

**SOUND AS LIBIDO: CONCEPTUALIZING CASES OF THEREMIN,
COCHLEAR IMPLANT AND PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS**

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Abstract

In the domain of social research, sounds are generally analyzed as being embedded in the set of social and cultural references. In its turn, sound studies theory proposes a phenomenological solution of analyzing sounds as non-discursive affects. Since both “sociologized sound” and “sound-affect” put the subject in a passive position towards the sonorous, this theoretical research seeks a methodological alternative, “sound-libido”. While being immersed in the perspectives of Pierre Bourdieu and Jacques Lacan on libido, I deploy their epistemological optics to re-sociologize sound in the context of social situations. The social situations I explore with interviewing as well as participant and non-participant observation are constituted by different sonic objects, such as the theremin, cochlear implants, and percussion instruments. Inside the embracing sonic structure of the performance, classes for children with CI, and musical improvisations, there is an epistemological bifurcation into social and libidinal situations. It is explained by the implicit conflict of the field and the Other. Through these tensions, I reconfigure Bourdieu’s conceptual differentiation of “biological libido” and “social libido” by Lacan’s perspectives of alienation and separation. Both in sociological and psychoanalytic paradigms, libido reflects not only the lack but also the subject's relations with the Other. On the level of the sonic situation, this Bourdieuan-Lacanian epistemological model can grasp the de-sociologized phenomenon of “sound-libido” through Venn’s diagrams.

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Table of contents

Introduction	1
Methodology.....	4
Chapter 1: Epistemologizing Libido: Between Mythology and Theology.....	6
1.1 Libido as a glue stick	8
1.2 Libido as a pound lock	11
1.3 Libido as an ‘y’	14
1.4 Libido as a theological argument	18
1.5 Libido as a broken instrument	21
Chapter 2: Social Situation and Libidinal Situation	23
2.1. Theremin: is audience a field?.....	24
2.2. Percussion Instruments: visual and sonorous	29
2.3. Cochlear Implant: the Other never lies	35
Chapter 3: Libido as Sound, Sound as Libido	39
Conclusion.....	49
Bibliography.....	52
Video sources:	52
Literature:	52

Table of figures

Figure 1.....	43
Figure 2.....	44

Introduction

In 1889, the American anthropologist Franz Boas gave (1889, p. 48) a compelling description of the human-sound interaction:

“The vibration of the air corresponding to this sound sets into motion the membrane of the tympanum of the hearer, who then perceives the sound. But how does he apperceive it? Only by means of similar sounds he has heard before”.

This is part of the argument Boas makes in the debate with another anthropologist Daniel Brinton. Essentially, Brinton claimed that there was a phenomenon in American Indian Languages of the different pronunciations of the same sounds (Bunzl, 1998, p. 65). In the phonological case of Inuit, Boas concludes that, while the pronunciation remains more or less the same, there are “alternating apperceptions of one the same sound” (Boas, 1889, p. 52). This quintessential observation reveals the sound as deeply enrooted in the social or cultural set of references.

In 1907, Georg Simmel introduced (1997, pp. 111, 115) a significant distinction of the “eye” and the “ear”:

“The eye is destined for a completely unique sociological achievement: the connection and interaction of individuals that lies in the act of individuals looking at one another”.

“The ear is further distinguished from the eye by the absence of that reciprocity which the look produces between one eye and another. [...] it cannot turn away or close itself, like the eye; rather, since it only takes, it is condemned to take everything that comes into its vicinity”.

In his *Sociology of the Senses*, Simmel seeks to demonstrate how the human sensorium may create and maintain social relations. These remarks also provide a conceptually foundational opposition. Thereby, the sonority generally is explained and described in relation to the visuality. While the former is socially passive and affected, the latter is socially active and productive. Here, Simmel distinguishes different kinds of sociological knowledge, complementing each other: “what we see of a person is interpreted by what we hear, while the reverse is much rarer” (Ibid, p. 114).

More or less explicitly, these Boasian and Simmelian basic conceptualizations constitute the underlying ideas of the different works on sound in the domain of social research. Methodologically, the sound is a box, containing social and cultural connotations that a researcher is primarily interested in. It is not precisely the sound per se, but the sociologized sound. The aim is generally to find a key that opens the box and to draw these connotations out. In skilled hands, this sociologized sound turns out to be an efficient instrument since it contains a piece of knowledge about society (Roy and Dowd, 2010). Sociologized sound, therefore, is applicable to other concepts of the sociological or anthropological vocabulary: a widely used methodological framework of soundscape may reveal how people may exist as an acoustic community (Foreman, 2011) or construct private spaces through sonic boundaries (Waldock, 2016). As an anthropologist Stephen Feld posits, “analysis of modes and codes of sound communication leads to an understanding of the ethos and quality of life” (Feld, 2012, p. 3). To be sociologized, the sound should be perceivable – it should be aurally audible and referentially graspable. According to this optics, if a member of Kalui society described by Stephen Feld does not hear some essential socialized sounds – that constitute, for instance, a song, producing an intimate territory involving the audience – she finds herself being excluded from an acoustic community and this intimate territory.

Fundamentally, the contemporary sound studies theory claims that the sound is more than the set of references it is generally equated to. The theoretical attempts to observe the sound, apart from its social or cultural significance and meaning, go in tune with some musical avant-garde practices of Pierre Schaeffer, John Cage, or Karlheinz Stockhausen. For instance, a philosopher, Christoph Cox, inspired by Gilles Deleuze, describes the sound as “continuous, anonymous flux to which human beings contribute but which precedes and exceeds them – an ever-changing and variegated sonic domain of incalculable size and infinite temporal dimension to which new material is added every moment” (Cox, 2018, p. 30). In its turn, the phenomenological project of sound studies presupposes that a researcher, instead of endlessly referring to cultural representations, has

to come into contact with a “non-discursive form of affective transmission resulting from acts of listening” (Kapchan, 2017, p. 2). The theoretical refusal from the social and cultural significance results in an epistemological model in which the affect itself turns out to be an object of investigation. By contrast with the sociologized sound, the sound-affect efficiently grasps not only the aurally audible but also non-cochlear sounds (Schrimshaw 2013).

However, both the sound-affect and sociologized sound share the implicit theoretical consequence highlighted by Georg Simmel. In other words, the move from discursivity to non-discursivity does not presuppose the move from passive to active. Since the subject is passive towards either the social meaning or affect, the subject is passive towards the sound. The figure of affect makes this consequence even more solid. The conventional Massumian interpretation of affect – as an “intensity [which] is embodied in purely autonomic reactions most directly manifested in the skin” (Massumi, 1995, p. 85) – is not only frequently used in the contemporary social sciences but also is frequently criticized (Leys 2011). For example, Moira Gatens points out that “Massumi fails to note the very thing that Deleuze rightly stresses, namely, that the devaluation of consciousness does not amount to the devaluation of thought” (Gatens, 2014, p. 23). While, due to optics of affect, the subject aurally or corporeally perceives more sounds (comparing with the optics of sociologized sound), it is more difficult for the subject to dissociate herself from the affect.

That is why I propose to consider sound not as affect, but as libido, in order to epistemologically activate the subject. So, my theoretical work aims to grasp sound-libido as an alternative solution. To overcome the basic theoretical impasse of passivity, the sound-affect should be consistently re-sociologized and then de-sociologized. Here, I borrow the notion of “libido” from the perspective of Jacques Lacan and Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice, while following the productive claim of Helene Aarseth (2016, p. 94):

“Whereas current strands of affect theory tend to see affect as a ‘formless, unstructured, non-signifying force or “intensity” separated from cognition’ (Leys, 2011, p. 442), a practice theoretical conception might conceive of

emotional investments as part of the generative capacity to understand and act in the world”.

In the first theoretical chapter, I will introduce how and why Pierre Bourdieu and Jacques Lacan deploy libido in their own conceptualizations. Since none of them elaborated an autonomous theory of libido, I will distinguish four different strategies of how Lacan and Bourdieu use libido as an epistemological instrument in their models. Particularly, I will show that epistemologizing the libido may prevent its empirical objectification. This chapter aims to attentively reconstruct the Bourdieuan and Lacanian libidinal epistemological optics. Then, in the second field-data-based chapter, I will introduce three varying social situations, involving an engaging interaction with sounds – the artistic actions with the theremin, the musical jams with percussion instruments, and special classes with children with cochlear implants. These situations are constituted by the recent private initiations in Moscow, Russia. While analyzing these three situations with the Bourdieuan epistemological optics, I will point at the problematic moments – the emerging libidinal situation – produced by the very epistemological model. Finally, in the third theoretical chapter, due to these problematic moments, I will reshape and specify the initial libidinal model of Bourdieu through Lacan’s perspective not only to grasp libido as sound but also sound as libido.

Methodology

Still, my research is the primarily theoretical one, the data-based chapter is an indispensable part of it. That is why I will introduce the methodological course of my fieldwork in this section – the very cases will be introduced in the second chapter.

For the theremin case, I interviewed a sonic artist and two Deaf and acoustically challenged performers. The latter I used for reconstructing the context of the performance. Since I do not know Russian Sign Language, I discussed with the Deaf informants the optimal way of communication. By mutual agreement, we had an online chat on Telegram messenger – for two and three hours.

For the percussion instruments case, I conducted the participant observation throughout the whole course. I did not only observe the class but also participate and play percussion instruments. Other participants of the rhythmic course were aware of my research. I consider my fieldwork also as an experimental ethnography; I had an opportunity to discuss the classes with the organizer and to propose some structural changes. Before implementing the changes, the organizer announced to the participants that I proposed it. Also, I interviewed the organizer after the third class and conducted small interviews with the participants during the last class.

The difference between participant observation and non-participant observation is crucial for me. For the cochlear implant case, during the classes with children, I conducted the non-participant observation with the consent of the teacher and parents. I did not make any recording or interference, only observing and taking some notes. After the classes, I discussed them with the teacher and also had small conversations with parents. Before the non-participant observation, I interviewed the director of the Melody of Life foundation, who gave me the contacts of the affiliated teachers. Later on, I conducted interviews with them as well.

All the interviews were taken in Russian and translated into English by me. All the informants gave their consent to video recording (during the conversations in Zoom or Skype) or audio recording (during the live conversations). Throughout the text, I am using different names or acronyms following the confirmation of informants. Finally, I would like to strongly emphasize that I do not compare the experiences of people with varying acoustical perceptions; I am comparing the different social situations since all of them are object-centered and performative ones.

Chapter 1: Epistemologizing Libido: Between Mythology and Theology

Libido which had been originally the Freudian analytical notion became an intrinsic part of everyday language in the meaning of sexual energy. In the contemporary psychoanalytic discourse, it seems pretty hard to grasp a certain dividing line after which psychoanalytic discourse began to view libido as a self-obvious and self-explanatory model that can explain *almost everything* a human being does. There is no great difference, whether risks of universalization had been entrenched in the very basic conceptualization or they were accumulated in the further rereading – these risks may be too high for analytical work.

In another vein, the phenomena described by the psychoanalytic notion of libido seem to be very representative – it is way more somatically manifestative than the concept of the unconscious, for example, which also may be frequently used in everyday language. As it looks, dealing with the unconscious presupposes more specific elaboration, while libidinal drives may be apparently compared to biochemical processes that can be studied not only by psychoanalysts. For instance, due to Charles Brenner's perspective, libidinal energy is intimately associated with neurobiological brain functioning (Zepf, 2010, p. 4). After arguments of this kind, psychoanalytical theories find themselves on the warpath; the struggle against neurobiological sciences is very tough and unnecessary. Maybe that's why, after Freud, the psychoanalysts, in most cases, tend to prefer those solutions which appear to be less abstract, vague, or dangerous.

These consequences should be taken into account, before tracing how Pierre Bourdieu and Jacques Lacan deal with Freudian intuition. Despite its potential controversy, there is something catchy and seductive about the very idea of libido. To some extent, the risks of universalization may be translated into theoretical opportunities for reshaping the conception of libido and reconsidering its functions. Undoubtedly, both Lacan in the 1960s and then Bourdieu in the 1990s did not miss their chance to use these opportunities – still with different practical goals in different domains of knowledge.

