

Chapter 7

The Politics of *Presque rien*

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Critical reception of Luc Ferrari's *Presque rien ou le lever du jour au bord de la mer* ("Almost nothing, or daybreak at the seashore") (1967–70) has been consistent in the three and a half decades since its composition. The piece, which presents an apparently unretouched recording of morning in a fishing village by the Black Sea, is generally characterized as a gesture of aesthetic transgression—though there is some disagreement as to what particular principle the work transgresses. For some commentators the minimal intervention in the source recordings that make up *Presque rien* represents a tacit repudiation of the work concept central to Western art since the late eighteenth century. Some of Ferrari's comments support such a reading; he has described the work as "a sort of anti-music," through which he expresses his opposition to "the bourgeois myth of the composer."¹ By this account, the use of magnetic tape to capture a slice of life, and thereby transform it into an object of aesthetic contemplation, places *Presque rien* within a tradition of avant-garde works that stretches from Marcel Duchamp to John Cage and beyond, a tradition that calls into question the boundary separating art and everyday life. But in the case of *Presque rien* it is not the museum's four walls or the concert ritual that frames the quotidian object or event; rather, it is the medium of tape that divorces everyday sounds from their context and, in the process, transforms them into purely musical material.

Alternatively, *Presque rien* has been read as a rupture with the then-dominant aesthetic in French electroacoustic music. Pierre Schaeffer's

notion of the acousmatic—which held that the identity of the recorded sound material used in electroacoustic music should be disguised, so that the listener might better attend to its innate morphology—had guided much of the work done in the *musique concrète* studio at the Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française (ORTF) in Paris since its inception in the 1940s. Although Ferrari himself had worked alongside Schaeffer from 1958 to 1966, and is generally identified as a central figure in the history of French *musique concrète*, *Presque rien*'s aesthetic is diametrically opposed to Schaeffer's acousmatic conception. By presenting clearly recognizable sounds, which have undergone little if any overt alteration, the piece marks what Michel Chion and Guy Reibel describe as a "return of the repressed."² Audible traces of reality, hitherto barred from *musique concrète*, are encountered at every turn in *Presque rien*.

While there is much to recommend such interpretations, the present essay offers another approach to *Presque rien*. More precisely, I reconsider a way of thinking about the piece that the composer himself first proposed in the years following its composition. In interviews from this period, Ferrari would remark that the use of familiar, recognizable sounds helped dispose of some of the barriers that prevented the comprehension—and thus the widespread public appreciation—of experimental music. At the same time, Ferrari saw in this and other such tape works a model for a new kind of amateur artistic activity, one that would draw upon the ease and affordability of the portable tape recorder in order to open up the domain of experimental music to nonspecialists. To make sense of the ambitions Ferrari held for this work, it is necessary to situate his endeavors within a range of movements and initiatives undertaken in France during the 1960s in order to promote cultural democratization. While there was a growing consensus that access to and participation in culture was a right to which all were entitled, what this *droit à la culture* entailed and how it was to be realized were the objects of fierce debate. In this regard, the approach to tape music that Ferrari hoped *Presque rien* would inaugurate may be understood as furnishing one particular solution to the problem of cultural democratization: a solution that expressed the optimism of a historical moment when the fusion of the avant-garde and the popular seemed tantalizingly near, but one that no less reflected the aporias that constrained the French artistic and intellectual Left's conception of the "popular" during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In a short autobiographical statement written in 1979, Ferrari provides a color-coded periodization of his career. He calls his early years as a composer, lasting from the 1950s to the mid-1960s, his "black period," the color chosen to reflect the "anarchistic" attitude exhibited by his music during this phase of his career. Conversely, the increasing interest in intimacy, sensuality, and memory that his music was beginning to evince in the late 1970s leads him to identify it as marking the onset

of his “blue period” (“blue like the Mediterranean”). Sandwiched between these two moments lies the period that concerns us in the present essay, his so-called “red period.” During this phase of his career there is “a certain convergence of the social and the political with musical intentions”; but there is above all “the demystification of the work, of art and the artist.”³ Although the first rumblings of Ferrari’s political turn date from 1965 (the year in which he composed the text piece *Société I*), the events of 1968 seem particularly decisive in solidifying the new direction his work was taking. At the beginning of the year Ferrari traveled to Havana at the behest of the Cuban cultural ministry, which had commissioned him to write an orchestral piece to celebrate the city’s bicentennial. This sojourn to a socialist state left a strong impression: “The encounter with a country that had undergone a revolution, that was a shock. There was also a confrontation with musics that had come from Africa, of Spanish influence, popular musics.” No less shocking was what Ferrari encountered upon his return to France: “We came back to Paris in April, and then there was May 68.”⁴

There is little doubt that the student uprising and general strike of May–June 1968 impressed itself upon Ferrari. He had been present in the occupied Odéon, where the “prise de la parole” by ordinary citizens found its most acute expression, and he had participated in an abortive attempt to form a composer’s union.⁵ And throughout the months of May and June he would take his microphone and portable tape recorder along with him into the streets to capture the protests (the recordings of which he would trade with other composers).⁶ But beyond such incidental involvement in the events themselves, the profound social upheaval that they unleashed seems to have significantly altered his conception of the composer’s role in society. Indeed, Ferrari’s comments from the time—like those of many engaged composers and artists—reflect a widely held belief in the necessity of changing the audience’s relationship to art, of rendering it more active. But unlike most advocates of “cultural revolution,” Ferrari was granted an ideal platform for putting such beliefs into practice, when later the same year he assumed a position at the *Maison de la Culture* in Amiens as an *animateur musical*.

The history of the *Maison de la Culture* as an institution and cultural *animation* as a vocation provides some insight into contemporary perceptions concerning cultural democracy in France, perceptions that (as I discuss later) played no small part in shaping Ferrari’s initial understanding of *Presque rien*’s meaning and function. The idea for the *Maison de la Culture* dates from the early years of the Fifth Republic, and represents one of the most ambitious undertakings of the newly formed Ministry of Cultural Affairs. The first minister charged with overseeing cultural affairs was the author André Malraux, who saw in the *Maisons* a means for overcoming long-standing disparities in the distribution of cultural goods in France—with culture understood to be more or less

coterminous with the fine arts. The *Maisons* would provide a forum for the display and performance of work in a range of media (the plastic arts, music, drama, film, and dance), which would thereby be made accessible to the populace. Furthermore, the *Maisons* were seen as instruments that could combat cultural inequality on two fronts simultaneously: geographically, they would help close the gap between culture-rich Paris and the “deprived” provinces; socially, they would ensure that art would no longer be inaccessible to large swaths of the populace, but would henceforth be available to all, regardless of social background. These two objectives, decentralization and democratization, provided the *Maisons* with their *raison d’être*.

