Unformed Sound in Multimedia Composition: Andrius Šarapovas’ Project Silver Dust

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Summary. The paper is based on the Deleuzean concept of the deterritorialization of refrain, using unformed sound and an investigation into how it works in the multimedia project Silver Dust. The experimental video project created by Lithuanian artist Andrius Šarapovas is interdisciplinary, comprising of music, dance, and poetry. In the project, different art lines run separately, parallel or in different directions, are full of cracks, and at the same time create unity through the invisible links. Our question is: How does G. Deleuze and F. Guattari’s mention of “raw sounds” in What is Philosophy? stimulate the appearance of the art’s machine, vibration and clinches between the different art lines in the composition Silver Dust?

Using Deleuzoguattarian concepts of crack and flesh, the arrangement of composition, the rearrangement of characters in art machine, and the acting of a dark precursor is analyzed. The conclusion is that A. Šarapovas tries to compound raw sound / noise, unexpectedly coming into music and poetry and the raw view in image (image behind the scene) and allows for their interconnection during the montage, opening up the conditions for vibrations and couplings between heterogeneous elements and division. Consequently, sounds are held as G. Deleuze and F. Guattari state, in their “extinction”, “production and development” by the multimedia art machine.

Keywords: video project, interdisciplinary, unformed sound, deterritorialization, flesh, becoming.

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Project *Silver Dust* Introduction

A. Šarapovas’ multimedia project *Silver Dust* is an interdisciplinary experiment that searches for links between different arts, while they are expressed and narrated in different forms. The project seeks to reveal and in a special way to expose what is hidden under ordinary audio and visual demonstration, to capture what is between hearing, seeing and narrating and even more, what is unheard, unseen, not narrated, and only expected in sensations. This is an effort to catch what is unrepresentative. The project works with three art fields: music, poetry and dance, edited by montage and sound postproduction. The composition and production of the project is made by Andrius Šarapovas. All other artists involved in this project – Vytis Nivinskas (double bass), Andrius Navakas (poetry), Lora Juodkaitė (dance), Algis Mikutėnas (camera) – are well known in Lithuania and other countries. The project is compounded of 12 short pieces and was already presented to the public in Vilnius and Copenhagen.

The uniqueness of this project is that it is framed by following some of Gilles Deleuze’s ideas. A. Šarapovas has been interested in G. Deleuze and F. Guattari’s philosophy, for a few years studying their work and now trying to apply their concepts and test their ideas in short films and music compositions. He is experimenting with “running lines”, series of repetition, creating and observing nomadic move and the journey of sound, waiting for the resonance of different series in composition and expected events and lines of flight. Different arts in this project run separately, parallel or in different directions. They are full of breaks, cracks, ruptures, and at the same time they create unity through the invisible links. Additionally, A. Šarapovas did the investigation of every participating artist’s perception of links between different arts in this project. Unfortunately, that is still not presented in any official form and was only mentioned in my interview with the project’s author (Šarapovas to Duobliene, 2014). His interview also gave access to investigate this project. During the conversation about sounds crystal and times crystal, the author placed emphasis on the unexpected sound, which comes and disappears and which potentially is in the composition, but we do not know when and in which form it will appear.

Our main interest in relation to Deleuze is to investigate the following questions: How does G. Deleuze and F. Guattari’s mention of “raw sounds” in the book *What is Philosophy?* stimulate the appearance of the art’s machine, vibration, and clinches between different art lines in the composition *Silver Dust*? How much raw sound and how much sound modification during the sound editing deterritorializes the refrain of composition, mentioned in G. Deleuze and F. Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*? How does this machine erase the boundaries between natural and artificially modified sounds in music and how does it produce clinches with dance and poetry? Is it the work of a dark precursor, as described in G. Deleuze’s early work *Difference and Repetition*?
The investigation of the problems of deterritorialization in music was already undertaken by many theorists. Chosen access, the unformed as well as inaudible sound in the process of deterritorialization has already been discussed by Jackue Attali (1985), Sean Higgins (2010), Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt (2010), Christof Migone (2007), and Zafer Aracagök (2009). They revealed how these sounds take part in art compositions and music improvisations as well as performances experimenting with voice and body. The unexpectedness of sound in the composition, especially jazz improvisation, is broadly investigated by Marcel Swiboda and Ian Buchanan (2006), Ian Carr (1992), and Robert Walser (1993). Their works on Miles Davis or Keith Jarrett’s improvisation also supported the interpretation of the recent project, which is influenced by these and other great jazz musicians.