Many scholars, such as Roudinesco (1990), Steinmetz (2006), Darmon (2016), Mauger (2017), Fabiani (2020), suggest that, in the post-war French theoretical context, psychoanalysis and social sciences, including Bourdieu, were in a sort of treaty relations. Undoubtedly, these relations were not always friendly (Fourny and Emery, 2000), but still, this is not about complete ignorance. In his late years, Bourdieu cautiously admits it. While “construct[ing] differently certain givens” and “focusing on aspects of reality that psychoanalysis pushes aside as secondary or insignificant”, sociology considers, among others, those phenomena that “psychoanalysis also takes as its object” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 512). Despite their different epistemological optics, sociology and psychoanalysis can have common ground through the objects of research.

Throughout his texts, Bourdieu leaves some hints on psychoanalytic theory for an attentive reader (although he keeps his references limited to several apt mentions of Freud). In his turn, young Lacan apparently was inspired by Durkheim and Mauss (Zafiroopoulos, 2010) and then directly refers to Lévi-Strauss in his works. However, inside the broad and debated topic ‘social sciences and psychoanalysis’, the particular link between Bourdieu and Lacan is much less obvious. Bourdieu’s relation with Lacan’s theory was quite complicated, more complicated than mere considering Lacanian conceptualizations as irrelevant. George Steinmetz remarkably characterizes this relation as a negation, intentional avoidance. In his barely perceptible allusions, “Bourdieu is talking about Lacan to show that he is not really talking about Lacan, not really presenting a theory that only makes sense when it is reconstructed in terms of Lacan’s ideas” (Steinmetz, 2006, p. 448). The absence of Lacan in Bourdieuvian writings may look at least dubious, especially after his claim that “sociology and psychology should combine their efforts (but this would require them to overcome their suspicion)” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 166). While declaring his eagerness to be open, Bourdieu is ready to ‘communicate’ only with Freud.

In this chapter, I do not intend to do an archaeology of Bourdieu-Lacan relations in the French intellectual field of the 20th century. I aim to compare Bourdieuvian and Lacanian approaches to the Freudian legacy – the important theoretical reference for both of them – namely, to the

notion of libido. It is important to keep in mind that, despite the concern for Freud, more evident in Lacan's 1960s seminars, while less articulated in Bourdieu's later works, they did not develop their own completed theories of libido. On the contrary, one can reveal some 'libidinal' parts scattered in different Bourdieuan and Lacanian works – now I will collect the most valuable parts and put them on one table for further examination. Here I will trace the line of argument in Lacan's *Sexuality in the Defiles of the Signifier* and *From Love to Libido* from the section *The Transference and the Drive* of his *Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1998) and Bourdieu's chapter *Is a Disinterested Act Possible?* from his *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (1998) as well as *Symbolic Violence and Political Struggles* from his *Pascalian Meditations* (2000).

1.1 Libido as a glue stick

Jacques Lacan's remarkable seminar *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* was started in 1964, in the same year he was excluded from the International Psychoanalytic Association originally founded by Freud. It would appear that his excommunication had significantly affected the course of his seminar since Lacan "[went] back to the fundamental [Freudian] concepts – the unconscious, repetition, transference, the drive" (Zafiroopoulos, 2010, p. 12) to clarify the status of this kind of knowledge. It is important that the place where the 1964 seminar was held – École normale supérieure – had been associated with philosophy and social sciences, not with psychoanalysis. It was a good opportunity for the excommunicado to make the borders of psychoanalysis more permeable for other types of theorizations. As it is known, Lévi-Strauss, an important theoretical figure for Lacan, attended the first session (Lacan, 1998, p. 2). The third section *The Transference and the Drive* is particularly important in the context of the whole seminar since it delves into the topic of relations emerging between an analyst and a client described by Freud in terms of transference. Lacan denotes it as "the enactment of the reality of the unconscious" (Ibid, p. 149). Here, in *Sexuality in the Defiles of the Signifier*, the audience in 1964 met the notion of libido.

Lacan's strategy, while reconsidering some core points, is to stick close to the Freudian texts. Following Freud's basic conceptualization Lacan's basic thesis is that "the reality of the unconscious is sexual reality" (Ibid, p. 150). "Sexual" here refers not only to sexual desire but also to the sexual division; the latter is a model of signs, here Lacan does not mean to say that sexual desire is a prerogative of heteronormativity, sex itself is denaturalized (Dean, 2003, p. 243). This model is a key to the very idea of existence – due to Freud, sex is intimately associated with death, and this is not only an anthropological perspective: "the survival of the horse as a species has a meaning – each horse is transitory and dies" (Lacan, 1998, p. 150). The sexual division is a starting point for constructing combinations – and, the next move, for a signifier, thus, for a knowledge-production, including a scientific one. Pre-modern science, continues Lacan, is a sexual technique, combinations of signifiers, such as the Chinese astronomy. Here, there is an important question of psychoanalysis's status as the mode of knowledge its connection to sexual reality.

There is a fork in the path. Being in front of this question, Lacan distinguishes two possible solutions – Jungian and Freudian – and both of them are libido-based. The Jungian move is described as an archaization: the subject gains access to reality through archetypes. There is a price to be paid: "repudiation of the term *libido*, by the neutralization of this function by recourse to a notion of psychical energy, a much more generalized notion of interest" (Ibid, p. 153). This price turns out to be too high for Lacan, as he follows the Freudian strategy: "the libido is the effective presence, as such, of desire" (Ibid). Libido here presents not as an archaic connection to reality, but as an essential *epistemological tool* to approach the unconscious. By this move, Lacan admits the irrelevancy of archaic/modern differentiation and the historical dimension for psychoanalysis to be put in, which he created a few moments before. In fact, psychoanalysis does not have to choose between astronomy and astrology. The Lacanian thesis is that libido "is what now remains to indicate desire" (Ibid).

Then, Lacan puts the cards on the table concerning his primary thesis on "the reality of the unconscious is sexual reality". What is, actually, the way the unconscious finds itself being linked

to sexual reality? And the Lacanian solution is that through signifiers in which the subject's demand can be articulated. This demand may take not only the form of conscious request ('I want this or that') but also the mere representation of bodily need ('I want to eat'). A bit later, Lacan directly refers to Freud's mentioning of little Anna's dreams on food, namely "tart, strawberries, eggs, and other delicacies" (Ibid, p. 155). However, the point is on the very articulation of the subject's demand. The functioning of the system of signifiers is never crystal-clear and flawless – there is always room for *jeu de mots*, misconception, or metonymy. At this point, Lacan speaks with confidence: "demand [...], by being articulated by signifiers, leaves a metonymic remainder that runs under it" (Ibid, p. 154). The remainder has the following characteristics – determinability and at the same time inability of being fully satisfied and recognized, being a "condition both, absolute and unapprehensible" and at the same time being unresolvable.

This remainder is what Lacan calls "desire" and identifies as an object of investigation. To understand desire, Lacan needs libido which is, due to Freud, "an essential element of the primary process" (Ibid, pp. 154-155). But before linking libido to the primary process, Lacan makes a mysterious statement: "*desidero* is the Freudian *cogito*" [Ibid: 154]. What does this mean? Is that a reference to Cartesian *cogito* which seems to be an antonym of the unconscious? Mladen Dolar fairly claims that Freud had not had any serious relations with Descartes, however, due to Freud, "cogito must be seen not only at odds with, but at the opposite end in relation to the unconscious" (Dolar, 2009, p. 12). I think Lacan means that if Freud wrote his own conception of *cogito*, the recognition of the subject's existence, he would formulate it as *desidero*. *Cogito* here is not about the subject, but rather about the Other.

But let's pay attention to the first part: what does "desidero" here mean? I think that what Lacan differentiates is not only "desidero" and "cogito" as non-substitutable modes of existence's realization, but rather, more importantly, "desidero" and "desire". "Desire" is a metonymy randomly produced by signifiers in which the demand is articulated, demand for food, for example. "Desire" alone is not self-valuable. In the case of little Anna, or Bertha Pappenheim, "it is only on

account of the sexualization of these objects that the hallucination of the dream is possible” (Lacan 1998, p. 155). Anna was forbidden to eat “tart, strawberries and eggs”, which is why she sexualizes them. Further, Lacan explains this principle by the topological model of the “interior 8” (Ibid, p. 156). Lacan’s scheme may look confusing, but this figure can be made by hand: just carve a strip out of paper, turn over one of the edges and then glue them together in a circle. In fact, it is constituted only by one plane, but it may appear that there are two autonomous fields – of the unconscious and sexual reality. And here is an important note: “I have placed the libido at the point at which the lobe defined as field of the development of the unconscious covers and conceals the other lobe, that of sexual reality” (Ibid).

So, libido is the point of ‘intersection’ of two fields, which, in fact, does not exist – there are no two fields, but one. Retrospectively, libido turned out to be a core basis of the basic statement of the unconscious and sexual reality. I would not agree with the point that Lacan sees both “desire” and “libido” as synonymous (Ragland-Sullivan, 1982, p. 8). “Desidero” is the function of libido that makes a “desire” out of metonymy, a point of ‘transition’ from metonymy to “desire”, which does not actually happen, since the interior 8 is already complete. The way Lacan handles libido reminds me of a glue stick. With a subtle motion of the hand, Lacan uses libido for gluing together different sides of the strip. As soon as the glue is dry, this model is ready for living on its own. “*Man’s desire is the desire of the Other*” (Lacan, 1998, p. 158), concludes Lacan a few pages later. Indeed, the interior 8, the most basic Lacanian topological conceptualization of the subject, looks like an elegant solution. Here, Lacan chests the epistemological instrument of libido, because its job is complete.

1.2 Libido as a pound lock

However, when Lacan tries to objectify libido, – to find traces of glue – it will be a much more complicated task. Only in *From Love to Libido*, there is the return of the prodigal – and it’s very paradoxical. Why does Lacan ever need to get back to libido again? For what does he suddenly claim that “libido is to be conceived as an organ” (Ibid, p. 187) and then tell the audience the myth

of lamella? In the next session, Lacan clarifies it by (again!) retrospectively stating that “the libido is the essential organ in understanding the nature of the drive” (Ibid, p. 205). Lacan pulls libido out of his toolbox once more to construct an argument of partial drives and to make the ‘subject-Other’ relations, that he labeled earlier, more specific. It would appear that, at some moment, he realizes that this move can be too obscure (Ibid, p. 187) since he didn’t even provide the audience with a definition of libido. Interestingly, the very definition he finally gives, in form and in content, does not oil the path. Just before, Lacan makes a disclaimer: I have always tried to give you the epistemological instruments, not to push you to stab in the dark. But now, it is a special occurrence. “You can only find the treasure in the way I tell you” (Ibid, p. 197). What does this mean? Lacan not only refers to the ancient story about androgynous Aristophanes told in the Plato’s *Symposium*, but also comes up with his own story – his myth on lamella (Ibid, pp. 197-198).

“The lamella is something extra-flat, which moves like the amoeba. It is just a little more complicated. But it goes everywhere. And as it is something [...] that is related to what the sexed being loses in sexuality, it is, like the amoeba in relation to sexed beings, immortal – because it survives any division, any scissiparous intervention. [...]. But suppose it comes and envelopes your face while you are quietly asleep. [...]. This lamella, this organ, whose characteristic is not to exist, but which is nevertheless an organ [...] is the libido. It is the libido, qua pure life instinct, that is to say, immortal life, or irrepressible life, life that has need of no organ, simplified, indestructible life. It is precisely what is subtracted from the living being by virtue of the fact that it is subject to the cycle of sexed reproduction”.

It would be interesting to check up on the reaction of the audience in 1964. Actually, Lacan deploys such a mythic form not only to create an impression but also to emphasize the unreal nature of libido – its connectedness to the register of Real subjects fails to symbolize. Due to libido’s inability to get represented, the subject can talk about it only through the myth. Wait for a second, is it precisely the Jungian strategy neglected by Lacan earlier? Not at all, since Lacan’s thesis is that libido, “this false organ”, “is situated in relation to the true organ” (Ibid, p. 196). It means that this libido-organ overlaps the erogenous zones – Lacan here adds eyes and ears to Freudian mouth and anus. Wait, wait! It is not consistent with what Lacan said before, re-articulating Freud’s basic statement: “[libido] cannot be [...] accumulated [...] in the centres of focusing offered it by the

subject” (Ibid, p. 187). “Please, attend!”, Lacan would respond to us, “the libido, or the lamella, that is what the subject lacks”.