Apart from providing spaces for exhibitions and performances, the practical question of how the *Maisons* would go about addressing cultural inequality remained somewhat vague. This was due in part to Malraux’s conception of the aesthetic experience, which bled over into the ministry’s early policies. According to Malraux, every person possessed the capacity to understand art in an immediate and intuitive fashion.⁷ One need not have any prior exposure to the fine arts, or possess any particular education in order to comprehend them. This emphasis on a quasi-mystical meeting of subject and aesthetic object was echoed in early ministry statements. A sketch of the *Maisons’* objectives published in 1961 described the “confrontation” Malraux sought to facilitate: “Out of this [aesthetic] encounter can be born a familiarity, a shock, a passion, another way for each to envisage his own condition... The confrontation that it [the *Maisons*] enables is direct, [and] it avoids the pitfall and the impoverishment of a simplifying vulgarization.”⁸

Such remarks point to another significant element at play in the ministry’s conception of the *Maisons*. The ministry would brook no compromise in terms of quality, for offering anything less than the best would mark the failure of cultural enfranchisement.⁹ There would be no “vulgarization” of difficult or challenging works; what was presented in the *Maisons* had to rise to international standards, which more often than not meant Parisian standards. Thus at the opening of the Maison in Grenoble, Malraux stated that “the primary *raison d’être* for this *Maison de la Culture*, is that everything essential that transpires in Paris should also transpire in Grenoble.”¹⁰ Comments like these helped fuel suspicion that the *Maisons* were instruments of cultural *dirigisme*, vehicles for importing Parisian values to the provinces.¹¹

Within the *Maisons* it fell to the so-called *animateurs* to facilitate the encounter between audience and work. What *animation* entailed, precisely, was open to debate, the term being the object of struggle over the years. The prototype for *animation* as a vocation originated in the mid-century “popular culture” and “popular education” movements in France, which had long agitated at a grass-roots level for people’s “right to culture.”¹² Although the movements exhibited some sympathy to the value of existing working-class cultures, and had striven to raise

workers' consciousness of the aesthetic dimensions of their everyday lives, more often than not they devoted the preponderance of their energies to bringing high culture to the people. At the same time, *animation* was invested with a sense of high-minded civic duty, since the cultural militants saw their work as necessary for the formation of a socially aware citizenry. In short, the "popular culture" movement saw culture in general (and high culture in particular) to be the means according to which one's relation to and intervention in the social world might be better managed.

Many of these traits continued to define the cultural *animateur* throughout the 1960s. Far from serving as a neutral conduit, the *animateur* worked to engage audiences actively with art. Ferrari, for instance, notes that individuals' failure to participate in artistic creation was not due to a lack of resources: "At first I worked together with a number of youth groups, who were mostly well equipped, possessing tape recorders, photo and film cameras, and who also had some understanding of how to handle these devices. It was merely that they didn't yet trust themselves to use them."¹³ To help people overcome such psychic hurdles Ferrari organized a host of events and activities that would make them more comfortable with artistic practice: open rehearsals, public debates, and the like. As for the youth groups, he encouraged them to come to events at the *Maison* armed with their equipment, "to interview the public and performers, in order that they might become active during the performances and might afterwards assemble the recordings they had made."¹⁴ Although Ferrari's activities as an *animateur* reflected his background as a composer of tape music, his description gives a good idea of how the ideals of *animation* worked in practice. Above all, Ferrari's work as an *animateur* exemplified the vocation's long-standing proclivity for linking artistic and social concerns: "I almost exclusively presented modern music, and in doing so always stressed that it is no longer acceptable to view music as a thing-in-itself, but rather that it must be discussed in the context of modern science, politics—in short all of that which forms society."¹⁵

However, the desire to connect cultural democracy with social and political concerns was not met with universal approbation. Contentious from their inception, controversies surrounding the *Maisons de la Culture* culminated during and after the events of May 1968. Although the *animateurstendency* to push avant-garde works on provincial audiences had been a long-standing source of resentment, it was their perceived role in disseminating subversive ideas that generated the greatest hostility. Gérard Marcus, a Gaullist deputy in the *Assemblée Nationale*, voiced such sentiments in a speech given on the floor of the assembly in November 1968:

One can say, without exaggeration, that they have...carried their own stones to the barricades of May, as much during the events as beforehand.

To agitate, over the years, before a public of young students, revolutionary myths ceaselessly glorifying the October Revolution, Castroism or Lumumba, to praise anti-militarism, to idealize every kind of rebellion, doesn't this create little by little a psychological terrain favorable to the development of events similar to those that we experienced in the month of May?¹⁶

The *Maisons* were equally suspect for many on the Left. This is hardly surprising, given that the value ascribed to art was itself increasingly contested, alternately seen as an ideological weapon, a means of evasion, a commodity, or an elitist pursuit. By May 1968 the hostility that had been building toward legitimate culture reached a peak, finding expression in the situationist-inspired graffiti that covered the walls of Paris: "Culture is the inversion of life," "Art is dead, let us free our daily life," or, more pointedly still, "Art is shit."¹⁷

But even for those on the Left who did not reject culture outright, the *Maisons'* status as state-run institutions made them ripe targets for critique. *Gauchistes* and party communists alike identified the *Maisons* as an "ideological state apparatus," and following Louis Althusser's definition of the concept, contended that they served as an instrument for winning the consent of the masses, and thus contributed to the continued reproduction of existing social relations.¹⁸ Others on the Left saw the policy of cultural democratization as a diversion from the more fundamental issue of class domination. This was a position characteristic of the *Parti communiste*, who argued that animation—no matter how well intentioned—placed "superstructural" concerns above those of the "base." Instead of working to change economic relations, *animateurs* operated at the level of individual attitudes, thereby falling into the idealist trap.¹⁹ No less damning than such critiques were sociological studies that revealed the extent to which the *Maisons* had failed in their task of bringing art to the people. Surveys indicated that most visitors to the *Maisons* came from social groups with high levels of educational attainment (teachers, university students, young professionals), while those seen as "culturally deprived" (the working class and farmworkers) —the very groups that the *Maisons* sought to serve—made up a miniscule fraction of their users. The statistics for the 1969–70 season at Amiens indicated that a scant 2 percent of the attendees identified themselves as workers, with 1 percent as shopkeepers, and 0.4 percent as farmworkers.²⁰ One explanation for this failure lay in the fact that Malraux and his ministry, in envisaging the *Maisons*, had not accounted for the degree to which differences in social background both prepare and condition one's attitudes toward high culture. This point was made most strongly by Pierre Bourdieu in a series of articles and books critiquing Malraux's policies published in the 1960s. He argued that the kind of "cultural needs" (*besoins culturels*) that the *Maisons* sought to satisfy were not innate—as Malraux would

contend—but something inculcated in only those classes for whom the acquisition of cultural knowledge has real benefits: namely, those having access to the educational opportunities, careers, and social networks where cultivation may pay dividends in the long run. As a result, large swaths of the population had no use for the *Maisons*. Bourdieu's assessment of Malraux's grand project is unflattering:

