Transgressive Sound Surrogacy

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This four-part exposition revisits Denis Smalley's concept of sound surrogacy from a critical constructive approach. In the first part, Smalley's article from 1997 serves as a point of origin for a close investigation of his concept. We examine the precise definitions and demarcations in his concepts and we attempt to systematise the model. In the second part of the investigation we attempt to solve some of the problems in Smalley's model by suggesting a new surrogacy model originating in Smalley's idea, but with a more formal structure and obvious demarcations. Having presented this new surrogacy model, with references to Georges Bataille's theories on *base materialism* as well as anthropological studies, we attempt to create a new order of surrogacy that in its object relation is positioned beneath Smalley's first-order surrogacy (as the *remote surrogacy order* is placed above the *third-order surrogacy*) – an impossible/paradoxical category that will be termed *transgressive sound surrogacy*. In the fourth part we demonstrate this new surrogacy order in a series of examples found in art and culture.

> 'Why, sometimes before breakfast, I've believed as many as six impossible things' (The White Queen, in *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll).

Denis Smalley has described his ideas on sound surrogacy in three different articles (Smalley 1986, 1992 and 1997). In his first article from 1986 Smalley operates with only three surrogacy orders, while in his later articles he added the category *remote surrogacy* as an extra category beyond *third-order surrogacy*. In the following four-part exposition we will revisit the concept of sound surrogacy from a critical constructive approach. In the first part of the investigation Smalley's article from 1997 will serve as a point of origin for a close investigation of his concept. We will examine the precise definitions and demarcations in his concepts and we will attempt to systematise the model. In the second part we will attempt to solve some of the problems in Smalley's model by suggesting a new surrogacy model originating in Smalley's idea, but with a more formal structure and obvious demarcations. Having presented this new surrogacy model we will, with references to Georges Bataille's theories on *base materialism* as well as anthropological studies of the taboo and the unclean, attempt to create a new order of surrogacy that in its object relation is positioned beneath Smalley's first-order surrogacy (as the *remote surrogacy order* is placed above the *third-order surrogacy*) – an impossible/paradoxical category that will be termed *transgressive sound surrogacy*. In the fourth part we will demonstrate this new surrogacy order in a series of examples found in art and culture. The focus will be on the way specific artistic trends of the twentieth century have influenced new music and sound production, and the argument is that the new surrogacy order represents a unique opportunity for the composer of acousmatic music to work with a series of artistic concepts which have deeply influenced other areas of both modern art and music.

1. DENIS SMALLEY'S 'SPECTROMORPHOLOGY'

In his article 'Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound-Shapes', Denis Smalley attempts to create a language and an aesthetic reference to explain and understand electroacoustic music by using spectromorphology as a descriptive tool. The paragraphs where Smalley describes his ideas on sound surrogacy are relatively short (Smalley 1997: 111–12) but very complex and, as we shall see, not fully stringent.

Smalley describes how spectromorphology concentrates on the relations between sound events within a piece of music (Smalley uses the term *intrinsic features*). However, he continues, a piece of music is not a closed autonomous artefact; it does not refer only to itself but relies on relations to a range of experiences outside the context of the work. An *extrinsic* foundation in culture is necessary so that the music can have meaning (Smalley 1997: 110). These extrinsic features of the music have to do with more basic psychoacoustic processes of perception. Smalley uses the term *source bonding* as a reference to the natural human tendency to relate a perceived sound to an imagined source or reason in the surrounding environment and the tendency to relate these sounds to each other as if they had shared and associated origins (Smalley 1997: 110).

In a central part of the text Smalley points out that there is quite a difference in identification level in three statements: 'it is stones falling', 'it sounds like stones falling' and 'it sounds as if it's behaving like falling stones'. All three statements are extrinsic connections but in increasing stages of uncertainty

Organised Sound **16**(1): 27–35 © Cambridge University Press, 2011. doi:10.1017/S1355771810000403

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355771810000403 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and remoteness from reality (Smalley 1997: 110). It is on the basis of the observation that there are different levels of certainty or uncertainty in our estimation of sound sources that he puts forth his theory on sound surrogacy. He is ordering the levels of remoteness into several orders of surrogacy.

