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**Pink Floyd. A Multi-disciplinary Understanding of a Global Music Brand.**

**“How can you have any pudding if you don’t eat yar meat?”**

Editors: Simon Morrison, Chris Hart and Georgina Gregory

Chapter submission:

**The Pink Floyd Intensity: Humanity, Aesthetics and the Breathless Fan.**

Robert Wilshire

## **The Pink Floyd Intensity: Humanity, aesthetics and the breathless fan.**

“It seems that breaths, in themselves and in ourselves, must be conceived of as pure intensities”

(Deleuze, 2015, p337)

### **Introduction**

On the cover of my copy of the single “When the Tigers broke free” (1982) it says that it is taken from the album *The Final Cut*. As we know, it did not happen that way. The album title has so many possibilities attached to it: The finality of a life cut short, of a ruthless final solution to all (unwanted) life, of a band that was, or thought it was, at its end, and of a song cut from an album.

The binary that a cut generates exposes constituent parts of the whole for us to see. Just as we split atoms to see what they are made of, so the split of Waters and Pink Floyd saw its human cry fly off in one direction and its smooth aesthetic in another. This chapter explores the dialectic of Pink Floyd’s music through the lived experience of an obsessed youth and the philosophy of an academic, both of whom are the same person some forty years apart. The crude binary of humanity and aesthetic is over simplistic and yet the depth of what we felt owed much to how the authenticity of the cry was expressed in the sound. The ‘Pink Floyd Intensity’ spoke to us and for us. Their music, coated in gold leaf and all on the outside and razor sharp on the inside, moved through our facades and crumbled our walls, leaving us breathless. This chapter attempts to uncover the elements behind this power to move which I hope will ring true for others that experienced the Pink Floyd Intensity.

On the cover of my CD of *The piper at the gates of dawn* are the words “Original UK release date: August 1967” (2016) and that can be said of me too, born as I was late in August of the summer of love. But like those birthday cards that have one’s year of birth on with the news headlines and music of the time it does not connect, not to the

actual year we were born. Nice as it is to know that I was born in the same year as *Sgt Pepper's* and the same month as the release of Pink Floyd's first album, it is meaningless with regards to the identity of a fan, Robert, who of course had no recollection of that year. Its relevance is only in as much as the timing of the mature works coming to fruition at the time that he was forming an identity and was experiencing depths of emotion that he had never experienced before and that it became totally bound up in his relationship with Pink Floyd. No one else, just The Pink Floyd. Yes, there were other bands that he felt he 'owned' (including 'Yes') and there was one other artist later in his later teens for whom he had a passion (obscurely this was the work of British composer Michael Tippett to whom breath was the essence of a symphony), and he didn't 'own' Pink Floyd, they owned him. But this first love was most surely the deepest. Perhaps another time, another band, the affect would have been the same, and that would speak for the universality of first loves, of musical affect in general, of intensity *in-itself* and *for-itself* but this chapter is about a particular intensity, namely The Pink Floyd Intensity.

### **Frame Works**

The intensity sought here is not *one* thing, it is not that the *effect* of a singularity is *affect*. Affect is variously accounted for by social scientists, neuroscientists, philosophers and other disciplines, and the current understanding has no particular consensus (we might even say, anticipating Ranciere's influence here, that there is *dissensus*). Rhonda Blair notes that affect theory is "best understood as affect theories, a myriad of approaches to studying and understanding flows of affect" (2013, p141). Neither does the concept of intensity have unity, being located at the skin for Brian Massumi, in difference and the other for Kant, in breath for Klossowski, and externally as the extract of affection for Deleuze and Guattari. No one appears to be speaking of the same thing exactly when it comes to affect (or indeed for intensity), but rather than problematizing the term its current fluidity opens up the opportunity to move towards an understanding of an intensity that is not bound by fixity of terminology and as such the term in this context will have its meaning driven from the 'affect' of the music, a particular and exclusively Pink Floyd intensity might be described rather than as an ontology of intensity itself. The study of key albums around pre- and post- Waters' Floyd is central to this investigation but first there is a need to set up some useful theoretical frameworks that will help piece

together the intensity that hopefully will become suitably *unclear* as the assemblage is constructed. As the title suggests, elements of the subject and the subjected are part of this, as are contemplations of the object and the objectified. That this divide of aesthetic and humanity fails from the very start of this investigation, in that it cannot consider one element in isolation (in this case the start is an aesthetic unable to free itself of the 'other'), is also accepted as part of a *non*-dialectical nature of the intensity assemblage, a contestation that does not resolve. Conversely, we may also see a dialectical progression in the coming together and the subsequent separation and the new understanding from this carried within the new (articulating a progress that preserves the former state). There is an attachment of opposites built in, an attraction perhaps pulls them together and holds them, suspended (sublated), in their cohered form when they merge. The various frameworks are set out with this spillage in mind and these are big categories: Aesthetics, affect, intensity, humanity, asignification, the self, the other *etc.*, all far too large to unpack in any great detail, but there is a move here to cram a lot into a small space on the grounds that the intensity itself is the result of such a cramming where one cannot see the wood for the trees but one can sense the enormity of it all. Think of the Pink Floyd Intensity as being a small dark cupboard at a party where the players of a game of sardines (the players are aesthetics, affect, humanity, otherness, sublation, excess *etc.*) are squished excitedly together in a moment of suspense waiting to be uncovered. It is something of that type of intensity, being aware but not fully knowing, being scared but also excited, not knowing who, how many or what is in there with you but having a sense of it all. '*Being*' caught up in the thrill of confusion. That will be where this intensity lies; meshed, certain but unsure, a whole but one that does not know all of its own parts or even how many it might have, never fully revealed, in control but only just, an *excess* teetering on a parapet.