[T]he *Maison de la Culture* has attracted and gathered together... those whose educational formation and social milieu have prepared them for cultural practice... [T]he members of the cultivated class feel that it is their right and duty to frequent these lofty places of culture, from which others, lacking sufficient culture, feel excluded. Far from fulfilling the function that a certain mystique of "popular culture" assigns to it, the *Maison de la Culture* remains the *Maison* of cultivated men [*la Maison des hommes cultivés*].²¹

Toward the end of May 1968 the directors of a number of the *Maisons de la Culture*, along with the directors of various "popular theaters" from across France, gathered in Villeurbanne to address the questions raised by critics of cultural democratization. On May 25 they issued a statement in which they expressed their dismay with the direction the *Maisons* had taken, and in which they called for a renewed effort to reach out to the vast "nonpublic" that was still excluded from French cultural life. The declaration began by crediting the events of May for revealing the shortcomings of their efforts, which appeared to many as promoting "a hereditary, exclusionary culture, which is quite simply to say, a bourgeois culture."²² In order to address the "non-public" for whom "bourgeois" culture held little interest, it was necessary for *action culturelle* to furnish the individual with "a means of breaking out of his current isolation, of leaving the ghetto, of situating himself more and more consciously in a social and historic context."²³ This not only redoubles the *animateurs'* concern with linking cultural production to social affairs but also de-emphasizes their role in proselytizing on behalf of high culture: "This is why we deliberately refuse any conception which would make it [culture] the object of a simple transmission."²⁴ Instead, culture must be active: "To speak of *active culture* is to speak of *permanent creation*, it is to invoke... an art which is ceaselessly in the process of being made."²⁵ Culture was no longer to be conceived as a static patrimony, a collection of objects to be enjoyed by as many people as possible, but as a medium of social action.

Whether he was aware of it or not, when Ferrari assumed the position of *animateur musical* at Amiens, he was injecting himself into this fray. (In fact the *Maison's* biweekly newsletter published excerpts from the Villeurbanne declaration the same month that Ferrari began his residence there.²⁶) It is against this backdrop that Ferrari's ideas concerning his role as both composer and *animateur*, and the possibilities of public participation in the creative process, come into focus. In a

series of interviews with Hansjörg Pauli conducted at the time of his tenure in Amiens, Ferrari expresses in strong terms his desire to reach out to and animate the sort of (non-) public described by the Villeurbanne statement. Discounting the idea that contemporary music's failure to appeal to mass audiences has to do with either this music's difficulty or the (non-) public's lack of aesthetic aspiration, he instead indicts the establishment for failing to attend to the "claims" of the people:

I'm not so sure that the public would rebel if we valued its claims somewhat higher in general. Who can say, then, that a worker or a farmer can't be as open to cultural matters as an arts manager, a program director, or a culture minister? My contact with the public has shown me on many occasions that an immense respect is present in so-called simple people for any kind of work, even for artistic work, even for that which is expressed in seemingly the most eccentric forms.²⁷

While he conveniently places a good deal of blame for the lack of interest in contemporary music on corporate and state control of the mass media, Ferrari does not exempt composers from his critique, acknowledging that the language they habitually employ in explaining new music has played no small role in alienating audiences: "We should wean ourselves from discussing technical compositional questions in public. That doesn't help anyone."²⁸ Rejecting formalism, Ferrari suggests that a more fruitful approach to the problem of public engagement may reside less in "explaining" music than in connecting it to the quotidian world. It is here that his aforementioned concern with discussing music "in the context of modern science, politics—in short all of that which forms society" assumes a strategic function, as a way of imbuing contemporary music with a sense of relevance. But rather than settle for making new music more comprehensible or pertinent—an approach that still treats culture as a fixed thing to be transmitted to the public—Ferrari suggests that the more pressing need is that of promoting participation, of providing individuals with the means for their own self-expression. In granting equal recognition to amateur creativity, Ferrari's undertaking seems to accord with the program outlined in the Villeurbanne declaration, in its promotion of an "active culture." Along similar lines, Ferrari denounces the professionalization of art, casting it as a pernicious impediment to a generalized, collective creativity. Indeed, certain of his remarks go so far as to suggest that society as a whole might be better off without music as a separate sphere of activity: "The concept of music will need to disappear in any case. It has a long past; as a consequence it has engendered conventions; that has imposed limitations on it; now it stands in our way... It is too specialized, and I believe that our thinking is evolving away from specialization."²⁹

In making such arguments Ferrari placed himself in a curious predicament, one shared by a number of other radical artists at the time. For in renouncing professionalism, Ferrari apparently renounced whatever authority he had as a composer. A host of questions followed from this:

how does an artist continue to work within the cultural sphere when the logic of one's position leads to a repudiation of that very sphere? How does one give up composing without *really* giving up composing? A way out of this quandary was to produce pieces that were more akin to games or loosely organized musical scenarios than works. In the mid-60s Ferrari had begun writing text scores (he called them "realizables"), which provided groups of amateurs and professionals with outlines for collective activity. What is more, the abandonment of the work concept allowed Ferrari to rid himself of the now problematic title of "composer," trading it in for the more attractive designation of "*réalisateur*." He explains to Pauli that "composers should become game leaders, who draw up rules according to which amateurs might be able to meaningfully engage themselves." But the term was all the more attractive to Ferrari because of its other connotations: "Am I a musician, a composer? Some days I answer by saying that I am a *réalisateur*. That doesn't mean a lot, except that within the word realization there is the word reality and the word realism."³⁰ It is within this confluence of impulses, at this juncture where animation, audience participation, and realism meet, that we begin to discern the various aspirations that came to be lodged in *Presque rien*.