First-order surrogacy projects a primal gesture occurring outside music, into sound and is concerned with sonic objects used in work and play prior to any 'instrumentation' or incorporation into a musical activity or structure. First-order surrogacy may involve more developed gestural play purposely used as compositional material, a sort-of personalised, nascent 'instrument' which never achieves, or can never achieve, full cultural instrumental status. But we can only award such sounds first-order status if we can recognise the source (the type of material) and the type of gestural cause (Smalley 1997: 112).

Second-order surrogacy is traditional instrumental gesture, a stage removed from the first order, where recognisable performance skill has been used to develop an extensive registral articulatory play. An acousmatic music which, for example, uses only recordings of identifiable instruments remains in the second order. Much music which uses simulation of instrumental sounds can also be regarded as second order since, although the instrument may not be real, it is perceived as the equivalent of the real. Commercial synthesiser usage is of this type when we recognise both the gesture involved and the instrumental source simulated (Smalley 1997: 112).

Third-order surrogacy is where a gesture is inferred or imagined in the music. The nature of the spectromorphology makes us unsure about the reality of the source or the cause, or both. We may not be sure how the sound was made to behave as it does, what the sounding material might be, or perhaps about the energy–motion trajectory involved (Smalley 1997: 112–13).

Remote surrogacy is concerned with gestural vestiges. Source and cause become unknown and unknowable as any human action behind the sound disappears. But some vestiges of gesture might still remain (Smalley 1997: 112).

The central positioning of the concept of *gesture* adds unclarity to the model. If gestures are weak, Smalley writes, or if they become too stretched out in time, or if they become too slowly evolving, we lose the human physicality. We seem to cross a blurred border between events on a human scale and events on a more worldly, environmental scale. This is a movement away from the musical gesture towards what he describes as *texture* (Smalley 1997: 113–14). As the object of Smalley's research is clearly sound-materials of great diversity, the focus on the human gesture seems strange. He describes how first-order surrogacy includes recordings of sound-making not intended for musical use, and argues further: 'for electroacoustic music it becomes an important level in its own right since many unique sound-gestures are transplanted directly into music from this level, for example gestural play with materials like wood or metal' (Smalley 1997: 112). How are we to understand 'gestural play with materials like wood or metal'? Would Smalley award recordings of traffic, machines or natural phenomena status of first-order surrogacy? The example with the falling stones seems to imply that the sound source could be sounds that were not generated by human gestures. But what if the sounds were of a duration beyond the human time scale? The question of whether a listener can identify the sound and the cause behind it is still relevant. Would Smalley consider such sounds a subject for a surrogacy analysis?

Smalley is not explicit in regards to these considerations, but instead describes how first-order surrogacy can involve more developed gestural play on nascent instruments. These nascent instruments, he writes, can never achieve full cultural status and can only be rewarded first-order status as long as we can recognise the type of material and gestural source. Opposed to the nascent instruments, traditional instruments belong to second-order surrogacy. It seems curious that the sound of a privately invented instrument should belong to a fundamentally different perceptional category from the sound of a traditional culturally embedded instrument – should the instruments of Harry Partch, for instance, be understood as belonging to the first order or are his compositions so well known that his instruments have achieved cultural status? How about the sound of instruments from other cultures, which in their own cultural context are deemed traditional, but are unknown in Western culture (or, of course, recordings of instruments from Europe or North America heard by members of another culture)? One must ask if it is relevant to introduce criteria of categorisations which are as culturally embedded as the segregation of traditional instruments versus privately invented instruments, in a theory which has to do with something as fundamental as human perception. The central question remains whether Smalley understands the surrogacy orders as some sort of objective set of logical orders, or whether he thinks of them as subjective categories in which sounds are placed depending on the subjective experience of the individual listener.

In the following we will try to develop the surrogacy model in a more formalised context and without the focus on either musical gestures or musical instruments.

2. THE REVISED SOUND SURROGACY MODEL

Considering Smalley's model without the concepts of musical gesture or the fixation on musical instruments, the suggestion of a different scheme appears.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355771810000403 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The split between identification of the sound source and the physical cause behind the sound are thought-provoking, and, as we shall see, conceptually fertile. From an evolutionary point of view the ability to form a qualified assumption about the physical circumstances behind a perceived sound source has been essential for survival.[1] It is therefore likely that such fundamental perceptive and cognitive skills have significance for the way we understand music generally, and especially electroacoustic music where we present abstract and complex soundscapes. Smalley argues that we should not think of the musical gesture process only in the one direction of cause-source-spectromorphology, but also in reverse. When we hear spectromorphologies we detect the humanity behind them by deducing gestural activity though which we automatically gain a wealth of psycho-physical information (Smalley 1997: 111). We propose that the ability to interpret the psycho-physical information – motives, emotions, etc. – behind instrumental performance, is just a special case of the human ability to form qualified assumptions about the physical realities behind any perceived sound sources. As an alternative to Smalley's focus on the concept of gesture, we therefore accentuate the differentiation between the sound *source* and the physical *cause* behind the sound.

