

# The Biography of the Sample: Notes on the Hidden Contexts of Acousmatic Art

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There is an old notion that written music—the visual hieroglyphics of the composer’s intent—is a material substance that is spiritualized by live performance. Because the 20th century had, through the steady march of recording technology, either done away with or confounded this notion of the live as it relates to a written score, much of what is at stake in debates about the meaning of performed versus inscribed music is lost to us. As performance became materialized on tape, vinyl or Edison cylinder, no longer would the spiritual event of live performance be the fetishized endpoint and privileged locus of audition. Yet it would take half the 20th century before Glenn Gould was able to make this change clear to popular audiences with his rebellion against the concert stage and his preference for the studio. We can cite, as well, the profound challenge to the soul of the performer that Pierre Schaeffer and *musique concrète* presented in creating the idea of an acousmatic [1] concert, in which case we can perhaps say that the spirituality of the performer, if there was one, was hidden away in the compositional process, and not monkey-suited in the concert hall.

This secreting away of the spiritual aura of the musician and disruption of the traditions of the compositional text is still an issue, as one can see in debates about the “presence” of the performer in live laptop music—what Kim Cascone calls the “pop-acousmatic”—or in the various strategies that artists have invented to open the fixed tracks of music technology to the uncertainties of live improvisation [2]. What these artists are negotiating, what it all comes down to, is the notion of soul—an invisible quality that encompasses something of the magical, the immaterial and the emotional in live performance. Such invisibles are part of the way in which sound has become exalted throughout history, as well as mystified, from the notion of the lyrical interpretation of a musical text to that *je ne sais quoi* that turns a particular combination of meat and machine into Justin Timberlake. Whether it’s soul, Shinola or payola, many sound artists have critiqued these notions, either obliquely or directly. To conceive of “music” as rising above and enchanting its textual counterpart is a classic case of Western phonocentrism [3]. At our *phonographcentric* end of history, we no longer need experience the privileged destiny of sound near the footlights, next to the angels. Glenn Gould and Pierre Schaeffer taught us how to leave the concert hall and create mashups in our basement and then post them to MySpace.

Does this type of production herald the kind of utopia of secularized sound production and new modes of listening that Barthes called “the shimmering of signifiers, ceaselessly restored to a listening which ceaselessly produces new ones from them without ever arresting their meaning,” or is it instead a not-so-new form of solipsistic monkishness? [4] Is the survival of acousmatic production—presumably antithetical to notions of “the live”—a post-modern effect of the technology or an archaism? And might the notion of “the live” be extended—as part of the text of “life” that continues to shimmer beyond the materiality of the sonic object? Current debates about the borderlines, aesthetics and significance of sonic art have begun to move beyond discussing performative “liveness” toward a discussion of just how “life” adheres to the sonic event, in ostensible alignment with or departure from Pierre Schaeffer’s acousmatic. Undoubtedly, since Schaeffer, the territory of traditional, performed music has been steadily encroached upon by textures of sound-pieces, samples drawn from the flow of life. However, for latter-day acousmatic artists, attention to the “life” forming the raw material of the work gets in the way of our experience of its pure sound. Part of this acousmatic gambit entails that we forget, for example, the systems of narrative, history and value that—intentionally or not—attend our approach to a work like Stephen Vitiello’s *World Trade Center Recordings*. Recorded in 1999, it would have been difficult even then to ignore the titular origin of the acousmatic experience; with its exhibition in the 2002 Whitney Biennial, however, any notion of pure sound goes out the window, so to speak, even though the artist lucked upon something that might be called a double acousmatic (absent both by nature of recording and in actual fact). Of course, an object like the World Trade Center is never really absent or present but rather undergoes a vacillation from actual traumatic absence to maudlin propagandistic hyperpresence to historical abyss.

Whether this all reads on the comparatively insignificant wafer of a contact mic is questionable. To attach all of the intellectual and historical baggage of life—examined or unexamined—onto an art that can uniquely challenge notions of the unified self smacks of theoretical cretinism. Sound art or music, while utilizing recycled or prerecorded material, engages the imagined materiality of a future condition beyond the constraints of biography and origin.

