Comunicar

Musics and Screens
Mediations in the Digital Landscape

Editorial

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The European Union Passes a Recommendation on Media Literacy in the European Digital Environment

La Unión Europea dictamina una nueva Recomendación sobre alfabetización mediática en el entorno digital en Europa

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In December 2007, the European Commission (see COMUNICAR 32, 2007) through the European Parliament (COM 2007: 33) passed a communication that urged member states to promote media literacy for commercial communication covering advertising and the media in general, partly to raise awareness of European cinema and enhance the creative and communicational skills of citizens applied to the new digital media.

Recently, several European bodies have backed the proposal to promote media literacy. In May 2008, the Education, Youth and Culture Council considered that media literacy was a key factor for active citizenship in today's information society. In October 2008, the Committee of the Regions adopted a global opinion on creative content on line and media literacy. The Council of Lisbon (CdR 9472008), within the framework of the i2010 initiative, has endorsed the promotion of the ICT sector with the aim of creating a Single European information space.

This European Commission recommendation, endorsed in Brussels on August 20, 2009, falls within the framework of a broad European movement that considers media literacy to be the key factor in the i2010 initiative that aspires to a more competitive knowledge economy while contributing to a more inclusive information society.

A public consultation at the end of 2006 highlighted different practices and uneven levels of media literacy across Europe. Therefore, a large-scale investigation is required to establish levels of media literacy among European citizens. In 2007, the «Current trends and approaches to media literacy in Europe» study carried out for the Commission recognized the barriers to the development of media literacy at European level. These include a lack of a shared European vision in initiatives taken at local, regional and national level, and the lack of networks to strengthen these initiatives in the Union. This study emphasises the need to analyse, highlight and spread good practices in the field through the European Union and promote coordination networks among stakeholders. It is also desirable to boost access to media and facilitate the ability of citizens to make informed and diversified choices as media consumers. The new challenges generated by digital content and the multiplication of distribution platforms require a standard of literacy that embraces all types of media to «increase people's awareness of the many forms of media messages…encountered in their everyday lives». As a consequence, «media literacy today is regarded as one of the pre-requisites for an active and full citizenship in order to prevent and diminish the risks of exclusion from community life». This

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is vital because «democracy depends on the active participation of citizens to the life of their community, and media literacy would provide the skills they need to make sense of the daily flow of information disseminated through new communication technologies».

The Commission points out in its recommendation that inclusion of media studies in school curricula at all levels is the primary responsibility of member states. The role of local authorities is also important, since they are close to the citizens, for supporting media literacy initiatives. Civil society should also make an active contribution to media literacy from the grassroots.

Section 21 of the Commission's Recommendation of August 2009 states the necessity for research projects into media literacy. Likewise, it aims to create a consensus around fundamental aspects in media literacy, via the Media initiative of 2007 (support programme for the audiovisual sector), the cooperation of other European institutions and international organizations like UNESCO, the United Nations Alliance of Civilization, and the promotion of a private-public partnership on media literacy.

The Commission's recommendation urges member states to 1) develop the co-regulation of the audiovisual sector and self-regulatory initiatives and guidelines; 2) promote systematic research through studies and projects on media literacy in the digital environment; 3) open a debate in conferences and other public events for the inclusion of media literacy in the compulsory education curriculum as part of the provision of the key competencies for lifelong learning, as established in the Recommendation of the European Parliament on December 18, 2006; 4) enhance awareness via training on the risks of processing personal data through information and communication networks; 5) encourage the media industry's commitment to improve media literacy through awareness campaigns and information packs to actively inform citizens about the need for media literacy in the European digital environment.

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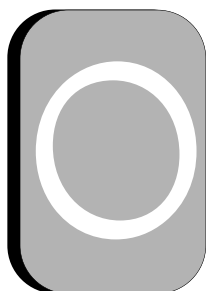Mediaciones en el nuevo escenario digital

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Música y pantallas. Mediaciones en el nuevo escenario digital

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ne of the basic ideas behind the prestigious journal «COMUNICAR» seems to us to be that in order properly understand education and communication it is not enough just to examine them separately within the framework of their own respective scientific traditions. On the contrary, to understand these and other cultural phenomena, it is convenient, even necessary, to look at the various facets of these phenomena. Consequently, today more than ever it is vital that sciences open up, communicate and enrich each other by crossing the thresholds that they have hitherto failed to breach due to the restraints of their respective scientific traditions. This is the case with communication and music, which is covered by issue 34 of «COMUNICAR».

No matter that music is one of the forms of sound used in human communication – in this case to express what words cannot say; in spite of the fact that music, especially some of its more popular manifestations, is fully endowed with features that characterize the phenomena that have long interested the majority of communication researchers and is often inseparable from them; the study of music and of communication have followed separate paths for years. There are many reasons for this, obviously related to a historical context which we can refer to here as Modernity.

We refer to the general meaning of the term when we speak of the establishment of a series of foundations, on the ideas' level, that supported the construction of the industrial society and which have also provided the base for various subjects to display their actions at its very heart. As we know, reason and culture occupied a preeminent place in these foundations. That ideal framework also welcomed the development – the overwhelming breakthrough – of a type of music known for more than two centuries as classical, which gave music an autonomous sphere, namely art, structured by taste and ruled by principles of authenticity and beauty.

Classical music played a leading role in the establishment of this artistic sphere, along with other fine arts, institutionalizing certain modes of sound – seeing the accumulation of a canonical repertoire of creations, frequently sublime – participating in the development of musical activities (modalities of access and use, depending on the various social actors) and its study (academic scene, object, method, basic theories). Music, like any other cultural form, is related to the social order.

It is also clear that the functions that music satisfied in industrial society – both society as a whole as well as specific groups and individuals – are not only limited to those which classical music most notably fulfils. Before, it coexisted with other forms of music – also subject to institutionalization – that were classified within the fields of popular and mass culture. Of these three ideal types established within the scene of Modernity to contain – socially channel and mark – the cultural practices of the popu-

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lation, it was the culture of the masses that was weighed down from the beginning with negative components. It was not to the liking of high culture as it did not conform to the required canons of beauty and authenticity, and it was based on mediations associated to its industrial condition: technological (in production and reproduction), commercial (economic ends that guided the elaboration of cultural works) and social (as a space for ideological and commercial manipulation); and as a consequence it was despised. And it was as if classical and popular music were not always supported on a specific technology, or as if they were completely removed from profiting from copyright or payment for access to enjoy a work, or if all types of music were, definitively, not cultural products specific to a historic medium – with possible meanings and uses for socially situated individuals and groups. In sum: that's Modernity! (although it is curious to think that, while the ideal bases of a society help its integrants to think and understand their surroundings and develop within them, they also place veils over us to hide the reality of what we are and the circumstances that occur within it).

In any case, the institutionalization of those three cultural spheres included the one related to their fields and modes of study (that is, the one concerning its theoretical direction and dominant methodologies). Such that if musicology was to classical music then anthropology was to popular music, while the music of the masses would have to be dealt with by the youngest of the sciences, communication. And we say would have to deal with for in spite of the obvious communicational condition of music, and that that type of music is organized around a powerful industry that allows it to be consistently present in the daily lives of the population, it would still not be taken into account by the science of communication.

This is all the more surprising for being well-known. The science of communication was, however, created mainly to concern itself with processes that affect public opinion and cultural industries that provide certain forms of entertainment – frequently based on the symbolic, vicarious satisfaction of specific emotions. Nevertheless in terms of scientific study, sound in general and music in particular have been historically passed over in favour of image.

There would be a long wait until the direction of the scientific study of communication changed, to stop focusing solely on certain media and communicative forms, and to understand communication within broader frameworks – especially the cultural – and thus comprehend cultural products (communicated or

communicable) as a series of elements within our reach that we can use to give meaning to our lives and what occurs within them, to channel the satisfaction of our emotions and apportion ourselves a certain well-being – via the symbolic technological supernatural, as defined by Ortega y Gasset. And with that opening-up of directions in communication, the phenomena that entered the orbit of this science would also widen, converging with the advances –focuses, objects of study– achieved in the field of music.

Generally, the sciences are now embarking on new journeys, broadening and diversifying focus, crossing over narrow disciplinary thresholds that used to separate one from the other for their own mutual enrichment. This is not only permitted by what we define as Postmodernity – that is, the gradual dismantling of several of the supposed ideals of Modernity – but it is also required by the profound movements that various fields and diverse forms are undergoing and through which culture develops today. Technologies change, cultural practices change, the established actors and scenes change. And music plays a leading role in this process.

The phenomena change and, in time, the sciences that attend to them as well. And out of this, we conceived this special edition of «COMUNICAR», with the idea of airing some of the approaches that broaden and enrich both the study of communication as well as music, or more generally, sound today. We have only been able to incorporate some of these ideas, since there are many focuses that come together around the themes, and the objects of study that they embrace are even more numerous. Therefore, we had to set criteria for organizing the selection of authors and subjects. Without going into detail, it is worth mentioning that all the works published combine the teaching experience of veteran writers who lay down foundations and lines that others can follow, with tendencies that point to another series of younger investigators – whose task it is to deepen the renewal of these studies.

The first article is by Klaus Bruhn Jensen who offers a panoramic vision of the investigation of sound as seen from the field of communication. Centred on word (written and spoken), music and sound surroundings, it makes a brief journey through the main traditions that have marked the study of each of these spheres. Although limited to the English-speaking scientific universe, the article establishes a quite accurate diagnosis: studies of sound have yet to find a specific home in the academic world, although its current emergence should help to start defining that position.

The work by Antoine Hennion is based on the tastes of amateur musicians and music fans. Hennion's approach to musical taste is theoretically complex, as it is not restricted to mere traditional contemplation as an instrument for defining identity and establishing differences. On the contrary, with a pragmatic focus he observes musical taste in situ as a staging that involves the subject and the object, among others; taste is a collective, orchestrated, reflective activity. Reflective, like this work which starts off from musical taste and moves on to a more profound methodological reflection on the sociology of culture.

The article by Aguilera, Adell and Borges also includes theoretical reflections: those needed for presenting some of the reasons that go towards explaining certain increasingly common cultural practices, although still new, among the population of our societies. These practices include various uses of music in the social networks, particularly in Facebook: uses supported in music – sharing it, the communication that arises from this act of sharing – among other ends to introduce and explain oneself to the rest and to construct an act of communication with them. There are also other uses that represent modes of consented or non-consented music appropriation.

Although also centred on social networks, Cecilia Suhr deals with a different line of investigation: the recommendations of experts to musicians – some of whom are already known, others who are working to be known – for taking advantage of the possibilities offered by MySpace to promote their work among users of that social network. Basing her work on a few precise notions, Suhr transcends the mere description of these recommendations to perceive certain social protocols in them.

Michael Bull's work develops a line of study and reflection that has already brought him recognition: he centres on mobile music – on its easy portability thanks to innovations like the MP3 player, supports like the iPod and the mobile phone – and on the experiences that user has with it. Taking your music with you symbolically transforms all the contexts we enter with music, to gain a certain well-being through the right here, right now – in the sense of Ortega y Gasset. Thus, we filter the external stimuli that suit us, we privatise the spaces we move through and we give them a new – although thanks mainly

to products from the cultural industries – aesthetic dimension of its own. Through this desire for total mediation we paradoxically enter the dream of non-mediated experience: direct access to the world of our emotions.

Héctor Fouce is concerned with a theme that is becoming classic in current studies on music: the changes, with a certain technological base, that the music industry and user practices are going through. Based on results from a recent investigation, Fouce offers data and reflections with the aim of providing keys to explain these facts.

Mark Grimshaw tackles sound in relation to a social and communicational phenomenon so highly characteristic of today: videogames. Based on pre-validated concepts for the study of film soundtracks (diagetic and non-diagetic), Grimshaw examines and explains the sensation of immersion that the gamer feels through the sound environments and his/her interaction with them.

Kazadi wa Mukuma's article deals with globalization and makes a case for it. But he doesn't examine it by referring to the usual points of view on cultural globalization but focuses on the instruments that help achieve a kind of homogeneity in tastes and create musical communities. Based on concepts like zones of cultural interaction and the examination of three traditional African instruments – their incorporation into other cultures where they are used differently – Mukuma offers a new vision of certain requirements of globalization in music.

The article by Jaime Hormigos takes a pronounced sociological direction to describe in general terms some of the functions of music in our societies in relation to the construction of cultural identities. The changes that music is going through today in its diverse orders – technological, symbolic, structural – constitute the reference framework of this article.

Manuel and Felipe Gértrudix end this special edition with a different perspective, unusual in this edition of «COMUNICAR» dedicated to music and communication, but perhaps this is not so unexpected in this journal! The Gértrudix brothers write about these phenomena from the educational point of view. More precisely, supporting their arguments on the suppositions of skills training, they examine the educational potential of these new products of popular culture. And they not only examine this potential but give it their support, applauding the educational community for considering the didactic use of these new cultural realities.

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An Interdisciplinary Review of Research on Sound as Communication

The Sounds of Media

El sonido de los medios. Revisión interdisciplinar de las investigaciones sobre el sonido como comunicación

ABSTRACT

Sound remains significantly underresearched as a form of communication, as a modality of experience, and as a resource for cultural expression and social interaction. This is in spite of the centrality of sound in most media and communicative practices, including face-to-face interaction and digital networks. Recent years, however, have witnessed a revitalized interest internationally in the area. This review revisits previous research on three sound prototypes – speech, music, and environmental soundscapes – which has mostly been undertaken in separate disciplines: rhetoric, philology, linguistics, classical musicology, popular music studies, architecture, discourse analysis, and more. The article, further, outlines the potential for more interdisciplinary research on sound as communication – as a source of meaning and as a resource for action. This potential is suggested by the diffusion of mobile media and the pervasiveness of communication in everyday contexts. At present, ordinary media users are in position, not only to receive, but also to send diverse forms of auditory, visual, as well as textual information. Users are becoming senders in new configurations of one-to-one, one-to-many, and, increasingly, many-to-many communication. Ubiquitous soundscapes and other mediascapes are even challenging received notions of what a 'medium' is and could be. In conclusion, the article suggests that the growing current interest in sound studies itself may be the product of a reconfigured media environment in which sound has come back in style.

RESUMEN

Es significativo que resulte todavía escasa la investigación sobre el sonido entendido como forma de comunicación, como modalidad de experiencia y como recurso para la expresión cultural y la interacción social. Y ello a pesar del papel central que el sonido tiene en la mayoría de las prácticas comunicativas y mediáticas, incluyendo la interacción cara a cara y las redes digitales. En los últimos años, sin embargo, hemos observado un renovado interés, por parte de la comunidad académica internacional, en este área. Esta revisión atiende a las investigaciones previas sobre tres tipos de sonido –la palabra hablada, la música y los paisajes sonoros ambientales– que hasta ahora han sido en su mayoría abordados por disciplinas diferentes y separadas entre sí: retórica, filología, lingüística, musicología clásica, estudios de la música popular, arquitectura, análisis del discurso y otras. Este artículo, además, enfatiza el potencial de un mayor número de investigaciones sobre el sonido como forma de comunicación, como fuente de significado y como recurso para la acción; lo que hoy resulta manifiesto por la difusión de los medios móviles y por la penetración de la comunicación en los contextos cotidianos. En la actualidad, los usuarios de los medios de comunicación tienen la capacidad, no sólo de recibir, sino también de enviar diferentes dinámicas auditivas y visuales, así como también información textual. El usuario se está convirtiendo en emisor de nuevas configuraciones de comunicación uno-a-uno, uno-a-muchos, y cada vez más, muchos-a-muchos. La ubicuidad de los paisajes sonoros y de otros paisajes mediáticos desafía, pone en entredicho, las nociones tradicionales relativas a lo que es un «medio» y a lo que puede ser. En conclusión, este artículo sugiere que el renovado interés actual por los «sound studies» puede ser en sí mismo el resultado del entorno mediático reconfigurado, en el que el sonido se ha puesto de moda.

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1. Introduction

Sound is a constitutive part of diverse media and communicative practices in contemporary society. And yet, sound remains significantly underresearched as a form of communication, as a modality of experience, and as a resource for cultural expression and social action, even if recent years have witnessed a revitalized interest internationally in the area (for overview, see Bull & Back, 2003). Because sound studies have no natural home in the academy, no full-scale equivalent of disciplines such as art history and film theory that address still and moving images respectively, any review will offer a selective recombination of findings and insights. The present review focuses on sound as communication — as a source of meaning and as a resource for action – revisiting previous work on three sound prototypes: speech, music, and environmental soundscapes. Whereas much work has been anchored in disciplines such as linguistics and musicology, a number of contributions have fallen either outside or between disciplines or, as in the case of musicology, they have challenged the discipline from within. In conclusion, the article presents a meta-perspective on research, suggesting that the current interest in sound studies itself may be the product of a reconfigured media environment in which sound has come back in style.

2. Speech: from classical rhetoric to modern discourse studies

«In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with humans, and the Word was humans». A secular restatement of the New Testament (John 1:1-3) serves to articulate the modern understanding that speech or symbolic communication is constitutive of being human. One distinctive feature of language is that it enables reflection and negotiation before individuals, organizations, or whole societies take action. Language supports not just great leaps of the individual imagination and grand collective projects, but, perhaps most important, doubt and delay. As noted by Aristotle (Clarke, 1990: 11), words allow humans to consider that which is at least temporarily absent –in space, in time, and from one's immediate experience– through thought experiments and dialogue. Speech, thus, can represent what is absent from, but imagined within, face-to-face encounters, opening up universes of what is not yet, what might be, as well as what ought never to come to pass. Present sounds allow for absent realities. Writing, print, electronic, and digital media, each in specific ways, radically extended the capacity of humans to imagine, represent, and communicate, also in each other's absence. Present media allow for absent realities, absent communicators, or both.

Rhetoric, being the grandparent of language study, drew on the resources and conventions of oral tradition when developing as a social practice as well as a field of research. Yet, paradoxically, «classical» rhetoric was being codified and consolidated during the transition to literate culture. Havelock (1963), for one, noted how Plato's attack on the bardic poets for being less than trustworthy in matters of government, historiography, and science, announced the passing of an oral culture. In areas as diverse as commerce, religion, warfare, and politics, writing and literacy provided strategically important means of social organization and control. Rhetorical practice itself was informed and sustained by written manuals – alphabetization facilitated codification. And, it was not least in the shape of «secondary rhetoric» (Kennedy, 1980: 5), as applied to diverse genres of literary and other written communication, that rhetorical concepts continued as a major influence on European scholarship and education into the nineteenth century. Poised between oral practice and literate form, rhetoric has remained a source of inspiration for communication theory up to and including mass media studies.

The plethora of practical manuals on the art of speaking well in public help to account for the still common reference to «only rhetoric» –form without substance. It might be more appropriate, in fact, to refer to «only literacy»– texts without context, as memorized and delivered on cue. Classical rhetoric had emphasized the intimate relation between knowing that something is the case, and knowing how to speak about it for a purpose and in a context. Aristotle observed that rhetoric is the source of a particular kind of knowledge which is probable and reasonable in relation to the business at hand – in comparison, logic can provide certain or necessary knowledge across contexts, at least about some aspects of reality (Clarke, 1990: 13). An important legacy of rhetoric for contemporary communication studies, then, is its close focus on context. This focus has been revitalized, for example, by the «new rhetoric» (Perelman, 1979). As speech and other auditory modalities of communication are being reembedded in everyday contexts through mobile technologies (Ling, 2004), both «old» and «new» rhetorics can offer theoretical and methodological frameworks for empirical research.

The distinctive capacity of writing and, later, print to transcend context made the written word a focus of language study for centuries. As a social infrastructure and a source of power, sustaining empires and cosmo-

logies, literacy required both a canon of forms and procedures, and a class of literate individuals to maintain it, on behalf on the powers that be. Philology (Cerquiglini, 1999), while focused originally on classical Greek and Latin, developed a wide range of general techniques for performing textual criticism of both historical, scientific, and literary works, fact as well as fiction, in different languages. By establishing the origins and relative authenticity of diverse texts, philology served as a crucial mediator of knowledge from and about the past, recontextualizing history in the present. The essentially contestable nature of this enterprise was witnessed, for example, during the nineteenth century when philology, while acquiring a new level of precision, participated actively in political projects of nation-building. By documenting and delimiting «national» languages and literatures, philology provided justifications for what was then a new type of imagined communities (Anderson, 1991: 67-82). Across national boundaries and social contexts, moreover, literacy became a generalized resource of cultural distinction (Bourdieu, 1984/1979). Literacy gives access to a particular heritage, and it empowers the literate to negotiate inclusion in and exclusion from this heritage, even the appropriate language for doing so. Like money, literacy talks – it speaks of social structure in action. The different historical varieties of language study, by implication, speak of how cultural capital has been administered by scholarship on behalf of society.

Linguistics in its twentieth-century incarnation performed a reorientation, on the one hand, away from the diachronic and comparative attention of philology to language as a vehicle of history and culture. Instead, linguistics came to highlight language as a structure in its own right and in a synchronic perspective. The seminal work of Saussure (1959/1916) served as a key influence on other structuralist and systemic turns beyond linguistics and into social sciences. On the other hand, twentieth-century language study remained focused on writing in its various shapes and, for all practical purposes, on a canon of written language – on form and norm. One ambition of modern linguistics was to develop into an autonomous «science» beyond a subordinate role of servicing literary and

other «arts» of language. That ambition was expressed most systematically by so-called transformational-generative grammar (TG), which sought to discover a «deep structure» of language that would account for the seemingly infinite variety of its «surface structures» in speech and writing (Chomsky, 1965). TG was informed by the widely influential notion of human cognition as computing; a metaphor that was taken literally, to varying degrees, in the borderlands of TG and AI, or artificial intelligence research (Boden, 1996). Precisely speech, however, with its sensitivity to context has posed one of the most serious obstacles so far in the development of operational AI systems.

In recent decades, linguistics has returned to speech as a key object of study, including the many public

> The academic study of music –musicology– arguably has been wedded less to sounds than to notes. Traditionally, the discipline has placed a strong emphasis on 'works' as formal objects, as they are represented in written scores. This is in spite of the fact that song and improvised performances presumably account for the majority of all musical events both historically and currently, literally accompanying people from cradle to grave.

and private settings in which language use makes daily life possible. Under a generic heading of discourse studies, much work has addressed discourse as a social process over above texts as the products of language (Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001). In linguistic terminology, discourse studies go beyond the grammar, semantics, and phonetics of single, abstracted sentences, to include pragmatics, which examines the social uses of language in complex sequences and situated contexts. Several factors, internal as well as external to research, help to explain this «pragmatic turn» (Jensen, 2002: 38-39). Internally, linguistics joined an interdisciplinary turn across the humanities and social sciences, exploring the role of language in the microcoordination of everyday life. To exemplify, sociolinguistics has gone beyond the documentation and comparison of «dialects» and «sociolects» in order to account for them as implicit worldviews and constitutive practices of social life. The title of one classic text –«the logic of non-standard English» (Labov, 1972/

1969)– indicates that, as late as 1969, it was still necessary to argue the point that, in this case, spoken Black English was more than an illogical aberration from the norm.

The external circumstances of language study help to explain such a «finding». The anti-authoritarian upheavals during the 1960s were questioning received notions of a common cultural heritage, as well as of ethnicity, class, and gender. The challenges to consensus were being amplified throughout society by a new media environment in which, not least, television was transcending social boundaries (Meyrowitz, 1985). Importantly, the challenges were being posed not merely as «issues» in media content, but equally through the form of communication – through diverse variants of language as practiced by distinctive subcul-

> Sound studies are still in their early stages, and have much to gain from an extraordinarily broad range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary sources. This review has recovered a variety of studies on three prototypes of sound –speech, music, and soundscapes– for media and communication research.

tures. The cultural diversity of language was now undeniably there to be listened to every night on the news, also by language scholars.

Over the longues durées of history, it is fair to conclude that the study of language has tended to revolve around literacy. Societies depending on writing similarly came to depend on practices for administering and maintaining the written word. Like language itself, language study is conditioned by its material and institutional circumstances, including the technologies available. Before the late nineteenth century, speech disappeared into the air unless documented by hand for particular purposes (Millard, 1995). From the 1940-50s onwards, lightweight recording equipment made fieldwork and subsequent transcriptions of language use more feasible. And, recent «corpus linguistics», working from empirical samples rather than imagined prototypes, depends on computer analysis to determine how people actually speak (and write) (Halliday, Teuberg, Yallop & Cermakova, 2004).

In sum, current sound studies are positioned to benefit from previous research about language on at

least two counts. First, the rhetorical tradition as well as the interdisciplinary field of discourse studies have offered many and diverse insights into speech as practice and process. Second, philology and linguistics have provided concrete approaches to writing both as a cultural technology and as an analytical resource, as enhanced by mechanical and digital means of reproduction. Speech –and the study of speech– is amplified through written techniques of notation, transcription, and analysis.

3. Music: from autonomous works to interested listeners

Form and norm have served as guiding principles for research on music, as well. For one thing, the academic study of music –musicology– arguably has been wedded less to sounds than to notes. Traditionally, the discipline has placed a strong emphasis on «works» as formal objects, as they are represented in written scores. This is in spite of the fact that song and improvised performances presumably account for the majority of all musical events both historically and currently, literally accompanying people from cradle to grave. For another thing, musicology has been remarkably focused on a particular portion of the notated heritage, namely, the canon of «classical» instrumental music especially from the late 1700s onwards. (The term «classical» music itself dates from the late 1800s (Potter, 1998: 65) and remains debated.) If literary and other aesthetic studies have cultivated the autonomy of artworks with a passion, musicology has pursued aesthetic autonomy with a vengeance.

Like rhetoric, music has been practiced as both art and scholarship since Antiquity. More so than rhetoric, musical scholarship has retained an intimate link with musical performance, as witnessed at conservatories as well as university schools of music. Scholars will normally be expected to practice music or, minimally, to be formally «literate». Also the published literature indicates that it is the aesthetics of musical works as means of expression and contemplation that has remained at the top of the «research agenda» – if that is a relevant terminology (for classic texts, see Treitler, 1998). In comparison, the broadly social uses of music in politics, religion, or primary socialization have remained on the periphery of the field as a minority con-

cern. This is in spite of early contributions on music by some of the founding figures of sociology (e.g., Weber, 1958/1921). As in the case of language study, the profile of academic musicology is explained, in part, by its infrastructural position vis-à-vis other social institutions. Musicology has served, in large measure, as the keeper of canonical tradition regarding the appropriate social uses of sound, as defined by shifting religious and secular establishments. The implicit commitment to musical performance, catering to the powers that be, has manifested itself, moreover, in particular scholarly techniques. According to Kerman (1985: 59), the meticulous, archival care for the «facts and texts» of music amounts to a variant of positivism. It is the socially interested nature of both music and musicology that a great deal of recent work has come to underscore.

The reassessment and reinvigoration of musicology that seem to be underway (Cook & Everist, 1999) have been facilitated by two specific departures from the mainstream. From within, the tradition has been challenged head-on by the so called «new» or «critical» musicology, which has brought the origins of music in, as well as its implications for, society to the fore, reemphasizing meaning, power, class, gender, and other classic concepts from the social sciences and cultural studies in the discourse of research (Kramer, 2002; Leppert, 1993; McClary, 1991; Subotnik, 1991). According to Subotnik (1991: 141), the interrelation of music and society should be treated, not as a hypothesis to be tested, but as a premise for research in the first place. While internally diverse, the New Musicology has taken a broadly critical, emphatically theoretical, and historically grounded position, drawing inspiration from a Frankfurt-School lineage of social theory, feminism, and discourse theory, in order to substantiate some of the ways in which music articulates socially interested perspectives on reality. In addition to raising controversial issues regarding musical divides between social segments, and recovering female composers and musicians that have gone unrecognized in music history (McClary, 1991), this group of researchers has also broadened the methodological scope of musicology, drawing on visual representations of music and musicians as well as other historical evidence in order to place musical texts in their social contexts (Leppert, 1993). Still, the methodologies of the New Musicology have, in practice, stayed comparatively close to the core musical «texts», whether notated or performed, treating other evidence as supplementary. Most important perhaps, the process of listening to and employing music for social ends is still

largely being extrapolated from the works rather than from evidence concerning the listeners themselves, despite some recent work on hearing in social and historical contexts (Erlmann, 2004). In this respect, research on music may be retracing the steps of media research and, not least, film studies, which, until quite recently (e.g., Stacey, 1994), relied on an audience of one –the researcher– to furnish interpretations of the media text at hand.

The second, external challenge to musicology has come from the field of popular music studies (for key texts and overview, see Frith & Goodwin, 1990; Middleton, 1990). Whereas «popular» music might be considered both historically and ontologically primary, the term is often used as a synonym for «not classical», and is most commonly associated with those genres that reach a mass audience through technological reproduction. Frith (1996: 226) has suggested that one may begin to think of the history of music generally in terms of a folk stage grounded in the body, an art stage sustained by notation, and a pop stage enabled by reproduction, which have entered into shifting, remediated configurations. Addressing the ambiguous position of much contemporary popular music in between «genuine» folk and «commercial» pop sources, the field has produced modern classics of its own, for example, on the place of music in African-American culture (Keil, 1966) and on the emotional qualities of music in the media (Tagg, 1979). Moreover, studies of the words or texts of popular songs (e.g., Middleton, 2002) serve as one reminder that «classical», instrumental music might be considered a historical anomaly — music and speech have typically been constituents of the same cultural practice. The downside of the focus within popular music studies on subcultures and social institutions is that, frequently, less explicit attention is given to musical practices as music. Middleton (1990: 158), for one, noted a tendency for subcultural theory to rely excessively on homology to account for the relationship between musical and social structures: Rock, for instance, may qualify as «screw and smash» music, but that description says little about its specificity as a cultural practice of sound and speech. Studies of music and society still tend to be silent on either society or music, partly because of limitations in the available theoretical and terminological repertoires.

Music follows people from cradle to grave, but not so musicology. One indication that this situation may be changing is the publication of volumes examining music and society which bring (new) musicology and popular music studies inside the same covers (Clayton, Herbert & Middleton, 2003). Indicating one agenda

for further research, Peterson and Kern (1996) found that while the traditional divide between highbrow and lowbrow music tastes may be dissolving, it is especially highbrow listeners who have embraced popular music, as well. At an institutional level, Born (1995) showed how, over the course of the twentieth century, avantgarde «serial» music contributed to new configurations of «classical», experimental, and popular music. And, in the context of everyday practices, Finnegan (1989) detailed how different conceptions of «composition» and «performance» enter into various musical subcultures, high and low, professional and amateur. In each case, technology is changing the conditions of what will count as music, for whom, and to what social ends.

4. Soundscapes: from music of the spheres to ambient environments

The notion that the natural environment, indeed, the entire universe, carries meanings that are articulated, in part, through sound, is familiar from the ancient idea of the music of the spheres (James, 1995). The harmony of the spheres was understood as an expression of the numerical ratios of a «world-soul», yielding mathematical principles with implications for astronomy, metaphysics, and music, and, according to some, sounding the universe. (A contemporary parallel is «DNA music», generating musical syntheses from DNA sequences (Gena & Strom, 2001).) Whereas a modern perspective would suggest a categorical distinction between natural events and human actions, and between incidental and intentional meanings, nevertheless humans habitually ascribe significance to both social and natural settings — as symbols in their own right or as arenas of action. Watzlawick y otros (1967) made the point that one cannot not communicate, noting that the presence of humans in a shared time and space necessarily implies communication: The body shows itself, and it sounds. Social contexts, similarly, cannot not communicate, at least as enabling conditions of what can or should, cannot or should not, occur there. From homes and offices, to public transportation and rural landscapes, environments are increasingly planned and engineered, thus anticipating, configuring, and contributing to meaningful interactions, including silence. Appadurai (1996) has suggested «scapes» as a covering term for various material and simultaneously meaningful frameworks of human action. Soundscapes, while currently associated, for example, with mobile media, have taken a variety of historical forms.