The recordings for *Presque rien no. 1* were made during the summer of 1968, in the town of Vela Luka on the isle of Korcula, in what was then Yugoslavia (now Croatia). Ferrari had traveled there that August to participate in an arts festival, and was particularly impressed by the stillness that fell over the village at night: "It was very quiet. At night the silence woke me up—that silence we forget when we live in a city. I heard this silence which, little by little, began to be embellished. . . . It was amazing."³¹ Inspired, Ferrari began making recordings of the hours just before dawn. After accumulating a number of these tapes, he noticed certain events that would recur from morning to morning—"the first fisherman passing by same time every day with his bicycle, the first hen, the first donkey, and then the lorry which left at 6 a.m. to the port to pick up people arriving on the boat. Events determined by society."³² From the material he had collected, Ferrari pieced together over the next few years a sonic representation of a typical morning in Vela Luka, completing it in 1970.³³ In his interviews with Pauli, Ferrari describes *Presque rien* as inaugurating a new genre, although he is quick to deny its status as a "work"; rather, Ferrari explains that

these things, which I call "The Presque Riens" because they are lacking development and completely static, because really almost nothing happens musically, are more reproductions than productions: electroacoustic nature photographs—a beach landscape in the morning mists, a winter day in the mountaintops.³⁴

He continues by stating that one can play these recordings in one's apartment or house, "just as one might hang photos or pictures on the

wall.”³⁵ Uncannily prefiguring the ambient nature recordings that would meet with commercial success in the 1990s, Ferrari’s comments suggest that *Presque rien no. 1* was not to be listened to as much as heard, used to color or to decorate an interior space.

In many respects *Presque rien* appears to be little more than an intensification of the impulses that originally motivated his first essay in “anecdotal music,” *Hétérozygote* (1963–64) in which extracts from field recordings made by Ferrari alternate with electronically synthesized sounds. By the time of *Presque rien*’s realization some six years later, the nonreferential sounds have vanished, leaving nothing but an uninterrupted flow of recognizable, everyday noises. A sense of the changing import ascribed to the use of anecdotal sound can be seen in the liner notes Ferrari wrote for the 1969 recording of *Hétérozygote*, in which he notes that the piece required little technical know-how to be completed. The result is a kind of “poor man’s *musique concrète*” since “practically no manipulations were involved and the tape could have been made in a non-professional studio.” Ferrari explains that his renunciation of sophisticated studio manipulation arose from extra-aesthetic considerations: “My intention was to pave the way for amateur concrete music much as people take snapshots during vacations.”³⁶ In a review of the recording from the same year, Jean-Michel Damian elaborates on Ferrari’s comments, observing that the work calls for “a kind of listening that the musician himself calls ‘pop’ listening.”³⁷ He notes that this represents a “popular music in the best sense of the term,” and that the use of the word *pop* reflects Ferrari’s hope that “there isn’t a need for any intellectual baggage to appreciate this music.” “Pop” listening is, in this sense, an “anti-cultural” form of listening, which according to Damian means that “to enjoy it one need not situate oneself with reference to learned concepts or knowledge. The only culture required is that which each person possesses: the capacity to recall his own memories.”³⁸

A better understanding of the logic underpinning Ferrari’s conception of the “popular” potential of anecdotal or referential sounds can be gained by reading it through the lens of Bourdieu’s roughly contemporaneous “*Éléments d’une théorie sociologique de la perception artistique*” (1968).³⁹ Bourdieu distinguishes two basic forms of aesthetic pleasure, “the *enjoyment* which accompanies aesthetic perception reduced to simple *aesthesis*, and the delight procured by scholarly savouring, presupposing, as a necessary but insufficient condition, adequate deciphering.”⁴⁰ Whereas the first of these, “simple *aisthesis*,” designates a kind of perception which responds to the sensory stimulus provided by the artwork (for instance, if a painting is colorful or monochromatic), without ascribing to it any particular stylistic or symbolic significance, the second, “scholarly savouring,” designates a kind of perception in which the viewer situates the work within a stylistic and/or historic framework and on that basis deciphers the work. However, it is another, even more

basic approach to the artwork that Bourdieu sees as the most common alternative to both “aisthesis” and “scholarly savouring”:

Those for whom the works of scholarly culture speak a foreign language are condemned to take into their perception and their appreciation of the work of art some extrinsic categories and values—those which organize their day-to-day perception and guide their practical judgment.⁴¹

That is to say, those for whom the proper artistic code is lacking will by necessity draw upon everyday experience to interpret the work. When confronted with a representational painting, the “learned” viewer will attend to *how* the object is represented in order to locate the work stylistically (as in “scholarly savouring”), or in order to appreciate its formal or sensual properties (as in “aisthesis”), whereas the “naïve” viewer, having recourse only to the codes that organize “day-to-day perception,” will instead attend to *what* is represented.

According to Bourdieu, the various modes of perception are not accorded equal value within aesthetic discourse. Interpreting an artwork according to the schemata of everyday experience has been seen (at least since Kant) as a vulgar form of aesthetic understanding, one that supposes “that every image shall fulfill a function, if only that of a sign.”⁴² Recast in light of Bourdieu’s observations, we might say that Ferrari’s objective for *Presque rien* was to invert this hierarchy, to revalue “uncultivated” perception as not only valid but as a privileged mode of hearing, precisely by virtue of its vulgarity. Ferrari’s aim, it would seem, was to create a kind of music where the identification of *what* is represented would suffice for an adequate perception of the work. Unlike music that derives its meaning from the play of abstract forms, anecdotal music has the advantage of not requiring any specialized knowledge of musical syntax or style to be deciphered. And insofar as anecdotal music fashions messages out of the quasi-universal code of everyday sonic experience, it is within the grasp of any potential listener, from the most naïve to the most educated. Ferrari thus describes his anecdotal works as “an attempt to find a music that is at the same time simple and unfamiliar, and thereby suitable for mass dissemination.”⁴³

But just because a piece like *Presque rien* need not be interpreted with reference to aesthetic, historic or stylistic contexts does not prohibit a listener possessing knowledge of such contexts from bringing them to bear on the work. Even if the use of clearly identifiable sounds positively encourages “uncultivated” perception, there is no interdiction against somebody adopting a “cultivated” strategy in listening to *Presque rien*. One can therefore imagine two broad approaches to understanding the piece—really, two ideal types—distilled from Bourdieu’s modes of artistic perception. A first-order perception would presumably take the sounds comprising the piece at face value, their meaning more or less coextensive with the physical actions or objects that produced them. Or rather, their meaning would be a function of the

total context they help create: far from simply presenting a jumble of unrelated signifiers, the various sounds form a proliferating web of physical, social, and affective associations. By contrast, a second-order perception of the work would be bound more to the ways in which it relates to the listener's inculcated expectations. One kind of interpretation that this type of perception enables was mentioned at the beginning of this essay, that which treats the piece as transgressive. In what way it is deemed transgressive depends on the particular stylistic or generic context invoked: it may be the acousmatic tradition within *musique concrète*, or the work-concept inherited from nineteenth-century bourgeois culture. Another alternative is to hear the arrangement of individual sonic events not as transgressing established norms, but as embodying them. For instance, a listener steeped in the Western art music tradition might hear the work as instantiating a standard formal contour, moving from the sparse pacing of events at the outset to the denser activity of the middle section, before tapering off at the end. From this perspective, the sound of a woman's voice singing which comes about three-quarters of the way through the piece, might be construed as a climax, an eruption of the "purely" musical into the soundscape. Similarly, the foregrounding of the cicadas at the very end of the piece may be interpreted as a purely textural event, an inversion of the figure/ground relationship operative in the work to that point.

