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The Discourse of Home Recording: Accessibility, Exclusion and Power

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Abstract

This thesis proposes a critical analysis of the discourse of home recording. It aims to question home recording's will to truth by investigating what makes its statements possible, or what is the system of rules that authorize certain things to be said within the discourse. Driven by enunciations regarding home recording's "accessibility" and "democratization", this thesis analyzes the power/knowledge relations that have been produced and legitimized within the discourse, as well as what they enable and constrain, allow and exclude. Music magazines and Internet discussion forums form the corpus of this thesis. The methods used in this research are inspired by Michel Foucault's theory and method of discourse and by the approach known as critical interpretation (Johnson *et al*., 2004). This thesis' analysis shows that the government in home recording seems to be exerted by two main subjects: recording professionals and home recording "pros", who are overall characterized as well-off men. Moreover, the rules of home recording seem to be a replication and an adaptation to the home environment of the organizing principles of professional studios. This thesis suggests that "democratization" as enunciated and produced within and by the discourse of home recording articulates the discursive notion of a "contemporary accessibility" in terms of technology and knowledge to the exclusions – such as that of women and people of limited means – that make this discourse possible. These exclusions are legitimized through what is considered the "truth" within the discourse, as well as the norms and regulations established within it, which in turn follow the logic of the professional studio.

Keywords: home, recording, studios, democratization, technology, discourse analysis, power/knowledge relations, Michel Foucault.

Sommaire

Ce mémoire propose une analyse critique du discours de l'enregistrement sonore à domicile (*home recording*). Dans la foulée des propos mettant de l'avant l' «accessibilité» et la «démocratisation» de l'enregistrement sonore, ce mémoire analyse les relations de savoir/pouvoir produites et légitimées par le discours, ce qu'elles permettent et contraignent, autorisent et excluent. Le corpus à l'étude est issu de la presse musicale ainsi que de forums de discussion en ligne relevant de sites spécialisés. Les méthodes utilisées sont inspirées de l'approche du discours développées par Michel Foucault et de ce que Johnson *et. al.* (2004) appellent l'interprétation critique. L'analyse met en évidence les deux principaux sujets du discours de l'enregistrement sonore à la maison : les professionnels de l'enregistrement et les «pros» de l'enregistrement à domicile, deux groupes constitués d'hommes financièrement aisés. Les règles qui régissent l'enregistrement à domicile semblent reprendre, en les adaptant, celles régissant les studios professionnels. Ce mémoire suggère que la «démocratisation» telle qu'énoncée dans ce discours articule l'«accessibilité contemporaine» à certains savoirs et certaines technologies à des exclusions singulières – comme des femmes et des personnes de moyens limités – qui rendent ce discours possible. Être dans le vrai, dans ce discours, c'est échanger, argumenter, discuter et prescrire des façons de faire et de dire qui font des studios professionnels l'espace des normes et des légitimités.

Mots clés: enregistrement, musique, maison, domicile, studio, démocratisation, technologie, l'analyse du discours, relations de pouvoir/savoir, Michel Foucault.

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"Patience obtains all things."
St. Teresa of Avila

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Introduction

As a musical practice, home recording has drawn more attraction and risen in popularity since computer technologies entered the domestic realm and became a "central component in daily life in the 1990s" (Williams, 2006, p. 384). The development of Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs)[1] in the same decade was the first step for the establishment of computers as the primary tools of contemporary sound recording (Théberge, 2011). These computer software programs brought to the territory of home practices that were first considered the norm in studio production (Théberge, 1997), such as multitrack recording[2]. Technologies and techniques that were once almost exclusively done in professional studios were then able to be performed through home computers. Therefore, while digital technology could potentially move the studio to any physical space, many music aficionados with access to a computer were given the chance to experiment with methods that were formerly an exclusivity of a few "specialists".

Making and recording music at home was accompanied by the development and the consolidation of a specialized industry which provides the means for such activity. Nowadays, software and hardware especially manufactured for home recording are considered to be generally "affordable" (Williams, 2006). The possibility of downloading cheaper versions or free models of DAWs (such as the open source *Audacity*, Apple's *GarageBand* and Cocko's *Reaper*), for example, has opened up the world of recording to amateurs and non-musicians. Moreover, digital home recording technology is recognized for providing a much better sound quality than what was possible through home recording technology previous to DAWs. In fact, the attention given to the advent of computer-based home recording is often directly related to "the increasing sound quality (often rivaling that of commercial operations) of the products offered by home studios" (Théberge, 1997, p. 233).

Thanks to the digital revolution, producing high-quality recordings at home is thus said to have become accessible to "absolutely anyone" (White, 2011, p. 3). Meanwhile, music magazines and websites frequently publish guides and tutorials about home recording, claiming to give their readers the best tips to achieve the greatest sound for the lowest cost (See Watson, 2006; Coryat, 2005; Myers, 1997; Recording Review, n.d.). Therefore, along

[1]See Glossary (Appendix I).
[2]See Glossary (Appendix I).

with the technology, knowledge about home recording has also been rendered available to people who wish to explore it.

The access of means to record at home given to music aficionados with different levels and forms of expertise brought to the fore not only discussions about home recording's accessibility, but also the idea of its "democratization". Homer (2008), for example, discusses how home recording technologies potentially ensure a "democratization of the music making process through their affordability" (p. 90). Théberge (1997) considers "the 'home studio' as a particular outgrowth of the 'democratization' of musical technology" (p. 215).

It is intriguing, however, to think of how this idea became part of home recording, considering that, for instance, having a computer at home, access to the required physical space and proper recording software may not only be a matter of will, but more importantly a matter of resources, hence of knowledge and power. How, then, and through what kinds of negotiations has "democratization" become an integral part of home recording? How, why and by whom has "truth" value been attributed to this particular argument more than to others (Sharp & Richardson, 2001)?

Driven by these questions regarding home recording's "democratization", this thesis proposes a critical analysis of the discourse of home recording. It aims to question home recording's will to truth (Foucault, 1971) by analyzing what makes its statements possible. Through this thesis, I intend to analyze the power/knowledge relations that have been produced and legitimized within the discourse, as well as what they enable and constrain, allow and exclude. Hence, I hope to better understand what is the system of rules that authorize certain things to be said within the discourse of home recording, while others are left in the realm of the "non-said" (Foucault, 1972).

Based on the Foucauldian theory and method of discourse (see 1.3. Home Recording as Discourse and 2. Methodology), I chose to analyze how home recording is talked about in contemporary North American and European recording magazines (*Canadian Musician*, *Tape Op, Sound on Sound* and *Recording Magazine*), as well as in recording Internet discussion forums (*Steinberg's Cubase forum*, *Recording.org* and *Home Recording.com*). This thesis' corpus was mostly chosen based on these magazines' and websites' popularity amongst western musicians and recordists, as well as on the material's availability for the researcher (for details, see 2.2. The Corpus).

Prior to the analysis, this thesis will provide a brief historical overview of home recording as an activity and a practice (see 1.1. A Historical Overview). Based on academic

research, this summary will be essential for contextualizing digital home recording, which is the focus of the present research. It will also work as support for a series of follow-up questions about home recording – as practice and as discourse – that will be suggested throughout this thesis (for example, see 1.2. Issues about Home Recording).

The analysis will consist of a critical interpretation (Johnson, Chambers, Raghuram, & Tinknell, 2004) of the established corpus (see 2.3. Principles of Analysis). My first goal will be to look for regularities and dispersions within the discourse of home recording. After that, I hope to identify the discourse's elements – such as its subjects, objects and main notions – and how they are articulated, in order to find the relations of power/knowledge established between them and what governs the conduct of individuals, enabling and constraining their acts (Foucault, 1982). I believe that it is through the identification of these discourses' elements and through the observation of their possible articulations that I will be able to grasp the discourse's system of rules and regime of truth. Through this exploratory research, I intend to look at home recording as a socio-historically constructed discourse in order to better understand why it is as it is, why it excludes who it does, and why it legitimizes certain notions and ideas.

Chapter 1: Home Recording

This chapter introduces home recording as an activity, a musical practice and as this thesis' research problem. It explains some of the central terms through which home recording is talked about – precisely "home recording setup", "home studio" and "project studio". It notes how these slightly different home recording spaces give home recording a wide range of possibilities as an activity, which can be performed by amateur and non-musicians, as well as by professionals who record at home for profit. This chapter also provides a brief historical overview of home recording, describing how the activity started, by whom, and what technological developments allowed music recording to slowly enter the realm of home. Next, it discusses some of the issues that became evident with the growing popularity of home recording and how, amongst other points, they put in question the notions of home recording's "accessibility" and "democratization". Finally, this chapter explores how home recording can be treated and conceptualized as a discourse.

For some kids who were put in contact with digital technology for the first time in the 1990s, the possibility to somehow manipulate .WAV and .MP3 files[3] through their home computers might have opened up their curiosity to such activities. I suppose that many must have tried, like I have, to use Window's Sound Recorder to reverse digital songs and look for subliminal messages. Or maybe to speed up songs, slow them down and see how the sound funnily changed.[4] As the 1990s saw a "greatest diffusion of computer technology within the social context of the home" and as "the knowledge and skills required to use the software [became] easier to acquire and more accessible to a larger population" (Venkatesh, 1994, p. 49), many curious audio aficionados had the opportunity, often for the first time, to manipulate sound digitally in their own domiciles.

Digital technology, early enough after its introduction in many homes[5], proved to be practical and efficient not only for music listening and manipulation, but also for music recording. As Williams (2006) argues,

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[3] Both WAV (Waveform audio file format) and MP3 (MPEG-1 Layer-3) are digital audio file formats. For more information, see Sterne, 2006, Millard, 2005 and Katz, 2004.

[4] This software, which came with Windows PCs – and still does – allows one to record audio through a microphone. The files can be saved in .WAV formats. It also allows simple effects such as adding echo, duplicating or dividing by two the audio speed, etc.

[5] It seems important to clarify at this moment that this thesis mostly regards practices that were overall possible in North America, Western Europe and maybe in high and middle-classes in developing countries. Although this fact definitely limits the scope and results of this research, this delimitation was nonetheless necessary: not only most of this thesis' sources take those regions into account, but also home recording can be indeed seen as an elitist practice, as we'll further discuss later in this work.

> "Digital technology radically expanded the creative possibilities of multitrack recording, and over the course of the 1990s, as these tools were placed in the hands of musicians with little access to professional facilities, transforming the recording process, and re-defining the concept of the 'studio'." (p. 369)

The development of computer-based recording software – as we will further explain in this work – was of great importance to the popularization of what is known today as "home recording" or "home studios".

Potentially, home recording can be experimented by musicians and music aficionados who have access to a computer and who have the means to acquire the additional necessary technology. However, the overall way the activity is done may vary considerably. A home recording setup and the activities performed with it may actually be judged and classified according to what technology is being used, how "treated" is the home recording space, what is the recordist's goal and what is his/her level of knowledge and expertise.

Most of the differences regarding the home recording conditions divide what can be defined as a "home recording setup", a "home studio" or a "project studio"[6]. A "home studio" can be understood as a delimited space at home equipped with gear, devoted to recording and which somehow follows the guidelines of a professional studio[7]. A "project studio", in turn, is "essentially a home studio that takes in commercial work and often consisting of little more than a well–equipped control room and perhaps a small booth for recording single instruments or vocals" (Théberge, 2011, p. 8). For the purposes of this thesis, a recording setup will be characterized as a modest "home studio", one that may or may not have a delimited space in the home, and that may or may not be used for profit. In short, a home recording setup is here seen as any sort of recording arrangement inside a home, regardless of its similarity to larger professional studios. For this reason, "home studio" and "home recording setup" may sometimes be used interchangeably.

This thesis' discussions on home recording thus takes into account the different home recording configurations mentioned above, calling attention to the existence of less sophisticated setups, which support the idea that "anyone can home record". While this thesis mostly considers the contemporary forms of digital home recording – mediated by home computers, along with specific recording software and hardware – it nonetheless

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[6] The differentiation between these three denominations isn't always made clear by the peers, apart from Théberge's definition of a "project studio". Hence, "Home recording setup" and "home studio" were here differentiated mostly so as this thesis' arguments can be more clearly made and supported.

[7] This description is based on what Williams (2006), Théberge (1997, 2001) and Homer (2009) say about 'home studios'. Théberge (2001), for example, mentions that "semi-professional and amateur musicians (...) began setting up their own studios using low-cost equipment specifically designed by manufacturers for the 'home studio' market" (p. 12).

recognizes that home recording is not that new. In order to provide an overview of this practice, the next section offers a brief history of home recording.

1.1. A historical overview

It would be impossible to talk about the history of home recording without referring – at least minimally – to the history of recording studios. It is also essential to point out some key technological developments that altered practices related to music recording. Moreover, talking about the history of home recording implies the observation of struggles around music recording, an activity which at first was not widely popular outside the realm of professional recording.

For the first half of the 20th century, the actual activity of music recording was, as a general rule, confined to a few professional studios. By the 1950s, five major companies – Capitol, RCA-Victor, Columbia, Decca and MGM – controlled the existing recording industry (Chanan, 1997, Williams, 2006). It was only in the wake of the development of the magnetic tape and the magnetic tape recording device that independent recording facilities emerged in this decade (Millard, 2005; Williams, 2006). These independent companies allowed more artists to record their work, and were thus essential to the popularization of "different" music styles such as rock'n'roll (Tankel, 1990).

Magnetic tape not only sounded better and allowed a longer playing time than recordings through discs, but it also gave engineers, for the first time, the capacity to edit songs. (Williams, 2006, p. 201) "Thanks to edit", argues Williams, "recording becomes an act of creation rather than preservation." (*Idem,* p. 202) It is also through the invention and use of magnetic tape that the performance loses its centrality, since the recording can be modified later on by the sound engineer.

After the magnetic tape and its recording device, another new recording technology was put on the market, one that was "by far the most revolutionary development in modern recording technology": the multitrack machine. Inspired by some of the overdubbing techniques highly explored by Les Paul[8], Ampex introduced in 1957 the first machine to

[8] Guitarist, songwriter and inventor, Les Paul is mostly known for his collaboration in the development of the solid body electric guitar that received his name (Gibson Les Paul), as well as for his experiments with recording techniques such as overdubbing.

contain a device that recorded on eight tracks[9], or "separate regions" that were "aligned so they could be auditioned or recorded in synchronous time" (*Ibid*, p. 210).

As new practices emerged after the advent of multitrack technology, studio professionals had to acquire specific skills that could suit those practices. (*Ibid*) It was at this moment that these professionals started being compelled to show an image of competence in their fields. Engineers started exerting an even stronger influence over the material recorded and the creative decision-making involved in the recording process. As a result, the differences between the roles of producers and engineers were blurred.

Up to this point, recording technology was still the privilege of professional and semi-professional[10] recording studios. In 1972, a company called TEAC tried for the first time to develop a four-track tape recorder designed for amateur musicians. Even though the machine was much cheaper than professional 24-track recorders, it was still too expensive for a large number of its target customers (*Ibid*).

The first "home studios" were actually built by famous musicians in the late 1970s. Williams remarks that "As rock stars began to accumulate technology for recording as well as for large-scale touring apparatus, they sought out large spaces to serve as multi-function facilities – rehearsal space, storage facility, offices, recording studio" (*Ibid*, p. 443). These places, however, were mostly the "owner-musician's creative home" (*Ibid*, p. 444), as these rock starts didn't live on their studios' premises.

It was finally in 1979 that home recording technology became accessible to a larger number of amateur musicians or music aficionados. It was then that TEAC/Tascam introduced the Portastudio, a device that

> "(…) enabled musicians to record on four separate tracks, with the capability of manipulating each signal with simple treble and bass EQ[11] adjustments, and with faders for balancing each track in the final stereo mix. (...) Not only was the Portastudio relatively inexpensive, it stored audio on cassette tapes, which were cheap and widely available" (*Ibid*, p. 383).

The Portastudio was also easy to use and it could be quickly set up almost anywhere. It was at this point that the notion of "home studio" emerged (Théberge, 2011).

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[9] See Glossary (Annex I).

[10] Williams (2006) explains that "many early semi-professional studios of the 1950s grew out of radio station facilities (...). Others were ad hoc assemblages of cast-off radio equipment and high-fidelity consumer audio products in converted businesses or industrial spaces (...)". (p. 216) He characterizes semi-professional studios by saying that these places "offered less than state-of-the-art equipment to less than professional recording artists, though in most cases the technology rivalled or surpassed that of many professional facilities of an earlier decade." (*Idem*)

[11] See Glossary (Annex I).

Although this technology was made available to more than professional musicians, the sound quality of what was recorded through these machines was inferior to that of recordings done at the time in professional studios. It was easy to realize that whatever was recorded in a Portastudio sounded "amateur", especially because many professional studios were already equipped with digital technology. In fact, professional facilities were introduced to digital recording technology in the late 1970s, when "Sony introduced the PCM-1600, a two-channel device that converted electromagnetic inputs into digital samples" (Williams, 2006, p. 381) and when "3M brought out a 32-track digital multitrack machine" (*Idem*). Nevertheless, the possibility to record at home opened to some music aficionados "the doors to the mysterious world of the recording studio and revealed many of the secrets that had been held by recording professionals for thirty years" (*Ibid*, p. 384).

Another important innovation which would change music recording and production dates back to 1983, when the Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI)[12] protocol was introduced (*Ibid*). According to Williams, "MIDI is both a standard physical interface and a coding system that can be used to communicate any kind of instruction between devices" (p. 378), allowing the integration of musical instrument with recording technology. As Théberge asserts,

> "By creating a standard protocol for communications not only between synthesizers but between synthesizers and computers as well, MIDI has become a vehicle for the growth of an entire generation of software products dedicated to music production" (1997, p. 90).

Therefore, MIDI not only "revolutionized the electronic musical instrument marketplace", but it was also essential for bringing "professional audio into the world of music retail" (Williams, 2006, p. 379). MIDI thus contributed to the growth of an industry whose products were designed for a market no longer restricted to professional musicians.

