available technological means (often without any budget). Secondly, their content performatively invokes attributions of non-institutionality. In the case of music video-like fan vids, this results from 1) a discursive orientation towards networked spaces of affinity and 2) the remediation of vernacular creativity through forms and formats based on the narrative re-imagination and re-appropriation of popular media texts by way of generic audiologovisual metalanguage. Beyond the self-referred non-institutional stance of vidders, the music video parody by Jon Lajoie and @Strack Azar's musicless music video paradigmatically highlight the potentials of deconstructing aspects of industrialised music video production, including meta-narratives of stardom, clichéd verbal and bodily performances, or conventions of audio-vision in commercial music video productions. In summary, the vernacular of music video-like media composition is invoked performatively in contrast to institutionalised practices of commercial music video and multimedia production, opening up a field of produsage which does not cease to let new streams of contributions emerge.

3.2 Everyday (Self-)Capture and Re-Appropriation: Audiovisual *Objets Trouvés*

When Jonny Shire walked past a house wall on August 31, 2014, an air conditioner caught his ear. Unmistakably, the loud clicking noise indicated a defect, but it was not technical fascination but rather the resulting rhythmic patterns, which evoked entirely isolated and immediate musical associations, that made him decide to record and upload his discovery directly from his iPhone via the "YouTube Capture" app, adding the title "Broken air con that plays a jazz drum solo!!"[37] In a similar fashion, @Mr. King shares his musical experience of a squeaky door in a Chicago parking lot, even moderating the following "performance": "Okay, so this is awesome. This door is gonna do an impression of Miles Davis' 'Bitches Brew.' Stand by."[38] These captures of readymade sound objects are afforded by mobile phone cameras, letting Jonny Shire and @Mr. King – and millions of other users – imbricate their everyday experience in

37 @Jonny Shire, "Broken air con that plays a jazz drum solo!!," August 31, 2014, YouTube video, 1:05, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmKTfro4g6Y.

38 @Mr. King, "Door Does Impression of Miles Davis," August 16, 2012, YouTube video, 0:33, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwOipTXvNNo.

the data flow of video hosting platforms like YouTube from anywhere at any time. Their uploads are fascinating artefacts of what could be conceived of as a postmodern form of *flânerie*, where idle strolling and purposeless – yet cultivated – receptivity to one's surroundings meet the imperative of "broadcasting yourself," rendering the experience of sound objects available for the *electronic flâneur*, a user type first described by Mike Featherstone.[39] Of course, individual explorations and dwellings within and across ubiquitously aestheticised virtual worlds differ fundamentally from late modern *flânerie*, famously characterised by Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin, as Featherstone notes with regard to the interactivity the hypertextual fabric of the Internet requires of online movement – as well as to the disruptive mobility it affords:

> The urban flâneur typically sauntered around, letting the impressions of the city soak into his subconscious. The electronic flâneur is capable of great mobility; his pace is not limited to the human body's capacity for locomotion – rather, with the electronic media of a networked world, instantaneous connections are possible which render physical spatial differences irrelevant.[40]

The *electronic flâneur* – or *flâneuse* – on YouTube chimes in with the algorithmically curated stream of interconnected videos, thereby idly moving from video to video, guided by no purpose but an immediate receptivity to the affective stimuli; they are, in Baudelaire's words, "a kaleidoscope gifted with consciousness, [...] an 'I' with an insatiable appetite for the 'non-I' [...]."[41] Upload, creation, and contemplation of everyday captures and sound objects are underlaid by the technological and cultural principles of modularity and variability, which at any time can turn the immersed, passive subject into a networked, interactive one. Private everyday observations are captured and uploaded as isolated modules of our online experience, the idle contemplation of which is embedded in an environment of creative relay that suggests their further remix and re-composition. Within the ongoing stream of contributions, musical readymades are taken up by other users and not only set in relation to each other,

39 See Mike Featherstone, "The Flâneur, the City and Virtual Public Life," *Urban Studies* 35, no. 5/6 (May 1998): 909–925, https://doi.org/10.1080/0042098984619.