Obviously there is nothing that absolutely determines the stance a given listener will adopt when confronted with *Presque rien*, there being some element of choice that one can exercise in acts of aesthetic perception. Yet this volition is, in Bourdieu's analysis, curtailed by social background—not just in terms of educational attainment, but by the instincts and habits acquired from early childhood onward. Given this constraint it is not surprising that much of the critical reception of *Presque rien* has assumed a "cultivated" stance. Originally released on record as part of Deutsche Grammaphon's Avantgarde series, a prestige label with a relatively small circulation, the work's audience was limited to a narrow demographic of new music connoisseurs; the upshot of this situation has been that most commentators on the piece have been professional music critics, academics, or other composers. As a result, the populist dimension Ferrari originally imputed to the work has largely been eclipsed, strengthening the impression that whatever meaning *Presque rien* might have is solely a function of its position within the various currents of twentieth-century music. Ferrari himself played no small part in bolstering this interpretive bias; his remarks in later years tended to situate *Presque rien* in relation to contemporaneous artistic movements, such as minimalism and photorealism.⁴⁴ Other commentators have promoted formalist readings of the work. Symptomatic is Daniel Teruggi's analysis of the piece: after making some initial observations about its source material, he moves on to a more detailed consideration of the work's formal properties.

However, rather than treat these two approaches as equivalent, Teruggi subtly endorses the latter. He describes how an initial impression of the work as a slice of the sonic landscape is thrown into question by a more attentive listening: "We suspect [Ferrari's] hand, organizing the rhythm of events and thus creating a dramaturgy which would bring this work closer to the musical than to the landscape."⁴⁵ By presenting the two approaches to the piece as following a logical progression, moving from a superficial to a refined hearing, Teruggi makes it seem as though any listener who is attentive will hear the work in formal, rather than referential, terms. "Scholarly savouring" becomes the telos of an adequate hearing of the work.

That *Presque rien* readily accommodates "scholarly savouring" may be explained in part by the largely negative definition of the popular that underlies Ferrari's conception of anecdotal music. Like many Left intellectuals of the period, Ferrari appears (at least at this point in his career) to have adhered to a fairly restricted notion of the popular. On account of their commercialism, forms of musical expression like rock, *variétés*, or *yéyé* were discounted as potential representatives of an authentic popular culture, regardless of whether or not large segments of the population derived meaning or pleasure from them. Having dispatched what was conventionally understood as being popular, and with no alternatives to fill the resulting void, popular culture became in the eyes of many Left intellectuals an empty concept, lacking positive content. It was precisely this idea—that the working class inhabited a cultural vacuum—that fueled the initiatives for cultural democratization described above. It was this same idea that Jean-Paul Sartre gave voice to when he asserted that "[t]he proletariat does not have its own culture: It either borrows elements from bourgeois culture, or it expresses a total rejection of any culture—which is tantamount to admitting the nonexistence of its own culture."⁴⁶ As a consequence, the "popular" mode of listening that *Presque rien* calls upon is defined in strictly negative terms, not by its embrace of a particular popular style, but by its refusal of any form of acculturation whatsoever as a necessary precondition of the piece's enjoyment. For this reason one may very well doubt whether Ferrari's project would have succeeded even had *Presque rien* received wider distribution. For the audiences it would have encountered beyond the rarefied sphere of new music aficionados were not the blank slates imagined by the French Left, but individuals in possession of their own, distinctive forms of cultural knowledge. And judged according to the standards of then-contemporary popular music, the piece would have undoubtedly proved unsatisfying, lacking a clear beat, chord changes, melodic hooks, and the like. Ferrari's works after 1970 would fare better in this regard, as he moved progressively toward a more affirmative conception of the popular, one that acknowledged and incorporated a wide range of vernacular styles. In the late 1960s, however, embracing styles

identified as “commercial” appears to have been largely unthinkable for a “serious” composer in France. Hence *Presque rien*, rather than striving to formulate a positive notion of popular culture, instead chased after a degree zero of culture. To the extent that it succeeded in this goal, the piece acted as a mirror, reflecting the values and expectations that listeners brought to it. With its audience effectively limited to a tiny sliver of the population, the piece became the rarefied aesthetic object that its (mainly cultivated) audience presumed it to be.

As the foregoing indicates, the engaged composer in the late 1960s was confronted with a dilemma. Having rejected “bourgeois” music on account of its elitism, there appeared to be few viable alternatives, commercial music being too tainted by its perceived complicity with the culture industry to be recognized as a genuinely popular form of expression. Elitism and commercialization thus formed the Scylla and Charybdis that a composer like Ferrari had to navigate. An article titled “Pour une culture populaire” that appeared in the newspaper *L'Étudiant de France*, the organ of the French student union UNEF (Union Nationale des Etudiants de France), lays out the terms of this dichotomy in a particularly clear fashion.⁴⁷ The author observes that the May events not only represented a crisis of social and political institutions, but cultural ones as well. To begin with, so-called serious art has been delegitimized, its claim to the status of the universal revealed as false: “Bourgeois culture is the desire to show off more than it is the satisfaction of experience. Comprehension, being based on erudition, [is] for the same reason reserved for a minority.”⁴⁸ Yet the alternative fares no better: “Mass culture is nothing more than a vast commercial enterprise destined to make profits and to snuff out any impulse that resists the dominant ideology.”⁴⁹ This Manichaean opposition leads the author to call for the creation of a “real popular culture,” that is to say, a culture that is not only enjoyed by the masses but is also produced directly by them:

To recognize creation as a fundamental need of man is to desire that the popular classes be freed from the alienation of commercialized pleasure. It is an objectively revolutionary ferment since the desire for freedom of expression and of creation demolishes the cultural privilege of the dominant classes and calls into question their other privileges.⁵⁰

Ferrari was by no means exempt from the lure of such calls to generalize creative activity. As critical as it was for an *animateur* such as Ferrari to render art accessible to the largest possible public, no less important was the inculcation of an active, participatory sensibility in individuals. Ferrari, like the author of “Pour une culture populaire,” maintained that people had to be given the opportunity to realize their untapped aesthetic impulses: “Each person is in possession of certain creative capacities. Thus everyone should have the chance to pursue

these capacities, to develop them, to live them fully."⁵¹ As far as his own music was concerned, Ferrari advocated that it should serve less as an object of veneration and more as a stimulus: "I myself wish that people who listen to my anecdotal works will not be paralyzed with respect and adoration, but should rather say to themselves: I too can do this."⁵² Such statements suggest that Ferrari saw in tape music the potential of becoming a new medium for amateur artistic practice. Made possible by the increasing affordability of portable tape recorders, the realization of this ambition would further require that tape music be demystified, stripped of its aura of technical complexity. In this regard, *Presque rien*, with its minimal editing, offered an ideal prototype for such a practice. More than simply an object of mass contemplation, the piece seems to have been conceived as an incitement to mass creation.