In the following we will present a revised sound surrogacy model. We will keep Denis Smalley's number of surrogacy orders as well as the split between *source* (A) and *cause* (B) of the recorded sound.

2.1. Source (A)

In regards to the *source* of the recorded sound we arrive at these four categories:

- **A1) First-order surrogacy of the sound source:** This category concerns recordings of sounds which are clearly identifiable. They could be sounds from the environment, sounds of musical instruments (whether or not they are traditional or privately invented and whether or not they are played by musicians or the untrained), or the sound of voices (song, speech or unarticulated sounds uttered by a trained or untrained singer/orator). The criterion is that the listener must have a feeling of being able to identify the source of the sound – it is not essential that the identification is correct.
- **A2) Second-order surrogacy of the sound source:** In this order are recordings where we can recognise the sound source, but where the context it occurs in is obscured – it could involve sound studio manipulation of reverb, EQ, or other use of effects that do not totally mask the original sound. It could also involve sounds recorded with alternative techniques which change the perspective of the listener – close-miking, contact microphones, and so on.
- **A3) Third-order surrogacy of the sound source:** In this category are sounds that are manipulated to such an extreme degree that it becomes difficult to identify the sound source. We could be dealing with moderate granular synthesis, backwards playing sound, extreme reverberation, manipulation of the row of harmonics of the sound, resynthesis, and so on. The most important element is that we have the feeling that there is some sort of physical object or instrument present in the recording.
- **A4) Remote surrogacy of the sound source:** In this category are sounds that are totally abstract so that the listener does not have any clear sense of a physical sound source – it could be extreme granular synthesis, heavily processed sounds, and so on.

2.2. Cause (B)

In regards to the *cause* of the recorded sound we arrive at these four categories:

- **B1) First-order surrogacy of the sound cause:** In this category we are dealing with recordings of sounds where the listener has a clear sense of the physical event creating the sound. It is not important if this estimation is 'correct'; the essential thing is that the listener is not in any confusion or has any real doubts. It could be a recording of a tennis match where the listener has a clear sense of the ball being hit and the running sound of the shoes on the floor. It could also be the sound of a musical instrument where the interpretation would not only relay the physical events creating the sound, but also the human motivation behind it (Smalley's psycho-physical information).
- **B2) Second-order surrogacy of the sound cause:** This category concerns recordings where our assumptions about the physical cause behind the sound become unclear or ambiguous, but where we still have the strong assumption that there is a realistic cause. An example could be the interpretation of the cause behind manipulated sounds. The understanding of the sound of a plate being put on a table would change drastically if the sound was pitched down and a large reverb was applied. Maybe we would visualise a paradoxical giant plate or feel our perspective as listener was diminished to a microscopic level. This would also apply to sounds Smalley would describe as textural – if the sound of running water became time stretched maybe we could visualise a kind of giant slow-motion wave of molasses.

[1]For an investigation into the relation of hearing as a survival skill and the meaning of this in relation to music, see Christensen 1996: 10–21.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355771810000403 Published online by Cambridge University Press

- **B3) Third-order surrogacy of the sound cause:** In this category are recordings where the listener no longer can identify or visualise any concrete physical cause behind the sound, but where there is still a sense of physicality in the sound – this could be in regard to movement or sense of expansion or growth, or it could be a tactile interpretation of something scraping or being crushed. The category concerns abstract sound relations where the listener will have difficulties relating the sound to the surrounding reality without a developed use of metaphors and where it would be difficult to describe the listener's experience precisely without the use of sonograms for example.
- **B4) Remote surrogacy of the sound cause:** In this last category we are dealing with recordings of sounds where there is absolutely no sense of the circumstances creating the sound whether or not the sound source can be identified.

A series of questions arise in relation to this new revised model of the sound surrogacy idea.