For a better understanding of the experiment with arts the application of certain concepts of G. Deleuze and F. Guattari such as multiplicity, singularity and univocity, event, flesh, becoming, and resonance was used. Such access is based on Rebecca Coleman and Jessica Ringrose’s (2013) description of methodology to investigate empirical and art world using Deleuze’s definitions of invention and creation. The most important aspect was to find out how the raw, not framed in musical sense (nonmusical) sound, as mentioned by G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, in our words, unformed sound comes to multimedia composition. Of course such a definition is quite tricky, because nowadays every sound can be understood as musical. *Unformed sound* could be analyzed as sound which potentially is, but is not audible, being between presence and absence. Z. Aracagök’s (2009) interpretations of that is very well done using *The Logic of Sense* (1990) and *Kafka: Toward Minor Literature*, where G. Deleuze says: “In short, sound doesn’t show up here as a form of expression, but rather as an unformed material of expression, that will act on the other terms” (Deleuze, 1986, 6).

The main proposition in this article is to understand unformed sound in a broader sense, as unpredictably interrupting into musical composition sound from the everyday, not organized in any musical sense. Sound, which comes into composition as a reminder of the potentiality of sounds, their multiplicity and singularity, their infinitive series and potential being in univocity, can be heard as noise. Or heard though it is inaudible. In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, G. Deleuze and F. Guattari say that “Music molecularizes sound matter and in so doing becomes capable of harnessing nonsonorous forces such as Duration and Intensity” (Deleuze, Guattari, 1987, 343). In a discussion about the difficulties of sound framing in *What is Philosophy?*, G. Deleuze and F. Guattari try to show how it comes to our sensations as framed. They describe characteristics of modern music and give an example of how a singular thickness appears on the sonorous plane through “the redefinition of the percept according to noise, to raw and complex sound (Cage); not only the enlargement of chromatism to other components of pitch but the tendency to a nonchromatic appearance of sound in an infinite continuum (electronic or electroacoustic music)” (Deleuze, Guattari, 1994, 195). Raw sound, noise,
and inaudible sound in silence have great importance in the *Silver Dust* composition. During the entire composition one can hear sounds such as a rubbing surface, scratching of the floor, squeaking doors, grinding, strange sound of old double bass bow, etc.

**Different Arts in the Composition**

When thinking about the links of different arts in one composition of *Silver Dust*, the hypothesis that the basis for the composition is text (poetry) arises. It covers the surface (stratum) of the interdisciplinary composition. Text is the most distinctive, most aggressive, full of existential meanings, and although one does not hear the full poetry, it is possible to catch only some phrases. Nonetheless, the text draws the frontiers of the composition’s territory by rhythm. It tries to dominate the composition by not allowing something more distinctive to appear, which would break the territory that is marked by words. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari state that “Music seems to have a much stronger deterritorializing force, at once more intense and much more collective, and a voice seems to have a much greater power of deterritorialization” (Deleuze, Guattari, 1987, 302). In our case both reading poetry and music are rhythmically contending, competing for priority to territorialize and deterritorialize the refrain of composition. While poetry territorializes by rhythm and deterritorializes by meanings, music does that by improvisations by pitch, timbre and also rhythm. The first idea, according to the author of the project, was to narrate poetry following the already created music, but in the process it appeared that it was not successful. The musical improvisation was more flexible and easier for experimenting. Forcible music tries to find the line of flight in the situation of a powerful rhythmical reading of poetry.

All pieces have quite interesting titles of poetry, though they are not announced on the screen (Šarapovas to Duoblienė, 2014). It may seem that they do not matter, but they do. They can be reconstructed from the text as well: *To Banality, Textiles, Feather and Ash, Nothing, Comfort*, etc. These words, as key words, give rhythm to the composition and ensure a refrain. Each piece of the composition starts with the process of tuning the instruments, practicing a dance move, many different sounds, and fragments of an image. However, the text works through the contrast: a stable, permanent rhythm, and on the contrary, meanings that refer to nothingness and being nowhere. The meanings of the words are references to another plane – the plane of a surface, an intrigue to wait for an event through eternal return: “if I turned myself fully inside out I would coincide with my surface: so that even blood would flow on that side of my skin: but what remains on this side?” (piece 2) and journey: “the lands of journeys that never end all round like a button ring” (piece 3); or fulfillment of cosmic, potentially existing sounds: “filled with sound” (piece 9). The dominance of the words is quite mischievous, but on the other hand, the meanings of the words expand attention and transpose it onto music and image.
Image probably follows sound according to importance in the composition. Gregg Redner in his book *Deleuze and Film Music* (2011) invites us once again to rethink the link between film and music and image and music theories and to find any methodological bridge, but we are not looking for links between different methodologies. The Cinema 2: The Time-Image by G. Deleuze gives some explanation on music and image, using ritournelle and gallop, rhythm and melody, sounds and time crystals. The A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia in which is mentioned John Cage, “who first and most perfectly deployed this fixed sound plane, which affirms a process against all structure and genesis, a floating time against pulsed time or tempo, experimentation against any kind of interpretation, and in which silence as sonorous rest also marks the absolute state of movement” and also Jean-Luc Godard, who “effectively carries the fixed plane of cinema to this state where forms dissolve, and all that subsists are tiny variations of speed between movements in composition” (1987, 267), directs us onto a visual image, which lacks a fixed plane as it lacks sound. Therefore, in those contexts we are interested in the image mostly as unformed, presented as raw material behind the scene (in other words, image noise / trash) and how it relates to the unformed sound, how it helps to develop pieces of composition until they come to the event in common rhythm.

