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Luc Ferrari's *Far-West News* as Travel Music: Listening for Exotic Sounds in the Southwestern United States

Abstract

This article likens experimental composer Luc Ferrari's musical work *Far-West News* to late-twentieth-century French travel literature. Made from recordings Ferrari took while journeying through the Southwestern United States, *Far-West News* is understood here as a "sound hunt" for exotic sounds—a search for a difference in the cultural entropy of late-twentieth-century globalism. Ferrari's piece offers an incentive to think about listening as an integral part of the travel experience.

Keywords

Luc Ferrari, Travel Literature, Exoticism, Listening, Cultural Entropy

Luc Ferrari's (1929–2005) 1999 work *Far-West News* offers a musical equivalent of travel writing. While Ferrari has variously described this piece as reportage, soundscape, portraiture, sonic land art, sound photography, and a "sound poem after nature," he has more abstemiously labelled the work as a "travel diary" (Warburton 1998). *Far-West News* was initially commissioned as a Hörspiel by the Dutch radio station NPS and is made from recordings that Ferrari took while journeying through the Southwestern United States with his wife in 1998. Once home, in the studio, Ferrari edited these field recordings together with additional sounds and newly composed music, creating an electro-acoustic work or piece of *musique concrète*.¹ Ferrari

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¹ Ferrari was a key figure in Pierre Schaeffer's important *Groupe de Recherches Musicales*—though he broke away from Schaeffer's doctrine of "acousmatic" sounds divorced from their causal origins, instead focusing on "anecdotal" sounds that clearly suggest certain events, places, or things.

regularly inserts his voice into *Far-West News*, emulating a travel diary's internal monologue: the composer announces town names and significant sites, sometimes commenting on what is heard in the piece. *Far-West News* is separated into three movements divided into five or six differentiated episodes.

This article interprets *Far-West News* through the discourse surrounding French travel writing of the late-twentieth century. Emulating the episodic structure of *Far-West News* itself, my article considers Ferrari's piece from various angles. Taking listening as an integral part of the travel experience, I discuss how tourism and cultural entropy affect our listening habits and how listening can, despite this, detect differences in places of foreign travel. After introducing the relationship between cultural entropy and exoticism that has been explored in French travel writing, I show how Ferrari's trip is subject to a particular brand of cultural entropy and how evidence of this can be heard in *Far-West News*. Nonetheless, Ferrari manages to also hear sonic differences throughout his journey via many (sometimes trivial) means —by getting out of the car and walking; by interviewing fellow travellers and locals; by being particularly attentive to tiny differences in “non-places” like supermarkets and fast-food restaurants; and via the occasional imposition of his imagination onto the place that he visits. Ultimately, this article shows that travelling, exoticism, and listening are comparable, intertwined phenomena, asserting that each establishes an interplay of subject and object; self and other; same and different; imaginary and real.

A Sound Hunt through Cultural Entropy

Charles Forsdick notes that French travel literature during the 1990s was characterised by an active search for a difference in a seemingly homogenised world, amounting to a “new *fin-de-siècle* exoticism” or “neo-exoticism” (Forsdick 2005, 6, 13). Forsdick's “neo-exoticism” presupposes Victor Segalen's earlier definition of exoticism as the “aesthetics of diversity,” a search for the unknown that entails an openness to the Other. This exoticism rejects what Segalen called cultural entropy or “the collapse of otherness into homogeneity” (Forsdick 2000, 54). Although Segalen considered cultural entropy a product of European colonialism at the nineteenth century's end, Forsdick and other scholars have subsequently applied Segalen's ideas to the “new *fin de siècle*” of late-twentieth-century globalism. Unlike his contemporaries in literature, Ferrari does not explicitly bemoan a loss of difference in

Far-West News;² nonetheless, the composition, and the journey it depicts, can be understood as a search for differences, with Ferrari's wife, Brunhild, later referring to *Far-West News* as "Luc's 'sound hunting' trip" (Ferrari 2019, 442) in which he searched for novel, unfamiliar sounds.