How is the use of an instrument like the synthesiser to be understood in this context? And how does the recording of it place itself in regard to the surrogacy model? An obvious answer could take its point of origin in the name of the instrument – to *synthesise* something means putting different parts together. As we are dealing with artificially created sounds, the sounds of the synthesiser can be placed in all the surrogacy orders depending on what kind of sound is being generated.

Another question which arises is: how are recordings of the playback of other recordings to be understood? The listener of a digital recording of an old analogue record playing the sounds of a tennis match would hear both the sound of the tennis match (the shoes and the ball bouncing and being hit) and the crackle of the record player/record. We would have a sort of double first-order surrogacy. But what if we were to manipulate the playback of the record player (from the slowing down of the rotation of the record, to scratch-techniques, to extreme manipulations like those performed by Christian Marclay)? On the one hand we would have sound surrogacy from the first order and up to the remote surrogacy order as the sound of the tennis match became more and more manipulated and abstract, but on the other hand we would have a consequent first-order surrogacy as it is all unhampered playback of an actual sound event (the manipulated playback of the record with the tennis match). Is it the level of effect usage and manipulation of the recorded sound that determines the surrogacy order? The answer of course is no – it must be the listener's sense of *source* and *cause* behind the recording that determines the order of surrogacy. An unmanipulated recording of a really rare sound phenomenon (the roaring dunes of the Kalahari desert, for instance), where the listener is unable to identify the sound as well as the physical events causing it, would be placed in the remote surrogacy order in regard to both *source* and *cause* even though no manipulation were applied at all. In relation to the placing in the surrogacy order of the recording of the manipulated playback of the record player, the answer depends on the listener's acquaintance with scratching techniques. A listener well acquainted with scratch techniques would remain in the first-order as he or she would be able to identify the applied techniques, and therefore the situation creating the sounds, while flabbergasted novices would find themselves catapulted out into the remote surrogacy domain.

This is an important point – the question of which surrogacy order a recording of a sound belongs in is in the end determined by the subjective experience of the listener depending on his or her ears, training and knowledge. The formality in the definition of the orders relates exclusively to the categorisation of the subjective listening experience of the listener.

This new interpretation of the sound surrogacy model aims to be an all-embracing and all-containing model and it is quite difficult to imagine sound material where none of the above categories apply. We have room for every sound which we can recognise, every sound we have difficulties recognising and every sound we do not recognise at all; likewise with the understanding of the physical circumstances behind the sound. However, in the following we shall try to discover a class of recorded sound material which cannot be fully contained in the present model, and we shall try to create a complementary surrogacy order for these 'impossible' sounds – a surrogacy order that lies beneath the first-order surrogacy.

3. TRANSGRESSIVE SOUND SURROGACY

If we look at the revised surrogacy model we see that as we move up through the surrogacy orders, both in relation to sound source and sound cause, we also move from the concrete to the abstract. This could also be described as a movement from the material to the immaterial.

The use of different strata between the material and immaterial, the physical and the intellectual, between this world and the beyond, is not unknown in music. The best example is maybe the Florentine philosopher Marsillio Ficino, who composed his Orphic hymns according to astrological principles so that text, melody and scales pointed towards similar planetary spheres attempting to draw near their influences – possibly in combination with the use of stones, metals and numbers containing the same

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355771810000403 Published online by Cambridge University Press

properties. After Descartes' dualism between *res extensa* and *res cogitans* the mediating areas between the intellectual and the material are mostly referred to the mysteries of the pineal gland, and the artistic possibility of references to angel ladders and cosmic sweeps up and down the divine emanations has been vastly reduced. But while much energy has been used on removing all ideas of mediating spiritual substances, souls and astral bodies from scientific discourse, the question whether there exist different degrees of materiality has never received similar attention. That, however, is the question we have to ask in our search of the surrogacy category beneath the first-order surrogacy.

If we are to move, not from first-order surrogacy to the remote surrogacy order in a sweep out of the physical realm, but downwards toward an ontological level beneath the first-order surrogacy – beneath materiality itself – how would that world sound? In the following we will explore this concept.

We know from earlier cultures, and from other parts of the world, extensive thought/value systems structured around the concept of the taboo – unclean objects, body parts, substances and people. Even in our own everyday life it is difficult on the intuitive plane to accept that there is no ontological difference between – for example – cake and excrement. While we do not pay credulity to any concept about the possibility of moving from the physical plane, up through spiritual spheres to a purely intellectual plane, it seems that we have an unreflected idea that we can move (or be moved) down through materiality, that the level of materiality varies – not according to any principle of molecular solidity – but according to an idea of sensual consequence.