To clarify his aspirations for anecdotal music Ferrari pointed to amateur photography as a possible precedent. Asked whether he really believed that people might go out and record their own tape pieces, Ferrari responded,

Why not? After all, people take holiday photos and make vacation films; they could just as well record their impressions in sound-pictures [Hörbildern]. The electroacoustic music that I make nowadays may be produced without any equipment beyond that available to every amateur.⁵³

The analogy he draws appears straightforward enough; yet Ferrari's reference to the particular practice of amateur photography seems to have been driven in part by the connotations that surrounded it, especially in terms of its perceived social status. The spread of cheap and easy-to-use cameras in the 1950s and 1960s had placed them alongside automobiles and refrigerators as a potent token of postwar mass culture. At the same time, the rapid expansion of the field of photographic activity condemned it to the ignominious designation as a "middlebrow art," as the title of Bourdieu's 1965 study of photography's social uses would bluntly put it.⁵⁴ Particularly vilified by French intellectuals and cultural elites was the burgeoning pastime of tourist photography. As one of Bourdieu's informants, a lawyer, would say: "I bring aesthetic concepts to photography. My judgment constantly intervenes to prevent me from taking simple tourist photographs."⁵⁵

That Ferrari chose an activity denigrated as "middlebrow" to be the prototype for the kind of musical practice he hoped to inspire is telling. The analogy was not merely descriptive, but performative as well: invoking the position of one practice (i.e., amateur photography) positioned the other in turn, helping to fix Ferrari's endeavors within a field of social and artistic possibilities. The efficacy of the metaphor lay in the train of associations it brings to mind, especially regarding matters of specialization and social class: for this reason the "vulgar" connotations of amateur photography made it a doubly attractive

model for Ferrari. For at the same time as it helped certify his populist leanings, the valorization of a mass-cultural practice can be seen as serving his professional interests, insofar as the embrace of the vulgar in defiance of good taste is a tried and true strategy (that of “épater le bourgeois”) for those seeking to take up a vanguard position in the artistic field. Indeed, Ferrari’s reference not just to amateur photography but specifically to tourist photography was particularly effective, since it fused two distinct emblems of middlebrow, mass culture in a single activity: mass tourism and amateur photography.

Such self-positioning could only succeed so long as one was aware of the status accorded to photography within the constellation of cultural practices. Yet the class coding of amateur photography does not wholly explain the disdain it generated in certain quarters. Equally important was the belief that the camera—like all other recording devices, including the tape recorder—served to degrade people’s experience of reality. The camera gained a political charge, becoming a compact symbol of the reifying forces at play under capitalism. Such readings of photography were part of a broader critique of the image, which found its most pointed expression at the time in Guy Debord’s situationist manifesto *La société du spectacle* (1967): “The whole life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*. All that once was directly lived has become mere representation.”⁵⁶ As the image encroaches on the real, as fixed representations replace the spontaneity of experience, the individual’s perceptive, affective, and cognitive faculties erode. A sclerosis of the senses sets in. Visual experience becomes nothing more than the capacity to recognize something already seen. The landmark sought by the tourist “will be photographed; going further, it will not even be looked at; the cliché will be seen instead. The world comes to resemble the image that has been presented of it.”⁵⁷ Nostalgia for a lost perceptual innocence lay at the heart of such critiques. The growing cognizance that unmediated perception was under threat, that every sight taken in by the viewer replicated that which is already familiar from books and advertisements, fueled this discourse. And while a more or less neutral instrument like the camera could hardly be deemed responsible by itself for the impoverishment of experience that critics ascribed to it, it nonetheless marked a privileged site where the “domination of the spectacle over life” appeared to assume concrete, material form (see figure 7.1).

Even though the critique of the image undertaken by the situationists and others had no precise analogue in contemporaneous musical debates in France, concerns about the reifying capacity of recording technology find a curious echo in an early critique of *Presque rien*, a critique that would buttress the sense that a “second-order,” cultivated perception was the most fitting way of apprehending the work. In 1972, shortly after the release of *Presque rien* on record, Ferrari was

INTERNATIONALE SITUATIONNISTE

j'aime ma caméra

parce que

**j'aime
vivre**

j'enregistre les
meilleurs moments
de l'existence

je les ressuscite
à ma volonté
dans tout leur éclat



LA DOMINATION DU SPECTACLE SUR LA VIE

Cette publicité de la caméra Eumig (été 1967) évoque très justement la glaciation de la vie individuelle qui s'est renversée dans la perspective spectaculaire : le présent se donne à vivre immédiatement **comme souvenir**. Par cette spatialisation du temps, qui se trouve soumis à l'ordre illusoire d'un présent accessible en permanence, le temps et la vie ont été perdus ensemble.

Figure 7.1 An illustration from the *Internationale situationniste*, no. 11 (October 1967). Advertisement: "I like my camera because I like to live. I record the best moments of existence. I bring them back to life in all their brilliance." "THE DOMINATION OF THE SPECTACLE OVER LIFE. This advertisement for the Eumig camera (summer 1967) evokes quite exactly the freezing of individual life, which is itself inverted in the spectacular perspective: the present is given to be lived immediately *as a memory*. By means of this spatialization of time, which finds itself subject to the illusory order of a permanently accessible present, both time and life together have been lost."

interviewed in the *Nouvelle revue française* by François-Bernard Mâche, another composer concerned with the question of realism in music. During the course of the interview Mâche assumes an antagonistic posture, rejecting not so much *Presque rien* itself, but rather its claim to realism. In Mâche's estimation any intervention on the composer's part in the unfolding soundscape undermines its authenticity. Since Ferrari's piece is an idealized representation of daybreak in Vela Luka,

cobbled together from a number of source recordings, it fails to pass muster: "If there is montage, there is composition. You have chosen for example to cleanly cut off the cicadas at the end, after twenty minutes of 'music'—whereas real cicadas chirp for hours. You have thus intervened actively in the acoustic event. You are still a composer, figurative rather than realist."⁵⁸