Here, Lacan surreptitiously gets back to the initial topic of *Sexuality in the Defiles of the Signifier* – sex division, linked to death, and the basis of the signifier. The myth of libido is not about “the relation between masculine and feminine” (Aristophanes’ story), but rather about “the relation between the living subject and that which he loses by having to pass, for his reproduction, through the sexual cycle” (Ibid, p. 199). That is how Lacan explains the way “sexuality in the unconscious [...] represents [...] death” [Ibid]. Basically, Lacan re-articulates libido once again in the confusing manner of myth on lamella, because he cannot make the same epistemological move, as he did while constructing the interior 8: retrospectively take libido away. That’s why he explicitly makes ‘non-existence’ of libido its characteristic as the object. A kind of Schrödinger’s libido. But, in this case, what about the signifiers? “Don’t worry”, insists Lacan, “rather let me reintroduce you to the dimension of the capital Other”.

The aforementioned addition of eyes and ears is non-accidental; Lacan needs them to formulate scopic and invocatory drive and to correct Freud. Here’s an important remark: “the root of the scopic drive is to be found entirely in the subject, in the fact that the subject sees himself” (Ibid, p. 194). This remark further will be reversed: the subject makes oneself seen. Then, by the same logic, the subject makes oneself heard (invocatory drive), gobbled up (oral erotism), etc. This “oneself”, due to Lacan, turns out to be the Other [Ibid: 196]. However, all these drives are partial ones – the subject does not actually long for gaze, voice, or breast which are only figures of libido (Ibid, p. 198) the subject has access to due to the Other. Why does Lacan call them partial and even invent a figure of “*objet petit a*” to emphasize this feature? Because they are not the real object of drive for the ‘uncompleted’ subject. Despite *the relations ‘subject-Other’ preceding the libido*, it is libido which is seen as the “real lack” [Ibid: 205] of the subject that splits the subject and makes all the drives partial ones. The subject gets involved in drives to find “the part of himself, lost forever” (Ibid), the fragment of Real, cannot be symbolized, and only the Other can ease this pain.

In Lacanian perspective, libido is a great epistemological instrument that may be used for studying desires and drives – to make this transition, Lacan invents a myth on lamella, on real lack. There is an important consequence of this invention: now libido is also the “*irreal organ*” that mediates the unconscious and the Other. It was not a sudden invention, since Lacan also mentions “lamella” at the 1960 Bonneval colloquium. In his 1960 speech, Lacan is very clear on libido’s functioning: “is not its discharge, but should rather be described as the turning inside out and outside” [Feldstein, Fink & Jaanus, 1995, p. 274]. That clarifies the relations of libido with erogenous zones (the unconscious) – libido is a pound lock, *écluse*, as Lacan would say. While specifying these erogenous zones, Lacan crucially mentions ears, which have “the privilege of not being able to close” (Lacan, 1998, p. 200). However, Lacan would not explicitly elaborate, among other things, this important remark in particular.

1.3 Libido as an ‘y’

Now, moving towards Pierre Bourdieu’s writings, this excursion will be also intriguing. Here or there, the notion of libido may singularly appear in different Bourdieuan texts, but the most elaborated parts are to be found in the chapter *Is a Disinterested Act Possible?* and then in *Pascalian Meditations*. During the last decade of his life, Bourdieu was apparently concerned about revisiting his conceptions in “an attempt to make things more palatable for the new generation of sociologists” (Fabiani, 2020, p. 4). It is important to note that, in those times, Bourdieu’s conceptions – for example, habitus – were continually criticized for being too objectivist or too structuralist. So, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* may be viewed as a kind of response to this critique – let’s follow up the Bourdieuan strategy.

Bourdieu’s writing style is very tricky since it contains a lot of hidden hazards, references, hints, and Bourdieu sees no rationale for explaining them to the reader. Not superfluous will remind oneself of being careful and attentive. At the very beginning, Bourdieu introduces the notion of “interest” as a starting point of his elaboration – and then dedicates the whole introductory section to justify this notion. That is already very strange, because Bourdieu certainly

did not invent this notion, and many theorists before him, like Weber, Simmel, or Durkheim used to deploy “interest” in their conceptualizations (Swedberg, 2005, p. 361). So, why is Bourdieu in need of justifications? And these justifications themselves look equally strange: “interest” should be used in sociological analysis, because it is “an instrument of rupture with an enchanted and mystifying vision of human behavior” (Bourdieu 1998, p. 75) and because “social agents do not engage in gratuitous acts” (Ibid, p. 76). What kind of “interest” Bourdieu talks about?

Then, in the next section, Bourdieu suddenly says that he will not deal with the justified notion of “interest”; it will be replaced “by more rigorous notions such as *illusio*, investment, or even *libido*” (Ibid). This move looks very familiar – it is the Jungian perspective described by Lacan, but vice versa. Bourdieu needs to justify “interest” to make a further transition to “*libido*”. In much the same way, as Lacan uses “*libido*” in the context of psychoanalytic knowledge, Bourdieu uses “interest” (to be later transformed in *libido*) in the context of sociological knowledge (Ibid, p. 75). The way Bourdieu does it is worth mentioning as a separate point.

In his second justification, Bourdieu crucially mentions the “principle of sufficient reason” (Ibid) which is a metaphysical and logical principle formulated by Gottfried Leibniz, “nothing happens without a reason”. This principle may imply a doubling (or bifurcation) of reality: ‘x’ exists in reality only if there is ‘y’ that sufficiently justifies its existence. In this equation, the ontological status of ‘y’ may seem to be quite vague. Does ‘y’ belong to the reality of ‘x’, being an omnipresent shadow of ‘x’, or ‘y’ is external to the reality of ‘x’? To pass by this ontological vagueness, Bourdieu outs this principle into epistemological optics of sociology, not in an ontological perspective. In his conversation with Sergiu Benvenuto, Bourdieu admits that there are actions that are gratuitous and makes an example of “kids burning cars” (Bourdieu, 1994). Does Bourdieu mean that such actions are out of sociology’s sphere?

On the surface, it seems so. One might say that Bourdieu uses this principle for solving the deadlock of knowledge in the domain of sociology. There are two types of knowledge — self-referential doxa (‘x’) and referential episteme (‘y’). Sociological (‘y’-an) knowledge can deal with

objects of reality due to its doubleness ('x' + 'y'); but it should pay the price: unreasonability. Due to this principle, sociology is not able to deal with unreasonability. It looks like a tautological argument: sociology cannot explain what cannot be explained, self-references ('x' without 'y'). But what is then this unreasonability in comprehension of Bourdieu?

Let's keep asking questions. Does Bourdieu, while mentioning this principle, really and truly refer to Leibniz? Or maybe Spinoza? I guess is that, in his phrase, there is a hidden figure of Emil Durkheim. The previous conceptualization of knowledge may look like a Durkheimian one. Indeed, it is arguable that Durkheim was influenced by the idea of "sufficient reason" (Mestrovic, 1988, p. 697). For example, Frédéric Vandenberghe directly draws a parallel between Bourdieuan "sufficient reason" and Durkheimian determinism (Vandenberghe, 1999, p. 41) which is also structurally tautological: what can be explained (social fact) should be explained by what can be explained (another social fact). Thus, there is an important question: why does Bourdieu, in his article, reiterate seemingly the most basic point that justifies the very existence of sociological knowledge? To swear allegiance to Durkheim?

There are too many questions the only introductory section provokes, so let's attentively reread the sequence of theoretical moves Bourdieu makes between mentioning the "principle of sufficient reason" and concluding that 'social agents do not engage in gratuitous acts' (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 75-76].

1. "Social agents don't do just anything, that they are not foolish, that they do not act without reason".
2. "This does not mean one must assume that they are rational, that they are right to act as they do, that they have reasons to act and that reason are what direct, guide, or orient their action".
3. "Agents may engage in reasonable forms of behavior without being rational; they may engage in behaviors one can explain, as classical philosophers would say, with the hypothesis of rationality, without their behavior having reason as its principle".
4. "Sociology thus postulates that there is a reason in what agents do (in the sense that one speaks of a reason of a series) which must be found".

At the first point, Bourdieu states the reasonability is the basis of action. Then, at the second point, he proposes an anti-Weberian solution: reasonability is not about rationality. At the third point, he proposes an anti-Durkheimian solution: reasonability does not presuppose transcendent social Reason as the principle of behavior. Previously, Bourdieu makes tautological Durkheimian arguments in order to overcome them. Finally, Bourdieu establishes reasonability as an epistemological tool that can be deployed not at the individual situation, but rather at the set of social situations.

In this four-step conceptualization, Bourdieu tries to undermine not only rationalistic Weberian logic (at the very beginning, Bourdieu throws a stone in Weber's garden of value-freedom – or 'disinterestedness'), but also Durkheimian determinism in an inconspicuous way. It may seem as if Bourdieu speaks of the sociology of Weber or Durkheim, but, in fact, he does not. The final introductory phrase "raison d'être of a behavior is identified with [...] the pursuit of economic ends" may be misleading: one might conclude that if Bourdieu does not talk about Weber and Durkheim, then he talks about Marx. But, actually, Bourdieu is talking about Freud. That is why he needs to justify once again the very existence of sociological knowledge – he wants to quietly say something new, a kind of quiet revolution in sociology. "The economic ends", in the Bourdieuan (or Freudian) sense, do not set pursuing a specific goal above the very commitment. When kids are burning cars, they have a "feel for the game" (Ibid, p. 77). This "reasonability", thus, embodies the transition from "interest" to "libido".

Furthermore, in the next section, Bourdieu introduces the notion of libido, in two capacities – biological and social. Whereas Lacan uses the libido for splitting the subject, Bourdieu splits the libido itself. So, there is a phenomenon of another doubling in Bourdieuan conceptualization: libido being an epistemological instrument of analysis social situation is inherent to the very social situation. That is why Bourdieu, in my opinion, differentiates 'biological libido' and 'social libido' to avoid the conventional self-reference. 'Biological libido' stands for 'everyone in a sense knows', while 'social libido' is what can be explained by its adherence to this or that social field: "one of

the tasks of sociology is to determine how the social world constitutes the biological libido, an undifferentiated impulse, as a specific social libido' (Ibid, p. 78). Interestingly, while talking about libido, Bourdieu also chooses the Lacanian strategy of analogies and Ancient examples. He speaks (Ibid, pp. 77-78) of Stoics' "ataraxia", then of the motto of Platonic Academy in Athens, – "Let no one enter here, who is not a geometrician" – and finally recalls "a sculpture found at the Auch cathedral, in the Gers, which represents two monks struggling over the prior's staff".

It seems like, for both Lacan and Bourdieu, the objectification of libido is no easy thing. In the chapter *Is a Disinterested Act Possible?* there is a trick of Bourdieuan sociology of knowledge which I call 'Bourdieu's trap'. There is a fee of refusal of Durkheimian tautologies Bourdieu has to pay to move further. If one uses a thing (libido) as an epistemological instrument, one cannot reveal this thing (libido) as an object of research, using the same epistemological instrument. The relations between the epistemological reasonability-libido ('y'), which justifies social agents' actions, and the libido as an autonomous object ('x') look very vague. Libido as an object is already pertinent to this 'x'-ian knowledge, doxa. There is already a hint on it at the first justification: "intellectual stakes also have stakes and [...] these stakes arouse interests – as so many things that everyone in a sense knows" (Ibid, p. 75). However, this moment of translation from ('x' to 'y') is conceptually more than unobvious.

1.4 Libido as a theological argument

Let's finish the theoretical journey by Bourdieu's *Pascalian Meditations*, in particular, by the chapter *Symbolic Violence and Political Struggles*. Apparently being aware of its unfinished state in the previous elaboration, Bourdieu gets back to the conception of libido, not as an epistemological substantiation of sociological action as well as not precisely an object of investigation. All in all, earlier he did not even explain what the libido, one of the basic elements of his non-Weberian and non-Durkheimian conceptualization of action, was. One of Bourdieu's aims here is to clarify the way the libido functions, without analogies and metaphors.