In the 1920s and 1930s the French philosopher Georges Bataille was in disagreement with the traditional materialism of the twentieth century. His claim was that the materialists of his day in their world view were still influenced by the same type of hierarchies as the idealism that they had revolted against. Materialists had reduced the impact of 'the real world' and the psychological and social 'facts' in favour of 'ideas', 'essences' or 'appearances' – all malingering concepts from a bygone idealism. His answer to this problem is the introduction of the concept of *base materialism*. He speaks of an *active matter* that disrupts and destabilises the idealised norms, as an opposition to the rational discourse of the Enlightenment. In an account of the human big toe he describes how this part of the human body is a target for contempt while the human head, the seat of rationality, is more favoured. But it is the big toe, firmly planted in the mud, which allows the human to separate itself from the animals by standing up. So while man proudly announces his erect and lofty stature with his head raised towards the rational skies, it is the despised big toe that allows this status in the first place – *base materialism* can flatten oppositions and dismantle idealistic hierarchies (Bataille 1985: 15–22).

Bataille conceptualises the realms of the social, the subjective and the discursive in two different domains, that of the *homogeneous*, consisting of rational discourse and productive behaviour, and that of the *heterogeneous*, consisting of unproductive behaviour – that which is forbidden in the homogeneous sphere – the magical, extreme violence, sex that does not aim at reproduction, insanity and generally prohibited behaviour. This behaviour he describes as the *transgressive*. To avoid another binary opposition between the two domains (and an idealistic hierarchy) he suggests a complementary relation between them so that one domain only exists in relation to the other. The aim of *transgression* therefore is not to break down the border between the two domains, but to expose their structure.

From Bataille's point of view it is not possible to work from any position of rational stringency and learn anything new about the underlying structures in reality/society/man – to gain real knowledge one has to occupy oneself with things that are transgressive (Bataille 1985: 45–52). It is with the point of origin in his theory on *base materialism* and the *transgressive* that he begins his research into *Gnosticism*, which is especially interesting from our point of view.

As a mystery-religion, both in a Christian and a non-Christian context, Gnosticism is characterised by the cultural and socio-economic circumstances in Hellenistic culture. The transformation from traditional relatively small societies towards a pluralistic and bureaucratic mega-structure influenced the shapes and forms of the spiritual world that surrounded the Hellenistic people. While the gods and deities of earlier times were thought to be responsible for the creation and running of the world, and the recipe for a good life was to be in good standing with the gods and to live in accordance with one's destiny, in Hellenistic time we see a massive collapse of these values towards a more pessimistic world view. In Gnosticism the world is thought to be the result of a cataclysmic cosmic disaster. Man, who in his origin was thought to be purely intellectual, is trapped in the prison of the physical world (and his body) without memory of his own privileged origin. The traditional gods change status from being benevolent (if somewhat unpredictable) to becoming antagonistic towards mankind. The earlier gods of creation are described as demiurges and archons – demonic and stupid creatures that, because of their jealousy, keep man imprisoned in the physical world, which is the lowest level in a series of aeons between the world of pure light and material reality. Man's salvation was to ascend through the aeons towards the pleroma

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355771810000403 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(the world of light). The technique to achieve this could consist of an extreme asceticism or quite the opposite – a libertinistic strategy to cultivate exactly the things that were thought to keep man imprisoned in his body and the material world (temptations like gluttony, lust, excess, and so on) to such a degree that their consequences became neutralised (a man that is overfed is not tempted by food). The Gnostics were disliked by the theologians of the early Christian church, who accused them of amoral libertinism and heresy, and until recently the polemics of the church fathers were almost the only sources we had, and it was from this perspective that Bataille investigated Gnosticism.[2]

The whole idea of an active investigation into materiality – especially understood as an extreme in a series of intermediary levels between the immaterial and the material – is interesting from our point of view as it is an investigation that parallels our own research into the bottom level of the sound surrogacy hierarchy. Several artists and musicians have made reference to Bataille, and we shall shortly take a look at his theory from a creative perspective.

