The first analytical tool introduced in this book shows the complex nuances involved in answering the question of how visible a particular sample is in a new composition. As the subsequent case studies and the interlude later in this book will show, this question is crucial both in production processes and when analyzing reasons and attitudes behind sampling processes. The FOV addresses further sub-questions such as:

- How present is the sample in the new track?
- Is it in the back- or foreground?
- Is it possible to hear the sample in the new composition?
- Does it refer to anything? If so, to which context?

I consciously use the term “visibility” instead of “audibility.” The following paradox explains this choice: a sample can be visible although it is not audible in the new composition. This happens when, for example, a producer has not processed the samples in question in an audible way, but publicly speaks about them, or mentions their sources in texts such as liner notes or press releases. This special case will not appear in the case studies that follow. An example is Matthew Herbert’s *The End of Silence* (2013), in which the producer sampled a recording of a bomb explosion during the Libyan civil war. Although the sample is not audible, it is visible, as Herbert discussed it extensively in public (Burkhalter 2015a, Velasco-Puffleau 2020). Hence, audibility is not required to achieve a particular
degree of sample visibility, though it will always raise the profile of the sample in question.¹

To address the question of visibility, it is necessary to consider more than one parameter. The FOV combines five: audibility, signalization, referentiality, recognizability, and extra-musical signalization. The simultaneous consideration of all these parameters allows for an in-depth and comprehensive discussion of the question of visibility. By adding a sixth parameter, evaluation, I finally want to illustrate the applicability of the tool for use beyond this study.

The display format is based on the faders found on sound engineering gear such as mixing consoles. In comparison with a trigger switch, the fader allows for the display of continuous scales rather than fixed dualistic categories. Only a few authors have discussed similar continuums in relation to the analysis of sample-based music; most prominent are the scales of Georg Fischer (2020; “50 shades of referentiality”) and Dietmar Elflein (2010; range from proactive to hidden referentiality), and Christopher Ballantine, who investigated borrowed material in the works of classical composer Charles Ives:

> There is a continuum of intelligibility stretching from an “open secret” at the one extreme to a “closed secret” at the other, and for each listener any one of Ives’s pieces using borrowed materials will have its place somewhere along that continuum. (Ballantine 1984, 84)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUDIBILITY</th>
<th>MEDIATION</th>
<th>REFERENTIALITY</th>
<th>RECOGNIZABILITY</th>
<th>CONTEXTUAL SIGNALIZATION</th>
<th>MASTER VISIBILITY</th>
<th>EFFECT EVALUATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>audible</td>
<td>signaled</td>
<td>indexical</td>
<td>recognizable</td>
<td>announced</td>
<td>obvious</td>
<td>predetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muted</td>
<td>unsigned</td>
<td>non-referential</td>
<td>obscured</td>
<td>unmentioned</td>
<td>concealed</td>
<td>open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1: The fader of visibility FOV

Ballantine acknowledges the subjectivity of such questions. Listeners’ answers will differ substantially from one another. The answers provided are highly dependent on a range of external factors, such as the habitus of the listener. In this study, the FOV will reflect the viewpoint of both the researcher and the producer.

The main advantage of this display format is its ability to represent interpretive tendencies. In many cases, it is difficult to clearly

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¹ It is remarkable that in theoretical writings on musique concrète the term “visibility” is used without any critical reflection. See for example Chion 2010, 33.
define whether a sample is audible (or recognizable) or not. The faders allow statements such as: “It is most likely that a certain sample is heard or recognized by a certain group of listeners for this and that reason,” or: “It is quite unlikely that this sample will be heard or recognized by anyone.” The former statement would cause the master fader to move towards the obvious end of the scale, while the latter would result in faders number 1 (audibility) and 4 (recognizability) being oriented towards the “muted” position.

At this point, I would like to revisit the model of imitative practices in music by Richard Dyer. This model provides a couple of useful terms for my purposes. As Dyer is interested in the artistic concept of pastiche and a comparison with other imitative practices, much of his framework is not relevant here. I am mainly interested in the three distinctive features from the upper part of his model: concealed vs. unconcealed practices, not textually signaled vs. textually signaled practices, and evaluatively open vs. evaluatively predetermined practices. With a couple of additions, these features can be fruitfully adapted for the analysis of sample-based music.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEALED</th>
<th>UNCONCEALED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT TEXTUALLY SIGNALLED</td>
<td>TEXTUALLY SIGNALLED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVALUATIVELY OPEN</td>
<td>EVALUATIVELY PREDETERMINED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plagiarism</td>
<td>copy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fake</td>
<td>versions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forgery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hoax</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Model of imitative practices by Richard Dyer (2007, 24)

I will now introduce the different faders of the FOV and thereby explain what I take from Dyer, and what I add to his model.