### **Aesthetic**

A simple approach to aesthetics with regard to Floyd might involve the sound of Gilmour's Stratocaster, the singular effect of three female backing singers, the inevitable 'reverse diegetic' of the sound effects (the phones, the radios, the clocks *etc.*), for these all play their part. And as the intensity has no plan of finding itself in singularities then the aesthetic too will be multiple, something along the lines of neo-Platonic philosopher Plotinus whose own approach to beauty comes to conclude that

“Only a compound can be beautiful, never anything devoid of parts; and only a whole; the several parts will have beauty, not in themselves, but only as working together to give a comely total” (Plotinus, 1991, p46). However, I wish to use those opposites that are already *tied* together, that display their attraction up front, and for this purpose it is not merely aesthetics as described in the elements above (guitar, backing vocals, sound effects *etc.*) but *aesthetic judgement* that carries this attraction of opposites. Rather than the object in relation to a subject, it is a subject in relation to object-and-subject that draws the importance of otherness into the aesthetic. This is described where, for Kant, the *sensus communis* leads to the necessity of thinking the other into our aesthetic judgement in order that intensity be produced in an art work. As Gary Peters puts it:

That is to say, the ‘*sensus communis*’, as the fictional articulation of the ‘possible’ rather than the ‘actual’ judgement of others, is in reality characterised by irresolvable difference, albeit measured against the ideal of consensus. It is the desire, and yet the ‘failure’ to transcend such difference that introduces intensity into aesthetic production.

(Peters, 2005. p13)

It is the irresolution between sameness and difference that the other brings to the self that intensifies the aesthetic judgement and in Floyd we encounter not only the thinking of the other itself but the exposing of *an* other as an embodied other (the obvious example being Pink in the *The Wall*) and then by proxy the exposing of the self through an empathic attunement to that other (the Pink in us). For Kant aesthetic judgment is not a dialectic because it does not resolve but instead it remains a contestation of universalities. Heidegger on the ‘other’ hand (a somewhat unfortunately apt figure in a discussion based around the neo-Nazi Pink) notes of our inauthentic self the inclusion of the other as our ‘*they-self*’, this is not meant necessarily derogatorily but rather that “The Self of everyday Dasein is the *they-self*, which we distinguish from *authentic Self* - that is, from the Self which has taken hold of in its own way” (Heidegger, 1962, p167) where dasein is understood, not straightforwardly as ‘being’, but rather a phenomenological ‘being there’ in the world. A self that encompasses the other, which as described above, is to include the fictional and possible rather than an (unknowable) actual. Here aesthetic judgement

seems to have strayed somewhat from a rather cold and objective attempt to describe beauty, to describe the Pink Floyd aesthetic, its sound. That quick shift, that momentary and fleeting glimpse of pure aesthetic that vanishes into plurality, is identified as one of the factors that produces the affect, the allure of the sonic glint that allows in the razor-sharp humanity which was attached to it all along. To quote boxer Muhammad Ali's catch phrase "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee", or perhaps to relate it to the mythical Sirens who lure sailors to their deaths through the beauty of their sound; there is a fatal attraction to this intensity. For some fans the dialectical move of the personal story in one direction (perhaps better exemplified in the narrative in Waters' *Radio Kaos* than *Pros and cons*) and the slick sound of post-split Floyd in *A momentary lapse of reason* presents something of a *downward* move, a negative dialectic (a downward-*aufheben*). *A momentary lapse* briefly draws me to an aesthetic but I am not stung, *Radio Kaos* has me observing someone else being stung, but again *I* am not stung. I can see the connection of beauty and sting in operation but I cannot *feel* it. It is without affect, without intensity.

Ranciere writes that the *sensus communis* is a "community of sense" (2011, p56), and from this that there is a difference of sense in the sensory reality of the art work to the sensory reality of the things that are 'represented' by the artist. This difference is part of Ranciere's term 'dissensus'. If Kant sees intensity in the difference between a universal sense perception system then Ranciere sees dissensus between sensory realities between artwork and the reality it is rendered from. Difference in the same is more than a semantic argument over the term 'sense', it goes to the heart of expression, that is, the desire of the affected self to share this affect with the other (that is, 'I want you to feel what I feel'). But this is never fully achievable as an aim, Ranciere writes "to the extent that it is a dissensual community, an aesthetic community is a community structured by disconnection" (2011, p59). Within Pink Floyd the struggle and the failure to find consensus comes to its peak in *The Wall*. Community and separation are at the core of this album, dissensus in the form of separated realities momentarily heightens intensity before it is dampened by fracturing, by the tearing down of the wall. Once the tension breaks apart the whole (the wall) the remaining parts are without tension. The tension has gone and the intensity with it. After that, where 'you' are alone, separated and singular, those who love you are in pairs, together and in community.

## **Affect**

Where the social theory of Brian Massumi (2002) presents affect as being in the realm of the prepersonal and non-conscious, of the body first before emotion, Margaret Wetherell presents affect as something much less linear with regards to how it functions between brain and body, as she writes “The picture that psychology and neuroscience typically now paints of affect is a highly dynamic, interacting *composite* or *assemblage*” (2012, p62). To paraphrase, this assemblage can capture “in the same general moment” automatic bodily responses, subjective feelings, cognitive processes, verbal exclamations, facial expressions, a whole host of receptions, processes and expressions that intertwine. This particular multiplicity of assemblage makes sense with regard to approaching the Pink Floyd Intensity; this intensity was never likely to be the product of a single element, not a single identifiable ingredient (that ‘x’ factor) that we could point to and say ‘there, that’s the thing in Pink Floyd’s music that makes us feel this way’, we will not be able to ‘put our finger on it’, indeed it is the fact that we *cannot* do this wherein lies intensity. Its *unarticulateableness* (an awkward word to express an awkward quality) is its being, it disappears at the very point of capture. Hence the multiple frameworks here are key to assembling some chemical mix between them that creates the compound that can be called the intensity, or to go back to the first analogy, the particles that make up the atom gelled by the subatomic forces between them. What cannot be achieved is the exact detail, the precision of position, of velocity; if that could be done it would be captured and that, as I have said, is its vanishing point.