The specific terminology of «soundscapes» is nor-

mally credited to the Canadian composer and musicologist, Murray Schafer (1977). Recalling the medium theory (Meyrowitz, 1994) of his countrymen, Harold A. Innis and Marshall McLuhan, that media typify particular epochs of culture and consciousness, Schafer interpreted the history of sound as a process of schizophonia, by which technologies have increasingly divorced sounds from their origins, thus potentially polluting both social and natural contexts, and desensitizing audiences to the potential richness of sound in work as well as leisure. One of Schafer's important contributions has been to identify sound as a general and complex modality that should be studied as a natural phenomenon, an artistic expression, as well as a mode of communication. As a framework for theory development and further empirical research, however, Schafer's position is limited by its highly normative premises, in effect demonizing noise, praising silence, and implicitly advocating a return to preindustrial soundscapes. A comparable position within communication studies, influenced by the media ecology of Postman (1985), appeared in Albrecht (2004).

Perhaps surprisingly, historians have been at the forefront of recent sound studies, reassessing the evidence regarding past soundscapes, which, unlike textual and pictorial sources, literally disappeared into the air until the advent of recording technologies from the late 1800s. One important contribution came from Corbin (1998), who explored the significance of village bells as frame-setters in the French countryside during the nineteenth century. Beyond the traditional enactment of standardized time in local communities, bells gave rise to deep social conflicts after the French revolution of 1789, involving state authorities, the church, as well as laypeople, particularly over the appropriate religious or secular uses of bells within a community. And, as part of conflicts between communities, bells were abducted, reused, and recast. In a different national setting, the recasting of bells into cannon could be seen to symbolize the predicament of the American south after the Civil War (Smith, 2001) – both the war and the sounding bells were lost.

In a contemporary perspective, soundscapes have increasingly been reengineered and remediated, from incidental spaces of hearing to dedicated places of listening — whether in private homes or concert halls. Thompson (2002: 7) noted how the engineering of specific contexts for listening entailed a «silencing of space», as reverberation came to be defined as noise, to be replaced by different degrees and varieties of «virtual sound». Also audiences fell silent, as attention became focused on the stage and its musical perfor-

mances, giving rise to individual, interior experience, rather than social interaction with others in the hall (Johnson, 1995). Other public places, such as shops and restaurants, have been studied as soundscapes comprising both specific information and contextual atmosphere. One distinctive component of modern urban life has been «muzak», establishing an ambient ground through «mood music», or what Lanza (1994) referred to as «elevator music», in workplaces, shops, and other enclosed soundscapes (Barnes, 1988).

Private settings, equally, have constituted historically shifting soundscapes for families and their social circles, large or small, offering piano recitals, radio broadcasting, or home-stereo listening. With portable audio devices came additional degrees of freedom in the creation of ad hoc soundscapes, beginning with the portable gramophone at picnics and «discos» during the 1910s (Nott, 2002: 33-43). While the transistor radio made music and other sounds more mobile from the 1960s, it still imposed a collective soundscape on its immediate surroundings – spaces of hearing rather than places of listening. The Walkman from 1979 enabled individual listeners to create a private auditory realm within the public domain. Bull (2000) has shown the multiple ways in which the Walkman enabled people to negotiate the experience of self vis-à-vis social reality (see also Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay & Negus, 1997). And, with mobile phones, iPods, and other playback devices, portable and personalized soundscapes are proliferating in public, as well (Humphreys, 2005). «Early» notions of immersive mediascapes during the 1980s (Levy, 1993) envisioned a form of virtual reality that would transpose a full-fledged context onto a single multi-functional text –the world in a medium. Current developments in ubiquitous and pervasive computing, potentially, reverse this relation, as they embed media in diverse objects, artefacts, and settings (Greenfield, 2006)– the world as a medium. Soundscapes and ubiquitous mediascapes generally are challenging received notions of what is a medium.

5. Conclusion

Sound studies are still in their early stages, and have much to gain from an extraordinarily broad range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary sources. This review has recovered a variety of studies on three prototypes of sound –speech, music, and soundscapes– for media and communication research. Digital media provide a special opportunity to reexamine both the expressive qualities and the social uses of sound across different media types — from bodies speaking and singing, to avatars responding in kind. Digitalization has brought sound and its diverse uses as information, communication, and action to the fore once again.

As shown by Peters (1999) in his history of the idea of communication, the available technologies and institutions of communication help to explain how researchers as well as the general public, over time, have thought of different media and modalities. The coming of mass communication, during the nineteenth century, served to thematize «communication» as a general human practice, joining face-to-face and technologi-

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cally mediated communication in a common vocabulary. During the post-1945 period, another general category of «media» emerged, as epitomized by Marshall McLuhan (1964), even if the reference was primarily to «mass» media. Indeed, the record of communication research as a whole still shows the existence a great divide between two separate worlds of «interpersonal» and «mediated» communication studies (Rogers, 1999). It is only within the last decade or so that students of the media have come to refer to themselves in terms of «media and communication» research, as symbolized by the IAMCR, which used to be the International Association for Mass Communication Reseach, but which, since 1996, is the International Association for Media and Communication Research. The field is currently working out the implications of that seemingly innocent change of terminology.

Perhaps communication researchers are still catching up with the general idea of communication. Perhaps media researchers are still in need of a general definition of media. Sound studies are a good place to

continue the search for both media and communication.

Acknowledgments

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24

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Loving Music: from a Sociology of Mediation to a Pragmatics of Taste

Gustos musicales: de una sociología de la mediación a una pragmática del gusto

ABSTRACT

This contribution provides an account of musical taste as a meaningful accomplishment and a situated activity, with its tricks and bricolages, instead of reducing it to a game of social difference and identity. Taste is a problematic modality of attachment to the world. In such a pragmatist conception it is analyzed as a reflexive activity, corporeal, framed, collective, equipped, depending on places, moments and devices, which simultaneously produces the competencies of a music lover and a repertoire of objects. To be explained, it needs the sociologist to concentrate on gestures, objects, bodies, media, devices and relations engaged. Taste is a performance. Playing, listening, recording, making others listen…, all those activities amount to more than the actualization of a taste «already there». They are redefined during the action, with a result that is partly uncertain. Thus amateurs' attachments and ways of doing things both engage and form subjectivities, and have a history, irreducible to that of the works. Understood in this way, as reflexive work performed on one's own attachments, the amateur's taste is no longer considered an arbitrary election to be explained by hidden social causes. Rather, it is a collective technique, whose analysis helps to understand the way we make ourselves sensitized, to things, to ourselves, to situations and to moments, while simultaneously reflexively controlling how those feelings might be shared and discussed with others.

RESUMEN

Esta contribución ilustra el gusto musical como un logro significativo y una actividad situada, con sus trucos y artimañas, en lugar de reducirla a un juego de identidad y diferenciación social. El gusto es una modalidad problemática de vinculación al mundo. En esta concepción pragmática, se analiza como una actividad reflexiva, corpórea, estructurada, colectiva, equipada, dependiente de los sitios, los momentos y los dispositivos; lo que simultáneamente produce las competencias de un amante de la música y un repertorio de objetos. Explicar el gusto exige que el sociólogo se concentre en los gestos, los objetos, los cuerpos, los medios, los dispositivos y las relaciones involucradas. El gusto es un comportamiento. Reproducir, escuchar, grabar, hacer que otros escuchen música… todas esas actividades vienen a ser algo más que la realización de un gusto que «ya existía». Todo ello se redefine durante la acción y el resultado es, en parte, incierto. Así, la vinculación de los aficionados y la forma de hacer las cosas se combinan, forman subjetividades y tienen una historia que no se puede reducir a la de las obras. Entendido de esta manera, como trabajo reflexivo conducido sobre la base de las vinculaciones propias, el gusto del aficionado ya no se considera una elección arbitraria que es explicada por razones sociales ocultas. Más bien, es una técnica colectiva, cuyo análisis ayuda a entender la manera en la que nos hacemos sensibles a las cosas, a nosotros mismos, a las situaciones y los momentos, mientras en paralelo controla reflexivamente la forma en que esos sentimientos pueden ser compartidos y discutidos con los demás.

KEY WORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

Music, amateur, taste, attachment, pragmatism, reflexive activity.
Música, aficionados, gusto, vinculación, pragmatismo, reflexividad.

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1. Introduction: Giving the amateur back his place

This text presents the challenges and first results of an ethnographic investigation in progress into the music fans of today. This study is particularly focused on the theoretical and methodological problems that accompany an investigation of this type if it is not conceived as the only explanation of external determinisms that direct the analysis towards the social origins of the fan or the aesthetic properties of the songs. On the contrary, the objective is to focus on the gestures, objects, media, devices and relationships included in a listening or a playing that are not limited to the forming of a taste already there, but which are redefined in the process of the action, and produce a more uncertain result. What has been constituted thanks to the media and the invention of the listener throughout the slow «discomorphosis» (Hennion & al., 2000) of music in the 20th century, joined today by «internetization», is that the sheet music of places and centuries past has been transformed into a repertoire that is available here and now for those who want it. The analysis of the music fan and taste need to be placed within this double transformation: that of the music which becomes a repertoire and that of the participant who becomes purchaser-listener-releaser.

This is why the fan's attachments and modes of action can be articulated and form subjectivities (not only responding to social labels), and have a history that is irreducible to that of the works. Therefore, it is necessary to conceive a more pragmatic sociology that is closer to what the actors think and do, as opposed to the critical conception that the culture of sociology has got us used to. The question of cultural inequalities and uneven access to the works has hidden the very production of the works as an accessible repertoire. In terms of music fans, this has led us to adopt a broader definition that includes all the practices of music. There is no reason to endorse the idea that some are but a passive consumption (attending a concert or listening to a record) and would not be worthy of appearing in a study of music fans. A highly active form of listening to music exists, in the sense of an enthusiastic development of competence (a no less traditional acceptance of the word fan, but more usual if we speak of cigars, wine or coffee). Undoubtedly, it is also wise to abandon the use of a single word, like taste for example, with so many connotations and mainly referring to the consumption of a precious object. Love, passion, taste, practices, habits, obsessions: there is an abundance of vocabulary that better defines the variety of configurations that link to music. It is not so important to determine it a priori; above all it is not

necessary to measure it only by the standard of taste for an object whose appreciation requires an erudite learning. It is not just about the choice of an over-selective social format but about not making premature hypotheses on the meaning of these practices, in which the place and status of the music itself are very far from being determined. Music is made, we like it, we listen to it, we like this genre or that music. The verbs are more adequate as they force less a collective practice with the objects to enter a substantive category directed towards an object.

In terms of the method, the sociologist cannot just observe taste from the outside, which is how he/she believes an amateur observes a work of art: as an object that can be contemplated and not as an effect that can or cannot emerge. Taste, pleasure or the effect of things are neither exogenous variables nor automatic attributes of the objects[1]. They are the result of an action performed by the taster, an action based on technique, bodily entertainment and repeated sampling, and which is accomplished over time, simultaneously because it follows a regulated development and because its success largely depends on moments. Taste is a bodily practice that is collective and instrumented, regulated by methods that are incessantly argued over, and that centres around the appropriated perception of uncertain effects. Thus, we prefer to talk about «attachments»[2]. This beautiful word destroys the opposition that accentuates the dualism of the word «taste», between a series of causes that come from outside and the «hic et nunc» of the situation and the interaction. In terms of music fans, there is less emphasis on labels and more on states, less on self-proclamations and more on people's activity; regarding the objects that motivate taste, their right to reply and their ability to coproduce what is happening, what arises from the contact, remains open.

2. Taste as a reflexive activity

So, another way of presenting this text would be to say it aims at articulating the musical taste in the act, the situation, with its tricks and traps, far removed from the space of public justification, focusing only on its own success. The practices of the music fan studied produce a marked variance in the base elements of taste that our study has elucidated (Hennion, 2004): the relationship to the object, the support on a collective, the entertainment of oneself, and finally the constitution of a technical device (understood in the broad sense of a more or less organized set of favourable conditions for the development of the activity or of the appreciation). Taste is neither the consequence (auto-

matic or induced) of the objects that provoke taste by themselves, nor a mere social arrangement projected onto the objects or the simple pretext of a ritual or collective game. It is a reflexive, instrumented arrangement to test our sensations. It is not a mechanical process, it is always «deliberate»; it is an «accomplishment», as expressed by English-speakers, who use Latin better than we, Latin languages-speakers, do…

The crucial point is the way in which taste depends on the returns of the object tasted, on what it does and what it makes people do. This is no paradox, except for sociologists, who consider everything within the relationship of taste, except the presence and effects of the product that causes taste. Speaking of «returns» is not to say either that the object contains its effects but that it is discovered precisely at the point of non-determination, variance and the deepening of the effects that the product produces; effects that are not due only to the product but to its momentums, unfoldings, and to circumstances. Also it is the idea of mediation (Hennion, 2007). The very media we give ourselves to capture the object (the record, song, dance or collective practice) form part of the effects that this can produce. Our research consequently centres on the analysis of taste as a collective, instrumented and reflexive activity, with the underlying idea that sociology has a lot of work to do if it wants to give an account of attachments, firstly on itself, in terms of its supposed theories and perhaps, fundamentally, on its means of investigation and the type of relationship it has with what it observes. If one has to get involved, in time and with its body, in commerce with the object in question, it is that relationship that imposes itself, also for the analyst. Listening is a challenge that the sociologist is confronted with. What can we say about music without involving our own love for it and, in the first instance, without listening? Therefore, the word listening is perfect because it avoids the duality of the relationship with the object (whether it is known or unknown, loved or unloved, «let yourself be deceived», believing in it or showing up taste as being just belief…), to bring together a wide range of varied aspects of musical activity: the attention of an I, the presence of others or the reference to them, the headphones, the instruments of sound production, the bodily reaction and the reflexive development of sensitivity.

2.1. You keep loving but what you have been…

But it would be selfish to reduce the problem to questions about the sociologist's situation towards what he/she observes. Sociology itself has long affected tastes, influenced the amateur. When we ask somebody about what he/she likes, today the answer comes with an excuse: his/her family was upper class, a brother played the violin, of course not everyone has the money to buy the best Bordeaux wines… We have reached the ultimate extreme, paradoxical, of criticism, where criticism becomes the doxa and not the paradox and makes the very reality of what it criticises disappear inside the actors it wishes to analyse. This vulgarization of its thesis determines the reception the sociologist receives henceforth: the amateur feels guilty or an object of suspicion, feels ashamed of what he/she likes, decodes and anticipates the meaning of what he/she says, stands accused of a practice that is too elitist, accepts the ritualistic nature of his/her rocking nights, wine tastings among friends or his/her love of opera.

> The aim is to pay special attention to the gestures, objects, media, mechanisms and relationships of a game of listening that is not restricted to the production of a taste already there but which is redefined in the process of the action in order to present a result that is partly uncertain.

And what is worse, the amateur does not dare any longer speak of neither the objects, the gestures, the feelings he/she experiences, nor his/her uncertainties. Instead of that, the amateur places him/ herself within those cases presumably assigned to him/her and only has one concern: that he/she does not seem to be ignorant of the fact that his/her taste falls into the domain of sociology. Far from revealing the hidden social character of tastes that the amateur would consider personal, irreducible and absolute, from now sociology is for some amateurs the first repertoire available to talk about them, and they put up no resistance, on the contrary, on presenting (among other registers, it is true, according to the circumstances and the speakers) their objects of attachment as arbitrary signs determined by social origin that they consider to be relative, historic and pretexts for various rituals.

A curious paradox: it is the turn of the sociologist to de-sociologize the amateurs so that they can talk not

about their determinisms but about ways of doing things, less about what they love. How can we make them stop warning the sociologist they know that their choices are determined, and speak again about ways of listening, drinking and playing, and about pleasure, of what overwhelms them, of the forms their practices take, of the surprising techniques they develop as amateurs to gather the conditions of their happiness, without any guarantee that it will be achieved? Far from being an agent manipulated by unknown forces, the amateur is a virtuoso of aesthetic, social, technical, mind and body experimentation. He/she is not the last one to argue the effects of belief and of distanciation: the amateur also wonders if excessive proximity to the object can blind him/her. Taking up a curious challen-

your tastes are your past in sediment (family, school, social…), it forms your identity. Once liberated from the temptation to declare that the social is a hidden dimension that determines everything, we can recognize that the fact that some people's micro-statement on taste carries immediate social identifications forms part of everyone's broad common knowledge. But this mobilization by people themselves completely changes the state of such a knowledge: first, it is not that unconscious; and, most importantly, this initial determination is not the end of the matter: it can be put to work (or not), it can be considered a support to go further or simply as a sign, it can be reinforced or surpassed. In sum, it is part of taste itself, as is its availability for debate with those that are closest. If the rocker in question offers this reflection to his friend, it is because he also thinks that tastes are negotiated in the exchange with others. This leads us quite far from a vision of taste as a game played by actors just considered as «believing» in the object of their taste and being blind to its social determinisms.

> It is necessary to situate the analysis of the amateur and the taste within this double transformation: the music that is transformed into repertoire and the participant who becomes the purchaser-listener-releaser. So, the amateur's attachments and ways of doing things can be articulated, form subjectivities (and not only in response to social labels), and have a history that is irreducible to that of the works. To do so, it is necessary to conceive a more pragmatic sociology, closer to what the actors do and think.

They select one from all the possible determinisms. Here, on our rocker's case, it was the history of taste as a definition of oneself, considered by the rest of his friend's as a type of highly stereotyped repetition; but by reproaching him his perpetual return to the rock of the 70s, they are not determinist: on the contrary, they make their assertion active, performing. They would not point it out without having in mind the uncertain hope that this might help him move a little forward…

In short, we are obliged to make a curious redress. It consists of giving back to the amateur the competences of a sociologist, and to the sociologist his/her right and duty to be an amateur as well. But the effort is worth it. The speaker who was distrustful is now in a position to talk about his/her tastes and becomes somebody who is incredibly ingenious in describing what he/she does, referring less to what he/she likes and more to how he/she likes it, with whom, how he/she does it, what carries him/her away, more or less according to the moments or given circumstances.

ge, the truth about his/her tastes, the amateur is sparing, according to the moments, of participation and withdrawal, of enthusiastic immersion and resorting to mechanisms of objectivising, analysis, guides and references. Put into another way, there is no debate that is so inherent in sociology that it escapes to the reflexive activity of the amateurs.

The sociologization of the actors themselves also functions in another way, as a pragmatic resource to work on the tastes. A chance example came to my mind that is independent of our investigations. In an argument between some rockers (that I, the sociologist, had not provoked), one evening I heard one say to the other : «You keep loving but what you have been». I didn't give it much thought but I think that comment made an impression on me. I recalled it some time later when discussing this subject. What could be more reflexive than this…reflection? On the one hand, this reflection mobilizes a sociology of social determinisms:

2.2. Philippe: the music library as imaginary harem

One of the first amateurs I questioned at the start

of the investigation provided me with a caricature of a good interview for a postgraduate student. He talked of his family background, his sister played the violin, his uncle took him to concerts as a young lad, the first time he went to the opera (an unforgettable experience), his current job (doctor), his tastes (opera and chamber music).

By chance, as he is a friend of mutual friends of ours, I had the chance to converse with him again, not in a second interview, but in a different kind of meeting, two years later, at a dinner for friends at his house. After dinner, he took me to the music room he had built himself, to which his wife, children and even his dog were forbidden access. There, with all the objects and places of his passion, in front of another amateur, it was another man who revealed himself to me. He didn't try to show the sociologist that an interviewee is no less intelligent than the interviewer, nor that he could politely display the series of determinisms of his own taste. Neither did he begin to recite a boring list of his favourite classics, anticipating my answers according to amateurs' ritual when first meeting. What he did was show me what he does, his gestures, his obsessions, his things, his installation. He also showed me how he experienced his moments of pleasure, the choice of his uncountable records, the ways in which he acquired them, even his critical notes (taken from magazines but never followed up when he is in a store) or the way in which he characterizes his states of mind and translating his fatigue into the terms of a possible repertoire.

He had two walls filled to the ceiling with shelves of records, CDs and cassettes. Then, laughing, he showed me how he sorted his objects; like everybody else, he had ordered them chronologically and alphabetically, which makes home record shelves look like a mini-Fnac. He is an overworked doctor and buys a lot. He had left some shelves empty on the lower right side where his latest purchases were piled up awaiting «classification». But they were also there as priority listening because they were new. And that is how he got the idea of transforming into a criteria of order this «lack of classification». So, he places the recordings he has just listened to on the lower right side of his record shelves, and so lets them pile up inside his library according to how much he likes each one over a period of time. He began with boxed sets of opera, his favourite genre, and he liked this system so much that he generalized it. His record collection gradually became a photograph in which his gestures pile up by strata. The physical space of the record library has become a trail of the amateur's personal history.

He uses it as such, knowing that he has to turn to the right to listen to new music or music he wishes to hear again, and on the left he will find rarer objects or music he has forgotten he had. He himself made me aware that had invented an absolutely idiosyncratic form of classifying music: Who, apart from him (and sometimes it was hard work…) would know where a specific record was kept? But most importantly, the amateur asserts himself over the musicologist. His taste is what determines classification, not the history of music. Between the pleasure of so keeping up a memory of what he has listened to, the satisfaction of being wrong, of evaluating his false impressions about the last time he listened to a record, the pleasure of forcing himself to step out of his own routine thanks to his ingenuity, or when he must bend down to pick up a record he has put to one side, it is easy to see an expression of happiness that says he has not wasted his time with his invention.

Listening is not only an instant, it is also a history. Its reflexivity is also its ability to build itself as the framework of its own activity. This time we no longer consider it in the present of a contact with the sounds that happen, but in the improbable duration of a slow invention, that of an art and a technique of listening for the sake of listening. The production of its own spaces and duration, of dedicated scenarios and mechanisms, the progressive evolving constitution of a repertoire, the entertainment of the body and spirit, the formation of a media of professionals, of a trade of criticism and a circle of amateurs, this is the other side of its reflexivity: music as a delegation of the power to move our emotions to a set of works converted into the objective of a privileged listening. This historic aspect of music listening is extremely awkward due to its false evidence. The very fact of listening to music is a strange position of which it is difficult to perceive the paradoxical nature once we occupy it and it becomes something natural[3]. To stand before an identified object, which must be listened to (consequently, for this object we have equipped the perception with techniques, words and all necessary prostheses) and which is able to rise to this expectation, is at the same time the most fundamental, the gesture that makes the music just as we perceive it, and the least visible part of our musical operations. At least, when we are with so-called serious or learned musicians: it is enough to move away from their tight circles and drift towards other musics, be them ethnic or popular, to get back to finding the heterogeneous multiplicity of mixed relations, «events» (in the sense of producers of shows), from which it is hard to pull away between the pleasure of the collec-

tive, bodily sensations, the formats of an organized moment and the musical elements of a performance[4].

2.3. Benoît: where must I stand to hear music?

«I was trained in music by singing in a choir. Many young people involved find it banal but I mean it a very technical sense, if you will. I don't know if it is my secret but it is there where I learned to listen to music specifically following a voice from the middle. And now I do the same, I listen to the music from the middle! What I mean to say is I had never taken singing lessons before, I was lost…so much so that I simply followed other tenors, slightly behind them, being eclipsed by the main singer, the soprano. I didn't understand anything. And then one day, I don't know, for fun or because it sounded good, I followed the voice of the contraltos, with me singing as a tenor and I was amazed. Now, I could hear everything, as if in a space of many dimensions, half inside me, half outside, like in stereo!

Later, I perfected it and learned those intermediate voices, and I searched for them on record. I experienced an intense enjoyment. Now I do it less often but I remember being absolutely enchanted by those records, that way of going over fragments of something we had sung starting off from a single voice, mine, or better still, the other, but a voice in the middle, or sometimes the voice of a low bass, but I don't hear that voice bass so well. I recall the great choral works of Händel, a motet by Bach, but also less well-known works, and the polyphonic works of the Renaissance, of course. Yes, all this made me love music. And also to bear the choir!».

Before resorting to records, Benoît used the medium at his disposal, the great choir of his provincial Catholic school, to make his attachment to music[5]. We can already read all the elements of attachment inside that secret of his: making use of others, the adaptation of his ear and the musical entertainment that it provided him, the return of the object in itself, in effect more predisposed to being domesticated and to reveal its richess to Benoît by this means than through a global listening without differentiation, eclipsed by the soprano, as he correctly puts it. And afterwards comes the self-satisfying happiness of this discovery, and the access to the normal world of classical music, that of concerts, records and the radio, which up to then were out of Benoît's reach despite the fact that he himself was a singer.

2.4. Ahmed and the high-speed train: music in movement

«I bought a good-quality CD player and case for 24 CDs, and for three years I made the Paris-Lyon, Lyon-Paris train journey twice a week. When I finally realized I would never get to work on the high-speed train after the classes, I began to listen to music systematically. In the beginning I listened to things I knew, dance music, Brazilian, Arab-Andalusian, potpourris, but later I got into music I was unfamiliar with. I asked Annie, more and more for classical music, and now for me this music is definitely linked to the high-speed train. I followed the landscape associated to the music. It is what happens, not hearing anything around me other than seeing the landscape pass while listening to the band march by. I read the rhythms of the valleys, the changes of light…I say this poetically but in truth it is simpler than that. I am an architect, and perhaps for this reason I finally found the way to read music in a space and understand it. That is it, I fabricated my own screen.

Now, I no longer go to Lyon. When I travel by train I don't always remember to take my CDs, anyway it is not the same any more, regularity is required, I believe…Concerning my musical repertoires, this has provoked something strange: now I know many types of music, especially when I listen to Anne's CDs again, but I don't know what I am listening to because cases, names didn't stay in my mind and I really had no idea about anything. Although it is obviously baroque or ancient, chamber music or opera, I cannot differentiate between them. I know them by heart but I don't know whether it is Mozart or something modern».

A still less orthodox way of catching it opened Ahmed to an entire space of music that he was completely unfamiliar with up to then and which, on the verbal plane, by a kind of ironic loyalty to his past (he is both the son of Algerian immigrants and an acknowledged professional in his field, as is clear from the interview), he will continue to deliberately keep in original anonymity, which contrasts with the accuracy of his recollections as a traveller. This is a form of familiarization with a heritage by at the same time keeping it at a distance (in short, rejecting the christening). There is something of a challenge in this, difficult to measure with accuracy especially in terms of sociology, linked to his double social identity, to which he can assume (reflexivity again…) that his interviewer is particularly attentive. Ahmed has invented a kind of magical musical lantern. The highly personal expression he chooses to reveal his experience to us, the adopted dependence on the tastes of his companion, to whom he completely delegates the task of providing him with music, and the unusual aspect of an attachment to classical music achieved via this medium, all

this merely emphasises the way the internal screen works, as he puts it, which is favoured by the listening with the CD player under various formats.

2.5. Dora: the listening divan

«I often listen to music lying down. I like it that way now that I have got some good equipment, which I never had before and which I had always looked down on having. You hear things like «music is not in HiFi», etc, which is nonsense. The sound itself offers a lot but not in terms of the intellectual relation to the music. On the contrary, HiFi provides the physical part, corporal, it is super-physical, the sound, it makes you vibrate, you enter into the resonance, you listen to the music differently by letting yourself be carried along by the sound. I disconnect from everything, I do it when my husband is not at home, for example, when I get home late and am exhausted. I have a CD thing, I go to my racks of CDs and chose one on impulse, put it on, take it off and put on another one (now I buy more than before, sometimes at random, well, not at random but I do buy a lot of different things and like a bit of everything) and when I have loaded six CDs, I lie down with the remote control and listen, I jump tracks when I want to change or find an ambience I like, for me this is total happiness…

Sometimes I am so relaxed that I fall deeply sleep, but not normally. I listen intently, much more than at a concert. This is what good sound gives you if you compare it with a normal music centre that gives you only the music, the score that just passes, it's fine from a musical point of view, the work, but… I don't know how to explain it, it is a monotonous sound, it passes you by…meanwhile on my divan, everything develops within you, you are inside. It is incredible how it envelops you. This makes me feel emotional. I feel sensitive, emotive, nervous. It is like a drug or therapy… I don't know. I also like going to concerts but it isn't the same. I go to see the musicians, the singers especially. I identify with them, I see them making music. I like that too, but it is not about listening: it is the concert, we are with them. Meanwhile my way of listening is different, it involves being completely alone with the music».

Here it is, expressed highly analytically (this from an amateur who never fails to raise the flag of anti-

intellectualism in music, especially in the presence of sociologist, to emphasise with a smile on the intimacy and sensuality of her relationship with music), a real manual about the way of using listening in HiFi, totally different to listening to music in concert. It is much more interesting that, without enquiring into their relationship, Dora also likes concerts and that there is nothing in her description of a general assertion in favour of music in tins with respect to live music: no, just the tale of a form of «demultiplying» the arrangements of the body and spirit, those most susceptible to the effects, sensory in the main, but also psychological and imaginary and, well, musical, of the works that are to hand, which is effectively a key element in the «discomorphosis» of music. Random or programmed selection, random listening or ordered with purpose, adjusting the volume, repetition if desired, going back, classifications and regrouping, insertion in the most unex-

> Taste is neither the consequence (automatic or induced) of the objects that alone cause the taste nor a pure social arrangement projected onto the objects or the simple pretext of a collective ritual game. It is a reflexive instrumented mechanism to test our sensations. It is not a mechanical process, it is always purposeful.

pected activities[6]: closely linked to the music system and to its numeric developments, there is an authentic «function-listening» which reveals itself in many ways. From the availability of a repertoire to the importance of physical posture and a good music system which goes from the body to the sound that invades it, Dora seriously believes that listening is a state that must be installed in her place and time and, after, you must let yourself go. All the factors of this investment in the relationship between the record as recording and the record as producer of music are staged and are meticulously taken advantage of.

How to feel better, that the record, by offering something to listen to, has created a new music? Up to that moment, as she says spontaneously about the concert, music was something to do (audience included), and normally to do with other people. This first opposition between music as an object and music as a relationship is made here even more intense by means of another contrast (in the wake of the musical and

numerical revolution), between the solitude she looked for in her listening sessions and the social character of the public performance.

3. Conclusion: the object of the music…

To leave behind an objectivist conception of taste, as if it were no more than the consequence of the physical properties of the objects that cause taste, does not mean substituting it for a social, ritual or interactive analysis in which belief in the object replaces the role of first cause that the object itself had before. The previous analyses aimed to show the opposite: the awkward presence of the object in taste. It is definitively the agreed place, or not, for the returns of the music, for the answer of the objects, which makes the difference. By being socially constructed, the object does not cease to exist: on the contrary, thus it is more present. We cannot keep on alternating indefinitely between natural-linear interpretations (taste arises from things in themselves) and circular-cultural interpretations (the objects are what we make of them). It is necessary to get rid of this «zero-sum game» between the object and the social in order to show how taste comes to things thanks to its amateur s. Here we stick closely to the suppositions of pragmatism.

This is what takes us out of a dual world (on the one hand, autonomous but inert things and on the other, pure social signs) to let us into a world of mediations and effects in which they are produced together, one by the other, the body that experiences the taste and the taste for the object, the collective which loves and the repertoire of loved objects[7]. The attachments mean all this, the body and the collectives, the things and the mechanisms, all these are mediators. They are determinants and the determined at the same time: they determine the impositions and renew the course of the things.

This co-production, the co-formation of an object and of those things that make it possible demand a more balanced sociology of taste in which the amateur's have as much to learn from sociology as vice-versa[8]. The very objective of our research (the amateur's and more precisely the big amateur's) was somewhat controversial in terms of the sociology of culture. Research strategies have led to an absolute rejection of taste as an individual and collective experience, a deliberate activity that requires considerable commitment and which multiplies the invention of mechanisms and social and bodily techniques.