The occupation with the extreme and the norm transcending has been characteristic of a large part of the art of the twentieth century. From the photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe or Andres Serrano to exhibitions of living goldfish in blenders, Bataille's ideas on the transgressive have been a distinct element in modern art. His works have also been explored by modern musicians and composers. There have been explicit references to him in the noise and industrial scene, and it makes obvious sense to understand this music in a Batailleian context – in connection with extreme amplitudes (Merzbow), extreme CD-covers and references to torture and S/M (John Zorn), stage performances involving urine, vomit and self-mutilations (Throbbing Gristle), use of samples of violent riots (Bob Ostertag), or surgical instruments (Matmos). All these examples can be understood in relation to Bataille and the artists have often been directly inspired by his works. But in our project of finding sounds that cannot be placed in the revised surrogacy model, none of this has any real significance. It makes no difference if the recorded sound source is a violin, the sound of someone vomiting, raw data played at 110 db or quiet summer rain. The sound sources and causes behind Merzbow's noise drones can be difficult to identify and would therefore often be placed in the third orders or even in the remote surrogacy orders. In opposition to this, the tortured screams of Yamatsuka Eye are obvious in regard to both source and cause – they must therefore be placed in the first-order surrogacy.

[2]For a general introduction to Gnosticism, see Rudolph 1987.

As we noted above, the surrogacy orders have room for every sound which we can recognise, every sound we have difficulty recognising and every sound we do not recognise or understand at all – no matter if they refer to a context that Bataille would describe as transgressive or not. Apparently it is not possible to record a sound that is so transgressive that the surrogacy orders cannot contain it. If Bataille's excursion into base materialism has to have any consequence in relation to the model of sound surrogacy and our attempt to find the sound beneath the first order of surrogacy, we have to look at the theory of transgression in a broader cultural context to try to understand the cultural dynamics behind the concepts of the taboo and the unclean.

In her work *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* the English anthropologist Mary Douglas investigated the concept of the unclean in a whole series of cultural settings. In the book's third chapter 'The Abominations of Leviticus' she pointed to a structure in the Israelite food taboos in Leviticus (Douglas 1966: 41–57). It turned out that the food types that were forbidden were all thought to destabilise the categories by which reality is ordered. Things that were living in water, in the air or on land could be eaten, while things that were crossing these elements, or had an apparatus for movement that did not conform to the element in which they moved, were counted as unclean. Her colleague Edmond Leach developed the same idea in his article 'Magical Hair' (Leach 2000: 177–201), where he investigated the anthropological phenomenology around hair and nails. These parts of the human body, which are ambiguous in character, were thought of as magical or dangerous – and therefore deemed to be taboo. Are hair and nails to be perceived as something which is a part of the body or as something attached to it, but not a part of it? If they are really part of the body, why do the beard and nails keep growing after the body is dead (what happens in reality is that the skin contracts after death, making it look like the hair and nails have grown)? Both Douglas and Leach point to a solid empirical material sustaining this theory and the basic argument is that the unclean is deemed to be so not because of dangers from bacteria or other health issues, but because it is undermining the cognitive categories with which we surround ourselves, or because the banning of it serves to sustain and maintain these categories. We saw in the above that we could not get closer to a transgressive sound surrogacy by recording transgressive behaviour or sounds that referred to things considered transgressive, but what does the anthropological analysis of the unclean mean for our project?

If we consider the limits and demarcations of the sound surrogacy categories, the question is: where

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can sound surrogacy itself be said to begin and end? While an ambiguity with regard to what surrogacy order a sound belongs does not create a transgressive situation, the doubt as to whether or not what we are hearing constitutes sound surrogacy at all could be said to create a basis for a transgressive situation with reference to the anthropological conclusions about structures underlying the unclean and taboo.

We saw that Denis Smalley wrote about a *primal gesture* occurring outside music, but on which the musical gesture was based – a sort of proprioceptive perceptual category. Again we find the use of the term *gesture*, in regards to the sound surrogacy discussion, problematic, but it is relevant to ask about the immediate surroundings outside the category of sound surrogacy. For something to be sound surrogacy we have to be dealing with a substitute for the original sound. That means that the direct listening experience of a sound from the environment surrounding the listener does not constitute a surrogacy situation as there is no reproduction of an original sound – we are hearing an actual unstored and direct sound source. However, there are a series of situations where the demarcation can become fuzzy.