The first digital tape recorder developed with the amateur consumer in mind was introduced by Alesis in 1991. The 8-track ADAT was much cheaper than the other digital recording machines available at the time, although it was still three times more expensive than the Portastudio (*Idem*). The ADAT, however, had the advantage of providing a sound quality that could rival professional digital technology (*Ibid*). For the first time, this machine decreased the gap in sound quality and costs that separated amateurs' from professionals' recording technology. But as it was still costly for many music aficionados, the ADAT was

[12] See Glossary (Annex I).

mostly bought and used by small and mid-level recording facilities (*Ibid*). Most home recording setups still relied on the Portastudio.

The technological development to have the biggest impact on home recording, and therefore on music recording in general was the Digital Audio Workstation (DAW). Also in the early 1990s, Digidesign redesigned its software for "editing and manipulating sound samples for keyboard-based synthesizers[13]" – the *Sound Tools* – by expanding it to "incorporate non-linear multitrack recording capabilities" (*Idem*, p. 389). This last program was called *Pro Tools*, a DAW that is still on the market, being used by many studios and music aficionados (Avid, n.d.).

DAWs were an important innovation in many ways. First, because of their non-linear editing capabilities: the software allows one to select recording tracks to be edited, "while leaving other adjacent tracks untouched" (*Ibid*, p. 388). Contrarily to edits done through tape, these digital edits can also be reversed at times through a command called "undo", without any loss of information or sound deterioration. In this case, a failed experiment can be easily forgotten (*Ibid*). Also, the visual interface that DAWs provide – what is seen through the computer screen – has its design based on the 24-track analog studio of the 1970s and early 1980s (Théberge, 2011). Given that it follows the logic of the previously available technology, this presentation "makes operation more efficient, and dramatically reduces the time it takes to make a series of composite edits" (Williams, 2006, p. 389).

DAWs also control all the steps of the recording process – from pre-production to mastering and mixing. Therefore, musicians and music aficionados can be producers and engineers at the same time. In fact, many musicians develop engineering skills through DAWs so as to better "control the technological practices that preserve their performances" (*Idem*, p. 445). In this case, being in a studio stopped being a necessity for phases such as mixing (*Ibid*, p. 391). Through DAWs, the overall processual pattern of a recording project (such as composition - pre-production - recording - mixing - mastering) loses its previous linearity, as recordists can go back and forward to any step at any time (*Ibid*). Moreover, DAWs have a great advantage, as other digital recording technologies do: when a digital sound file is copied or transferred, it does not add additional noise to the magnetic medium where it is stored (*Ibid*).

At first, the development of DAWs allowed a whole professional territory to be ceded to well-financed amateurs. It was at this moment that "the term 'project studio' began

[13] See Glossary (Annex I).

to appear in professional magazines as a way of referring to this new type of small–scale recording facility" (Théberge, 2011, p. 8). According to Théberge, 'Project Studios' became another model of what recording studios could be (*Idem*). Moreover, professional musicians also adopted DAWs for their private use, in which case "the ad hoc amateur home studio became the workplace of the professional" (Williams, 2006, p. 393). Yet, soon enough home recording through DAWs and home computers became a reality for less well-off amateurs.

According to Williams, Pro Tools was at some point, by the late 1990s, made available for free, although users needed to buy proprietary hardware in order to achieve the program's full functionality. Nowadays, many DAW options are available to consumers of widely different budgets and levels of expertise. While professional versions of Pro Tools can cost over $10,000, DAWs such as Apple's *GarageBand* come packaged with the purchase of a Mac computer (*Ibid*); they are also sold for iPhones and iPads for as little as $4.99 (iTunes Preview, n.d.). Moreover, "hardware/software developers, such as Steinberg (developers of Cubase and Nuendo) and Digidesign (ProTools), increasingly design consumer and professional versions of their audio products with similar feature sets" (Théberge, 2011, p. 10). The greatest example of a low-budget DAW is *Audacity*, a DAW software that is open source and free for download through its website (Audacity, n.d.). This availability of DAWs – especially those available for free or free of charge with the sale of Macintoshs – seem to be "thus promoting multitrack recording as a form of common practice" (Théberge, 2011, p. 10).

Although the notion of "home studio" emerged in the 1970s, it was in fact "the proliferation of DAWs that firmly established the home environment as a primary location for both professional and amateur recording" (Williams, 2006, p. 445). It was only after the development and adoption of DAWs that the sound of home recordings could be made comparably to sounds that were recorded in professional studios. As Théberge explains,

> "(...) the sheer power of these technologies has largely fulfilled the dream of a professional quality home recording that earlier technologies, in varying degrees, only promised; in this sense, the distinction between what can be considered a 'professional' or 'commercial' project studio and simply a 'personal' or 'home' studio has become increasingly difficult to make" (2011, p. 10).

Moreover, this newer recording technology proved to be more accessible than all the other recording technologies that had been available before.

The rise of digital home recording represented, for mid-level professional musicians (Williams, 2006), a way to escape the control exerted in professional studios. Recording at

home is usually more comfortable "compared to the 'synthetic environment' of the professional studio" (*Idem*, p. 451) and it gives musicians the freedom to make mistakes, to explore and to be creative at their own speed. As home studios are "off-the-clock" (*Ibid*, p. 452), musicians – and non-musicians alike – can take their time to develop the required skills to home record. As Williams notes, "As musicians gained more knowledge of recording technology, and more control over the recording process, recording in the home became the norm, even at some of the highest levels of professional success" (*Ibid*, p. 455).

To recording amateurs and non-musicians, on the other hand, these technologies introduced multitrack recording as a new, possible activity. As many didn't have prior experience in professional studios, they were free to "develop their own recording practices keyed to non-linear, non-destructive editing" and "to establish a recording 'studio' in nearly any physical environment" (*Ibid*, p. 456). As "DAWs recast 'engineering' and 'production' as programming" (*Ibid*, p. 390), people who are savvy with computers and interested in music recording are given the chance to occupy some of the roles that were at first an exclusivity of a few professional employees in big studios.

As I tried to demonstrate, the introduction of DAWs and the possibility to operate them in home computers were essential to the rise of home recording as it is mostly known today. As more people have been allowed to home record with less due to these technological innovations, home recording is often spoken in relation to the "accessibility" and "democratization" that the activity possibly brings to music recording, as it was mentioned earlier. Even though the term "democratization" in relation to home recording has been lately used carefully[14], the idea of this possibility seems to be strongly formed nonetheless.

Home recording's growth in popularity brought to the fore certain issues that accompany the activity. The aspects that seem to be central to the formation and characterization of home recording raise certain problems that might put the very notion of "accessibility" or "democratization" into question. Some of these issues will be presented and briefly discussed in the following section.

[14] Théberge (1997) uses quotation marks around the word democratization, while also emphasizing a "utopian rhetoric found in many magazine articles and advertisements" (p. 215). Homer (2009), in turn, doesn't go further than talking about a "potential democratization of the music making process" (p. 90).

1.2. Issues about Home Recording

Understanding and exploring home recording is not only a matter of learning how the activity became possible, but also a question of analyzing and discussing certain notions, ideas and even conflicts that form home recording and that are also formed by it. Aspects such as the use of technology, the space of home, the "studio", the roles and processes it comprises all seem to be crucial for the constitution of what we presently call "home recording". Meanwhile, these aspects also raise questions that can be valuable for a critical thinking of home recording.

As it was briefly discussed in the previous section, the notion of "home recording" became possible as the market for music recording technology started expanding. Similarly to what Théberge (1997) argues about popular musicians, it is possible to say that the home recordist is, above all, a "consumer of technology". Following Théberge's argument, this expression not only means that musicians and recordists have become "consumers of digital musical instruments and recording devices as consumer objects", but also that "they have, in various ways, aligned their musical practice with a kind of behavior akin to a type of consumer practice" (*Idem*, p. 6). He adds that "the home studio has become both the site of significant music activity at every level (...) and the focal point of the consumer market for electronic musical instrument suppliers" (*Idem*, p. 215).

While some home recordists may choose to equip their setups with the minimum amount of gear necessary, others aim to build project studios that resemble the professional recording facilities. Théberge defends that "the average home studio is filled with musical gear" (1997, p. 244), which usually include microphones, mixing console, a computer and peripheral hardware and software. As it was mentioned before, a whole industry of music recording software and hardware keeps on developing technology to supply this home recording consumer market. Regardless of the intentions and budget of the home recordist, the home recording activity therefore presupposes technology consumption and quite often, gear upgrade, as "high technology will likely become obsolete within one or two brief product cycles" (*Idem*, p. 245). This issue brings to the fore the very idea of accessibility in home recording. What would be the basic economic conditions for someone to start home recording, considering that he/she is inevitably a technology consumer? Also, what kind of cultural capital one would need to have in order to start home recording?

Yet, the impact of computer-based recording goes beyond the emergence and growth

of a market for recording technology consumers. In fact, the uses of this technology have also had consequences over the whole process of music composition. As the recording process through DAWs loses its linearity – as we mentioned above –, so does the act of composing. As Williams (2006) argues, "The impact of basic computer editing techniques on composition can be compared to the impact of word processing programs to the act of writing" (p. 456). Usually, any material that is written or recorded through computer software programs can be reconsidered, explored, modified or discarded at any time (*Idem*). Théberge (2011) adds that "the micro-manipulation of digital audio has become more and more the primary focus of contemporary recording practice" (p. 21). The actual moment of recording tracks, as Théberge discusses, is "essentially, only the starting point for a much more lengthy and engaged set of compositional practices" (*Idem*). These reconfigurations in music writing changed the working practices of some musicians and composers; meanwhile, they also represented a new beginning and possibility for many other music aficionados, who maybe had never had the motivation to compose or play with sound before the advent of consumer home recording gadgets.

The dissemination of digital recording technologies for home recording thus allowed musicians and non-musicians to openly explore operations that are part of the specialized work of producers and engineers. Williams explains that "The occupants of the roles of producer, engineer, musician, and artist each must develop particular skills related to the specific duties associated with each position" (2006, p. 297) As more people – professional and non-professional musicians and music aficionados of different expertise – are given the opportunity to try out and learn such skills, the very idea of who can claim the role of musicians, producers or engineers in contemporary culture is challenged. (Théberge, 2011) Likewise, the increasing access to computer-based audio recording technology and to the knowledge it requires "is eroding the distinction between amateur audio buff and professional studio wizard" (Williams, 2006, p. 460). Certainly, the combination of the world of professional recording and the realm of private, domestic spaces plays a part in this relaxation of roles (*Idem*). But to what extent non-musicians can really claim the role of musicians, or home recordists can really claim the role of producers/engineers? Through this "relaxations of roles", are the positions of musician, engineer and producer equally open as a possibility to any home recordist?

Recording music at home therefore challenges some of the previous configurations of recording practices; at the same time, it disturbs certain activities that were formerly held in the domestic environment. As Williams asserts, "Certainly the cozy atmosphere of the

home studio can be conductive to relaxed performance, but setting up recording equipment in spaces not designed for recording can disrupt the life of those who share the domicile" (*Ibid*, p. 452). Hence, it is likely that the combination of two different environments – if we regard *work* and *home* as often separated spaces, even if momentarily – will cause conflicts that may require an adaptation of both territories and the respective activities to which they give place. Taking this possibility into account, what kind of negotiations need to happen in domestic spaces so as to make home recording possible?

Although the advent of digital computer-based technology and home recording have resulted in certain rearrangements as those that were mentioned above, they didn't completely change the activities around the recording process. As "the secrets of professional studios" were made available to a larger number of music aficionados, home recordists tried to adapt this knowledge to the space of home. Consequently, "Whether located in a high-rise office building, an industrial warehouse, or a re-modeled living room, a studio is still a 'studio', and the practices that take place within them remain remarkably similar." (*Ibid*, p. 455) The professional studio and its practices aren't ignored by home recordists; instead, they are valued as a source of knowledge for the home recordists' activities. Moreover, "Hybrid projects, those that moved from home studio to commercial facility and back again became the dominant form of recording for affluent amateurs as well as for struggling professionals" (*Ibid*, p. 387). Therefore, professional studios and their practices seem to remain strong in the era of digital home recording. In this case, one could wonder if home recording's "accessibility" could ever lead this practice to new, innovative recording activities, independent from those held in professional facilities. But while home recording still seems to be overall based on what is done in big studios, to what extent do professional studios have some sort of regulatory power over domestic recordings?

This attachment that the "home studio" has to the "professional studio" is actually clearly shown in academic works that discuss home recording. Whenever this activity is approached in scholar articles or books[15], it is done as a section of larger studies on the "recording studio history and practice" (Williams, 2006) or on the "different studio configurations" (Théberge, 2011, p. 20). This thesis thus proposes to look closely at home recording as a particular studio form. For this to be possible, I decided to look at home recording as a discourse, one that forms and is formed by its system of rules and

[15] It is important to mention that, for the purposes of this thesis, I couldn't find many academic works that specifically studied "home recording". One exception was the article written by Homer (2009). This fact shows not only that home recording is still a relatively young phenomenon, but also how its activities are very much connected to those of professional studios.

power/knowledge relations, as I will discuss next.

1.3. Home Recording as Discourse

As we could briefly grasp from the historical overview and the discussion about issues in home recording, this activity is formed by certain rules and regularities. Being a home recordist, as we could observe so far, requires at least the acquisition of technology, of knowledge and the delimitation of space at home. Home recording is thus organized in a particular way, one that is only possible due to the conditions of knowledge in a particular culture (Ysmal, 1972) at a given socio-historical moment.

As a "pratique réglée" (*Idem*, p. 790), home recording can be seen and treated as a discourse. By "discourse", I don't mean the linguistic concept of the term, but the Foucauldian concept that links discourse to "practice". As Stuart Hall describes,

> "By 'discourse', Foucault meant 'a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment. … Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But … since all social practices entail *meaning*, and meanings shape and influence what we do – our conduct – all practices have a discursive aspect.'" (as cited in Hall, 1997, p. 44)

Studying home recording as a discourse means focusing on identifying "the rules and practices that produced meaningful statements and regulated discourse" (*Idem*) at specific times. Statements are here seen as

> "a function of existence that properly belongs to signs and on the basis of which one may decide, through analysis or intuition, whether or not they 'make sense', according to what rule they follow one another or are juxtaposed, of what they are the sign, and what sort of act is carried out by their formulation." (Foucault, 1972, p. 97)

Statements are the events of discourse (*Idem*); "They are traces of practices, the accomplishment of projects" (Allor & Gagnon, 1997, p. 35). Home recording, in turn, is seen as a practice that systematically produces the object it talks about (Ysmal, 1972), governing the way that it can "be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about" (Hall, 1997, p. 44).

Discourse "constructs, defines and produces objects of knowledge, while excluding other ways of reasoning" (Baker & Galasiński, 2001, p. 12). Therefore, home recording as a discourse not only admits certain people to home record and to talk about it, but it also

excludes (Foucault, 1982) others from the activity. And everything that is allowed or excluded, constrained and rejected, "said" and "non-said" is part of the discourse's laws of formation (Foucault, 1976). As Foucault explains, "The manifest discourse (...) is really no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say; and this “not-said” is a hollow that undermines from within all that is said" (*Idem*, p. 25).

All that "can be said" within the discourse of home recording, as well as the conduct to be followed, needs to be within home recording's regime of truth (Foucault, 1971). These validations are possible due to discourses' "internal rules, where discourse exercises its own control; rules concerned with the principles of classification, ordering and distribution" (*Idem*, p. 12). Being part of a certain discourse thus requires fulfilling certain conditions and "being within the truth" of that discourse.

Here, "truth" doesn't mean only "what can be truly said" (Foucault, 1971) about something, but also what is not allowed to be said (Foucault, 1976). As Foucault explains,

> "Truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. (...) Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned (...) the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true." (1980, p. 131)

Foucault also argues that "Truth isn't outside of power. (...) it induces regular effects of power" (*Idem*). Power is what regulates meanings and notions in discourses. It "governs not only what can be said under determinate social and cultural conditions, but who can speak, when and where" (Baker & Galasiński, 2001, p. 12). Power is thus "processes that generate, enable and constrain any form of social action” (*Idem*, p. 25). Instead of being a centralizing, constraining force, power is "a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power just as much as those over whom it is exercised" (Foucault, 1980, p. 156). Foucault (1982) adds that power is a question of "capacity" (p.786): what matters, in fact, is no more than who has power, and what happens when relations of power take place and individuals exert power over others.

Relations of power thus consist of actions over other people's actions (Foucault, 1982). Since "the one over whom power is exercised" is "recognized and maintained (…) as someone who acts (…), a whole field of responses, reactions, results and possible inventions may open up" (*Idem*, p. 789). Therefore, while power circulates (Hall, 1997), it also enables and constraints the conduct of people.

Power is intrinsically connected with *knowledge*. In fact, "power produces knowledge" and they "directly imply one another" (Foucault, 1977a). "Foucault argued that not only is knowledge always a form of power, but power is implicated in the questions of whether and in what circumstances knowledge is to be applied or not" (Hall, 1997, p. 48). Knowledge linked to power is thus what is constructed as "true" in a certain discipline[16], under certain historical and political circumstances:

> "Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true.' Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practice. (...) There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations." (Foucault, 1977a, p. 27)

Hence, as possibilities of conduct are guided by exercises of power and knowledge, it is by analyzing the power/knowledge relations (Foucault, 1971) within the discourse of home recording that it will be possible to understand why certain things are accepted as "true" within the discourse, while others are excluded from it.

Whereas these relations of power/knowledge regulate the conduct of others within the discourse of home recording, they allow the formation of specific *subjects*. Produced by the discourse, these subjects

> "(…) must submit to its rules and conventions, to its dispositions of power/knowledge. The subject can become the bearer of the kind of knowledge which discourse produces. It can become the object through which power is relayed." (Hall, 1997, p. 55)

According to Foucault (1971), specific discourses form knowing subjects to whom a certain position is granted. These subjects thus have the power/knowledge to guide the action of others, as it is the exercise of power that guides the possibility of conduct and puts in order the possible outcome (Foucault, 1982). Being subject of a discourse thus means locating oneself "in the *position* from which the discourse makes most sense" and "'subjecting' oneself to its meanings, power and regulation" (Hall, 1997, p. 56). As Foucault argues, "It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects" (1982, p. 780).