The highly productive development of an attachment through an object that is produced and shared is interpreted, paradoxically, as its exact opposite, a free

game determined by social labels in which the qualities and classifications of the object of appreciation only appeared as secondary or illusory. Meanwhile no interest was shown in the frameworks within which this taste or passion operated, nor in the mechanisms or the times and places that the amateur's invented to develop the collective and instrumented appreciation of their common object.

In conclusion, tastes, not as independent variables that gather together in order to guarantee a result but as uncertain mediations that support each other to make states arise, to bring about responses to objects, to transform beings, to make the moments that matter coherent. We can dream: and what if sociology was to cease fighting once and for all against the imaginary power that the objects supposedly hold over us? And what if, by listening to the amateur s, sociology was to recognize this power, or in other words, the art of a more intense and reflexive relationship which, through taste, humans slowly by surely establish with the objects, with others, with their bodies and with themselves?

Notes
[1] The main interest of the DEP research into amateurs (Donnat, 1996) is to break with this model in order to focus on effective practices, like historians did, for example, with regard to collecting (Pomian, 1987) or reading (Chartier, 1987; 1992).
[2] Concerning the notion of attachment, see (Callon, 1999), (Gomart and Hennion, 1999) and (Latour, 1996; 2000).
[3] The social historian W. Weber posed the question, with regard to the concert, asking himself whether people did listen to music in the 18th century (Weber, 1997). There is an anachronism in the use of the same words (listening, music, work) to describe situations that are so historically opposed, such as court music, the modern concert and the record. As P. Szendy points out, the ear has a history (Szendy, 2001).
[4] At this point we can ask ourselves, perhaps stretching the reasoning to the limit, whether today's technology and all-powerful music systems are not media that impede listening, or at least purposeful listening, to make music pass over to the side of the social techniques of emotion and collective fusion, tearing it away from the selective attention invented by classic mechanisms.
[5] (Bessy and Chateauraynaud, 1995). Is it necessary to point out that the interviewee does not go into a description of this type any more than if he deems that it makes sense to the interiewer? He must find the appropriate means to emphasise his interest in the practice in question and a minimum knowledge of choirs.
[6] From aerobics to the memories that departed, see various examples by T. DeNora (DeNora, 2000). Regarding the creation of the music industry's culture of music, see (Maisonneuve, 2001).
[7] The sociology of taste owes a lot here to the works on sciences and techniques of CSI and the Actor-Network Theory, for example, (Callon, 1986), (Latour, 1991) and (Law and Hassard, 1999).
[8] Thus, I conclude a critical journey through the sociology of art and culture (Hennion, 2007) with an invitation to abandon its submission to what I call the theory of generalized belief. P. Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1979) has radicalized a critical formulation in the sociology of culture but via the notion of convention, it is the same model

of belief that dominates the sociology of art as H.S. Becker's (Becker, 1988), even if in a much more liberal and closer to the actors mode.

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Imaginative Appropriations of Music in the New Communicative Scenarios

Apropiaciones imaginativas de la música en los nuevos escenarios comunicativos

ABSTRACT

Sharing music is a traditional mechanism of cultural sociability, the observation of wich is useful in order to understand the negotiation procedures of sense and identity. In the new digital scene, the act of sharing and offering music shows –along with the obvious purpose of establishing relationships with others as well as making them participate in something pleasant– a desire to spread one's own personal taste and a will to communicate our one's identity. Thus, now and then, communicating by means of music and sharing it –as well as giving an opinion on it– are ways of both self-representation and expression of one's identity, offering others some sort of «musical personality»: another way of being in the world, typical of our era and related to a way of using the products of cultural industry with a personal purpose. This use, however, is not restricted to just expressing identity aspects: we use mass culture products in several ways with different purposes in our everyday life. According to some of these other uses, we will expand the field of the main subject of this article: other ways of sharing music that represent both permitted and non-permitted appropriations of music. We will accomplish this by considering some of the reasons that help getting a better understanding of the cultural task carried out by music (and other cultural products).

RESUMEN

Compartir música es un mecanismo tradicional de la sociabilidad cultural, cuya observación resulta útil para entender los mecanismos de negociación del sentido y de la identidad. En el nuevo escenario digital, el acto de compartir u ofrecer música muestra, además del evidente propósito de hacer partícipes a los otros de algo placentero y de entrar en relación, también el deseo de difundir el gusto personal y una voluntad de comunicación de la propia identidad. Así, hoy como ayer, comunicar mediante la música y compartirla –y opinar sobre la música que se comparte– son formas de auto-representación y expresión de la propia identidad, ofreciendo a los otros una especie de «personalidad musical»; que es otra manera de estar en el mundo, propia de nuestra época y relacionada con un modo de usar con fines personales los productos de las industrias culturales. Aunque ese uso no se límite a la expresión de aspectos identitarios: pues nos servimos de los productos de la cultura de masas de varias maneras y con diversos fines en nuestras vidas cotidianas. En este trabajo se analizan otras formas de compartir la música, que representan modos consentidos y no consentidos de apropiación de la música. Que se completa tomando en consideración algunas de las razones que ayudan a entender cierta labor cultural que desarrollamos mediante la música y con otros elementos culturales.

KEY WORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

Social networks, cultural practices, digital music, imaginative appropriation, identity building, communicative scenarios.
Redes sociales, prácticas culturales, música digital, apropiaciones imaginativas, construcción de identidad, escenarios comunicativos.

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1. Introduction: music in the new communicative scenarios

A user of the social networking website Facebook has just uploaded to his personal profile the video clip of a song by one of the favourite groups from his youth that he found by chance on YouTube. Perhaps, for example, the song in question is «Interferencias», the B-side of an early single by Madrid band Radio Futura released in the 1980s. The song is a live version the user has never heard before, as it was filmed by a fan of the band who has only recently posted the clip on the world's biggest video sharing website, YouTube. As we said, this user discovered this video clip by chance and, delighted at finding this unknown version of one of his favourite songs, wants to share it with his virtual friends with whom he has much in common, not least in taste in music.

As it is well known, the network of friends and personal relationships that make up a social network on the internet is complex and diverse. It is not limited to those people to whom we can ascribe the dictionary definition of friendship – «a bond of personal affection, pure and unselfish, something shared with another person that is born and nurtured through care and attention». It goes beyond that, as it deals with a type of personal relationship that is different in some aspects, in which the nodes (individuals) and edges (relationships) that constitute this online social structure network are not only sustained by a «circle of friends» according to the definition previously given, but which are fleshed out by other types of relationships. These relationships are intimate and affectionate to a greater or lesser degree, with variable forms and levels of treatment based occasionally on the professional environment and, at other times, on an affinity for shared common interests. Not all the friendships classified as such are really the product of a previous personal relationship or dealing with someone face to face, but they can start and even strengthen through the use of the software of social network websites on the Internet.

Shortly after uploading the song, the user begins to receive various replies on his wall commenting on it. So, in the space of a few minutes an improvised collective communicative act has occurred in which music plays a key role but which is based essentially on sharing; the sharing of music and opinions on music. This little story based on recent experience will surely sound familiar. It is common practice among thousands of users of social network websites on the Internet, especially Facebook and MySpace (although each network has its own characteristics); in this case, sharing music with friends and chatting (evaluating, commenting, arguing) about the music shared. According to Brown and Sellen: «Despite the attention given to Internet sharing, physical music sharing is an activity that has been commonplace for many years – sharing of music between individuals through copied tapes and CDs» (Brown & Sellen, 2006: 37).

For years, music has played an important though varied role in the establishment and development of particular social relationships, and that role has grown substantially in recent decades. This is due to social networks and other elements of the emerging media system that surrounds us today and which is merely a technological and symbolic extension of ourselves – the instruments of our relationship mediated with the environment. Among these Facebook, which although not initially conceived as a computer application for developing this cultural sociability constituted and presented around some cultural phenomenon, nor specifically conceived for sharing and exchanging music, is a demonstration of how music is playing an increasingly important role in this social network. But Facebook is not the only means we have for sharing music or having easy access to it. There are many other applications that allow this. In particular, those that enable the swapping of digital files, such as iTunes[1], via podcasts or other means, or more recent applications (last.fm, Spotify, among the best known) that allow access to music via streaming, so the searcher can access via artist, album or playlists created by the users themselves. Of course, the proliferation of all these forms of releasing and circulating music on the internet, putting it within our reach, is no chance occurrence. This abundance is due to the fact that: «Music is a rich part of our environment – providing cues for structuring activity and creating appropriate atmospheres and ambience. Music also plays a role in our social lives – talking about, displaying, swapping and sharing music are all ways through which we express who we are and interact with others» (O'Hara & Brown, 2006: 3).

As the editors state in the introduction to the book Consuming Music Together, the way we consume music is not just about simply listening but is part of the way we construct our daily lives and how we integrate in our society. Today, technology and the new associated ways of consuming and listening are by no means remote from this notion: «this relationship between technology and the ways people consume music in their everyday lives can be illustrated by looking at some key technical shifts over the years and how they created new and interesting social phenomena around

netarise, these various forms of access – Digital Music Report 2009) and in the ways we take these cultural products that are now part of the complex cultural work (De Aguilera, 2004: 154) which we must deal with now more than ever. We dedicate a paragraph that comments on that work and some of the conditions in which it is done, even though we are forced to do so in somewhat abstract terms.

If in the entire historical context human beings have had to use the series of elements that respective cultures possess, in present day society we are obliged to keep up a more intense activity in order to discover cultural elements, select them and appropriate them imaginatively and use them in our habitual scenes, living experiences with them that satisfy a range of ex-

from which, and for which, they were conceived, as well as their subsequent attachment to the circumstances of the contexts in which they are used [meaning in movement (Lull, 2000), are abundant and of varied origin, as well as being virtual, since accessing any of them is as easy as any simple technical operation (a simple click]. All of which contributes to the profound modification, or breaking, of the cultural base of human experience, its time space order. So this leads to a crisis of meaning as a consequence of the loss of interpretative certainties with respect to ourselves, what surrounds us and what occurs. And the uncertainty goes hand in hand with a feeling of risk.

In sum, that crisis of meaning reflects the gradual collapse of the ideal foundations of the industrial society set up by Modernity (Bueno, 1996) to which the abundance of cultural stimuli of varied origin has contributed. But, in order to overcome that crisis and gain some certainties, we have been compelled to undertake a cultural work to which we referred before. Several authors took up this theme some time ago, and they draw attention to certain facets; reflexivity, which we use to understand life and construct our I-project, giving it cognitive coherence (Giddens, 1995). But other authors looked less to the sphere of conscious reflection and more to emotional and other elements within the human personality and its own culture. From here, questions emerge such as the work of the imagination, by means of which large swathes of the population employ the imaginary present of the Net, its myths and archetypes to elaborate their imagined I and their dream worlds (Appadurai, 1996: 3), to live euphemistic actions with them – or symbolic creativity – to creatively transform the elements of everyday life in order to make them ideally more comfortable and to express ourselves through it (Willis, 1990: 1-6). And music plays a significant role both in that work of the imagination and in the symbolic creativity.

> The fact of sharing music on the social networks of the Internet, and with this idea we close, is one of the collateral effects of this sensation of the free, fluid superabundance of music in the digital age. Since all music is accessible immediately, what is new in the behaviour of those who consume it is the use they make of it for configuring their own identity. This does not take an individual form that excludes, but rather is negotiated with the rest of the virtual community via the social network.

periences. On this, most experts on the subject agree that, as a consequence of the crisis of subjective and inter-subjective meaning (Berger and Luckmann, 1997) that affects us today there is need to fight this crisis using cultural stimuli. In fact, diverse factors of varied weight and condition have contributed to this crisis, including the loss of functionality of the main institutions established by industrial society to furnish new individual and collective biographies with meaning (Castells, 1988), as well as the abundance, indeed opulence, of cultural stimuli that we have at our fingertips today thanks to the huge interconnected system of media.

These stimuli, although they originated elsewhere, derive from the various cultures that we humans have created in response to various beliefs in addition to the types of time and space context for which each cultural element was conceived. Thus, those cultural stimuli whose use means their break with the circumstances

So, as it is well known, for a long time many authors have attributed a primary role to culture and communication in this changing society. The field of communication has in turn experienced considerable shifts of movement that affect its various spheres and which have coalesced around the display of a renewed range

of cultural practices. These changes then feed on themselves and strengthen each other and bestow even greater importance on communicative activity in our social and cultural life. A decade ago we could not have foreseen the major advances that were going to occur one after the other in technology. Decisive steps have been taken along the path of digitalization and its development in numerous interconnected applications, such as in the development of the 2.0 version of Internet and the emergence of mobility in communications, with its permanent and ubiquitous connection. Among the conditions associated with technology and that have contributed to its development has been the widespread capacity to access communication machines, the use of these machines and the symbols associated with them.

Thus, the traditional interpretative powers – understanding messages, criticising them, creatively appropriating them, negotiating their meaning – that users of communication long ago acquired, are now augmented by more creative and useful powers – to modify them, create them, share them, display them. And all this within a framework that includes an extended participative culture and the display of new forms and modes of sociability.

So, users of communication have historically had a certain way of participating in communication, at least being able to enjoy a certain interpretative power that facilitated the understanding of messages and their imaginative appropriation. But with their greater expertise in communicating, the development of certain technological orientations and with the concurrence of a series of reasons, users today have extended their control over the communications in which they participate by making them more serviceable – for their lifestyles, their needs, their pleasures – and by putting them to more innovative use in this appropriation which constitutes one more component in our cultural work.

All of which has led us to display a brand new range of cultural practices – some newer, others more traditional – characterized by access to the content each user wants (among the thousands available in the system of interconnected media), when the user wants (access to most content is asynchronous) where the user wants (connection can be made anywhere) and through the medium deemed most appropriate (since the user can access content in different media, where usually the screen is the main interface – TV, computer, mobile phone and even a console). And among those cultural practices, music occupies a place of considerable importance.

3. The imaginative uses of music in the various communicative scenarios

Profound changes in music have occurred over the past years that have revolutionised music itself and the way it is created, produced, distributed and consumed. This, as pointed out earlier, is due to certain technological changes coinciding with other changes such as the extension of musical knowhow to broad sectors of the population, and an ability to produce musical content[2]. As Roca puts it so well: «Musical creativity has been completely transformed by computers, putting tools in the hands of musicians and users with no musical technique which would have been inconceivable decades ago» (Roca, 2004: 31). Add to which the greater ease of access to technology and the existence of traditions of appropriation of content and technology (of varied nature and different weight – versions of songs, remixes and others). Despite the convergence of varied transformations at the heart of appropriation practices – which will be outlined in this paper's section – one can perceive a first point of inflection in the mode of access itself, with the user's growing interest in consumption via guaranteed paths of access, that is, here and now quality access to the content the user wishes to acquire. Leonhard (2008) explains this transition in his liquid model, in which access acquires a value that replaces the property of the content and guarantees the consumption itself. Not surprisingly, some applications that are supported in this idea, like Spotify and last.fm, have gained in stature and now openly compete with iTunes (Hattersley, 2009) by offering an unlimited source of musical content for a monthly subscription. This mode of access to content enables consumption via streaming – even from portable and mobile devices – which also enhances consumer experience by avoiding problems of storage and management of content or loss of data. This easy access to musical content on demand at any place and time helps transform a basic idea linked for so long to music and other cultural works; from content held as property, a closed system (protected), to the practice of sharing. Sharing is an open system, and thus open to easy appropriation, and this leads us to a second important transformation; the emergence of the communicative scenario of the virtual community within the framework of sharing.

Despite various attempts in the past, the practice of sharing digital content on platforms would not come into its own[3] until the arrival on the communicative scenario of the social networks, marking the point at which the community of users came to reinforce sharing and the flow of opinion on shared content, and

this greatly strengthened the link between participants and promoted virality. Returning to the example of Spotify and last.fm, which are undoubtedly based on some of the basic properties of the social networks, we observe that these applications are boosted by the sociability of the virtual collective and the need to share content, opinions, play lists, personalized radios and even subscriptions to the application, thus disseminating listening habits and profiles that define the identity of the social network. It is the practice of sharing that mainly channels the displaying of content, and it is the virtual community that profits from that discovery, but always from a communicative scene in which ideas of participation and idea-sharing predominate.

Now, if the guarantee of access has created the glue for establishing virtual communities based on the practice of swapping content and opinions, the third key element arises when the practice of sharing occurs within a framework whose aim is creative appropriation (De Aguilera, 2008). It is this transformation, along with other factors that are not just social, that has stimulated the proliferation of content generated by the user. This phenomenon, successfully exploited through music industry initiatives – even though YouTube got there first - and which would later find a space for development and close overcome in the social networks, now belongs to the essential uses and practices of those users having greater technological involvement. Creative appropriation not only means the modification or alteration of content, but extends to the use of content in a different communicative context – the symbolic creativity of the user. This type of creative insertion, particularly in remixes, is evident in cases like the launch of Nine Inch Nails' Year Zero in 2007 which represented the new way of sharing tracks that fans and network users could later remix themselves[4]. Since then, the concept has developed into a base for virtual track sharing networks such as SoundCloud and IndabaMusic, in which the community creates and manages music online. In the practice of creative musical appropriation, YouTube is a reference that arouses great interest. This video swapping space has a vast community of musicians who record and upload videos of their performances and generate a considerable amount of opinion – a feature much used and with great skill in the new music marketing practices. It has become the norm for videos of musical performances shared on this social network to either reinforce musical knowhow via the Internet or to create a focus for discussion around a particular performance or to divulge pedagogical competence, and thus the imaginative use to which the user puts the

uploaded content transcends the concept of appropriation. We can view a mixture of musical interpretations that range from live concert recordings in large venues to a simple performance in front of a home computer webcam, an amateur group rehearsal in a garage to tutorials on how to play the latest hit song. What is clear is that YouTube is seen as a solid platform for musical apprenticeship where the musician can save on the arduous task of deciphering code, a musical score for example, and pass directly to an audiovisual creative practice that is easily accessible to the untrained musician. One of the most important phenomena that has grown out of this practice is the re-emergence of the figure of guitar hero of the 80s. The Activision video game has undoubtedly contributed to this, but the increase in video uploads of guitarist performances of varied musical styles has led to music industry artists giving away additional content when they release a record – track mixes without guitar solos or vocals – so the user can generate their own content.

The dizzying evolution of the new uses of music on YouTube has directed these individualised performances to the terrain of group interaction, with projects like The LivingRoomRockGods[5], which uses the practice of musical appropriation as a justification, and stimulates the creation of online musical projects that find sufficient means on the Internet to consolidate musical groupings. This is evident in the growing number of different sources that converge on the Internet, and they not only create compositions and MySpace profiles but they also audition online and create symphonic orchestras – as in the case of the YouTube Orchestra, in which more than 90 musicians from 30 different countries took part.

However, an important distinction must be made regarding the practice of appropriation. Basically, the elements mentioned in this section refer to the dynamic of appropriation of content with consent. However, invasive appropriation sees the modification of content that is protected by copyright. Mention should be made of video clips with altered vocals and music which jeopardise the image of the artist, the use of a protected audio track in audiovisual creations or the humorous subtitling of songs to alter their meaning[6]. This small example of imaginative usage offers a brief glimpse of the expansion of innovative practices in music, but it also allows us to discern certain gratification associated to these practices which, in some cases, play an important role in the construction of identities. Sharing, for example, can be associated to gratification related to courtesy and social acceptance. But the type of cultural practice displayed, in its con-

nection with various collectives and lifestyles or situations, can also dictate which patterns of identity are constructed. A consented appropriation occurs normally through collaborative ideals that are based on mutual confidence and agreement, which characterises the collective that participates in this activity; in turn, an invasive appropriation is related to more illicit practices.

4. Back to identity: between technology and shared consumption

The gratification gained through different forms of interaction between the individual and digital musical content in the social networks can be a positive source for the active construction of identity as well for personal self-realization, emphasising the relationship between musical consumption and identity. Hesmondhalgh (2008) posed the importance of music in daily life based on two contrary but coexistent dimensions of musical experience: the constant and complex negotiation between the individual's expression of privacy; and the expression of the collective identity. That is why music is considered a sum of cultural practices that have always been closely linked both to the subjective and to the objective, at the same time providing a base for public collective experiences (Hesmondhalgh, 2008). Thus music represents a meeting point between the public and the private, offering a base for the identity in a perpetually negotiated relationship between the individual and the collective. As Simon Frith writes « (it…) seems to make possible a new kind of self-recognition, to free us from the everyday routines, from the social expectations with which we are encumbered… Music constructs our sense of identity through the experiences it offers of the body, time, and sociability» (Frith, 1996: 275).

As in other scenes in daily life, music on the Internet participates in the construction of our identity but in diverse forms. Thus, in the most popular social networks (Facebook) and in those websites that allow the user to listen to and share music selectively (last.fm), this construction of identity is based on the act of sharing (music, information), converting each user into one more agent of identity creation, balancing between the public and private, the personal and collective

(although in some cases this collectivity is limited to those users accepted as friends and is not completely open). What is certainly true is that this type of application enables listening habits to be followed – only if the user wishes to share this with other users – to see what music others recommend and intervene in potential debates that arise. In the case of last.fm, the user can display what he is listening to on the profile page and allow others access to this information in such a way that they can get an idea of that user's musical tastes past and present. The Net inevitably proposes a new model of music distribution and circulation (music as product but also as information) which overrides the traditional control of the music industry. Experiences such as last.fm or Facebook aim definitively to provide an outlet for this situation of radical abundance, as Beuscart (2007: 170) accurately called it. Thanks to the dynamism of the social networks on the Internet, these experiences create a new value for music sharing, opening up new contexts in the rela-

> All of which has led us to display a brand new range of cultural practices characterized by access to the content each user wants, when the user wants (access to most content is asynchronous), where the user wants (connectivity that allows the access anywhere) and through the medium deemed most appropriate. And among those cultural practices, music occupies a place of considerable importance.

tionship between music and communication. We should not forget, however, that the use of music for cultural sociability purposes is frequent in the daily life of many people, constituting symbolic cultural material that plays an important role in the way individuals organize themselves socially (DeNora, 1986; 2000) and how they perceive of themselves as subjects.

The current ease of access to music means that we must rethink its role in daily life. In one of Gerd Leonhard's most famous articles, republished in the Music 2.0 volume (2008), which aims to be a sort of road map to guide us through the future of music, he posits that music must be regarded as water (music like water) or electricity since it is a fluid, ubiquitous element, that is, a basic consumer product that should be within reach of all through a monthly charge (he opts

for a flat rate). This easy access to music – knowing we have any kind of music we want or can imagine within our reach, ipso facto, with a single click – naturally affects the music business but also the consideration of music as a cultural object of desire and the way in which it is consumed. So it is that «the freedom in the free digital downloads suddenly allowed music lovers to do all kinds of things with this music that they had longed to do but were unable to do before things were free. The free in digital music meant the audience could unbundle it from albums, sample it, create their own playlists, embed it, share it with love, bend it, graph it in colors, twist it, mash it, carry it, squeeze it and enliven it with new ideas. The free-ization made it liquid and free to interact with other media. In the context of this freedom, the questionable legality of its free-ness was secondary. It didn't really matter because music had been liberated by the free, almost made into a new media» (Kelly, 2007).

The fact of sharing music on the social networks of the Internet is, and with this idea we close, one of the collateral effects of this sensation of the free, fluid superabundance of music in the digital age. Since all music is accessible immediately, what is new in the behaviour of those who consume it is the use they make of it for configuring their own identity. This does not take an individual form that excludes, but rather is negotiated with the rest of the virtual community via the social network. Although these are consumer musical practices (appropriation practices, too) that are still emerging and scarcely defined, they deserve more detailed investigation. These new communicative scenes, these forms of appropriation by the user, are a challenge to our knowledge of culture; they require a pragmatic exploration of the desire to share music, sharing even while knowing that it is easily accessible music. Also needed is an explanation of the motives that make sharing music so interiorized (and so pleasurable) (Adell, 2008) within the social practices of music lovers.

Notes:

[1] «Apple Computer's iTunes digital music jukebox software has been one of the few music sharing technologies that has successfully walked this apparent fine line between taking advantage of certain technical innovations and conforming to the constraints of political, legal, and ethical considerations. A study of iTunes music sharing practices enables the research community to better understand the moving target of music sharing technologies and practices and the implications of the positioning of music sharing technologies between technical innovation and political, legal, and ethical considerations» (Voida, Grinter & Ducheneaut, 2006: 61).

[2] One of the many examples that illustrate this assertion could be that the Guitar Hero franchise «has sold more than 32 million copies among all the games of the franchise. www.sextonivel.com/cifras-de-ventas/la-franquicia-guitar-hero-logra-vender-32-millones-de-copias

[3] In 2004, the 4.5 version of iTunes incorporated iMix lists configured by users, and placed in the iTunes Store for downloading by other users. The strategy was not as successful as Apple had hoped because the virtual distribution platform lacked – and in many ways still does – a scene for the virtual exchanging of experiences and dialogue, as well as the virality characteristic of communication in these times.

[4] The album had songs in multi-track format that allowed the most restless user to make his/her own versions of the tracks. Currently a community has been created that can access the Web for open source remixes and send in their own musical proposals. In 2008 British group Radiohead lend their support to the project.

[5] This section of virtual rock bands corresponds to an original and innovative dynamic in which, after a negotiation stage, various musicians decided to interpret a song; so a guitarist, bassist, drummer and vocalist record their performance from home and each clip – sent in online – is edited onto a group video that is later posted on: (www.lrrg.net; www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTk8WePJRvc).

[6] An example that illustrates this is the case of videos that have been viralized on YouTube with shreds, where the user modifies the audiovisual content, specifically the performance of some famous guitarist, and substitutes the audio track for one of his/her own, synchronizing the sound and body movement of the artist in the video to simulate a bad recording (www.youtube.com/watch?v=89zM9pZzt0U&feature=related). The growth of shreds has reached such proportions that it is now applied to entire band concerts and even to composers like John Willliams. Another example of appropriation of restricted content is that related to Microsoft's Songsmith application. Songsmith can recognize the notes of a voice melody recorded through a microphone onto a computer and construct a harmonic accompaniment to that melody. Taking advantage of the characteristics of this application, users started to erase the vocal tracks of hit songs and create new versions through Microsoft's software, which were later posted on YouTube and the Web (www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHduATM-o7M).

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Understanding the Emergence of Social Protocols on MySpace: Impact and its Ramifications

Comprendiendo la aparición de los protocolos sociales en MySpace: impacto y ramificaciones

ABSTRACT

Over the recent years, MySpace has been vital to fostering the growth of independent musicians' followings and have played critical roles in helping mainstream artists maintain fan communities. The popularity of MySpace has been accompanied by the establishment of social protocols which allow musicians to network with one another in an efficient and successful way. These protocols have inspired the publication of various books (such as «MySpace Music Profit Monster!: Proven Online Marketing Strategies!» by Nicky Kalliongis devoted to providing tips and strategies for musicians. While some of these protocols pertain to being savvy with the technological aspect of MySpace, other protocols are directly related to learning a particular manner to network on MySpace. Furthermore, these practices are considered a serious work as they require a lot of time and networking skills to achieve a certain level of success, i.e. increasing the number of friends on one's network. Thus, this article examines the emerging social protocols on MySpace as a form of affective and immaterial labor. The author argues that the implementation of various tips as provided by MySpace expert will possibly have a regressive effect on musicians' social networking practices as these could become a standardized and repetitive practice. As a whole, this article traces the evolution of MySpace, especially in regards to the decreasing popularity of the site as a current trend.

RESUMEN

En los últimos años, MySpace ha sido crucial para promover el aumento de los seguidores de músicos independientes y ha representado un papel muy importante a la hora de ayudar a artistas populares a mantener las comunidades de fans. La popularidad de MySpace ha ido acompañada del establecimiento de protocolos sociales que han permitido a los músicos establecer vínculos entre ellos de una manera eficaz y exitosa. Estos protocolos han servido de inspiración para publicar varios libros (como «MySpace Music Profit Monster!: Proven Online Marketing Strategies!» de Nicky Kalliongis) con consejos y estrategias para los músicos. Si bien, algunos de estos protocolos pretenden conocer el aspecto tecnológico de MySpace, otros protocolos están directamente relacionados con el aprendizaje de una manera particular de conexión en red a través de MySpace. Además, estas prácticas son consideradas un trabajo serio, ya que requieren mucho tiempo y habilidades de conexión en red para lograr un cierto nivel de éxito, es decir, aumentar el número de amigos en la red personal. Así que, en este artículo, se analizan los protocolos sociales emergentes en MySpace como una forma de trabajo afectivo e inmaterial. La autora sostiene que la implementación de algunos consejos, como los proporcionados por expertos en MySpace, posiblemente pueda tener un efecto regresivo en las prácticas de los músicos en redes sociales, ya que podrían estandarizarizarse y volverse repetitivas. En conjunto, este artículo describe la evolución de MySpace, sobre todo en lo que respecta a la decreciente popularidad del sitio como una tendencia actual.

KEY WORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

Labor, social protocols, popularity, social networking, musician.
Trabajo, protocolos sociales, popularidad, redes sociales, músico.

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1. Introduction

MySpace has become an integral part of musicians' social networking practices; MySpace is used as a way to easily promote, market, and distribute music. Because of the growing importance of the site, the number of self-help books related to MySpace has also increased. Purportedly these publications help musicians to expand their exposure and popularity. These books argue –either implicitly or explicitly- that gaining more exposure and winning new fans can be achieved by simply following a certain manual. In analyzing the art of social networking in this article, the discrete website protocols will be individually presented, as online social networking requires new methods for the act of befriending people.

Henry Jenkins (2006) highlights the importance of protocol by drawing on the work of Lisa Gitelman (2006). Jenkins states that «a medium is a set of associated 'protocols' or social and cultural practices that have grown up around that technology. Delivery systems are simply and only technologies; media are also cultural systems… Protocols express a huge variety of social, economic, and material relationships» (Jenkins, 2006: 13-14).

Protocols are of particular importance in reference to participatory culture: «As long as the focus remains on access, reform remains focused on technologies; as soon as we begin talking about participation, the emphasis shifts to cultural protocols and practices» (Jenkins, 2006: 23). The notion of protocols is critical because every social networking site has created a unique set of procedures that one must learn in order to maximize the benefits offered by each site. Thus, this article will analyze self-help books written by experts on MySpace with the goal of examining the rhetoric that is used in discussions of particular social protocols and the cultures on MySpace.

Learning to implement internet-based «social protocols» has been previously conceived as a form of immaterial, affective, and free labor (Suhr, 2009). Thus, the analysis of tips and recommendations will also shed light on the nature of the work involved in generating popularity on MySpace. As a whole, I argue that MySpace's popularity has given rise to contrived efforts to network and communicate with others. Eventually this will have a regressive effect on the future of MySpace as well as the careers of its users.

2. MySpace Musicians

MySpace's popularity is an extremely desirable goal for both unsigned musicians and musicians signed to major record labels. Colbie Caillat is a prime example of an unknown artist becoming extremely popular. Whitney Self (2009) notes that after Caillat posted a few songs on MySpace, within eight months, she was the number one unsigned artist on MySpace; this eventually led to her contract with Universal Republic Records and her debut album, Coco, in 2007 (this charted at Number Five in Billboard).

Many mainstream musicians also utilize MySpace and Youtube as an important source of marketing. For example, singer-songwriter James Blunt, who is signed to Warner Brothers Records, released his album on MySpace (Contactmusic, 2007). Anyone can download his album for $9.99, and in addition to downloading, the purchaser also receives a CD album in the mail. However, it is important to note the cases in which artists who are signed to major record labels are transformed into indie artists by signing with the MySpace Record label. Concepcison (2008) reports in Billboard that Christina Millian, whose recording contract with Def Jam Record terminated in 2006, will sign a new deal with MySpace Records. In addition to signing with MySpace Records, artists who are already signed to major record labels, such as Lily Allen, utilize MySpace as another source of marketing new albums by performing in MySpace's «Secret Show Series» (Ayers, 2009). Allen is also reported to have performed in Tokyo for another of MySpace's «Secret Show Series».