While much of the dispute revolves around seemingly trivial terminological questions—"réalisme" vs. "surréalisme" vs. "sous-réalisme"—it soon becomes clear that Mâche's difficulty with Ferrari's work stems from what he sees as the fundamentally misrepresentative character of magnetic tape. If the aim of a piece like *Presque rien* is to provide listeners with an accurate image of a particular acoustic environment, its reliance on sound recording—no matter how high the fidelity—will always render the piece inadequate, a pale reflection of reality. Rather than engage in the practice of "sound photography," which by necessity entails the isolation and extraction of sounds from their natural context, Mâche asks if it wouldn't be better to organize "a travel agency where listeners would go to witness in person this sonic spectacle."⁵⁹ Such an agency would return sounds to their surroundings, but might also provide the listener with a sense of immediacy and vividness, qualities necessarily lost in a recording: "There are surely places where every day the sunrise is accompanied by marvelous noises at this time of year. Let's go, the stereo will be better."⁶⁰ What for Ferrari is a model of a popular artistic practice—the middlebrow form of photography—represents instead for Mâche a distortion, perhaps even a corruption, of our experience of the acoustic environment: "it is necessary to admit that when one transforms the sunrise into music that one listens to in one's apartment, there is already artifice, and thus art."⁶¹ If Ferrari's reference to photography seeks to insert his practice into the realm of the popular, then Mâche's criticism of *Presque rien* reinscribes the piece in the sphere of cultivated apprehension from which it had sought to free itself. Noting that the audience for the work is not the proletariat but "a fraction of the bourgeoisie," Mâche adds that "*Presque rien* is only possible here, in the capitalist West,"⁶² thereby rebuffing in an unceremonious fashion Ferrari's ambitious aspirations for the work.

How, then, are we to evaluate the import of *Presque rien*? At first blush, it seems clear that Ferrari's aspirations for anecdotal music—that it might open the door to a form of amateur sound recording practice—went unrealized. There appears to be little evidence that others took up his proposal to go out with portable tape machines in hand and create their own *musique concrète*. On the other hand, if we consider *Presque rien* strictly as an object of aesthetic apprehension, and not as an incitement to creative activity, it seems incontestable that the "cultivated" mode of listening—as noted above—has won out over all other contenders. At least this is the impression given by the critical

literature on the piece (what little of it exists). Most critics have thus followed Mâche's lead and placed the piece decidedly on the near side of the art/reality divide. For some, such as Chion and Reibel, the status of anecdotal music as a cultural artifact marks Ferrari's socio-aesthetic project as a failure, inadequate to the composer's intentions: "He's a little bit like our own Cage, less of a philosopher and more easy-going. While proclaiming near and far his disdain for all aesthetic constraints, he has yet to cease playing hide-and-seek with a notion that he pretends to scorn: that of the *work*".⁶³ For others, most notably Jacqueline Caux, the affirmation of *Presque rien*'s status as a work of art is plain and simply a question of valorization: "If the word masterpiece means anything, then it may surely be applied to *Presque rien no 1, le lever du jour au bord de la mer*."⁶⁴ But if we accept her claim that *Presque rien* is nothing less than a masterpiece, then by the same token we must accept that it will never be anything more than that either.

Nonetheless, one should not be overhasty in drawing conclusions about *Presque rien*'s legacy—either its consignment to the aesthetic realm, or its failure as an impetus to popular creative activity. Ultimately the piece's value resides in the uses individuals derive from it, and we should be mindful of the fact that information about how *Presque rien* has been put to work is scattered and partial. If it appears that a cultivated, aestheticizing approach to the piece has trumped all others, this is perhaps due to the form and nature of the documentation that is available to us: music reviews, journals, and magazines, which all tend to be written by and tailored to a cultivated and aesthetically astute segment of the population. Who knows what others outside this narrow orbit might have made of the piece? Who knows if one of the students that Ferrari worked with in Amiens continued to make tape pieces after his departure in 1969? Every now and then it is possible to catch a glimpse of a different response to *Presque rien*, an alternative history of its impact that stands in sharp contrast to that provided in the musicological literature. Consider, for instance, that during a visit to the United States in 1970, Ferrari participated in an interview with Charles Amirkhanian and Richard Friedman on KPFA radio in Berkeley, California, during the course of which he discussed the recently composed *Presque rien no. 1*. Shortly after the broadcast of this interview, Amirkhanian and Friedman began a radio program called the "World Ear Project," which invited listeners to send in their own tape pieces—their own, homemade versions of "electroacoustic nature photography."⁶⁵ While Ferrari's work was but one small piece in a much larger jigsaw puzzle of inspirations that lay behind the initiative (inspirations that include Cage, R. Murray Schafer, and the nascent environmental movement), there is no doubt that his work played some role, however indirect, in the creation of this platform for amateur tape music. Beyond whatever enduring aesthetic value the piece may possess, it is as much here—outside the pale of documented music

history, in the practical uses that individuals have drawn from the work—that the ultimate significance of *Presque rien* may very well reside.

I am especially grateful to Brunhild Meyer-Ferrari, for having answered so many of my questions about Luc Ferrari's life and work during the 1960s and 1970s; and to Richard Friedman and Charles Amirkhanian, who not only provided information concerning the origins of the World Ear Project, but in addition located and made available to me a recording of Amirkhanian's 1973 radio program devoted to Ferrari's music.

Notes

1. Ferrari, in François-Bernard Mâche, "Entretien avec Luc Ferrari," *Nouvelle revue française* 232 (April 1972): 115. Reprinted in *La revue musicale* 214–15 (1977): 63–69.

2. Michel Chion and Guy Reibel, *Les musiques electroacoustiques* (Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, 1976), 67.

3. Ferrari, in Jacqueline Caux, *Presque rien avec Luc Ferrari* (Paris: Éditions Main d'œuvre, 2002), 171. In an interview with Charles Amirkhanian he cites the militarization of France under President Charles De Gaulle as being one catalyst for his politicization; Luc Ferrari, interviewed by Charles Amirkhanian, *Ode to Gravity*, KPFA (Berkeley, Calif.), April 11, 1973. A further catalyst was the Algerian War of Independence; Brunhild Meyer-Ferrari, interview with the author, June 7, 2006.

4. Ferrari, in Caux, *ibid.*, 56.

5. Although there were a number of local and national musicians' unions active at the time of May 68, no body existed to protect the interests of composers as a distinct group. The composers' union that was founded on May 22, 1968 (and which included Henri Dutilleux, Gilbert Amy, André Jolivet, Maurice Ohana, Francis Miroglio, Jean Weiner, Jean Barraqué, Claude Ballif, Jean Martinet, and André Boucourechliev sought to fill this vacuum, and provide a vehicle for the advancement of their political goals.