The type of cultural entropy a traveller experiences depends primarily on their background, the place visited, and the era of visitation: different modes of entropy (ways that differences are eradicated or negated) occur depending on these variables. Ferrari is European (more specifically French, with Italian ancestry), the place through which he and his wife (who is German) travel is the Southwestern United States, and the time is 1998. This combination of factors makes the journey particularly susceptible to cultural entropy. The American Southwest's cultural heritage is noticeably different from that of France, and the two places are geographically distant, but historical forces have, by the 1990s, brought them into an unexpected alignment. European colonisation of the Americas gives mainstream American culture a European "backbone," while post-war France is subject to Americanisation as part of a broader "cocacolonization" of the world (see Ross 1995).

The Southwestern United States is also subject to the cultural entropy that Jean Baudrillard has called "hyperrealism." This form of cultural entropy involves reality converging with its myths or illusions. The Southwestern United States is a highly mythologised place, depicted in American cultural exports of mixed authenticity, from Buffalo Bill to cinematic westerns (particularly well received in France; see Burns, Cabau 2017). These representations of the Southwest have since been superimposed back onto the place itself by the tourist industry and mass media (see Eco 1986, 40-42). Now resembling imaginary representations of itself, the Southwestern United States is a "simulacrum"—a copy of its copies, a place where no clear "distinction can be made between the real and the imaginary" (Baudrillard 1994, 3).

The western film's role in constructing this hyperreal imaginary is evident in *Far-West News*' third part, where the Ferraris are heard having dinner at the Palace Hotel in Prescott, Arizona. In the background, the outlaw country song *Pancho and Lefty* is heard, while Ferrari and his wife discuss with the waiter a portrait of Steve McQueen hanging on the wall taken when Sam Peckinpah was shooting the film *Junior Bonner* in nearby Monument Valley. The waiter's conversation slips into a historical antidote about the hotel and how it was initially a bordello house frequented by local politicians who entered via underground tunnels. In this segment of *Far-West News*,

² However, Eric Drott has made such a claim for another of Ferrari's pieces, his *Petite symphonie intuitive pour un paysage de printemps* (Drott 2016).

a 1970s song about an outlaw born in the 1870s, a Western film, and a somewhat dubious historical anecdote come together as the soundscape of the typical tourist attraction that is the “authentic” Western saloon—history and myth are hence superimposed in a culturally hyperreal soundscape.³

The Southwest’s hyperreality also often leads to cases of mistaken identity. In the second part of *Far-West News*’ third movement, the Ferraris are heard entering a café in Bagdad, Arizona, called the “Bagdad Café.” They assume that this is the café from Percy Adlon’s film (a German film about a café in the Mojave), but while discussing the movie with the proprietor, another customer mentions that they have been to the “real” Bagdad Café, which is in fact in the Mojave Desert. The Ferraris are, however, nonplussed; having already imposed their memories of the film onto this café, it has essentially become the “real” Bagdad Café for them—and at any rate, since it is from a film, the “real” Bagdad café in the Mojave is not really “real” anyway.

Hyperrealism not only infects quant tourist cafes and restaurants; it also occurs in grandiose locations like Monument Valley, where mass-mediated images heavily precondition the traveller’s reception. Ferrari himself notes, “I wanted to see Monument Valley. Now here we were. So many movies, so many cowboy commercials, so many pictures seen again and again” (Caux 2012, 112). This contaminated perception of Monument Valley makes it difficult for travellers to obtain a true sense of difference when they visit, for as David Scott observes, “even in the wildest parts of the American West, the interpreting consciousness comes up against the hyperreal and simulacral images that it has already internalised through years of mediated experience” (Scott 2004, 160). However, this does not mean that it is impossible to find differences in such a hyperreal locale: there usually is something that strikes the traveller as unexpected, going against their preconceived, mass-mediated expectations. Ferrari follows the above-given quote regarding Monument Valley by stating, “We know it like the back of our hand. And yet it’s completely different!” (Caux 2012, 112). As I will explain below, it is often the sonic aspects of a place that are least susceptible to cultural entropy. In comparison to images, sounds are less often propagated by the mass media—or at least, the actual sounds of the place visited are. These sonic differences tend to appear microscopic; in the least expected of places; they require a particularly attentive disposition or even the involvement of the traveller’s imaginary.