As revealed in the above examples, MySpace does not just cater to independent artists, since it clearly embraces and aids mainstream artists who are signed to major record labels.

3. Labor on Social Networking Sites

According to John Banks and Sal Humphreys, «understanding media consumption as a labour practice is not entirely new» (Banks & Humphreys, 2008: 403). Banks and Humphrey explore the emergence of labor practices by drawing from the work of scholars such as Andrew Ross. Referring to Ross's argument, they argue that «the implications of social, peer production for the livelihoods and working conditions of creative workers have been ignored» (Banks & Humphreys, 2008: 405). This particular concept of labor intersects with the type of labor that the commercial industry pursues to gain financial rewards.

Banks and Humphrey also note weaknesses in Ross's arguments: «Ross does not come to terms with the emerging shape of social network markets in which the flows and extraction of value are very different from a simple displacement of traditional labour by unpaid creative labour» (Banks & Humphreys, 2008:

405). This point is crucial to this study's task of analyzing the relationship between value and labor.

On social networking sites, even though financial gain may result from laboring practices, the type of labor pursued differs from traditional labor forms in that laboring is often done on an immaterial and affective basis[1]. Banks and Humphrey further point out that labor becomes more complex when it is transformed into free labor: «this free labour has not been appropriated but voluntarily given. The relationships are much more nuanced and complex than the language of incorporation, appropriation or exploitation suggests» (Banks & Humphreys, 2008: 407). This article will strive to examine the social protocols that take place on MySpace as a form of labor. Analysis of experts' recommendations will clearly reveal the differences between this form of labor and traditional interpretations of work.

4. Laboring Tips from the Experts

Various books have been published to aid musicians in gaining more fans on MySpace (Vincent, 2007; Jag, 2007; Weber, 2007). This is an action which is viewed as a ticket to greater success and to the launching of professional careers in music. Thus in this section, I will be examining a recently published book specifically written for online music promotion called MySpace music profit monster: Proven online marketing strategies for getting more fans fast! by Nicky Kalliongis (2008). According to the back cover of the book, the author is «a veteran music industry professional that's worked with the likes of the legendary Clive Davis and L. A. Reid and with artists as diverse as Aretha Franklin, Arvil Lavigne, Outcast, Pink and Prince». After establishing the author's credentials as an «expert», the book explains how the author can help you to 1) make the most of your MySpace page; 2) utilize MySpace, Youtube, Facebook and Squidoo in concert for maximum online presence; 3) get people to visit your site and listen to your music; 4) increase traffic to your site; 4) write and circulate an effective press release; and 5) attract media, radio stations, record labels and fans and much more. The book also received a four and a half-star rating on Amazon.com from 21 customer reviews (although this rating should not simply be taken at its face value, in

general, this publication has been positively received).

While the book promises to provide various tips on the topics stated above, what constitutes the author's actual advice? The whole point of examining the recommendations of the author is not to necessarily imply that the professional's advice is legitimate and true; however, in closely reading the tips and suggestions by the author, it becomes clear that becoming famous on MySpace requires serious work. Most importantly, labor on this website pertains to the immaterial and affective dimension. Examples of affective labor are evident when the author emphasizes tapping into the «caring» dimension. Kalliongis (2008) makes it clear that there are two issues that relate directly to increasing the number of friends and fans: «Use the invite system to create personalized invitations. Most people appreciate an email that means something ins-

> The whole point of examining the recommendations of the author is not to necessarily imply that the professional's advice is legitimate and true; however, in closely reading the tips and suggestions by the author, it becomes clear that becoming famous on MySpace requires serious work. Most importantly, labor on this website pertains to the immaterial and affective dimension.

tead of a generic email that everyone receives. While this will take more time, it is worth doing in order to cultivate an invested friends list. You're not simply trying to amass the most friends, you're building your audience one fan at a time». (Kalliongis, 2008: 48)

As can be seen from this statement, there is an element of «affective labor» in the effort made by a musician to befriend the audience members and to then turn them into fans. Although fans actually support the artist, not all friends become active fans.

Kalliongis also emphasizes that the goal is to find a way to quickly capture the user's attention in very short time span: «your MySpace profile is your window to the world. It might only receive a fleeting glance from the passers-by, so grabbing their attention is important» (Kalliongis, 2008: 48). Kalliongis's tip is to first focus on the headline: «Headline: Your headline is important. It's one of the first things the user will notice, as it's positioned directly next to your picture. Your

headline can serve several purposes. Promotion of a new album or tour (e.g. our new single – out March 30th!). Use the headline to promote your upcoming work. If you're planning on releasing a single for download, mark it up in your Headline with a release date. This will instantly let the reader know what you're up to» (Kalliongis, 2008: 49).

Next the author focuses on the significance of slogans: «A catchy slogan that fits in with the genre that you're appealing to. If you can think of a catchy slogan, it's useful marketing mechanism. Having a catchphrase or gimmick can help establish your brand. The punk bands of the '70s and '80s made a lot of money using slogans and t-shirt-friendly phrases. It was part of their appeal, and people like to buy into something that seems cool. 1) A simple description of the band and its

As a discrete group of users, musicians have long argued that popularity generated on MySpace can help launch or enhance their professional careers. Thus, there has been an increase in the various services that assist musicians in quickly attaining popularity. Despite attempts to cater to musicians and to stay relevant in the current cultural climate, there are numerous indications that MySpace may be turning into a less popular and trendy social networking site.

sound; 2) Bio: This field allows you to write a short history of your band or act. MySpace users have a short attention span. If you blitz them with an essay, they'll avoid it completely. Limit your bio to a couple of paragraphs of short and snappy text. Leave a link to an extended version if you must, but don't let it clog up your page» (Kalliongis, 2008: 49-50).

Kalliongis provides a few additional helpful tips about improving one's MySpace page to attract more attention:

• Using a picture that is taller rather than wider will make your profile stand out more when you are added to a friends list.

• Changing your URL on your profile page is helpful for a few reasons. Choosing a name that is easy to remember will help fans and others find your page. Adding a keyword or two will help search engines find your profile, which will result in higher rankings.

• Adding a logo is a good way to create name recognition on MySpace.

• Link your MySpace page to your web site and vice versa. This will help increase your web exposure. Include keywords into your link which will also be picked up by search engines.

• Add high PR rating Google profile pages to your friends list in order to improve your own web ranking. Google's PR rating represents how important the page is on the web. It assumes that if one page links to another, it is giving an endorsement and a vote from the other site. This can be done by searching for the highest ranking profiles using the advanced search feature on Google. Enter the search term «MySpace profiles» and for the domain, enter «MySpace.com» so it will narrow your search to only those profiles on MySpace with the highest ranking. Simply do a friend request and when approved send them a comment. This is a very advantageous strategy! (Kalliongis, 2008: 56-57).

As some of these tips suggest, trying to attract users' attention on MySpace is a tedious task. What is particularly noteworthy about these recommendations is that all of these tactics are geared towards the building of one's persona as an active, important, and desired artist through concentration on interpersonal and interactive elements.

On a related note, the labor of adding «friends» is also highly emphasized by Kalliongis. He teaches how to accrue friends manually: «If you want to add more names to your friends list, placing an «Add me» button in a comment on a popular profile with a large friends list is a powerful way to get a large amount of new friends. You can use any picture you want to draw attention, and when a new friend clicks on it they will be asked to accept you as a friend. Podcasting from your blog or MySpace page is a good way to increase your fan base. A podcast is exactly the same as a blog, but with audio as well. To create a podcast, you need to upload your songs or other audio content to your web site or you can host your podcast to your MySpace blog or page by pasting your podcast (Kalliongis, 2008: 57).

It is important to note that the laboring tips recommended in this quotation are very time-consuming and require a mastery of certain techniques. A successful user of this advice must be able to converge various media outlets and be savvy with all kinds of customi-

zing tools. Although learning and adapting to technology is important in one's labor, Kalliongis highlights the more interpersonal aspect of labor, which is the art of social networking.

In addition to dedicating time to making one's profile appear more attractive, Kalliongis focuses on the social protocols of MySpace. The interactive dimension is very important, as MySpace's central function is social networking. Work must be put into being socially pro-active on the website. Kalliongis mentions the exact same point: «Now that you have a complete MySpace profile, it's time to look at how to interact on the MySpace network. This is very important because the amount of time you spend marketing your music will determine how popular you become on MySpace. MySpace marketing is all about getting your name out there and making «friends». While you shouldn't expect this to extend to real life, a «MySpace friend» is a friend to appreciate. Every user you can get on your friend list will show others that your page is worth exploring (Kalliongis, 2008: 69).

This aspect is extremely important and resonates with other social networking sites as well. The social networking tips given by Kalliongis should be examined further in order to understand the types of key components he is addressing, since some of them seem contradictory. For example, he states that while it is important to befriend others in a real, manual manner, «you shouldn't be concerned with the personalities of the people on your friend's list. A friend is a friend and in the world of MySpace, the more you have the better you'll be received» (Kalliongis, 2008: 69). The implication of this advice extends further than its obvious emphasis on the equation between the number of friends and perceived popularity and value. In essence, Kalliongis seems to be saying that the specific people who consume one's music are not all that important, a perspective that completely ignores and dismisses the quality of audience members.

Hardt and Negri's understanding of immaterial and affective labor highlights the promising aspects of cooperation and social interaction: «the only configurations of capital able to thrive in the new world will be those that adapt to and govern the new immaterial, cooperative, communicative, and affective composition of labor power» (Hardt & Negri, 2000: 27). In general, their outlook on immaterial and affective labor has been viewed as «benign» (Thompson, 2005: 85). However, these laboring processes may not only result in positive outcomes.

Some scholars, such as Gill and Pratt, are dissatisfied with the notion of affective labor, since all work

possesses affective dimensions and challenges: «if all work has affective dimensions then what does it mean to say that any particular job involves affective labour» (Gill & Pratt, 2008: 15). For these scholars, the puzzling aspect about affective labor is rooted in the conceptualization of the affect itself: «affect appears largely in its more pleasant guises –solidarity, sociality, cooperativeness, desire– and, importantly, as (largely) always-already transgressive» (Gill & Pratt, 2008: 15). Gill and Pratt argue that the implications of the emphasis on affirmative feelings are troublesome, especially taking into account contemporary capitalism that does not acknowledge the existence of other types of emotions such as «fatigue, exhaustions and frustration… fear, competitiveness, the experience of socializing not simply as pleasurable potential, but as compulsory means of securing future work» (Gill & Pratt, 2008: 15).

As the earlier examples of MySpace indicate, the affective dimension is, to some extent, deceptive; Kalliongis seems to recognize this, since he clearly disregards the quality and emphasizes the quantity of friends. Even if one proactively projects a positive image and sends out invitations, at the end of the day, the labor is only productive insofar as it fulfills one's goal of gaining popularity. Moreover, Kalliongis does not address how this type of affective labor of befriending others may result in rejection and failure. Although one may extend invitations to numerous users, there may be many accounts of people disregarding the messages. Perhaps in an effort to prevent this type of outcome, MySpace's communicative mechanism includes various devices that encourage users to not ignore such messages. However, despite developing a way to encourage MySpace community members to acknowledge one another's messages and thus improve the networking process, there are also ways in which one can reject all messages and friend requests from specific users by putting one's profile setting into a default mode.

While there are positive and affirmative aspects to affective labor on MySpace, it is also important to recognize that negative emotions can happen in the midst of one's labor. Thus, as Gill and Pratt assert, «these (unpleasant) affective experiences - as well as the pleasures of the work – need to be theorized to furnish a full understanding of the experience of cultural work» (Gill & Pratt, 2008: 16). Similarly Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2008) contend that immaterial and affective labor is problematic, especially in the context of the creative industries. They also criticize Hardt and Negri for failing to specifically address the imma-

terial and affective labor that takes place in the cultural sector: «at some point in an account of the labour undertaken in a particular sector, such as the cultural industries, it will also be necessary to consider what is specific to that sector. At no point do Hardt and Negri offer even a hint of assistance in this respect. (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008: 99-100)

After pointing out Hardt and Negri's shortcoming, Hesmondhalgh and Baker turn their attention to a particular case study from the creative industries: the reality television programs related to talent competitions. In examining the talent program «Show us your talent», Hesmondhalgh and Baker explain that much of what is involved in this competition is emotional labor: «managing the emotional responses of others… is also integral in talent shows.

This applies not only to the performance itself but also to the contributor's walk on to the stage (trepidation, nervousness, excitement) and the post-performance chat in the green room (joy, disappointment, frustration, anger) (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008: 108). What this suggests is that the affective labor described by Hardt and Negri is not all-encompassing in the sense that not only affirmative and positive emotions are linked to such endeavors. Hesmondhalgh and Baker reveal how, in the creative industries and especially in talent shows, the pressure to win the show can often be emotionally draining and overwhelming; this can undermine the fun and happy times that often actually happen on such occasions (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008: 112).

From this study, we can locate MySpace within the larger landscape of the culture industries, where the focus is on one's talent and the methods for displaying one's talent in such a manner that people become fans. The following recommendations by Kalliongis (2008) underscore the pressure and delicacy of dealing with social networking issues: «I'd like to point that over-dressing your email can leave the user under the distinct impression that they're a recipient of a mass-marketing campaign, so make sure you «personalize» your correspondence in some small way… Be sure to add a little humor and self-deprecation. It loosens their guard and makes them slightly more willing to give your work a listen. Nobody likes an ego, so make sure the message isn't only about you. Focus on other topics in order to keep people interested in what you have to say. Remember that you're asking for a favor. You can sugar coat the message all you want, but at the end of the day, you're still bargaining for the cooperation of the user. Always remember to thank them, whether or not they decide to give their attention to your work. It's

a good idea to add a small disclaimer apologizing in the event that you've wasted any of their time. Once again, this example of good online etiquette is absolutely critical. You ARE looking for friends after all (Kalliongis, 2008: 75-76).

However when all else does fail, and one ends up being unsuccessful with online social networking or if one does not have the time to gather many friends, there is an alternative. One can purchase a MySpace profile, which are sold for prices up to $25,000 (Kalliongis, 2008: 69).

The similarities between television talent shows and MySpace are that both require a toughness to overcome personal emotions and a need to ingratiate oneself with others. On the television shows, one must learn to control one's anger and frustration, and to put on a cheery face at all times to convince program producers and staff members that one is cut out for the competition (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008). On MySpace, one must learn to deal with negative experiences, even if one is not getting the type of attention that one desires to receive, and one must become accustomed to soliciting others' support: «The idea of disguising yourself as a friend so that users open your mail without the pretences of spam and manufactured words is good as long as you let people know who you are» (Kalliongis, 2008: 75). This process of befriending others could potentially be draining, as one makes an effort to make as many friends as one can, only for the sake of becoming popular online. In the next section, I will explore the potential future directions of MySpace. What could be the ramifications of this labor? In general, will this type of labor promote or hinder MySpace's future success?

5. Social Protocols and the Future of MySpace

MySpace may still be considered worthwhile by some users, but is it already entering a state of decline? The last part of this article will explore a few indicators about the future trajectory of MySpace's prominence. In the article, «Rumors of the decline of MySpace are exaggerated», Duncan Riley (2007) discussed the controversial rumors about the decline of MySpace in reaction to the rising popularity of Facebook. At that time, Riley argued that MySpace was not being threatened.

Two years later in an article titled «MySpace shrinks as Facebook, Twitter and Bebo grab its users», David Smith (2009) reports that «MySpace had 124 million monthly unique visitors last month, a decline of 2%, according to the marketing research company comScore. Facebook, by contrast, racked up 276 mi-

llion unique visitors, an increase of 16.6%» (para. 5). Smith further explains that the reasons for MySpace's decline were linked to the increasing number of employee resignations at MySpace. According to Ryan Nakashima (2009) in Time, MySpace reportedly cut 30% of its staff in order to increase efficiency and to more closely resemble the make-up of the Facebook staff. MySpace is definitely aware of its rival Facebook as revealed by the hiring of former Facebook executive Owen Van Natta by News Corp. as its new chief executive. It is no exaggeration to say that MySpace is in need of new ideas for success, especially from someone who has experience creating success on Facebook.

Although MySpace's diminished popularity did not occur overnight, it is important to note that this development was neither sudden nor unforeseen. Over the six years since its founding in 2003, MySpace has experienced a gradual decline in membership, resulting in a loss in popularity, and a devaluation in the eyes of its users and others. As a discrete group of users, musicians have long argued that popularity generated on MySpace can help launch or enhance their professional careers. Thus, there has been an increase in the various services that assist musicians in quickly attaining popularity. Despite attempts to cater to musicians and to stay relevant in the current cultural climate, there are numerous indications that MySpace may be turning into a less popular and trendy social networking site.

In addition to the results from an informal survey of random users' views on MySpace and a collection of various news reports, my personal profile e-mail account is currently filled with countless spam and advertising messages. In the month of April 2009, a random review of the e-mail subject lines included the following announcements: «Last call for tickets to detour: NYC's premiere Film Noir & Arts Festival @ Galapagos in Dumbo Brkyn, Thurs April @ 7:30 pm»; «Hey I'm playing a show in New York»; «Bride has new stuff»; «Tania Stavreva Piano Recital at Yamaha Artists Services, Inc 05/08/09»; «Discover Sound- Join our online community»; «Download the new silent disorder EP now»; «Sin.sex.art. detour: NYC's premiere Film Noir & Arts Festival»; «booking: live shows,

photo shoots, and more». As the titles of these MySpace messages clearly indicate, almost none of the emails filling my mailbox are for non-promotional purposes. Contrary to the experts' recommendations on effective means for social networking on MySpace, the striving for popularity mitigates interactivity on the website, and this in return impacts individual artists' efforts to promote themselves. Although MySpace's gradual decline cannot be blamed solely on the experts' tips, I argue that when everyone starts adopting the recommended techniques and social protocols, MySpace will become a place where very few genuine connections and interactions will occur. However, this is not to say that criticism should only be placed on the musicians. According to Anthony Bruno (2009) on Billboard.com.

> While the majority of the tips are useful to a certain degree, in the end, the merits of these recommendations can only last for a relatively short period of time. With the continual decline of MySpace's popularity, musicians may need different types of tips to maximize their use of MySpace. Perhaps instead of «dressing up» one's site or «spamming» others' accounts, a renewed focus on one's craft and music may once again redeem the value of MySpace and impede its drift into irrelevance.

«Trent Reznor is taking a break from social networking. As one of the more prolific users of Twitter, blogs and other social networking constructs, Reznor, in his latest post laments the degradation of the experience by spammers and trollers. Social networking certainly allows artists to get closer to fans, but Reznor writes, that's not always a positive thing.

As suggested by this statement, the artist-fan interaction is not the only thing that has become somewhat stale and contrived. Reznor has received numerous messages from fans claiming that the entire experience of social networking is also rather unpleasant at this point.

Although these messages actually pertain to another networking site, the same criticism could be applied to MySpace. Here the fully open connection between artists and fans could result in potentially manipulative or exploitive relationships.

6. Conclusion

In this article, tips and recommendations have been examined as a series of social protocols. Because standing out from the crowd is important for those involved with the social networking sites, many tips focus on how to outshine the other site members. It is important to understand that each individual tip given by the various writers is not as significant as the collective influence of the recommendations when they are adopted and then applied to the network. As time passes, the social protocols become norms on the social networking sites. These norms eventually influence and interact with each other, and can possibly become stale and formulaic. In short, once the protocols become standard practices, they may have a degenerative impact or an adverse consequence. As indicated numerous times in this article, gaining popularity requires paying attention to a large number of details. Affective labor is essential to this endeavor. Without a «personal touch, musicians» advertisements for their CDs and shows would be lost in the hundreds and thousands of emails generated by users of the various websites. Because so much information and marketing are created on the social networking sites, standing out as an artist required an intricate mastery of social protocols.

Yet, the irony is that there are also features on the social networking sites, specifically MySpace, that can result in the rejection of a band's or musician's profile all together (but only when the profile is left in the default setting mode). Another feature on MySpace requires approval in one's comments section before allowing songs to be posted on other users' profiles. In addition, as more and more people vie for attention in the network, users' attention span for each profile may decrease and produce a negative outcome. Thus, once a certain social networking site becomes widely popular, as is the case with MySpace, the danger develops that it could lose its vast appeal. This is the paradox that the givers of advice may not realize.

At the height of its popularity, MySpace was undoubtedly the most cutting-edge and pioneering of the social networking sites for independent as well as mainstream musicians. This article has explored the current state of MySpace in light of the tips and recommendations on «how to succeed on MySpace». While MySpace may be losing its appeal among users, one wonders about the value of the sites tips and recommendations — to what extent can these tips impact a musician's career? While the majority of the tips are useful to a certain degree, in the end, the merits of these recommendations can only last for a relatively short period of time. With the continual decline of MySpace's popularity, musicians may need different types of tips to maximize their use of MySpace. Perhaps instead of «dressing up» one's site or «spamming» others' accounts, a renewed focus on one's craft and music may once again redeem the value of MySpace and impede its drift into irrelevance.

Footnotes

[1] See (Suhr, 2009) for further reading. Lazzarato (1996) provides an informative discussion of the context of immaterial labor as a form of non-manual labor. Hardt and Negri (2000) focus on the benefits of affective labor (the emotional, sensorial, and caring dimension of work) in their publication, «Empire».

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iPod: a Personalized Sound World for its Consumers

iPod: un mundo sonoro personalizado para sus consumidores

ABSTRACT

For the first time in industrialised culture, over fifty percent of the population possesses the ability to privatise whatever environment they might be in through the use of a dedicated MP3 player or through a mobile phone with MP3 capabilities. The consumption of technologically mediated sound in the 20th and 21st centuries represents an increasingly significant mode of 'being-in-the-world' in which the 'self' claims a mobile and auditory territory for itself through a specific form of 'sensory gating' permitting the user to screen out unwanted sounds through the creation of their own seductive soundscape. The untrammelled pleasures of creating a privatised mobile soundworld resonates through urban and cultural theory posing a set of interrelated theoretical problems relating to both our relation to the spaces we move through. the nature and meaning of public and private space., the potential for urban aestheticisation, urban retreat and withdrawalIn this paper I discuss the use of Apple iPod in terms of its use as a technological support system of users. The paper draws upon the Internet responses of over one thousand iPod users worldwide between 2004 and 2005. The paper investigates the specific nature of auditory mediation that use entails. It argues that iPod use can usefully be interpreted as a form of pleasurable toxicity within which the 'total mediated' world of users lies a dream of unmediated experience - of direct access to the world and one's emotions.

RESUMEN

Por primera vez desde el nacimiento de la cultura industrializada, más de la mitad de la población es capaz de personalizar cualquier parte de su entorno gracias a un reproductor de MP3 o a través de un teléfono móvil. El consumo de sonidos mediados tecnológicamente durante los siglos XX y XXI representa una forma cada vez más importante de «estar-en-el-mundo»; el «yo» reclama un territorio sonoro móvil a través de una especie de «compuerta sensorial» que le permite filtrar los sonidos que no le interesan y crear el paisaje sonoro que más le satisface. El placer sin límites que supone crear un mundo sonoro móvil de carácter privado plantea, para la teoría urbana y cultural, un conjunto de problemas teóricos que tienen que ver con la relación con los espacios en los que nos movemos, la naturaleza y el significado del espacio público y privado, el potencial de la estetización de lo urbano, y la incomunicación de la ciudad. También cuestiona el conocimiento de las tecnologías que se usan para mediatizar gran parte de la experiencia cotidiana. En este artículo se analiza el uso del iPod como soporte tecnológico para los consumidores. Se basa en las respuestas de más de un millar de usuarios entre 2004-05. Plantea que el uso del iPod puede ser interpretado positivamente si se considera como una forma de toxicidad placentera en la que bajo el mundo «totalmente mediatizado» de los usuarios subyace un anhelo de experiencia no mediatizada –de acceso directo al mundo y a las emociones de cada uno.

KEY WORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

Mediation, toxicity, we-ness, filtering, music, mp3, mobile.
Mediatización, toxicidad, sentido de fraternidad, filtrado, música, mp3, movilidad.

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«I feel almost cut off from society if I don't have my mobile, whereas I feel like I'm cut off from a part of myself if I don't have my iPod» (iPod user). «I can't ove-restimate the importance of having all my music avai-lable all the time. It gives me an unprecedented level of emotional control over my life» (iPod user). Liste-ning to music makes me feel better about my environ-ment. Using an iPod keeps me from feeling oppressed by being constantly surrounded by other human beings, and it makes me feel emotional or in-tune or empowered, or whatever else I need to feel at the time (iPod user). «What music colours is the desolation of the inner sense…it is the decoration of empty time» (Adorno 1976: 48).

We have throughout the 20th and 2st centuries increasingly moved to music both through the provi-sion of Fordist communication technologies, such as the radio and muzak technologies, that create sonic environments of uniformity for consumers or through the hyper-post fordist technologies of the Walkmans and iPod through which, with the aid of a pair of headphones, we create individualised and mobile soundscapes.

The age of mechanical reproduction is an age of sonic saturation and colonisation of urban spaces – both private and public. It is an age in which there has been a continual redefinition of, and contestation of, the meanings attached to the way in which individuals inhabit space and place sonically. Sound, in its fluidity seeps into the spaces of everyday life like no other sense. The way in which music/sound has become an ever-present desire/threat in the twentieth and twenty first century is the subject of this chapter. This chapter explains the above phenomena through the lens of mediation, solipsism and toxicity focusing primarily upon the contemporary use of the Apple iPod[1]. The debate plays out at the intersections of pleasure, per-sonal space, movement and desire.

The rise of headphone culture, which paralleled the rise of the Walkman and then the iPod appears to fit the model of mediated solipsism ideally whereby users withdraw into a private world of personalised music (Bull, 2000; 2007). It is to these phenomena that the term total mediation refers. Mediated experience refers to the sounds of music (the culture industry) bet-ween the ears fed directly through headphones often placed directly into the ears - directly into the expe-riencing subject – the outside world sinking into silen-ce. Mediated experience appears to be more 'imme-diate' to the user of an iPod or MP3 phone whilst the technology of the object becomes increasingly invisi-ble. Through the continual use of technologies like the

Apple iPod mediated immediacy becomes second nature to the user. MP3 players are now possessed by over fifty percent of the population of every industria-lised country either in the form of a dedicated MP3 player or through a mobile phone with MP3 capability. The privatising of social space is increasingly common-place and hence in need of analysis.

The use of one communication technology should however be contextualised within the ubiquitous use of these technologies generally From the use of the internet, video games and social network sites to the vast array of mobile communication technologies which link consumers to the worlds of commerce, friends and strangers, mediated experience is fast beco-ming 'second nature' to many. Embodied in the manu-facture of, advertising of, and use of these communica-tion technologies is a dream or desire for total media-tion - 24/7 connectivity. The nature and meaning of this mediated connectivity ranges from the functionally useful to the intensely pleasurable (Bogost, 2007; Castells & al., 2007; Goggins, 2006; Ito & al., 2005; Katz & Aakhus, 2002). Embedded in this 24/7 con-nectivity is the notion of toxicity. Toxicity refers to the transformation of subjectivity through the use of new media technologies which takes on a dystopian aura as the pervasive use of new technologies potentially decrease the capacity of subjects to disconnect from their intoxicating use, tipping subjects into what Rheingold and Kluitenberg refer to as a form of social 'toxicity' (Rheingold and Kluitenberg, 2006). In their analysis this state is not experienced as pleasurable, however in the following pages I propose a more nuanced understanding of auditory toxicity. Toxic pleasure refers to the pleasures attached to continuous withdrawal and aesthetic recreation engendered through the continuous creation of privatized sonic environments which have nevertheless potential social consequences in terms of shared social spaces in the city[2].

1. The Seductive Nature of Sound

In their daily use of the Apple iPod users claims a mobile and auditory territory for themselves through a specific form of 'sensory gating', permitting them to screen out unwanted sounds and producing their own 'soundscape'. iPod users live within a mediated and perpetual sound matrix, each user inhabiting a diffe-rent auditory world. For the most part these 'filtering' processes are intensely satisfying for users. Users often report that their iPod is their mobile technology of choi-ce – giving them intense pleasure in the construction of their very own auditory bubble. The use of the Apple

iPod tends to be seamless - with many users putting their headphones on as they leave their front door and only taking it off when they reach their destination.

Traditionally the ears have been perceived as a passive sense, which remained continually open to the world - the introduction of headphones empowered the ears precisely by enabling users to choose whichever soundscape they wish to listen to. This empowering potential of technologies such as the Apple iPod permits users to redial their auditory map - yet they can only do this through the technology of the iPod itself. This empowerment is dependent.

Users filter out unwanted sounds in order to more fully control/regulate their own daily lives. Filtering is a heightening strategy of cognitive control. Technologies such as the iPod act as a 'framing' device, enabling a distinctive mode of auditory embodiment. iPod users, for example orchestrate their soundworld by toning 'down stimuli from one sensory field [whilst] amplifying information coming through another channel' (Geurts, 2002: 234). Sherry Turkle has recently referred to this form of continual connectivity as a form of 'tethering' of the subject to media technologies (Turkle, 2006). The 'tethering' of the subject to sound technologies such as the iPod casts light upon the meaning and significance of others with whom urban space is shared, and to the urban landscape/soundscape itself. The auditory filtering of experience represents the cultural template of much urban experience. Sensory filtering is central to the urban topography of daily life: 'Sensory orientations, therefore, represent a critical dimension of how « culture and psyche make each other up» and play a critical role in a person's sensibilities around inter-subjective dynamics and boundaries between self and others' (Geurts, 2002: 236).

Auditory filtering as such becomes 'second nature' to iPod users as increasingly large portions of daily experience become mediated through the use of communication technologies:

«I've gotten to the point that music portability is paramount to my day. I take my iPod into a relaxing bath. If my partner is watching TV I'll wear it whilst making dinner. I use it to go to sleep» (Ben). «I know listen to music any time I can. Walking to and from work, at work, on vacation, on a train or airplane, even at home when I don't want to disturb my partner. I have any song I want to listen to at my fingertips at any particular moment» (Susan). «I then started wearing it [the iPod] while shopping. I did it to control my environment and desensitise myself to everything around me. What I found interesting was that the more I wear my iPod the less I want to interact with strangers. I've gotten to the point where I don't make eye contact. I feel almost encased in a bubble… I view people more like choices when I'm wearing my iPod» (Zuni).

«I do like to listen uninterrupted, and if I'm interrupted I feel slightly invaded. I listen to my iPod when I'm on my own. It's my time and in my space, and any interruption invades my time with myself» (Matt). «I don't want anyone to bother me when I'm listening.

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I'm not interested in doing anything but listening to the song when my headphones are on» (Wes).

The experience of continuity is often evoked through the use of an iPod whereby users construct seamless auditory bubbles for themselves as they move through daily life communing with the products of the culture industry. In doing so they banish the contingency of daily life through immersing themselves within their very own private auditory utopia in which they do not speak, but listen, silenced and silencing, through the spaces of the city, living in the continuous rhythm of unproblematic reception, shielded cognitively from the contingency of the world.