6. Interview with Brunhild Meyer-Ferrari, June 7, 2006.

7. David Looseley summarizes Malraux's beliefs by saying that "great art . . . does not need to be explained or taught but can be appreciated spontaneously if encountered directly." David Looseley, *The Politics of Fun: Cultural Policy and Debate in Contemporary France* (Oxford: Berg, 1995), 36.

8. From Pierre Moinot, "Les Maisons de la Culture" (1961), reprinted in *Les Affaires culturelles au temps d'André Malraux 1959–1969* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1996), 384.

9. Brian Rigby, *Popular Culture in Modern France: A Study of Cultural Discourse* (London: Routledge, 1991), 133–34.

10. Malraux, cited in J. -C. Bécane, *L'Expérience des maisons de la culture* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1973), 54.

11. The phrase "dirigisme culturel" is Bécane's, in *L'Expérience des maisons de la culture*, 6. It should be noted that the *Maisons de la Culture* were conceived as a means of countering the fragmentation of the French polity in the wake of decolonization, and that many of its early administrators were former colonial functionaries.

12. For a discussion of these movements, see Rigby, *Popular Culture in Modern France*, 39–67.

13. Ferrari, in Hansjörg Pauli, *Für wen komponieren Sie eigentlich?* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag, 1971), 56.

14. Ibid., 57.

15. Ibid., 55.

16. Cited in Bécane, *L'Expérience des maisons de la culture*, 32.

17. These and other graffiti from May are recorded in *Les Murs ont la parole: Journal mural mai 68*, ed. Julien Besançon (Paris: Tchou, 1968), 154, 174 and 113, respectively.

18. The notion of the “ideological state apparatus” is introduced in Althusser’s essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation),” (1970), in his *Lenin and Philosophy*, trans. Benjamin Brewster (New York: Monthly Review, 1972).

19. The communists’ suspicion toward “action culturelle” is discussed in Jean Caune, *La Culture en action: De Vilar à Lang, le sens perdu* (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1999), 198–201.

20. The statistics for Amiens are given in Bécane, *L'Expérience des maisons de la culture*, 23.

21. Pierre Bourdieu, “L’ école conservatrice. Les inégalités devant l’école et devant la culture,” *Revue française de sociologie* 7, no. 3 (July/September 1966): 344.

22. “Déclaration de Villeurbanne, 25/5/68,” reprinted in Francis Jeanson, *L’Action culturelle dans la cité* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973), 119. English translations of the declaration can be found in Alain Schnapp and Pierre Vidal-Nacquet, *The French Student Uprising, November 1967–June 1968: An Analytical Record*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon, 1971), 579–82; and in Jeremy Ahearne, *French Cultural Policy Debates: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 70–75. (All translations of the declaration given here are mine.)

23. “Déclaration de Villeurbanne,” in Jeanson, *L’Action culturelle dans la cité*, 120.

24. Ibid., 121.

25. Ibid.

26. “Déclaration de Villeurbanne,” *Maison de la Culture d’Amiens* 9 (October 15, 1968): 1.

27. Ferrari, in Pauli, *Für wen komponieren Sie eigentlich?*, 44.

28. Ibid., 48.

29. Ibid., 50.

30. Ferrari, cited in Denys Lemery, “Luc Ferrari: Entretien avec un jeune compositeur non-conformiste . . .,” *Actuel* 12 (1970): 15.

31. “Luc Ferrari: Interview by Dan Warburton, July 22, 1998,” <http://www.paristransatlantic.com/magazine/interviews/ferrari.html> (accessed July 20, 2005).

32. Ibid.

33. Ferrari states in an interview with François-Bernard Mâche that the piece was the product of splicing together numerous recordings in order to provide a representation of a “typical” morning: “[I]n *Presque rien* I chose from all the sounds that accompany the sunrise each morning those which always came back, which were truly typical for me.” Ferrari, in Mâche, “Entretien avec Luc Ferrari,” 113.

34. Ferrari, in Pauli, *Für wen komponieren Sie eigentlich?*, 58.

35. Ibid.
36. Luc Ferrari, liner notes to *Hétérozygote/J'ai été coupé* (Philips, Prospective 21^e siècle 836 885 DSY).
37. Jean-Michel Damian, "Luc Ferrari: Hétérozygote; J'ai été coupé," *Harmonie* 52 (December 1969): 68.
38. Ibid.
39. Translated as "Outline for a Sociological Theory of Artistic Perception," in *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 215–37.
40. Ibid., 220.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., 222.
43. Ferrari, in Pauli, *Für wen komponieren Sie eigentlich?*, 46.
44. In interviews Ferrari has described *Presque rien* as instantiating both minimalist and hyperrealist aesthetics. See Caux, *Presque rien avec Luc Ferrari*, 51. See also Jacqueline Caux's introduction to the same volume, 10–11.
45. Daniel Teruggi, "Les Presque rien de Luc Ferrari," in *Portraits Polychrome: Luc Ferrari* (Paris: CDMC/INA Groupe Edition–Documentation, 2001), 38.
46. Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Risk of Spontaneity and the Logic of the Institution," in *"All We Are Saying . . ." The Philosophy of the New Left*, ed. Arthur Lothstein (New York: Capricorn, 1971), 294.
47. In "Pour une culture populaire," *L'Étudiant de France* 2 (July–August 1968): 6.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ferrari in Pauli, *Für wen komponieren Sie eigentlich?*, 50.
52. Ibid., 49.
53. Ibid.
54. Pierre Bourdieu et al., *Un art moyen* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1965); translated as *Photography: A Middle-brow Art*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).
55. Bourdieu, *Photography*, 65.
56. Guy Debord, *La Société du spectacle* (Paris: Buchet–Chastel, 1967). Translated as *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone, 1994), 12. It should be noted that the first sentence is a rewriting (or "détournement") of the opening of Marx's *Das Kapital*, with the word *spectacles* replacing that of *commodities*.
57. Jean Keim, *La Photographie et l'homme: sociologie et psychologie de la photographie* (Paris: Casterman, 1971), 43.
58. Mâche, "Entretien avec Luc Ferrari," 114.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Chion and Reibel, *Les musiques electroacoustiques*, 143.
64. Jacqueline Caux, "Les «Presque rien» de Luc Ferrari," liner notes to Luc Ferrari, *Presque rien* (INA c 2008), n.p.
65. Personal communication from Richard Friedman, September 12, 2005.