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[16] Foucault defines disciplines as bodies of knowledge. The word can be related, for example, to scholarly disciplines such as science, medicine, sociology, etc., or to disciplinary institutions of social control such as the prison, the school, the hospital, etc. (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 26).

By investigating home recording as a discourse, I intend to question the said and the not-said within that discourse. Yet, this thesis' interest is not in discovering meanings that may be lying behind the discourse (Foucault, 1971). Instead, it aims to find how statements are produced within the discourse; the power/knowledge relations that legitimize, form and are formed by home recording's system of rules and regime of truth; the subjects that are produced through power exerted within the discourse of home recording – and who is identified as "authority" –, as well as the discourse's regime of exclusion. Therefore, through an analysis of the discourse of home recording, I hope to better understand what makes home recording possible as it is.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter discusses the methods used in this research. It explains how this thesis relies on some of Michel Foucault's guidelines on how to perform a discourse analysis. It also describes how the constitution of the thesis' corpus was inspired by the Foucauldian concept of "archive". It describes the magazines, websites and books chosen to be part of the corpus and why they were selected. It also discusses the basic principles of the approach known as *critical interpretation* (Johnson *et al*., 2004) that inform the thesis. Finally, it describes in details the methodological rules underlying the analysis of the corpus.

2.1. Discourse Analysis

In order to look for the system of regularities and productivities (Allor & Gagnon, 1997) that form and are formed by the discourse of home recording, I chose to analyze written texts which have been published in contemporary music magazines and Internet forums that discuss the topic (see 2.2. The Corpus). As I mentioned in the previous chapter, I do not intend to proceed with a linguistic discourse analysis, but rather with a Foucauldian analysis of the discourse of home recording. Instead of looking for "what was being said in what was said" (Foucault, 1972, p. 30), I attempt to grasp the *statements* – or "what is said" – "in the exact specificity of its occurrence, (...) establish its correlations with other statements that may be connected with it, and show what other forms of statements it excludes" (Idem, p. 30-31).

In their book *L'état de Culture* (1997), Martin Allor and Michelle Gagnon study the trajectory of "les politiques culturelles québécoises" and the production of the cultural field in Québec as "both the central legitimizing agency of government and as an emergent regime of social power" (Allor & Gagnon, 1997, p. 26). In order to proceed with this analysis of the development of the Cultural field, they chose *discourse analysis* as the most appropriate research program. They argue that

> "(…) discourse analysis of the field can make visible the virtual system of regularities and productivities in the statements and texts which articulate the cultural domain. Such a broad discourse analysis can focus precisely on the emergent power-knowledge relations which work to over-determine the terms of particular debates and governmental actions" (*Idem*, p. 32-33).

Likewise, through my analysis, I will look for regularities and distinctions that characterize the discourse of home recording "in order to better analyze the power relations at play" (*Ibid*, p. 34). This way, I intend to "render visible some of the 'politics of truth' which work to regularize the imminent rules for the production of statements in the domain" (*Ibid*). Similarly to what Foucault suggested for the analysis of sexuality, I will focus on finding possible answers to the following questions: "quelles sont les relations de pouvoir, les plus immédiates, les plus locales qui sont à l' œuvre? Comment rendent-elles possibles ces sortes de discours, et inversement comment ces discours leurs servent-ils de support?" (Foucault, 1976, p. 128)

In his book *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), Foucault provides certain guidelines that explicit how such a discourse analysis can be performed. Although he has not developed a proper methodology, he offers nevertheless certain directions that are part of his own theorizing of discourse. Based on these guidelines, this thesis adopts the "three decisions" suggested by Foucault: "to question our will to truth; to restore to discourse its character as an event; to abolish the sovereignty of the signifier" (Foucault, 1971, p. 21). It embraces, thus, an anti-essentialist perspective, one that generally considers that meanings, as well as culture or identity, are produced through power relations and are historically situated (see Johnson *et al*., 2004; Mercier, 2007). My concern is to question *how* home recording is constructed, *how* it becomes what it is, rather than concentrating on questions oriented by "what" or "who" (Mercier, 2007).

This thesis also follows the Foucauldian "methodological demands" (Foucault, 1971, p. 22) for discourse analysis. These are formed by four principles that should be taken into account by the researcher: *principle of reversal* – "to recognize the negative activity of the cutting-out and rarefaction of discourse" (*Idem*); *principle of discontinuity* – "Discourse must be treated as a discontinuous activity, its different manifestations sometimes coming together, but just as easily unaware of, or excluding each other" (*Ibid*); *principle of specificity* – "We must conceive discourse as a violence that we do to things or, at all events, as a practice we impose upon them; it is in this practice that the events of discourse find the principle of their regularity" (*Ibid*); and *principle of exteriority* – "we are not to burrow to the hidden core of discourse (...) instead, taking the discourse itself, its appearance and its regularity, (...) we should look for its external conditions of existence" (*Ibid*).

The principle of discontinuity was essential for the formation and analysis of this thesis' corpus, since it led me to look at home recording not simply as a regular sequence of practices put together, but rather as an irregular ensemble of enunciations. Similarly, the

principle of reversal guided me to think of the discourse of home recording as part of a more complex system, which for instance, also includes non-discursive relations of power. The principle of specificity reinforced the idea that the sovereignty of the signifier should be abolished, while "truth" should be questioned. Finally, the principle of exteriority led me to look for home recording's system of rules, instead of searching for meanings possibly hidden or existing outside the discourse. The details about this thesis' methodological path will be better explained in the following sections.

2.2. The Corpus

The constitution of this thesis' corpus was inspired by the principles of an *archive*, as described by Foucault. From a Foucauldian perspective, the archive is the "'system of discursivity' that establishes the possibility of what can be said" (Manoff, 2004, p. 18). It is "the first law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events" (Foucault, 1972, p. 145). Following Foucault's principles, I organized this thesis' corpus by looking for texts (which could have been presented in various forms such as speech, dialogue, treatise, etc.) that suggest "rules of conduct" while "offering rules, opinions and advice on how to behave as one should: 'practical texts', which are themselves objects of a 'practice' in that they were designed to be read, learned, reflected upon and tested out, and they were intended to constitute the eventual framework of everyday conduct" (Foucault, 2000, p. 366-367).

In order to put together these "practical texts", I chose to analyze contemporary magazine articles and Internet forum threads that somehow discuss home recording. More specifically, this thesis' corpus is formed by fourteen articles from the magazine *Canadian Musician*; thirteen articles from the *Sound on Sound* magazine (and one issue entirely dedicated to the "basics" about home recording); five issues of *Tape Op: The Creative Music Recording Magazine*; seven articles from the *Recording Magazine*; as well as multiple threads from the Internet forums *Recording.org*, *Home Recording.com* and a few from *Steinberg's Cubase forum*. Later on, the first chapter of the book entitled *Guerilla Home Recording* (Coryat, 2005) was also added as part of the corpus. Before providing a brief description of each of these magazines, forums and book, it seems relevant to mention the starting considerations that led to this corpus' formation.

In order to build a corpus from where I could identify the articulation of different orders of "ideas, projects and possibilities" (O'Regan as cited in Allor & Gagnon, 1997, p. 35) regarding home recording, I was guided by three general premises. Firstly, I looked for a "field which the relations are likely to be numerous, dense, and relatively easy to describe" (Foucault, 1972, p. 32). It seemed to me that written texts on home recording usually fit into that profile. Also, these texts are relatively easy to access, as most of them are available online (be it through magazine's and forum's websites or through Internet research databases). Assuring the availability of the corpus was essential for the accomplishment of this work, especially considering the limits regarding time and money that usually accompany the development of a master's thesis.

Secondly, knowing that "discourses are to be treated as ensembles of discursive events" and that "events (...) are to be dealt with discontinuous series" (Foucault, 1971, p. 23), I tried to look for sources of written texts about home recording that had different stated goals, backgrounds and target readers – or users, considering the Internet forums. I wanted to be able to look at the discourse of home recording from its multiple and different positions and functions; in other words, from its points of dispersion, diffraction and discontinuity (*Idem*). As I identified many magazines and Internet forums that discussed home recording, I compared their descriptions (which were found through websites, users comments online and personal conversations) in order to choose the most heterogeneous corpus possible, obviously considering the limitations of a master's thesis, as I mentioned above.

Finally, I established that, for this thesis, I would analyze articles and debates that date from the early 1990s up to the present. As Foucault (1972) defends, "We must be ready to receive every moment of discourse in its sudden irruption (...) Discourse must not be referred to the distant presence of the origin, but treated as and when it occurs" (p. 29). Therefore, this thesis' corpus was built considering this "immediacy" of discourse. As mentioned earlier, my objective is not to look for the origins of home recording, but rather to see how it is being enunciated today and under what system of rules. This temporal limit was also constituted considering that I am mostly interested in the discourse of home recording after the so called digital revolution.

2.2.1. Music Print Magazines

- Canadian Musician

The magazine describes itself as "Canada's magazine for professional and amateur musicians" (About Canadian Musician, n.d.). Published bi-monthly since 1979, the magazine covers Canadian artists, gears, techniques and it has regular columns on guitar, bass, voice, percussion, MIDI, recording, on-line music and more.

The magazine was chosen for the proposed discourse analysis firstly for the fact that it doesn't comprise only music recording. As a general music magazine, its articles on home recording tend to be less specialized than those found in *Sound on Sound* or *Recording Magazine*, for example. Moreover, *Canadian Musician* is easily accessible. In fact, many of its articles on home recording could be obtained through the website *International Index to Music Periodicals* (http://iimp.chadwyck.com/home.do).

- Sound on Sound

Sound on Sound (SOS) describes itself as the "World's premier music recording technology magazine" (About SOS, n.d.). Based in Cambridge, England, and founded in 1985, *SOS* is a monthly magazine "recognized internationally as the 'bible' of the high-tech music recording industry" (*Idem,* para. 2). The magazine offers tutorials and "how-to" workshops "for beginners and professionals alike, helping readers gain the most from their studio equipment" (*Ibid,* para. 3).

This magazine was chosen for its popularity amongst musicians and people interested in home recording I talked with. It was recommended by three people who work selling recording equipment in Montreal (in private conversations) and it was repeatedly mentioned in a music recording forum as one of music recorders' favorite magazine (Vadim, 2008).

SOS magazine has published many articles about home recording. Many are available through their website, starting from the ones published in January 1994. The *SOS* website also has an active forum; my focus, however, remained on their articles about home recording, which were mostly gathered from the magazine's web page. The only print version added to the corpus was an issue from the magazine's "Smart Guides Series" called "Music Technology: Basics & Beyond" (White, 2011). The magazine issue claims to be a basic guide for the most important steps regarding home recording.

- Tape Op: The Creative Music Recording Magazine

Founded in 1996, the magazine is a bi-monthly publication on music recording. According to its website, its "focus has been on creativity and inspiration, rather than simple discussions of recording equipment" (Tape Op: The Creative Music Recording Magazine, n.d., para. 2). The magazine is free of charge in the US and in the UK: free print magazine subscriptions are available for those countries through *Tape Op*'s website.

Tape Op was chosen as part of this thesis' corpus for two main reasons. First, *Tape Op* also received very good comments from users of a recording forum (Vadim, 2008), along with *SOS* magazine. In addition to positive comments, *Tape Op* was the only magazine – amongst the ones considered – that explicitly attempts to focus more on creativity than on equipment. The magazine thus seemed to be a valuable choice, considering the heterogeneity of ideas and positions I aimed to reach.

- Recording Magazine

Recording – The Magazine for the Recording Musician is an American monthly magazine, available by subscription and distribution throughout North America (About, n.d.). It claims to have kept the same mission statement since when it was founded in 1987:

> "'Recording will carry out in-depth reviews of new equipment as soon as it comes onto the market, interview the engineers and producers who influence the way music is made today, and explain any new technology as it is introduced in an easy-to-understand and logical way.' *–Inaugural Issue, October 1987*" (*Idem*, para. 4-5)

This magazine was the last one to be chosen for this thesis' corpus. In a private conversation in June 2011, Paul Théberge called to my attention the fact that this magazine had its title changed from "Home & Studio Recording" to simply "Recording" in 1994 (A brief history, n.d.). The fact that "home" and "studio" were merged somehow intrigued me; it made me wonder how home recording was spoken about in such context, regardless of the magazine's official explanation for the name change.

2.2.2. Internet Music Forums

- Recording.org

Recording.org describes itself as a "professional online community since 2000", "created for musicians by musicians" (Recording.org, n.d.). Its Recording and Sound

Engineering forums are the website's main page, and they are divided as follows: Pro Audio forums; Project Studios, Newbies, Home Recording; Announcements; and Music Resources. Particularly for this website, it's on the forums within the second topic that I concentrated my analysis.

Recording.org is only one amongst many websites that house forums on home recording. However, it was chosen mostly for being a "professional" community which has a dedicated space for amateurs, and for not being directly related to other websites or to commercial purposes – apart from the advertisement banners that it may display.

- Home Recording.com

Home Recording.com by "Audio Fanzine" – a free of charge online magazine and community – was also chosen as a forum to be analyzed, mostly for two reasons. Firstly, it is directly dedicated to home recording; secondly, it doesn't claim to be meant for professionals, which distinguishes it from the website *Recording.org*. In fact, Home Recording's very first forum is called "Newbies", which contains the following description: "Just starting? Afraid to ask a question? Don't worry, here nobody will laugh (...)." (Home Recording.com, n.d.)

The website *Home Recording.com* contains forums on recording and mixing techniques, on studio building and display, on "Marketing your music", a special forum called "Home Recording's Original Song Contest", etc. The informality of its forums descriptions is another factor that differentiates it from the *Cubase* and *Recording.org* forums. For example, the *Home Recording.com* website characterizes its "Singing and Vocals" forum by the phrase "Singers unite! Singing techniques, itchy throats, and do you need vocal lessons? (...) Share your problems and solutions..." (*Idem*). Similarly, it explains its "Song Writing and Composition" forum with the following sentence: "How to structure a song, write lyrics... Verse Chorus Verse Bridge Chorus Chorus" (*Ibid*). The other referred websites make use of literal descriptions of what the forums are about, without the use of jokes or play-on-words.

- Steinberg's Cubase Forum

Cubase[17] is a software developed by the German company Steinberg for music recording, composing and mixing (Steinberg, n.d.). According to the Steinberg website, the

[17] It is important to note why I chose Cubase's forums instead of Pro Tools', for example, which is not only a well known and widely used recording software, but it is also the pioneer of DAWs. First of all, the two software

company was founded in 1984 "on [the] (...) ideal (...) to help artists to make music in ways that put their creativity first, and using technology that almost anyone could afford" (*Idem,* para. 1) Its forum – which can be accessed from Steinberg's website – is a place where Cubase users can discuss the software's features, get in contact with the Cubase specialists and make available their projects made with the software (Steinberg Forum, n.d.).

The Cubase forum was chosen to be part of this thesis' corpus for being recommended in private conversation as a place largely visited mostly by amateur recordists[18]. Moreover, I was particularly interested in their forum thread "Made with Cubase", where Cubase users are encouraged to post the songs they recorded through the software program.

2.2.3. Book

- "Guerilla Home Recording – How to get great sound from any studio (no matter how weird or cheap your gear is)"

The reference for this book, written by Karl Coryat (2005) was first found in the form of a book review for the "All things – technology" section of the Music Educators Journal (White, 2006). Initially, it was left aside, as my original interest was to work with magazines and Internet recording forums. However, as the term "guerrilla recording" kept appearing in the articles I read, I decided to add this book's first chapter to the corpus. Entitled "What is Guerilla Home Recording", this chapter was chosen for its attempt to answer such a question. It also provides basic guidelines for those who intend to do guerrilla home recording, such as "Get over yourself", "Sample those drums", "Don't Sweat Acoustics", etc.

As a researcher, I am aware that restricting a corpus to a few Internet discussion forums and North American and Western-European music magazines is very limiting for a discourse analysis. In fact, that is one of the reasons why I didn't hesitate to add more material to the corpus when it seemed appropriate – such as the *Recording Magazine* and Coryat's book about Guerrilla Home Recording, as I mentioned earlier. Moreover, I understand that a discourse's power/knowledge relations "are superimposed, they cross,

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programs fulfill the same general purpose in home recording; thus, analyzing both their forums didn't seem crucial, considering the necessity of heterogeneity in our corpus and the scope of this project. The Cubase forum was chosen instead of Pro Tools' for the fact that it was directly recommended and for its "Made with Cubase" thread.

[18] The Cubase forum was recommended by two salesmen that work for the music store *Italmelodie* in Montreal. They were asked for advice on where to find basic information about home recording in online forums.

impose their own limits, sometimes cancel one another, sometimes reinforce one another" (Foucault, 1982, p. 793). Discourses are thus in constant movement, in a continual process of legitimation and formation, something which adds to the present research's corpus limitations. It is however important to emphasize here that this thesis proposes an exploratory research about the discourse of home recording, rather than an exhaustive one. Also, Foucault argues that

> "Two facts must be constantly borne in mind: that the analysis of discursive events is in no way limited to such a field; and that the division of this field itself cannot be regarded either as definitive or as absolutely valid; it is no more than an initial approximation that must allow relations to appear that may erase the limits of this initial outline." (1972, p. 33)

This thesis' corpus was constituted with a view to allow an "initial approximation" of what can be the power/knowledge relations and articulations established within and by the discourse of home recording.

2.3. Principles of Analysis

In addition to the Foucauldian "methodological demands" for a discourse analysis as suggested above, this thesis' methodology is based on what Johnson *et al*. (2004) call an "'interpretative' critique" (p. 48). Located in the parameters of *cultural studies* – "a particular approach within the study of culture" (*Idem*, p. 1), this method is supported by particular orientations regarding the cultural research, the researching self, objectivism and claims to truth. Some of these guidelines are essential to the way in which the present research has been understood and performed.