The link between sound (text and music) and image is undeniable in the project, though lines of different arts are composed as different stories, with a very fragile connection among them. While the composition decomposes attention in different directions, and every art line runs rather independently, the film keeps the observer’s attention on the wholeness. The sound is not diegetic, it does not illustrate the image, and only in some cases a straight interconnection is distinct. When we try to reveal separation, autonomy and, on the other hand, to find clinches, couplings, and closeness in vibrations of characters, the Deleuzean idea of differentiation and identity is very helpful. So what is the differentiator in this composition and under which power or releasing of power does an event happen, the composition creates the resonance of all lines, and consequently creates wholeness? Our conclusion is that there are at least two explanations: first is on the compositional arrangement and the second on character rearrangement within the composition.

**Compositional Arrangement**

Almost every short piece has three parts: the beginning, which reminds us of any other performance or concert repetition, when instruments, the camera, and dancers have their probe, and every art line has its own rhythm, which is also tuned as a common rhythm in chaos. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari state that “Chaos is defined not so much by its disorder as by the infinite speed with which every form taking shape in it vanishes” (1994, 118). It is birth and disappearance. The rhythm of sonic and visual movement is
very important in the process of journey between cosmos and chaos, essence and absence, multiplicity and singularity. In the beginning it shapes the territory of performance. In the middle of every piece, different art lines come to the culmination and all rhythmical lines evidently, not virtually, are in one and coincide with the melody line. Sound and image support one another, so it seems that all arts are in harmony (have their clear territorial positions). Finally, in the end (third part) of almost every piece it goes to slowness, spilling, kind of sticking in sound and image, the gradual disappearing of sound, or the transformation of it into “noisy” silence, and calming dance. Such a construct of three parts in every composition was emphasized by the author. That was his idea of linking arts. Extrinsically, it is evident that the rhythmical culmination is in the middle, when in G. Deleuze’s words the galloping rhythm conquers all noises and exhibits links among arts. It has been started from the zero (probe) and finalized with distortion and strewing in every piece of composition. The end deterritorializes the compositional piece before the next short piece, which starts again from the process of territorialization. In such a case the main artist and composer (A. Šarapovas with the help of the double bass player V. Nivinskas) are those who create differentiations and identities between different lines of arts and their series in the composition. Perhaps it is a bit of a simplified explanation of composition in relation to an understanding of deterritorialization. Compositional accents in our interpretation can be changed: speed in the composition gradually increases and after the culmination it shoots up into another plane of thickness, which is heterogeneous and smooth, and although from the first impression seems broken and destroyed, at the same time “briefing” in one chaotic rhythm. It is the plane of another intensity, where the speed is higher, though in our impression it could be different. The gallop and ritournelle, as described by G. Deleuze, did their job. That was emphasized by the author of this composition in his interview as well. But let’s come back to the unformed sound.

**Rearrangement of Characters: Unformed Sound in Art Machine**

In the second explanation, which is the most important we emphasize not the external compositional arrangement, but characters from the different art lines which interact during the composition: come close and move away, vibrate and resonate. In order to understand their movement and flow, it is helpful to distinguish unformed sound or noise in the composition. As G. Deleuze and F. Guattari state: “The difference between noise and sound is definitely not a basis for a definition of music or even for the distinction between musician birds and nonmusician birds” (Deleuze, Guattari, 1987, 302). While in agreement with the previous statement, we are talking about this distinction with the purpose of understanding how later it helps to create a smooth space. Noise and natural or raw outside sounds come to the composition unexpectedly and unpredictably and fulfill the smooth space. For example, in piece 3 one can hear cracking, tapping, rapping,
rubbing surface, grinding, and a vibration of some sounds which are inaudible (kind of silence), but one can feel they potentially are. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari state that, “<…> smooth space is occupied by intensities, wind and noise, forces, and sonorous and tactile qualities, as in the desert, steppe, or ice” (1987, 479).