This book provides a philosophical perspective that is embedded in the very title and which is quite surprising for Bourdieu: “a man thought to be a Marxist is discovered to be a Pascalian” [Cléro 2012]. Bourdieu concludes an alliance with Blaise Pascal, the 17th-century French philosopher and Jansen-oriented theologian. Indeed, this is an alliance, because, without analyzing Pascal himself, Bourdieu “uses [Pascal’s ideas] as a framework or paradigm to develop, reveal, or articulate his own thoughts” [Ibid]. Bourdieu’s loyalty to this framework may shed light upon the obscure notion. Before *Libido* and *Illusio* section, there are some peculiar references to *libido* (italics by Bourdieu) – *libido dominandi* and *libido sciendi* (Bourdieu, 2000, pp. 11, 101, 111) – as specific dispositions the field of academy demands. Let’s refer to Pascal’s *Thoughts* – to find the very same Latin formulations (Pascal, 1910, p. 152).

“All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, or the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life; *libido sentiendi*, *libido sciendi*, *libido dominandi*.’ Wretched is the cursed land which these three rivers of fire enflame rather than water! Happy they who, on these rivers, are not overwhelmed nor carried away, but are immovably fixed, not Standing, but seated on a low and secure base, whence they do not rise before the light, but, having rested in peace, stretch out their hands to Him, who must lift them up, and make them stand upright and firm in the porches of the holy Jerusalem! There pride can no longer assail them nor cast them down; and yet they weep, not to see all those perishable things swept away by the torrents, but at the remembrance of their loved country, the heavenly Jerusalem, which they remember without ceasing during their prolonged exile”.

The first line is a quotation from the Gospel of John (John 2:16), and the same reference is to be found in Cornelius Jansen’s *Discours de la Réformation de l’Homme Intérieur* (Jansenius, 1642, pp. 44, 52). This piece, along with other Jansenian works, had a significant impact on Pascal’s elaboration (Le Guern, 1994), however, Jansen had not used the Latin formulations of three libidos. Here, Pascal seemingly refers to st. Augustine’s idea of *libido dominandi* and also adds *libido sciendi* and *libido sentiendi* following the Gospel’s pattern. However, Pascal does not provide the end of John 2:16 – “is not of the Father, but is of the world”. This is a very important differentiation, since, due to Pascal, *libido* is not only derived from “the world”, but refers to the lack of the Father, the lack of “the heavenly Jerusalem” and the “loved country”. In the theological

perspective, “libido” is primarily about the “prolonged exile” and the lost Paradise, the lack and the relations with the Other. Does it sound familiar? It reminds me of the reversed version of the Lacanian myth on lamella: for Lacan, the actual lack of libido results in the subject’s link with the Other; for Pascal, the lack of Other results in the subject’s link with libido.

Undoubtedly, Bourdieu is not Jansenist (Cléro, 2012), and there is an important Jansen’s take (Jansenius, 1624, p. 90), close to the idea of irresistible grace, that would sound controversial for later Bourdieu’s theory: because of God, or the Other, people have a will to act. Another justification is needed for what Bourdieu calls “libido”. Jansenist-Pascalian perspective allows to grasp libido only as dispositions (“libido dominandi”, “libido sciendi”) demanded by the field (or “the world”), whereas Bourdieu’s praxis-oriented take is that investment is determined not only from the outside but also from the inside (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 512). That is why what Bourdieu does is tries to psychoanalyze the initial theological argument of libido. He did not even deny the sexual nature of libido (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 166), although he makes no use of it. The most important part here is on the same ‘biological libido/social libido’ differentiation which is treated in a psychoanalytical way (Ibid):

“How does the transition, described by Freud, occur, leading from a narcissistic organization of the libido, in which the child takes himself (or his own body) as an object of desire, to another state in which he orients himself towards another person, thus entering the world of ‘object relations’, in the form of the original social microcosm and the protagonists of the drama that is played out there?”

From “Narcissistic organization of the libido” to “object relations” – here Bourdieu re-articulates the basic idea on relations between narcissistic “ego-libido” (“self-regard”) and “object-libido” (“erotism”, “libidinal object-cathexes”) from the famous Freudian work *On Narcissism: An Introduction* (Freud, 1914), the idea barely mentioned, but not explicitly elaborated by Lacan. This idea seems to be an inspiration for Bourdieu to replace “object-libido” with “social libido”. Bourdieu turns out to be more Freudian than Lacan himself. Here, Bourdieu formulates his actual justification, the motor of social libido is “the search for recognition”, “a fascinated pursuit of the approval of others” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 166). That is a Freudian argument. Through this argument,

Bourdieu distinguishes two possible strategies of “transition” from “biological libido” to “social libido” on the example of the family field: “an extreme form of fulfilment” and “an absolute form of alienation” (Ibid). Let us finally check the way Freud describes the same strategies (Freud, 2014, pp. 29-30).

“Loving in itself, in so far as it involves longing and deprivation, lowers self-regard; whereas being loved, having one’s love returned [1st strategy – D.B.], and possessing the loved object, raises it once more. When libido is repressed [2nd strategy – D.B.], the erotic cathexis is felt as a severe depletion of the ego, the satisfaction of love is impossible, and the re-enrichment of the ego can be effected only by a withdrawal of libido from its objects”.

Return on investment – that is the kind of recognition the subject seeks, otherwise there would be outflows of investable funds. Keep in mind that the actual goal of libido is an investment. This “having one’s love returned” is not the goal of libido, but the motor of it, kindling wood. Here, Bourdieu, as though justifying the compatibility of psychoanalysis and theology, refers to Pascal’s pedagogical argument: “the children of Port-Royal, who do not receive this stimulus of envy and glory, fall into carelessness” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 167). Before the cited paragraph, Pascal himself makes a thesis that may be conceived as being close to Lacanian perspective: “We do not content ourselves with the life we have in ourselves and in our own being; we desire to live an imaginary life in the mind of others [...] to adorn and preserve this imaginary existence, and neglect the real” (Pascal, 1910, p. 59).

1.5 Libido as a broken instrument

Let me summarize here the important parallels between Bourdieu and Lacan made by me throughout the chapter. In 1964, Lacan challenged the unified perception of psychoanalysis and proposed his own elaborations, whereas, in the 1990s, Bourdieu sought to make a ‘quiet’ revolution in sociology. For these goals, they use the Freudian notion of libido and make a core epistemological instrument from it – to justify the interior 8 and the partial character of drives as well as to explore social actions at the social fields. In their elaborations, some parallels can be found – in a similar vein, Lacanian libido mediates the unconscious (the subject) and the Other,

Bourdieuian social libido mediates the social agent and the social field. However, both types of libido, while being ‘epistemologized’, resist further attempts of objectification – that is why Lacan and Bourdieu seek indirect roots of mythology and theology. Here – and that is the core point – both of them, more explicitly in Lacan’s perspective, less explicitly in Bourdieu’s one, while speaking about libido itself, point to the subject’s relation with the Other and the lack in the subject. I will return to this point in the third chapter on sound-libido.

It is worth pausing to ask myself: why do I need this Bourdieuan-Lacanian libidinal epistemology for defending a hypothesis that libido may be objectified in sound? How to get out of the ‘Bourdieuian trap’ and to view sound-libido? Here I will conclude by sketching the solution I propose. Lacan and Bourdieu construct libidinal optics to gain the access to objects of investigation – desires, drives, or actions. If one breaks the optics, still one will be able to view those objects, through ruptures and fractures. But there will be a different picture. The libido as an object (libido-sound) may be seen through Bourdieuan-Lacanian optics, but these libidinal optics have to be broken.

Chapter 2: Social Situation and Libidinal Situation

Before introducing the cases and the field data, it should be highlighted that each of them deserves autonomous research. I am aware of it and it would be unreasonable to conduct all three research for the price of one paper. That is why the stories I refer to should be rigorously structured to maintain my line of thought on sound and libido. The consequence of this approach comes down to a question of research scope. Due to Bourdieu, the social space, generally speaking, can be divided into numerous autonomous fields (scientific, bureaucratic, artistic, political, juridical, etc.). In its turn, a field is defined by the stakes it proposes for social agents – different fields have different stakes. It seems like “social libido” is the only mediator between agent and field (or a sub-field) (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 78-79). Social libido pushes an agent to invest in stakes a field proposes. It is worth reminding that the Bourdieuan “social libido” is a double-edged sword since it consists of subjective “undifferentiated impulse” which was transformed into “socially constituted interests which only exist in relation to a social space” (Ibid). It is clear that here Bourdieu theoretically deals with the subjectivist-objectivist dichotomy. However, for the practical analysis, this scale seems to be not only too large but also too indistinct: where are the limits of “agent”, where are the borders of “field”?

For my analysis, I propose the scale of the social situation – my only aim is to scale down the basic optics, I do not intend to claim that the Bourdieuan field is constituted by numerous social situations. Since the move of changing the scope may be dangerous, it is essential to discuss the conditions of a bargain. I refer to the classical Deweyan definition: “For we never experience nor form judgments about objects and events in isolation, but only in connection with a contextual whole. This latter is what is called a ‘situation’” (Dewey, 1938, p. 66). Adding to this pragmatic idea of a “contextual whole” such parameters as communication or subjective interaction will result, for example, in the Batesonian metacommunication or Goffmanian frame. The interaction is very problematic for Bourdieu since there is a huge risk of subjectivism. As Roy Boyne posits, “Bourdieu makes it plain that the idea of a situation, conceived as a social setting brought about

and defined by social actors, is to be rejected as a sociological mistake” (Boyne, 1993, p. 243]. There is another unavoidable question on this model of “agent – social libido – field”: how can the interactive relations “agent – agent” be constituted in a particular case? Will the monks from Auch Cathedral fight every time they see each other? Do they subjectively interact with each other during their struggle? Not with the field? For Bourdieu, something more solid, than the way agents mutually translate the setting, is needed to define a social situation.

In my opinion, there is an element that would not tilt the theoretical balance and which, at the same time, would be solid enough to create a social situation in the Bourdieuan paradigm. It is a material object which can be associated with the structure of the field. Getting back to the same example of two struggling monks. Let us believe Bourdieu and consider their fight as a social situation. Instead of describing in detail the very model, consisting of the field of religion, agents, interests, libido, Bourdieu only mentions the “prior’s staff” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 78) – a particular material object. The very presence of a material object is not a mere representation of the situation, but rather its basis. At the same time, the “prior’s staff” explains the situation (the monks are struggling not for nothing) and produces the situation (the monks would not struggle if there is no object). In this example, the unlucky monks do not need to interact with each other to conclude that the fight is necessary. They already know what to do, due to the incorporated feel of the game (Ibid, p. 81) and due to the presence of the object. That is why, in this work, I deal with those social situations which I consider to be object-based.

In the following sections, I will present three object-based social situations, involving different sonic material objects.

2.1. Theremin: is audience a field?

Theremin, an early electronic musical instrument invented by Soviet engineer Leon Theremin in 1920, is played without any taction. The theremin’s sounds (signals) and vibrations are produced by hand motions. It is no coincidence that its music has been repeatedly used for ‘sonification’ of outer space Other in science fiction films (Wierzbicki, 2002) – this unique musical

instrument dredges up images of alternative kinds of communication. The latter feature formed the basis for the 2019 performance *Organ of Memory* [Орган Памяти] created by Russian sonic artist Egor Rogalev. The social situation of performance is constituted by the sequential interaction of several Deaf or acoustically challenged performers with the theremin; the performers were reading in the Russian Sign Language the excerpts from *How Steel Was Tempered* novel in front of the theremin¹.

Overall, there were 3 actions in 2019, Moscow: March 9, at the NCCA (Egor: “There was an open call for an inclusive project at NCCA”); May 18, at the Nikolai Ostrovsky Museum (Egor: “The people who work there [in the museum - D.B.] heard about the performance and decided [...] that it was necessary to invite us”); July 16, in the botanical garden Aptekarsky Ogorod (Egor: “It was during a storm, there was a thunder and lightning, the rain was beating against the glass roof”). Each action involved 4-6 performers. All the three actions constitute three social situations with different settings and even actors – in other words, the *Organ of Memory* performance is a set of social situations.