40 Ibid., 921.

41 Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, ed. and trans. Jonathan Mayne (New York: Phaidon Press, 1964), 9. The original essay appeared in the Parisian newspaper *Figaro* in 1863.

as in @Rez' digital *musique concrète* montage of several musical doors and the broken air conditioner, but also combined with pre-existing audio tracks, as can be heard and seen in zarbi10425's reinterpretation of Dave Brubeck's Take Five, "featuring broken air con, jazz door, glove box and a bin."[42]

Beyond the musicalisation of the occasional everyday capture, musical approaches to sonic *objets trouvés* on YouTube have branched into distinctive concepts and formats, even reaching into the specialised domains of conceptual art and professional composition: Conceptual artist Cory Arcangel, for instance, collects and cuts footage of "cute kittens" stepping on and pawing at piano keyboards, ordering the struck keys according to the score of Schönbergs "Drei Klavierstücke" op. 11, which results in musically rather broken and counter-intuitive collaborative kitten performances of these early atonal pieces.[43] With his conceptual video pieces, Arcangel draws on the phenomenon of uncountable cat videos in social media in a humorous way in order to literally enact the clichéd dismissive image that "atonal music sounds just like a cat stepping on piano keys." Quite different from Arcangel's concept, composer and arranger Alexander Liebermann turns found YouTube footage of animals and wildlife into material for his personal ear training, musically transcribing the voices and sounds of animals and re-uploading the source material with an accompanying score (see Figure 4). His ear training video featuring the chirping of Grey Butcherbirds and Pied Butcherbirds, which he found in videos on the channels @PittwaterEcowarriors and @PHOTONAUT,[44] even contains a performance by a soprano singing the score.[45] The video is a clear nod to the transcriptions of birdcalls by Olivier Messiaen, as Liebermann also states in the video description: "I focused on these two birds because one of my favorite composers, Olivier Messiaen, was deeply interested in their songs

42 @zarbi10425, "Take Five, but featuring broken air con, jazz door, glove box and a bin," February 17, 2021, YouTube video, 0:25, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqpEQWRcQcw.

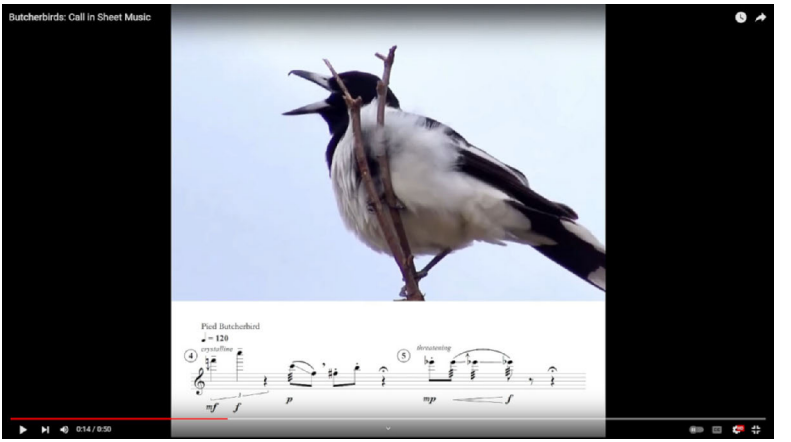
43 Cory Arcangel, "Cory Arcangel – Arnold Schoenberg, op. 11 – I – Cute Kittens," July 7, 2009, YouTube video, 4:20, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lF6IBWTDgnI.

44 See @PittwaterEcowarriors, "GREY BUTCHERBIRD SONGS," March 5, 2012, YouTube video, 3:58, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlAb-ObjIH4; @PHOTONAUT, "Amazing Singing Performance by Four Pied Butcherbirds, Western Australia," April 1, 2016, YouTube video, 5:02, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wr46I3568Hk.