2. The Toxic Pleasures of iPod Use

IPod culture represents a desire for uninterrupted and continuous experience as a central facet of the users urban experience. This desire for a subjectively empowered sense of continuousness is enabled by, and facilitated through, iPod use. Which enables users to link disparate places and moods through the temporal immediacy of iPod sounds. Users often describe

themselves as bereft without the mediated auditory presence of their iPod. Experience unadorned by the immersion of experience through the intimate sound world of the iPod is often described with apprehension:

«It [the iPod] removes the internal dread. For example, when I needed to do yard work I used to become depressed because my mind would wander. Now, with the iPod, yard work is a positive experience because I know I have hours of uninterrupted listening, exercise, fresh air, and no business worries… Serb Erener's 'Everyway that I can' stirs me for some reason. » (Sam)

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3. Sound Makes the City

As iPod users move through the city urban experience becomes synonymous with technological experience. Technology as a medium of organisation seamlessly mediates their urban experience. The aesthetics of the street is largely an audio-visual one in which they are transported from one cognitive and physical space to another through the dominant organising potential of privatised sound enabling them to create a satisfying aestheticized reality of the city.

iPod users aim to create a privatised sound world, which is in harmony with their mood, orientation and surroundings, enabling them to re-spatialise urban

experience through a process of solipsistic aestheticization. This aesthetic appropriation of urban space is an effective cognitive strategy for them in their attempt to create a seamless web of mediated and privatised experience, enhancing virtually any chosen experience in any geographical location at will. In doing so they create an illusion of omnipotence through mediated proximity and 'connectedness' engendered by the use of their iPod.

Jason is thirty-five years old; he lives in New Orleans and works in online media distribution. He is married with one young child and has owned an iPod for over a year, never having possessed a mobile music player previously:

My world looks better; I get more emotional about the things including the people I see and my thoughts in general. Sometimes I project the lyrical content of songs onto the people I see while I'm listening. For example, I can distinctly remember listening to U2's «Stuck in a Moment» and I was looking at some of the people standing around me in a coffee shop, with the look of anxiety on their faces and general angst. It made me wants to hug them and tell them it's ok… I would look at other people and they would smile at me, almost like they knew what I was thinking…. it's like it polarized my world into these hemispheres of those who understood Bono's message and those who didn't. I'm not a Bono worshipper or anything; it was just the first time I had really listened to the lyrics of the song. That's a very private moment (in public)…. it's difficult to explain, but when he said the words «I know it's tough, but you can never get enough of what you don't really need» it all just crystallized for me. I've had a lot of surreal moments like that listening to the music on my iPod and watching the world around me…it's almost like watching a movie, but you're in it.

The reference to iPod experience as being like that of a movie is common although it's meaning varies (Bull, 2000). In Jason's account it refers to the world in which he lives appearing as if he were a movie in which he is also placed. The U2 song heightens Jason's mood. Listening to the song he recognises the superfluity of the ethics of consumption as articulated by Bono and seemingly etched upon the faces of the

hapless customers in the café. The lyrics of the song appear to describe the cognitive state of the others, visually imagined and interpreted by Jason. The aesthetic principle serves to elevate Jason beyond mundane concerns – placing him in a position of an empowered interpreter of the world whilst remaining distant. In the act of interpretation, Jason remains silent, impenetrable to others. Silence protects the urban subject from «the harsh realities of the world». It is this silence, which promotes both isolation and the flowering of self; the richness of interiority contrasted with the blandness of the outside world. The flow of people moving through the street differs from that of those sitting or milling around a café. The café is also a place of talk, of snatched conversations, of potential exposure. The above account of iPod use re-imposes the purely visual onto the activity of others in order to construct them as significant - yet imaginary, others. Jason in drawing others into his 'enlightenment' vision is essentially saying 'If you could hear what I hear, then you too would be transformed'. Jason's enlightenment however remains a mute and private enlightenment in which others are unaware as they move through space with their own unknown pre-occupations. Jason's private revelations nevertheless cognitively empower him, heightening his sense of presence and purpose; his is an audio-visual mastery of the world:

Sometimes I think I can calm people down just by looking at them when I'm listening to music. And sometimes when they look at me, I think they do «shift», because they recognise that I'm in a 'good place'.

Jason, in the act of private listening, imagines that he ceases to be a blank canvass, a mere surface that others look at disinterestedly. Meaning radiates from him, the internal becomes externalised, constructed through music and made transparent - immediate. He is transformed in the imagined eyes of others becoming the centre of a cognitive universe through which others reflect – his cognitive state becomes their cognitive state - though they are not privy to his sound world. The auditory 'look' is a sufficient tag, in the above account, for and imaginary' recognition to flow from the 'other'. Jason is not merely a part of this audio-visual world; he becomes its director, orchestrating meanings in which he imagines others as 'knowing' cast members. Jason is not alone in summoning up precise aesthetic re-creations through the creation of scenarios in which others play unwitting stand up parts:

For some reason, Talking Head songs seem to work best for this. Like, I will look at an old woman with a cane, and imagine her singing one lyric. Then move on to a hip-hop style teenage boy, and have him sing to the next line. My imagination really can take off. It sometimes makes me laugh and smile to myself – especially if a particularly amusing line comes up. It really does transform my surroundings – I sort of feel like I'm in my own music video. (Karen)

Underlying this virtual connectivity appears a playful narrative of invention in which users remain cognitively invisible. Alternatively, the personalisation of the users soundworld imbues the street and its atmosphere, indeed the whole world with an intimacy, warmth and significance it otherwise lacks. The world mimics and moves to the rhythm of users. For iPod users the street is orchestrated to the predictable sounds of their favourite play-lists:

The world looks friendlier, happier, and sunnier when I walk down the street with my iPod on. It feels as if I'm in a movie at times. Like my life has a soundtrack now. It also takes away some of the noise of the streets, so that everything around me becomes calmer somewhat. It detaches me from my environment, like I'm an invisible, floating observer» (Berklee). The solipsism of the user is frequently referred to in terms of general feelings of separateness:

I'm living in a world where music is going on and things are happening and everyone else who can't hear what I'm hearing is not really in that world or slightly less connected to it. There's something going on in my head that's for me and only me (Kate). I see people like I do when I watch a movie… there is a soundtrack to my Encounters…music to accompany my thought about others. It dramatizes things a bit. It fills the silent void (June).

Streets perceived as silent are in reality a complex of sounds – June's observation that her iPod filled the 'silent void' is indicative of users experiencing the world solely as a function of mediated sound – the unmediated sound world of urban society is a place where nothing happens - devoid of interest, throwing the subject back into the world of contingency, isolation and incompleteness. Unmediated experience is experienced as threatening, silence is associated with falling prey to the unmanageable and contingent nature of their own cognition. iPod use provides the user with the power to transform their environment seamlessly and continuously. A sense of completeness arrives through mediation.

To aestheticize, as Marcuse argued, is to simplify - to strip reality of its inessentials. The aesthetic principle is inherently one of transcendence – an essential component of this transcendence for iPod users is to re-

place the multi-rhythmic and hence unmanageable nature of urban life with their own manageable mono-rhythms. Mundane, yet nevertheless unmanageable urban life is transformed through iPod use creating movement and energy in the user where there was none before. Amy a thirty two year old who works in product design in Philadelphia, describes walking down the street with her iPod playing:

My music drives my attitude as I walk down the street. If I'm listening to melancholy music, my surroundings are a little greyer, a little more dismal, and the strangers I see on the street become a little more menacing. If I'm listening to upbeat music, the strangers look friendlier and my surroundings are not as depressing. While living in a city is practical for many reasons, it can also be overwhelmingly depressing. Having cheerful music in my ears as I see a homeless person digging through garbage to find a meal is disconcerting. Sometimes the music acts as a buffer between me and the city, and other times the music draws such a sharp contrast between what I'm hearing and what I'm seeing that it's hard to take. Other times, when I'm walking through the city with a great song, one that's appropriate to my external surroundings and internal feelings, I feel like I'm the star of my own personal movie, strutting along to my theme song of the moment.

Common in iPod accounts of aesthetic experience is making the street mimic the mood engendered by the music playing on the iPod. In the above account the homeless that are observed are not so much aestheticized, as recessed. Negatives are transformed into positives as Amy describes her elation as she traverses the spaces of the city. The following respondent also highlights this colonisation of space in which one's surrounding take on the ambience of the cognitive state of the user mediated through their sound track: I feel as though life is a movie and is playing especially for me. If I listen to sad music, which I only listen to when I'm down (boyfriend break up, bad grade, just bad news) then everything sort of has a grey shadow over it, even when it's sunny outside (Betty). My iPod puts me in a place and time. It is very common for me to walk to the music, so to speak. What I am listening to affects how I see everything around me. I might listen to some classic soul while I walk and the city seems to have a very mellow vibe. On other occasions, I might have on some Rage Against the Machine or something like that, and the city seems chaotic, crazy, too fast. What I listen to always impacts the way I view my surroundings (Freedom).

iPod use is non-interactive in the sense that users construct fantasies and maintain feelings of security precisely by not interacting with others or their environment. Sound both colonises the listener and actively recreates and reconfigures the spaces of experience. Through the power of a privatised soundworld the world becomes intimate, known, and possessed. Imagination is mediated by the sounds of the iPod becoming an essential component in the ability of users to imagine at all. Users are often unable to aestheticize experience without the existence of their own individual soundtrack acting as a spur to the imagination.

In this process of aestheticization, iPod users transform the world into conformity with their pre-dispositions – the world becomes part of a mimetic fantasy in which the 'otherness' of the world in its various guises is negated. This is an important strategy for iPod users who subjectivize space – consume it, as if it were a commodity. In the process, immediate experience is fetishized. Technologized experience is fetishized experience – experience becomes real or hyper-real precisely through its technologization - through technological appropriation. The utopian impulse to transform the world only occurs in the imaginary – in its technologized instrumentality, the world remains untouched. Users prefer to live in this technological space whereby experience is brought under control – aesthetically managed and embodied - whilst the contingent nature of urban space and the 'other' is denied.

The aestheticization of experience has traditionally been portrayed not merely as pleasurable, which it certainly is, but also as inconsequential insofar as the object of the gaze is left untouched – unsullied; «Aesthetically, the city space is a spectacle in which amusement value overrides all other considerations» (Bauman, 2000: 168). Yet, far from being inconsequential, this aestheticizing mode of urban experience contains cognitive and moral resonances. The aestheticization of experience remains relational – and whilst the subjects of the aestheticization process remain untouched –the aestheticizing impulse highlights the underlying values of users in their relation to the 'other' and the spaces passed through. The aestheticizing practices of iPod users contributes to our understanding of what it means to 'share' urban space with others from within an auditory bubble – immune to the sounds of others. Whilst some iPod users report enjoying city life, there's a mediated experience of the pleasures of the city. The city is viewed through the products of the culture industry in the form of music, talking books and of course the iPod itself:

I refer to my iPod as my pace maker, it helps me find that place. I almost exclusively travel to NYC

when not in London. I have a dedicated playlist called «NY State of Mind» this includes a lot of New York rap music and NY/ East coast Jazz. Something with N.Y. in the lyrics, but also the sophistication, edge and energy of the place. (Sami)

The meaning of city spaces itself derives from the playlists of users. Cosmopolitanism becomes a fictional reality existing in the often-eclectic mix of music contained in the iPod, in the users music collection itself. For many iPod users the pleasure of the city comes from not interacting with others who 'disrupt' and 'distract' their energy but rather from listening to music, which it might remind them of what it is to live in a city. A mediated cosmopolitanism encased in the users iPod.

iPod users also display a heightened sensitivity towards the mundane existence of others in public space. The noise of 'otherness' is banished and with it the 'quirkiness' of the other – For Wes, a twenty four year old programmer from America, this extends to the 'tonality and accent' of other people's voices:

When I'm around others in a public place I use music to block them out. To begin with, people aren't as likely to approach someone wearing headphones, Secondly, small talk and chatter gets on my nerves, and I don't want to be drawn into other people's lives or conversations either vicariously or directly. Also the tonality and accent of certain people's voices is terribly grating to me. (Wes)

The more users wish to remain in a private auditory space of control the more sensitive they tend to become to the contingent nature of the everyday world, which they wish to push away. Tracy a thirty two years old script writer living in Phoenix, Arizona typifies these widespread urban strategies of exclusion. Tracy was an early adopter of MP3 technology having had a player for four years. Control is an overriding consideration in Tracy's description of how she uses mobile technologies. The iPod is described as 'a tool' enabling her to control whatever environment she occupies. Tracy is a heavy user of the iPod using it continuously at work and elsewhere, «Since I'm a writer, I'm left mostly alone. If I had the option, I wouldn't take my headphones off all day. Listening to music at work makes it slightly bearable. I've quit jobs that

wouldn't let me listen to music». Tracy uses music to accompany her during most activities of the day. The need and desire for musical accompaniment to a wide range of activities is taken for granted in her description of use. Music is chosen to match her mood and activity, whilst doing yard work, for example, she describes needing music with a «faster beat. A Mozart sonata isn't going to motivate me». Continuity of listening is a way of organising the rhythms of the day – continuity implies separateness for iPod users such as Tracy. Forced interruption is described in the following terms, «Sometimes I feel violated if I have to turn it off for an unplanned reason». The breaking of her auditory bubble represents recognition of the fragility of her auditory empowerment. Interruption becomes tantamount to the touching of an exposed nerve – the flow of subjective sound takes users away from the physicality of the world which is described as recessed by some, or not 'really being there'. An involuntary and sudden

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return to the world, as others experience it, is invariably experienced as unpleasant.

In America, people are often loud and rude and it's sometimes hard to concentrate effectively. In Phoenix, we have a lot of Mexican immigrants. They don't learn English and they have no control over their children. I believe in mutual respect when in public places. It was becoming increasingly difficult for me to shop without encountering a bombardment of Spanish or screaming kids. The iPod lets me filter them all out. I'm much calmer now when I shop. The iPod lets me overlook the lack of courtesy. Using the iPod helps control my concentration. Since I'm familiar with the music, I can let it float to the back of my consciousness. (Tracy).

Tracy achieves a state of equilibrium precisely by withdrawing into herself, Sennett described this form of behaviour as representing «an early sign of the dua-

lity of modern culture: flight from others for the sake of self-mastery» (Sennett 1990: 44). iPod use can usefully be understood as a filtering mechanism permitting users like Tracy to remain focussed on themselves through the negation of the 'distasteful' and contingent nature of urban space. If the social politics of the street is one of proximity whereby the public spaces of the street are gendered, racialized and class bound, (Massey 2005) then the constant use of technologies such as the iPod erase the differential nature of these spaces.

4. Conclusion

MP3 users live in world of mediated we-ness. Theodor Adorno coined this phrase when he argued that the consumption of mechanically reproduced music increasingly functioned as an effective substitute for a desired sense of connectivity that modern culture lacked. 'We-ness' refers to the substitution of technologically mediated forms of experience for direct experience. Music for Adorno enables the subject to transcend the repressive nature of the social world precisely by integrating themselves more fully into the everyday through the consumption of music. Music provides both the dreams and the chains for urban subjects. Mediated aural proximity - the music coming directly through the headphones into the subjects ears – constitutes this state of we-ness producing 'an illusion of immediacy in a totally mediated world, of proximity between strangers, the warmth of those who come to feel a chill of unmitigated struggle of all against all' (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1973: 46).

Adorno perceived the urban subject as increasingly dependent upon forms of mediated company within which to live; 'we might conceive a series leading from the man who cannot work without the blare of the radio to one who kills time and paralyses loneliness by filling his ears with the illusion of «being with» no matter what' (Adorno, 1991: 78). Apple iPods would appear to be the post-Fordist technology of choice for those wedded to the notion of 'we-ness', but a 'we-ness' that stresses the individualising of the soundscape rather than the Fordist one analysed by Adorno.

iPod users are simultaneously connected and disconnected from the urban world that they inhabit. Connected through the use of their iPod whilst simultaneously disconnected from the physical world through which they move. In the totally mediated world of the iPod user lies the dream of unmediated experience - of direct access to the world and one's emotions. Mediated immediacy becomes second natu-

re to the user, their iPods functioning as digital Sherpa's accompanying them securely through the spaces and time of everyday life. The toxic pleasures of iPod use resonate through our understanding of what it is to live in an urban setting – historically a place that is shared with others – now increasingly a site of the pleasurable withdrawal from others.

Footnotes

[1] The following article is based upon the use of primary data in the form of qualitative Internet interviews with over one thousand Apple iPod users worldwide between 2004 and 2005. For more extensive treatment of this material refer to Bull 2007.

[2] Toxicity is often experienced as unpleasurable as in the following case of the use of a mobile phone:

I had this good friend who came down from London to stay with me overnight. I got really annoyed, as she kept phoning her boyfriend every five minutes as we were walking to go out. When she wasn't phoning him he was phoning her every ten minutes. I got so annoyed I said I thought she had come to London to see me and could she tell her boyfriend not to keep phoning. We went to the cinema and he didn't phone. As soon as we left the cinema she phoned him and didn't get a reply. She went on about it all the time. When we got back to my flat, she asked to use my mobile phone as her battery had gone flat - She couldn't get hold of him, she was on the phone for three hours trying to track him down. Eventually, she phoned her brother and he was with him drinking – he'd turned his phone off. (Sarah)

Sarah, a thirty two year old photojournalist describes the weekend visit of an old friend. It is a description of the compulsiveness nature of the desire for control and proximity; it is also a picture of the impossibility of achieving this in an interpersonal world of contingency. The subjects continual phoning of the 'absent other', her boyfriend drifts into compulsiveness, engulfing her physical space and transforming her co-presence with Sarah who becomes progressively involved in the drama of re-affirmation and search. The constant need for re-assurance, and the possession of the technology to supposedly provide it destroys the quality of the physically present as the user is cognitively orientated 'elsewhere'.

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Technologies and Media in Digital Music

From Music Market Crisis to New Listening Practices

Tecnologías y medios de comunicación en la música digital. De la crisis del mercado discográfico a las nuevas prácticas de escucha

ABSTRACT

In the last decade, the music industry has become the paradigm of the transformations that has carried the development of the productive system towards Informational Capitalism. Of the hand of a quick technological innovation, not always produced by companies, new forms of production and consumption of music have been developed. This new environment has dragged the phonographic companies to a crisis of sales that has forced a radical transformation for the sake of survival. One of these business transformations has been the intensification of the management of copyright. This intensification occurs mainly in two areas: the extension of the protection deadlines and the expansion of the fields and rights management companies-driven activities. This article is intended to answer the question that lies behind the ambitions to modify the productive system: how create cultural industries capable, at the time, to maintain a common and democratic culture and also to develop initiatives to generate capital gains to musicians, songwriters, and other music professionals. We will use data from a research that have conducted three group interviews segmented by age. The aim is to cross the views and experiences of consumers with the analysis of the evolution of music industry organization. From the observation that the younger generations are installed in a culture of free music, we explore what new business opportunities appear and how are received from the conflicting positions already referred.

RESUMEN

En la última década la industria de la música se ha convertido en el paradigma de las transformaciones que ha traído consigo el desarrollo del modo productivo hacia el capitalismo informacional. De la mano de una veloz innovación tecnológica, no siempre producida en los entornos empresariales, se han desarrollado nuevas formas de producción y consumo de música que han arrastrado a las compañías productoras de fonogramas a una crisis de ventas que ha obligado a una radical transformación en estas empresas en aras de la supervivencia. Este artículo pretende dar respuesta a la interrogante que subyace en las ambiciones de modificar el tejido productivo: cómo crear unas industrias culturales que sean capaces, al tiempo, de mantener una cultura común y democrática y desarrollar iniciativas que generen plusvalías a músicos, compositores y otros profesionales de la música. Para ello, nos serviremos de los datos extraídos tras una investigación en la que se realizaron tres entrevistas de grupo segmentadas según la edad. Se trata de cruzar las opiniones y experiencias de los consumidores con el análisis de la evolución de la organización de la industria de la música. A partir de la constatación de que las generaciones más jóvenes están instaladas en una cultura de la gratuidad de la música, se trata de explorar qué nuevos espacios de negocio aparecen y cómo son recibidos desde las posiciones en conflicto ya referidas.

KEY WORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

Digital music, cultural industry, publics, tecnologies, digital culture, digital natives, popular music, intellectual property.
Música digital, industria cultural, públicos, tecnologías, cultura digital, nativos digitales, música popular, propiedad intelectual.

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1. Introduction. Beyond the music industry crisis

Since the 90s, coinciding with the emergence of the Internet, the music industry has been going through a serious crisis due to the continuous decline in sales of music supports. This sales crisis is not conjunctural, but reveals a deep transformation within the industries of culture and the relationship of these industries to the general public: people have greater and greater access to more music but do not pay for it. What is in crisis is not just a business model but a model of consumption and, consequently, a model of cultural relationships.

There are few studies on the music industry in Spain (Buquet, 2002; Calvi, 2006) and even less research and reflection, with the notable exception of Megías and Rodríguez (2001; 2003), on the relationship between people and the music they listen to: how they get it, what role it plays in their social life, which technologies they use. Evidently the new framework of the music industry maintains a dialogue with the new forms of appropriation and consumption. So, the challenge is not just to analyse the changes in the productive model of the music industry and anticipate how far these changes will permeate all the other cultural industries. It is also necessary to see to what extent the practices (and the discourses they generate) of music users are a consequence of these transformations of the industry.

This concern is at the heart of the investigation, New practices and new technologies: digital music in Spain (Fouce, 2009), financed by the Fundación Alternativas through the Obervatorio de Cultura y Comunicación. This investigation aims to go beyond technological fetishism: of course, the digital has changed the way we access music to the detriment of old supports (LP and CD) but at the same time it has caused the industry to reorganize and to re-evaluate all that is not digital (the experience of live music), and now focuses on the maximum dematerialization of the music product (the management of rights of access through intellectual property regulations).

This research also aims to provide a platform for the main protagonists of this process of transformation who, paradoxically, are often treated as mere passive subjects and not as social actors who take initiatives, make choices, solidify cultural practices and ways of doing things, and who exchange discourses that legitimise or attack the positions of the industry, musicians or political powers.

This research was carried out quickly over a short period of time due to the rapidity of changes in this sector; the speed of change makes for few extensive works on digital music as the data and observations become obsolete as processes spread. A drawback was limited representation among the three groups interviewed, secondary school students, university students and young adults. Taking age as the only variable, it is impossible to analyse the differences that the various types of habit, genre, education or class generate when dealing with digital music. Nevertheless, this work should be taken as a first exploration of a changing environment and of new forms of understanding the music practices and discourses that surround it. The group interviews, rather than close off questions, reveal new territories to be explored and treated with care and attention.

2. Practices of music consumption: new technologies and old customs

As Thompson stated (1998), media communication is a contextualised social phenomenon which constitutes contexts that it also models. Communication is a form of action tied to institutional forms and mechanisms of power. From this point of view, music is one of the fields that best exemplifies the tensions between the ways of doing things and modern institutions, the market and the State being the two most representative institutions of the information society. The dominant forms of music consumption, based above all on free P2P networks, appear to challenge an industry incapable of finding a business model that enables them to profit from the traffic of these networks. They also challenge the State, whose power is reduced by the Internet, and its need to guarantee compliance with the rules of the game of the free market, which contradicts its obligation to defend fundamental rights such as the privacy of communication.

Too often studies on communication have centred on the media rather than on the mediations, to paraphrase Martín Barbero (1987). I believe that in these times of uncertainty and change it is more important to observe how people's ways of doing things are transforming than the changes in technology; however much devices change, what is relevant is to see how their use modifies the cultural and social context, and generates a need for new technologies.

The digitalization of music has undoubtedly changed the way in which people listen to music. This study is based on interviews with three groups defined according to age. The idea was to trace the differences between the groups who were relatively close in terms of age but whose musical and technological experience was radically different, due to the speed of change in this environment. The first group (GESO) was made up of secondary school students already

educated in the use of the Internet. The second group was university students (GUNIV) whose introduction to the digital culture came a little later. The third was a group of young adults (GJA) between 25 and 35, a generation that lived through vinyl and tape cassettes and the formation process of a new model of digital cultural music.

The various ways of experience related to technologies have produced new forms of knowledge and social relations. This is the idea behind the distinction that Mark Prensky makes (2001) between digital natives and digital immigrants that enables us to search out the different types of relationship with knowledge that occur between those who were born into the videogame culture, computers and the Internet, and those who approach these cultural environments with interest but hold on to other cultural logics. For Prensky (2001: 2), these digital immigrants keep their accent, that is, their ways of thinking, working and ordering information, and they belong to a culture written in analogue. In contrast, digital natives are «accustomed to receiving information quickly. They enjoy processes that run in parallel and they multitask the technology. They prefer graphics to text. They prefer random access like hypertext. They are motivated by gratification and rewards that are frequent and instant. They prefer games to serious work».

Ease of access to music, via the P2P networks, is now a shared experience for all generations of music fans. But the varied cultural baggage causes the evaluations on this almost unlimited and free access to change. Adults tend to value the music support as an object, the rituals linked to taking the disc out of the box, looking at the photos, reading the album notes to see who took part. The digitalization of the music has gradually marginalized an old almost ritualistic practice among music lovers: going to a record shop to seek out some long-desired item. «Buying a CD was a ritual. You bought the record, you got home, you opened it, looked at the libretto: Brilliant! You read the lyrics while you listened…sometimes you went from shop to shop in search of a record you don't find» (GJA). Music gave meaning to an activity that required time, effort and money. The reward was to have the record

in your hands. «Now all you have is a file that you can delete anytime if it no longer interests you» (GJA).

But it was not just a question of possessing an object that gave meaning to this investment in time and effort. Copying a record onto a cassette tape was a far different activity to downloading songs from a computer and e-mailing them to a friend. «You recorded a tape and put some work into it, writing out the song titles, sometimes even typing them out. I cut out photos from magazines and glued them on to the insert card [another interviewee] Yes, from the Tipo catalogue. And I pasted on the lyrics too!» (GJA). «It took time to make a tape» (GJA). Some of these practices associated to the analogical still persist among this generation of young adults, like reminiscent accents that characte-

> The dominant forms of music consumption, based above all on free P2P networks, appear to challenge an industry that is incapable of finding a business model that enables them to profit from the traffic of these networks. They also challenge the State, whose power is reduced by the Internet, and its need to guarantee compliance with the rules of the game of the free market, which contradicts its obligation to defend fundamental rights such as the privacy of communication.

rize digital immigrants: «My brother still tapes what he has already downloaded onto a CD, searches for the original cover and prints it out» (GJA).

Younger people, however, have no affinity whatsoever with the music supports associated to the older generation. They acknowledge that they hardly use CDs. Their chosen instrument for listening to and sharing music is the mobile phone. They download songs from the Internet and transfer them to their phones, send them to friends via Bluetooth if they are close by, and even share music on the same mobile phone with a single earphone each. But the mobile phone and the music it contains is not necessarily a device associated to privacy. Music on the mobile phone is often played in public through its speakers, thus updating the practices of space occupation that traditionally characterise youth subcultures. «They play their mobile phone music very loud. Like when the blacks in the Bronx went around with those huge radiocassette players, invading everywhere with their noise. Or like those

people who play their music loudly when driving so the rest of us passersby have to hear it too» (GJA). The music emerges from the computer environment to occupy the street once again, and it has a role in providing identity and posing a challenge to those outside the group of kindred spirits.

The dominant social representation defines teenagers as a big group of music consumers: they have more free time, they socialize more, and their socialization is particularly linked to leisure practices, with music having a substantial presence. Being pure digital natives, we are tempted to believe that they will be the biggest users of Web 2.0 in terms of music consumption.

However, the group interviews in this study go counter to this notion. The youngest group showed no great inclination towards free downloads and their

fm, you often end up listening to stuff that has nothing to do with the group you started out exploring, and that is good» (GUNIV). «I buy 'El País' on Fridays, I take the list from the EP3 trends' supplement, enter the names of groups in Google and download and listen» (GJA). Downloads thus become a complement to information, as a way of judging whether the critics are right about their assessment of a group and as a way of accessing new territories. These practices involve musical taste and cultural curiosity that are absent in teenagers who are, naturally, forming their own musical criteria. That is, while teenagers need to listen to everything to be able to decide to go with a particular artist or style, the more adult listeners have already formed their taste and follow patterns of listening that are more stylistically defined. In this case, it is not proximity to the digital culture that determines uses but the needs of these older groups. It is also necessary to point out that, just as we perceive in teenagers a culture of media convergence that unites the computer to the mobile phone as devices for managing the same files, in the young adults' group there is a continuity and complementariness between traditional media practices – specialized press and magazines, the radio – and those linked to the Web 2.0 (MySpace and YouTube).

> In terms of the practices, new ways of doing things generated by digitalization coexist with old practices inherited from analogical music. Contrary to what one might think, this coexistence not only occurs in the age group that has lived through the transformation from analogical to digital music but there are also parallels among digital natives between the earlier forms of music consumption and today's lack of differentiation the arbitrary way music is offered to us.

potential for exploring new music or new groups. Rather they listen to groups that are in fashion, they have a broad musical taste in which there is room for melodic songs, reggaeton, hiphop and heavy metal. The digital natives who proffered opinions in this study (limited, as mentioned before) repeat the hegemonic consumer practices that existed pre-Internet, characterised by random listening (radio) and occasional purchases (a large percentage of records are bought in hypermarkets, or big shops in which the sale of music is a sideline not a speciality).

By contrast, university students and adults value more and get greater use out of the Web 2.0 tools, as a means of broadening their musical knowledge and consumption. «Emule is like the print media. I read the magazines and download records to know what these people are doing. I listen to it and if I don't like it I delete it» (GJA). «Thanks to YouTube, MySpace or Last.-

3. The discourse on music: from suspicion to legitimization

So far we have dealt with certain aspects of the new practices of music listening, its connection to the depth of immersion in the digital culture and the continuity and breaches between this culture and the habits of the more traditional media cultures. The second part analyses another musical environment that has seen important changes with the arrival of digitalization.

This environment is the discourse on music, a space from which the influence of the crisis of the music industry is seen even more clearly than from the space of practices. Until recently, listeners' discourses on music centred on aesthetic questions, groups, songs, styles, as shown by Nick Hornby in his novel High Fidelity (1985), confirming Frith's assertion (1996, 4) that «part of the pleasure of popular culture is talking about it». However, the consolidation of the

Internet as a medium for listening and swapping music has generated considerable social debate regarding the clash between the use of new technologies and copyright protection. Much debate about music now focuses on the role of industry and its relationship with musicians and listeners.

The study Challenges to copyright. Music and cinema in the digital age (DNX, 2007) is praiseworthy for being the first to connect listeners' consumer habits to their discourse on the music industry in the Spanish environment. The users polled in this study want to able to listen to music on any device they wish, and they positively value the possibility the Internet offers of allowing them to get to know new music and new artists free of charge. «It is an emerging digital culture capable of taking maximum advantage of the possibilities of the Net» (DNX, 2007: 22).

Other attitudes shared by the majority are related to free access to music provided by Internet. Together with a clear opportunistic streak («I copy or download music because it is free» or «I download whole albums and an artist's complete discography»), the study airs the general complaint about the current forms of commercialization (price) and distribution of music (restrictions within the physical supports): «I would not download music free if the price in the shops was fair» and «I pay to download individual songs because I am not interested in the whole album» (ibid, 22). At the same time, there is much criticism directed towards representatives of copyright and intellectual property. The study emphasises that «these criticisms act as self-legitimization in terms of the practices of free access to music». Internet users regard «the price of songs on official download sites to be very high», that «free downloading is not illegal» and that «artists have other sources of income» (ibid, 22). Our research records similar listener dissatisfaction with the music industry and even greater opposition to the extension of mechanisms to protect copyright. As mentioned in the introduction, one of the ways the music industry tries to compensate for the drastic reduction in record sales is to intensify its management of intellectual property rights. This is done by extending the time copyright is under protection before entering the public domain, and pushing copyright into new areas. The latter relates to the so-called digital statute, which has aroused fierce debate in Spain about the model of culture and the cultural industry of the future.

The debate on the statute per private copy arose out of the debate in parliament on the reform of the Law of Intellectual Property and the Law on Services of the Information Society, popularly known as the Internet law. Spanish law differs from U.S. law in that it allows copies to be made of cultural material if it is for personal use only, and this is getting easier by the day due to digitalization. Since this involves money – if I copy a CD I don't have to buy it – manufacturers of recording devices (CD and DVD recorders, recordable CDs, scanners, photocopiers…) pay a fixed fee to copyright managers on each device sold. The reforms aim to specify the devices and the fees payable on those devices by way of the statute per private copy.