Unformed sounds are welcomed into the composition. As A. Šarapovas stated in an interview, “When everything is said and all harmony, rhythmic things step aside, there is nothing in front of you; the new briefing and intensity for creation approaches”, and the pretext for that is raw sound (in a wrong way, an old double bass sound, a phone call, and the sound of opening door is played). Strange sound includes outside what it does not include evidently. These sounds are the cracks of a circle (refrain of the composition), a bridge to counterpoints and a condition for experimenting with the intensity of frequencies, variation of pitch, timbre, and rhythm in the process of deterritorialization.

It seems that the noise or unformed sound by intruding into the composition creates an art machine which is not under control anymore. It inspires musicians and other project artists to react on this interruption as an inclusive detail. From this point of view, musically unformed, or in other words raw sound, as well as a probing image (or raw image, image noise or trash) in the beginning of every piece of the composition is more important for the development of the machine than framing the pieces into three compositional parts. That marks the transversality of the different characters.

A variety of raw sound has its own way in this art machine and creates couplings and divisions. “Sound owes this power not to signifying or “communicational” values (which on the contrary presuppose that power), nor to physical properties (which would privilege light over sound), but to a phylogenetic line, a machinic phylum that operates in sound and makes it a cutting edge of deterritorialization” (Deleuze, Guattari, 1987, 348).

In this process “it is necessary for the nonmusical sound of the human being to form a block with the becoming-music of sound, for them to confront and embrace each other like two wrestlers who can no longer break free from each other’s grasp, and slide down a sloping line” (Deleuze, Guattari, 1987, 308).

Nonmusical sound of a human being can be voice, but not necessarily. It could also be other sounds, which come with body movements – breathing and coughing, as well as the body encountering the environment: the scratching of a wooden floor while standing with an instrument or dancing, a door squeaking, noise coming through an open window. That comes naturally into the composition by letting that sound be in a block of becoming-music sound. It is recorded by the author and later is multiplied using montage and sound post-production. Unformed sound deterritorializes the musical refrain (inside the music assemblage). Deterritorialization using the cracks of unformed sound also comes to the dance assemblage, performing according to the music, while poetry with its very clear rhythm tries to keep the territorial line.

If in the process of deterritorialization unformed sound is a crack, in the situation of affectation it could be treated as flesh, which leads to blocks of sensation, percepts and
affects, using cosmic forces. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari in the book *What is Philosophy?* say: “Flesh is only the developer which disappears in what it develops: the compound of sensation” (Deleuze, Guattari, 1994, 183). As has been mentioned, unexpected and unformed sounds inspire the performances team, so first of all A. Šarapovas reacts to the moment. G. Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* mentioned that the moment is “the one which ‘is lacking in its place’ as it lacks its own identity,” when he talks about the dark precursor (Deleuze, 1994, 120). There is no clear connection between flesh, which works in affection and the work of the dark precursor, which is an event when different series communicate and come to resonance, giving an effect. Both act with strong invisible forces, differentiation, and capturing pre-existence, although moments stress different things: the affect and effect.

Unformed sound as a flesh provokes the further work of the art machine in the process of sound editing and montage. As A. Šarapovas in the interview said, he quiets (lowers the volume of) text (poetry words), sometimes framing that in repeating series, and he modifies music sounds into noise, leaving a lot of visual noise (preparatory, working moments in the image). Erasing or quieting some poetry words in the art machine gives briefing to other sounds (music and additional non-music sounds). In the piece no. 2, tuning the instruments and a demonstration of the filming process as image noise / trash gives us a message about the multiplicity of elements, which are on and under the surface, and some are potential, waiting for their appearance in the process of creation. Experimenting with unformed sounds and images lets them move from one to another assemblage, rupture different series, and capture and loose sound in the middle of absence and presence. Consequently, sounds are held as G. Deleuze and F. Guattari state, in their “extinction,” and “production and development” by the multimedia art machine and experimenting with different pitch, timbre and rhythm. The art machine, with the help of A. Šarapovas as a part of the machine, tries to compound raw sound/noise within the music assemblage, and keeps a connection with other assemblages of poetry and dance. Montage allows the interconnection between raw sound / noise in music and poetry and the image noise or fragmented / split image, opening conditions for vibrations and couplings between heterogeneous elements as well as division. So we have the process of creation and new intraconnections and interconnections of different art characters in the assemblage while playing with sound and image modification.