45 @Alexander Liebermann, "Butcherbirds: Call in Sheet Music," January 15, 2021, YouTube video, 0:50, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Br06bYP7dHE.

(Notably in the song of the Pied Butcherbird, whose call he used in his last work 'Éclairs sur l'au-delà')."[46]

Figure 4: Still from Alexander Liebermann's video "Butcherbirds: Call in Sheet Music" (2021).



However, most practices of capturing, observing, and reproducing sound objects via musical means focus on the instrumental accompaniment and re-contextualisation of pre-recorded speech patterns, with some clips becoming popular sources for repeated musical re-appropriation. One example for this is a blooper from the TV special "Goodnight Moon and Other Sleepytime Tales," which aired on HBO on December 11, 1999 and featured bedtime stories, lullabies, animations, and interviews with children. The clip features a little boy who stumbles over his words, ending up with a completely disjointed sentence:

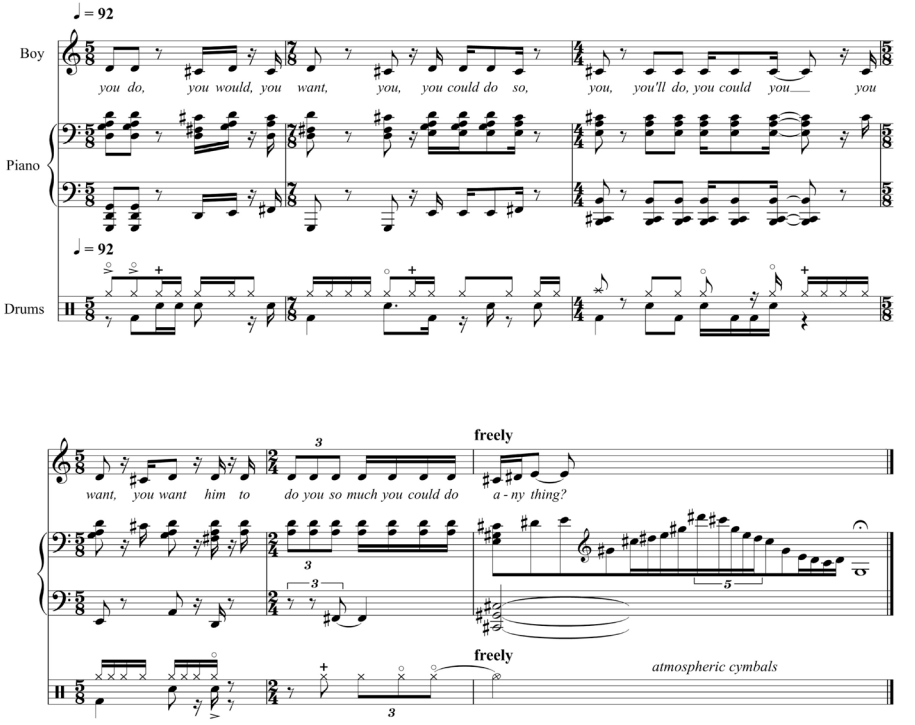
> Have you ever had a dream that, that you, um, you had, you'll t–, you would, you could, you do, you would, you want, you, you could do so, you, you'll do, you could you, you want, you want him to do you so much you could do anything?[47]

46 Ibid.

47 @mrblueangeldood, "Have you ever had a dream like this?," June 2, 2011, YouTube video, 0:21, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7RgN9ijwE4.

After its upload on YouTube in 2011, the clip "went viral" and soon became discovered as a sound object for remixes, musical transcriptions and instrumental accompaniments. In the instrumentalisation by Charles Cornell, for instance, the boy's voice is used as a quasi-melodic *sprechstimme*, harmonised and rhythmically supported by a backing track which carves out and contextualises the rhythmic intricacies of the boy's speech (see Figure 5).[48]

Figure 5: The last bars of Charles Cornell's musical take on the video "Have you ever had a dream like this?" My transcription; reduced to voice, piano, and drums.