All the age groups polled agree that the statute legitimizes downloading music. «If you have bought a CD you can do what you want with it» (GESO). «If you pay 20€ more for a printer that you only use to print out your notes, then you compensate that by downloading music, so long as it's not done to make money…» (GUNIV). Teenagers, accustomed to free music, voice few opinions on this controversy while older age groups who might reject the statute articulate a more analytical discourse on the subject. «You pay the final price for the equipment and don't think about how much the statute might cost you. It's an ideological argument not one about prices. In fact, the price of the statute was already included when you bought tape cassettes and nobody protested about that» (GJA). «I think the statute makes sense because the music you download has been made by somebody. People supposedly devote their lives to music because they love music, and when you perform, because you need to survive, then the music changes. But if these people pay out to make their own music, it is only right that we should give them something back somehow» (GUNIV).

The prevalent feeling is that paying the statutory price per private copy and then being treated as a criminal for swapping files via devices that we have already paid for in order to be able to make copies is contradictory if not absurd, to say the least! There is considerable distrust and indignation over the price to pay for the statute and the fact that the sums gathered are managed by private entities that are secretive about how much they pass on to the artists. At the same time that this climate of public opinion was created, the management organizations with the support of the Ministry of Culture were undertaking campaigns against piracy, claiming that downloading music from the Internet was illegal and was in nobody's interest.

But these campaigns seem to have had no effect on the public of any age and were seen to be dubious and lacking credibility. «Nobody pays attention to those campaigns; if you go to the cinema and they show an advert for the campaign, the people just keep

on talking through it until the film begins» (GESO). «No-one cares. Besides, the punishment for this type of thing is absurd. You can go to prison for more years for downloading from the Internet than for robbing a shop» (GUNIV). Criticism is aimed at an industry that fails to understand that the paradigm of the music business has changed for ever, and also at some of the most successful artists who proclaim that music is culture, but who are the main beneficiaries of an outmoded distribution system. «This is a market society and we are in the midst of a technological revolution, just like the printing revolution. The forms of music production will have to change» (GJA). «When artists demonstrate, why is it you always see Miguel Bosé and Alejandro Sanz, who sell a million copies, and not artists like Quique González, who sells only 10,000?» (GJA).

So it is surprising that music, now the paradigm of changes generated around the digital environment, appears so little in communication studies. Few cultural environments today are so media-friendly and mediatised. The task of researchers is to keep on analysing and observing the reconfiguration of these mediations that show us the ways in which our contemporary culture is organized.

Criticism of the industry's methods is common among all age groups, and all are unmoved by the anti-piracy campaign. However, the young adults are aware that the industry is appealing to their experience as music consumers to try to discredit file-swapping programs while giving up trying to convince the youngest who have never paid for music and who are seen as a lost cause by an industry that will emerge from this crisis unless there is a radical change in business strategy. «It doesn't play on the conscience of the youngest. They do it because it is easy, and free and everybody does it. The campaigns are aimed at people like us, but the real target is the very young. Public relations people have a hell of a job on their hands trying to convince them that it is better to pay for music. They will have to drop the prices of records and sell them on the Internet, or get the musicians themselves to sell their music. They need to find new strategies» (GJA).

The total lack of any response by the music industry and institutions to these kinds of messages is creating widespread distrust in those in charge of deciding what music gets played and what music doesn't, personified by the record companies and the radio stations. «The record companies make the records worse; take a group that has lyrics that, perhaps, speak about violence or have a political message; if in the end they promote you, it is only so that you put in what they want» (GESO). «The musicians pay out for a lot of things and I am not sure that they get paid fairly» (GNIV). «People often buy a record not because it is any good but because of a marketing strategy» (GJA).

Music radio - and TV, although it is hardly mentioned due to the almost total lack of music programmes on the main TV channels - is also rejected out of hand, as their choice of music is deemed to be dictated by the boring and suspect music industry. «I don't trust the radio much. I used to listen to the Top 40 but then you realize how they operate and you switch off» (GUNV). «There are few music programmes on TV, and besides, musicians aren't allowed to play live, and they hate that» (GUNIV). «You hear very few new groups on FM radio» (GUNIV).

The logical response to this lack of confidence in the usual music mediators is the rise of recommendation systems linked to groups (My-Space) or to users' tastes (Last.fm). «I use MySpace to find out about groups I like» (GESO). «When I hear someone talking about a group, I first look in MySpace because you don't need to download anything and because you can jump from group to group» (GJA). «MySpace is much better than the radio, and you get to choose what you want to hear» (GUNIV). However, beyond sporadic searches in MySpace, which is really nothing more than a catalogue of bands, there doesn't appear to be much use being made of the new Web 2.0 resources.

At the time of the group interviews the Spanish version of Spotify, a system of listening by streaming in which the music is not downloaded on to the hard disc, had not come out yet. Later several interviewees stated that this system had more and more users but that its advanced functions – like sharing play lists with friends – were hardly used. This was supported by the way in which Last.fm is used, as if it were a radio station, without taking advantage of its potential to develop choice of music.

4. Conclusions: the reconfiguration of the media environment

In this study, I have attempted a different approach to the changes occurring in the music industry, a paradigm of cultural industries in transition towards a new business model. Instead of a descriptive work along the lines of economics and politics, my starting point was an ethnographic investigation to find out how practices and discourses on the music of the people interact with the changing environment.

One of the first conclusions, and certainly the most discouraging, is that a more profound ethnographic study is needed to be able to unravel the subtleties of the practices of music consumption: how music is searched for, what is done with it, how it is shared, and the influence of music on the creation of individual identities and group experiences are all sufficiently complex questions that deserve a more detailed study than the one on which this article is based. However, this investigation has succeeded in drawing a map of categories to which one can return later in order to refine them theoretically and extend their reach through ethnographic work. In terms of the practices, new ways of doing things generated by digitalization coexist with old practices inherited from analogical music. Contrary to what one might think, this coexistence not only occurs in the age group that has lived through the transformation from analogic to digital music but there are also parallels among digital natives between the earlier forms of music consumption and today's lack of differentiation and the arbitrary way music is offered to us. It is also noteworthy that it is the young adults who make the most of the Web 2.0 musical tools, probably due to the inclinations of taste and scarce free time.

As for the discourses, the social debate around music is extensive, especially in terms of intellectual property rights and the fixation with the digital statute. Rarely has a law generated such fierce debate in the media or in society, and a consensus appears to be more remote than ever. This debate is widespread: all age groups show a depth of political and ethical reflection on what copyright should entail, adequate remuneration for musicians and the model of the record industry.

Music seems to be at the epicentre of problems that affect contemporary culture and the media: our daily practices, the construction of identities, the industries of culture, technology, the law, political resistance and ethical positions. So it is surprising that music, now the paradigm of changes generated around the digital environment, appears so little in communication studies. Few cultural environments today are so media-friendly and mediatised. The task of researchers is to keep on analysing and observing the reconfiguration of these mediations that show us the ways in which our contemporary culture is organized.

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Player Relationships as Mediated Through Sound in Immersive Multi-player Computer Games

Relaciones mediadas por el sonido entre jugadores en el entorno de juegos multijugador

ABSTRACT

This essay examines the relationship between player and diegetic sound FX in immersive computer game environments and how this relationship leads, in large part, to the contextualization of the player within the virtual world of the game. This contextualization presupposes a primarily sonically-based perception of objects and events in the world and, in a multi-player game, this ultimately leads to communication between players through the medium of diegetic sound. The players' engagement with, and immersion in, the game's acoustic environment is the result of a relationship with sound that is technologically mediated. The game engine, for example, produces a range of environmental or ambient sounds and almost every player action has a corresponding sound. A variety of relevant theories and disciplines are assessed for the methodological basis of the points raised, such as film sound theory and sonification, and, throughout, the First-Person Shooter sub-genre is used as an exemplar. Such games include the «Doom» and «Quake» series, the «Half-Life» series and derivatives and later games such as «Left 4 Dead». The combination of the acoustic environment, the interactive placement of the player – as embodied by his virtual, prosthetic arms – in the environment and the sonic relationships between players produces the acoustic ecology. An exposition of this multi-player communication and the resultant acoustic ecology and player immersion, is the main objective of the essay.

RESUMEN

Este ensayo examina la relación entre el jugador y los efectos de sonido diegéticos en entornos de juego inmersivos para ordenadores, y a su vez, la manera en la que esta relación, en gran parte, pone en contexto al jugador dentro del mundo virtual del juego. Esta contextualización presupone una percepción basada principalmente en los sonidos de los objetos y los acontecimientos del mundo, lo que en el entorno del juego multijugador conduce finalmente a la comunicación entre los jugadores por medio del sonido diegético. El compromiso de los jugadores con –y la inmersión en– el ambiente acústico del juego es el resultado de una relación con el sonido mediada tecnológicamente. El motor del juego, por ejemplo, produce una gama de sonidos del entorno o del medio ambiente y casi todas las acciones del jugador tienen un sonido correspondiente. Una variedad de relevantes teorías y disciplinas, como la teoría del cine sonoro y la sonificación, se usan para construir nuestra base metodológica, y nos servimos de ejemplos como el del subgénero del «First-Person Shooter». Este tipo de juegos incluye las series «Doom» y «Quake», la serie «Half-Life» y sus derivados y juegos posteriores como «Left 4 Dead». La combinación del ambiente acústico, la posición interactiva del jugador –con la encarnación virtual de sus brazos protésicos– en el medio ambiente y las relaciones sonoras entre los jugadores produce la ecología acústica. Una exposición de esta comunicación multijugador, la ecología acústica resultante y la inmersión del jugador, es el objetivo principal del ensayo.

KEY WORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

Computer games, sound, engagement, diegesis, immersion, sonification, acoustic ecology.
Juegos de ordenador, sonido, compromiso, diégesis, inmersión, sonificación, ecología acústica.

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1. Introduction

This essay analyses player engagement with digital games through the medium of sound by suggesting that the player is immersed in, and part of, an acoustic ecology and thus, through this immersion, is engaged and incorporated into the game world and the game-play. In particular, it focuses upon the genre of the first-person perspective game which is best exemplified by the sub-genre of the run 'n' gun game or the First-Person Shooter (FPS). In this type of computer game, the player is encouraged to believe they are in the world of the game through devices such as perspective and real-time interaction with the game world elements. Examples of such games include the «Doom» and «Quake» series, the «Half-Life» series and derivatives and later games such as «Left 4 Dead». A 3-dimensional perspective is presented to the player in which visual objects have an illusory depth and volume. Typically, a pair of prosthetic arms, clutching a weapon, recedes into the game space from the bottom centre of the screen representing, in part, the game-world identity of the player. Objects and characters in the game respond in real-time to the player's actions – a gun reloads, a shadow is cast by the player's character and blood and gore are spattered and enemies die as the player shoots. Sonically, almost every player action has a corresponding sound event; there is a range of environmental or ambient sounds and most sounds have locational properties – depth and volume as do the visual objects. The combination of this acoustic environment and the interactive placement of the player in the environment (with the opportunity of affecting, indeed, effecting that environment) produces the acoustic ecology. This real-time relationship between player and sound provides the basis for communication between the player and the game engine and between players in a networked, multi-player game, and, ultimately, produces the desired engagement with and immersion in the game-play and the game world.

2. Diegetic sound

Sounds in the FPS game can be broadly categorized into diegetic and nondiegetic sounds – categories adopted from French film theory. The former are sounds that derive from or are part of the internal logic of the game world and game-play whereas the latter are all other sounds heard while loading or playing the game (Grimshaw, 2008a: 117-118). Such sounds include those heard while operating the game menu (audio and video set-up and character initialization, for example) in addition to the musical soundtrack heard during game-play. Indeed, game designers typically conceptually separate the soundtrack from the (diegetic) game sounds both in the way the software handles them and in the separate volume controls available to the player in the set-up menu. Many FPS players turn the musical soundtrack off completely; turning down the soundtrack enables the player to attend more closely to subtle diegetic sounds presaging, for example, an enemy's approach – very important in the 'hunter and the hunted' scenario that characterizes FPS games. However, categorically defining the soundtrack as nondiegetic risks the supposition that music has no effect upon the player's actions and engagement with the game. As with film music, game music is often used to create or heighten particular emotions in the player and this can have an effect upon the player's actions, making him more cautious or reckless, for example, or moving the player's character in time to the beat (Grimshaw, 2008a: 117). Some FPS games deliberately use music to cue certain game events and, in deriving from the internal logic of the game-play, such musical soundtracks therefore have a diegetic element to them. This is the case in «Left 4 Dead», for example, where musical cues or sectional changes prefigure an attack of the zombie swarm or the imminent arrival of the fatally powerful non-player character (NPC) Tank. Whilst acknowledging this conceptual fuzziness, the essay will concentrate on clearly diegetic sounds as a means to understanding their role in forming, in conjunction with the player, the FPS game acoustic ecology.

Diegetic sounds, then, can themselves be separated into two categories as a means of comprehending their disposition in this ecology. There are environmental (or ambient) sounds and there are sound events; each of these, particularly the latter, can be sub-categorized further[1]. Environmental sounds are those diegetic sounds which form the base of the acoustic environment of the game, Schafer's keynote sounds (1994: 9-10). They may be animate or inanimate sounds: rain sounds; general machinery sounds; the sound of wind blowing through the leaves of a forest; or birds twittering, for example. These sounds are placed in the game world by the game designer to help create that world by giving it a sonic depth and volume. Unlike the illusory visual depth and volume suggested by the objects depicted on the 2-dimensional screen, the game sound depth and volume is just as real and 3-dimensional as any sound heard in a real-world acoustic ecology; to understand this difference is to understand the importance sound plays in player immersion and, indeed, although the player is not phy-

sically immersed in the visual world of the game, he is so immersed in the game sound. An urban landscape has a different set of sounds to a bucolic landscape and they help create the illusion of presence in the game world through their localization (that is, their locational position) and by giving sonic form and body to the aggregated pixels displayed on the screen. Because the player operates kinaesthetically in the FPS game world (Stockburger, 2003: 9), the player has some control over the sounding of many environmental sounds. Choosing which path to navigate through a game level, the player controls which sounds start to play and which sounds stop playing because these sounds, typically, are local to various parts of the game world. Environmental sounds play, therefore, a vital role in embodying the player in the 3-dimensional world of the game.

In contrast to the game's environmental sounds, sound events are sounded either by the game engine, other players in a multi-player game or by the player himself and are typically short, discrete sounds tied to specific game events or game states. For example, NPCs might emit various sounds such as vocalizations, footsteps or weapons fire and, although often played in response to the player's actions, are usually initiated by the game engine as part of that response. In a multi-player game, where other players can be part of the player's team or can take the part of an enemy, any one player can hear the character sounds of other players in the vicinity. Some games allow players to trigger speech radio messages; taunts from the enemy or team communications, for example. At the end of one level while waiting for the next level to load, the game engine in «Left 4 Dead» will pass the time by triggering short, scripted commentaries on the past action or the characters' prowess, for example. The player himself can directly trigger his character's and action's sounds through keyboard, mouse or controller input. Such sounds include footsteps (the frequency, timbre and intensity of which might signal speed, ground surface and weight of the player's character), weapons fire, proprioceptive sounds like fluctuating breathing (in some games) and an imaginative variety of grunts, groans and gasps (male, female or otherwise as per the player's choice of

character) in response to damage sustained in the hazardous conditions of the game.

3. Engagement and immersion through diegetic sound

FPS games, like all digital games, are an interactive form of entertainment as opposed to more physically passive spectacles such as cinema and theatre. Indeed, games require active and physical player involvement to be games at all; one of the three conditions cited by McMahon for immersion in a game world is that «the user's actions must have a non-trivial impact upon the environment» (2003: 68-69). For the acoustic environment or soundscape of the FPS game almost every action of the player has an impact upon that environment either by altering sounds already playing or by

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stopping and starting sounds. As previously mentioned, the game soundscape typically changes as the player moves through the game level. Not only are local environmental sounds stopped and started but their volumes change with changing distance from the sound source and their locations within the sound field change as the player turns or moves sideways (assuming the player's sound reproduction system is capable of at least stereo playback). Very often, environmental sounds will have reverberation either statically encoded as part of the sound or processed in real-time (in later games) to shadow the acoustic properties of the spaces and surfaces of the game locale. This changing soundscape as the player moves is not only evidence of the player's impact upon the acoustic environment but also helps to contextualize the player within the game spaces. Such contextualization is strengthened where reverberation and timbre match the apparent depth, volume and surfaces of the spaces and objects

portrayed on screen. More directly, the player has a non-trivial impact upon the game soundscape through the triggering of sound events such as the firing of weapons or the sounding of footsteps while walking or running; such sound events may be termed kinediegetic in order to differentiate them from sound events produced by other game elements such as NPCs (Grimshaw & Schott, 2007: 476).

Not only can the player affect the game's acoustic environment but this environment can affect the player's movements and behaviour in turn. Players can be attracted to or repelled by certain sounds through attending to such sounds in the navigational listening mode (Grimshaw & Schott, 2007: 477)1. In «Left 4

In a multi-player game, each player operates on and within their own private soundscape. As in a real-world acoustic environment, there is a range of hearing (dictated by the game engine) beyond which the sounds forming other players' soundscapes are not heard. As soon as a player moves into the vicinity of another, their soundscapes begin to mingle and, in addition to their own kinediegetic sounds, each player starts to hear the other player's kinediegetic sounds.

Dead», cries for help from trapped teammates act as audio beacons; the wailing and crying of the deadly NPC Witch may similarly beckon the curious and uninitiated but seasoned campaigners navigate well away being aware of the adage 'once bitten, twice shy'.

Reference has been made previously to diegetic sounds that match various objects and images displayed on the screen. This is a form of cross-modal comparison and, in most cases, cross-modal confirmation. Footsteps on a metallic surface would be supposed to have a different timbre to footsteps on grass and, in a large enclosed space (represented 2-dimensionally on screen), a different reverberant characteristic to footsteps in an open area. This expectation arises from experience; in this case, probably direct, real-world experience on the part of the player and, if this expectation is not cross-modally confirmed, the game designer risks undermining the perception of immersion in the game world. Experience, however, can be indirect and the resulting expectations only loosely based on reality. A good example of this is the gap between

what a firing weapon sounds like in reality and what it is expected to sound like in a different context. Here, cliché and conditioning by the media play a strong role. The sound of Arnie's shotgun in «Terminator 2» is not a faithful reproduction of a shotgun firing but a synthesis of two cannon shots (Palmer, 2002: 9); however, it has become the acme of weapons realism in cinema and digital games despite its lack of authenticity. Further experience is gained, and expectations raised, as the novice player goes through a game learning process where audio cues become recognizable as such and their significance is acquired.

Chion has used the concept of synchresis to explain how film audiences perceptually synchronize images and sounds that, in the cinema, are reflected or projected from different and often widely separate physical sources (1994: 63-64). As Lastra states: «Decades of tin-sheet thunder and coconut shell hooves prove […] that fidelity to source is not a property of film sound, but an effect of synchronization» (2000: 147). The same process works in FPS games with the added support for synchresis of player input, in most cases, producing an immediate and attributable sound (the click of a mouse button simultaneously produces a flame burst from the muzzle of the gun and a satisfyingly deafening blast of sound). It is the player making the sound and this participatory synchresis is a further aid to engagement and immersion in the game world.

FPS games, as the name implies, provide the player with a first-person perspective in which, visually, the player's character is at the centre of the game world. The graphics engine in the game software logically places the player's character at the centre of the game Cartesian space too and thus all game elements rotate about him. As pointed out before, the first-person perspective is reinforced by prosthetic arms on the screen representing the real arms of the player. The player sees what the character 'sees' and the character 'sees' as the player would were the player physically present in the game world. This view is in contrast to a third-person perspective where the player views the entirety of his character from some point in space usually located behind and above that character. By analogy, the player in the FPS game can be termed a

first-person auditor (Grimshaw, 2007: 122) hearing as the character 'hears' who 'hears' as the player would hear were the player physically present in the game world. However, whereas the visual field of view has an arc of about 140° (somewhat adjustable in many games), the sound field is all-enveloping. Not only does sound have a function that is to cross-modally confirm what the eyes see, it also provides information about the unseen world to the sides and behind the player (and information about sound sources ahead but hidden from view). These acousmatic sounds (Chion, 1994: 32) can be cross-modally confirmed by sight if the player chooses to turn towards the location of the sound source. In other words, as in real life, the player can become an explorer in the acoustic environment, engaged in the process of investigation and discovery of the world around him driven onward by recognizable sound cues and other more mysterious and causally ambivalent sounds.

A strong motivator of immersion in the FPS game world is emotional engagement (Grimshaw & al., 2008) and, in the 'hunter and the hunted' premise of such games, particularly in horror FPS games like «Left 4 Dead», fear is just such a motivating factor. There is a number of elements that might inculcate a sense of fear in the player. The player's knowledge of the game's context and premise, and the expectation deriving from that, is one. A sound, or the conjunction between sound and image, in one context might be frightening but, in another context, might be humorous. A recent study of the uncanny (a perception relating to eeriness and fear) and the virtual characters found in digital games and other media, concluded that uncanniness increases with increasing lack of synchronization between lips and voice (Tinwell & Grimshaw, 2009). This study took place in an abstracted, experimental context and, in the framing context of a FPS horror game where the player is already cued for apprehension and fear, this phenomenon may indeed be apparent. However, badly synchronized dubbing of Hong Kong Chock-Socky movies are a recurrent comedic device. The player's prior knowledge of the game context (horror or comedy, for example) sets up the appropriate expectation and anticipation – a prefabricated emotional framing.

Another element identified as leading to a sense of fear is uncertainty and it may arise in several ways. Difficulty in localizing a sound, that is, locating its source, can cause feelings of apprehension particularly in the predatory environment of the FPS game; the evolutionary link between fear and survival has been suggested as the cause (Ekman & Kajastila, 2009: 2).

In the medium of film, Chion posits this unsettling mysteriousness as one of the properties of acousmatic sound: «[Acousmatic sound] creates a mystery of the nature of its sound source, its properties and its powers» (1994: 72). Some ostensibly nondiegetic soundtracks in FPS horror games include a variety of nonmusical sounds (sibilant whispering and howls, for example) that leave the player unsure as to whether they derive from the game diegesis or not. This creates «a framework of uncertainty [and the] collapse of the barrier between the diegetic and non-diegetic soundscape is a strategy to build a horror atmosphere» (Kromand, 2008: 16).

Threats, according to Plutchik, are the stimulus events leading to feelings of terror, fear and apprehension (1980). Threats are often presaged by alarms which themselves are typically, due to the usefully pervasive nature of sound, aural. «Left 4 Dead», for example, has a range of alarms: musical cues (as already mentioned); and also the mutterings, growls, howls and screams emanating from dark recesses, growing in density and intensity as the threat approaches. Many fearful sounds that raise alarms and hackles have an animate origin or possess similar properties to animal sounds. For example, the spine-tingling sensation induced by fingernails scraping down a blackboard has, it has been suggested, a root in the sound's similarity to the warning screeches of macaque monkeys – the reaction to such a sound is a deeply buried vestige of a time when humans and their ancestors might have been regularly hunted by predators (Halpern & al., 1986: 80). Allied to this conjecture is the suggestion that some of the vocalizations of primates (laughter and crying) are used at a fundamental cognitive level to arouse particular emotions through the sounds' acoustic properties rather than to convey representational or linguistic information (Owren & Bachorowski, 2003: 187).

Thus far, this essay has considered the game's acoustic environment from one player's point of audition presuming the game is a single-player game having one player with or against a number of NPCs. Most modern FPS games not only provide this single mode of game-play but also, via a network, provide multiplayer versions of the game. There are several types of multi-player game: all players may compete against each other in a deathmatch; teams may compete in a team deathmatch; all players may form a team against NPCs; and there is a variety of other team-based modes of play such as the popular capture the flag in which teams score points by safely transporting an enemy's team flag back to their own base. Diegetic

sound provides an important conduit for communication between players, both teammates and enemies.

In a multi-player game, each player operates on and within their own private soundscape. As in a real-world acoustic environment, there is a range of hearing (dictated by the game engine) beyond which the sounds forming other players' soundscapes are not heard. As soon as a player moves into the vicinity of another, their soundscapes begin to mingle and, in addition to their own kinediegetic sounds, each player starts to hear the other player's kinediegetic sounds. Primarily, this phenomenon is an indication of player activity in the game world which takes on other meaning, threatening or otherwise, depending upon the mode of play. Furthermore, there is a range of sounds that can be experienced simultaneously across all player soundscapes. Depending upon the particular game level, there may be global environmental sounds (the sound of falling rain, for example). If the game engine allows, there are short radio messages heard by all team members or there may be sounds triggered by the game engine indicating particular states of play (for instance, an auditory icon representing the capture of a flag). Very often, as in the latter case, such sounds provide the only indication that an unseen game event of significance has occurred.

4. The FPS acoustic ecology

Sonification is the technique of transforming non-audio data into sound, the intention being to focus the particular qualities of the auditory system on that data in order to facilitate comprehension or to provide new understanding (Kramer & al.: 3). As an example, our hearing is more sensitive than sight to temporal changes and, unlike sight which may be switched off simply by shutting the eyes, is constantly active and sensing. There are various levels of sonification. 0th order sonification (or audification) is a non-arbitrary mapping from non-audio parameters to sound parameters. For instance, the encoding on an audio compact disc originally derived from a sound wave and so the process of sonifying that data upon playback is very close to the reverse of the original encoding process. In other words, the process of mapping the digital bits to frequency and amplitude parameters is not an arbitrary one. Sonifying population movements over the last century requires some potentially arbitrary decisions to be made. Should population density be represented by sound amplitude? or different cultures be represented by different pitches?

Sonification is at the heart of the player's role in the acoustic ecology of the FPS game. The very pre-sence of the player in front of the game's screen sets in motion the game's sonification processes – to exist at all, the game's acoustic ecology requires a «discerning Subject [sic]» to be present (Böhme, 2000: 15). As all modern FPS games make use of audio samples (pre-recorded snippets of digital audio) for their diegetic sounds, 0th order sonification (of these digital codes into audible sound) underpins this acoustic ecology. Yet there is a more complicated, higher order of sonification occurring too. There is, for example, the sonification process undertaken by the game engine in interpreting player actions and game events and sonifying them. Some interpretations are less arbitrary than others. Movement is sonified as footsteps (and, in some games, breathing, the frequency and strength of which mirrors the exertions of the player's character) and weapons fire is sonified according to the weapon being used (although, as demonstrated earlier, a liberal interpretation can be applied to the concept of authenticity). More arbitrary interpretations are usually reserved for global diegetic sounds signalling various global game events such as the electric guitar chord indicating the capture of a flag in «Quake III Arena». The arbitrary nature of this sound and its lack of indexicality to the event – just what should the sound be of the capturing of a flag in a virtual world? – requires the interpretation of this auditory icon to be learned by the player (as opposed to the directness of more indexical sounds such as footsteps). Where the musical soundtrack has diegetic characteristics – various musical cues and alarms – their arbitrariness too requires learning on the part of the player. Conversely, the more indexical and less arbitrary the sounds, the quicker the immersion process because experience and prior learning is brought to bear. In all cases, sonification is predicated upon the presence of the player and the player's actions; sonification, then, forms the basis of the relational framework between player and soundscape that is the acoustic ecology.

The fundamental components of the FPS game's acoustic ecology are the player and his soundscape. Together, they form a relational and communicational web that is the gateway to engagement and immersion in the game world. The «soundscape acts as the semantic and contextual nexus between players and between players and the game engine» (Grimshaw & Schott, 2007: 480). This relationship between player and soundscape is a two-way relationship where not only do the presence and actions of the player have a non-trivial impact upon the soundscape but the soundscape too has an effect upon the emotions and actions of the player. In this sense, the game's acoustic ecology

is similar to Truax's definition of an acoustic community as a locus «in which acoustic information plays a pervasive role in the lives of inhabitants» (2001: 66).

In a networked, multi-player game there are multiple acoustic ecologies comprising each player and his acoustic environment. The operation of, and relationship between, these multiple ecologies mirrors acoustic ecologies of the real world. There are sounds in common (in a city, the sounds of traffic, for example, pervading different locations of that city), each human inhabits and perceives his own ecology and, at times, these ecologies inter-mingle (a car with thumping boom-box fleetingly passes an ambulance with wailing siren and the occupants of each vehicle experience, and react to, the acoustic ecology of the other). The collection of FPS game acoustic ecologies has been termed elsewhere a virtual acoustic ecology and its organic and dynamic properties, so indicative of the players' immersion in their game worlds, have together been proposed as comprising an autopoietic system (Grimshaw, 2008b). Individual acoustic ecologies, though autopoietic themselves, are the allopoietic components of the larger virtual acoustic ecology, itself an autopoietic system. As an autopoietic system, the FPS game's virtual acoustic ecology is a homeostatic organization dedicated to self-preservation and the immersion of a new player and his soundscape is the autopoietic system's compensatory approach to the perturbations posed by that new allopoietic component.

In a real-world ecology, every naturally-occurring sound is likely to be unique at each sounding of it. Such sounds are combinations of a number of factors including the direct sound from the source object (animate or inanimate, each production of the sound is likely to have slight variations) and reflected sound from the environment.

These reflections (and the amount of direct sound absorbed) inform much about the environment even to an untrained listener as Gaver (1993) describes. Reflected sound informs about the material properties of the environment through the ways in which frequency components of the direct sound are boosted or attenuated (metal surfaces, for example, tend to produce brighter reflections), the difference in intensity between direct sound and reflected sound will also

betray information about the sound absorbent properties of the materials in the room while the time difference in perception of both sounds provides some indication of the volume of the space in which the sound is sounded. Something further to note about natural acoustic ecologies is that the number of potentially simultaneous sounds is (to all practical extents and purposes) infinite, the only limit being the number of sound sources within hearing range.

On the basis of the points raised above, an analogy of the FPS acoustic ecology with a natural acoustic ecology can only go so far. Firstly, the game's acoustic ecology, along with other spaces in the game, is an imagined recreation of natural (or fantastic) ecologies. More importantly, the technological limitations of the game's hardware and software mean that sounds are not likely to be unique and that there are only a certain number of simultaneous sounds possible. As already mentioned, FPS games use audio samples for their

> In a digital acoustic ecology that is crippled in comparison to real-world acoustic ecologies, it might be supposed that the player's immersion in the game world (through being a component of that ecology) would be seriously impeded, especially in those FPS game worlds that attempt an emulation of reality. However, players do report perceptions of immersion in FPS game worlds.

sounds; the storage requirements for these digital files (several hundred or more) imposes a limit on the number of sounds available on the game's point-of-sale media. Additionally, the computer or game console on which the game is played imposes a limit on the number of simultaneous sounds through its finite memory and processing power. Many FPS games attempt to obfuscate these restrictions by, in the case of footsteps, for example, providing a small number of varied audio samples of the sound then randomizing the order and intensity of their delivery. Some modern FPS games, such as games based on the «Source» game engine, incorporate an audio processing system where the reverberation of some sounds is calculated in real-time according to the apparent materials and volumes of the spaces displayed on screen and the position of the player in those spaces.

In a digital acoustic ecology that is crippled in comparison to real-world acoustic ecologies, it might be supposed that the player's immersion in the game world (through being a component of that ecology) would be seriously impeded, especially in those FPS game worlds that attempt an emulation of reality. However, players do report perceptions of immersion in FPS game worlds (Grimshaw & al., 2008) and several writers go further in suggesting that verisimilitude, or a perceptual realism, might suffice to replace sonic realism for the purposes of engagement and immersion. In other words, a realism based upon «plausibility of characterization, circumstance and action» (Corner, 1992: 100) as opposed to a realism of authenticity. Writers such as Laurel (1993), Back and Des (1996) and Fencott (1999) have discussed the use of caricature sounds, rather than authentic recordings, in virtual environments and this essay has already discussed the expectations arising from game conventions and genres. It is in a perceptually-real acoustic ecology, then, that the player is a fundamental component and through which the player is perceptually immersed in the world of the game.