Like Wetherell, Matthew Reason is similarly less convinced by Massumi’s idea that affect is ‘prepersonal’ and that emotions are then subsequently ‘personal’ (affect being *prior* to emotion and the personal). Reason articulates Massumi’s position as “Emotions are therefore conscious, personal, subjective; affect in contrast not only precedes both emotion and language (although it might be what gives emotion its intensity) but is also non-conscious [...] As a prepersonal intensity, affect is not under the individual’s control.” (Reason, 2016, p85). Reason’s research goes on to show how a complex assemblage takes place in the iterative and multiple processes that occur in the moment of affect. He states this positioning between affect and linguistics “The value of affect theories to contemporary performance is exactly its

ability to acknowledge that which we cannot put our finger on but is utterly essential nonetheless” (2016, p86). We want to share with faultless accuracy between sender and receiver, our sense to our sense-community, to be able to communicate what it is that is felt but that ‘I cannot put my finger on’. An eternal return in art, not to express emotion but to share sense, or more necessarily, to share affect. Failure to achieve this and for reception to be dampened returns the dampening effect to the one, where affect continually fails to share itself the dampening thickens until numbness set in (the more one shouts the more the one is dampened, numbed). Where the desire to connect affect meets the disinterest of the world, where togetherness has gone and then where we are no longer even ‘together and apart’ (Ranciere) but merely apart then numbness and perfect isolation result. How is the resultant intensity of the totality of that situation to be presented, and then beyond presentation and representation, to be *felt*? The Pink Floyd Intensity that we felt is, for many of us, the closest we have come to putting our finger on it, any closer and it would disappear, we are as near as is possible. The explosion of art is precisely because affect wishes to be known but that it does not know how to do so.

## **Intensity**

So far the developments in the understanding of affect have not reflected well on Massumi but his ideas are not to be dismissed so easily. Drawing on an empirical and scientific study (involving Galvanic skin response) he notes that “Intensity is embodied in purely autonomic reactions most directly manifested in the skin – at the surface of the body, at its interface with things” (Massumi, 2002, p25). The reactions measured at the skin in these subjects (children’s responses to three versions of the same short film) showed greatest intensity in the original version of the film, the only version that was nonverbal (the other two versions including voice overs). We have to accept a particular version of what is meant by ‘intensity’ here, as we do with all discussions on the term, but what is interesting in Massumi’s discussion is the description between the *effect* that language has on affect, and he uses the terms ‘dampening’ and ‘heightening’ to qualify the nature of experienced intensity. In this case (and he is clear to point out that language is not in opposition to intensity), the voice-overs seem to have a *dampening* effect. As noted in the previous section, Wetherell offers a more nuanced and complex association between sense and the

conscious with regard to a preconscious state of affect, but there is something in his reading of the case where intensity involves the ‘crossing of semantic wires’ where experiencing sadness is pleasant. Whilst keeping Wetherell’s uncertainly about the affect as singularly preconscious in mind, there is something in the pleasantness of Floydian anxiety that can be explored, the warm glow of anxiety, and there is certainly, if only by analogy, a way in which we can observe intensity in Floyd through a discussion on what ‘dampens’ intensity post-split that might help enlighten what heightened it pre-split.

The epigraph at the start of this chapter is from Deleuze’s *The logic of sense* (2015) which contemplates Pierre Klossowski’s work where the spirit, the ‘breath’, is a reduction from existence to subsistence, and almost to an essence where what remains is “the unequal or the different – each one is already difference in itself – so that all of them are comprehended in the manifestation of every one” (Deleuze, 2015, p337). This ‘non-communicable’ and ‘obstinate’ singularity for Klossowski is soul, and as Daniel Smith writes of Klossowski’s notion “What is incommunicable in the soul (or body) are its “impulses”—their fluctuations of intensity, their rises and falls, their manic elations and depressive descents, which are in constant variation” (Smith, 2012, p326). Again, we return to the impossibility of communication as intensity. Klossowki’s impulses fluctuate, rise and fall, they are dampened or heightened. The communication of the uncommunicable, the not being able to say it, the not being able to put one’s finger on it, are frustrations. The frustration of ‘not being able to’ heightens intensity to a point of exhaustion through the act of trying and failing, an exhaustion that leaves one, finally, breathless. In that end moment, if we connect this to Klossowki’s spirits, then to be absolutely breathless is to say that intensity is no longer present (for intensity is breath). Perhaps that is the relief at the end of the experience? Or rather the relief is when we are then asked to breathe and the breath comes in to focus. We do this in moments of panic, at times of excess of affect, we ask others to ‘breath slowly’ to ‘take a deep breath of air’.

I have already pointed to Kant’s need of the other in the production of intensity in aesthetic judgement, and that it is the difference in the other, the contestation of the universal, that drives this. Let us bring in Stephen Hawking into the equation here and throw in Gilles Deleuze and Pink Floyd (post-split) and God as well, just for good

measure. That sounds like a pretty intense combination. In *A Brief History of Time* Hawking wrote that “Using the no boundary condition, we find that the universe must in fact have started off with just the minimum possible nonuniformity allowed by the uncertainty principle” (Hawking, 1988, p140). Hawking played his part in noting the importance of difference at the very start of the universe, without it, without the minute inequalities present at the beginning, there would be no universe. Difference is universal. The universe *is* difference. Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* writes this:

It is therefore true that God makes the world by calculating, but his calculations never work out exactly [*juste*], and this inexactitude or injustice in the result, this irreducible inequality, forms the condition of the world. The world “happens” while God calculates; if the calculations were exact, there would be no world. The world can be regarded as a “remainder”, and the real in the world understood in terms of fractional or even incommensurable numbers. (2010, p280)