Let us consider the sound of the electric guitar. Is there a sound surrogacy going on as the strings are 'recorded' by the instrument's pick-ups and the 'recorded' material is played back through the amplifier and loudspeaker? As it is a situation where there is no real-time delay (measured in a human timescale) between the attack of the string and the playback of the amplified tone, and where the playing techniques of the instrument often depend on a synergy between the intonation and the amplified tone (feed-back/sustain), we will argue that it does not constitute a surrogacy situation. But when we are dealing with delay-pedals or a loop-station, where a temporary sound storage is taking place, we are moving towards an interesting borderland.

When hearing the different aggregates of sound reproduction (diverse stereos, ghetto blasters, iPods and radios) and the information-carrying media (tapes, records, CDs and hard discs), we can experience different fault conditions during playback. In hi-fi equipment loose connections and short circuits can play havoc with the music, and in radios bad reception can be a problem. Tapes can be worn or damaged with buzzing as a result, and both records and CDs can be scratched. In relation to the sound of these fault conditions, they constitute a direct listening experience and not a surrogacy situation as what we are hearing is the result of an unmediated generation of sound in our present time and environment and no sound-storing element is used. In the playback situation where an old scratched record with J. C. Bach is being played – how are we to understand the surrogacy relation? The music of Bach would be a subject for a surrogacy analysis, while the sound of the scratches would constitute a direct listening experience and could therefore not be placed in any surrogacy order. But what if it was a recording of a trip-hop band that used samples of record scratches (a much-used technique by these bands in the late 1990s)? Inside a short time interval it would be difficult to determine if the noise was the result of wear and tear on the record or a mixing strategy. Similarly with a CD containing glitch music – on listening to it for the first time it could be difficult to determine if an unexpected sound were a result of a scratch on the CD, or if it were part of the composition.

We have now reached an indefinable borderland between direct sound and surrogacy sound, paralleling the described anthropological structure behind the ideas of the unclean. This category concerns a whole class of sounds where it is difficult to determine if what we are hearing is surrogacy or direct sound, especially sounds of malfunctions of the playback media or the storage media have a tendency to create this effect, but it could also be a sort of trick mixing of a piece of music where a sound that was thought to originate in the listening environment was mixed into the music.

As the movement from remote surrogacy to first-order surrogacy involved a movement from the abstract to the physical 'real', it can be said that these sounds are even more 'real' than the first-order sounds as we do not know if it is direct sound or surrogated sound, therefore we have placed their order beneath the first surrogacy order in the same way as the remote surrogacy order is placed beyond the third-order surrogacy. If recordings of these kinds of sound or samples are used as elements in music, whether it is a composition using only this kind of sound material or a more traditional composition using ordinary instruments but where these sounds have been integrated, we would have a situation where the listener would not be sure if they were hearing an original sound or a surrogate. Now, according to Douglas and Leach, we would have a situation involving an ambiguity undermining the categories by which we order reality. Whether this situation is conceived as destabilising and dangerous to the very cognitive and perceptual process making a solid and structured reality possible, or if it is just believed to be unsettling and 'messy', it points to the anthropological phenomenology of the unclean and forbidden. For this reason we have chosen the term 'transgressive surrogacy' for this special surrogacy order.

One could argue that these kinds of sounds still belong, or can be handled, inside the system of the surrogacy orders, as they are reproductions of recorded and stored sound material and therefore surrogates for the original sound. However, we saw how the placing of sounds in the surrogacy orders in

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the end depended on the listener and his or her subjective experience. The surrogacy orders are not objective logical orders and the formality in the definition of the orders has exclusively to do with the subjective experience of the listener. As the listener is in the absolute centre of the theory, the question whether he or she is even able to know if the sound is direct or surrogated is not only relevant but central to the whole idea.

4. TRANSGRESSIVE SOUND SURROGACY IN ART AND MUSIC

Having achieved our goal of finding and defining a new order of sound surrogacy, the obvious question to ask is: what is the relevance of this idea in sound and music?