However, a sound never exists but in a space—coded, over-

## ABSTRACT

Acousmatic sound art production has as its goal a transformation of recognizable recorded sound samples into new relations, effectively hiding the origin of the raw material so as to focus on an experience of pure sound. The author defines the “live” as the “life” from which these samples are pulled, and considers the ways in which the biography of the sample troubles acousmatic art.

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coded, recodable—redounding from empty fracas, modulated by language. The adherents of acoustic ecology (as followers of John Cage) have tended to challenge the purities of *musique concrète*'s acousmatists, in a more humanist mode—as well as in a mode less anxious about establishing their work on par with the “fine arts.” They more readily admit the inalienable status of context in its relation to the recorded fragment, and in so doing, they have garnered the disapproval of many self-described followers of Pierre Schaeffer's acousmatic art, who believe in a more autonomous musical object. Yet, to one unaware of these debates, there is strikingly little perceivable difference between the composed recorded material of a piece from an acoustic ecologist and one from an acousmatician. Comparing works such as, say, acoustic ecologist Hildegard Westerkamp's trilogy *Into India* (1997–2002) and Francisco López's acousmatic trilogy *The Americas* (1997–2005), the formal differences are not as striking as the similarities: Both arrange prerecorded sounds, which “mediate” (if we can use the word) “impossible objects” of epic proportions (thus foreclosing any possibility of accurate “representational” capture). The crucial difference resides in whether the artist means for the recorded fragments to point toward the absolute or toward some understanding of the source and the artist's relation to the source (which recording, by its very nature, absents from the experience of listening).

This difference resides in context—part of how we are asked to perceive the work—although it paradoxically forms the core of what Brandon LaBelle describes as the “contextual debate,” between acousmatic music and any sound art that asks us to look outside of music, in the “emphasis on sound and its source.” In the work of Cage and acoustic ecologists such as Hildegard Westerkamp, Murray Schafer and Barry Truax, “Materiality and context form the basis for an exploded musical object, . . . whereas the ideality of sound and its technological partner, form a self-enclosed loop of detailed sonic structurings in *musique concrète*.” LaBelle cites the seeming anomaly of Luc Ferrari's anecdotal acousmatic work, which “caused a slight rift in the GRM [Groupe de Recherches Musicales] studios through its reference to the real as autobiographical narrative rather than sonic material, as insistence on the source as opposed to an abstracted imaginary” [5]. If we do not think of *musique concrète*—past and present—as monolithically bent on hiding the source as some would have it,

then Ferrari's anecdotes are not so odd. For example, *concrète* composer François Bayle's “*si loin, si proche . . .*” starts with, as he describes, “the echo of bells on the walls of an enclosed courtyard . . . that I have heard everyday for the last 30 years” [6]. In this reflection on sonic reflection itself—incorporating the dynamics of memory into the sound experience—Bayle whirls these bells into multi-timbral projections and back again. This “back” is no mere, easy return. Yet it is impossible to appreciate this piece without the dynamics of source exerting its pressure, subtly and insinuatingly encouraging an attendance to something other than a purely musical composition. Bayle says he makes “acousmatic poems”—a term that, with a lighter touch, evokes sound and its syntax, as well as the way in which, like poetry, sound art arrays “marks, blank spaces, questioning forms which . . . designate what *neither shows nor conceals, but beckons*” [7].

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When a sample or processed sound gives a sense of the journey of that sound—whether the journey is from an apt sonic source or through a visible ensemble of unconventional extra-laptop devices; from the archive of a consequential past or to an imagined future connection—could this be what we call “live” in the age of technically enhanced performance? Is this “soul”?

Rilke, inspired by the grooves of the phonograph, imagined this soul in the fissure of a human skull—dead to all intents and purposes. Hep to the music of the future, he knew where the groove was at: He imagined that if you took a needle to this fissure, you would hear the ur-sound. For Rilke, there was some sort of mystical resonance (rather than a mimetic reference) between a source-object and the unpredictable noise it will emit: a connection to the lifeworld, via the skull, with stopovers in the absolute. But his story of primal sound, beginning, “It must have been when I was a boy at school . . .” is just as much about the memory of the object—here, the medical specimen of a skull—as it is about this object's future phonographic transformation. The “moments of deliberate attention which made this ambiguous object really mine” before “confronting, as it were, a new and infinitely delicate point in the texture of reality” impelled him to imagine how this object could be captured in new sensorial registers [8].