As briefly mentioned earlier, this thesis first assumes an anti-essentialist position. It accepts that cultural forms are where meaning and power are produced and organized. While power is not reduced "to one central location or dynamo" (*Ibid*, p. 35), culture is not "homogeneous, firmly bounded, pure and (...) organized around an essence or core" (*Ibid*). Secondly, it considers the researcher's "positionality" (Ibid, p. 48) inside her object of study. As Johnson *et al.* explain,

> "(…) we are actively constituted as knowing subjects by the theories and discourses we work with – which, in a sense, work us. (...) As Gramsci most memorably put it 'The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is *knowing thyself* as a product of the

> historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory (1971: 324)" (*Ibid*, p. 44-45).

The "positionality" of the researcher thus means that there is a constant "dialogue between the researcher's questioning and their sources" (*Ibid*, p. 46) Through writing, researchers also represent and communicate culture through a certain perspective, which reinforces the assumption that knowledge is always situated and partial (*Ibid*). Cultural studies thus "treats culture as a structure of formation that goes beyond, but embraces, individual subjectivities" (*Ibid*, p. 48), including the one of the researcher.

As a woman, musician and amateur home recordist, I admit that my position leads me to ask specific questions, especially the ones concerning home recording as an "accessible" activity and the subject position of those who can't, for any reason, have a fully equipped recording setup. Meanwhile, this "positionality" that builds my *self* as researcher is constantly reformulated as I enter in dialogue with "others" in research. And it is the "alterity" caused by this constant dialogue "that makes understanding necessary and self-questioning possible" (*Ibid*, p. 46).

Finally, this research is not only committed to better understanding "our own and others' life worlds" (*Ibid*, p. 50) through an "interpretation" of its constituted corpus, but it is also seen "as a political activity, an intervention in the situation studied and knowledge about it" (*Ibid*, p. 50-51). Hence, by questioning what is "true" within the discourse of home recording, I also hope to incite discussions about its rules and exclusions, as well as why and how they are legitimized.

In order to arrive at such discussions, I first started gathering and reading academic literature that talked about home recording, its origins and issues, not only to better familiarize myself with the topic, but also to contextualize home recording from other sources, different from those of the constituted corpus. This contextualization, particularly developed in this thesis' second chapter, was essential for understanding the conditions of home recording's emergence, as well as the discourse's development as knowledge and practice (Mercier, 2007). The search for literature and its consultation also took place throughout this thesis' composition.

Once this thesis' corpus was determined (for details, see 2.2. The Corpus), I started a process of detailed observation and close reading (Johnson *et al.*, 2004, p. 51) of the material gathered, so as to start looking for some of the discourse's questions, issues, subjects and power relations. This reading wasn't done in a linear way; instead, fragments from different magazines and websites were constantly being contrasted, compared and put in parallel. As

traces of the discourse's discontinuity were being found, sections were underlined and key-words or sentences were noted. Considering the forum threads consulted, excerpts were copied and pasted in a text document, while their respective links and web pages were saved. This highlighting and noting process was done many times, as the texts were read repeatedly. As I intended to identify the possible articulations that took place within the discourse, fragments from the selected magazines and websites were analyzed together regarding their regularity and dispersion; their elements were studied considering what they linked and what they excluded.

All the issues that were noted according to the description above were assembled together in a text document. They comprised summaries of "advice" for how to home record – such as "learning never stops", "take your time", "copying big studios" –, the possible limitations regarding home recording – such as money, time, space –, the description of advertisements, amongst other issues. The rationale behind this document was to start looking at the discourse of home recording as a whole, a little more independently from the texts' sources. The sources were nevertheless mentioned in the document, so as to facilitate the consultation of those excerpts when needed.

I then wrote a first draft of what seemed to be the relations and articulations that these noted issues established amongst themselves. As this text was being written, the original magazine articles and web pages were often consulted again. The new topics that first emerged from the relations observed were: *Technology*; *Sound, noise and listening*; *Recording at home*; *Being or not being a "Pro" in Home Recording*; *Building a Home Recording Setup*; *Guerilla Recording*; *The Practice of (Home) Recording*; *Home Recording Through Time*; *Making Music* and *Gender Issues*. This list of issues was shortened as I realized that some of them could actually be merged into other discussions. The matter of "technology", for example, is constantly present in all the other issues observed; in this case, its discussion was spread throughout the analysis instead of being separated in one specific topic. Likewise, "Building a Home Recording Setup" and "The Practice of (Home) Recording" seemed to be more easily explained as part of the "prescriptions" present in the discourse of home recording. These issues were thus similarly discussed in other sections of the analysis, such as the one about "Becoming a Pro". The only topic that was left out of discussion was "Home Recording Through Time", due to this research's time and range limitations (for details about this exclusion, see Conclusion). This thesis' analysis is organized as follows: The section 3.1 explains how *The Notion of Home Recording* is

enunciated in the magazines and forums that are part of the corpus[19]. The section *Recording at Home* (section 3.2) comprises discussions about *Making Music* (section 3.2.1) – or how, according to the discourse, recording music at home somehow shapes the compositional process –, *The Matter of Space* (section 3.2.2) – or how negotiations are established within the space of home in the context of home recording – and *The Matter of Sound* (section 3.2.3.) – how "good sound" is conceptualized within the discourse and what are the discourse's prescriptions for how to obtain a "good sound" at home. The section 3.3 discusses the system of rules for one to *become a home recording "Pro"*. In turn, the section 3.4 discusses *Home recording for fun and empowerment*, and how *"doing it yourself"* is constructed as counter-discourse of home recording. Finally, power relations regarding *Gender in Home Recording* will be discussed in the section 3.5.

[19] This topic was the last one to be developed in the analysis. After all the discussions that were brought up by the analysis were written, it seemed interesting to introduce the discourse of home recording by showing how the notion of home recording was constructed within the corpus proposed.

Chapter 3: Analysis

This chapter discusses the articulations observed from the corpus analyzed. It explains how "home recording" is introduced and talked about in the magazine articles and forum conversations studied. It also discusses some of the main issues about recording music at home: the music compositional process in a home recording environment, the negotiations of space in the domestic territory and the matter or sound and noise. This chapter describes what characterizes both the discourse of home recording ("Becoming a home recording 'pro'") and the counter-discourse ("Home recording for fun and empowerment"), while discussing the system of rules or the "prescriptions" that guide home recordists to be within the discourses' "truth". Finally, this chapter examines some of the gendered aspects of the discourse of home recording.

3.1. The Notion of Home Recording

What is home recording all about? Why has it been gaining more attention for the past twenty years? Why are there articles about it in music magazines; why are there discussion forums dedicated to it? How do people talk about it? These and other similar questions drove me to look at how "home recording" is introduced by this thesis' corpus. How is the notion of home recording generally built or reinforced by its discourse?

Home recording is often presented as an activity that symbolizes a turning point for recording musicians and for recorded music. "Until a few years ago, working in a truly dedicated recording space within the home environment was a fantasy." (Krikawa, n.d., para. 3) According to the discourse, home recording – and especially the technological developments that gave rise to this activity – allowed musicians to become fully independent of professional recording facilities. The introduction of "personal recording technology (...) enabled those who were spending hours in rehearsal studios (...) to create a very close approximation of what the finished demo tape would sound like." (Daley, 1997, para. 2) "With the rise of relatively affordable digital multitrack recorders" (Myers, 1997, para. 1) and other recording technologies "the concept of a 'keeper' take being recorded in your bedroom is no longer a low-tech, high maintenance proposition." (*Idem*) As a consequence of this "breakthrough" regarding technological development and "affordability", one can now "find recording facilities in places we never imagined possible. Churches, radio

stations, rehearsal halls, and of course musician's private homes frequently house some sort of project studio." (Emmet, n.d., para. 1) "With recent advances in digital technology the ability to produce a final product in your home is no longer reserved for the rich and famous." (Skinner, 1999, para. 2) "Power and performance previously unthinkable in an analogue studio can be realised with this continuing advance in technology." (White, 2011, p. 3)

One of the important keys for home recording's popularity is said to be its "perpetual rise of accessibility for even the tightest budgets." (McLaughlin, 2002, para. 1) As enunciated, "Recording and distributing your own music has never been more affordable or accessible." (White, 2011, p. 3) "Most professional and project studios now have a computer (laptop or desktop) at the heart, running DAW software capable of combining multitrack recording and mixing with MIDI sequencing." (*Idem*) Those DAWs, which can "even [be] freebies that come pre-installed on your PC" (*Ibid*) are "increasingly (...) making amateur recordists out of people who wouldn't even consider themselves musicians" (Emmet, n.d., para. 1). Moreover, "You can even buy DAW software for iPhones, iPads and other portable devices, enabling you to take your studio with you." (White, 2011, p. 3) As it is argued, "With a DAW it's possible for absolutely anyone to produce high-quality recordings in their own bedroom!" (*Idem*) "These days, given what's possible with a small home recording rig, the similarities between what you can achieve at home vs. in a full studio probably outweigh the differences." (Young, 2005, p. 49) Even though "(...) big studios are great places to work", anyone "can make very serious recordings at home." (Watson, 2006, p. 43)

According to those involved in this activity, "Home studios are becoming a common and necessary tool for modern musicians" (Pearce, 2001, para. 2) "of all skills and talents" (McLaughlin, 2002, para. 1). For what it enables and for the "many different options [and information available] for home recording" (Makoway, 2002, para. 1), not only non-musicians have the chance to become home recordists, but also "Amateurs have the ability to become experts on their own set-ups." (Young, 2008, p. 50) Moreover, "the home" is considered "a comfortable place to be" (Krikawa, n.d., para. 3), thus an ideal space for performing and recording (*Idem*). As a home recordist explains, "the best thing (...) is not only that I can do all this in my house, but I can do it in my underwear." (Myers, 1997, para. 1) A home recording setup can be regarded as a "cradle of creativity" (Weiss, 2004, p. 26), as "Having recording tools close at hand can do wonders for the creative process" (McLaughlin, 2002, para. 1).

The discourse of home recording also takes into account the inevitable limitations to the activity. For instance, "The obstacles this [home] environment presents to audio recording are apparent to anyone who's ever tried it: interference from outside noise, disturbing the household and neighborhood peace, limited control over acoustics, and regular encroachment by the rest of the living space". (Krikawa, n.d., para. 2) Moreover, "While it's extremely easy to get some decent guitar, keyboard, bass and vocal sounds, recording drums [at home] is extremely difficult." (Makoway, 2002, para.1-2.) Also, "If there is one problem with all this technology, it is that the flexibility, complexity and power of even the simplest systems can be initially overwhelming." (White, 2011, p. 3)

In order to overcome these and other "challenges" inherent to home recording, the discourse provides all sorts of guidelines and prescriptions that can be followed by "anyone who wants". For example, "[tackling] the challenge of building a playing and recording space" is possible "with a little study and a lot of planning". (Krikawa, n.d., para. 3) Similarly, "turning that spare room into a workable recording space requires some forethought and a little knowledge of sound physics, along with time, patience and all the money you can possibly throw into the project." (Emmet, n.d., para. 3) It is also argued that "With a tiny investment, you can get some decent-sounding recordings right on your computer." (Tedesco, 2008, p. 68) The amount of money dedicated to build a recording setup is in fact part of what "depends on your [the home recordist's] needs, your project, your sound, what inspires you" (Young, 2008, p. 50).

The discourse of home recording seems to be very much centered on the fact that it is open to be learned and practiced by anyone who desires to do so. The basic condition for one to start home recording seems to be a minimum investment on gear at the beginning. After that, it depends on the home recordist to set his/her goals and find the right information to overcome the difficulties that appear on the way. As it seems, however, these adversities shouldn't be a barrier for anyone to start or continue home recording. There are many different "recipes" available within the discourse for overcoming "all" of the possible constraints.

This thesis's analysis will discuss some of the main issues regarding home recording, where negotiations constantly take place for the production of its discourse. Although this analysis doesn't consist of an exhaustive study of what home recording is and can be, as I mentioned earlier, it nevertheless brings to the fore many important – if not essential – aspects of this activity. Those will provide us with an overview of the power

relations around which the discourse is built, enough for us to better comprehend what makes home recording possible as it is today.

3.2. Recording at Home

This section explores three topics that are problematized when recording music in the home environment is at stake. The first one, "Making music: Home recording as a compositional tool", discusses how being at home influences the dynamic of the recording process, and how the access to recording technology in the domestic environment favors a non-linear process of music composition. The second one, "The matter of space in home recording", explores certain issues of space related to *home*, such as the negotiations that need to be established with family, cohabitants, neighbors and the city, as well as the mutual adaptations of two different environments – the home and the studio – that coexist in the context of home recording. The third topic, "The matter of sound in home recording" discusses the notions of "sound" and "noise" and how they are articulated within the discourse, as it also argues about the importance of "controlling sound" in home recording setups.

3.2.1. Making music: home recording as a compositional tool

Within the discourse of home recording, having the means to record music at home is regarded as "a common and necessary tool for modern musicians" (Pearce, 2001, p. 49), as I mentioned earlier. While some record at home in order to become better sound engineers and others learn recording tricks in their free time for their own amusement, some musicians enjoy home recording as a tool for their compositional practices. Recording at home is considered to be an important part of a musician's development: it is convenient for "perfecting songwriting skills (...) It's great for learning to write cohesive parts and arrangements." (Makoway, 2002, p. 59)

According to musicians, home is a place where they have "the comfort of being able to mess with things" (Sheaffer & Lowery, 2004, p. 30). As a home recordist explained, "[it] eventually changed my life. (...) I started being able to do the things I'd really wanted to do – had time to do it. I didn't have anyone else telling me what I should or shouldn't be doing. It suddenly was like a kind of door opening" (Silverstein, 2002, p. 46). At home, many claim to feel comfortable to play instruments that they don't master, something that wouldn't happen in a professional studio: "(...) the reason that I record myself is that I'm not a proficient enough musician to be comfortable going into a studio and having a week to

record an album" (Sheaffer & Lowery, 2004, p. 30). Having more time at home also seems to be an enabling factor on that matter:

> "Going in the studio, I often feel a bit uncomfortable with playing the drums, because I really don't think I'm a very good drummer. If I'm going in the studio and it all has to be arranged, then I'll arrange to have a drummer there. If I'm recording at home, I play the drums. I can do it over and over and over 'til I've got it right." (Silverstein, 2002, p. 47)

Moreover, recording at home also allows the musician to work following his/her own creativity flow:

> "I can act on inspiration. Instead of 'Alright, the studio is booked Tuesday through Friday, and you better be brilliant on those three days.' In your home studio you can roll in with your big cup of coffee, and take the phone off the hook, and start working." (Pearce, 2001, p. 49)

Apart from the autonomy of playing different instruments and "messing with things", home recording – specifically through digital technology – also allows musicians to "mess with sound" due to the "advantage[s] of non-destructive editing" (McLaughlin, 2002, p. 53). Editing MIDI tracks – an interface that is "invaluable to composers who work with sampled or electronically generated sounds" (White, 2011, p. 55) – is an example of a non-destructive process:

> "(...) the original data stays the same and the DAW computes the necessary changes during playback. Even where you make permanent changes to the data (so-called 'destructive' edits'), you can probably still use the DAW's 'undo' feature to undo the last thing you did." (Idem, p. 53)

The 'undo' command mentioned above is often spoken about as an advantageous attribute of 'non-destructive' digital recording. It gives home recordists freedom to experiment and make mistakes, due to the possibilities of "going back" in case something goes wrong:

> "You have the magic of the 'undo' command, very useful when tracking difficult material in that there's no risk in trying to get a better take. You always have a good take to go back to if your efforts don't yield an improvement. (...) In addition, you can take the advantage of non-destructive editing, as in: 'Should the bridge be a couple of bars shorter?' 'Let's hear that.' (mouse clicking) 'Okay, here goes.' 'ARGH! WHAT THE HELL WAS I THINKING?!' (Command Z) 'Okay, that never really happened... right?'" (McLaughlin, 2002, p. 53)

Apart from the "magic of the 'undo'", DAWs also allow edits in recorded tracks "such as cutting regions, changing their length, moving them or copying them, [which] are

all 'non-destructive'" (White, 2011, p. 80). These and other possibilities, such as using different sounds made available by DAWs (Sherbourne, 2009) or simply multitrack recording with these software programs have incited musicians to use this technology as part of their songwriting process. For example, a musician explains how her intentions to learn how to operate DAWs are directly motivated by her will to write songs:

> "I really want to learn Logic and Pro Tools. I know that's a big undertaking, but I'm actually renting a room from this guy in upstate New York so that I can go up there every so often. He has Pro Tools and he said he would teach me a little bit. I want to learn that and do a bunch of songs on it and just write as a way to be alive right now with all that's happening [doing press and all that kind of stuff]." (Nicholas, 2002, p. 37)

Another musician explains how he proceeds with his songwriting/recording process at home:

> "When I write a song, I can visualize what I want the sound to be like. Capturing a recording of the song is a bit like painting a picture. You have to prepare the canvas or lay the foundations first. I usually start with either a click track and some guitar with a guide vocal, or I'll start with the drums. It tends to be a guide guitar, drums and bass first. [Next,] if there's keyboards I'll put them and any rhythm guitars. And then all the fancy stuff I'll lay on top. I'll do the vocals last." (Silverstein, 2002, p. 47)

This last example represents what Daley (1997) calls the "singer/songwriter (who no longer had to put up with a band)" (para. 2), one of the "significant cultural trends in music" that was ignited by "personal recording equipment" (*Idem*). Frequently, musicians record all – or most of – their songs' instruments, often with the help of a DAW and additional recording technology:

> "The first thing I do is sit down with my acoustic guitar and I write the song before I get any fancier. (...) Then I'll record the drum machine so I get the tempo, and the I'll record with a mic on my acoustic guitar and an AKG 1000 or Rode NT1 mic on my voice." (Weiss, 2004, p. 26)

> "I did the drums with EZ Drummer, the Jazz kit. The bass is my Squier Jazz Bass. (...) The guitars are my Charvel Model 1A. The arpeggio synth pad is the Minimoog V. The saxes are my Selmer Mark VI. The trumpets and trombones are from Garritan JABB. I did all the vocals." (HornForHire, 2011)[20]

As we can see, it isn't hard to find within the discourse of home recording references to musicians or music aficionados who aren't part of a band, but that nonetheless create,

[20] The excerpt is from Steinberg's Cubase forum thread called "Made with Cubase". Therefore, according to the context, the musician used a DAW – more specifically Cubase – to record the referred song.

record and sometimes produce, mix and master their own songs. It is said that composing, producing, recording and mixing an album in a home studio has "the benefit of complete creative autonomy" (Sherbourne, 2009, para. 37). Considering the "all-in-one musician", it is possible to assume that every step that involves song and sound manipulating, before and after recording, is considered part of the musician's compositional process. Certain recording techniques such as editing can actually play a big part in songwriting processes:

> "I often will loop parts and, like, I edited like crazy up at Avast! on the Pro Tools stuff. That song 'Turn A Square', when we went up there it was about a six minute song, and it ended up like being three minutes or something. And that was me editing and editing and editing over the course of a couple days while we were messing up with that song." (Sheaffer & Lowery, 2004, p. 29)

It is interesting to remark, therefore, that as home recordists take up many, if not all of the roles regarding music making and recording, the act of composing doesn't have a pre-established moment to happen. In fact, it can take place in every step of the recording and music-making process, from lyric writing to mixing. For instance, the concepts that musicians may have in mind for their songs can define how they proceed with the songs' production:

> "I did all the vocals first, all the harmonies, and actually got most of the [fader] rides done before I did anything else. I know it sounds weird, but I want to make sure that when you hear the voice you never lose it, and it always works on its own." (Sherbourne, 2009, para. 22)

In this case, one might question to what extent home recording may be blurring the roles of musicians, producers and sound engineers regarding artistic expression in song compositions. While producers and sound engineers didn't always have their "entrepreneurial" work granted with the status of "art", as Tankel (1990) discusses in his article "The practice of recording music: Remixing as Recoding", home recording seems to be reinforcing the idea that making sound choices for songs are as much a part of the composition as writing the lyrics and the chord progressions, for example.