He goes on to note that “Every intensity is differential, by itself a difference” (p281), difference is intensity and hence the phrase ‘difference of intensity’ is a tautology. But that is not, from Deleuze’s point of view, to dismiss measurements of intensity (which Massumi can see as being dampened or heightened) but to point out that intensity *is* difference rather than being *of* difference. To draw this away from the birth of a universe and forward thirteen billion years to the arrival of humans then A.T Kingsman, writing on the impact of British philosopher Nick Land notes Land’s notion of intensity-in-itself as:

a thirsting for annihilation via a nihilistic acceleration without ethics. Apart from these frameworks of intuition—frameworks of subjectivity, affect, and phenomenology that Deleuze and Guattari (as well as most other transcendental materialists) are uncomfortable jettisoning entirely—the ‘subject’ cannot experience intensity, because intensity de-stabilizes and eliminates subjectivity. (Kingsmith, 2017)

If this elimination of the subject seems farfetched, then we can bring it home quite simply, if the subject is *one’s self* and the external object that eliminates it is the

*music*, then we are left with the very familiar idea that one literally ‘loses one’s self in the music’. Where intensity-in-itself is the very beginning of the universe it also harbors a ‘thirsting for annihilation’. It wants to explode and expand and retract and annihilate all at the same time. No wonder intensity is so intense.

### **Dialectic**

The assemblage of the Pink Floyd Intensity makes use of the split. The dialectical nature of this division moves, on one hand, towards the knowledge (or perhaps a *knowing-experience*) of the intensity, each part of the split leaving negative spaces, spaces in which we might be able to observe and identify what is missing. This absence ought to be a positive way forward towards identifying what the intensity ‘is’ by naming the absences. Perhaps the most enlightening way forward in taking a Hegelian approach to dialectics is the consideration of what is ‘pulled through’ from an original starting point, what is maintained from that position that is preserved within the current and new position. With regard to this notion of ‘picking up’ Hegel in *The science of logic* explains the concept of sublation (*aufheben*):

On the one hand, we understand it to mean “clear away” or “cancel” [...] But the word also means “to preserve”, [...] This ambiguity in linguistic usage, through which the same word has a negative and a positive meaning, cannot be regarded as an accident nor yet as a reason to reproach language as if it were a source of confusion. We ought rather to recognise here the speculative spirit of our language which transcends the “either-or” of mere understanding. (Hegel, 1991, p154)

The trajectory here is to work on how an established affect is ‘picked up’ and carried through (preserved) in a new moment. Hegel’s translators of *Logic* suggest that Sublate would be better replaced with the word ‘suspend’ in that it “has the dual sense of something’s being put out of action whilst continuing to exist” (Hegel, 1991, xxxv). In that preservation what is contained of the original is essential in the new moment, the new accumulating affect that builds towards the critical mass that can be called the intensity. Hence the ‘big bang’ of the split, that formed *Momentary lapse*

and *Pros and cons*, might be considered to undergo a process whereby an element has been dropped, a reverse or ‘downward-*aufheben*’ in that they lose rather than preserve. However, within this dialectic, and with knowledge of the original, it more clearly exposes the moments that can pinpoint where intensity works. Whereas the Hegelian dialectic is positive (the negation of negation is positive, affirmative) and sublation preserves whilst moving forward, in Žižek’s engagement with a new dialectical materialism he notes an alternative “The standard Hegelian ‘upward-*Aufhebung*’ spiritualizes the immediacy of reality, reconciling its struggles and/or contradictions in an ideal/notional form, while in the case of the ‘downward-*Aufhebung*,’ the contradiction remains unresolved and is merely patched up in an obscene spectral appearance” (Žižek, 2015, p332). There is a link here to Kant’s irresolution of universal aesthetic judgement that introduces intensity onto aesthetic production.

Theodore Adorno, in his 1965-66 *Lectures on negative dialectics* (Adorno, 2008) noted the traditional logic that a minus and a minus equals a plus, and this chimes with Hegel’s dialectics that the negation of negation is a positive, this is how the Hegelian dialectic moves forward. But for Adorno this is not a sustainable position, living as he did through times of regress rather than progress...

### **Humanity**

... to the point where positivity was seen as a desperate avoidance of negation, a negative positivity where emigrants to a new country, who were met with aggression, had to fit in by means of positive response: “In order to succeed in this process of adaptation, in order to do justice to what they were forced to do, you would hear them say, by way of encouragement – and you could see the effort it cost them to identify with the aggressor – ‘Yes, so-and-so really is very positive...’” (Adorno, 2008, p17).

And so I have segued from one category straight into the next, deliberately of course because they are not separate. Adorno continues his accusation of negative ideology directly against the aggressor “In the case of the Nazis, it was race, something that even the most stupid people have ceased to believe in” (2008, p17). Adorno was no great supporter of popular music (for it keeps the proletariat in its place) but it would be interesting to imagine how he would have responded to The Wall’s neo-Nazi Pink.

Is social protest in rock music a positive dialectic? Has it improved the world at all, or can it only preach to the converted? Or as Ranciere would have it, the political lies within the emancipation of the aesthetic rather than from the overtly political instrumentalisation of art. How is the political act of art best served, to voice a statement or to free it from instrumentalisation?

As our children are told when writing stories at school to 'show, don't tell' that is one of the drivers for where Waters seems to excel in comparison to the telling of post-Waters Floyd. Roger Waters, seemingly so tied up in autobiography, placed humanity in the situation of the individual, the screwed-up self's intent of screwing up others, whereas Floyd became general, where abstracted regimes divorced of identity displayed generic qualities (the dogs of war that do not negotiate). The split is a divide in how the story is told, but it is not a split in politics. When one splits an aesthetic, there is a tendency to locate parts on party political sides. To paraphrase from Walter Benjamin's *Illuminations*, the left politicize aesthetics and the right aestheticize politics. And just to emphasise this Pink Floyd tweeted at the time of the last general election "I'm voting labour because I believe in social equality. David Gilmour" (Pink Floyd, 2017) along with a link to register to vote and help forge the youthquake forward. There is a strong social message in Pink Floyd and the split gives an opportunity to see what happens when the individual story is wrapped in the slick aesthetic pre-split and then what happens when the individual story lacks that aesthetic and conversely when the aesthetic tries to speak without the cry of the individual soul. Which is the greater, to tell us to keep talking or to show us people talking?