**Acting of Dark Precursor**

This happens in the process of becoming, becoming music, becoming art. It is the work of an artisan, as G. Deleuze and F. Guattari state. A. Šarapovas comments on his work with these words: “It is a rounding idea, like a ball, and from the other side, an environment; their encounter provides the product.” So it depends on him, as the author and producer...
of the idea and also on the dark precursor, because no one knows when that happens, when it comes to the event, when all series will be harmonized in one chaotic rhythm.

It is very nicely expressed in the piece *Comfort* (piece 9), where the combination of image fragments and repetitions is demonstrated, as well as playing with text “filled with sound” and sound, which all creates a kind of mosaic. The art machine displaces and removes some characters in assemblage and multiplies some sounds, which might seem as noise, but reminds one of sound multiplicity and cosmic potentiality; sounds move between chaos and cosmos. That happens through the affect in the process of editing, erasing all boundaries between raw and produced, music and non music, natural and artificial, noise and music, and consequently composed image and image noise, and fragmented image. All series of arts (music, poetry, and dance), or in the final production, – audible and visible, communicate according to the appearance of differences which come unexpectedly, when strange sound includes what is not included and strange visual image includes what is outside the image. These differentiations disappear in their communication and play, opening a smooth space and creating a vibration between different arts series, their exposed and hidden characters, and their resonance in another moment than the moment of flesh.

In conclusion we can state that A. Šarapovas’ project comes very close to G. Deleuze and F. Guattari’s insight, saying: “All that, however, would be possible only because the invisible precursor conceals itself and its functioning, and at the same time conceals the in-itself or true nature of difference” (Deleuze, 1994, 119). That happens because of the displacement and disguise of the differentiator, which in our interpretation can be provoked by unformed sound, bringing up the potentially existent, expressed in a unique way the singularity for just one time, and on the other side reminding their gradually compositional connection to the universe.

**Literature**


**Videos**

A. Šarapovas. *Silverdust*. 

**Interviews**

A. Šarapovas to L. Duoblienė (2014). (15 October, 2014, approx. 50 minutes)
Nesuformuotas garsas multimedijos kompozicijoje: Andriaus Šarapovo projektas Sidabro dulkės

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje, remiantis Gilles’io Deleuze’o ir Felixo Guattari konceptais, analizuojama natūralaus, į muzikinį kūrinį iš aplinkos netikėtai patenkančio, nemuzikinio, dar kitaip įvardijamo kaip nesuformuoto, garso įtaka multimedijų projektui Sidabro dulkės. Andriaus Šarapovo audiovizualusis projektas yra tarpdisciplininių jungčių paieškos inovatyvi forma, bandymas atskirių meno rūšių (poezijos, muzikos, šokio) savitą kalbėjimą, atskiras istorijas suvesti draugėn. Tai eksperimentas, kuriame kūrėjams svarbu rasti ir savitu būdu išreikšti tai, kas nematoma, nenusakoma, nereprezentuojama, gal tik nujaučiama. Deteritorizacija muzikoje, remiantis nesuformuotu garsu / triukšmu, yra minima G. Deleuze’o ir F. Guattari knygose Kas yra filosofija? bei Tūkstančiai plokštikalnių: kapitalizmas ir šizofrenija ir interpretuota G. Deleuze’o filosofijos tyrėjų. Šiame straipsnyje svarstoma, kaip į multimedijų kompoziciją patekęs netikėtas garsas / triukšmas deteritorizuoja refreną ir kaip nulemia skirtingų meno rūšių „susikabinimą“ Teigiama, kad heterogeninių elementų suartėjimas ir susijungimas įvyksta pirmiausia juos nutoleinant, kai atlikėjai reaguoją į atsitiktinį garsą ir kartu yra inspiruojami improvizuoti, ieškoti naujų sankabų. Po to, atsiradusią garsų įvairovę įtraukus į garso redagavimo ir montažo mašiną, muzikiniai garsai susipina su atsitiktiniais, garsas su vaizdu, jie perkuriai, multiplikuojami. Darbinis vaizdas, arba tai, kas yra „už scenos“ (vaizdo šiukšlės), analogiškai atsitiktiniam garsui ar triukšmui, yra įtraukiamą į kompozicijos redagavimo mašiną. Kompozicijos rezultatą, remiantis tyrimu, lemia ne tik autorių ir kitų kompozicijos kūrėjai, bet ir G. Deleuze’o įvardijamas juodasis pirmtakas.

Esminiai žodžiai: vaizdo projektas, tarpdiscipliniškumas, nesuformuotas garsas, deteritorizacija, tapsmas.