³ Almost as if to try and re-establish some distinction between reality and myth, Ferrari follows this scene with an interview-recording of a cowboy discussing the authenticity of his profession and the differences between a “real working cowboy”, a “rodeo cowboy”, and a “weekend cowboy”.

Walking on the Real, Driving through Hyperreality

In the Indian Village of Taos Pueblo, I hear for the first time through my earphones the sound of my footsteps on this strange land. Everywhere and throughout the journey, the same dry and crunchy sound. Not European. And then the roads. The silence of the road (Ferrari in Caux 2012, 112).

Despite the cultural entropy present for a European traveller in the South-western United States, the ground beneath Ferrari's feet—the real beneath the hyperreal—remains an essential source of sonic difference throughout his trip. Ferrari hears the desert sands, so different from anything back home while walking—one of Michel de Certeau's best-known "tactics" for combating "strategies" that (like hyperrealism) aim "to create places in conformity with abstract models" (Certeau 1988, 57). In the specific context of French travel writing, Forsdick mentions how "it is the element of deceleration that becomes central to walking's potential as an alternative means of travel, and of often microscopic perception of diversity" (Forsdick 2005, 175). Indeed, all the sounds in *Far-West News* originate from outside the Ferraris' car, despite being their primary mode of transport.

Paul Virilio notes how automobile travellers are detached from their surroundings, which they do not actively engage with but passively take in through their windscreens like a series of cinematograph projections (Virilio, Lotringer 2008, 97). This "once-removed" quality applies to a driver's visual impressions, but the aural component of their surroundings is often eliminated. The driver and their passengers are detached from the soundscape outside their vehicle when moving along a highway; next to nothing can be heard over the high-velocity wind that enters through an open window. This barrier leaves most people to opt for the channelling of both cool air and sound into the car via air conditioning and radio instead. In what seems like a moment of self-critique, Ferrari interviews a couple at the end of *Far-West News*' second movement who are doing their trip by bicycle. Ferrari asks why they are travelling by bike, to which the woman replies, "because you're really slow, so you really see the countryside, whereas if you're in a car you're just too fast, so you don't really see [and we might add, hear] everything."

Even the few automobile-sounds that are heard in *Far-West News*—doors slamming and other cars speeding along the highway—occur outside the Ferrari's car. These sounds delimit the composition's segments, bracketing unheard ellipses where driving presumably takes place. This sound creates narrative jumps similar to those in literature and film. An exception, of sorts,

to the general silencing of intra-vehicular travel, arrives at *Far West News*' end when the Ferraris travel through Death Valley. Although this segment begins with the sounds of Ferrari walking on dry sand, as mentioned above, its remainder contains no field recordings and instead features percussive, minimalist music made by Ferrari in his studio back home. Ferrari's decision to use this music instead of field recordings may be due to Death Valley's purported "silence," poetically described by Baudrillard, who interestingly links it to the earth itself, the sounds of which Ferrari finds so fascinating:

the silence is something extraordinary, as though it were itself all ears. It is not the silence of cold, nor of barrenness, nor of an absence of life. It is the silence of the whole of this heat over the mineral expanses that stretch out before us for hundreds of miles, the silence of the gentle wind upon the salt mud of Badwater, caressing the ore deposits of Telegraph Peak. A silence internal to the Valley itself, the silence of underwater erosion, below the very waterline of time, as it is below the level of the sea (Baudrillard 2010, 75).