48 @Charles Cornell, "Have You Ever Had A Dream," June 15, 2019, YouTube video, 0:24, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6bxGboVrYY.

From Musical Adaptation to "Indexploitation"

There are manifold distinctive approaches to the musical accompaniment of viral social media videos. For instance, on the channel of bassist Dywane Thomas Jr., professionally known as MonoNeon, the focus does not primarily lie on reharmonisation, as in Cornell's video, but on composing with instrumental *mimicry* of idiosyncratic human speech melodies and rhythms – usually within the grid of 12-tone equal temperament, sometimes microtonally, thereby bringing about the recognition of their musical qualities by mere instrumental, mostly monophonic, doublings.[49] Although – after the "exposition" of the musical material in its bare form – he proceeds to make use of loop techniques, background tracks, and overdubs, MonoNeon's approach is fascinatingly close to the compositional idea of "phonorealism," which was established by Austrian composer Peter Ablinger. Since 1997, Ablinger has conceptualised pieces and work cycles built on the reproduction of sound filtered through the tonal and temporal grids of semitones and up to 16 units per second, thereby realising "phonorealistic" images of concrete sound objects, which he compares with "photo-realist painting, or […] with techniques in the graphic arts that use grids to transform photos into prints."[50] Whereas Ablinger aims at a purely instrumental mimicry of a sound object which is *missing*, in YouTube-specific musicalisation practices the audio and video of human speech is normally *included* in the contribution. This changes the quality of the musicalised outcome, as, according to Diedrich Diederichsen, the artistic integration of recordings of reality inevitably leads to their involuntary communication which may evade, overlay, or even run against subjective artistic intentions.[51] While Ablinger is not concerned with "literal reproduction itself but precisely this border-zone between abstract musical structure and the sudden shift into recognition – the relationship between musical qualities and 'phonorealism' […]," [52] the causations of bodily presence effects – Diederichsen calls them "index effects" – of musicalised source

49 See, for example, @MonoNeon, "MonoNeon – 'baby talking on the phone,'" February 14, 2022, YouTube video, 1:35, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxqbnpiPeYk.

50 Peter Ablinger, "Peter Ablinger – Quadraturen," website of Peter Ablinger, accessed March 30, 2023, https://ablinger.mur.at/docu11.html.

51 See Diedrich Diederichsen, *Körpertreffer: Zur Ästhetik der nachpopulären Künste* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2017), 10.

52 Peter Ablinger, "Quadraturen."

material on YouTube holds an invasive potential which does not allow for an oscillation between these two poles. Rather, musical elements and index effects are recognisable at the same time, creating an enjoyable hyper-illusion. The recognition and entertainment value of the viral source material is synergetically complemented by its musicalisation, shifting its experience and making it musically intriguing – or simply more pleasurable.

As pre-recorded speech segments entail a quality of uncontainable eventfulness in terms of audiovisual stimuli and the production of meaning, it is just a small step from using them as recognisable carriers with musical potential to strategically musicalising them with deliberate political, parodying, or ridiculing intent. Politically charged parody can, for instance, be found on the channel of @Cassetteboy, who has cultivated techniques of splicing pre-recorded speech segments of public figures and putting them to hip-hop beats in order to manipulate their utterings and make them "rap." For example, in the clip "Cassetteboy vs. Boris Johnson," Johnson can be heard rapping to the background track of MC Hammer's "U Can't Touch This":

> […] The planet now is burning,
> at a terrifying rate
> and I don't even turn up
> to the climate change debate
> […]
> Stop, stammer time! [footage of Boris Johnson stammering follows] […][53]

Here, the strategy of musicalisation supports the artist's intention of ridiculing a political person – and his political agenda – for entertainment purposes. Unlike the approaches of Cornell and MonoNeon, @Cassetteboy's contributions are not built on the detection, observation, and uncovering of *musical* qualities. Musicalisation is not a primary concern, but simply necessary to make the content entertaining and ensure its circulation.