In fact, some musicians find inspiration for songs through different sounds that come up from instruments, equipment or even from objects around the house. "Collection[s] of unusual instruments and sound toys, or everyday objects" can be "processed into something new" (Sherbourne, 2009, para. 19) by home recordists. As spoken about a musician/home recordist's creation, "she decided to use sounds from around the house as starting points, partly because of the poetic sense in which the house was linked to the album, but mainly as

a practical framework or limitation to focus her efforts" (*Idem*). These sounds thus worked as inspirational tools for this musician to explore her own compositional creativity.

Similarly, other musicians also discuss how new sounds coming from instruments or equipment can be inspirational for new songs:

> "I think new equipment gives us new ideas, so it's always good to buy new stuff. But then you have too much stuff, so the more you buy, the more you have to sell back. Like, sell the old ones to keep the new ones.[21] It's good to buy something that's not obvious that you need to buy. It can change your world. We are only into touching equipment. We like simple things to touch. When we program the beat box, we like to do it when it's physical and you can play it with your hands. It's like a game, like a toy. We don't like to spend so much time in the menus, the screens." (Crane, 2004, p. 47.)

Likewise, having audio engineering skills is also said to be helpful for music writing:

> "Sometimes you can get a sound from an engineering aspect. Like sometimes, I'll put the drum machine through a delay pedal, and that way you get a totally new beat, which can inspire a song. Effects that turn into landscapes of sound can be inspiring – if I'm not inspired I can just start going nuts on the sounds and something will emerge." (Weiss, 2004, p. 27)

In this last case, it is possible to guess that learning audio engineering and production skills, a common task for home recordists, is useful not only for the recording process itself, but also for working on songs' composition. Recording in "layers, one of the top of another" is a technique used not only to "get sounds into the computer", but also to "move them [the layers] around and build the song" (Crane, 2004, p. 48).

While the chase for different sounds can be a valuable source of inspiration for home recordists, the great availability of sounds in music/recording equipment – software and hardware – can actually distract the musician from the compositional process: "You can easily get lost and spend hours even beginning a starting point in Logic, because you have so many options open to you. It's easy to get lost in something like [Native Instruments'] Massive, listening to all the fun sounds" (Sherbourne, 2009, para. 20). Similarly, it is also argued that

> "(...) the more options you have, the more time you take up. I think it's important to move quickly when you're creating a song, at least in this home

[21] It is interesting to observe how different concepts commonly cross each other in the discourse of home recording. While these musicians (Crane, 2004) talked about how it is "good" to buy equipment in order to find new sounds and ideas, they also suggest that limits of space at home – or in their case, in an apartment – are constraints that have to be taken into consideration before one decides to do so.

> environment. Sometimes when you get bogged down trying to choose the right pedal, it gets in the way of being creative." (Weiss, 2004, p. 27)

Playing with different sounds can also keep the musician from working on other musical parts, such as lyric writing. In this case, being away from the home studio can be seen as an strategy to write the songs' words: "I hate writing lyrics when I could be making sounds, but I thought 'If I'm not with my gear, I'll just have to write the lyrics,' and I really enjoyed it then" (Sherbourne, 2009, para. 5). This example shows how home recordists who embrace every step of the work are produced discursively as needing to learn how to pre-produce themselves. This task, in turn, "requires perspective, and the ability to make decisions at every step of the process" (Young, 2009, p. 50).

Making use of home recording environments as compositional tools, however, is not necessarily a solitary endeavor. It is also possible to collaborate with others, either by having "guest musicians" (Sherbourne, 2009, para. 18) for specific recording sections or by sharing recorded pieces, working on them and later putting them together (see Skinner, 1999, para. 22-23). These possibilities are considered "advantages of recording at home compared to recording in a commercial studio" (*Idem*, para. 22), since they give the musician "the freedom to do what you want, when you want" (*Ibid*). Having compatible recording technology is also seen as useful for those who want to jam and compose music electronically:

> "J: I think that the revolutionizing step in our collaboration process is that we have matching samplers so we can trade discs and work at home. It seem like that's the way a lot of collaborations work these days with people being able to exchange computer files, Pro Tools or whatever, and that's really exciting. I'm hoping we'll be able to work more like that, even in different formats, like Pro Tools or [*Emagic*] Logic or [*Propellerhead*] Reason.
> K: It's really collaborative to be doing that, (...) as we're working on something we can put it down in a couple tracks of tape and then one of us during the day can be at home working on the MPC [*Akai MIDI Production Center*] and then another can be working on lyrics or adding a guitar part or bass or whatever in the studio. It's cool because we can all be working on the same song at different locations and then come back together. So it's like we electronically jam but we're not in the same room." (Nicholas, 2002, p. 35)

Similarly, being able to have the collaboration from guest musicians or friends who live in different cities is regarded as an advantage of home recording:

> "On my record I sent my tapes to Craig Northey, a friend of mine and one of the singers in Odds and he did some singing and guitar playing on it. (...) [When] he sent them back it was very exciting. (...) I had no idea what he was

> going to do. I wasn't there, I just mailed the tapes. (...) I've had a lot of guests on my record and I think part of it was the result of having the studio in my house. It meant that I didn't have to co-ordinate studio time with other people." (Skinner, 1999, para. 23)

Users of Internet Forums on home recording also offer and accept collaboration from other users in different steps of their music making and recording. Users may keep in touch, for example, to exchange mastering services:

> Jude 2010: "I'm working on an album and i'm [sic] looking to get it to sound as professionally as i [sic] can ATM i [sic] do not own a pair of studio monitors which are crucial for mixing and mastering successfully. (...) any ways if anyone is looking for some practise [sic] on mastering track and wouldn't mind taking on the task i'd [sic] appreciate it very much (...)." (Jude2010, 2011)

> Dogn4u: "Yup. I'm setting up a mastering room and soliciting work. Until I build a rep, my fee is $0. Email me at [*his e-mail*] and we'll discuss the format you can send me and what you're looking for. What have you got to lose? A fifty-cent DVD+ROM? (...)" (Dogn4u, 2011)

Mixing exchanges can also be seen through recording forums. For instance, a forum user started a post suggesting other users to mix one of his songs. He proposed the following guidelines:

> "-- you can't edit out parts and you can't add or substitute, you must work with the files I supply
> -- you can't change the position of parts (they are fixed)
> -- send your finished mixes directly to me, don't post them here
> -- deadline is 25th May, so you can mix away for a few weeks
> -- when your mix is ready, PM me a link to a download
> After the deadline, I'll post links to the mixes in this thread.
> (...)
> It'll be interesting to hear the mixes and I'll look forward to hearing anyone's efforts, all of which will be greatly appreciated." (Pearldivers, 2011)

Forum users may also participate in online collaborations by building songs from different, independent parts, all of which are recorded by people who are geographically apart. The following excerpt is a short description of such an online collaboration held in a recording Internet forum:

> "a cubase collab
> Pearldivers guitars
> Wim Koopman Sax
> Lenny Lee Bass
> Peter van de Woestijne keyboards

> took me a while to mix this one but enjoyed it
> top in the list
> http://www.soundclick.com/loungeinc"
> (desert, 2011)

While compatible software and the Internet allow these online collaborations, specific types of hardware are also developed to "create a social environment where music could be written and played simultaneously with open communication" (King, 2010, p. 54). The personal mixing and multi-track recording *MyMix*, for example, is said to be "a device that lets you capture ideas at rehearsal, archive a gig, or even track for a recording. Musicians can create their own independent monitor mixes for controlled rehearsals or performance while simultaneously recording multitrack audio." (*Idem*).

Whether music composition is considered to be a solitary or a collective task, DAWs and other technologies are often used for music making and recording at home, as we briefly analyzed. Although most of the examples cited above came from musicians (regardless of their level of commercial recognition), the discourse of home recording also enunciates that non-musicians alike have been using DAWs for music composing. Some DAWs such as Audacity (see RemyRAD, 2008), Reaper (see Brotherlove, 2011) and GarageBand (Emmet, n.d.), as it was argued before in this thesis, are available either for free or at relatively low prices. Consequently, "software such as Apple's GarageBand is making amateur recordists out of people who couldn't even consider themselves musicians" (*Idem*, para. 2).

Even though the "availability" of multi-track recording software leads to the assumption that this technology might be used by music aficionados other than musicians, it is interesting to remark that the term "non-musician" is rarely enunciated by the discourse of home recording. In fact, there seems to be a lack of discussion about what it means to be a musician. This leads me to question if the capacity to make music defines somehow what it is to be a musician in the referred discourse. What would be the boundaries between a home recordist and a musician? Would it mostly depend on the home recordist's goals and specific recording activities? There is certainly a blurriness in-between those two subjects – the musician and the non-musician –, which can be observed from the discourse of home recording.

As I intended to demonstrate through the excerpts cited above, almost every step of recording music at home – such as pre-production, recording and mixing – appears to be considered an integral part of the compositional process. According to the discourse of home recording, this becomes even more obvious when one musician is taking charge of all the

work, since he or she supposedly has more freedom to create than if there were professional producers and sound engineers involved in the process. When recording is considered part of music-making, the song structure is neither the only part nor the fundament of composition: the sound choices, the song's length, the instruments and the collaborations all constitute the writing process as well. The final recorded song, thus, seems to represent the masterpiece, the finished "oeuvre", the musician's artistic expression materialized.

These points, as observed from this thesis' corpus, also bring to the fore issues such as the role of materialized recorded music in the way music is seen and conceived. For instance, live music is rarely discussed within the discourse of home recording (for exception, see Inglis, 2010 and Young, 2005). According to the discourse analyzed, it seems not only that the "materialized" recorded song is the main goal for home recordists, but also that it is the end in itself. The scholar Barry Shrank argues that

> "The traditional recording standard of 'fidelity' assumed an original performance to which the recording is faithful, but as recording becomes increasingly sophisticated, (...) the recording becomes the original work, [and] all subsequent 'live' performances are attempts to emulate its sound" (as cited in Wallach, 2003).

The reversion in this "relationship of fidelity" (*Idem*) seems to have become even more problematic in the context of home recording, since live playing may not necessarily be part of home recording as a musical practice. The discourse of home recording thus seems to emphasize recorded music as a phenomenon that can be made and examined independently from its performance (Wallach, 2003).

3.2.2. The matter of space in home recording

As I mentioned in the first chapter, private recording studios have been built since the '70s, when rock stars started seeking for a single place that could function as their rehearsing space, office, storage facility and recording studio (Williams, 2006, p. 443). Groups and artists such as Pink Floyd, The Who, Prince and Peter Gabriel constructed facilities that served their needs and that worked as their "creative home" (*Idem*, p. 444). As I previously argued, these artists didn't live in the premises of their studio. In fact, having their own recording space was mostly a way found by these musicians to free themselves from the impersonal nature of professional studios (*Ibid*).

Home recording as it is characterized today – both by practitioners and academics – mostly refers to setups built within people's residences, where negotiations with several different entities – such as family, cohabitants, neighbors and the city – are likely to happen. As the home became a core space for recording, both amateur and professional musicians started making use of this environment for such means: while many amateurs gained access to the world of recorded music for the first time, as I discussed earlier, professionals started recording at home in order to have greater control over the recording process (*Ibid*).

According to the discourse of home recording, working from home can be as liberating as it can be challenging. Considering the drawbacks of home recording, it is argued that the obstacles of this activity – such as those related to sound control and space limitation – are evident to anyone who has ever tried recording music at home, as I also mentioned in this analysis' introduction. Moreover, "Another down side of recording at home is that when the phone rings, [the home recordist] has to answer it or when the kids come home for lunch he [or she] has to take a break from his work" (Skinner, 1999, para. 10). Home recording can also be challenging due to "a homeowner's association code longer and more complex than the Geneva Convention, and various sets of elderly neighbors with remarkably keen hearing (...)" (Emmet, n.d., para. 4).

On the other hand, "home is exactly the place [one] would like to perform and record." (Krikawa, n.d., para. 3) The advantages of recording at home "are not having to pay by the hour and having total control over your creative vision" (Skinner, 1999, para. 22) Also, it is said that "When you are recording in your own home there is an inherent feeling of freedom" (*Idem*, para. 25). "One of the great things [about] having a home studio is that aspect of making a cup of tea, walking down the basement stairs, and boom, there you are" (Skinner, 1999, para. 10).

While some home recordists may have the financial means to record in both professional and domestic environments (See Skinner, 1999; Daley, 1997), home is, for many music aficionados, the only available space for testing their musical skills, for improving their recording abilities and for trying to find their own way to a "good", professional sound. In this case, it seems that the "studio" or recording environment somehow invades the territory of home, bringing out negotiations and a mutual readjustment to those spaces that are suddenly merged. Considering home as a place where identity is always and continuously being produced – as suggests the feminist geographer Massey (1994) – this environment somehow shapes the practices related to home recording. At the

same time, home has its characteristics as a place reformulated in a mutual and constant negotiation.

This section will discuss some of the issues that accompany recording music at home, particularly considering home as an open and provisional place of performance (*Idem*). According to what was identified in the discourse of home recording, I will examine how *home* is defined in the intersection of: home as physical structure and geographic location; the matter of noise and silence at home; and finally, home as a private and also commonly a shared space.

- The "studio" within the house: the physical space

According to the corpus analyzed, the way music aficionados home record can be fairly diverse regarding techniques, gears and goals. The locations within the home used to record also vary considerably, as well as the structure of one's setup. The fact that many "musicians' private homes frequently house some sort of project studio" is said to be "redefining the role of the recording studio for our day and culture" (Emmet, n.d., para. 1). Meanwhile, well-designed setups that "can provide fully professional sound and service in a relaxed residential atmosphere (...) have ended the stigma of the 'home' studio" (*Idem*, para. 2). As home recording setups can take the most varied forms, the term "home studio" doesn't seem to have a precise definition amongst home recordists (See Flint, 2004; Skinner, 1999; White & Robjohns, 2010; c7sus, 2004). Cellars, basements, garages and spare rooms can all potentially be converted into a project studio (Flint, 2004), regardless of the amount of gear that is present or the level of expertise of its owner.

Building a home recording setup oftentimes involves physical adaptations within the domicile of the home recordist. Not only a space needs to be determined, but this area also needs to be arranged to suit a recording/experimenting environment. While a "small room leaves little space for acoustic treatment", it can still become a "nice little recording workshop" (Flint, 2004, para. 16, 22), although with limited possibilities concerning the amount of musicians who can perform together at that space, for example. In case of rented places, home recordists may be compelled to rearrange the chosen room in ways that can easily be reversed. Gluing a CD or plywood slats "to the near top of some foam panels, so that [they can be hung on] the wall 'picture-style', using a single wood screw" is said to be useful for avoiding "making any irreversible changes to the room" (White and Robjohns,

2009, para. 5). Some home recordists may choose to improvise and use household items they already own to creatively enhance their setup. It is argued that

> "If you were to take a look around your house, there are probably several things you already own that would make great additions to your home studio. You could easily use components of your home stereo system for a playback and monitoring systems and there is no reason that your home computer couldn't double as a sequencer and digital editing system." (Skinner, 1999, para. 14)

Moreover, homemade soundproofing systems can be enhanced by the use of blankets (*Idem*; Pearce, 2011), "old dividers from a bank that was being renovated" or even "carpet (...) on the walls" (Skinner, 1999, para. 16).

Some home recordists may also be able to invest a little more and follow more accurately what are considered the design and rules of a professional studio. For instance, these home recordists may be able to get a computer that will be dedicated only to recording (White, 2011) or big control desks that may give the impression of a "real studio" to the ambiance (Sherbourne, 2009). The level of these arrangements and the amount of time, money and dedication spent on them are part of the factors that define the home recordist's "real commitment" to the activity (See Anderton, 2004; Daley, 1997; Watson, 2004). It seems thus that the professional studio usually serves as a prototype to guide home recordists and help them making the "right" choices regarding the composition of their setup.