But as is clear from this passage, the silence of Death Valley is a "Cagean" one that, in fact, consists of minute, rather distinguished sounds (much like the sand Ferrari captures). It is perhaps not Death Valley's absence of sound that accounts for the lack of field-recordings in this segment then, but the valley's harsh environment, which dissuades Ferrari from taking his sound hunt, and the "tactic" of walking it implies away from the safe, air-conditioned environment of his car. After all, Ferrari is a tourist.

The Tourist's Ear and Polyvocality

According to Forsdick, one way that French travel writers try to reject cultural entropy is by taking an anti-tourist stance, giving their accounts an "aristocratic" flare—insinuating that they, as opposed to the tourist, have privileged access to differences in the place through which they travel (see Forsdick 2005, 95). Ferrari does not, however, take any such stance, refusing to hide the blatantly touristic nature of his journey. This rejection is evident throughout *Far-West News*, where tourist guides are heard as Luc and Brunhild visit national parks; conversations are struck up with fellow travellers in road-side diners and petrol stations; attractions like the Palace Restaurant in Prescott, Arizona, and Universal Studios in Los Angeles (where Ferrari records a group of Japanese tourists) are visited—places that any traveller after aristocratic prestige would be sure to avoid.

This unashamedly touristic aspect of Ferrari's journey (and the composition that results) echoes a particular strain of post-war French travel writing. In the work of Michel Butor, for instance, there is often a focus on the perspectives of fellow "travellees" and not just the writer themselves—who, as a result, "is no longer the persistently sovereign individual of nineteenth-century travel accounts, but a character relativized by those whom he meets" (Forsdick 2005, 140). A similar attitude is also found in Nicolas Bouvier's work: "no search for pristine spaces, no discourse of disappointment at the discovery that others have... travelled there before" (Forsdick 2005, 153). The road-side diners and tourist attractions that Ferrari records are places where his journey intersects and is relativised by the journeys of others. This relativisation is tied to Ferrari's broader interest in "The act of capturing ordinary, everyday events on a tape recorder" (Caux 2012, 47-48): Ferrari notes that "When I was making Hörspiele, I never used to interview exceptional individuals; I was talking to ordinary people like you and me, in their working life, their emotional life, in society." For Ferrari (like Butor and Bouvier), there is no anxiety surrounding a place's popularity and the presence of fellow travellers there; in fact, interaction with others becomes part of the journey's *raison d'être*.

Yet mass tourism, which broadly enables the intersection of journeys, is generally linked to global homogenisation—its cultural entropy and the production of so-called "pseudo-events" where watered-down versions of cultural differences are presented in safe, familiarised frameworks (see Urry, Jarsen 2011, 7-10). How is Ferrari's unashamed status as a tourist squared with his purported sound-hunt and its search for sonic differences? Erik Cohen notes that tourism always "involves a *generalized* interest in or appreciation of that which is different, strange or novel in comparison with what the traveller is acquainted" (Cohen 1979, 182). Admitting that some tourist experiences are incredibly superficial, Cohen specifies that others come closer to "aristocratic" journeys or religious pilgrimages. Cohen's reminder is that tourists have personal agency, and although the tourist industry often constrains their experiences, they can seek out differences if they desire. The contrast between superficial, safe tourism and some more "authentic" or "aristocratic" journey that allows an appreciation of differences operates on a spectrum rather than a clear-cut binary.