Both myself and Robert (the young me) have to confess to being ignorant of Pink Floyd outside of the music. For sure, we come across news and hear things from other Floyd fans but we do not seek out information (who needs information?), so we are not geeks in that sense, more like 'purists' who receive all from a singular source and try to avoid infiltration from outside thus remaining within the totality that is given to us by the artists, the music that they want us to hear and not the gossip that might surround it. The drawback of course for a 'serious' academic is that ignorance comes at a price, it might be a valued quality in Rancierian pedagogy but less so in a knowledge economy. That said, the advantage is that our reception is largely

untainted and we are emancipated from any worry that what we have to say is affected by the other. As much as this is an excuse for missing so much, it is also true. But Robert and I have heard some things, we know *Pros and cons* could have been a Floyd Album, and that Waters had regrets about making *Radio Kaos*, which for us is a shame because we don't like *Pros and cons* much (too shouty, as we will describe later) but we do like *Radio Kaos*. Neither do we know much about the split itself with regards to the band members and their relationships, Richard Wright doesn't appear on *The Final Cut* but returns on post-split albums. Something happened during *The Wall* that you might know but we don't. You have the advantage of us.

In the mid 1970s Robert had a tape player in his room, not a *cassette recorder*, they were small little plastic rectangles laid flat on their backs with hard to push panel-like buttons at one end with the tape holder just above them and the speaker just above that. There was one in the house, but it wasn't used very much until a few years later when it squeaked its information into his brothers ZX81. Stuart was four years older than Robert, mum and dad's record collection was Simon and Garfunkel, Elton John, The Spinners, The Beatles (they were good) but Stuart's tape collection was rock and it often found its way on to Robert's quite chunky and upright tape player. There was one tape above all others called *Wish You Were Here* that got inside and would not leave. That synth at first, nothing vocal, nothing rhythmic, nothing else like it that he had heard, the notes were soft and not hard like the other tapes, no words but a welling up of feelings that felt as if they needed to well up, he was being welcomed, but welcomed to humanity not to a machine. And then the words welcomed him too, he was their son, he had new parents to guide him and to tell him that his young and fresh experiences were real. It was the only thing in Robert's world that made any sense. Roll on four years and this kid on the verge of becoming a teenager, confused by everything, where nothing in the world made sense but Pink Floyd, heard on the radio that a new single was going to come out later that month. That night Robert cleaned his teeth thinking about when he might next be allowed to go to Kaye's record shop in Yate. And for some reason he put a toothpaste sized amount of mum's moisturiser on Stuart's toothbrush. From his bedroom later that evening he heard his brother call out 'Mum, there's something on my toothbrush and I've put it in my mouth'. I'm sorry Stu, I still don't know why I did it. I lost all sense of reason, just for a moment.

### **The pro's and con's of post-split albums.**

Before we look into the differences perhaps we should take a look at the sameness of some of these post-split studio albums, in particular the first two by Floyd and the first two by Waters. They cover a ten-year period in terms of their release dates (1984 to 1994) though noticeably *Radio Kaos* and Floyd's *A Momentary Lapse of Reason* are released within 4 months of each other in June and September 1987. Just for context the release dates of albums pre and post split are: *The Wall* (November 1979), *The Final Cut* (March 1983), Waters' *The Pros and Cons of Hitch Hiking* (April 1984), Waters' *Radio Kaos* (June 1987), Pink Floyd's *A Momentary Lapse of Reason* (Sept 1987), Pink Floyd's *The Division Bell* (March 1994). Just to get a feel for the general notions of sameness we can construct a short 'checklist', a comforting list of all the types of things we had come to expect from Floyd and that can still be observed in the remnants that follow the split and can be found in both Pink Floyd's and Roger Waters' albums. Such a list might go something like this: Sound effects (*check*), guitar solos (*check*), sax solos (*check*), female backing singers (*check*), song about human communication (*check*), song about those in power (*check*), song about 'turning' (*well, yes, check*), warped circus-waltz-like intervention (*obscure, but sort of, check*), wheelchair user with voice synthesizer (*what...?*), Billy and Stephen (*oh, I see*).

Let us start with Billy and Stephen. If one of the ways into affect is the cry of humanity then we can observe both the cry, the means of signification, and the humanity that is signified. Billy is, for the purpose of the album *Radio Kaos*, a fictional character, whereas Stephen Hawking on the song 'Keep talking' (*The Division Bell*) is an actual person who 'speaks' for himself. To explore the 'cry' first, we are confronted with the human who, muted by accident or disease, has a sonic identity wrapped up in the sound of their voice synthesizer. Hawking's voice is instantly recognisable, Billy's is recognisably different from Hawking's. They share the 'uncanny valley' hybridity between human and robot and, because we know they are human, we are drawn to the robotic voice perhaps because of the greater effort required to speak, and hence that effort underlies that someone wants to say something of importance, something worth listening to. Words are easy, except when