Notes

[1] As part of a virtual, make-believe world, all visual game objects are inanimate, being merely aggregations of pixels. However, by analogy, it is useful to refer to such objects as (animate) organisms or (inanimate) things as if the game world – and the acoustic ecology forming part of that game world – were not virtual but real which, from a phenomenological point of view, it is.

[2] A fourth listening mode to be added to the three defined in electroacoustic music theory: causal, reduced and semantic (Chion, 1994: 25-34).

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The role of musical instruments in the globalization of music

El papel de los instrumentos musicales en la globalización de la música

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the term «globalization» has become a catchword in many languages. It is an open-ended process that implies different levels of unification. In music, attempts have been made by individual and collectively by artists from different cultures in the world. In each case, the process has been focused on the unification of musical sounds that can be identified within the global community. Technology is successful with the duplication of sounds of musical instruments for computer games, but the creation of zones of cultural interaction as defined by actual musical instruments is presenting challenges with the unification of cultural values into one global community. In music, globalization implies «world music» that is articulated as a hybrid product. The process of globalization is readily realized electronically, with sounds of musical instruments, but the creation of zones of cultural interaction, with the same musical instruments, will require a mixture of configuration of factors ranging from ecology to language and cultural manifestation. The objective of zones of cultural interaction is not to unify style of music, but through globalization is the sharing of actual musical instruments. To accomplish this objective, geographic spaces will have to surmount the globalization of the world ecology, language, and culture.

RESUMEN

En los últimos años, el término «globalización» se ha convertido en una palabra clave para muchas lenguas. Con él se hace referencia a un proceso abierto que implica diferentes niveles de unificación. En el campo de la música, han participado en él, tanto de forma individual como colectiva, artistas de diferentes culturas del mundo. En todos los casos, el proceso se ha centrado en la unificación de sonidos musicales que puedan identificarse por una comunidad global. En este sentido, la tecnología ha conseguido con éxito duplicar los sonidos de los instrumentos musicales para los videojuegos, pero la creación de zonas de interacción cultural, como las definidas por los instrumentos musicales actuales, se enfrenta a una serie de retos derivados de la unificación de los valores culturales en una comunidad global. El proceso de globalización se puede desarrollar fácilmente de manera electrónica con sonidos de instrumentos musicales, la creación de las zonas de interacción cultural con los mismos instrumentos musicales necesitará que se den además una serie de factores, que van desde lo ecológico hasta lo lingüístico y cultural. El principal objetivo de las zonas de interacción cultural no es el de unificar el estilo de música, sino el de compartir los instrumentos musicales actuales a través de la globalización. Para cumplir este objetivo, los territorios en los que se produzca esa interacción tendrán que completar este proceso globalizador atendiendo a criterios ecológicos, lingüísticos y culturales.

KEY WORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

Ethnomusicology, globalization, technology, cultural interaction, musical instruments, hybridation.
Etnomusicología, globalización, tecnología, interacción cultural, instrumentos culturales, hibridación.

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1. Introduction

Attempts to globalize styles of music of the world have been made by individual artists and, collectively in various cultures in the world. In each case, the process has been focused on the development of the musical alphabet that will become the foundation of the new expression— «world music». This assertion is best understood when taking into consideration that, as a sign, music is empty and derives its meaning from the multiplicity of interpretations, which arise from the network of relations that compose the societies of the world. For that, it becomes necessary to accept à priori that, as both a process and a product of processes, and regardless of its genre of the concept held by its makers, music has a limited culturally defined semantic field, in which it operates as means of communication.

As such, «world music» engenders the concept of hybridization, which reflects levels of attainment in various aspects of human life in a global reality. In the field of technology, one observes creative efforts being endorsed by manufacturers of computer-generated music leading, to such products as the chiptunes, referring to music composed for the microchip based audio hardware of early home computers and gaming consoles. These manufacturers visualize the world is divided into zones a, b, c, etc., and the music being played in zone d, can be heard also in zone z, without traveling. In spite of this rather high tech attempt, which is globalizing sounds of musical instruments of the world, there are still aspects of certain musical elements that will resist being globalized in this process, and absorbed into this form of high tech. This is due to the fact that the identity of instruments is culturally defined, i.e., every instrument is identified with of its musical zone, in which it fulfills a specific cultural function and it is an integral part of the essence of musical style pertaining to a given geographic space and people. In this paper, I am arguing that although the globalization of sounds of musical instruments can be accomplished electronically, the process of incorporating these instruments into zones of cultural interaction will require complex factors such as ecology, language and cultural practice. The effort is not so much on unifying the styles as it is on reinterpreting the actual instruments, to become integral parts of cultural calendar of the world communities.

2. Reproduction of sounds of nature in music

Prior to the development of harmony in Europe, composers were occasionally incorporating human emotions and sounds of nature as a process of musical embellishment in their works. The evolution of this practice intensified from the Baroque period forward until the Romantic era, when composers utilized their orchestral scores to account a story or describe a scene as detailed by the program. Samples abound throughout the Romantic and the 20th century periods in the symphonic compositions, the operatic realm as well as in tone poems program music. Nevertheless, it would be the French experiment, with musique concrete that will finally give rise to the electronic music. Composers wrote works with electronically generated sounds from laboratories emulating nature disaster sounds, independently recorded or those of orchestral musical instruments electronically generated.

The concern of reproducing sounds of musical instruments electronically, as accurately as possible, is related to that of the evolution of the process of transcription of music, which occupied the 19th century evolutionary phase of the field ethnomusicology, when it became a means for the ethnomusicology to «advocate [its] worth in cognate disciplines» (Wade, 2006: 191). The process of transcription became an obsession, for some in the field, to perfect this process mechanically. This experiment with musical sounds was being developed contemporaneously with the ability to transcribe music mechanically. One encounters the development of music transcription apparatus from the tonometer to the digital melograph being perfected for ethnomusicological laboratories. This noble effort evolved to the point of rendering the entire process obsolete in the evolution of the field of ethnomusicology. One of these inventions is a series of Charles Seeger's melograph, from Model-T to SYMPOD, ranging in degree of sophistication of elements and musical partials to be included in the transcription. The higher the model, the more the entire exercise became useless and abandoned all together for providing graphs of superfluous sounds of music that were not needed nor audible to the human naked ear. The concern of transcription has been reduced to the sound heard by human ear, and this has simplified the transcription process, even that being produced for analysis by using computer software.

In the realm of instrumental sound, the effort was placed on the electronic production of the actual sound of each music instrument, with all its characteristics. All of these experiments took place prior to the mention of World Music and the concept of globalization in this human artistic expression. This process continued to be developed more in both areas by engineering sounds than by music composers. It can be asserted that in these domains, the concept of globalization was taken to a higher level, especially when one

considers different sounds emitted by sources, other than the virtual musical instruments. From this perspective, these sounds can be identified in any corner of the world, specifically where technology has been developed, in that they are electronically generated. In this sense, the accomplishment of, or the realization of so-called globalization is complete and at that level, technology has succeeded in unifying the world musically, at least is the sounds of video games.

3. Globalization and «zones of cultural interaction»

Elsewhere I assert that although it has recently become a catchword, «globalization is an open-ended process that implies different levels of unification» (Kazadi, 1999-2001: 191). As a new concept in music, «globalization» continues to present challenges to scholars and layman alike, as to the scope of its definition, and in reference to the intended outcome of this process, I asserted that «regardless of its accepted definition and concept, «world music» is becoming a reality as a product of the globalization process» (Kazadi, 1999-2001: 191). In the field of music, globalization is feeding on music cultures of the world, not so much for the purpose of unifying musical styles of the world, but rather, to create a musical language alphabet, capable of being utilized to produce a hybrid expression – «world music», that can be claimed by the diverse cultural areas in the world.

In another source, I share Kwabena Nketia's expression, «zone of Cultural interaction», which he defines as a geographic space in which a cultural element is shared by its inhabitant[1]. For the interest of this paper, the cultural element can be a musical instrument or a musical practice that is not temporarily borrowed by a culture, but it is an integral part of the cultural calendar of a given area for that geographic space to be considered part of the zone of cultural interaction defined by the instrument in question. In addition to the criterion described above, the process of assimilation has to take place before the instrument can be integrated into a new culture. First, members of the new society have to determine its compatibility with the existing practices in the new society; second, there has to be a source of raw material in the area with which the instrument can be fabricated; and last

but not least, the instrument has to be re-interpreted by its new users, i.e., as a final phase of the process. And, before the instrument is assimilated by the new society, it has to be judged valuable and attributed new cultural functions or assigned to a new cultural manifestation, to insure its perpetuity in the new culture (Kazadi, 1990).

4. Zones of cultural interaction defined by musical instruments

Relevant to this paper, three African musical instruments have been selected to illustrate this argument. The first of these is the mbira – a widely spread idiophone encountered today practically on the four continents of the world; but the zone of cultural interaction defined by the mbira is limited to the Bantu world and its bordering territories of the Central African Republic and the Igbo region of Nigeria on the continent of

> In music, globalization implies «world music» that is articulated as a hybrid product. I have also argued that whereas the process of globalization is readily realized electronically, with sounds of musical instruments, the creation of zones of cultural interaction, with the same musical instruments, will require a mixture of configuration of factors ranging from ecology to language and cultural manifestation.

Africa. The presence of this instrument in the various parts of the world is not permanent and for the most part it is not an integral part of the cultural calendar of the world cultural areas where it is found. Examples abound in Africa and elsewhere with different cultural elements, but the zone of cultural interaction defined by each of them takes into consideration a variety of factors and phenomena, which is more than the mere presence. Although the world has been rendered narrow by the evolution of the technology, the explanation of the dissemination of any cultural element falls more into the realm of diffusionists than into that of the evolutionists. African cultural materials are readily encountered in Asia, America and Europe, where they have been diffused by tourists or by casual amateurs.

The second musical instrument under consideration is the instrument par excellence of the Mandingo Jali (griots) — the Kora. This 21-stringed instrument

Fig. 1. Shona Mbira dza Vadzimu

has a fascinating morphological structure. The sound box is made of a large gourde covered with an animal skin. Its 21 strings are arranged in two rows of 10 and 11, attached individually to a rawhide ring around the long neck. The evolution of this instrument over the years, has been noticeable by the increase in the number of strings, which is being threatened by the younger generation to raise it to 24. The zone of cultural interaction defined by this instrument is limited to the Sudanic Belt territory and specifically in the area where the large gourds are readily available. In addition to the ecological requirement, which explains the absence of the kora throughout the continent of Africa, there is also the cultural function for which it was developed to entertain the emperor Sundjata Keita (c. 1217-c.1255).

These traditional cultural functions were fulfilled by four families Kuyate, Suso, Diabate, and Konte, who have maintained the tradition of kora playing and its repertoire, and passed it down within the family from one generation to another. While the physical structure of the kora has suffered minor adaptations over the evolution of the instrument, the replacement of rawhide and gut strings with fishing line, the implantation of tuning pegs to resemble those of the Western chordophones, the insertion of an electric device for acoustic reasons, are among the most visible. The tuning system adopted by each family has remained the same, as corroborated by the number of epics that compose each family's repertoire. The zone cultural interaction defined by the kora incorporates the countries of Mali, Guinea Bissau, and Sine-Gambia area, where members of the Mandingo ethnic group migrated after the death of the «Mansa»2 Sundjata Keita.

The third instrument under consideration is the xylophone encountered throughout the sub-Saharan Africa, where it is known by a different names and structurally different, according to the function it fulfills in the ethnic group. In spite of its distribution on the continent of Africa, the cradle of the xylophone on this continent is in Mozambique, where it is known among the Chopi as timbila, is of varying sizes and group them into an orchestra also called timbila. For a significant period of time, scholars were inquisitive about the source/cradle of the xylophone. Where the majority in the field of anthropology and ethnomusicology stressed that xylophone was a native of Africa, others argued that this instrument came from Indonesia, together with the disease «elephantiasis» with which it is associated and it entered the continent of Africa via Mozambique (Jones, 1964). It is only appropriate that the Chopi of Mozambique, who excel in the art of the xylophone, would believe that it was given to their founding fathers by the spirits. Would these spirits be the Indonesians who came and returned on water? This will certainly remain unanswered for being out of the scope of this paper.

All three musical instruments from Africa are products of a network of ecological distribution, linguistic stock, and cultural values, which collectively underline their cultural identity. Although their sound can be electronically generated, their cultural identity, for which the definition is partially initiated by the zone of cultural interaction, will have to be reinterpreted in the new society. This is the case, for example, of the Brazilian friction drum – cuica, which morphologically resembles the Congolese Kinfwiti. Whereas among Bakongo this instrument was used for entertainment and for ritual invocations, symbolizing the leopard, the lion, or the mysterious voices from the dead, in Brazil it has been attributed only carnivalistic functions. This process completed the cycle of assimilation and the instrument had to be vulgarized for it to attain new

Fig. 2. «Kora»

role in the new society. What I am stressing here is the fact that when completed, the process of assimilation is an integral phase of the globalization. It allows musical instrumenme an integral part of the cultural calendar of the area, and with that brings the area into the zone of cultural interaction, which is the result of the globalization process.

Unlike with the kinfwiti, which has been assimilated in Brazil, other musical instruments from Africa, although they were at one time utilized in Brazil, have been dropped by the way side, because they had lost their context in which they evolved. This is the case of the xylophone, the mbira, and the tchiumba. On the other hand, Tiago de Oliveira Pinto (1990) affirms that if the musical bow berimbau survived to the present day, it is because it found its way into a new cultural context/manifestation – capoeira. Similar obser-

Fig. 3. Xylophone

vations can be made in reference to other musical instruments of African origin, which have been adopted or rejected in Brazil, primarily because they were incompatible and were not assigned new roles in the new society. While stages of the assimilation process may be applied consciously, or otherwise by members of an emerging society, the incorporation of the new area into the zone of cultural interaction is complete only after the re-interpretation phase.

In this paper, I have brought forth two theoretical observations that complement each other and stress the adaptability of a musical instrument to insure its survival in the new area as a process of globalization. The underlining condition for both of these theories is the assimilation process, which contains the following phases: 1) a cultural inventory; 2) the selection of common denominators; and 3) those common denominators that have been judged compatible are submitted to the «re-interpretation» phase, when the instrument is attributed new functions, as it gradually reach the point of assimilation. The relevance of this basic theoretical observation is applicable to the understanding of the forging of a zone of cultural interaction.

The same theoretical observation is relevant to the study of the assimilation of musical instruments, and it is also applicable to other cultural religious practices.

Elsewhere, I demonstrate how language plays a paramount role in the organization of vocal music in Africa, and conclude that: «Language is crucial to the understanding of the creative process of the vocal music. Its tonal inflections are not only vital in the process of melodic construction and heterophonic implication; they are also influential in the selection of certain musical instruments used by an ethnic group» (Kazadi, 1997).

In addition to assisting in the selection of the musical instrument, with which an ethnic group is identified in Africa, language is also the source of all the nature of music, ranging from the melodic contour to harmonic implication and the rhythmic organization. African language, for example, is predominantly tonal, i.e., the meaning of the word is determined by the pattern of it tonal inflections. Although two words may have the same spelling, they differ from each other when their respective tonal inflections are applied. Therefore, to maintain the meaning of each word, the basic melodic pattern has to adhere to the tonal inflection of each word. In short, the semantic level of the language is dictating the sonic level of the music. This reality is also true in the organization of the rhythmic dimension of African music, which derives its structure from the poetic rhythm of the language. Thus concluding that the temporal level of the music derives its structural principle from the syntax of the language. In other words, the impact of the language is also felt in the instrumental rhythmic structure.

Often, a phrase or a series of nonsense syllables – kon nkolo kon kon nkolo– is formulated to an instrumental rhythmic pattern, called by African scholars as time-line pattern, and in England as standard pattern, which serves as a memory and teaching aid (Kubik, 1972; 1979). Whereas traditionally master drummers rely on these patterns as memory and a teaching aid, in a composition, they function as a measuring stick for musical phrases. Although the structure of pattern may appear simple individually, the difficulty in understanding the final rhythmic tapestry of an African musical piece resides in the relationship derived from the combination of its constituent patterns. In his mind, the African believes that each pattern contains holes that are fitted by another pattern. Although an instrumental composition may be conceived rhythmically, the relationship between its constituent time-line patterns is by application perceived melodically. In other terms, the stratification of any number of time-line patterns in an

interlocking relationship is what Meki Nzewi (1997: 44) has coined an Ensemble Thematic Cycle (ETC).

The continuity of a cultural element in a new society is a validation of its persistence or its assimilation into that society. Although persistence and assimilation are not synonymous with continuity, they are conditions, sine qua non, for the realization of the latter. This order of events is best comprehended when «assimilation» is accepted as having occurred when the process of cultural exchange, acculturation or inculturation, has been completed. Thus, assimilation can be defined as the advanced stage of the acceptance of a cultural element; a stage at which «continuity» is initiated, while «persistence» insures the latter's evolution.

The discrepancy in this case is two fold: 1) difficulty of separating the object with its culture whence it derives its identity; 2) incorporating the object into a new cultural calendar and thus attributing it a new identity. For example, as a musical instrument from Africa, a kora defines a zone of cultural interaction which includes the entire northeastern corner of the continent of Africa. Unlike with zones of cultural interaction defined by the actual musical instruments, those defined by electronically generated sound, seem to be without boundaries in that they are void of cultural identity. Whereas on one hand, kora is identified with the Mandingo people, chiptunes, on the other hand, is identified with video games.

5. Conclusions

In the above discourse, I have argued that the globalization is a process with meanings differently determined by areas of interest. In music, globalization implies «world music» that is articulated as a hybrid pro-

duct. I have also argued that whereas the process of globalization is readily realized electronically, with sounds of musical instruments, the creation of zones of cultural interaction, with the same musical instruments, will require a mixture of configuration of factors ranging from ecology to language and cultural manifestation.

Endnotes

[1] Public lecture delivered at the Conference in Belagio, Italy, October 14, 1992.
[2] King of kings.

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Music Distribution in the Consumer Society: the Creation of Cultural Identities Through Sound

Distribución musical en la sociedad de consumo
La creación de identidades culturales a través del sonido

ABSTRACT

Our behavior is determined by the characteristics of the culture in which we live. Culture imposes on us ways of thinking and perceiving, habits, customs and usages. Music is a form of cultural expression that has a very important role in the social construction of reality. Music has always accompanied man, is one of the oldest rituals of human kind. No one knows exactly how and why the man has started to make music but the music has been a means of perceiving the world, a powerful instrument of knowledge. Traditionally, creation and distribution of music has been tied to the need to communicate feelings and experiences that can not be expressed through common language. This paper describes how our society has generated a multitude of sounds that are distributed freely through the new technologies. This set of sounds is creating cultural identities that are unable to manage his current music and understand their communicative speech. To this end, the paper examines the profound changes that music is experiencing in a consumer society. These changes make it necessary to establish a new paradigm for analysis that allows structuring the diversity of sounds, analyzing their creation, distribution and consumption. Finally, the paper states that permanent contact with the music changes the way we perceive sounds. In contemporary society, music has gone from being a vital need to become an instrument of consumption. This has led to significant changes in their functions, significance and social use.

RESUMEN

Los seres humanos estamos condicionados, en una medida imposible de estimar, por los supuestos de la cultura en que vivimos, y ésta nos impone modos de pensar y de percibir, hábitos, costumbres y usos. La música como forma de expresión cultural siempre ha tenido un papel muy importante en la construcción social de la realidad, es un arte cuyo desarrollo va unido a las condiciones económicas, sociales e históricas de cada sociedad. El presente artículo analiza el papel que tiene la música dentro del universo simbólico de la cultura contemporánea. Para ello centra su estudio en describir cómo nuestra sociedad ha generado multitud de sonidos que se distribuyen libremente a través de los canales establecidos por las nuevas tecnologías permitiendo establecer, a través del proceso de comunicación musical, múltiples identidades culturales que son incapaces de ordenar el discurso musical actual y extraer de él lo que de novedoso pueda presentar. Para ello se analizan los profundos cambios estructurales y simbólicos que está sufriendo la música en la sociedad de consumo y que hacen necesario fijar un nuevo paradigma para su análisis que permita estructurar la diversidad de sonidos de nuestra época, analizar su creación, distribución y consumo. Finalmente, el artículo concluye desarrollando la idea de que hoy, debido al contacto continuo con el hecho musical que se produce en la sociedad contemporánea, ha cambiado nuestra forma de percibir la música; nos hemos acostumbrado a apreciarla como una fuente de placer efímero, a percibirla más como una satisfacción inofensiva que como una necesidad vital.

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1. Introduction

The aim of this article, which is part of a broader investigation into the subject, is to determine the characteristics that define today's music as a social phenomenon. Social because understanding it requires an analysis of the uses and functions of music today, and this analysis is only possible from a relationship between the music and the characteristics of the society that created or interpreted it; social because the necessity to produce and listen to music is one of Man's most fundamental activities. This project aims to link the analysis of music in society to the importance that sound in the universe of communication has always had, in order to examine the role of music in relation to the evolution of society today. We emphasise the growth and development of the current music market, analysing audiences and the profile of the individual who consumes music today, as well as the union between the structure of the music and the construction of the symbolic universe. So, the main objective is to join the analysis of consumption and current musical creation to the structure of feeling appropriate to the times we live in.

2. The importance of music in society

Music has always been with us. It is one of the oldest rituals of the human race that reflects and expresses our emotions, passions and feelings (Glowacka Pitet, 2004). We don't know how or why Man started to make music but it is clear that music is a medium through which to perceive the world, a potent instrument of knowledge. It is the language that goes beyond language since it has been traditionally linked to Man's need to communicate feelings and experiences that cannot be expressed through common language. Its communicative power lies in the fact that it can say everything to us without saying anything at all since it is not necessary for it to be a bearer of words or intelligible in order to refer to a world of infinite meanings that can vary with each new interpretation. Daily life does not exist without music; the cultures of the world have succeeded in ordering the noise and creating melodies, rhythms and songs that have played a transcendental role in the development of humanity, from primitive song to the most urban of rhythms like rock, jazz or the blues, all have had important repercussions in the development of society (Hormigos, 2008). So, we start from the idea that music is inherently endowed with the quality of sociability, it is the expression of inner life, of feelings, but it also demands the listener's receptivity and understanding of the style in which it is made as well as knowledge of the society in

which it was created, because each musical work is a set of signs invented during its execution, dictated by the needs of the social context. If we detach the musical signs of the work from the society that created it, these would have different meanings.

Music is an undeniable social fact; it has thousands of social mechanisms, is deeply engrained in the human collective, receives numerous environmental stimuli and in turn creates new relationships between people (Fubini, 2001). The songs and melodies that we carry in our cultural baggage imply specific ideas, meanings, values and functions that intimately relate to the sounds of the cultural fabric that produces them. Historically, music has always been allocated to a specific public conceived as a social group with tastes that are different according to the society we live in. We can therefore see how the very musical practices of our contemporary culture not only reflect symbols and values, but also the rules of social stratification, the technological characteristics of our time and the growing influence of the means of production.

So, we can say that music plays a very important role in our society in terms of cultural declaration; it is communication among individuals, reflecting the culture of which it forms a part. Man expresses himself through cultural forms; in the case of music, he uses a specialized language, different from everyday language, which poses various levels of understanding and allows us to observe the extension of dialogism in modern culture, and also the importance of passion, with its cognitive and contractual dimensions. It symbolizes the general dynamism of the feelings, and contains the most abstract structures of the emotions. Music constructs our sense of identity through the direct experiences offered up by the body, time and sociability, experiences which enable us to situate ourselves within imaginative cultural stories (Frith, 2003). When it comes to understanding the music, to receiving a message from the notes of a musical instrument or perceiving the meaning of a song, we must be aware that the interactions between the sounds and the individual arise from answers learned, personal guidelines and cultural standards; hence the same song can be interpreted differently depending on the cultural characteristics of the person perceiving it.

Musical structures derive from specific cultural standards; that is why each society classifies sounds according to their functionality, thus we have music for dancing, for sensual pleasure, music that is light, religious, for prayer and consumption, etc. All musical functions are determined by society, so we are only able to know the music and the social movements that

exist around it if we recognize the cultural background in which it was created, since each musical culture has its own peculiarities. It also has fixed procedures for validating the music, for setting the boundary for what is to be included and excluded as part of a genre, or creating labels to help interpret and classify the sound. From this perspective, interest in the musical product itself loses ground to the analysis of the dynamic aspects of the culture that influence musical composition. More attention is paid to the analysis of aspects that lie outside music (function, symbolism, change of attitudes and values, enculturation, etc) which become important when understanding the contemporary universe of sound. In today's society, however, it is very hard to determine music's true place in the world of culture, due to the rise of mass culture which has led to a massification of music in certain genres, much of which of it containing repetitive messages that lack aesthetic or artistic value. It has also caused an incorrect perception of the function performed by music within our cultural universe. It tends too often to be linked to consumption while forgetting that it is really much closer to culture. This has led to a false outlook regarding the idea that Man's need to listen to music is more a leisure or consumer activity than a cultural activity. So, the social interest in music beyond the vision that converts it into a product of exchange within the modern consumer society is lost; and what is ignored is that there is still a fundamental cultural dimension, together with that consumer dimension to which music is exposed to today, that will give meaning to the musical fact. The importance of music must not be measured by the profit earned from its sale but by how the vital experience surrounding it is created and constructed. We can only understand this if we take on a subjective and objective identification with the musical culture of the moment.

The music of contemporary society does not appear from nowhere but is built over time, it is maintained socially and created and experienced individually. So, to better comprehend the role music plays in our society we must look into the dynamic aspects of culture, since here is where we will find those aspects beyond the music that are important for un-

derstanding the universe of sound. Culture is what endows a melody with a specific function that establishes places for its interpretation, which converts a song into a symbol, and marks attitudes and values, etc. Each era has given us a specific musical language that we have transformed in accordance with the rules and values of our society. That music, endowed with specific cultural characteristics, will be perceived according to each person's individual criteria. Therefore, it is necessary to identify how the individual makes and perceives music, to identify the connection of the music to the rest of human behaviour.

The meaning of the music is not only found in the text, that is, in the work of music, but in the performance, in its staging through musical/cultural activity.

> Man expresses himself through cultural forms; in terms of music, he uses a specialized language different to everyday speech which poses various levels of understanding and allows us to observe the extension of dialogism in modern culture, and also the importance of passion, with its cognitive and contractual dimensions. It symbolizes the general dynamism of the feelings, and contains the most abstract structures of the emotions.

This staging allows us to move from a description of the music to a description of the listener's response and the consideration of the relationship of feeling, truth and identity. We say that music becomes symbolic for a group of individuals and transmits identity when songs or melodies appear with a value that is representative for a human group in a specific time and context. Music always has a strong emotional component which converts the music into a symbol, either because the sounds in that music have been created specifically to become symbolic music or because, with the passing of time and familiarity, a melody or song becomes spontaneously symbolic based on a social availability that gives the music a special value with content that a group can identify. We must bear in mind that this symbolism of music is situational; when taken out of its initial context it loses its capacity to generate identity. To understand how identity is generated via music, the role played by music as an instrument of communication within culture needs to be studied.

3. Communication by music in the contemporary cultural universe

Cultural identity is the place where we find culture as subjectivity, where the community sees itself as subject in a dynamic way within a continuous process. That is, cultural identity is an incessant mediation between tradition and renewal, permanence and transformation, emotion and knowledge. Cultural identity created from the discourse of sound lends meaning to the music; it shows us that it is the ideal vehicle for transmitting the values of culture. Traditionally, we have socialized through music; the desires, values, ideas and beliefs we share have found an outlet for expression via sound. Through particular melodies or

agent since it has always had a power and decisive educative vocation in the social construction of identities, and cultural and individual styles. The musical discourse consciously lays open its practical dimensions to the point where it involves itself in forms of life with singular conceptions on how we relate to each other and the world. Music is an essential part of our biographical memory; any time in our life can be linked to a type of music, melody or song that helps us to remember, and stays with us from infancy to maturity adding sound to our development in society.

Musical expression is a fundamental pillar of all societies. All human communities have musical expression as a structural and integrating element. Music possesses an important value that derives from the nature of its language and its capacity for communication.

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Although the semantic message of the music often seems slight, especially if we refer to music that only has melody, we must understand that aesthetic information is a highly significant field. We can then affirm that music always expresses something, even for those people who do not know its language. Music can evoke, suggest, describe and narrate. Each musical act generates

sounds, we have recognized the social roots of our belonging to a particular culture; these enable us to recognize our past, situate us in a present and project a future. But the feeling of the music as social action is still a subjective phenomenon that depends on receptor activity. Musical reception is preceded by a strategy that plays with the listener's expectations. This action of perception is the feeling of the music and it alone can establish cultural spheres, can be effective as a communication tool and can be social.

Man makes contact with the world via his senses, each of which allows him to know something of his surroundings. Sound becomes a fundamental element in receiving and transmitting information, with this need to perceive the environment through the senses. After speech, music is the most important sound made by Man. It is a structuring of sounds that constitutes an imaginary language with its own expressive value. Music is a fundamental communicative instrument that describes concepts, feelings, places and situations, etc, and so, all cultures have used it as a potent socializing

processes of meaning. The language of music is not that of common speech as it has no conceptual character but, even so, it can also express emotions and feelings. In sound, Man has found an important element for identification since, when he cannot express an idea in his head through common language he turns to a mechanism of expression that is much more powerful, the language of sounds, loaded with specific cultural expressivity.

However, the communicative function of music also depends on the style, taste, artistic labels and training prevalent at the time for its interpretation. Each culture has its own rhythm, and its conscious experience is ordered into cycles of seasonal change, physical growth, economic activity and political upheavals, life and beyond. We could say that the experience of ordinary life takes place in a world in real time. The essential quality of music is its power to create another world in virtual time (Blacking, 2006). It is here where the real communicative power of music lies, communicating something that can be modified with each

new hearing, something that changes to the rhythm of the changes of context, of the changes in society. This characteristic of music arises when the sound becomes material, with its transmission through time/space channels, when the music goes from immediate perception to being distributed through the media, and is recorded and stored in various supports. Then the music is no longer unique but observable, like a temporal product (Moles, 1978). Before the music could be recorded and stored to be turned into sound in any given situation, the melodies only existed as temporal material created by the music of the time. Since the invention of recording, musical language has become stable. Thus, musical communication remains fixed in time for all generations, and takes on new meaning with each interpretation, hence its richness.

Today we cannot question the communicative capacity of music because it operates as a language without being one, and its communicability is developed via observable, measureable and verifiable procedures. But despite this we live in an age where music is used and abused without us caring about its communicative capacity. We have never been so surrounded by music, but it occupies a place on the periphery of our society, its communicative function hidden away. Hence, we have been steadily losing the ability to interpret its real language. Each one of us fixes limits within which sound, perceived as agreeable and satisfactory, informs us of meaning, but outside these limits sound is appreciated as noise and dissonance with no meaning. Today these limits, traditionally established within specific parameters and shared by society, are becoming unfixed. The music lover who likes a certain musical style endows the sounds he hears with meaning in accordance with the expectations the music has aroused in him. Following a specific musical style, musical label, musician or artist conditions us when we receive other types of music because we tend to judge anything new within the reference frameworks we have created as a consequence of our tastes. So, the melodies or songs we listen to will be much more communicative for us the closer they are to that musical standard determined by our personal taste.

Many social practices are already linked to music, and help construct it and give it meaning. Music's most important dimension is its functionality within a specific social context. This belonging to a given cultural scenario generates and determines the communicative role that music has in the life of the individual who belongs to a group with which he shares a symbolic universe, a language, customs, beliefs, etc. It is in this context that the melody or song takes on a shared

social meaning. However, our society has tended towards the mass dissemination of an easy musical discourse that is wiping out traditional musical cultures that existed within the community dimension of music based on collective interpretation.