By 2021, the performance exists only as video documentation, a 56-minutes official video from the very first action at the NCCA (Art Inclusion, 2019), which is an essential orienting point for me. Also, I conducted two interviews – with G., who had contributed to all the actions, and with Alena., who had taken the part only July 16. G. is a 36-years old man; Egor notably describes G. as “the essential link” (G. helped him to contact other performers) and “the most artistic performer”. Alena is a 31-years old woman, an actress of Mimics and Gesture Theater in Moscow,

¹ *Organ of Memory* performance was inspired by the infamous and brutal ‘case of Leningrad deaf-mute people’ that had been fabricated by the NKVD in 1937. The memoir’s piece by a Deaf actor David Ginsburgsky, entitled I remember the tragic 1937 (Ginsburgsky, 1999), seems to be the only detailed historical source about this case. According to it, the case was based on a denunciation that some members of deaf-mute people’s society in Leningrad were involved in speculation by trading postcards at Leningrad railway stations. Since several images of Hitler were found among 1400 confiscated postcards and a single revolver, about 55 Deaf people were arrested, then executed or banished to Gulag. Only a few of them sold these postcards, while the majority of the condemned were only acquainted with street vendors. Later it was found out that these provocative images were merely inserts from contraband German packs of cigarettes. One of the convicted persons, the director of the Leningrad Theater of the Deaf people, was arrested during the general rehearsal of a new play that was being prepared for the 20th Anniversary of the revolution. The play was based on the book by Nikolai Ostrovsky *How Steel Was Tempered* (Ibid).

she is acoustically challenged. By arrangement with the informants, the interviews were shaped as an online chat. This is a retrospective reconstruction since regarding the interviewing, the very performance took place 2 years ago.

At the outset, it is imperative to fix upon the status of the audience, since the situation of performance presupposes its presence. Due to Bourdieu, the audience itself, consisting of numerous social agents, exists in a different field of power, since the “rules” spectators follow are dependent on the artistic taste and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1984). In this context, Alena has a peculiar position of being the spectator and the performer (May 18, Alena visited Nikolai Ostrovsky Museum to see a performance). While describing the artistic action from the position of the spectator, she makes an interesting note: “I understand Russian Sign Language, that is why I knew what was being said. But there were moments when the sound took over and I listened to it, missing what they were saying”. As a spectator, Alena differentiates two specific regimes – of sound and speech. Then, concerning the performance, Alena identifies her role as an “elocutionist”: “I worked with the text, I had to translate it correctly in Russian Sign Language, the deaf spectators needed to understand what I was talking about”. G. confesses that the presence affected him as well: “It’s all about courage and the willingness to speak out in front of those who don’t understand us. So, I was doing a pantomime for the audience to know what I’m talking about”. Significantly, it is not the agentive interaction with the audience, and G. states (partially, on behalf of other performers): “there was no [feedback], and we were not interested in it”. In the Bourdieuan optics and from the performers’ point of view, the same audience can be considered as a constitutive part of their field to invest in.

Then, the form of this artistic performance as a social situation presupposes explicit “rules” for the social agents (in the Bourdieuan sense). To some extent, these “rules” are defined by the way a performer invests in the field (audience). Also, structurally, it is not an improvisation, since every performer has her or his position in the sequence and a text fragment to translate into Russian Sign Language. Due to this, the second essential feature is the near absence of repetitions before

every action, even despite the partial rotation of performers. Preliminary meetings aimed to technically check the theremin itself, and that, according to Egor, “was, in fact, sufficient”. Alena also claims, “there is no need of rehearsals with the theremin”, while G. notes that “some [performers] were stiff and complained that the minimum of rehearsals had given them trouble”. That brings us to the issue of the theremin itself and of the implicit “rules” the instrument imposes on the social agent. Interestingly, due to the video documentation (Art Inclusion, 2019), the theremin starts to produce sounds at that particular moment a performer approaches it, sort of indicating the subject’s presence.

The very experience of dealing with the theremin is considered unique – the agents had not profoundly interacted with the theremin before they participated in the performance. For example, Alena even states that “[she] might have never known about the theremin [except for this experience], whereas G. says that it was “a new experience” for him. Despite its ‘novelty’, the theremin is viewed as an engaging instrument. Egor says that playing the theremin “was completely intuitive” and remembers a legend of Vladimir Lenin who, according to the rumors, managed to off-hand play Mikhail Glinka’s *Nightingale*. While describing her experience of interacting with the theremin during the tune-up, Alena says that she “had time to have a little fun”. However, the theremin is not only about sounds or signals. The core point is that during the performance the theremin was specifically tuned to produce the vibration that sets another level of the agent’s engagement. This brings us to non-cochlear listening that “responds to demands, conventions, forms, and content not restricted to the realm of the sonic” (Kim-Cohen, 2009, p. xxii), to the engagement with sounds that are not aurally perceived. It can be traced throughout the narrative of G.:

“The Deaf persons usually can’t hear sounds (those who are acoustically challenged are not counted). They feel the vibration through the lungs or legs. Over the years we’ve got used to relying on these sensations, and the theremin turned out to be powerful... Some of [performers] tried to amplify the sounds to make the vibration more powerful. Others tried to reduce the effect and were quietly “speaking”. [...]. I love noise and loud sounds. [...]. You see, if a person is used to feeling with the body, the ears become an unnecessary tool. The eyes

and the body are our everything. And I still don't understand people who say that music is cool. It's just a bunch of sounds, it doesn't make any sense. It's all about getting a buzz or appreciating the visual beauty. [...]. For example, if a train passes by, I can feel the vibration in my body, I get a buzz. And the sound, it's kind of disgusting. Wheels of the train and everything. And the vibration... It's the same with the plane – I have trouble falling asleep – the whole plane vibrates. And there's no sound. But the feeling of the plane... Bliss. As if I'm united with the body of the object. It's the same with the theremin. Like a preorgasmic state”.

It should be noted that there is no differentiation between sound and vibration. There are different notions of “sound” – “senseless” sounds (in the context of music), referring to connotations and meanings, and “buzzy” sounds, particularly existing as a non-audible vibration. The former is “disgusting”, while the latter is “like a preorgasmic state”. Despite G. puts them on one scale, there is also a significant difference between a plane or train and a theremin. Concerning the latter, G. says that “you're your own conductor. You control the vibration and the tempo”. It is not precisely the affective “feeling with the body”. The fact of controlling the process – and, therefore, the emotions – leads to a possibility of describing this engagement as a libidinal investment. Significantly, for G., such kind of investment is connected not with audible, but with vibrative sounds. It is very telling since the time has come to problematize the status of the audience.

The Bourdieuan optics shows that the dynamics inside this social situation are created by the performers' investment in the field – in the audience. Does this investment remain stable? As G. describes it, there were moments of euphoria, “if you catch the rhythm... that's it, you're gone”. At that moment, a performer forgets about the audience: “During the first action I was aware of the audience's presence, while during the second and third ones I just didn't notice it”. Here, due to the theremin, – the object that constitutes the social situation – the audience as a field to invest disappears for a performer, but the very investment remains. This state is most pronounced at that time when the interaction with the theremin draws to a close – G. describes this experience in the following way:

“As my colleague told me, [...] you feel that moment [from Ostrovsky’s text] and that’s it. It breaks off... Some kind of desolation, a feeling of incompleteness – how much would have been done, but that’s all. [...]. When [the performers] were leaving [the theremin], everyone’s emotions went high, we haven’t completely expressed ourselves”.

In her turn, Alena admits that “it’s a pity it was only once, I would have loved to participate in such a project [once again].” Although Alena was primarily concentrated on the reading text during the action, from the point of view of the spectator who understands Russian Sign Language, she also points to these different regimes of sound and speech, as was mentioned earlier. Here Alena meant the theremin’s sonic signals, since “[she doesn’t] pay attention to the vibration” – the signals which were perceived by G. on the level of vibration. The most important here is the differentiation of signifying connotations and of the sound (which includes vibrations). The former is intimately associated with the investment in the audience. The latter is more problematic.

2.2. Percussion Instruments: visual and sonorous

By contrast with the theremin, percussion instruments impose a much more engaging level of physical tactility. Also, while the theremin is an electronic avant-garde musical object, percussion instruments are generally viewed – especially, in the context of communal music production and drum circles – as referring to locality, tradition, or religion (Foltz, 2010). The variety of objects, namely drums, produce the second set of social situations I am exploring – an experimental 4-classes course on rhythm organized by Viktor Glazunov, a Russian professional drummer and a member of the *Playtronica* team. March-April 2021 (March 20, March 27, April 3, and April 17), this course took place at VDNKh, Moscow – at the small studio which is “a real paradise for a percussionist due to a diversity of pulsatile instruments”, as Viktor said at the first session. The very format does not presuppose any particular audience, as the public invitation on Facebook generally says, “we will play different drums, cups [cup songs – D.B.] and vegetables and learn how to extract sounds from our body (body percussion)”.

The broad idea of this course is to problematize the relations with rhythm through collaboration with various musical and non-musical objects as well as the body. As a rule, one class

consisted of a set of rhythmic games and exercises, collective reflections, and music jams. Overall, there were about 10 participants with various backgrounds (importantly, a lot of them did not have a musical background), including me and Viktor. Since there were no Deaf persons among them, I would like to emphasize once again that I do not intend to compare the subjective experiences of people with varying aural perceptions; while analyzing not subjects, but social situations and objects, I put all the three stories on one table due to their object-centricity and performativity.

I conducted participant observation as well as short unstructured interviews with participants and Viktor. The main focus is on the social situation of music jam – a sonic improvisation involving a vast array of percussion instruments – which is viewed by the organizer of this experimental course as a key pillar of the learning process. I can distinguish two modes of music jam, and the very differentiation is possible due to my experimental intervention in the situation: following y suggestion, during the third class's music jam, the participants, including me and Viktor, were playing with eyes closed. For this reason, I will eventually introduce two experimentally constructed modes of music jam as a situation – visual and non-visual.

The first music jam took place at the end of the first class, March 20. There were 7 participants (this time I chose observing), and 13 musical instruments; and here is a list of the objects: Kenkeni; Djembe; Conga (4); Goblet drum (darbuka); Dunun; Mark tree; Marimba; Ocean drum; Tone-blocks; Drum set. Before this improvisation, there was a 1,5 hour of rhythmic group exercises (body percussion) and training the cup songs. Also, Viktor explained the most elementary way of playing percussion instruments: open/closed beat at the center of the membrane and open/closed beat at the left or right side. Significantly, this social situation problematizes the status of Victor himself: while being an organizer, structuring the class, he participated in every jam session and therefore can be viewed as the same social agent. During jam sessions, Viktor's verbal guidance was minimal or merely absent. It helps me to conceptually divide the social situations of group exercises and music jams themselves inside the whole course.

The very instruments that were involved in the social situation of jam music contain certain social and cultural references as well as a specific tradition of playing depending on the geographical regions of origin. Undoubtedly, it seems fair to say that these ‘wrapped’ references are paramount for the analysis of agent-object interaction. On the other hand, the experimental structure of this social situation presupposes that the participants generally not only had not been aware of specific references but also were not introduced to those references each musical instrument unavoidably contains in itself. This crucially distinguishes this format from a conventional jam session: whereas professional musicians, without any preliminary plan, “embody” (in the Bourdieuan sense) the rules of the game (Gibson, 2006), the participants of the course seemed to try to follow the rules of the game which are unknown for them.

For all the members of the course (except for Viktor), the participation in the music jam, involving drums, is not an ordinary experience – much as the experience of interaction of dealing with the theremin for Deaf or acoustically challenged performers. Here comes the question of how the social situation of music jam is organized. Here and there, the Bourdieuan optics grasps the investment of social libido in the field holding a social situation. Basically, due to Bourdieu, a social agent is never outside of the field. This is how the libidinal argument works – a social agent does not get lost in the social situation in which an agent has never been before since she already knows how to libidinally invest. The presence of a field to invest in is confirmed by the fact that during music improvisation people did not actually ‘communicate’ one to each other. As I noticed, the only moments of communication were emerging after someone’s rhythmical chance mistake, however, a subsequent reaction (giggling) lasted for a short time.

Since a musical instrument seemed to be referentially ‘empty’ for the agent, the point of entry into the social situation was constituted only by the basic rules, introduced before, and the materiality of the musical object. On this material level, the rhythm of the social situation was manifested by a sequence of low sounds that were being produced by the center of a membrane of each drum. This commonly constructed sequence should be considered as the field, and the

proper investment presupposes the maintaining of the common tempo. In this context, from the point of view of a single player, the other participants are part of the field. During the first session, the participants were sitting on a chair or sofa in a circle, behind the percussion instrument. Since the number of drums was beyond the number of players, other instruments were scattered in the entire area. That is why the social agent was not ‘fixed’ to the place; almost everyone changed her instrument once or twice. Generally, each new instrument had a high sonority, strongly pronounced against the backdrop of the common tempo of low sounds. That is why the change of instrument is also the investment in the (sonic) field through making it diverse.