Rilke's notions were carried over into the synesthetic experiments of Oskar Fischinger, who imagined that the inner

lives of objects were revealed in their sounding. With the new ability to manually trace patterns on optical soundtracks, he would ask questions like, “What would a face sound like?”—a question humorously taken up in Scott Stark's 1988 “The Sound of His Face,” in which we hear the blasts of noise that blown-up images of Kirk Douglas's face make when they meet the exciter bulb. While these notions may seem quaint or conceptual one-liners, we need only survey current experiments to see their survival—and not merely acoustic ecologists playing pinecones with contact mics. The contemporary vogue for amplified objects and transcoded data ushers in a whole universe of potential sound sources—sometimes overtly visualized, since sound art has more vigorously been included in gallery space [9]. “Live” performance with electronics itself is no longer acousmatic in the traditional sense, in that its assemblages more readily elicit the eye. When work is *not* drawn into these visual fields of gallery and sculptural performance, the source of the sound is *told*, and that telling is an art, or an extension of the art itself [10]. The most popular recent use of an acousmatic's fiction may be on Matmos's *A Chance to Cut Is a Chance to Cure* (2001). Perhaps unconsciously returning to the anatomist origins of Rilke's ur-sound, Matmos composed this entire CD from sounds of medical technologies and surgical procedures. This sampling could even be considered more strictly (and perhaps boringly) autobiographical, given that their parents are doctors; however, the sample's biography need not circuit back to the family circle or the dirty secret [11]. Here, what complicates this easy line of inquiry is that the medical procedures remixed are precisely ones that challenge the idea that you're stuck with what you're born with.

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The improbability, uniqueness, history or significance of sound sources is as much a part of the journey of a signal as any acoustic vector, and Schaeffer was not immune to the aura of this journey. Late in his life, he himself desired that sound production move into a baroque deconstruction of acousmatic blindness [12] (of the kind one can experience notably in the live MiniMovie collaborations of Sue C. and AGF or the various sculptural/performative/social radio assemblages of the free103point9 collective [13]). Even at the very beginning, in his 1948 Concert of Noises, Schaeffer seemed to embrace the romance of the referent, with good humor—his “Etude for Pots and

Pans,” for example. Additionally, *musique concrète* early on distinguished itself from computer music, precisely along the lines of sound sources—recorded “natural” sounds versus synthesized electronic sounds [14]. The purely formal work of *musique concrète*, however, in its attempt to construct a future utopian condition by way of the fragments of the day to day, was conflicted by the indexical nature of its sound sources. It was as if the lowly origins of these sounds ultimately prevented their appreciation as music. So Schaeffer was famously ambivalent about his activity, and sometimes even considered his life’s work a failure [15]. Perhaps, however, if we think of acousmatics less as a purist enterprise erasing the significance of its source and more as a politics that creates new connections and new narratives, then it becomes highly contextual. Schaeffer’s work then seems much more in line with the project of acoustic ecology, foregrounding a recording’s linkages with the life-world, albeit in a more futurist vein. It seems to me that both World Soundscapists and acousmatic engineers engage in the however paradoxical need to use tape to get at life. And Schaeffer’s dream to move beyond mimetic reference into a new sense of “the whole,” “to relate a musical object to its most general context, to the *spiritual destiny of the period*” just fell on deaf ears [16].