**The Faders**

**Fader 1, Audibility: From Audible to Muted**

A sample is fully audible if it is most likely that listeners can hear the sample in the new composition: for example, a prominent hook line or single instrument notes. On the other hand, a sample is completely muted if there is no chance of hearing it in the final mix. There are various potential reasons why a sample might be muted: its sound level might be too low; it might have been manipulated too heavily; it might consist of frequencies that are not audible to the human ear; or it might be of extremely short length. Between these poles, samples could be partially audible, or manipulated to a degree where they are barely audible but not completely muted. The case studies will cover the whole range from almost muted...
samples (James Whipple) to fully audible samples (Lara Sarkissian, Vika Kirchenbauer, and Ian McDonnell).

Fader 2, Signalization: From Signaled to Unsighed

The second scale is drawn directly from Dyer’s model and his distinction between textually signaled and not textually signaled imitation. This terminology makes it possible to illustrate that the new composition signals that it contains sampled material, or that the sample itself signals that it is a sample. This could happen by (added or already present) sound effects (such as vinyl or radio crackle), the material appearance of the sample (sound quality), or manipulating techniques (such as chopping samples). The crucial question is not whether a sample is audible or not, but whether it is audible that a particular sound clip is sampled. While it is not obvious that the keyboard melody in Lara Sarkissian’s “kenats” is sampled, the Sacred Harp tune in Vika Kirchenbauer’s “STABILIZED, YES!” is signaled as a sample through the way that it is processed and its aesthetic appearance.

A particular form of signaled sampling would be what Ragnhild Brøvig-Hanssen describes as “opaque mediation.” She points to the importance of the use of mediating technology in music production and argues that mediation “has tremendous importance for musical expression” (Brøvig-Hanssen 2010, 174):² “Mediation always leaves a signature (its self-presentation) during the act of conveying” and can thus never be “a neutral transition of sounds” (162–63). Brøvig-Hanssen describes two aesthetics: the first, “opaque mediation,” “highlight[s] the degree of exposure of the relevant mediating technology,” while in “transparent mediation (…) the ideal is a use of mediating technology that the listener can completely ignore” (159). In its mediation of sounds from a source to a new composition, sampling is a typical example here. In conclusion, if mediation is recognizable (“opaque mediation”) this also signals that the respective track contains sampled sound material.

Fader 3, Referentiality: From Indexical to Non-Referential

According to Allan Moore (2012, 217), music is referential “in three fundamentally different ways: within itself; to itself; outside itself.” One could thus argue that a sound is referential per se. I do not follow such a broad conception of reference here, and I only consider a sound to be referential if it points to an extra-musical element, which according to Moore’s conception would be either “outside itself” or “to itself,” but not “within itself.” Chion (2010, 31) labels these sounds as “anecdotal,” as distinct from “non-narrative” sounds. A demonstrative example might be the particular sound of

² In her book Digital Signatures, Brøvig-Hanssen further develops the concept of opaque and transparent mediation (Brøvig-Hanssen and Danielsen 2016).
an instrument. A sampled trumpet can either refer to the particular trumpet style of a famous trumpeter (indexical), or it can just be used to include the sound of a non-specific trumpet in the new composition (non-referential). The fader, thus, makes it possible to display the degree of referentiality of a sample. The higher the controller is positioned, the greater the significance of any references to extra-musical content.

While it is, in theory, possible to objectively evaluate the position of the controller for the other faders, it is particularly challenging here. Whether something is referential or not depends on the knowledge of the respective listener. Hence, a sound might be highly referential for one person and non-referential for another. In my analyses, I will use this fader to represent the producer’s view. A high position of this fader thus indicates that the sampled material is highly referential for the producer themselves (such as the war sounds in James Whipple’s “Methy Imbiß,” or the Sacred Harp tunes in Vika Kirchenbauer’s “STABILIZED, YES!”). A middle or low position signifies that the referential qualities of the processed samples are less or not important (such as the YouTube footage in Ian McDonnell’s “Perversas,” or the keyboard sounds in Lara Sarkissian’s “kenats”).

I therefore distinguish between hard and soft references. Hard references point to a particular source context, while soft references point to a musical style in general, or a non-contextual sound—that is, a sound that is not connected with a particular context. This is, in principle, the same distinction drawn by Elflein (2010) between a quotation of context (hard reference) and a quotation of sound (soft reference). Since the focus of this study is on political sampling material, there will be no examples provided where the fader is positioned at its lowest point.