One can find a passage from Bourdieu’s text that perfectly describes the rhythmic dynamics of this situation as a bodily practice. “Having the feel for the game is having the game under the skin [...]. While the bad player is always off tempo, always too early or too late, the good player is the one who anticipates, who is ahead of the game. [...]. [The good player] embodies the game” (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 80-81). Anticipating the common musical tempo is a mechanism of social libido – that is what makes, due to Bourdieu, the situation of music jam social. But how does this “embodiment” practically work? It brings us to another important question: are social and sonic fields distinguishable? To check it, I followed the Simmelian metaphor of the eye (Simmel, 1997, p. 115): the social is primarily visual. That goes in tune with the feature I discovered in the experience of other participants and me as well: visual repetition. It is hard to maintain the same rhythm, because, as Viktor says, “the brain completely breaks”. So, if the player is out of tempo, either during the rhythmic exercise or musical jam, she can look at Viktor or the nearest player to visually catch the tempo once again, by observing the hand motion. Also, during the body percussion, I observed some participants watching the way Viktor claps or pats and using the same hand or leg. Considering that the majority of participants are novices, is it an actual corporeal embodiment of rhythm or visual repetition?

To answer such a question, I needed to change the setting of the music jam – to make the situation non-visual. So, I asked Viktor to conduct a music jam with eyes closed during the third

and the fourth class – unexpectedly, it was a new experience even for him. Overall, there were 8 players (including me), 8 musical voices, and because of such a quantity, in the beginning, this session reminded the undistinguishable and confusing roar. It was particularly hard to hear yourself, only to physically feel the instrument. Afterward, I had an interview with Viktor who claims that he felt by the nearest player’s intonations that “she had some troubles, and I opened my eyes several times and helped her”. By “troubles” he means that “she just didn’t play, I heard when she didn’t play for more than some time”. However, Viktor also says that “it was cool because we were getting out of rhythm” – many players, including me, did pauses (not “more than some time”) during the jam; it had not happened during the previous sessions. The relations with temporality also dramatically changed: while in the perception of players, during the ordinary jam times flies faster, with the eyes closed, it seems as if it takes much longer. Also, there were several stages when the participants were commonly playing quieter than usual – Viktor also points at. That is an essential difference to bear in mind; due to Viktor, the ability to make pauses and playing quiet is the step towards a musical phrase.

The second non-visual session that took place April 17, during the last class, in the park near the studio, was documented on video. There were only 5 participants, including me and Viktor – Leila, a 24-year-old woman, Maria, a 29 years old woman (both Leila and Maria participated in 3 sessions overall), and Katia, a 31 years old woman who participated in this session for the first time. After the non-visual session, I took short interviews with each informant.

As the video shows, the music jam lasted for 10 minutes which is, in fact, a conventional amount of time for every jam throughout the course. The players are sitting in a circle: Viktor and Katya are playing the conga, I’m playing the cajón, Leila is playing the darbuka and Maria is playing the djembe. Non-visual music jam pushes a social agent to tactilely interact only with her instrument. This may lead to a problematization of the instrument itself. For example, Leila says: “[I was working] tactilely as well – the instrument I was working with, I was trying to feel it somehow too, its language... And that’s an atypical story for me, in general”. For Maria, her

instrument (“it produces very cool vibrations, a djembe”) defined her strategy during the music jam: “I felt that my role in this jam was to highlight the beat”. Maria has started the jam with a single beat. In her turn, Katya shares an interesting insight: “I think, with your eyes open, you’re looking at the object from which the sound is being extracted. And here, [with your eyes closed] you’re hearing the sound, like, better or something. It’s easier for you to switch between [sounds of] instruments, which is weird”. She also denotes that it was complicated since nobody had been “leading” and everyone had been “[listening] to each other very attentively”.

This line of thought may be developed by Leila’s statement: I could hear some phrase and I could answer it on my instrument in a different way. In those moments when we were connecting, I don’t think we could do it with our eyes open, because everyone was thinking about something at that moment, but now we weren’t thinking and just like that, here we go!”. In her opinion, the main difference with a conventional performance was the absence of what Bourdieu calls the basis of social libido – “the search for recognition” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 166): “Well, maybe a little less self-control. [...]. Because you don’t think about any evaluation when you have no opportunity to engage any other sense organs”. This “evaluation” here may be interpreted as “the search for recognition” which imposes certain “rules”; while describing a visual music jam Katya directly posits that, “when you’re with your eyes open, it’s like you’re controlling this moment with your eyes. Like, can I? [...]. You can understand more, like approval or disapproval”. Maria also broaches this subject in the course of conversation, and that shows non-visual engagement in a different way: “I was thinking, actually, what would I like to try now, maybe play more quickly, maybe less quickly, maybe put in some complicated rhythmic thing, a structure. I mean, like a kind of free jam, but with elements of consciousness”. Instead of Bourdieuan “recognition”, understood also as an “evaluation”, non-visual music jam proposes another form of “consciousness” and problematizes the relations between social and sonic fields.

2.3. Cochlear Implant: the Other never lies

Concluding this chapter, I will refer to a social situation that can be produced by a cochlear implant (CI), an “artificial ear” (Blume, 2009) which compensates the sensorineural hearing loss. This case proposes another essential point of entry to the notion of sound, since, as opposed to the theremin or percussion instruments, the CI does not produce, but perceives and analyzes sounds. Although the relations between CI and a recipient seem to be very intimate (basically, it is implanted during a surgical procedure), this object presupposes a set of repetitive social situations, if only because an external sound processor should be renovated every 5 years. Since, in Russia, this renovation is not attributable by state, the fundraising can be accomplished by the non-profit “Melody of Life” (“*Мелодия Жизни*”) foundation situated in Moscow.

I took an interview with Nailia, the director of the foundation, who distinguishes three types of possible recipients: a congenitally deaf preschool child; a grown-up person who gradually loses hearing within 5 years; a grown-up person who lost hearing in an accident. While the implantation is allowed for the last two types, because they still have an established sonic memory, the first case is more interesting, since young children, while lacking “sonic consciousness”, have a “more flexible psyche”. While “a hearing child accumulates all the sonic information in the first year of life”, after the implantation, a child has a “neonate hearing, and that is why she needs [...] to accumulate information”. Then, Nailia admits that CI is a socially problematic and contradictory object: while there are parents who “are afraid of implantation”, some members of the “Society of the Deaf in Russia” argue against implantation and describe CI as a “metalware in the head”. Also, for a child, CI can act as a psychic instance that influences her subjectivation. The domestic field is extremely important for a child’s relations with sounds since a parent’s fear of CI is projected on a child. A child perceives her parent’s attitude to CI: “kids sometimes play too much, get offended, and take off the CI, because they understand that mom cares about it”.

Nailia’s insights significantly highlight the interaction with sounds as a practice through which sounds get socialized. The socialization of sounds goes in tune with certain psychological

processes. Nailia differentiates “hearing” and “listening”, describing the latter as “an ability to focus on sounds and distinguish them”. Since some children with CI hear but do not independently study to “listen”, they need to study with special teachers². These classes, during which the socialization of sounds occurs, constitute a set of social situations I will analyze in this final section. I conducted interviews with two teachers engaged with the Melody of Life foundation – Olga who is an organizer of the “Listen is Interesting” (“*Слышать интересно*”) private center in Moscow and Varvara who teaches at her home. Also, I had a non-participant observation during one class with two children in Olga’s center.

Olga works with children from 7 months and up to 8 years old. Paradoxically, at the very beginning of the interview, Olga characterizes the aim of her work as “to teach [a child] to use [...] KI in such a manner that listening becomes passive. So, she listens without paying attention to [the process of listening]”. Interestingly, distinguishing the needed sonorous flux out of the noisy atmosphere is described as a passive skill. Olga illustrates this with a metaphor: “fish is the last one to notice the water”. Basically, after implantation, the child, being immersed in the undistinguishable noise, “chaos of sounds”, is in a state of active listening. The very idea of sound is socially constructed through classes with the teacher – the first step of socialization of sound is to identify if there is a sound or a silence. Olga says that “due to the lack of acoustic sense, we can call her or thunder at a drum behind her back until we are blue in face, but a child [...] doesn’t turn her head backward”. The silence is interpreted not as an absence of sounds (as under vacuum), but as those sounds that do not hold “a semantic charge”. The next step of socialization of sounds is an ability to hold attention on visible acoustic sources – and then on non-visible ones. These basics, differentiation of sounds and silence and focus on sounds, allow advancing further the teaching of speech or non-speech sound’s characteristics. All the classes crucially share the interactive and performative form of the game.

² In Russian, *сурдопедагог* from French *pédagogue sourd*. In English, teacher of the deaf or hard-of-hearing.

Varvara, in her turn, says that while Olga's focus is on the "acoustic sense", her work is "speech-centered": "I put more emphasis on the development of speech comprehension". These two strategies are not contradictory, but rather self-constitutive. Performativity is also a key pillar of socialization of sounds; Varvara says: "I generally deploy emotions, games, some kind of interesting mobile activity. And parents are always present in my classes and I include them in the process". Generally, Varvara emphasizes parent-child interaction, like a "pre-speech communication: eye-contact, the ability to copy the adult". What Varvara describes is what I call socialization of libido through sound: "The very first thing I teach is an emotional interaction between the adult and the child. This should be [...] games with all sorts of sounding toys. [...]. We stimulate in every possible way such emotional reactions of the child in response to the sound, first of all, to the sound and, secondly, to the adult in general". Varvara entertains the possibility of group classes with other children with KI, but "first, [a child] has to learn how to interact with a teacher and parents". There is an interesting example Varvara provides: "for example, if you look at the sandbox, children at two years old are kind of playing together, but they're just sitting on their own".

On May 13, I conducted the participant observation during two 45-minutes and 30-minutes individual classes with two children at the "Listen is Interesting" center – first, with M., a 5 years old girl, and then with S., a 2-year-and-3-months old boy. The mother of M., while sitting in the hall, is not physically involved in the process of the game; however, the room and the hall create a common sonic space, so a mother is aware of what is going on in the room. In her turn, the mother of S. entered the classroom, when S. started to behave badly (in the middle of the class), and then Olga asked us to leave them alone. In the classroom, near the window, there is a kid's table and two little chairs – the table constitutes the space of the game, while the size of chairs seeks to draw the teacher's position near the position of the child. Every class starts and ends with a children's song about an owl and other animals – Olga puts on a glove puppet of an owl and imitates the flight of a bird. As soon as the song is over, Olga puts a hand with the glove puppet on the table.

The flight of the owl should be accompanied by a sonorous and meaningful song. Then, the class consists of a set of guessing games – who produces this or that sound? Every sonic situation created by the teacher is socialized. The only sonic moment which occurred without the participation of Olga, was when M. dropped one of the toys on the floor and was happy to hear the sound.

Interestingly, the relations between the child and the teacher remind of the relations with the Bourdieuan field. It is not the game that imposes the rules on the social agent, but the teacher. When M. becomes distracted, Olga tries to regain the attention. These rules are generally based on anticipations and failed expectations. During the guessing game, Olga can prompt the wrong answer, and when M. repeats it, Olga replies: “why don’t you believe your ears? believe them”. During the class, the child socially invests not in the game, but in the teacher herself. In its turn, the owl acts as Olga’s ‘helper’; throughout the class, Olga puts the owl back and repeats the task on its behalf. Sometimes, the teacher can say something with the owl, while raising a hand to the KI of M.: “I’ll have a word in your ear”. The owl, as opposed to Olga, never ‘lies’, the child trusts the owl as well as the other toys. This was reflected during the class with S. when he had to guess what animal was saying what sounds inside the doll’s house. By the end of the game, toys ‘encouraged’ S. to tell them “bye-bye”, and S. believed, said “bye-bye” and made a move towards the classroom’s exit. Hereon, he refused to continue the class, his mother came, and then Olga asked us to leave them alone. Toys, including the owl, are not a mere part of the field. Their function may be compared to the function of the Other.