Making bigger changes in the house to suit a home recording setup involves negotiations with others who inhabit the domicile, with the place's owner – in case it is rented – and ultimately with the city where the house is situated. Building regulations (Flint, 2004), zoning laws (Emmet, n.d.) and local fire codes (Krikawa, n.d.) define what one can and cannot change in the construction, as well as how certain modifications can be made. These regulations are mostly seen as constraints to home recordists, since these requirements may limit the options for where and how to build a recording setup. Moreover, they make the whole process a little more costly, since extra fees may be charged for approving renovation plans and checking the work in process (Flint, 2004). As building regulations and zoning laws may differ considerably in different countries, cities and neighborhoods, home recordists are advised to "(...) *please* make sure ahead of time that you're not violating any zoning laws, building codes, or housing development covenants with your building plans" (Emmet, n.d., para. 24)

Home recordists are also advised to think about security in their recording setup. Since the process of building a home recording environment involves the acquisition of gear,

the accumulation of technological gadget over time may call the attention of possible thieves. Security can be an even bigger necessity if the project studio is located outside the house, such as in a shed (Flint, 2004) or in another outbuilding in the garden (phlopip, 2011). Some of the solutions brought up by home recordists to deal with the issue include acquiring "a big mean dog" (jimmys69, 2011), monitored cameras, alarms and homeowners insurance[22]. Home recordists are also encouraged to make sure that the security system they chose won't be violated:

> "(...) I'd like to know what would be effective means of securing the building. What do you guys have?" (Phlopip, 2011)
>
> "A monitored alarm is what I have. (...) Plus, I'm quite careful about who is allowed to know there is mega $ worth of gear on the inside... so if I ever have to allow tradesmen etc in, I make sure nothing is visible." (Armistice, 2011)
>
> "Homeowner's insurance. I've actually had 2 fairly massive P.A.'s stolen. Once out of a trailer, and the other time they took the whole fucking trailer! Most homeowner's policies will provide coverage for 'off premises' property provided that it's not 'business' property. I actually got into a fight with Allstate about whether or not the band's P.A. was business property" (Chrisharris, 2011).

As I intended to briefly demonstrate, assembling a home recording setup involves rearrangements in some of the physical and spatial dimensions of the house. For those who don't live isolated or alone, these reconfigurations of spatial organization depend on the play of different relations of power; as they take place, those power relations constantly redefine the place of home (Massey, 1994). The next topic will further explore the power relations that most likely take place in home recordists' domiciles.

- Home is where the *noise* is

The discourse of home recording often enunciates that managing noise is one of the most important tasks for building a home recording setup. Having full control of the noise that comes in and out of a home recording environment can be very challenging, especially

[22] Some insurance companies even offer specialized services for those who own a studio, as it could be seen from advertisements in recording magazines (See JT Lake Insurance Services, 2002; JT Lake Insurance Services, 2003; JT Lake Insurance Services, 2004).

for those who can't afford – for lack of enough money or lack of sufficient space – a professional soundproofing system:

> "The home environment, unfortunately, is not kind to the would-be sound recordist. (...) Wood floorboards transmit sound from the floor above. Windows, welcome from their light and views, allow sound in and out with frustrating ease, and provide the neighbors with a full view of your setup whenever the curtains are open. (...) electrical power and lighting, often an afterthought, are frequently insufficient and too noisy for serious studio use.
> Add to the mix possible noise from refrigerators, dishwashers, water pipes, pets, passing traffic, and it's easy to see the problems plaguing the home recording environment, before you even worry about the neighbors. Unfortunately, the superb specs of today's recording equipment virtually guarantee that you'll hear everything, too." (Emmet, n.d., para. 9-10)

Incoming noise is said to be either a major or a minor problem, depending on the home recordist's goals and expectations for the final recorded sound. For those interested in "electronic music production, guitars through amp simulators, occasional live vocals, horns and drums – [it] wouldn't be impossible [to record] in a properly setup small room" (*Idem*, para. 5). However, for home recordists who prefer performing with "loud and large live instruments" (Flint, 2004), a great deal of information and creativity is usually needed so they can reach the expected good/professional sound, while reducing the range of outgoing noise. Home recordists are reminded that "If you can hear things from the outside, your neighbors will certainly hear things being playing on the inside [of your recording setup]" (Watson, 2004, para. 8).

Home recordists are thus guided to rearrange the chosen room by covering places that reflect sound with some kind of deadening material. These can be improvised through the use of carpets and blankets, as it was mentioned earlier; otherwise, "expensive professional solutions" (*Idem*, para. 9) may be the answer for a proper soundproofing system. Home recordists are also advised to "wait until the house is empty before recording" or "to make your recordings at night when the world seems a much quieter place" (Robjohns, 2000, para. 9). However, they need to keep in mind that "that very tranquility may mean your music-making causes greater disturbance to others, unless you have excellent soundproofing" (*Idem*).

Having neighbors is usually referred to as a constraint that home recordists need to deal with. It is said that the only differences between "what you can achieve at home vs. in a full studio" could be "measured in the strength and frequency of violent thoughts being directed at you from your neighbors" (Young, 2005, p. 49) Therefore, some argue that "(...)

it might not hurt to know your neighbors really, *really* well, and be on very good terms with them. Just on the off chance their violent thoughts might become violent actions" (*Idem*, p. 54). The most recurrent tip for home recordists, however, is to throw all the money they possibly can into the project (Emmet, n.d.) so as to invest in the best sound isolating system they can afford. Making noise "without stressing the neighbors" (megalith6, 2011) is considered essential for those who want to fully explore the "freedom" usually associated with home recording.

- Home is where the *family* is

The home recording setup is considered as a space for working and experimenting. Those who are committed enough to invest in building such a space in the house usually intend – and, according to the discourse, are expected to – spend hours exploring possibilities for sound recording. As it is assumed about home recordists who go through the efforts of building a setup, "(...) you are probably intending to spend a great deal of time in there" (Flint, 2004, para. 7). Similarly, it is said that home recording involves a "great time commitment in learning the skills needed to make high quality recordings" (Skinner, 1999, para. 9). The home recording setup is thus expected to be a place of work, concentration and of creativity emanation (see Klepko, 2007). However, for those who share the house with their family, having a quiet, isolated place at home may not be just a matter of will for the home recordist. Negotiations need to take place in the home so the recording activities and the family activities don't conflict too much with one another.

As it was mentioned earlier, recording at home can be challenging for the home recordist due to the incoming and outgoing noises and to the constant interruptions. Recording in a badly isolated room can also intensely disturb the other activities that are placed within the house. The social relations within the home thus seem to be crucial to the construction and characterization of home recording, as well as for the reorganization of the home itself.

A home recording setup closed in a room is usually a restricted area, which seems to isolate the home recordist from the rest of the family. As it is argued within the discourse, even the computer used to record preferably should not be shared with the family, "as unnecessary software and documents could lead to problems and even viruses" (White, 2011, p. 159). As stated by home recordists, amongst the reasons why they invest in these

private spaces is the necessity of a male's own space detached from the spouse's one, as I will further explore when discussing gender and home recording (see 3.5. About Gender in Home Recording). It is also argued that a proper isolated space for recording at home can be a way to escape from "noisy" little kids (Frederic, 2004). Hence, with the exception of families that record together (see, for example, Pearce, 2001), a recording setup is usually a place of reclusion and segregation from those who do not share the same activity.

As uttered within the discourse, the "lots of mess and noise" that are usually present in the recording premises "are not things people will want you to share with them" (Flint, 2004, para. 40). In this case, it is argued that living alone or having a "particularly understanding family" (*Idem*) can be very advantageous if one wants the freedom to make use of different parts of the house as recording spaces (*Ibid*). When that is not the case, it seems that the home recordist needs to be equipped with another important skill: diplomacy. "Taking a large bedroom as a studio may not go down too well with the rest of the family, but if you can cram everything into the box room you're more likely to keep everyone happy" (*Ibid*, para. 16).

The spatial disorder that can be caused by gear accumulation is also a preoccupation of home recordists that share their domicile with others. In order to reduce such chaos, some may choose to buy "more compact interfaces and mixers" (Shirley, n.d.-b, para. 41). Others may invest in software that can do the same work of specific hardware (White, 2011), since the former clearly take less space in the room. Home recordists are also told that "To alleviate limited space (...) even consider setting up some sort of grid on the ceiling where you can have the option to hang and suspend mics from." (Klepko, 2007, p. 46)

For those who can't have a "full soundproofing job" (Flint, 2004, para. 20) in their recording setup, "working at moderate volumes" (*Idem*) is also said to avoid noise-related problems with cohabitants and neighbors. Moreover, those who improvise soundproofing systems at home by using foams or blankets are advised to "put some kind of sexy vibe over top so it looks good" (Pearce, 2001, para. 25). These observations suggest that the home recordist not only needs to bargain and assure a space for recording at home, proving his/her authority in that environment, but this subject also needs to make sure that his/her recording practices don't drastically unbalance the harmony that is usually expected within a domicile.

Hence, while the home recordist is expected to be the authority regarding the recording activity, he or she may have to deal with other equally, more or less capable subjects when *home* is at stake. In this case, spaces may need to be shared and their moments of use may need to be agreed upon. As a home recordist mentioned about his shared

recording space: "The room (...) has a fairly professional look – once you overlook the laundry machines, anyway." (Emmet, n.d., para. 47) While residential recording setups might need to overcome the look of "laundry machines" or even toilets (see Munch, 2004; Young, 2008), these washing-houses and bathrooms also need to share space and time with a recording facility. Therefore, the result of negotiations taken place in the home define not only how and where the recording setup is situated, but also when it is being used and for what particular purposes.

These reflections about home as uttered and problematized in the discourse of home recording bring us once again to Massey's (1994) discussions about home, space and place. It is interesting to remark how, according to the author, the world has been seeing a violent time-space compression. Massey argues that globalization has been taking home to other places, as it's been bringing other places to the home. Following the same logic, I believe that the relocation of the recording studio to private domiciles, similarly to the transfer of the working space to the home since the 1990s, stretches out different kinds of social relationships over space (*Idem*, p. 158). As these relationships change, they also change the space where they happen. Considering that "a 'place' is formed out of the particular set of social relations which interact at a particular location" (*Ibid*, p. 168), it is possible to say that the place of home in the context of home recording is continuously produced by the recording activities placed within – and often imposed upon – the domestic environment. It seems that while the characteristics of a home environment bring limitations and adaptations to these re-located recording activities, home recording also produces continuously the dynamics within the home. From the discourse analyzed, I thus believe that these dynamics are established according to the various power relations that take place in the home environment.

Therefore, the analysis of the discourse of home recording suggests that the limitations imposed by family and neighbors are some of the relations that allow home recording to be referred to as it is today. Spatial constraints, shared authority in the house and the necessity to manage noise seem to be some of the reasons why creativity thinking and improvisation are talents that home recordists “need” to have, notions that will be further discussed in the following sections. As affirmed within the discourse, “if everything were perfect, there’d be no incentive to be inventive, and maybe then all our music would lack the very thing that makes it sound original and distinctive in the first place.” (Flint, 2004, para. 41) Home recording is thus made of those constraints and negotiations, and knowing that "good" music can be reached from unexpected environments and situations (see Emmet,

n.d.) seems in fact to be an encouragement for home recordists to overcome the barriers and keep on looking for the best sound they can find in their homes.

3.2.3. The matter of sound in home recording

One of the main concepts discussed and formed by the discourse of home recording is the one of "good" sound. From those who have built their complete home studios to those who record with a computer in their dining room, home recordists seem to structure their practices based on how they can find the best possible sound results. As it can be seen in discussions about home recording, searching for and being committed to obtaining a "good" sound is one of the criteria that defines a "serious" home recordist: "The quality of the final product is a reflection of how serious you are about your music" (Masteringhouse, 2010). It is also argued that "serious" and "brave" home recordists will make sure that they have "really great (read professional) songs" (Lowther, 1999, para. 4).

Within the discourse, it seems that since it became *possible* to reach a "good" sound at home, it also became a rule to be followed. Home recordists are often divided between those who want to compete with the professionals and those who record for pleasure: "For the home recordist, I guess there are at least two camps, those for whom this is a hobby and those who actually want to compete in the wider world." (Grimtraveller, 2010) Similarly, home recordists are advised to position themselves in one of those two "camps" before they start: "Decision #2: Is this an odd weekend thing to do with the fellas, or do you want to pursue some higher level of audio excellence?" (Watson, 2004, para. 4) Throughout the discourse analyzed, it seems that the home recordists who want to compete – be they beginners or not – are the discourse's main subjects, since they invest in knowledge, follow the rules exposed by professionals and are aware of their place and individual properties within the discourse (Foucault, 1971). Hobbyists, on the other hand, are usually excluded from the discourse of home recording, as following the rules to reach sound excellence may not be their ultimate goal. As it is argued, "(...) there is too much inappropriate use of 'basement' studios when a more professional format was needed" (Kane, 2002, para. 7).

Moreover, the expression "sounding like a demo", which is treated as the opposite to "sounding professional" or "sounding expensive", is not only something to be avoided in home recording, but also something not to be accepted. As stated about the preparation of the source of recording, such as setting up and tuning instruments: "(...) if these things are

overlooked at the tracking level of a home recording; you have already limited yourself to sounding 'demo-y' - uggghh!" (Watson, 2006, p. 43) The phrase "sounds like a demo" is considered to mean, "bluntly, overall, [that] your recording sounds amateurish" (Young, 2009, p. 49). The term, thus, seems to have a highly pejorative connotation. As affirmed within the discourse, "there's no excuse for bad home recording" (Young, 2005, p. 50).

Coming up with a "good", professional sound – or to a close equivalent – may involve different acts of decision-making, which mostly depend on the musician's goals and budget. One can aim to master the equipment that he/she already has, learning how to make the best of it, or choose to buy "better" and more "specialized" gear. For example, amongst the advice given on how to record with a microphone pointed to a guitar amplifier, forum users add: "Yes, buy the [Shure Microphone] 57" (Jeemy, 2011) and "You should buy a DI box like a Countryman Type 85" (Guitarfreak, 2011). Others, however, state that becoming proficient on the gear you have should be done before one decides to buy more equipment:

> "There are no 'pro' engineers that started out of the box with professional results. The first thing to do is learn what your equipment can do. Learn everything about your hardware and software you possibly can. Then, make good decisions about what gear you buy." (Gzsound, 2011)

Home recordists may also invest in hiring experts who can help with specific issues – such as equipment position in the room or sound-proofing systems – or in hiring the services of a professional studio to finish a work started at home:

> "While not everyone has the benefit of having friends or colleagues that are knowledgeable in the art of recording, that does not mean that advice is out of reach. It may be a good idea to pay someone with a strong background in recording to come into your home studio and teach you the basic principals of recording. Or get the best free advice you can." (Skinner, 1999, para. 12)

Studio SOS articles (White & Robjohns, 2009; White & Robjohns, 2010) are in fact a practical example of the advice quoted above. In both cases, "experts" visit home studios and "lend some practical studio advice" to people who are "rather newer to the world of songwriting and home recording" (White & Robjohns, 2009).

Mixing and mastering are considered to be assignments that should preferably be done by professionals or in professional environments. Although one could learn how to mix and master – Internet forums, magazines and books often give tips on that matter (see, for example, White, 2011 and Anderton, 2004) – these activities often demand lots of time and

practice until one can be considered an "expert" in the domain. Before that, home recordists are encouraged to share that work with professionals in order to arrive to a competing sound:

> "Don't forget about mastering – and, preferably, don't think you can do it yourself with a DAT machine and a stereo compressor. There are many small mastering houses that are affordable. And if it's truly not in the budget, bring in an experience engineer to help master." (Daley, 1997, para. 25)

It is also argued that "If you don't have a good listening environment, go to a better one to mix. If you have been careful in the tracking phase of your recordings, then mixing in a better studio will be worthwhile" (Watson, 2006, p. 46). Likewise, using professional services for mixing is considered to be a good idea: "There are ways to get a good recording with a lower budget. (...) One way to do it is to budget for two days at a larger studio. On the first day you could track all your drum parts (...). Use the second day at the studio to mix" (Tedesco, 2008, p. 68).

It is also argued that many studios are now suited to work with smaller – thus cheaper – projects. Instead of being constrained by home recording's rising popularity, professional studios can be part of a collaboration which allows musicians to "use both environments to their best advantage" (Daley, 1997, para. 18). "Doing it all at home is not the answer unless you have next to no money. Even though home recording has come a long way, a well-built and well-equipped studio with a great engineer has yet to be surpassed." (Tedesco, 2008, p. 68) The issue was actually theme of a recording workshop entitled "The Best of Both Worlds":

> "Analog or digital? Home studio or commercial studio? Seasoned engineer or happy accidents? Producer or self produced? (...) With the compatibility of digital audio formats, there is no reason to do it all yourself or to limit yourself to one way of working. Working with a studio for part of your recording enables the home recordist to take advantage of the equipment and expertise a full service studio can provide. A tight budget can make a record that sounds as good as one costing three times more. Mixing analog and digital gear and techniques can create a hybrid that can be better than both. Let's discuss?" (Tape Op Con 2004, 2004, p. 21)

Recording full albums in professional studios, however, can still be considered too cost prohibitive for many musicians: "I can't afford to make a record in a big studio. I can, if I could get a big lump of money together (…). It's a down payment on a house. It's just impossible." (Skinner, 1999, para. 27) The encouragement for collaborations between home studios and big studios, thus, seems to be a way to divide home recordists once again, while supporting the sovereignty of professional studios.

Money is treated as one of the main issues for home recordists, enabling or constraining some of their decisions and activities. It is broadly assumed that home recordists don't have a lot of money to spend: "If you are anything like most Canadian musicians, you are working on a tight budget" (Watson, 2004, para. 9). Moreover, the advent of "the home music studio market" (Daley, 1997, para. 1) in North America is called "The USA's low-budget Record Revolution" (*Idem*).

While the collaboration between home studios and professional studios is encouraged, it is not considered as the only way to reach "good" sounds. Due to the assumption of budget limitation, the discourse (in fact, the *counter-discourse*, as I will discuss later) also aims to help home recordists learn how to reach the "best" sound results at home with whatever gear they have. The title of Coryat's (2005) book represents this well: *Guerrilla Home Recording: How to Get Great Sound from Any Studio (No Matter How Weird or Cheap your Gear is)*. Likewise, an article aimed at home recordists has as its heading: "Home Recording: make your home recordings sound expensive... without spending too much money" (Watson, 2006).