they are not, and where it is difficult to speak we have to listen more closely if we want to hear. Hawking brings status, an iconic genius to whom we should listen, and he is already embedded here (in this chapter) in the theoretical framework in the intensity of contingency and irregularity at the begging of everything. But what Hawking says, as valid as it is, is at a *general* level, a simple message that if we keep talking then things will work out alright in the end. It might be true, it is a worthy message, but it is not 'intense' (the voice over has a dampening effect). The very meaning of life itself, as exposed by Monty Python at the end of the eponymous film, is "Well, it's nothing very special. Try to be nice to people [...] and try and live together in peace and harmony with people of all creeds and nations" (Monty Python 1983). Python might also be right, but again, the joke here lies in this most significant of questions being answered with a dispelling of intensity, with a frivolous platitude, a dampening (perhaps it is no surprise to find Douglas Adams involved in post-split Floyd who disarmed a similarly grand question with the apparently trivial answer of '42'). Ironically, Hawking is a 'genuine' genius with a brain capable of uncovering the very nature of the universe, but his words here fail to affect. Yet Billy is only fictionally given such insight, with his power to hear radio waves in his head he knows when the 'red button' at the hands of the world leaders is pressed before anyone else. Land's intensity of the 'thirsting for annihilation' is played out here in story and yet it is more affective with regard to intensity than Pink Floyd's 'Keep talking'. The order of signification of being told to keep talking if we want to save the world is less than the order of asignification in the empathic affect of *feeling* the end of the world, the secrecy of power crazy red button pressers, the moment of a second sun evaporating our tears. One can say 'I feel sad' and it be understood by others but music can make the other *be* sad. Opposed to the semiotic Deleuze and Guattari wrote it in *What is Philosophy?* that "the work of art—is a bloc of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects" (2011, p164) where the artwork is the affect from affection and the percept from perception. A very different view to the representational system of semiotics but instead the turn to affect and being. For Deleuze and Guattari there is further step, an asignifying rupture that rejects the sign, the art work is not the subject-orientated perception and affection but that it sits external to the subject (as noted in Massumi's notes to *A thousand plateaus*, and in Land where the subject disappears). It is art that creates percept and affect, it is philosophy that creates concept. It begs the question with regard to Pink Floyd then as

to what the 'concept album' is? In this respect, with art for percept and affect, and philosophy for concept, then the concept album must be 'philosophical art'. For a Pink Floyd fan that sounds cool, it means that *Dark side of the moon* is philosophical art, that *Animals* is philosophical art. I'll go with that, not least it means that the music Robert listened to was validated by this impressive categorisation (and how we could laud it over the ignoramuses who liked pop). Billy's final countdown to annihilation is but a simulation, but as Baudrillard emphasises throughout *Simulation and Simulacra* (1994), the signs are indistinguishable from those of 'reality' and as such are more dangerous than pretention. Whereas pretending admits that there is a 'real', simulation threatens the fixity, the assuredness, of the real. The message might be as platitudinous as saying 'just be nice to each other' but the danger of simulation introduces an intensity that is not there in the telling of the platitude. Ultimately then we are left with an odd couple of attempts to share affect; genius scientist Hawking's message is dampened by words in telling us to 'keep talking', the fictional Billy heightens intensity by threatening the worlds existence, albeit we observe this rather than feeling it and hence it does not achieve the heights that it wishes (we are not 'really' threatened). Maybe neither works that well in the end, neither of these post-split approaches seem to match that which was achieved pre-split.

So is Water's cry of humanity where intensity lies in pre-split Floyd? It is part of the assemblage but it is only a part. I can best express this perhaps through the vocal registers and timbres of Waters in *Pros and cons* where the mode of expressions are familiar but are without intensity. We were used to the shifts in tone and register of Waters' vocals ranging from low and almost dis-voiced whispering, to mid-range melody, to high register nearly-in-tune-but-not-quite shouting. But when these are not in balance the intensity dampens. It might be thought that the loud, shouting, high register, barely in tune, half sung half screamed vocal is the most intense, but that is not the reason for intensity. An odd and sinister emphasis at the start of *Pros and cons* on being hungry seems misplaced. The 'shouty' voice of Waters here hits us very early on and very suddenly at the start of '4:33AM (Running Shoes)', and we might well say 'that's too intense', the issue then is that the intensity here is kept outside the body, that is, in terms of affect we are not prepared to 'let this in' in other words, to let it affect us, and hence it is left outside of us. This is of a different order to a Deleuzian notion of externality of affect, as Massumi in his notes on translation of A

*Thousand Plateaus* writes of affect and affection that “Neither word denotes personal feeling [...]. *L’affect* (Spinoza’s *affectus*) is an ability to affect and be affected. [...] *L’affection* (Spinoza’s *affectio*) is each such state considered as an encounter between the affected body and a second, affecting, body” (Massumi, 2013, p.xvi). Intensity lies in the connectedness of outside actors, but here in ‘Running Shoes’ Waters shouting does not make those connections to the inside; an excess of shouting but not an excess of connections, not an excess that confuses and thrills. When one shouts too much and too often the villagers no longer respond to the cry of ‘wolf!’. So, there is something in the personal storytelling of Waters and the cry of the voice that is part of the Pink Floyd Intensity, but left uncontrolled (post split) it fails to contain excess (to keep excess inside us), it does not do the work of intensity, and hence it does not ‘work’ for us. Without the Pink Floyd Aesthetic the cry is not allowed inside to affect us.

So is it that the role of the aesthetic in the Pink Floyd Intensity, the gold leafing that delivers the message that cuts inside, that does the containing, the cramming in of the assembled bodies in our sardine cupboard of intensity? In echoes of earlier times *Momentary lapse* and *Division bell* start with the long sustained, drumless, harmonically static, synth and guitar amblings of *Wish You Were Here* and before. Unlike Waters’ preference for heading straight into the narrative, Floyd let the music ‘speak for itself’ and it is distinctly Floydian in texture and timbre in string laden sustained synths and the luxuriousness of tone of Gilmour’s guitar notes that I can only describe as being like the moment one puts that first chocolate in one’s mouth and it takes just a very short moment to seep satisfaction through the body before one closes one’s eyes and gives a closed-lipped sigh of enjoyment and pure satisfaction. Something has got inside, something that could bring with it more or less whatever it liked at this point so seduced are we with the Siren’s song. ‘Shine on You Crazy Diamond’ sublates, the aesthetic carries through, when the lyrics kick in they carry in them what has come before and we are immersed within this totality, the positive dialectic, the upward *aufheben* that ‘suspends’ the past and moves us forward, blown on the breeze, and within that enclosed totality the players, the actors, assemble the intensity. The opening numbers of *Momentary lapse* and *Division bell* have the aesthetic quality but they do not carry through a past, like an empty rhetoric they start well but do not bring gravity. In pre-split Floyd sublation can work both ways;