For Schaeffer, the important distinction acousmatic music made was not with contextualized sound but rather with the practice of “acoustics.” His problem was more with the technicians than the Cageans, that is, those who would impose upon musical technology the narrative of technical mastery over the signal, as if the technology were merely a sonic mirror reflecting back our knowledge of culturally conditioned sound sources (especially instrumental ones), rather than a machine for new experience. Schaeffer himself complicates the notion of a pure “sound object” in ways that some of his inheritors have seemed not to have picked up on, having unwittingly fallen in with the technicians:

Acoustics and acousmatics are not opposed to each other like the objective and the subjective. If the first approach, starting with physics, must go as far as the “reactions of the subject” and thereby integrate, in the end, the psychological elements, the second approach must in effect be unaware of the measures and experiences that are applicable only to the physical object, the “signal” of acousticians. But for all that, its investigations, turned toward the subject, cannot abandon its claim to *an objectivity that is proper to it*: if what it studies were reduced to the changing impressions of each lis-

tener, all communication would become impossible; Pythagoras’ disciples would have to give up naming, describing, and understanding what they were hearing *in common*; a particular listener would even have to give up understanding himself from one moment to the next. The question, in this case, would be how to rediscover, through confronting subjectivities, something several experimenters might agree on [17].

Michel Chion reminds us that the term “acousmatic” comes from an archaic word designating the way in which Pythagoreans listened to their master from behind a curtain, so as not to be distracted by his human form [18]. Acousmatics may be fraught, then, with the mystical hierarchies of the Greek geometrist, famously criticized in Luigi Russolo’s “The Art of Noise” as productive of “the concept of sound as something by itself, different from and independent of life” [19]. However, Schaeffer here brings in the social, communicative element of listening in ways that the acoustician would introduce in only a purely instrumental way (e.g. psychoacoustics). After all, Pythagoreans are not so otherworldly that they forget it is the master behind the curtain, instead of a dog, a cicada or a blender (differences an acoustician would consider moot in the mystification and valorization of pure technique). Schaeffer’s language, it is true, proposes something different than this mere identification of source; he is looking for a new common language to describe sounds and engage listening. It is not the logic of disavowal (“I know, but all the same”), but an attempt, amidst “confronting subjectivities,” to create a social discourse, inevitably extending the sound object out of the strict domain of musical hermeticism and into the lifeworld.

In the name of Schaeffer, various newer sound artists have sought to break from this lifeworld, to reassert the mystificatory environment of the Pythagorean curtain. Francisco López is perhaps the clearest example of acousmatic performers who, rather than celebrate the baroque and interdisciplinary potentialities of sound experiments, shore up the idea of a pure “music.” He says, “There can only be a documentary or communicative reason to keep the cause-object relationship in the work with soundscapes, never an artistic/musical one” [20]. Therefore, we would have to give up assessing those “moments of deliberate attention” that characterize the artist’s choice to be present in the forest (for his most well-known CD *La Selva* (1997) and “document” its

sounds (even though there is something to the forest that seems to suit López—a deep biographical resonance). Similarly foreclosed would be the way in which the work communicates (perhaps the better word is “radiates”) beyond the initial moment of capture. Part of this radiation is undeniably the non-innocent mechanisms of promotion, distribution and presentation—extending what would otherwise be a “metaphysics of presence” into the very material texture by which sound art exerts itself. One need only investigate the packaging of *La Selva* to appreciate the depth of what is indeed an almost hysterical disavowal of the way in which his art exists in the world. Here he attempts to prize apart for as long as possible what he calls “the transcendental dimension of the sound matter *by itself*” [21] from its uncanny double in the world. The packaging and the CD are mostly black, signifying the “blind listening” he is encouraging. Yet there is an exceedingly thick booklet that beckons into the forests of semiosis. The pages are taped shut, not easily removed—the listener must engage in a kind of vandalism to open it (I used a pocket knife). There is a lot he needs to say, although he pretends not to be saying it. López is notoriously “critical of what he calls the ‘dissipative agents’ of music, which is anything that distracts attention from the pure matter of sound: language, text, image, referentiality, musical form and structure, technique and process, instrumental virtuosity, etc.” [22]. Included in this packet, however, is a 22-page essay with 30 citations; a paragraph-long reminder that one will abandon all hope of non-dissipated listening by continuing onward (this warning only occurs at page 1 of the booklet’s part II); a map of *La Selva*; another short essay on the ecosystem of *La Selva* (with five cited works); and, the coup de grâce, 10 pages (single-spaced, in an 8-point font) of every species recorded and identified—with their Latin, English and Spanish names—each with their respective track times.