From the excerpts mentioned above, it is possible to assume that part of the so called home recording "revolution" consists in the fact that having thousands of dollars is not a determinant for coming up with "good" sounds anymore. On the contrary, with the right skills one can "sound expensive" with very little gear. It is argued that "Amateurs have the ability to become experts in their own set-ups. (...) Where? Who cares – as long as it sounds like a million bucks" (Young, 2008, p. 50). What really seems to be at stake, in fact, is the home recordist's time commitment and patience to gather the knowledge, build the experience and apply it to his/her work:

> "If you do it yourself, you have to be prepared to try a lot of things that may or may not work in order to make a competitive-sounding record. (...) You're up against records being made in studios for a lot more money, so you have to take the time that having your own studio gives to counter-balance that" (Daley, 1997, para. 5)

Likewise, it is said that "The more affordable and accessible recording technology becomes, the greater the trick of balancing creative and technical skills – finding time and patience to stay current in terms of new tech and new methodology" (Young, 2008, p. 51) I assume, thus, that this autonomy granted to the home recordist – the fact that he/she can set up his/her recording practices according to his/her own interests and goals –, along with the discourse's "promise" that those who follow the rules will reach a "good" sound, were some

of the factors that must have attracted many music aficionados to the practice of home recording.

The professional studio – which according to Williams (2006) used to be a mysterious world that held the secrets of music recording – is regarded as the model that guides many aspects of the home recording practice. The term "sound expensive" (Watson, 2006) makes a direct reference to the big studios, which usually demand tens of thousands of dollars for the construction of their full setup (Skinner, 1999). The fact that home recordists "don't have a lot of money" can also be seen as a reference to these costly professional studios, and how building equivalent ones at home may be an ideal goal, but not always a feasible one. Yet, the big studios' rules, definitions, techniques and tools are made available to be learned and adapted to the home environment by those who wish to be within the "truth" of music recording. Hence, those who operate a project studio at home, whatever is its level of proximity to the professional ones, are nevertheless led to think about it through the terms of the professional studio.

- Sound and Noise

As seen throughout the discourse of home recording, one of the most important characteristics of a professional studio – sometimes harder to reproduce at home – is the presence of a complete soundproofing system. Techniques such as the "room within a room" – the separation of two parallel walls with several inches of air (Krikawa, n. d.) – and the acoustic foam (White & Robjohns, 2009) help to "prevent unwanted noise from entering into the studio, reduce emissions from the studio to the outside world, and control noise and sound within the studio itself" (Krikawa, n. d.). Silent air-conditioning systems, as well as the separation between the control room and the space where musicians record are also part of a professional acoustically treated space (Daley, 1997; Klepko, 2007).

Controlling noise and sound can thus be fairly challenging for home recordists – as I started discussing in the last section –, especially due to the usual large sum of money demanded for these professional soundproofing systems. Once again, money seems to be a constraining factor for home recordists. It is argued that "If you have lots of money, there are all sorts of expensive professional solutions available to you for soundproofing" (Watson, 2004, para. 9). When that is not the case, home recordists are advised not to forcibly try to copy professional studios:

> "Unless you have a large budget, you should forget about making a conventional control room (with glass window) overlooking a studio room. I've been to a few home studios that just tried too hard to be like professional studios. (...) after all the (costly) attempts at noise insulation and acoustic treatment were added, [they] only ended up with smaller, harsh-sounding rooms". (Klepko, 2007, p. 48)

Such money constraints, as well as those related to home space and other material conditions such as building regulations should lead home recordists to opt for only some of the available methods of isolation acoustics:

> "I think in most situations, it's better to go on the route on trying to make a conformable, cozy atmosphere (...) even if it seems to be at the expense of some idealized acoustic integrity – in the end, it probably counter-balances things in your favor to have a (less-costly) space that inspires and allows and uninhibited flow of creativity." (*Idem*)

Even though professional studios are still the model to be followed, home recordists are often driven to improvise in order to reach the best possible sound experience, as I also started exploring in the previous section. "Deadening the room with carpeting and curtains, (...) couches, chairs, bookshelves, etc." (*Ibid*) and putting "your computer hardware somewhere else" (Robjohns, 2000, para. 7) are examples of possible solutions to reduce unwanted noise in home recording setups.

Considering that small spaces for recording at home limit the options for acoustic treatment (such as the room within a room, for example), home recordists need to make choices regarding the use of their setup and the management of noise. Recording drums inside a small and non-isolated space, for example, is considered "extremely difficult" (Makoway, 2002) and "impractical" (Joyner, 1999). Musicians, in that case, may need to hire a professional studio for that part of the work or rely on drum machines: "It's very common to record drums at a real recording studio and then record everything else as overdubs[23] in a home studio. It's also quite common to use a sequencer, where drum loops (...) are played over and over." (Makoway, 2002, para. 3) However, these sequencers are sometimes criticized for not providing "the musical 'feel' of a real performance" (White, 2011, p. 102), which may be a priority for certain music styles and goals.

As having a quiet recording space is crucial for the achievement of a "good" sound, critically listening to that environment is also considered a "very important step" (Watson, 2004, para. 6) towards that goal. Home recordists are expected to develop a certain audile

[23] See Glossary (Annex I).

technique (see Sterne, 2003) so they can perceive the sounds coming in and out of the studio and therefore better control them. For instance, home recordists are advised to listen carefully to the ambience where they intend to record, so as to spot where noises are coming from (Robjohns, 2000, para. 3-4). Training one's ears for "listening critically" is considered useful for testing potential "quiet" recording rooms: "It is one thing to believe that you live in a quiet neighborhood. It is quite another to live in a quiet enough area to record a guitar." (Watson, 2004, para. 6) "An objective pair of ears" is also regarded as essential for mixing and mastering, as "95 percent of mastering is not in the tools – it's in the ears." (Anderton, 2004, para. 4) Furthermore, "listening tests" along with "acoustic experiments" are fundamental for positioning microphones, instruments and material for acoustic treatment in the room (White & Robjohns, 2009).

Having a proper audile technique is also considered essential for knowing how and when *noise* can be wisely used: "In fact, some producers are putting noise into tracks to create more of a vibe, because we've lost some of it, with this silence recording we've come up with." (Young, 2009, p. 50) Being able to listen "critically" is thus an essential part of being able to control not only the acoustic environment, but also the recorded sound.

It is interesting, however, to observe that "training one's ears" is often treated as a "material" rule to be followed for achieving a "good" recorded sound, as much as, for example, building soundproofing systems or learning everything about the gear you have. As uttered within the discourse,

> "In considering your new venture that will allow you to be your own boss, make no money, and worry about how you are going to make the house payments, here is your first VERY IMPORTANT STEP! Have a sit down in the area where you want to record – and listen." (Watson, 2004, para. 6)

For that matter, some "listening exercises" are prescribed to home recordists:

> "Here is the trick – try listening with one ear – sounds stupid, but plug one ear and listen with the other. Now I don't pretend to be some kind of psychoacoustic expert (psycho expert perhaps), but there's something that your brain does in processing information, when we use two ears, that doesn't happen when only using one. (...) When you use only one ear, it is suddenly really easy to hear the 'sound' of the room. From here you can concern yourself with thoughts like: do you need to deaden the room with gobos? Does the instrument sound small and tinny or is it boom-y?" (Watson, 2006, p. 43-44)

It is assumed, thus, that by doing certain "exercises", anyone who *can listen* would be able to come up with the same "critical" conclusion about the noises coming in and out of the

"observed" room. Even though some also consider that developing critical ears is something that takes a long time to achieve (see Anderton, 2004, para. 6), *listening* is treated by the discourse as "natural" and "regular" ability from person to person. Learning how to listen critically, regardless of how long it takes, is thus instrumentalized and materialized in the discourse as something that will provide the same results for all of those who put the same effort into it.

The discourse admits that these "listening abilities" are usually associated with "sought after engineers or producers" (Tape Op Con 2004, 2004, p. 20). Whereas it considers that this "special way of hearing" can be *developed*, it also regards the topic as an open-ended debate:

> "How should a recording should [sic] 'sound'? This is a subjective matter which is why there are EQ knobs on your stereo. So why can't just anyone do what we do? What makes our hearing better than someone else's to the point that we get to control and dictate the sound of a recording? How do you develop that special way of hearing that makes you a sough after engineer or producer? How does one say with confidence something is sounding good or not? Obviously, we rely on our hearing. When our ears tell us that something does not sound that great, do we speak up or do we accept the signal as is? (...) An open ended debate for sure and one that will always be around as long as there are recordings and mixing and mastering." (*Idem*)

However, while the way a recording "should sound" is here considered as a "subjective matter", it is also something controlled by a "select" group of people who separate themselves from those who "can't do what we do". I thus assume that listening abilities must be one of the tools for the exercise of power within the discourse of home recording. It seems that whoever manages to have this competence will certainly have an advantage over so many others who don't have the "right" skills to "control and dictate the sound of a recording".

Hence, while it is claimed that home recording has "no rules" (WhiteStrat, 2009; Young, 2008; Young, 2009), the discourse of home recording imposes at least one main guideline, one that *needs* to be followed: the achievement of – or at lest the chase for – a "good" sound, as I intended to demonstrate. Through the discourse analyzed, it is possible to assume that the social and cultural agreement on what a good recorded sound means, or the best it can possibly be, is based on what comes out of professional studios. The means to arrive at this "great/professional" sound, however, can vary and they may correspond or not to what is done in big studios.

Even though recording at home and in professional studios may involve different forms of recording, their "main stresses are nonetheless analogous" (Foucault, 1971, p. 19). Therefore, regardless of how one records at home, it is mainly the achievement of this "good"/professional sound that divides "pros", experienced musicians and "serious" home recordists from amateurs, "newbies" and hobbyists. The accomplishment of a professional sound at home – or taking all the necessary steps towards that goal – is one of the main requirements for being "in the truth" within the discourse of home recording. The "good", professional sound, thus, is the "ideal truth" that functions as the law of the referred discourse.

3.3. Becoming a Home Recording "Pro"

The discourse of home recording seems to form and be formed by prescriptions, guides and norms for how to record music at home. It assumes that given the "accessibility" of home recording, anyone can and thus should concentrate on reaching a professional sound at home, as I have tried to demonstrate. Hence, the discourse seems to have as its main subjects the "Pros" – the ones who reached a certain level of experience and know-how in the practice, enough so they can be compared to institutional professionals – and the "Serious" home recordists – those who follow all the uttered steps in order to become a "Pro"[24]. "Pros" and "serious" home recordists are acknowledged as "good" home recordists, considering their "commitment" to following all the dictated rules.

The discourse seems to encourage all home recordists to aim for becoming "Pros". It insists on the idea that anyone who follows the rules can achieve such status. The "Pro" is thus the "ideal" home recordist, the one whose work can actually be compared to that of recording professionals. In turn, it seems that these professionals are the ones who often guide "serious" home recordists, as I will further discuss next.

Before the digital revolution, the commercialization of ADATs and the popularization of DAWs for home computers, coming up with good quality recorded music was a power held and exerted mostly by professional studios, as it has been discussed earlier in this thesis. It is possible to assume, thus, that the professionals that work in that environment are pioneers in having the experience and means to reaching such sound. Within the discourse of home recording, they are acknowledged for having the power/knowledge to work within the competitive music industry. According to the Foucauldian theory of discourse, these professionals can be seen as part of the institutional supports that reinforce and accompany the will to truth and other systems of exclusions (Foucault, 1971).

As seen within the discourse, professionals from big studios are often the first ones to give advice to home recordists (see, for example, Pearce, 2001; Young, 2005; Young,

[24] The distinction between "Pros", "serious" home recordists and "experts" is not always explicit. Often, these terms are used interchangeably to refer to one single subjectivity. As I deduced from the present discourse analysis, "Pros" are also "serious" home recordists, but not every "serious" home recordists has already gained the status of "Pro". Likewise, "Pros" are often considered "experts" at least in some aspects of home recording; meanwhile, the term "experts" often refers to recording professionals. Therefore, this thesis won't try to set closed boundaries for "Pros", "serious" home recordists and "experts". Instead, it will use these terms as they were uttered within the discourse. The main objective is to demonstrate how these subjectivities were formed by a prescriptive discourse, one that encourages home recordists to attempt to reach professional results at home.

2008; Young, 2009; King, 2010), considering some sort of hierarchy based on power/knowledge within the discourse. The latter, in turn, are encouraged to listen to what these specialists have to say and learn from their methods. Professionals seem to be the ones who tell home recordists how they can become "pros" in their home recording setups[25]; they know the "secrets" of a "good" sound, so they can either reveal what is done in big studios or, when they have the extra expertise, they can clarify how to get the exact same results in a home studio. On all levels, from human relations to techniques, the foundations and main issues about recording are considered the same, no matter where the activity is done. (Remark, for example, how a magazine once entitled "Home & Studio Recording" simply became "Recording Magazine". The removal of "home & studio" suggests, amongst other aspects[26], that the practice of recording doesn't depend or have to be necessarily associated with specific spaces: A brief history, n.d.). According to the discourse, once one knows and masters the foundations of recording, it comes down to the home recordist's creativity to adapt those rules to a different environment, other than the one of a big studio.

Whereas it is argued that home recording is becoming more accessible over the decades (see McLaughlin, 2002; Watson, 2006), the activity is also characterized by its constraints, challenges and limitations, as I explained before. Being a "pro" thus means being able to surpass these challenges in order to reach a professional result, regardless of the means through which this goal is achieved. As getting rid of all the constraints is not always possible, a "good" home recordist is also the one who makes the right choices, giving up some elements at the expense of others that they judge better for the final sonic results. A "serious" home recordist needs to know how to "control (...) [what] you have at your disposal" (McLaughlin, 2002, para. 27).

While in big studios different assignments are usually performed by different professionals, it is common that all the recording steps in home setups are a "one-person job", as I briefly mentioned while discussing music composition in home recording

[25] Based on what was observed in the discourse, I refer to "professionals" as those whose careers take place within the recording industry. Here, "professionals" are also those who have the experience of working in institutional settings such as the professional recording studio. "Pros", on the other hand, are spoken as the discourse's subject. In short, "pros" differ from professionals as the formers are mostly formed by the discourse of home recording.

[26] The magazine's economical struggle may also have been a reason for the name change. As Paul Théberge suggested (in private conversation), they may have "changed the title from 'Home & Studio Recording' to simply 'Recording' in order to gain, in their own words, 'a new level of respect and prominence in the pro-audio industry' (...) Given that the survival of these magazines is based as much on advertising as on subscription sales, I suspect this move has more to do with a need to legitimize themselves in the eyes of their advertisers than with a change in the composition of their readership." I do believe, however, that the change in the magazine's title emphasizes how recording at home and in professional studios are discursively part of one main activity, with regular rules that aren't necessarily connected to specific spaces.

environments. Whereas professional studios "generally [include] a house engineer" (Daley, 1997, para. 14), for example, home recordists have to "be the engineer and studio designer, too" (*Idem*, para. 11). Therefore, there is a lot that is expected from a "good" home recordist. She or he needs to become proficient in all the steps concerning pre-production, production, sound engineering, and sometimes mixing and mastering. "Pros" and those who want to become one need be aware that "The acoustical properties of the room(s) you chose to record in have a major impact on the result in many ways" (Klepko, 2007, p. 46); therefore, they need to "isolate everything as well as they can" (Young, 2008, p. 50). They also need to "[ready] all the elements of your project before performing or putting it to record" (King, 2010, p. 50). "Pros" need to "learn everything about your hardware and software you possibly can" (Gzsound, 2011). Moreover, especially after mixing and mastering, they need to make sure that "the recording sound[s] 'better' than the actual performance." (Shirley, n.d.-a, para. 27) As the owners of the home studio, they also need to worry about its maintenance, especially if they are making business out of it. When that is the case, the success of their home studio depends on "having some elements that everyone expects, counts on, or doesn't even think to ask for; [and] having some unique elements that set you apart from other local studios" (Klepko, 2007, p. 47).

Even more critical than those required skills and know-how, however, is the fact that the home recordist needs to realize if all those steps are being mastered or not. Being a "pro" also means being aware of his/her own limits, "both in terms of your budget and the ability to master the technology you choose" (Young, 2005, p. 54). As it is argued, "pros" need to "know your room", not to mention the project's scope (*Idem*). Being able to do this auto-evaluation properly, though, can be rather confusing for home recordists:

> "One of the confounding factors is that it is your brain and imagination that tells you what you are hearing, not your ears... something sounds good because you want it to, not because it is. Another confounding factor is your ego: it's got to be this way because that's how I want it to be, and I refuse to accept that an alternative way may be better." (Supercreep, 2010)

In fact, home recording "pros" and recording professionals make sure to "remind" other home recordists about their individual properties, positions and roles within the discourse. "Pros" and professionals have the authority to function as "gatekeepers", limiting what is done, by whom and how. For example, two administrators of a recording forum make sure to advise a user not to start distributing business cards for his home studio:

> "Sorry to be blunt. You're really not ready for business cards. You have a lot more self education to do before you worry about a business. Go intern at a regular studio or with a location engineer. You will learn more and faster." (TheJackAttack, 2011b)

> "Forget the business cards at this time as well. You are still in dream land and I mean this in a kind way. You need to spend a lot more money before you will even make it sound worth anything. Start reading about Sonar and what you need to record music." (Bigtree, 2011)

For those who still cannot perform well all the necessary steps for a professional-sounding recording, collaborating with big studios or with other professionals is regarded as the best decision. As a home recordist explains: "I realised that I could use both environments (...). I don't have a great tracking room at home, so I would use a studio with one for drums and guitars, then bring those tracks home for overdubs and editing." (Daley, 1997, para. 18) A home recording "pro" should thus know his/her own limitations (*Idem*), especially regarding gear and ability.

As I briefly mentioned while discussing *sound* in home recording, the encouragement for these collaborations or hybrid recordings seems to function as a legitimation of the power of professional studios. Considering the home recordist's multiple tasks, responsibilities, gear and skills necessary for becoming a "pro", big studios are regarded as the best solution for those who can't control every step of recording. Through this encouragement, the discourse of home recording keeps on accrediting to professional studios the higher status regarding "good" recording sound and conditions.