Finally, whether all of these references are perceived by the listener—or if they are perceivable at all—depends not least on the positions of the other faders.

**Fader 4, Recognizability: From Recognizable to Obscured**

One could argue that the fader of recognizability is akin to the first fader (audibility): if a sample is audible it is at the same time recognizable; if it is muted it is, conversely, unrecognizable. However, by considering this fader separately we can add a further nuance to the discussion of sampling strategies. Hence, a sample could be audible and signaled—the listener is able to hear the sample and he/she knows that it is a sample—while the particular content of the sample in its original appearance still remains unrecognizable or obscured due to heavy manipulation. This is the case in Vika Kirchenbauer’s “STABILIZED, YES!” where the sample-clips are both audible and signaled, but not clearly recognizable as deriving from a tune in the U.S. Sacred Harp tradition. Recognizability (I hear the
This fader shifts the perspective from production to reception. The highest position of this fader signifies that it is most likely that most listeners recognize the sample, while the lowest position indicates that recognition is not expected to be possible at all. Positions in between represent cases where it depends on particular knowledge (habitus) to recognize the sample. In a study of reception, this fader could also be used to display the actual reactions of listeners, rather than assumed or probable recognizability, as is the case in this study.

Fader 5, Extra-Musical Signalization: From Announced to Unmentioned

This fader complements the second. While the distinction between signaled and unsignaled mediation focuses on “musical” elements that are part of the new composition, this distinction focuses on “extra-musical” channels through which potential signalization can happen. Irrespective of whether the sample is audible or not, the sample and its source can be publicly announced, discussed, or indicated in cover designs, press releases, liner notes, blog entries, interviews, posts on social media, announcements during live performances, and so on. This fader, thus, covers the appearance of information related to the sample in every kind of source outside of the musical product itself, the track. In my case studies, Vika Kirchenbauer’s “STABILIZED, YES!” is accompanied by considerable extra-musical signalization.

This fader also makes clear that an analysis using the FOV is always a snapshot. While the first three faders rely on information from the process of production, which is ideally closed, the position of faders four and five could potentially change over time. Studies on sample-based music significantly affect the position of the current fader, and no lower position would be possible after the publication of such a study.

Fader 6 (Master), Visibility: From Obvious to Concealed

All of the faders introduced so far ultimately affect the level of the master fader. This scale functions as a summation of all parameters. The continuum extends from concealed (with a nod to Dyer) to obvious, and represents the degree of visibility that a sample can adopt. The higher the positions of the first five faders, the higher the master fader must be set. For example, a sampling practice that processes a sample that is perfectly audible, signaled as a sample by the composition itself, highly recognizable, referring to a well-known
sound, voice, or context, and broadly discussed in public can be analyzed as highly obvious in terms of visibility. The subsequent analyses will present the whole range of visibility from the “obvious” end (Vika Kirchenbauer) to the “concealed” (James Whipple).

The last fader only appears as an effect, and I will not use it in my analyses. Nevertheless, I want to include it here because it illustrates the scope for adding further channels and effects to this display format, and it expands the tool for further application beyond this study—in particular towards reception analysis.

**Fader 7 (Effect), Evaluation: From Predetermined to Open**

Referring once again to Dyer, according to this distinction, the way in which an imitation practice (sampling in our case) is perceived is either “evaluatively open” or “evaluatively predetermined.” To reach useful conclusions here a broader reception study would need to be made, in which a researcher interested in this question could identify different ways in which the sample in question is perceived by listeners. This distinction also touches on the question of intention, which will be covered by the SSR introduced in the next section.

The FOV facilitates a qualitative analysis of sample-based music as a multilayered musical object and helps to recognize and to display various sampling strategies. This analytical tool makes clear that the question of visibility is reliant on a couple of subordinate questions and parameters. The fader combines distinctive features with terminology that has already been introduced by other sampling scholars, and illustrates crucial aspects of processes of sampling in a new, in-depth manner.

The display format could even be used for comparative analyses, if a sufficiently large number of tracks were considered. At this point, it is important to mention that only qualitative statements can be displayed with this tool, as the setting of every fader relies on subjective interpretation. To counter the temptation to use the tool quantitatively I have consciously avoided displaying a numbered scale.

Finally, the fader always depends on a critical discussion of the analytical position being taken and the question of visibility *for whom*. This question cannot be answered in general, relying instead on the particular analysis being conducted and the research question behind it. For this study, the analyses were always conducted from the author’s perspective, focusing on the production process of the analyzed tracks. As a next step, I will introduce the second analytical tool, the SSR.