Within a media environment built on principles of modularity and variabilty, *any* uploaded recording of speech – any sound file in general – becomes a potentially manipulable musical object. As I will exemplify in the following paragraphs, the aforementioned approaches to the musicalisation of speech patterns are entangled with practices of deliberate "indexploitation" – that is,

53 @cassetteboy, "Cassetteboy vs Boris Johnson," December 5, 2019, YouTube video, 2:13, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LI87PRgIKks.

of purposeful imitation and utilisation of index effects[54] – which do not make hold at the musical uptake of iconic content or performances of people of public interest but hold the potential of intruding the private lives of unwitting persons. A video by the Gregory Brothers may serve as an example in this context: Since 2009, the Gregory Brothers create auto-tuned remixes – or, as they call it, "songifications" – of newscasts and television interviews on their channel schmoyoho.[55] Their content creation is accompanied by the continuous scouting for "unintentional singers" that could be turned into entertaining and profitable content. In 2010, they created their biggest hit, after they "songified" a video of Alabama residents Antoine and Kelly Dodson being interviewed by a local television station. In the interview, Antoine, a black resident of a housing project in Huntsville, Alabama, comments on the attempted rape of his sister by an "intruder" who broke in through her bedroom window. Three days later, the Gregory Brothers released the "Bed Intruder Song" on YouTube, featuring segments of Antoine Dodson and his sister Kelly from the interview. In the video, Antoine, dressed in a tank top and a red durag, sings in an auto-tuned voice over a backing track while the Gregory Brothers appear as news anchors, singing and dancing to Dodson's performance. His utterances, like his imploration to "hide your kids, hide your wife," are pitch shifted and treated as musical phrases, their catchiness enhanced by vocal harmonisations and loops. The song turned Antoine Dodson into an Internet sensation over night; however, it was just the starting point for a media spectacle that unfolded around Dodson's appearance, his flamboyant demeanor, and his vernacular speech. Within an environment of hypermediation fuelled by further remixes and mainstream media attention, a subject became objectified and a real-life situation reduced to enjoyable aesthetic material. In smoothing out the recording with the help of auto-tune and the re-arrangement, cutting, and looping of speech segments, the Gregory Brothers created a distance between the recipients of the song and the underlying situation of the interview. What is more, the appearance of the brothers in the video functions as a marker of dominance and whiteness, as Alexandrina Agloro notes: "Just as minstrel acts were structured so that white audiences could maintain their own sense of superiority, The Gregory Brothers perform to their audience and juxtapose themselves in suits to contrast with Dodson's appearance in a tank top and hair wrap. Appearing as

54 See Diederichsen, *Körpertreffer*, 47–49.

55 @schmoyoho, YouTube channel, joined December 10, 2006, https://www.youtube.com/user/schmoyoho.

news anchors within the 'Bed Intruder Song' is an act of washing themselves white, constructing themselves as the unmarked category upon which Antoine Dodson's difference is constructed."[56] The ironic facial expressions and dance moves of the Gregory Brothers make it seem as if Antoine Dodson is singing for their entertainment, caricaturing him in a fashion characteristic of what Fidel Martinez referred to as "modern minstrel shows."[57] The "Bed Intruder Song" is not a singular case – in fact, musical "indexploitations" with racialised undertones are particularly popular among "songification" remixes on YouTube: Kimberly "Sweet" Brown, a woman who was interviewed after escaping a fire, and Charles Ramsey, who rescued three women who had been kidnapped and held captive for a decade, are just two more examples of persons who became objectified through communal musical engagement on YouTube. The numerous remixes and view counts – 71 million views for the most popular remix of Kimberly Brown, 36 million views in Ramsey's case – bear witness to the (white) audience's desire for musical aestheticisations of black persons' appearances and vernacular speech for entertainment purposes.[58]