‘Comfortable Numb’ (albeit the fan is already almost breathless with intensity by this point anyway) succeeds in carrying the affect of the music-words into the guitar solo which then intensifies the affect, taking over the baton from the work done by the lyrics and music. But in, for example, ‘The dogs of war’ (*Momentary lapse*) the generic nature of the lyrics, their lack of the personal, does not set up intensity for the guitar solo that follows. A totality is immersive because there is no room for anything else to get it, when there is room, it fails to intensify. There is nothing particularly wrong with, say, ‘One slip’ as a song, a catchy chorus, somewhat general lyrics perhaps but they still relate, and the bass playing (let’s be frank) is much better than it used to be, but the sounds allow in external (intertextual) associations, images of Jackson-esque ‘thriller’ zombies armed stretched out towards me breaks the totality, the immersion. Another occasion on my own with no music playing I am singing ‘On the turning away’ but after the second line I find that I am singing ‘all around the blooming heather’ from a 19<sup>th</sup> century Scottish folk song instead. Again, something else from outside has come in and dispersed the assembling hoards before they reach critical mass.

The breathless fan is a believer. There are things outside but they are not proper things. Robert walked into Kaye’s record shop in Yate, a short walk from his home in Chipping Sodbury but still an adventure for a 12 year old. The shop was small, one central stand running down the middle with records either side and then record stands on each of the opposite walls of the rectangular shop. Glass fronted, one normally took the right-hand side of the central record stand to get to the counter which stretched right across the far end if one wasn’t there just to browse. Robert pre-ordered a copy of the forthcoming single ‘Another brick in the wall part 2’, but he had a question for the man in a plain white tee-shirt on the other side of the counter, ‘Are people *really* buying Lena Martell’s ‘One day at a time’?’. The man gave a small chuckle, smiled and said ‘Yes. Yes they are’.

Of course, ‘One day at a time’ is a classic, a beautifully constructed song, and Lena Martell’s version stayed at number one in the UK charts for 3 weeks in October 1979. But to a 12 year old obsessed Pink Floyd fan it was hard to believe. Robert was convinced that it was a marketing ploy, we had all heard rumours of record companies buying their own records to get into the charts and hence gain airplay and sales.

Surely this must be what is happening here? But clearly not, the man at the shop said so. The only other explanation then was that people were 'lacking' something, they clearly couldn't see that this was not proper music, if they could then it would be obvious that Pink Floyd were the best. They would, those that were emotionally and intellectually intelligent enough, come to realise that Pink Floyd were the best. Either they had yet to realise this (but had the capability to do so) or they simply were not musical enough, not intellectually or emotionally intelligent enough ever to come to know the truth. There were those that could be saved, and those that had no soul to save. The latter would simply have to have go through life lacking any access to the truth. Robert felt a bit annoyed by them.

The other is in conflict not just that they are clearly 'wrong', that is, that my aesthetic judgement holds as universal, but that this lack of consensus is problematic. Consensus is not required, aesthetic judgment is universal and final, but there are clearly others and my everyday being here in the world creates an inauthentic *they-self* that conflicts with an authentic *my-self*. This irresolvable difference then that the other injects into aesthetic production creates tensions. This intensity, the result of the other in aesthetic production, is a significant part of the Pink Floyd Intensity: us and them, you and me, me or him, him and me alone, binaries but ones that do not easily divide between the one and the other (Ranciere uses an example artwork titled 'I and Us'). The other is already external *and* internal to the one, hence we see the pulling of the character Pink across identities, a desire to include the other, but then a break, a cut that turns to a desire to exclude the other. And in the confusion of identity within Floyd we are unsure what is fiction, what is fact, what stories are *their* stories? Is 'Shine on you' about an absent Syd, *Division bell* an absent Roger, is *Pros and cons* a recovering Pink, and what part of Pink was Waters himself and what part Syd? It is hard to tell what is what, but that is part of the excess and the confusion, the readerly-ness of the text (Barthes). '4:50AM (Go Fishing)', as in many parts of *Pros and cons* links intertextually to *The Wall* and *The final cut*. As if the bricks, the building blocks, now lie in pieces, still there but no longer a whole with a function. We, the listeners, are now tourists visiting its ruins walking up and down by it perhaps, we recognise the themes though they have lost their place, their position of pressure and strength, and they beg that question, is this Pink picking upon the pieces and finding his way forward after the fall of the wall? External context tells us that the album concept was

offered at the same time as *The Wall* and not as a sequel, but now it has fragments of *The Wall* in it and so why would it not be read this way? In some respect the failings of *Pros and cons* would be fitting for Pink, his heyday behind him, there are moments of greatness but they are not coherent, it reminisces, it is recognisable but as the ruins of the thing and not the thing itself. Such is the album *Pros and cons* in relation to *The Wall*.