If it were not for the sheer vituperativeness of López’s arguments, I would say this CD is just a very good joke. Yet, in the same way that López seems to conquer the forest with his machinic mastery, he enacts a humorless territorialization of the field of sound art [23]. In a more reasoned remix of his artistic statement, he contrasts his practice with that of bioacousticians—who, in attempting a high-fidelity capture of the sonic traces of singular species, excessively frame their subject in a hyperreal way [24]. His critique here *is* Schaefferian and, to

my mind, appropriate. Yet even though he challenges the recording practices of the bioacousticians by producing a more unruly mix—including non-biotic sources and overlooked biotic ones (the sounds of plants)—his definition of environment that emerges out of this practice falls into the very problems that he critiques. For example, he talks about how he had to avoid the sounds of the “disco-móviles”—“mobile discos with considerable powerful sound equipment transported in trucks to any village for outdoor dance parties”—to produce his “environmental” piece. “This situation made the recording work an outrageously difficult task, waiting for completely ‘non-polluted’ intervals of time or looking for ‘hidden,’ sonically-shadowed spots” [25]. How can the disco-móviles be considered an intrusion, when, in a sense, the whole forest and the meaning it generates threaten to intrude upon the space of López’s blind listening? How useful is López’s notion of environment if he seems to evacuate self-reflexivity in favor of the acoustic fantasy of the microphone’s transcendental transparency? [26]

Between the dogmatic purity of new acousmatic art and the potentially conservative force returning art to a sentimentalized or essential origin, there seems to be a third way. Deleuze has criticized both tendencies as partaking of “the same false movement.” Both the artistic flight from life and the descent into an original, personal and hidden meaning block what he would consider the only reason for art—creation of a deterritorializing flux [27]. “[F]rom fragment to fragment is constructed a living experiment” [28]. In his essay on Whitman, Deleuze even uses the word “sample” to describe this notion of the art of the fragment:

The world as a collection of heterogeneous parts: an infinite patchwork, or an endless wall of dry stones. . . . The world as a *sampling*: the samples (“specimens”) are singularities, remarkable and nontotalizable parts extracted from a series of ordinary parts. Samples of days, *specimen days*, says Whitman. . . . Selecting singular cases and minor scenes is more important than any consideration of the whole. It is in the fragments that the hidden background appears. . . . [29]

The paradoxical nature of Deleuze’s analysis lies in the fact that, while these fragments provide a useful (and for him particularly American) antidote to notions of the beautiful, compositional whole, he does not give himself over to the pure, deracinated pleasure of the

fragment alone that would lead to some abstract or absolute composition (and one should be careful about confounding the two, or discounting either outright). The sense of the whole that the fragment enables is one that is constantly renewed, a “live” creation of space, interval and relation—“a web of variable relations. . . an encounter with the Outside” [30]. The documentary intensity of the fragment is thus neither disavowed nor simply aestheticized; rather, it is a relay of sorts in a web that may include cosmos, kitchen or link unknown. Deleuze goes as far as to say that without this sense of potential relation, “Art collapses into morbidity, and democracy, into deception” [31]. While this statement might come off as poststructuralist hyperbole, it does not seem like too great a leap to make from a disengaged avant-garde’s morbid toying with sounds bereft of context to the sound-bite culture that has enveloped notions of democracy [32]. The most important questions one can bring to the creation of new sounds today may be those of politics, narrative and ethics. Is this program music? Interestingly enough, Deleuze embraces this term of reproach, asking us to “Experiment, never interpret. Make programmes, never make fantasms.” He criticizes the European tendency towards manifesto-guaranteed art and says, “Programmes are not manifestos—still less are they phantasms, *but means of providing reference points for an experiment which exceeds our capacities to foresee*” [33].