Musical Aestheticisation and the Normalisation of Voyeuristic Entertainment

As Paula Harper points out in her dissertation "Unmute This: Circulation, Sociality, and Sound in Viral Media," musicalising techniques, as a fundamental part of participatory media, help normalise the act of not only "broadcasting yourself," but also those around you, witting or unwitting. Harper diagnoses Internet behaviours of public shaming and mockery, afforded and mediated by mobile phone cameras, turning the public and the private sphere

56 Alexandrina Agloro, "Contemporary Coon Songs and Neo-Minstrels: Auto-Tune the News, Antoine Dodson, and the 'Bed Intruder Song,'" *Gnovis Journal* 11, no. 2 (April 2011), https://gnovisjournal.georgetown.edu/journal/contemporary-coon-songs-and-neo-minstrels-auto-tune-the-news-antoine-dodson-and-the-bed-intruder-song/#.

57 See Fidel Martinez, "Are 'Hilarious Black Neighbor' Videos a Modern Minstrel Show?," *The Daily Dot*, May 9, 2013, https://www.dailydot.com/unclick/hilarious-black-neighbor-modern-minstrel/.

58 See @The Parody Factory, "Sweet Brown – Ain't Nobody Got Time for That (Autotune Remix)," April 14, 2012, YouTube video, 1:56, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFEoMOopc7k; @schmoyoho, "Dead Giveaway!," May 8, 2013, YouTube video, 1:28, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZcRUoOp5P4.

"into sites for scrutiny, mockery, vernacular surveillance."[59] By capturing human speech and appearance and rendering it aesthetically consumable, vernacular musicalisation enables participatory musical engagement, encouraging practices of public surveillance and capture as a way of imbricating the data of everyday life in aestheticised forms and formats of creative relay. The underlying model of surveillance can thus not be described as part of a disciplinary panoptic regime, but rather as a type of "peer-to-peer surveillance" driven by the desire to take part in communally mediated practices focussed on capturing and aestheticising affectively stimulating index effects of everyday life.[60] In their entanglement with technological affordances and agencies, these practices can be viewed under the lense of what Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson conceptualised as a contemporary rhizomatic "surveillant assemblage," which consists of extended means of monitoring as well as institutional, private, and technological agents of surveillance and "operates by abstracting human bodies from their territorial settings and separating them into a series of discrete flows."[61] Although Haggerty and Ericson do not specifically expand on constellations of "peer-to-peer surveillance" in public spaces, they name the "voyeuristic entertainment value" of surveillance as a factor of quantitatively increased data-capturing of human bodies, in addition to desires "for order, control, discipline and profit."[62] The case of the "Crazy Meijer Lady" is paradigmatic for the dynamic interrelation between technologically afforded peer-to-peer surveillance, electronic flâneurism, and vernacular musicalisation: In January 2020, a video emerged on a private Facebook page, showing an altercation between a woman and customers and staff members of a Meijer store in New Haven, Michigan. The video starts with the woman, who is showing obvious signs of mental illness, talking to a man at the checkout, claiming she is "trying to help" him and urging him to "repent," her speech interspersed with confused biblical references and swearwords: "You do need my help, sir, can't you see that, you son of a bitch? […] You gotta ask Jesus Christ,

59 Paula Harper, "Unmute This," 122.

60 For the notion of peer-to-peer surveillance, see Jeremy Weissman, "P2P Surveillance in the Global Village," *Ethics and Information Technology* 21, no. 1 (March 2019): 29–47, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-018-9488-y.

61 Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson, "The Surveillant Assemblage," *The British Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 4 (December 2000): 606, https://doi.org/10.1080/00071310020015280.