In every case, there is a moment when something happens: when the performers forget about the audience, when the players close their eyes, when the child drops the toy. It looks as if a social agent finds herself in a completely different situation – in a libidinal situation. This differentiation of libidinal/social will be explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Libido as Sound, Sound as Libido

The libidinal optics ‘breaks’ by doubling since one can observe the same situation (of performance, music jam, or class) from the social and libidinal perspectives. So, the Bourdieuan move from “biological libido” to “social libido” results in the optics that, in some cases, can double the picture and show both social and libidinal situations in the context of the sonic situation. Whereas the social agent cannot distinguish herself from the sonic situation, she clearly distinguishes, as the field data demonstrates, the social and the sonic situations. It should be considered as the break of the optics since Bourdieu did not plan to deal with libidinal situations. Here, the libido objectified as the sound can be observed. The libidinal situation, objectified by the social agents’ investment, is situated in the sonic situation. Libido as sound is objectified in the sonic situation itself through the investment in the sonic order. However, how the sound exists as the libido is a more complicated and confusing issue.

Also, it is fair to ask, what do the various social agents in the three social situations invest in when they forget about the audience during the performance, close their eyes during the music jam, or accidentally drop the toy and hear the sound? Indeed, Bourdieu posits that “social agents do not engage in gratuitous acts” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 76), however in those moments, agents are not interested in the field. Bourdieu might have been aware of these risks of doubling, and that is why he comes up with the term “disinterestedness”. According to Bourdieu, “disinterested acts” occur due to “the encounter between habitus predisposed to disinterestedness and the universe in which disinterestedness is rewarded” (Ibid, p. 88). Agents may seem to be disinterested, but they are interested in the field. That is why one may claim that since these actions are characterized by the agent’s “disinterestedness” in the field, for Bourdieu, they are out of the sociological area of responsibility. However, these actions are an essential part of the sonic situation.

To break the stalemate, I will address the status of the field in which a social agent is disinterested for some time. Does the figure of the audience or the teacher completely disappear in the libidinal situation? Here, let’s remember the theological argument on libido, which Bourdieu

seeks to psychoanalyze: libido is about the relations with the Other. Why then does this figure of Other seem to be omitted in the Bourdieuan elaboration? Here, the notion of libido is found side by side with the conception of “illusio”, another derivation of the “interest”, which denotes the social order. Bourdieu describes “illusio” as “the fact of being in the game” (Ibid, p. 76) and compares it with Johan Huizinga’s statement from *Homo Ludens* that the words “illusion” and “ludus” contain the same Latin root. It is telling that Bourdieu makes a direct reference; so I decided to look it up in Huizinga’s text. By all appearances, the excerpt Bourdieu refers to is the following (Huizinga, 1980, p. 11):

“It is curious to note how much more lenient society is to the cheat than to the spoil-sport. This is because the spoil-sport shatters the play-world itself. By withdrawing from the game he reveals the relativity and fragility of the play-world in which he had temporarily shut himself with others. He robs play of its illusion—a pregnant word which means literally “in-play” (from *inlusio*, *illudere* or *inludere*).”

Here, there is a figure of “spoil-sport”, such as a revolutionary or a heretic, who reveals the conditional character of “illusio” by not following rules. It is a challenge because the social order should be conceptually ‘protected’. So, what Bourdieu does is he reverses Huizinga’s argument: “[agents] may want to overturn the relations of force within the field, but, for that very reason, they grant recognition to the stakes, they are not indifferent” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 78). As it seems, the only figure that may pose risk to the Bourdieuan “illusio” is a disinterested agent. Let’s look at how Bourdieu describes “ataraxia”, the antonym of “illusio” in his conceptual language: “[such social agents] are in the position of Buridan’s ass, not making a distinction” (Ibid, p. 77). Further, Bourdieu unconventionally interprets this paradox: the Buridan’s ass cannot choose not just because two objects are identical but rather because it lacks “the principles of vision and division necessary to make distinction” (Ibid). It is the ass that is guilty of its own death. Such an interpretation may lead to another paradox. If the object-libido (social libido) is characterized by the ability of differentiation of objects, then biological libido, due to Bourdieu, can be suddenly denoted as “ataraxia”.

That is why Bourdieu does not radically differentiate biological and social in terms of libido, otherwise his basic argument on “embodiment of game” would be discrepant. So, while remembering the story of Buridan’s ass, is Bourdieu pure in heart? I think here, as in the case with the “principle of sufficient reason”, Bourdieu may also refer to Gottfried Leibniz. In his *Théodicée*, Leibniz directly claims that “the case [...] of Buridan’s ass between two meadows, impelled equally towards both of them, is a fiction that cannot occur in the universe” (Leibniz, 2007, p. 153). Bourdieu also believes that disinterested agents are fiction and secures himself by claiming that “disinterestedness” is only a manner of behavior imposed by the field. Further, Leibniz makes a peculiar statement: “it is true that an angel, or God certainly, could always account for the course man has adopted, by assigning a cause or a predisposing reason which has actually induced him to adopt it” (Ibid, pp. 153-154). This might provide insight into why Bourdieu comes up with a general notion of “field” that embraces each social action. On the contrary, a sociologist might be seen as the Other (angel or God) that can “always account for the course man has adopted”. That is what Bourdieu seeks to avoid.

So, I think there is another figure Bourdieu is afraid of since it can break the “illusio” – it is the Other. In his example of struggling monks, Bourdieu seeks to replace the Other (the God) with the field (relations of power) because the presence of Other may prevent their fight. That is how the Pascalian argument – the lack of Other results in the subject’s link with libido – works in the interpretation with Bourdieu. It is valid not only for libido dominandi. The shock of the kissing couple in the lane, disturbed by a stranger, is how the Other can break the “illusio”. They are shocked not by the disturbance but by the moment of realization of the conditionality of the situation. That answers a very important question: why should I deploy the Lacanian perspective, if the theological argument, which can be implicitly found in Bourdieu’s references, also views the notion of libido through the Other? The Bourdieuan and Lacanian solutions themselves are structurally similar but essentially different: whereas Pascal concludes that the lack of Other determines the existence of libido, due to the Lacanian seminar, libido precedes the subject whose

relations with the Other results in the lack of libido. To conceptualize libido as sound, and then sound as libido, let's follow this Bourdieuan-Lacanian conceptualization.

The basic Bourdieuan formulation is: “biological libido” is transformed into “social libido” (Ibid, p. 77). While considering the social situation as the investment in the field driven by the “social libido”, there is an ambiguity on the status of the seemingly disappearing field. In those moments, the audience, the sonic order of the jam, or the teacher can act as manifestations of the Other that do not break the “illusio”; social agent enters the realm of the “biological libido”. As a principle, Bourdieu entertains a possibility that “social libido” can go back to being “biological libido”. For example, in *Masculine Domination*, he claims that “the socially instituted libido is realized in a particular form of libido, in the ordinary sense of desire” (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 79). For example, according to Bourdieu, women can be attracted to demonstrative masculinity “because differential social-ization disposes men to love the games of power and women to love the men who play them” (Ibid). The “social libido” goes back to the “biological libido”, however, remaining essentially social. Concerning my field data, it would be ridiculous to claim that the audience as the field pushes G. to what he describes as “the pre-orgasmic state” which is socialized. That is why, how the “biological libido” functions is not clear, because the Bourdieuan formula, in this context, is “biological libido” ↔ “social libido”. Due to self-constitution, distinguishing one from another is a complicated task.

To clarify this formula, let's get back to the Lacanian conceptualization. Step by step, Lacan revises, without mentioning it, what Freud considers as ego-libido: the way the subject invests in herself. On the example of Piaget's egocentric discourse, Lacan claims that “the child, in this discourse, which may be tape-recorded, does not speak for himself, as one says” (Lacan, 1998, p. 208). In this case, the child speaks not to herself or himself, not to the others, but to the Other. Here, Lacan would argue with Varvara's example of children “sitting on their own”. The relations with the Other (or with the lack of the Other) are paramount for libido. I think that the transition from “biological libido” to “social libido” and vice versa occurs not through the field, but the

Other. It may be compared with the Lacanian topological figure of a “small losange” (or lozenge), not circle-like but rhombus-like relations (Ibid, p. 209). Let’s take a closer look at it.



Figure 1

This “ \diamond ” consists of two operations – “ \vee ” (“the lower half of the losange”) and “ \wedge ” (hence, the higher half), functioning in the “anticlockwise”, “vectorial direction” (Ibid). Lacan crucially denotes these operations as the “alienation” (“ \vee ”) and the “separation” (“ \wedge ”) that essentially clarify the subject’s relations with the Other. The choice of rhombus’ half is not accidental; Lacan associates these operations with logical connectives – “ \vee ” with a disjunction, while “ \wedge ” with conjunction.

On the surface, Lacan’s move towards propositional logic is mere rhetoric, but it sheds some light on the situation. In the session *The Subject and the Other: Alienation*, Lacan introduces several drawings – he does not mention it, but these drawings are based on a logician John Venn’s diagrams, two intersecting circles. This is how the Vennian spatial visualization of different logical connectives, that inspired Lacan, looks like (Cheng, 2020).

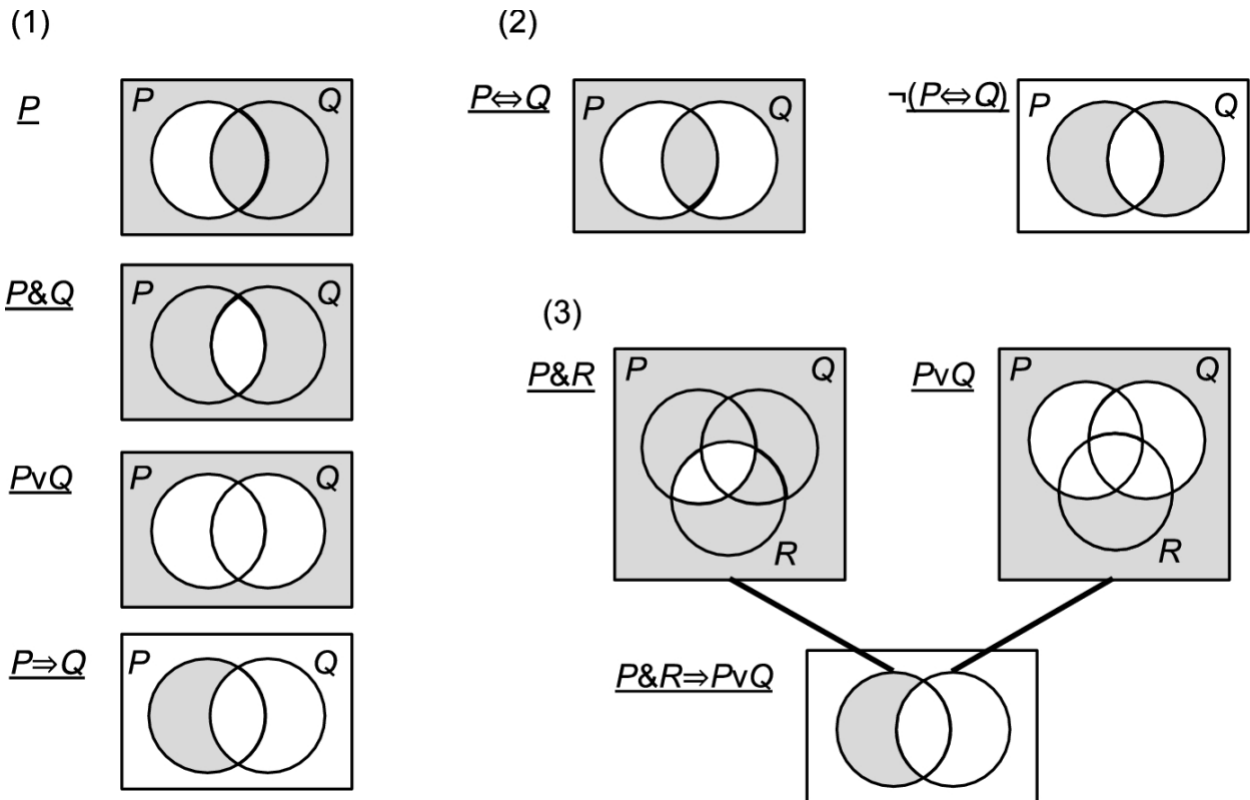


Figure 2

In the first section, $P \& Q$ refers to the Lacanian separation, while $P \vee Q$ is the Lacanian alienation. For Lacan, the circle of P denotes the Being (an area of the subject), while the circle of Q stands for the Meaning (an area of the Other), and the overlap area between the circles is an area of “non-meaning”, the graspable unconscious (Lacan, 1998, p. 211). For Lacan, the subject means the subject of the unconscious, however, only the intersecting area can be grasped. Let’s now inspect both alienation and separation (in Lacan’s sequence) through the lenses of Venn’s diagrams.