This music is being substituted by a standard musical model in which the communicative function is increasingly altered and manipulated by an institutional corporate network that has tentacles in technology, the economy and politics (Smiers, 2006). This network designs the components of a mass culture more concerned with effects on the audience and the possibilities of controlling its reactions than with the communicative functions of music. However, what the media defines as music is not the only truth. Alternative musical forms and different means of musical production often coexist with mass musical dimensions, contaminating them and being contaminated by them. We can state that the variety of today's musical expressions is closely linked to the dynamics of social life and is full of symbolic values of an implicit and explicit nature. The music of the postmodern era has no receptors, only users. It serves as a substitute in the I of the song or melody, and not even the I of the music but a kind of empty box at the service of the user who wants to use the melody or song to express his feelings. Following this dynamic, today's music blanks out the meaning so that each of us can fill it with our own ideas (Pardo, 2008).

4. The influence of new forms of distribution on the perception of contemporary music.

Technological changes have brought new forms of socialization of cultural goods, and music is no exception. The creation and reception of music has been greatly transformed by the arrival of new software programs that allow sounds to be created and manipulated with ease, even by those who have no musical training (Roca, 2004). In addition, today's changes in the dissemination of information and the technologies of transmission have greatly increased music distribution worldwide. The Internet has become the great ally of the musical message thanks to new recording and distribution technologies supported in new formats, thus broadening the catalogue of messages that the individual can receive through the mass of available music, and so reopening an old debate about the role of music in the cultural universe. These new forms of distribution developed by the culture of contemporary technology have caused music to become a ubiquitous element subject to a continuous revolution that obliges a constant revision of the paradigms that

try to structure the diversity of modern sounds so as to group together styles, messages, fashions, functions and effects to understand them better. Instead of this, today we find infinite sounds freely distributed across the channels established by the new technologies, allowing the generation of multiple identities constructed within highly diffuse limits and which facilitate an ordering of the current musical discourse that enables us to extract from it whatever is new. All this is altering the perception of music, its communicative capacity, its forms of distribution and control, even the individual's ability to appreciate the current musical discourse. We have gone from musical practices that were the preserve of a specific group to a form of omnivore appropriation of music that consists of listening to a bit of everything. The omnivore is someone who is willing to appreciate all forms of music. However, it is important to differentiate between knowing a musical genre or cultural style and appreciating it as your own, appropriating it to express an identity. This omnivore behaviour of today is best understood as someone who has knowledge rather than affinity (Ariño, 2006).

The loss of physical format (first the tape cassette, then the record and now the CD) has caused a radical maybe even irreversible mutation in music. The format allowed repertoires to be ordered and a specific communicative discourse to be transmitted clearly. In other times, musical fashions were created around it and its transmission enabled the creation of cultural identities. Today we are exposed to a continuous torrent of sounds that do not allow us to make specific sense of the contemporary musical discourse. Thus, postmodern music has been losing its time reference that used to enable it to be understood, and instead has become all-present. With hardly any effort, we continually access melodies and songs that are born and die in no time at all. The immediate, mass availability of free music through the Net is modifying not only the perception of music but also its formulas of reproduction and distribution, even the forms of production. The new digital supports have liberated music from the captivity of the format, inclining more towards automated listening, more passive on the part of the listener who is exposed to continuous music which, while it is true that it extends the range of sounds we can hear, gives the music no time to tell us what it wants to say.

That is why easily digestible music triumphs today, and styles, labels and interpreters go out of fashion faster and faster, leaving no place for more complex music within the social discourse of contemporary consumer society. This is not for lack of quality or

because the ear is not enabled to search out communication and identity in it, but because the current social scenario gives it no space in which to contact the individual who is more accustomed to using music than appreciating the musical discourse. What is important today is the existence of music that is portable, without interruptions and potentially infinite. But this permanence of music goes hand in hand with the obsolescence of each single moment that is part of that continuous sound (Horta, 2008). Today more than ever we have stopped listening to music; now we only hear it. There is no time to take delight in it; current consumer society allows no time to appreciate the musical discourse that it generates. From the painstaking selection of melodies and songs that in another time spoke to us of our musical culture, enabling the generation of cultural identities shared through the discourse of sound, we have arrived at a compulsive accumulation of sound files that say nothing to us. We store more music than we can ever listen to or appreciate, leaving to one side the need to identify ourselves with a specific musical style and replacing it with a need to accumulate that is very apt for a consumer society. In other times, a new release was awaited with anticipation, with speculation rife over song content, how an artist's sound might have changed, the message the music would transmit. Today, we can have the entire musical catalogue of any era at our disposal in a matter of minutes, gaining in access capacity to music but losing the social discourse that would help us to understand it.

As we mentioned before, music has always been mixed with social existence; it animates, accompanies and imitates the organic functioning of life. And this is precisely what it does in an age of digital ubiquity, it aligns with a way of life that is ephemeral, spurred on by the consumer rhythm that the market imposes, and which implies weak interpersonal links, a light ideological substratum and cultural parameters that are difficult to control. In this context, the music, digitally compressed, transcends time, an element that is consubstantial to it and which it inhabits in its very essence (Horta, 2008). This mercantilization of music cancels out self-expression and favours the repetition of predictable, standardised models. The crisis of the music industry sees it turn increasingly towards repetition, the latest star is boosted, as are all those who seem suspiciously like stars of the past, casting aside the new and original. In other times, it was the music that wore the identity codes of each style to adorn the musical discourse and to reach a chosen public. Today the industry reinvents those codes, manipulates them, cle-

ans them up so that they reach a greater number of individuals, thus creating a musical pastiche that aims to be identified by various groups of individuals but which, in the attempt, loses its communicative power and its capacity to become a cultural reference. Also, all this is causing the elimination of the public discourse in the media of those musicians who are starting out and who can contribute something new to the current saturated musical discourse. To combat this rejection of the unknown, new forms of putting music in contact with society are emerging via social networks like MySpace or YouTube, where the music industry loses influence over the medium when deciding what musical content is to be projected. Here public taste determines the success of a type of music. However, it must be remembered that social categories of taste and taste itself or aesthetic sensibility are socially determined. So the universes of individual preferences are organized homologically in terms of the structure of social space, and they reproduce their configuration. Thus, today's musical taste is conditioned by the sound saturation to which we are exposed, so nobody has the right to set the sound, it floats continuously in the air, appearing and disappearing without warning, and leaves traces in our sound memory that have little to do with the original listening experience. Clearly postmodern society gives more importance to the immediate availability of sound than to the act of recalling the cultural discourse of the music. Little by little music pulls back from those boundaries within which it was comprehensible and ceases to facilitate a perfectly defined cultural identity in favour of diverse mobile identity models.

5. Conclusions

The history of Western music of the last 50 years is marked by its integration into a society in which the predominant form of cultural dissemination has identified with the mass media and the new technologies. Gradually, music has been assimilating a wide range of changes and mutations from new languages, the alteration of habits of communication and listening, the consequent crisis of the traditional aesthetic canons to

the very notion of the work of art. We can add other changes of great sociological importance, like the disproportionate increase in musical consumption. Postmodern music is characterized by a pluralism of styles and languages that tend towards making its contents complex and relative. The current variability of tastes linked to a continuous transition of fashion provoked by social dynamism, and a growing democratization of culture imply a succession of brief musical aesthetics.

We can say that the music created today has no

> Today we cannot question the communicative capacity of music because it operates as a language without being one, and its communicability is developed via observable, measureable and verifiable procedures. But despite this we live in an age where music is used and abused without us caring about its communicative capacity. We have never been so surrounded by music, but it occupies a place on the periphery of our society, its communicative function hidden away. Hence, we have been steadily losing the ability to interpret its real language.

unitary aesthetic conscience but a multiplicity (many styles, messages, etc) of fragmented aesthetic consciences. But we cannot forget that music is impregnated with a social spirit that determines it in the end, so the music of today, through its sounds, reflects the way of being that is appropriate to our society.

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The Utility of Musico-visual Formats in Teaching

La utilidad de los formatos de interacción músico-visual en la enseñanza

ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the educational potential of popular culture through the use didactic formats musicovisual interaction in the classroom. It is believed that popular culture, specifically music, is a particularly useful tool for learning. Considered by learning skills, and its current deployment in International educational systems. Especially, its implementation in the education Systems in Europe and Spanish. We live in a technological society, and therefore it is necessary to extend the concept of literacy to digital literacy. Elements of popular culture that are common for young people, such as video clips, should be incorporated. We analyze the competency learning proposals made by the OECD through the DESECO Project or the European framework defined by the recommendation of the European Parliament and Council. These proposals provide a starting point to establish an initial strategy, from the discursive dimension of interaction musicovisual formats, allowing for effective work in the classroom. For this reason, the article evaluates formats musico-visual interaction as teaching aids to serve a critical digital literacy. It also explores some specific contributions to the development of competencies in compulsory Secondary Education. General proposals are made to enable teachers to understand how to use these formats musico-visual interaction in their classroom to work general competencies.

RESUMEN

Desde los presupuestos del aprendizaje por competencias, y su actual implantación en la mayor parte de los sistemas educativos internacionales, el artículo analiza la potencialidad educativa de la cultura popular a través de la utilización didáctica de los formatos de interacción músico-visual en el aula. Se defiende la necesidad de permear el concepto de alfabetización, integrando en el mismo los elementos que conforman el actual escenario de una sociedad digital altamente tecnológica, al tiempo que se recupera e inserta en el discurso de la escuela y en los procesos de aprendizaje que ésta motiva, los productos culturales que forman parte de la vivencia cotidiana de los adolescentes. El análisis de las propuestas de aprendizaje por competencias realizadas, entre otros, por la OCDE a través del Proyecto DESECO o el marco de referencia europeo definido a través de la recomendación del Parlamento y el Consejo Europeo, sirven de punto de partida para establecer una estrategia inicial que, desde la dimensión discursiva de los formatos de interacción músico-visual, permita un trabajo eficaz en el aula. Así, se evalúa la oportunidad que estos formatos de interacción músico-visual, y concretamente los videoclips, ofrecen como medios didácticos al servicio de una alfabetización digital que fomente un espíritu crítico, y se exploran algunas contribuciones concretas que se vislumbran en el desarrollo de competencias generales en Educación Secundaria Obligatoria.

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Introduction:

It is a paradox that schools as an institution have traditionally been resistant to popular culture, to that which has its own tradition. Despite the fact that the products of this folklore have always been part of the daily cultural diet of young people, formal education has been reluctant to embrace this knowledge and integrate it into its educational practices.

Of all the expressions of popular culture, music is especially relevant in the current configuration of this diet. Teenagers enjoy the experience of music intensely through various channels, media and formats. They relish the constant exposure to a flow of sound and music which in recent decades has added the visual to the audio experience. Hence, the video clip has burst onto the scene as an interactive music-visual format, from the paradigms of intertextuality and spectacularization, and has aroused the interest of youngsters. The proliferation of mobile technological devices has extended the reach of this consumption, significantly broadening the time and space young people devote to their consumption.

So, a relevant question is what possibilities are offered by the arrival of music-visual interaction formats, especially video clips, in the processes of formal education; that is, how far, regarding the current concern about educational processes driven by the competence model, can these products of communication help achieve general competence and, in particular, stimulate critical and reflexive thought.

We try to answer some of these questions in this study, making general proposals that cover large areas of competencies as defined by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This has required a broad theoretical review that interrelates such disciplines as Pedagogy, Didactics, Communication and Music, among others.

1. The competence as reference framework

The model of competencies structures the design of a significant part of international educational systems today. So, any proposal for action in education must necessarily be framed within this model. It is a reference that has been imposed, and although disputed by certain collectives (Vega Cantor, 2007) who distrust some of the suppositions on which this model is based (competition, efficacy…), it is a reality that makes it an integral part of our educational systems both in pre-university and university education, and has come to transcend the regulatory curricular designs in force in Europe, and consequently in Spain – Organic Law of Educational Planning (2006), Organic Law of

Universities (2007). Notwithstanding antecedents – studies on competencies rooted in the early 70s [(Drummond, 1974), (Walker, 1977)] and widely accepted in the 90s, the starting point was the so-called Lisbon Strategy in 2000, but more so with its reformulation in 2005 – when the European Union, basing itself on reports from the Council and the Commission as well as on the results of different studies like Maastricht (CEDEFOP, 2004), established a series of recommendations to determine a reference framework of general competencies that are transversal and which must be achieved by all students. They emphasised the progressive, iterative nature of learning as something continuous throughout life within multiple open contexts (2006).

Thus, the scope of the term competence was defined as «a combination of knowledge, capabilities and attitudes appropriate to the context», and was framed within a project of personal and collective development that must contribute to «active citizenship, social inclusion and employment» (2006: 394/13). It also emphasizes the critical capabilities needed for analysis, reasoning and communication that must be deployed efficiently when «problems in a variety of areas arise», (OECD, 2005: 2). Definitively, the potentiality of interpreting, confronting and adequately responding to the constant stimuli of a world that is increasingly complex, technological and dynamic.

The research developed by the OECD through the DESECO project (OECD, 2005: 4 and ss.) has prioritized three main areas of competence which are interrelated and form the basis of the proposals we put forward in this text:

a) Instrumental: individuals must have a broad and varied ToolBox which enables them to positively interact with their surroundings, including skills in the use of languages, Information and Communication Technologies, socio-cultural areas..

b) Autonomy: the ability to exercise freedom of action responsibly, to set goals and propositions and set about achieving them, to be responsible for one's own personal development.

c) Interaction: citizens must possess a variety of mechanisms and resources to allow them to freely and spontaneously interact within a highly interrelated social system which is also global and interdependent.

2. The complex processes of literacy in a connected society

We know that we are deep into transformation. And although we don't know what lies ahead, we are certainly aware that these transformations have an

essential impact on the forms of proceeding and understanding, fundamentally because these «affect the nature of the semiotics used, and the dominant contexts of communication» (Pérez Tornero, 2000: 89). The framework of competencies questions the traditional concept of literacy; the dominant linguistic and verbal-written competencies, like structuring agents of the processes of communication, lose ground to multiple, complex systems of social interaction, which is dislocated, multimedia and hypertextual, as numerous authors have pointed out (Pérez Tornero, 2000; Piscitelli, 2002; Marina, 2008; Lankshear & Knobel, 2008).

The young live in an increasingly mediatised society that offers them a huge amount of information that grows and overflows; a RAM_culture, as Brea (2008) put it. The murder of the real, as proclaimed by Baudrillard, by a virtualized world that goes beyond reality, saturating it, forces us to face up to the need to understand/attend to literacy in a broader sense in order to respond to the new necessities of knowledge management that confront us. «The excess of information is the end of information, and the excess of communication is the end of communication», Baudrillard reminds us (2002: 57) so, in a reconfiguration of its postulates, it is important for schools to allow the establishment of valid and efficient connections between the pieces on the Borges map inhabited by students and the real references to which the indices of this map point to. In the plethora of the schematic, in the designs of the self-referenced sign, the school must continue to fulfil the objective of rescuing the fragments of the real from the drift. It must broaden the meaning of its action towards a model of all-understand digital literacy, and deepen its action in the environment of an educated society by contextualizing learning and making it significant for that economic spectator presented by Vilches (2001: 40). Advantage needs to be taken of the opportunities that this new reality offers, that «privileged sphere of extension, exuberant and hyperreal (…) That symbolic world plagued with stimuli and sown with signs» (García & Gertrudix, 2009: 19).

The huge amount of information outside the school's orbit causes a continuous shift in the influence the different educational states have as managers of learning. The school seems to separate itself from the daily flow of knowledge because the society of casual learning is increasingly to the fore. Beyond the mentalities applied to the educational systems, this questions the relevance of the regulated, formalized models of learning as opposed to informal learning (micro-contents, culture snack, multi-scoped singularity, etc). Clearly the school's influence on the construction of learning is waning, as has been indicated over the past two decades. From the call for social descholarization by the Austrian Iván Illich (1985) to the construct of the educational city of Edgar Faure (1973), and to recent movements, like Connectivism, propelled by George Siemens (2005) or expanded education, passing through theories of situated learning, all have shown how the alternative forms of learning are gai-

> When the video clip is brought into the classroom, it facilitates the recovery of an element that is part of the everyday life and life experience of the student, and benefits their attention and interest, and identification within the group and social setting, etc. but it also causes the reflection and articulation of a critical examination of the video clip as text and of the pre-eminent meanings and underlying ideology always present in any cultural expression.

ning ground against formal learning as practised at school. It is as stated by Rubén Díaz, of the Zemos98 collective, «education can happen at any time and in any place…, inside or outside school. When we enter school, we enter a culture of silence. Expanding knowledge means passing from the culture of silence to the culture of questioning, and this means entering into the dynamic of libertarian pedagogy» (Various, 2009).

The protean diversity of the panoply of media that makes up the contemporary spectrum of social communication, and the incessant flow of media text that floods our reality offer us a kind of Pandora's Box on to which are often projected all the good and bad of the world via debates whose verticity varies according to the social moment in which they occur. Specifically, the all-enveloping breadth and complexity of this offer requires, as Ortiz Sobrino states, a continuous critical reflection on the role the media plays in the educatio-

nal processes: «audiovisual literacy is an indispensible tool today for forming critical citizens who know how to take advantage of the many possibilities that media communication offers for knowledge, information and entertainment» (2008: 10).

3. Culture and popular music: formats of musico-visual interaction

For centuries, the control of formal knowledge and the formulation of values in the West have been in the hands of certain powers and social classes who marginalized other knowledge that was part of popular culture. Nevertheless exchanges, more or less fluid, have always occurred between these two environments, one feeding off the other, and the original sour-

> Musico-visual interaction formats have a didactic dimension. A potential which, if properly treated, is aware of its context, and the cultural, political and socio-economic parameters that define each era (their message), but which also contains a programme for interpreting that message (a code).

ce has often been blurred.

This is obvious in music, for example. Throughout different eras, composers have searched for the essence of their creation in popular melodies, rhythms and sentiment while popular music has adapted and popularized compositions by cultured artists, assimilating them and making them popular. The historic evolution of that game has divided along the lines of educational control by the elites (the institutions, the upper classes, the composers…) and the appropriation by the people «of the nation, of the feeling of social participation embodied in folklore» (Gertrudix, 2009: 17). Strictly speaking, numerous authors have debated the difficulty of establishing levels between both cultures on the basis of hypothetical superiorities. Like everyday life, culture is a resolutely democratic idea (Lull, 1997: 92).

The formats of music-visual interaction group together all those expressions which have been more or less canonically formulated in the past decades, and are textually configured via the additive synergy of the expressive substances of sound and vision into a type of collage. Hence, commercials and video clips represent the nucleus of these proposals although other

phenomena fit into this category, such as so-called visual Music, with synesthetic references, audiovisual installations of a space-time nature, or any other audiovisual format. They all have poetic features in common defined by such questions as the nature of the relationship between the visual and sound-musical images – symbiosis, osmosis, synchresis – (Colón, Infante, & Lombardo, 1997: 221-222), or the forms of interaction produced – parallelism (empathetic effect), addiction (added value), neutral addiction (anempathetic effect), opposition - (Román, 2008: 142).

Although these relationships necessarily exist in all audiovisual formats and genres – even prior to those of a technical nature – we are particularly interested here in those which, as various authors point out (Darley, 2002; Sánchez Navarro, 2005), are characterized by a formal style of spectacularization. Specifically, the video clip defines a particularized model of music-visual relationship, in that it vectorizes the music-image relationship to its advantage. This contrasts with what occurs in other audiovisual formats and genres; here, it is the musical structures (melodic, harmonic, textural, rhythmic…) that give meaning to the minimal units of discursive articulation (Vernallis, 2004: X).

Studies on video clips have asserted that these are examples of a postmodern aesthetic. With the rejection of the narrative, the insolent games of insinuation and suggestion, the defiant allusion together with a valiant game of hypetextualities have been the features that defined its Poetic: images that «lead to no identification or critical reflection, and which essentially refer to the image itself instead of to a world beyond it» (Sánchez Navarro, 2005: 239). A kind of metagraphic audio and visual which is put together with games of permutation, combination, substitution and addiction, with a decidedly transgressive intentionality on the part of the enunciator; a continued trope in which the synecdoque, the paradox, the irony, the oxymoron fit… and in which the authenticating function of the fictional proclaimed by Dolézel (1999) dilutes and disappears, and which commends the author as narrator in the text.

On the other hand, we cannot forget that the texts that generate these formats are not neutral; they are the reflection of an ideology, of a way of looking at the world, interpreting it, stating a point of view on reality.

They are a substantive element of the commercial process of the contemporary music industry (Viñuela Suárez, 2003) and, therefore, they entail much more than added images and sounds. Behind the frivolous appearance of a video clip, its uninhibited and insignificant nature, Ariadne also weaves her net in order to stimulate complex processes of cultural identification that are globalized today, and which propose normalized cultural contexts to the young in which they can immerse themselves and roam. Thus, listening to music becomes audiovisual consumption, and what's more, in integral hyperconsumption, in which styles, trends, genres, fashions, tendencies are imposed not as personal aesthetic preferences but which play the game of social construction processes; a construction dominated by market forces, and in which learning the rules, values, aesthetics, ways of living and thinking are increasingly controlled by the modern industries of culture that are capable of articulating the «representation in sound of a (complete) cultural universe in movement» (Adell, 2004: 400).

We are dealing with a phenomenon that is not only for adolescents. It spreads right across the entire school age. And we cannot forget that the basic discursive matrix of music models many edu-formation media products children are exposed to from an early age. We find examples of this in Cantajuegos series, in various music videos for children in TV programmes such as «Spongebob», «Pocoyo», «La Abeja Maya» or «Los Lunis». That is why it is necessary to train, inform and learn how to use these formats in a critical way. To contribute to that training in media and to use those media by promoting a truly reflexive spirit that enables young people to separate analytically all the layers contained in these media texts.

4. Formats of musico-visual interaction as an instrument for learning

Taking interactive music-visual formats as an audiovisual genre in which, through a static, dynamic or digital screen (Manovich, 2005) we manage the expressive materials of sound and image with a coherent global purpose via a set of stable, uniform resources that are thematic, articulated and rhetorical, we can follow this idea to see it in windows as different and past as those of the Portico de la Gloria of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (the image is seen, the sound is intuited), Berlioz's Symphonie Fantastique (music stated, image programmed), The Jazz Singer film (image in movement, music recorded) or the first video clip recorded on an iPhone 3G by the artist GOSHone (music and image are digital and interactive)

4.1. Didactic potential

To make the most of the didactic potential of these formats of music-visual interaction, we cannot forget that the systems of digital production and treatment instrumentally condition the way in which reality is treated and constructed, which supposes a bigger challenge for their use in education. The reach of these music-visual interactions spreads, grows and branches off with the emergence of numerical treatment systems in the production of audiovisual discourses. This requires, for example, an act of reflection on what the rate of transformation is that they propose in the traditional concepts of audiovisual representation (Vilches, 2001: 230).

We stand before a new communicative ecosystem into which «emerging audiovisual forms (for example, mobile communication) in consolidation (for example, videogames) or transformation (for example, cinema or television) (Alberich & Roig, 2005: 16) converge, in an intense interrelationship.

When the video clip enters the classroom, it facilitates the recovery of a moment that is present in everyday life and in the living experience of the student, and it contributes to greater attention, interest, identification with group and social sphere, etc. On the other hand, it enables the reflection and articulation of a critical examination of the video clip as text and of the pre-eminent meanings and underlying ideology always present in any cultural expression. Using the video clip as an instrument in the service of learning, we subject it to a process of isolation, a fracturing of the infinite, perpetual discourse that forms its natural ecosystem which makes any reflection impossible within that framework, thus favouring a reasoned and methodical view that can illuminate critical thought. This is so because the school still represents, or at least should do, a privileged space for reflection and analysis.

In the postulates we have established, there clearly exists an opportunity to take advantage of the significativity that the interactive music-visual formats have for students as an efficient instrument in the service of media education. Considering that «cultural capital: that is, the necessary cultural skills and competencies to use technology creatively and productively» (Buckingham, 2004: 281) is closely linked to the level, depth and quality of access to such technology and, consequently, to the texts it produces, it is easy to deduce that the students will be very willing and able.

Besides that, digital technology has opened up an unusual range of possibilities for creative learning that is aware and maturing when it makes visible certain

parts of the processes of making media. «Digital manipulation is not simply a more efficient way of doing things…» but, through the very dynamic of repeated interactions with complex feedback from the student, they enable the student to «conceptualize the process more directly and flexibly» (Buckingham, 2004: 284-285).

4.2. The contribution to the development of general competences in Secondary Education

The contribution of the use and treatment of the music-visual interaction formats to the development of competencies is based on three categories in the DE-SECO (2005) project, namely: instrumental, autonomous and interactive.

Firstly, it needs to be said that a meta-cognition is produced in all teaching-learning processes in which the student develops applicative skills that entail: knowing, knowing what is (from a critical viewpoint), knowing how to do something, and knowing how to be organized in such a way as to be applicable to society (Gertrudix, 2009b). This meta-cognition has its foundations in the four dimensions of competence: conceptual (the cognitive), operational (the functional and social), occupational (the cognitive and functional) and personal (the social and meta-cognitive). The convergence of these competences will lead to the development of a critical view that enables a reflection on the complexity of the automated, operationalized reality in which we move, so that we will be capable of redirecting the traditional functionalities (social, political, virtualized…) that Baudrillard believes are endangered by their use in a purely virtualized world (2002: 56).

But it is not only reflection and critical thought that merit study; media education activities via the music-visual interaction formats can contribute to the development of other competencies in reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as skills in areas like technology, problem solving and research (Buckingham, 2005: 148). In addition, cultural and artistic competence is implicit, where music and image are the bulwark of aesthetic, creative ability.

Musical perception and expression contribute to personal growth, boosting the competencies of autonomy and personal, cultural, artistic, social and civic initiative. Later we will examine some possible channels for achieving student involvement such that the student gains the necessary capabilities to develop competencies by using music-visual interaction formats in the classroom. These skills are directed towards three perspectives:

a) Using tools interactively

Although there is insufficient research to validate the use of this type of technological resource in teaching, it is notable how, once again, constructivist teaching is supported on this type of materials (Gertrudix, 2009: 66). As an example, we can use the Wii music game to make a video clip to work on the development of competences like: a) personal initiative and linguistic communication, the choice of texts, images, sounds and/or music; b) learning to learn, thanks to its practical aspect, from the start of the project through its process to the final product, the video clip; c) treatment of information and digital competence, stated in the very concept of the music-visual interaction format.

On the other hand, it is a fact that music contributes to the development of competencies and, specifically, to those that students must have acquired by the end of compulsory secondary education. If we also take the idea that music is not a type of thing but a type of experience (Dewey, 1934), then uniting music to image will exponentially increase this experience which, in the interactive music-visual formats, is reflected in the visual, audio and tactile: strictly speaking, a global, sensitive stimulation. Music has always had an influential role in the treatment of information and digital competence: a constant paring since the beginning of the time of sound (Gertrudix, 2009a: 39), enriching communicative exchanges, participating in the communion between verbal and musical language, the manipulation and knowledge of the various music-visual formats as well as the praxis in techniques of treating and recording sound and image, all of which enable this competence to make continuous progress.

The school can make the most of the possibilities derived from these music-visual formats, in which students can compose and release their own music, and produce their own video clips without intermediaries, since the output goes from the «creator or interpreter directly to the listener», thanks to computers or mobile phones, which have become devices for listening to music (Roca, 2004: 35).

b) Interaction in heterogeneous groups

One of the methodological strengths in the development of competencies is group work (Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council, 2006). With regard to work processes in the classroom directed towards the development of original video clip proposals, or reformulations of these using remix techniques, it is easy to present collaborative and cooperative strategies that involve the group in achieving common objectives; synergy: a situation in which peo-

ple work in groups to reach common objectives, obtaining better results than if they had worked alone (Stamato, 2008), and increasing creativity and communion (Goleman, Kaufman and Ray, 2000).

Viewing video clips with heterogeneous groups of students oriented along a series of common lines or axes like, for example, specific social, ethical or political aspects, can contribute to social and civic competence understood as an ethical dimension. This facilitates the understanding of the values of the milieu with the aim of assessing and reconstructing them to create their own system of values and the skills to relate to others. So, taking a specific video clip that deals with one of these aspects, the students will search for and contribute new video clips (known to them) linked to the same topics but treated from different viewpoints, and with the aim of noting common elements beyond the mere aesthetic pleasure of the video clip, as well as philosophical, political and social ideas that underlie the narrative discourse.

c) Acting autonomously

We know that music improves order, concentration, memory and analytical capability: this allows us to venture that music enhances this effect through its union with the image in the music-visual formats. At the same time, various learning strategies are faculties that are gestated in music teaching, such as reinforcing mathematical competence, as the psychologists Gardiner (2001), Shaw and Rauscher (1998) have demonstrated by affirming how the auditory processes (semiotic and analytical) collaborate to achieve a cognitive improvement in the mathematical processes. But video clips also put meta-cognitive competencies to work, as in learning to learn.

For example, when students want to reformulate the latest video clip by their favourite group (for instance, in the MTV portal, using an online editing tool), they have to set themselves a reflexive exercise, beyond the basic editing and treatment operations, on what the limits of their knowledge are: what they know, and don't know, and how they can achieve those skills they lack, autonomously and by working in a group.

5. Conclusions

The European reference framework has taken up the principles of the model of education by competencies and, as a prescriptive standard, has induced its postulates into the educational norms in force in Spain.

It is the model's integrating and transversal nature that lends credibility to this focus; creating its scope from a global dimension that allows the transfer of the vehicular nature of the competencies to convert them into agents of change, into a stimulus for reflexive thought that requires activating «meta-cognitive skills (thinking about thinking), creative skills and the adoption of a critical attitude».

Today this is no mean feat for schools, which must integrate their actions and adjust their steps to the broad framework of an Educative Society that is leaning to connect (Siemmens, 2005).

> Digital technology has opened up an unusual range of possibilities for creative learning that is aware and maturing when it makes visible certain parts of the processes of making media. «Digital manipulation is not simply a more efficient way of doing things…» but, through the very dynamic of repeated interactions with complex feedback from the student, they enable the student to «conceptualize the process more directly and flexibly».

Media education, how to make learning/teaching a process within the digital sphere, must be substantiated by the effective acquisition of competence by students who are eager to know, know how to do and how to be, and which avoids falling into the trap of making something digital for the sake of it. This assumes going beyond the tools, beyond an instrumental use of the video clip as a didactic resource; we have to configure new methods and strategies to understand and educate with the media and for the media. Paraphrasing Ricardo Fernández, we would have to reflect on whether the use of this type of platforms (music-visual interaction formats) allows us to improve all the usual things or if we can really harness their potential to make new things (Fernández, 2007: 89)

The processes of media literacy must include reading and writing media, and developing critical understanding and active participation. It must equip students' thought with depth and social maturity so that they can acquire, through the use of communication

products relevant to them, an analytical overview that makes them think about the social pressures, economic interests, cultural trends, and the imaginary and ideological worlds on which music-visual interaction formats are supported. Behind every independent viewpoint and responsible action lies a citizen who is free and committed.

Music, with its interrelation with technology and the audiovisual, has given rise to different expressive and discursive models, like the interactive music-visual formats, which have boosted cultural exchange. These models are in fact the reflection of the current cultural hybridization with its pure mix of games, swaps, blurred borders and constant ebb and flow, and at the same time they are symptomatic of a movement away from current music consumption to an appropriation of all-sensitive sound.

Music-visual interaction formats have a didactic dimension. A potential which, if properly treated, is aware of its context, and the cultural, political and socio-economic parameters that define each era (their message), but which also contains a programme for interpreting that message (a code). The contribution of music-visual interaction formats to the development of competencies can be realized through any of the three main areas of competence: the instrumental, the autonomous and the interactive.

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