In *Against Interpretation*, Susan Sontag defends a formalist appreciation of art against the reactionary philistinism of “looking for deep meaning”; interpretation sometimes can keep us from hearing what is actually there [34]. Deleuze even calls interpretation “slightly disgusting” [35]. But to admit a notion of life, presence and context that might be brought to bear upon sound art production is not the same as asking “deep meaning” to be manifest or even, ultimately, retrievable. Nor, in asking for a communicative art, is one saying that works with a “textual” element are better than those that are purely abstract (in fact, some of Westerkamp’s least successful works are the ones that include vocalized textual elements; some genres of radio documentary and essay could likewise benefit by weaning themselves from their addiction to first-person narrative and embracing a more posthuman—or at the very least post-emo—aesthetics). The point is that blind listening does not exist: Sounds are magnetized by the world as much as they magnetize it, and we are caught up

in their systems of relay and resonance. Thinking about Rilke’s encounter with the skull, if initial moments of attention (pressing record) are as well considered as the confrontation with “a new and infinitely delicate point in the texture of reality,” then we might be getting closer to Sontag’s notion of an “erotics of art”—risking an encounter with life itself rather than shoring up secret knowledge.

## References and Notes

1. The term “acousmatic” describes work that hides the activity of the composer, as well as the sound source, so that adepts may focus on the sound alone.
2. See Kim Cascone, “The Aesthetics of Failure: ‘Post-Digital’ Tendencies in Contemporary Computer Music,” *Computer Music Journal* 24, No. 4, 12–18 (2000); Kim Cascone, “Laptop Music: Counterfeiting Aura in the Age of Infinite Reproduction,” *Parachute: Contemporary Art Magazine* 107, 52–60 (2002).
3. The idea of phonocentrism, as described by Derrida, implies that Western culture denigrates the textual (here the written composition) while privileging the presence and embodiment of words as spoken. For Derrida, the textual creates this difference itself, so that any fantasy of vitalistic presence is always ultimately guaranteed by a textual operation. Derrida’s play with the text/sound distinction finds resonance in Cage’s sound/music distinction; it is a confusing, yet I think productive, comparison, given that “sound” is the metaphysical term for Derrida, and is the more noisy, earthly term for Cage. Yet, each in his own related way rediscovered the text or texture that performing and literary arts attempt to efface, in their desire for embodied artistic presence.
4. Roland Barthes, “Listening,” in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, Richard Howard, trans. (NY: Hill and Wang, 1985) p. 259.
5. Brandon LaBelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art* (NY: Continuum, 2007) p. 31.
6. François Bayle, liner notes for *La forme du temps est un cercle, 1999–2001* (Paris: Magison, 2002).
7. François Bayle, “The Astonished Ear,” liner notes for *Pierre Schaeffer: L’Oeuvre Musicale* (Albany: EMF and GRM, 1998) p. 47.
8. Rainer Maria Rilke, “Primal Sound,” in *The Book of Music and Nature: An Anthology of Sounds, Words, Thoughts*, David Rothenberg and Marta Ulvaeus, eds. (Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 2001) pp. 21–24. See also Thomas Y. Levin, “‘Tones from out of Nowhere’: Rudolf Pfenninger and the Archaeology of Synthetic Sound,” in *New Media, Old Media: A History and Theory Reader*, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Keenan, eds. (NY: Routledge, 2006) pp. 45–82.
9. It may be that the current embrace of sound art by galleries may have a deleterious effect on the diversity of sound art. For one, as sound art migrates back to the fine arts after more than a decade in the interstices, it must contend with the logophobia endemic to more purist conceptions of art practice. And while those artists and theorists who initially brought sound art out of the rarefied world of music were extremely inventive and generous about the ways in which they spanned categories, the sound art that has emerged from the galleries—and that which has been reabsorbed into music—has attempted to define itself by exclusion.
10. If one remembers Cage’s famous encounter with “pure silence” in the anechoic chamber—in which he heard, instead of silence, the low pulse of his blood and the high-frequency buzzing of his nerves—we can say that there was a third sound about which Cage failed to comment. It was the sound-in-the-head that constructed the story as he

experienced the event and through which he relayed the experience.