Much of the momentum in the art of the late twentieth century had to do with an attempt to break the barrier between the artist and the spectator – to create a more unmediated art detached from the traditional art forms. Following Marcel Duchamp, artists moved away from the understanding of art in the context of the painting and towards a conceptual art where installations, happenings and provocations have a central position. And as part of postmodernism and the whole impact of the theories by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, there has been a strong focus on the media through which art has been expressed, and the deconstruction of the known forms. Even though the painting itself has moved to a somewhat more marginal position, some of the results of the modern artists' investigations into, and deconstruction of, traditional art forms has reflected back upon the shapes and appearances of the modern painting in ways that are interesting from our perspective. Where earlier art movements centred on discussions of how to represent a painted object (realism, impressionism, expressionism, cubism, etc.), it seems as though modern painters, from the minimalists and onwards, are working in ways where the canvas itself can be said to be the object. It would almost seem as though an artist – Robert Rauschenberg, for example – is trying to turn the canvas itself into an installation. The impulse to create a piece of art that is able to break away from the whole continuum – between the abstract as one pole, impressionism, expressionism and realism as intermediary positions, and hyperrealism/minimalism as the other pole – is understandable. It could almost be understood as an attempt to transcend the breach between the painted object and the surface of the canvas itself. This impulse is also felt in literature. In Mark Z. Danielewski's book *House of Leaves* (2000) the very pages we are reading appear to be written on different typewriters, they contain hidden codes outside the text – and there are traces of blood drops on them!

Does there exist a similar movement in music? The analogy between the abstract–hyperrealist continuum on the one hand and the remote surrogacy–first-order surrogacy continuum on the other is obvious, and one would expect to hear music paralleling the intermediating trend in art and literature; music which, for example, contained cosmic sweeps from remote surrogacy sound material, down through the third- and second-order surrogacy to hit the bottom in the first order, then breaking into reality itself via the transgressive surrogacy order. Curiously enough there has been very little focus on this aspect in modern music.

In CD-music the use of what we have coined transgressive sound surrogacy is, even on the noise and avant-garde scene, a curiously rare occurrence, with the noted exception of glitch music. In glitch compositions clicks, scratches and otherwise 'erroneously' produced noises are used as percussion or instrumentation. Often the tracks are relatively calm or silent, and one has a feeling that the music has more to do with the electronic sounds in the environment of everyday life or exploring the serenity of silence than with the artistic and aesthetic discussion mentioned above. On the noise and avant-garde scene, on the other hand, there has been a deep involvement in these discussions, but the musical focus has more been on the performance situation and the extended techniques of the instruments than on producing records. There has nevertheless been an artistic interest in manipulating, circuit bending and destroying the sound-reproducing aggregates and storage media. In particular, the artist Yoshihide Otomo has experimented with samplers feeding on themselves and record players being played without the use of records. He has created a series of compositions and improvisations using sounds that could be interpreted as fault conditions in a sound system.

In film soundtracks, however, we hear an illusionistic use of transgressive sound surrogacy in a wide variety of contexts. The trick of displacing the film score and a song used in the film is rather common (the main character is driving in his car and a beautiful score accompanies the passing landscape, but when he arrives at his destination, he turns off the car radio and the music disappears). David Lynch has used a rather clever illusion in his film *Mulholland Drive*, where the two protagonists are inside the theatre Club Silencio watching the performance of a piece of music by a singer. Suddenly the singer drops to the floor (presumably dead), but the song continues, implying that what they thought was direct sound was in fact playback. What could be a funny scene exposing a lip-synch singer becomes a really eerie moment as a performer in the play announces 'No hay banda' (There is no band) 'but yet we hear a band', thus summing up the whole theme of the film. Lynch creates what could be described as a

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355771810000403 Published online by Cambridge University Press

transgressive surrogacy experience for his characters (we, the real audience, remain safely within the boundaries of the normal sound surrogacy orders). Lynch utilises exactly the magical or dangerous in this situation as the categories break down and the illusions our protagonists have been under so far are dispelled.

Artistically the theory of surrogacy orders and transgressive sound surrogacy should create an opportunity to work with the whole problem of the mediated versus the unmediated in our culture and everyday life – not just by playing live music in front of an audience instead of recording, or by designing interactive sound sculptures – but also by producing recorded music designed and composed especially for the media on which it is stored and which uses the artistic possibilities of that media and the systems of playback – not to create an idealised sound, but to create sound which points back to the mediation itself.

The distance between the artist and the audience in the world of art has been creatively stimulating, and it would be interesting to hear sound artists and composers that tried to relate to the problem of mediation in the context of reproduced sound. Would it be possible to use the theoretical framework of acousmatic music and Denis Smalley's thoughts on sound surrogacy as a basis for a reconceptualisation of CD production in a modern artistic context?

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355771810000403 Published online by Cambridge University Press