In short, Ferrari's unabashed tourism does not necessarily obstruct his hunt for sonic differences; in fact, the voices of fellow "travellees" incorporated into *Far-West News* are themselves a vital source of difference. These interviews supplement the composer's voice, allowing a polyvocality

to emerge from within the piece. In his consideration of Butor's writing, Forsdick highlights how such a "polyphony of voices... is complemented by a proliferation of trajectories, both past, and present, as the narrator's own journey narrative is challenged by those of his contemporaries whom he passes on the freeway, by those of earlier European emigrants, and by those of Native Americans progressively displaced" (Forsdick 2005, 140). *Far-West News* often echoes this polyvocality in Butor's text through Ferrari's many interviews. For instance, when Ferrari visits the Taos Pueblo, he strikes up a conversation with a gift-shop owner and records the music of the store-owner's son as it plays over the loudspeaker. On being asked whether the music is traditional, the store-owner replies that it is a mix of "traditional and contemporary." Later, while walking through Monument Valley, Ferrari and his fellow tourists are taught Navajo words by their guide, and an Australian traveller notes how the problem of rock climbers in Monument Valley is also present in Australian Indigenous sites like Uluru back home. Then, in the third section of *Far-West News*' final movement, Ferrari interviews two Dutch travellers visiting Las Vegas to find out about their heritage. They believe they have Swedish or Danish ancestors who immigrated to Las Vegas before the family returned to Europe. The trajectory of these travellers is an unexpected reversal of the more common trip many Americans take to Europe in search of their "roots." In all three segments, interactions, dialogues, translations, or hybridisations of different peoples and cultures are present (though, of course, the members of these interactions are not always on an equal footing), producing a polyvocality for *Far West News* that manifests a particularly social form of sonic differences.

The Overlooked and the Overheard

A door always opens onto the unknown, however familiar it may be (Ferrari in Caux 2012, 77).

Ferrari finds sonic differences not only in the voices of locals and fellow travellers or in the desert sands but also in what might otherwise be the most culturally homogenised of all places. In an ironic reversal of the fact that unique locations like Monument Valley can have their differences partly expunged by mass-mediated images, locations that are essentially the same everywhere—hotels, supermarkets, petrol stations, food courts, what Marc Augé calls "non-places" (Augé 1995)—become the unexpected source of acute sonic differences. Many of the sounds Ferrari records during his trip evoke

locations and things that are notable only insofar as they are particularly banal. For instance, Ferrari records in supermarkets and fast-food restaurants (while ordering at Subway), places that would seem to hold little exotic interest for a European traveller. However, travellers often obtain a heightened awareness of minute abnormalities in these non-places: having frequented their local supermarket hundreds of times, even the most negligible differences in a foreign supermarket become unduly apparent. These tiny differences have a disproportionate effect because they occur in an otherwise familiar setting or differ only slightly from what is experienced back home. These sounds are familiar yet strange, bringing a micro-exoticism of hard-to-ascertain but unduly affective differences.

Through spoken word narration inserted into his work, Ferrari mentions some of the micro-differences experienced during his journey—little things that differ between France and the United States. He focuses on measurements, discussing conversion rates between francs and dollars; Celsius and Fahrenheit; and tries to figure out whether you travel further for your money in America or France (through a complex equation that works out the differences between litres and gallons, kilometres and miles, francs and dollars). More importantly, though, *Far-West News* contains several sounds that exemplify (at least, for a European in the USA) this strange brand of micro-exoticism. In the second segment of *Far-West News*' second movement, sirens are heard; although this is a familiar sound in both Europe and America, the two continents use noticeably different types—making the familiar sonic presence unexpectedly odd for the traveller. Television sounds also feature in the piece's following segment—sounds that are often 'made strange' when in a foreign country due to variances in popular culture (and even stranger are the ads, with their surreal, often ridiculous content becoming particularly apparent when products and language are unfamiliar).

However, Ferrari's ability to hear these exotic sounds is due not only to the otherwise bland nature of the non-places in which they occur; it is also due to his status as a traveller, for Ferrari's receptivity to these sounds depends mainly on the fact that he is just 'passing through,' and so is once removed from what he hears. Local residents will often "overlook" sounds—those that are familiar to them, experienced every day, embedded in their milieu—but these same sounds can be novel or "ear-catching" for travellers. Because travellers are not rooted in the milieu from which the sounds emerge, they "overhear" them—in the sense of overhearing a conversation one is not actively a part of. The traveller listens voyeuristically, perceiving sounds from an aloof vantage point, which allows the unique and exotic quality of such sounds to become apparent.

