

## The Lure of the Voice in the Ballet of Machines

Nancy Gillespie and Svitlana Matviyenko

*Lost in the Memory Palace*, Janet Cardiff's and George Bures Miller's travelling retrospective, features five major installations and related visual and sound works produced over 20 years of their collaboration. This paper will explore selected instances of the artists' use of 'the voice,' which we will place in the wider context of a discussion on desire in the data flow of 'our' machines – from the fictional Operating System "Samantha" (*Her*) to the actual Google Search that addresses us in a 'human' voice.

By means of elaborated sound effects, which appear to incorporate various artifacts, organic and inorganic systems, as well as historical and fictional narratives through the use of binaural voice recordings of different 'noise,' and passages of musical works, Cardiff and Miller simulate various experiences that, according to the artists, "blur the distinction between a viewer and a listener" in a dream-memory-landscape of synesthesia which, we will argue, lends itself to a Lacanian reading in which 'the voice' and 'the gaze' are indistinguishable as the object *a*.

In our discussion we will work with two different but related notions of 'the voice' introduced by Jacques Lacan in *Seminar II* (1954-55) and later, in *Seminars X* (1962-63) and *XI* (1964): the former, meaningless but measurable "the voice of no one" that "reintroduces order, and... regulates the ballet of the machines" (*Seminar II*, 55), and the latter, the voice as lure and the object *a*, an object of anxiety, a stain on the memory screen, indistinguishable from the gaze, in order to explore how this retrospective installation incorporates sounding art to both illuminate the ways in which the imaginary aspect of our desire lures us to see and hear what it wishes us to see and hear by covering up what is actually seen and heard through the eye and ear, and to arguably disrupt some of these "fated semiotic parasitisms" through their differential productions.

**Nancy Gillespie** is a former musician who has a PhD in Literature and Psychoanalysis from the university of Sussex in the UK. She currently divides her time between NYC, Vancouver, and Paris. Her continuing academic endeavors, which have replaced her musical pursuits for the moment, shift between the discourses of Lacanian psychoanalysis and feminist, experimental poetics. She is a practising analyst, and a member of the editorial team of *Hurly Burly: The International Lacanian Journal of Psychoanalysis*. She serves on the board of the *Kootenay School of Writing* in Vancouver and has been part of their collective for several years, through which she ran a year long seminar series on Lacan and experimental poetics, which developed into a special issue of the journal *Open Letter*. She has published articles on both Lacan and poetics and is currently developing a few publishing projects in those areas.

**Svitlana Matviyenko** is a media scholar. She has a PhD in Critical Theory, Media Theory and Psychoanalysis from the University of Missouri and she is now pursuing her second doctorate at the Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism at Western. She writes on psychoanalysis, topology, posthumanism, mobile apps, and networking drive. Her work has been published and forthcoming in *Digital Creativity*, *(Re)-Turn: A Journal of Lacanian Studies*, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, *Krytyka*, *Kino-Kolo*. Currently, she serves as Associate Editor of *(Re)-Turn: A Journal of Lacanian Studies*. Svitlana curated several experimental dance performances and several art exhibitions at the Ukrainian Institute of America in NYC, Museum | London (Ontario), Artisphere (USA), and other venues. She is a co-editor (with Paul D. Miller) of *The Imaginary App* (MIT, 2014).