11. See Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, trans. (NY: Columbia UP, 1987) pp. 45–51.

12. See Tim Hodgkinson, “An Interview with Pierre Schaeffer,” in Rothenberg and Ulvaeus [8] pp. 38–39.

13. See <www.minimoviemovement.com>, <www.poemproducer.com>, <www.sue-c.net>, and <www.free103point9.org>.

14. We could, however, complicating even this canonical distinction, ask, “Is ADSR a narrative of sorts (or conversely, is Freitag’s schema a triangle wave)?” Do the paths that our signals take inevitably contain within themselves a narrative meaning, albeit a potentially posthuman one? Language is what directs us here: it has always been a bridge to the non-musical, heightening our experience of what would otherwise be a forgotten noise. For better or worse, it is the secret plug-in of the sound artist.

15. See Hodgkinson [8] p. 35.

16. Bayle [7] p. 46.

17. Pierre Schaeffer, “Acousmatics,” in Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, eds., *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music* (NY: Continuum, 2004) p. 77.

18. See Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, Claudia Gorbman, trans. (NY: Columbia UP, 1999) p. 19.

19. Luigi Russolo, “The Art of Noise,” in Michael Kirby, ed., *Futurist Performance*, Victoria Nes Kirby, trans. (NY: PAJ Publications, 1986) p. 166.

20. Francisco López, “Schizophrenia vs. l’objet sonore: soundscapes and artistic freedom,” *eContact!* 1.4, 23 ii (1998) p. 4. See <cec.concordia.ca/econtact/Ecology/López.html>.

21. López, liner notes for *La Selva* (Rotterdam: V2\_Archief, 1998) p. I.10; López, “Profound Listening and Environmental Sound Matter” in *Audio Culture*, p. 85; López, “Blind Listening” in *The Book of Music and Nature*, p. 163.

22. Christoph Cox, “Abstract Concrete: Francisco López and the Ontology of Sound,” *Cabinet 2* (Spring 2001) p. 2. See <www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/2/abstractconcrete.php>.

23. While theorists such as Jacques Attali have helped clarify the connections between sound and exercises of power, only a few writers have challenged the ways in which a combination of sonic abstraction, high technology and band-boy homosociality have served to keep sound art as the last refuge of art machismo. One good start, however, is Barry Truax’s “Homosexualism and Electroacoustic Music: Absence and Personal Voice,” *Organized Sound* 8, No. 1 (2003) pp. 117–124. See <www.sfu.ca/~truax/os6.html>.

24. López, “Profound Listening and Environmental Sound Matter,” in Cox and Warner [17] p. 83.

25. López [21] liner notes for *La Selva*, p. II.6.

26. We must not localize this tendency in one very vocal advocate. In fact, even though López clearly distances himself from the acoustic ecologists, we can see similar sentiment operating in the way leading acoustic ecologist Hildegard Westerkamp describes her “textual” relation to her work: “I cannot speak about anything involving the soundscape if I want to stay true to an ecological consciousness that positions itself inside the soundscape, as part of and participant in the soundscape, not as outsider, observer, or commentator.” Westerkamp falls into López’s suspicion about these dissipative agents, without considering them to be fundamental or inextricable. Yet she nuances her argument by claiming, “Environmental sound is a type of language, a text. And the technology through which we transmit the sounds has its own language.” She asks that artists fess up to the

ways in which these languages operate, and think about how the fragments that a sound recordist pulls from one location can communicate a presence to a listener who has no access to the time and space of the original sonic event. See Hildegard Westerkamp, “Speaking from Inside the Soundscape,” in Rothenberg and Ulvaeus [8] pp. 144 and 149.

27. Deleuze and Parnet [11] p. 50.

28. Deleuze and Parnet [11] p. 48.

29. Gilles Deleuze, “Whitman,” in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, trans. (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1997) p. 57.

30. Deleuze [29] p. 60.

31. Deleuze [29] p. 60.

32. This critique is echoed in Adorno’s “On the Fetish Character in Music.” As Paul Hegarty says, “For Adorno, there is nothing at stake in sampled, collaged sounds, and he probably speaks for many in arguing that it is a form of tinkering, a sort of alienated hobby.” Paul Hegarty, *Noise/Music: A History* (NY: Continuum, 2007) p. 35.

33. Deleuze and Parnet [11] p. 48.

34. Susan Sontag, “Against Interpretation,” in *Against Interpretation, and Other Essays* (NY: Noonday Press, 1966) pp. 3–14.

35. Deleuze and Parnet [11] p. 48.

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