Hearing Double

At certain moments in *Far-West News*, Ferrari imposes his imagination onto what he hears. This form of imagination is distinguished from the hyperreal imaginary mentioned earlier in that it is more personal and idiosyncratic, not linked directly to mass-mediated tropes. This personal imaginary appears at the end of *Far-West News*' second movement when Ferrari visits the Grand Canyon and hears high-velocity winds along with propellers. In a voice-over, Ferrari mentions that "This day, there was no wind at Grand Canyon," justifying his inclusion of these sounds by claiming that "My business is to approach and go away from the reality."

Alterations, exaggerations, and elaborations of this kind are regularly found in travel literature—where boundaries between travelogue and novel, ethnography and fiction are often blurred, resulting in a disavowal of differences. Edward Said, discussing the writings of a much earlier French travel writer, François-René de Chateaubriand, mentions how "imagination and imaginative interpretation" can cause differences to be "obliterated by the designs and patterns foisted upon it by the imperial ego" (Said 1994, 195). Nevertheless, in the Grand Canyon segment of *Far-West News*, Ferrari undermines his own "imaginative interpretation" by making it clear to listeners that what they hear is essentially fake; this allows the listener to then "hear double," to register not only the airstream sounds of Ferrari's imagination but also to themselves imagine the absence of these sounds (a silence that could be considered to lie beneath these sounds)—which is what Ferrari himself heard.

With this narration, Ferrari also drastically undermines the truth-value of his composition as-a-whole. Since Ferrari's "airstream" was added in-studio, listeners may begin to wonder what other elements of *Far-West News* were likewise tampered with or added after the journey. This uncertainty prevents Ferrari's composition from being taken as an "objective" document of the place through which he travels—one that could then be critically unveiled as the biased depiction of an "imperial ego." *Far-West News* is a more honest and, it might be said, responsible type of travelogue than those Said criticised, precisely because the composer makes his subjective involvement clear from within the very fabric of the composition itself. Forsdick notices similar instances in much post-war French travel writing, where the author often "manages both to address inflated claims relating to the genre's perceived need to represent 'authenticity' and to grasp the almost Mallarmean aspects of a form of writing that tends increasingly to reflect on its impossi-

bility" (Forsdick 2005, 135); that is, the impossibility of depicting an objective exotic presence as something separate from the subject's perception and imagination.

Conclusion: A Journey Towards (Decentering) the Self

The imposition of an author or composer's imagination onto the locale that they visit—the, in fact, unavoidable presence of their subjectivity in their journey—can often cause their voyage descriptions (whether written or composed) to become a synecdochic representation of their "life's journey." This is the case with *Far-West News*, as Ferrari confirms:

I travelled to the American Southwest where I recorded a reportage about "a composer who travels for hundreds of miles." In a comment, I said: "I'm going to reclaim my ideas and mix them up, I'm going to bring them back to life in a different form." I applied this to all my ideas, whether about serialism, chance, found objects, tautology, minimalism, narration, radio art, etc. Strangely, the idea came to me while visiting Monument Valley and the Grand Canyon (Caux 2012, 136).

Ferrari's recombination of styles and compositional attitudes in *Far West News* turns the piece into a reflection of his own "journey" as a composer. Ferrari further states how

I had to revisit my past, and I realized that I could look back on it as though it didn't belong to me. I was able to judge some works as bad or excellent without any sense of shame. I realized that I was able to maintain a subjective objectivity. It was me without being me, a kind of active detachment (Caux 2012, 136).

Ferrari's journey through the Southwestern United States becomes the very means by which he recognises his own life's journey—at a distance, as it were—and he subsequently illustrates the comparison between these two journeys by composing *Far-West News*.