The voice of Waters was beginning to dominate in *The Wall*, becoming shouty and angry, yet it was contained within the Floyd aesthetic. *The final cut* is less an album in itself but rather a contextualisation of *The Wall*, a postscript as well as a requiem, beautifully melodic as it is (and arguably the most melodic of all Floyd albums), it is as if film makers were releasing a 'making of the film' documentary in its relationship to *The Wall*. If Hegel's world-spirit (*weltgeist*) makes itself manifest in worldly things with which to come to know itself, then perhaps *The final cut* is this dialectic in action. The dedication to Eric Fletcher Waters (1913 – 1944) and the most beautiful and powerful single accumulative structure in Floyds output 'When the Tigers broke free' (perhaps 'Eclipse' from *Dark Side* being its nearest competitor in terms of its direct teleology) that tells his (Waters') story, says 'this is what I wanted to say all along'. By this I mean that the telling of the 'facts' in *Final cut* does not communicate the intensity of the affect in the way that the dramatization of *The Wall* does, wrapped up as it is in the desire to communicate 'being'. No doubt it is embroiled in signification and representation but the workings of affect are those of being, of an asignifying rupture (Deleuze and Guattari) far away from 'this means that' but rather 'it is'. Eventually following its absence from the vinyl release of the album, 'When the Tigers broke free' found its place in the album re-release on CD and it segues in and out in accordance with its aesthetic and its affect. It is an accumulation picking up pressure instrumentally, lyrically and vocally on a single destination to its climax at the very end. It almost feels as if everything, every part of Pink Floyd that Waters was involved in was about, and was leading to, this moment. The whispering Waters of 'One of the few' places the calm for the opening horn of 'When the Tigers', the song then acts like the slow drawing back of a bow and arrow string until it is as taut as it can be, and then the arrow is let loose at the start of 'The Hero's Return' where Waters' shouting voice projects. In *The final cut* the end of this version of the band is in sight, the album is not *by* Pink Floyd but is 'performed by Pink Floyd'. Here the

unwanted excess that would leave intensity outside is still kept at bay but only just and for the last time with Waters in the line-up at this point. That main stay of Waters, Gilmour, Mason and Wright is already broken by this point with Richard Wright not featuring. And although Clapton's guitar playing on *Pros and cons* is gutsy, controlled and brilliant, it does not constrain the excess of Waters in the manner in which Gilmour's seductive and chocolate tones did. And that album cover for *Pros and cons* is awkward, not in a deliberately uncomfortable way but rather more than a decade on from the 70s *carry-on* and *calendar-girl* culture of everyday sexism in which 'A Nice Pair' was released in 1973, the high-heeled naked and beautiful backpacker is already out of step with society (and one cannot critique something by merely doing the thing one is critiquing, if indeed critique is what it is). The rock rawness of *Pros and cons* album art work is in opposition to the enigmatic, and much more prog-rocky *Momentary lapse* cover with its multiples and its juxtaposition of familiar objects and situations that are incongruous when put together (familiar signs usually unconnected brought together to make a new sign that is under-coded and in need of new meaning). But it is right that Waters makes a break from the Floyd aesthetic, after all it is not Pink Floyd. Post-split Pink Floyd is (in name at least) still Pink Floyd and hence it's brand identity is continued in the art work, although the keen of eye will note that the man is sat at leisure on the edge of the bed whilst the woman is the one in the maid's outfit doing all the work (she does get a lie down in another picture though). If these covers are comments on equality and sexism, then they are not particularly good ones. *Radio Kaos* and *Division bell* fair somewhat better in this respect. At least the covers avoid gender issues and focus on communication, the two heads face-to-face that also make one face are both 'talking' to each other (courtesy of the signifying lights in the back ground) whilst *Radio Kaos* uses the binary dot-dash system of Morse code, a linguistic system that is used where words are not available, they are not a primary choice but a sign system used when words are absent. Similarly, the use of sound effects pervades Floyd's output and that continues in post-split albums. We perhaps have to rethink these less as sound effects and more as a reversal of the diegetic sound that we are used to in film. We are familiar with the non-diegetic of music in film, whereas with an album where the primary reality is music it is the 'real' sounds that are outside of the primacy and hence are non-diegetic (the 'scene' being the music in this case). If music in film carries the 'being' of the narrative (making us 'be' scared or 'be' happy *etc.* rather

than merely representing fear or happiness *etc.*) then the sound effects in accompanying the music attempts to ground the abstract affect in the real world, this results in the affect being pulled from the body, but not completely, not the Deleuzian externalisation but a dual position of being inside and outside. *Dark side of the moon* threaded this technique throughout, *The Wall* used it more dramatically emphasising its rock-opera quality. Post-split though it generally fails to hold the intensity that being both inside and outside carries with it; the rowing of ‘Signs of life’ that fails to build into ‘Learning to fly’, the ticking and cars of *Pros and cons* that sets a scene breaks the success of the reverse diegetic by making the music secondary (when it’s primacy is a necessity). The difference between the dark side of the moon and the dark side of the earth is the difference between reality (of the side we never see, the tidal lock) and simulation (the fake end of it all), between the abstracted laughter where affect is literally extracted and isolated, and the laughter of a DJ that mocks, between the rowing that rows to nowhere and the ticking that puts actual time before the reality of the music.

Robert walked from the pitch area out into the tunnels of Wembley stadium away from the crowds whilst a Waters-less Pink Floyd were playing on stage. It wasn’t Floyd’s fault, he had grown up anyway and the intensity of first love had faded some years ago now. There was a hint of sadness, yes, but more overwhelmingly a sense of thanks. How odd it is, to be immersed in the intensity of a band’s music but to know that one cannot send back that affect to them. Such is fandom. And to be able to see, later, from the outside the bubble that one was in, but also to recognise that it was no illusion, it was crammed full of reality to the point of excess and confusion that was the thrill of the Pink Floyd Intensity.

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## **Discography**

### **Pink Floyd:**

The piper at the gates of dawn (1967) EMI Columbia Records

The piper at the gates of dawn [CD] (2016). Pink Floyd Records

The dark side of the moon (1973) EMI Records

A nice pair (1973) Harvest, Capitol (US)

Wish you were here (1975) EMI Records

Animals (1977) EMI Records

When the Tigers broke free (1982) [single] EMI Records

The final cut (1983) EMI Records

Another brick in the wall (part 2) (1979) [single] EMI Records

The Wall (1979) EMI Records

A momentary lapse of reason (1987) EMI, Columbia Records

The division bell (1994) Columbia Records

### **Roger Waters:**

The pros and cons of hitch hiking (1984) Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Radio Kaos (1987) Sony Music Entertainment Inc.