62 Ibid., 616.

we're all sinners."[63] The situation escalates as the woman begins to shout at the man and, in the further course of the video, goes head-to-head with staff members and other customers, until she gets arrested. The original video prompted not only several re-uploads on YouTube, but also musical remixes, exploiting the vulgarity of the woman's speech as well as her vocal timbre. In his metal remix, @ehgore1978 musicalises her raw shouts with a metal backing track reminiscent of the "groove metal" style played by Pantera in the early 1990s. The passage "You motherfucking accuser! Accuser of the fucking brethren, you motherfucker!,"[64] for instance, becomes musically re-contextualised as a recurring shouted buildup, leading into new segments of the song. The musical re-arrangement and constant repetition of the woman's swearwords shift the listening orientation from the original rhetorical context – and from narrative meaning in general – towards genre-typical musical expectations regarding phrasing, timbre, and verbal expression.[65] In the days following the first remixes, a Facebook page and discussions on Reddit emerged, encouraging users to post new video material of the woman, operating as platforms for the upload of new sightings and remixes.[66] Accompanied and amplified by musicalising practices, the ensuing search for the woman focussed on capturing affectively charged audiovisual material which could become imbricated within an environment of hypermediation and musicalisation with the effect of further perpetuating the moment of ridicule by distancing and dehumanising means of aestheticisation.

"Affect Hopping" vs. Musical Receptivity

These cases of reduction of human (self-)display to manipulable data objects exemplify the normalisation of musical "indexploitation" in technologically accelerated practices of data capture and aestheticisations of the everyday. Of

63 @quack, "Example of Ephesians 4:29," January 20, 2020, YouTube video, 5:39, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjSpocBPo2w.

64 @ehgore1978, "Crazy Religious Lady At Meijer Metal Song (Strong Language) – Scott McGinley," January 24, 2020, YouTube video, 2:46, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKJgQboNKRI.

65 Paula Harper calls musically re-functionalised vulgar speech patterns that shift from swear to sound "perverse Pierre Schaefferian 'sound object[s].'" See Harper, "Unmute This," 143.

66 See, for example, "Crazy Meijer Lady," Facebook page, accessed March 30, 2023, https://www.facebook.com/Crazy-Meijer-Lady-113668376850089.

course, beyond the data capture of human bodies, *any* uploaded content on the platform is subject to audiovisual modification, serving as potential affective cultural products within environments of community-driven vernacular musicking. Forms and formats become standardised and made commensurable by processes of capture, creative relay, algorithmic diffusion, and (para-)textual signalisation. Digital affordances of unlimited storage, modularity, and variability further reinforce the postmodern cultural logic of fragmentation and situational conduct. All in all, the technologically hyper-accelerated and ever-accumulating practices of aestheticisation of the everyday on YouTube are situated within, drawing from, and feeding into a vast data flow "marked by dynamic change (both in terms of videos and organization), a diversity of content […], and a […] quotidian frequency, or 'everydayness.'"[67] According to Hartmut Rosa, the resulting increase of "the number of episodes of experience per unit of time" consequentially lets a "compression of experience" occur.[68] With regard to modes of musical reception in networked archives like YouTube, Simon Reynolds states that "every gain in consumer-empowering convenience," such as instant limitless access to data, "has come at the cost of disempowering the power of art to dominate our attention, to induce a state of aesthetic surrender. […] [I]t makes us restless, erodes our ability to focus and be in the moment. We are always interrupting ourselves, disrupting the flow of experience."[69] Indeed, the proliferation of "songifications" seems to satisfy the desire of audiences in frenetic search for new sensations composed from and within the web of constantly accumulating audiovisual aesthetic objects, hopping from one affective stimulus to the next. Particularly the manipulations of audio files by way of auto-tuning, splicing, and looping affords a calculable manufacturing of pleasurable musical material and serve as reliable techniques of turning recorded realia into sonic capital.[70] Moreover, the recognition of realia as a potentially viral source for communal musicking extends into

67 Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2009), 6.

68 Hartmut Rosa, *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 124.

69 Reynolds, *Retromania*, 71–72.

70 The term of sonic capital is inspired by Holger Schulze, who theoretically underpins it by way of examining contemporary dispositives of digital media creation, sound design, and music. See Holger Schulze, "Das sonische Kapital. Sound in den digitalen Medien," *SPIEL. Neue Folge* 2017, no. 2 (January 2017): 13–30, https://doi.org/10.3726/spiel.2017.02.02.

the urban public space, including intrusive practices of peer-to-peer surveillance.