Ferrari's hunt for an occasional encounter with differences in the exotic sounds of the Southwestern United States allows for this recognition of difference within the self. This recognition is, for Segalen, the ultimate aim of exoticism:

[through] the feeling of diversity, the special attitude of the subject for the object [of difference]... [the subject] finds himself face to face with himself. This is universal Exoticism, essential Exoticism. But here too... he does not overlook the fact that, in conceiving of himself, he can conceive himself only as something *other* than he is. *And he rejoices in his diversity* (Segalen 2002, 70).

This perception is not the absorption of differences into the same, as with Said's "imperial egos," but is a subject's recognition, had through encounters with difference, that they are constituted by difference. Exoticism involves an object of difference, like an exotic sound (which, in situations of cultural entropy, the subject sometimes needs to fantasise by themselves),⁴ decentering the self, causing a self-realisation that such encounters with difference always constituted oneself.

Exoticism hence relies on numerous fluctuating binary oppositions, or the play between "a series of antithetical couplets: real-imaginary; self-other; known-exotic; subjective-objective; exclusion-assimilation" (Forsdick 2000, 43). Each term not only interacts with its corollary but penetrates or contaminates it, making them one another's precondition. These interrelationships are pertinent not only to travelling and the exoticism it may engender but also to listening, which Ferrari focuses on throughout his journey in the Southwestern United States and, of course, throughout his journey as a composer. As Jean-Luc Nancy attests,

To be listening is thus to enter into tension and to be on the lookout for a relation to self; *not*, it should be emphasized, a relationship to "me" (the supposedly given subject) or to the "self" of the other (the speaker, the musician, also supposedly given, with his subjectivity), but to the *relationship of self*, so to speak, as it forms a "self" or a "to-itself" in general (Nancy 2007, 12).

Therefore, listening is a form of travel, where the subject comes to itself by resounding through itself and others—through a journey. Ferrari's hunt for sonic differences is not only a journey in search of the other but a journey where the other is heard in the self.

Ferrari expresses a similar sentiment regarding his compositional approach, close enough to both Segalen's notion of exoticism and Nancy's thoughts on listening to be worth quoting in full:

Between, on the one hand, extreme subjectivity, which would tend to posit that everything is related to me and that therefore there is no world outside of me; And, on the other hand, extreme objectivity, which would tend to posit that everything exists outside of me and that therefore my presence is pointless; I can work out an intermediate position which could be defined thus: things exist according to degrees of imagination or energy I put into seeing them; in other words, superimposed on top of objective reality, there is a second, subjective, reality, which is necessary for the thing itself to ex-

⁴ As Forsdick mentions, the "Perpetuation of the exotic inevitably depends on such elements of imagination" (Forsdick 2000, 36).

ist. I am aware of the thing, and I can even go so far as to say that the thing is aware of me, and that I don't exist without that gift exchange, without the (maybe) endless back-and-forth motion of that substance, the life-giving matter. I could say then that life is neither in me nor in the world outside of me, but rather between the world and me. In action, not in a latent state (Ferrari 2019, 109).

Segalen, Nancy, and Ferrari all perceive a binary interaction—an interweaving of subject and object, self and other, same and different, or imaginary and real—that establishes the ground on which exoticism, listening, or composition takes place. However, as the beginning of this article made clear, there is also the presence of mass-mediated images, society at large, and the hyperreal, which contaminates the real (the object of difference) and the subject and their imaginary. The binary relationship of Ferrari's journey and exoticism or listening more broadly can hence be expanded into a ternary between subject, object, and society; or self, other, and the external structures or images that partly condition both. These interactions and interpenetrations, the resonances of which are heard throughout *Far-West News*, make Ferrari's composition an appropriate musical manifestation of the "neo-exoticism" that Forsdick claims for French travel literature at the twentieth century's end.

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