The alienation illustrates the balance ($P \vee Q$) maintaining the subject in the Being and Meaning. As a consequence, the subject is alienated from herself in favor of the Other; the subject cannot be the subject without the Other. The possible choice between the Being and Meaning would be against the subject; Lacan clearly illustrates this logic by the example of the choice between money and life a robber proposes to a wanderer: “If I choose the money, I lose both. If I choose life, I have life without the money, namely, a life deprived of something” (Ibid, p. 212). On Venn’s visualization, a non-alienated non-subject would stand only for P . The optimum option

for the subject thus is to save both money (Being) and life (Meaning) through the alienation from herself which is the only way to keep balance. For Lacan, this is the lack of subject.

The tricky point is with the overlap area, standing for “non-meaning”. Through this “non-meaning”, according to Lacan, “we may rediscover the determinants of the subject’s entire behaviour” (Ibid). On the one hand, it is what differentiates the Meaning from the Being; on Venn’s visualization of $P \Leftrightarrow Q$, or equation, there is no overlap area. However, during the alienation, this area is also indistinguishable because it is alienated. On the other hand, it is the only common thing between Being and Meaning; on the visualization of $P \& Q$ (or $\text{Being} \wedge \text{Meaning}$), there is the only element – the overlap area. The latter operation is denoted by Lacan as the separation; for him, this is the lack in the Other. This lack in Other produces this “lunula in which you find the form of the gap, the rim” (Ibid, p. 213). The subject finds herself in this space of lack in the Other. As the Vennian visualization shows, non-meaning here is the only graspable element since if the subject is separated from the Other, still the subject is not completely graspable. These operations of alienation and separation are intimately associated, as the following algebraic formula shows: $(\text{Being}) \vee (\text{Meaning})^3 = (\text{Being}) + (\text{Meaning}) - (\text{Being} \wedge \text{Meaning})^4$. Lacan does not show it but it means that the alienation cannot be ‘calculated’ without the separation being ‘calculated’ or vice versa.

So, I propose to replace “biological libido” \clubsuit “social libido” with “biological libido” \diamond “social libido”. It means that the transition from libidinal situation to the social situation should be described as alienation, whereas the transition from the social situation back to the libidinal situation is constituted by separation. This scheme works due to the consistent common denominator, the sonic situation which, in every case, embraces both the social and libidinal situations. That is to say, the “social libido” refers to the social/sonic situation, while the “biological

³ The alienation, according to Lacan.

⁴ The separation, according to Lacan.

libido” refers to the libidinal/sonic situation. The essential consequence of the differentiation between the social and libidinal situation is the division between the field and the Other. During the social/sonic situation, the audience, the other participants, or the teacher simultaneously take the position of both the Bourdieuan field and the Lacanian Other. During the libidinal/sonic situation, they take only the position of the Other.

Let’s quickly reinterpret the three sonic situations, due to the Bourdieuan-Lacanian conceptualization. The socialization of libido is characterized by the alienation of the subject. While preferring the ability to differentiate objects, the subject becomes the social agent and makes a sacrifice of the ability to differentiate her own desire. After the alienation, the social agent identifies her desire with the desire of the Other and searches for the recognition of the audience, the other participants of music jam, alongside Viktor, or the teacher. Due to alienation, the subject can call herself “the subject of the action” and therefore “the social agent”. The Other, representing the field to invest in, maintains such a status quo until the subject finds the lack in the Other. It indicates a short-term return to biological libido through the separation from the Other and the disinterestedness in the field. The subject can be aware of the existence of the Other only due to the lack of it and due to the ‘disappearance’ of the field. This lack occurs when the Other ‘stumbles’ and makes itself visible. For example, when the participants of the music jam close their eyes, they realize the fact of self-evaluation, or when the child drops the toy, she observes the teacher not as the field to invest in but as the Other. As a consequence, for a moment, the subject separates from the Other and can find her own desire as the partial drive.

Ultimately, separation is the libidinal operation, and Lacan here gives a hint while comparing “lunula” from the Vennian diagram with “rim”. There is an essential link with what Lacan says about the libido: “the lamella has a rim, it inserts itself into the erogenous zone, [...] in one of the orifices of the body, in so far as these orifices [...] are linked to the opening/closing of the gap of the unconscious” (Ibid, p. 200). Generally, this gap of the unconscious gives the direction for the libido – inside or outside – which is the basis for Bourdieuan differentiation of

biological and social libido. For Lacan, the libido connects the unconscious and the drives; due to the lack of libido, the drives are partial ones. As was shown in the first chapter, such a drive presupposes the Other. Among the erogenous zones, Lacan distinguishes ears since they reflect the invocatory drive “which has [...] the privilege of not being able to close” (Ibid). The subject wants the Other to invoke her, that is how it works. However, in Lacan’s interpretation, the invocation is primarily discursive. It is unclear how this kind of drive is connected to the sonority and the sound.

As the second chapter shows, the sonority is not always about the aural but also corporeal experience. The metaphor of “ear” is too narrow to grasp the experience of such a kind. Now, we are getting close to the sound-libido. Let’s, finally, make the last move and use the same model of alienation-separation in the broader context of the sonic situation, which is the sequence of social and libidinal situations. The embracing form of the sonic situation demonstrates that alienation and separation are only alternating moments. Through this scope, the sequence is different since separation presupposes alienation.

I will clarify this point by referring to the same Vennian diagrams (Figure 2), but now I will add the third circle – the sound itself. Visually, it may be compared to the Borromean rings by which Lacan introduces the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. On the visualization of Venn’s diagrams, there are three intersecting circles of the subject, the Other and the sound, which can be viewed in the third section. As a sample, I will use the formula of implication as provided by Peter Cheng (2020): $P \& R \Rightarrow P \vee Q$. Generally, $P \vee Q$, or (the subject) \vee (the Other), stands for the alienation, the optimal condition of the subject and the social agent. On the visualization, the absence of sound maintains this balance between the subject and the Other since the sound is neither the subject nor the Other; the latter is precisely how Venn himself explains this diagram (cf. Venn, 1881, p. 114). In the social situation, there is an actual absence of sound in the sense of its sonority – the sound exists only as a set of references, in the socialized state. However, this alienation is possible due to the previous separation between the subject and the sound; the

implication crucially highlights the separation as the condition, then the alienation as the consequence. The very formula looks like $(\text{the subject}) \wedge (\text{the sound}) \Rightarrow (\text{the subject}) \vee (\text{the Other})$. If the subject is separated from the sound, then the subject is alienated in the Other.

On the visualization (P&R), there is the same overlap area between the subject and the sound, while half of this area does not reside in the Other, it is not the “non-meaning”. It is the result of this separation, namely, the sound-libido. The subject does not invest in the sound, which is somewhere outside, the subject (the unconscious) significantly deals with the sounds through the body. Due to the lack of the Other, the sound as libido is produced by the simultaneous inside and outside investment, which is why it can be categorized neither as the biological nor as the social libido. Practically, it can be described by the investment in the sound which is situated in the body (as the rhythmic vibration, produced either by the theremin or the percussion instrument in the libidinal/sonic situation). This finally proposes the solution to the problem of the agents’ investment during the libidinal/sonic situation.

Conclusion

A long journey towards the sound as libido is finally over. Here, in conclusion, I will recap the moves this theoretical journey consisted of.

The initial differentiation of sociologized sound and sound-affect is conceptualized in terms of discursivity and non-discursivity. That is why I could not just replace the affect with libido. So, in the introduction, I started with the hypothetical differentiation of sound-affect and sound-libido as passive/active. Throughout the journey, the notion of libido was remarkably specified. The libido does not only denote the productive and creative sexualized energy. More importantly, the libido symbolizes the relations of the lack and the relations with the Other.

Lacan in the 1960s and Bourdieu in the 1990s sought to revisit the foundations of their disciplines - psychoanalysis and sociology. Both of them deploy libido as an epistemological instrument, and in the first chapter, I describe their strategies. In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan uses the libido as a glue stick to demonstrate the interconnection of the unconscious and the sexual reality. Since the sexual reality is constructed by the signifiers of the Other, this point is crucial. It allows Lacan to move towards the relations of the unconscious and the Other. To describe their relations, Lacan invents a myth on lamella, highlighting the libido as an irreal organ. Only the lack of libido can make the subject. Practically, libido is a pound lock that regulates the opening and closing of erogenous zones.

Bourdieu, in *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*, incorporates the libido (by the means of the general notion of “interest”) in the sociological theory of knowledge. While referring to the principle of sufficient knowledge, which presupposes ‘y’ that explains and justifies the observable ‘x’, Bourdieu puts libido for ‘y’. His move is to differentiate biological and social libido: the social libido is constituted from the biological one and pushes the social agent to invest in the social field. Still, this problematizes the objectification of libido. Also, the source of the Bourdieuan reference to the libido remains unclear. In *Pascalian Meditations*, Bourdieu de-veils his original sources – namely, Pascal and Jansen. The libido turns out to be a theological argument (the lack of the Other

presupposes the existence of libido), which Bourdieu tries to psychoanalyze through Freud's model of ego-libido and object-libido.

While epistemologizing libido, both Lacan and Bourdieu have problems with its objectification. In the second chapter, I'm probing the Bourdieuan optics (social agent – social libido – social field) on the scope of social situation produced by the sonic object. By this chapter, I observe how sound can be sociologized according to Bourdieuan epistemology. I introduce three social situations, compared by their performativity and object-oriented structure: the theremin produces the situation of the *Organ of Memory* performance, the percussion instruments – the situation of the musical jam, the cochlear implant – the situation of the class with a teacher. I demonstrate that in every case there are moments when the optics doubles the picture into social and libidinal situations. This doubling occurs due to the problematization of the status of the field – from time to time, the social agents do not invest in it. Here, I emphasize the moments when the performers forget about the audience, when the players close their eyes during the musical jam, or when the child with CI accidentally drops a toy. In those moments, the social agents deal with non-socialized sound. Thus, the coherency is maintained by embracing social and libidinal situations under the sonic situation; all the objects, producing the social situations are sonic ones.

In the third chapter, I identify the basic Bourdieuan move biological libido ↔ social libido as the reason for this epistemological doubling – social/sonic and libidinal/sonic situations. Since the epistemological optics break by the doubling, libido can be objectified in the sound produced or perceived by the object. I describe the differentiation between the social and libidinal through the differentiation between the field and the Other. In the libidinal situation, the field does not disappear but accomplishes the function of the Other. That is why I seek to specify the circle-like relations of biological and social libido through the Lacanian perspective on the rhombus-like relations between the unconscious and the Other. I argue that Bourdieuan and Lacanian models are structurally similar but essentially different. Through Pascal, Bourdieu implies that the lack of

Other results in the existence of the libido; in his myth on lamella, Lacan concludes that the lack of libido results in the subject's relations with the Other.

Lacan visually explains these relations through diagrams of John Venn and denotes alienation as the disjunction (\vee) and separation as the conjunction (\wedge). Lacan uses two intersecting circles of Being (the subject of the unconscious) and Meaning (the Other) and describes the overlap area as the non-meaning, the only graspable part of the unconscious. I interpret alienation of the subject in favor of the Other as the only way for the subject to keep the balance between Being and Meaning. Then, the separation occurs, when the subject, being alienated, identifies the lack in the Other – at this moment the subject is ready to find her desire. Here, I propose the following scheme: biological libido \diamond social libido.

Since Lacan's approach to sound is primarily discursive (he describes it as an invocation of the Other), sound as libido still cannot be detected in this conceptualization. Finally, by changing the sequence of operations (separation, then alienation) and adding the third ring of sound, I apply the same Venn-based model for the sonic situation. Here, the subject to become a social agent still needs to be alienated. However, to accomplish it, the subject should be separated from the sound. These dynamics can be described by the following formula: (the subject) \wedge (the sound) \Rightarrow (the subject) \vee (the Other). On the level of separation, in the overlap area, there is a sector that is not covered by the Other's area. I propose to identify it as sound as libido.

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