However, even the most critical assumptions about the production of musicalised aesthetic objects actually shed little light on the general potentialities of aesthetic experience linked to their consumption. Mark Featherstone counters overgeneralising notions of ubiquitous "affect-hopping," using the example of music television: "[T]heorists of the postmodern often talk of an ideal-type channel-hopping MTV (music television) viewer who flips through different images at such speed that she/he is unable to chain the signifiers together into a meaningful narrative, he/she merely enjoys the multiphrenic intensities and sensations of the surface of the images. Evidence of the extent of such practices […] is markedly lacking."[71] Featherstone instead even likens the intensities of postmodern (mass) media to the "capacity of the ever-changing urban landscape to summon up associations, resemblances and memories," which "feeds the curiosity of the stroller in the crowds"[72] – an observation that preceded and arguably informed his notion of the *electronic flâneur.* The user's disrupted mobility within the platform's hypertext as well as their aesthetic excitability for disconnected striking audiovisual stimulations can indeed entail a freely associative creative engagement with aesthetic objects that does not succumb to the supposed effect of an overall "compression of experience," but is dedicated to the sound object's *inherent* time and sonic eventfulness. In their very distinctive ways, the ear training scores by Alexander Liebermann, the reharmonisations by Charles Cornell, and the quasi-phonorealistic doublings by MonoNeon represent object-*adaptive* musicalisations and, as such, can be seen as – and serve as – observational "dwellings" instead of calculatedly manufactured disruptive affects. Here, similar to the immediate absorption of the fleeting impressions of modern city life by the *flâneur*, purposeless (musical) receptivity as well as adaptive and responsive approaches to sonic emergences of the source material guide the musicalisation of found sound objects and afford further attentive reception and musical produsage. By collapsing the role of the observer and the contributor into one, these practices result in experiential renderings of the produser's initial musical associations and observations which are often characterised by a curious responsiveness. However, just

71 Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, 2nd ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2007), 5.

72 Ibid., 74.

as the eventfulness of indexical sound affords such a musically responsive approach, the mere presence – and involuntary communication – of their index effects tends to encourage their further remediation and re-appropriation on YouTube and other social media platforms. Hence, with regard to the musical uptake of human speech, even the most musically self-sufficient observations of speech patterns – especially viral ones – further contribute to the normalisation and perpetuation of pleasurable musical engagement with data-captured human (self-)display and are entangled with intrusive practices of musical "indexploitation" – including practices linked to public ridicule and peer-to-peer surveillance. Moreover, they provide the affective cultural production that the platform serves to its users as content. Against this backdrop, the mere use of samples of bodily presence effects can already be conceived of as an act of "expropriation," generating "involuntary labour that's been alienated from its original environment and put into service in a completely other context, creating profit and prestige for another."[73] Thus, beyond this inquiry into aspects of technological acceleration, techniques of musicalisation, and potentialities of affective stimulation by audiovisual aesthetic objects, a further examination of vernacular practices of musicalisation against the backdrop of trajectories of circulation, iteration, and aspirational labour is indispensable.

3.3 Composing with Computational Surface and Interface Effects

As vernacular banalities of networked interaction and relationality, the signs, signals, and surfaces effected by computational interfaces concretely shape the aesthetic objects and figurations of communal (re-)composition on YouTube. Not only does the interface design of social media platforms have a strong curating impact by introducing regimes of algorithmically mediated visibility, but it also obfuscates the performativity of the underlying computational operations happening at a medial sub-surface via user-friendly surfaces. However, in Internet-mediated creative relay, this obfuscation becomes implicitly thematised time and time again, as audiovisual patterns of computational "interface aesthetics" are constantly re-imagined, represented, and reproduced as elements of vernacular expression. The following chapter aims at disentangling the various vernacular practices on YouTube that musically engage with the virtualities of symbolic human-computer interaction, thereby examining

73 Reynolds, *Retromania*, 314.