In order to acquire all the prescribed skills for becoming a "pro", it is argued that home recordists need to *commit* to the activity. "Serious" home recordists dedicate lots of "time and patience" to recording (Emmet, n.d., para. 3; White, 2011, p. 3). Home recordists are reminded that "the only way to get good at anything is practice" (Anderton, 2004, para. 6). They also need to "make sure you know exactly what you need" (McLaughlin, 2002, para. 25) and insist on reaching a professional sound. If they can't afford building a fully equipped home studio right away, they are encouraged to work on becoming "experts on their own set-ups" (Young, 2008, p. 50), while slowly building their recording studio: "Buy what you need when you need it" (McLaughlin, 2002, para. 25). Home recordists should also realize that "learning never ends" (Shirley, n.d.-a), and that it usually takes many years of practice and "self education" (TheJackAttack, 2011b) until they can be fully recognized as experts or "pros"[27] by other professionals and musicians.

[27] In the discourse under study, "experts" mostly refers to those who intend to and manage to perfect their *know-*

It is argued that home recordists should "do a lot of research" (McLaughlin, 2002, para. 4) in order to learn everything they can about the activity. As professionals advise, "Talk to people you know. Talk to professionals that use recording gear everyday. Read as much as you can." (*Idem*, para. 28) Home recordists are encouraged to make use of all the supports available for learning, as "there is a never-ending supply of information on the topic" (*Ibid*, para. 2). For instance, it is pointed out that "You can check out forums or blogs on various subjects just to soak up as much as possible from other people." (King, 2010, p. 52) Moreover, "For getting more knowledge about how to set up your studio, the Internet is your best friend – there are tons of how-to sites and production and mixing tips on YouTube." (Young, 2008, p. 53)

It is also argued that a valuable way to learn and gain experience in recording is to have mentors; in other words, to work with professionals and observe what they do. "Working with professionals gives you the chance to gain some valuable experience of your own. (...) There's a number of things you can pick up from working with a top-notch producer" (*Idem*, p. 56). Professionals often advise home recordists to find internships in big studios as a way to learn more and faster by being fully exposed "to the rough world of the industry" (Lowther, 1999, para. 6. See also TheJackAttack, 2011b). Working with experienced professionals is in fact described as the "proper education" for home recordists:

> "Having mentors has been very important to me. And here, you have some of the most wonderful mentors on the Internet at Recording.org thanks to Chris. I know many of my colleagues here are far more well educated than I (me?). But doing this for over 40+ years has only enhanced my brain damage. Making me the logical choice for those not interested in a proper education." (RemyRAD, 2011)

Home recordists also need to master the language used by professionals and other recordists. As written at the end of a short recording tutorial, "The important part is that we've explored the foundational elements of the process as well as the terms used to describe it. It aids in both communication and understanding when we all speak the same language. (I believe its called audiogeekese)" (Shirley, n.d.-b, para. 60). Home recordists are expected to know how to name different gear, their function and their specifications. They are usually questioned about the technical details of their recordings, such as "What kind of multi-track did you record with? (...) What kind of computer? (...) What were you running the mics

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how on home recording without necessarily becoming "pros". Meanwhile, "experts" can also be one of the subjectivities of the "pro", as this know-how can also be accompanied by recording experience, recognition by professionals, etc. As the boundaries of those notions are often blurred, I may, under specific circumstances, use the terms "experts" and "pros" interchangeably.

into?" (Crane, 2002, p. 52) When they don't know such specifications, that fact is brought to the fore: "Saloman does not know what equipment Gold Dust [Studios] use" (Silverstein, 2002, p. 47). They should be aware of at least most of the technical aspects of their gear, even if it involves learning some "scary math" (Emmet, n.d.). As technology has a central role in recording, it seems that the more one is literate on that matter, the more he/she is seen as an *expert*, which according to the discourse is one of the possible subjectivities of the "pro".

Similarly, home recordists who exchange knowledge through Internet forums are expected to have a fairly good sense of grammar and punctuation, which shows that a minimum intellectual level is also required. As a forum user pointed to another: "Grammar nazi says: 'learn to punctuate'. Incite means to start something. Like a fight. Insight is clear or deep perception of a situation." (hueseph, 2010) Hence, knowing how to write properly and how to address to the used technology seems to be part of what "defines the qualifications required of the speaker" (Foucault, 1971, p. 18). Being literate in the referred aspects is part of the "policy" of this discourse – borrowing once again Foucaldian terms –, thus a necessary step for one not to be excluded from it.

Amongst all the skills necessary for someone to be a home recording "pro", having a "good" pair of ears is considered as an important and essential aptitude, as I started explaining in the previous section. Before building a recording setup, the home recordist is advised to "Have a sit down in the area where you want to record – and listen. What can you hear?" (Watson, 2004, para. 6) As I briefly mentioned when discussing sound and acoustically treated spaces, "critically listening" to the environment is considered fundamental for spotting incoming sounds that can depreciate the quality of the music being recorded. A "good" home recordist also needs to be critical about the "set up" and "tuning" of instruments, "mic[rophone] placement" and the quality of the sounds that are being captured by the computer: "Put on some headphones and listen to what the mic is 'hearing'. (...) If the instrument sounds good in the headphones, likely it will sound good when it is playing in the track." (Watson, 2006. p. 43-44). A certain listening ability is equally needed for realizing the strong and weak aspects of a song. "Neutral ears" are considered to be important for "[making] sure that you've got the parts of your song roughly identified." (King, 2010, p. 50) Good home recordists also need to have "'long ears': Long enough to maintain [those abilities] for long sessions, to be neither your worse, or most forgiving critic, but your most constructive one." (Young, 2005)

Having "good ears" and accurate listening abilities are often related to "expertise" in recording. As enunciated within the discourse: "Paul and Hugh's expertise and X-Ray ears have certainly pointed me in the right direction" (White & Robjohns, 2009, para. 20). Regarding the process of mastering music, "good ears" are also related to *art* and *skillfulness*: "It's as much art as skill though & requires SUPERB ears to do it properly." (Rayc, 2011)

A "good" home recordist thus needs to aim to become a "listening expert". According to the discourse, a "pro" is expected to differentiate "good" from "bad" sounds in any circumstances. This shows in fact how there seems to be a naturalized idea amongst home recordists of what a "good sound" should be like. "Pros" should not only be able to make that distinction, but they should also be capable of making the right decisions for controlling sound in order to reach recordings that sound "professional". "Good ears" are actually considered to be more decisive for the quality of the recording than gear and an acoustically treated room:

> "Gear is nice. (...) Having a well-treated room is important, too. (...) Now for the rub: If you have a tin ear, none of this is going to help you turn around a decent product. If you don't have ear for pitch, and your instruments are out of tune with themselves and other instruments, your recordings will suffer." (Supercreep, 2010)

The discourse of home recording frequently brings to the fore the idea that having different skills is more important than having lots of gear: "You can buy the gear, but you still have to develop the skills. 'That's not going to change, even if the technical side is getting easier and easier'" (Young, 2008, p. 56) It is also argued that "The limits of the quality recording aren't based entirely on gear and never have been." (Young, 2005, p. 51) In fact, having a small and simple setup is considered interesting for self-teaching, as long as the home recordist commits to master the gadgets that he/she already owns:

> "Another maxim would be to start off with simple gear & a simple arrangement of a simple piece. When that's nailed it would be time to progress. I spent 10 years fiddling about with 1 mic and a cassette portastudio. That set up forced me to learn a lot: having to ping pong meant I had to think ahead so that the final picture was what I was after – in other words plan a little. Working with just a couple of pieces of gear meant learning how to milk them for the best possible result." (Rayc, 2010)

Even though some defend that "You can have a spare bedroom and a computer running Cubase and that is a home studio" (McLaughlin 2002, para. 4), the discourse

legitimizes that coming up with a professional sound depends on the acquisition of good, professional technology. Setups that cost $500 or less aren't considered "serious" enough: "Under 500? Dollars?!" (Watson, 2004, para. 28) Budgets as such are said to be for home recordists who "just want to have a lot of fun messing around with audio" (*Idem*). For those who want to be "serious", the best advice is: "save your money a little longer" (*Ibid*). Studios for those who long to be home recording "pros" start at a $5000 budget (Skinner, 1999), and only after $10.000 one can enter the "world of professional recording" (*Idem*, para. 59).

"Serious" home recordists should take their time to build their setup, "start[ing] with one or two key elements and then expanding from there." (McLaughlin, 2002, para. 26) The ones who aim to become "pros" are encouraged to "choose your equipment wisely and do your research" (*Idem*, para. 13). They are also advised to "save up for the good stuff" (*Ibid*, para. 12). While improvising can be a quick and cheap solution to certain aspects of home recording, "pros" shouldn't stick to those responses: "make sure you've got the best possible kit for the job during recording time. A good drumset shouldn't need any tape or dampening... just a nice clear open tone." (LeeRosario, 2010) In order to save money, learning certain skills such as "soldering your own harnesses to the exact needed length" (Emmet, n.d., para. 35) are considered to be "a great option" (*Idem*) for home recordists. On the other hand, software piracy is unacceptable within the discourse. The illegal download of software is almost considered "dangerous" for "serious" home recordists, since it will probably lead them to "frustration" during recording:

> "Though you'll find a lot of 'cracked' software on the Internet, specially for Windows PCs, I'd strongly advise you not to take that route. Not only it is an illegal practice that deprives software houses (some of which are surprisingly small) of legitimate income, it is also fraught with risk. Cracked software can be very unstable and often comes packaged with adware and other nasties, all of which will cause you endless frustration. It can be a tempting option, but don't do it!" (White, 2011, p. 19-20)

> "Yeah you can try downloading the "free" software from gnutella and kazaa but usually these programs seem like they have something missing...not in their physical appearance but in their programming." (MartyMcFly, 2002)

> "You can never really trust that any problems in your [illegally downloaded] DAW setup aren't caused by a bad version or crack. It's not about supporting the company but paying for the company to support you." (TexRoadKill, 2002)

> "You don't even need a moral reason to be opposed to piracy. Imagine how much more money software companies would spend on development if piracy

> didn't exist. In this way, piracy has a harmful effect on innovation." (Trebek, 2002)

In turn, home recordists who can't afford to pay the full price of software such as DAW platforms are encouraged to

> "(...) discover cheap or free software that will do the job you need honestly:
> - Reaper. It's free to try and like $50 for a license (I don't use it, so I'm not too familiar with the details).
> - Audacity. Simple, but free and open source.
> - Ten million free plugins, many of them quite good. Do a search here, because there are many, many threads on that topic.
> - Used software. Good deals here, as many people seemed to have switched software recently, which only used to happen very rarely, and people had to keep all their old versions to upgrade. Just BE CAREFUL, and read the vendor's license transfer policy, and make sure you get original manuals, documentation, activation codes, dongles, etc., as appropriate." (Mshilarious, 2009)

Another possible option available is to "look at the 'light' version of the mainstream programs, which offer most of the key features of their pricier siblings at a much lower price point." (White, 2011, p. 20)

Whereas the discourse recognizes that "there are some 'Lo-Fi' recording (...) that have done very well" (Kane, 2002, para. 7) regarding sound quality, it defends that as a general rule one can "definitely" hear the difference between "the 'Professional' and the 'Semi-Professional' categories" (*Idem*) concerning recording equipment. The expensive and well-equipped professional studios, thus, continue to be the ideal model to be followed by home recordists.

As if these demands weren't already overwhelming, a "good" home recordist is also expected to be a good *artist*. According to the discourse, it is through art that the home recordist will finally have the ability to make a good professional sound out of *almost* any equipment:

> "That recording is an art – not just a craft or skill set – is evidenced by the many poor, or just unimaginative, recordings that are being made despite the use of the latest or most expensive gear. Even using the best equipment, and knowing how it operates, is not enough to guarantee a good recording. To expect this would be like expecting that simply by buying the best paints, canvas, knives and brushes... anyone can paint a masterpiece (...). On the other hand, a true master can pluck a singed piece of wood from the fireplace and create a moving work of art using just that charcoal and his [sic] fingers upon a tablecloth." (Shirley, n.d., para. 8)

The discourse argues that "it's not just the composing, playing and singing of music which are artistic endeavors... so is the recording process itself." (*Idem*, para. 7) Home recordists are considered to be "artist[s] working with a sonic palette" (Watson, 2006, p. 46). Art is thus one of the features that home recordists need to focus on: "You need to be able to make decisions based on the artistic content." (Young, 2009, p. 50)

The "artist" in home recording is often spoken about in relation to his/her artistic or creative freedom. For example, it is argued that home recording "allows artists to take control of their music (financially & creatively)". (Shanecools, 2011) It is also enunciated that "There's a legitimate space that should be reserved for music that sounds the way the artist intended it to sound." (Holder, 1998, para. 3) Home recording thus seems to give recording artists the opportunity to fully "express [themselves] through sound" (Shirley, n.d.-a, para. 7). Those who record by themselves at home, for example, recognize that "producing an entire album alone" has the "benefit of complete creative autonomy" (Sherbourne, 2009, para. 38), as it was mentioned earlier. As we can observe, the notions of art and creativity often walk side by side in the discourse of home recording, being even used interchangeably at certain times.

Creativity is regarded as one of the essential characteristic for a "good" home recordist to have. It is argued that "In the studio it is necessary for technical knowledge, musical concept, and creativity to share equally in the experience" (*Idem*, para. 10). "Recording success depends on knowledge, experience, well-defined goals, critical listening skills, imagination/creativity, and patience." (*Ibid*, para. 50) The discourse of home recording admits that "(...) the tools are less important than the creativity, knowledge, and resourcefulness of the people involved in the building process." (Young, 2008, p. 56)

As "knowledge", creativity is understood as a highly demanded skill for every step of the recording process. Adapting the recording techniques used in studios to the home environment requires creativity in the first place, considering that each house, family, neighborhood and city will probably have their conditions imposed differently to the home recordist. Moreover, creativity is also said to be needed in order to reduce the costs of building a home recording setup: "It is this type of creative thinking that can reduce the cost of building your home studio. Everyday household products can easily be used in creative ways to help in the recording process." (Skinner, 1999, para. 17) "Good" songs and "good" arrangements equally depend on creativity: "(…) to create a product on par with the pros, before you think about creating a great-sounding product from a technical perspective, you

need to have a great-sounding product from a creative perspective, and that might be the trickier part of the two…" (King, 2010, p. 49)

Being creative and "talented" in home recording is regarded as a "tricky" characteristic for aspiring "pros" to obtain, considering that "you can't just buy talent and creativity..." (Bdenton, 2011). However, while "creativity" isn't expressively considered as something that can be bought or learned, it is regarded as something that "good" home recordists *must* have. Therefore, they need to look for it, and lead their work and decisions towards finding this "valuable" characteristic: "If keeping your old way of working is going to keep you creative, then keep your old stuff and work with it. The point is to be creative and to make music." (Young, 2008, p. 52) It is also considered interesting for home recordists to invest in a "space that inspires and allows an uninhibited flow of creativity" (Klepko, 2007, p. 48). The discourse even argues that "The major strength of the [professional] studio is that the band can come in and concentrate on what it would like to achieve creatively rather than technically" (Young, 2008, p. 55). This reinforces once again the sovereignty of the big studios, as well as the importance of creativity for the achievement of a "good" sound.

Along with creativity, there is a similar notion produced by the discourse which also represents what home recordists need to "keep a look out for" (Young, 2009, p. 54): *magic*. Magic in home recording usually refers to things or moments that aren't easily explained or described, but that should nevertheless be chased. It is argued that "Many magical, historical musical performances are based on emotional feelings, and the 'quality' of the moment of capture sometimes plays into the magic and history – i.e. it wasn't about a high quality ratio, it was about confidently and quickly facilitating a 'vibe'" (McLaughlin, 2002, para. 10). While this "magical vibe" isn't clearly prescribed within the discourse, it is still associated with other things home recordists can – or should – look for. For example, home recordists can facilitate the possible occurrence of magic by making sure they are recording in a comfortable environment: "There's a magic about being comfortable. (...) Some studios are very sterile and there's not a lot of vibe to them. If you're in your home and you're comfortable there then you're probably going to be able to sing better in that type of setting." (Young, 2005, p. 51)

Finding the magical moment at any recording set is almost considered as a "guarantee" for reaching a "good" sound: "Whether you choose to do so for financial or artistic reasons doesn't matter, if the process, performances, and material create some undeniable magic, people will hear it." (Young, 2005, p. 56) It is also argued that "creating"

this magic depends "entirely" on the musician/recordist: "'If you think of it, the only thing between you and the listener is a microphone, a preamp and a piece of tape. It really does rely entirely on you to create magic.' Being able to put that magic out of yourself and others is a talent in itself." (Young, 2009, p. 52) Therefore, it is possible to assume that home recordists need to appropriate that sort of "talent" if they intend to become "pros".

Even though "finding magic" and "being creative" aren't characteristics that can be prescribed as well as "finding a good sound" or "controlling your gear", for example, they are nevertheless something that aspiring "pros" need to control. While creativity is considered as an essential characteristic for good home recordings, magic can "surprisingly" boost the quality of recordings as well.

As asserted within the discourse, "Recording is a curious blend of science, technology, business and, most importantly, art" (Shirley, n.d.-a, para. 7). Therefore, a home recording "pro" needs to be able to combine "great arrangement and sonic purity" (Watson, 2006, p. 43), a task which requires, above all, creativity, technical knowledge and even good gear, as I intended to demonstrate throughout this section. While information on how to record at home is often published in specialized magazines and websites, home recordists can only graduate from "newbies" to "beginners" and from there to "pros" through their own hands-on *experience*: "The best thing someone who wants to start recording can do is, 'buy yourself some equipment, take a month and learn to use it, and then start to record your own songs.' (...) The experience will come". (Pearce, 2001, para. 16-17) According to the discourse, it is through lots of practice, research and by working/learning with professionals that one can finally become a "pro" in home recording. Although gathering diplomas in music recording is considered a possible way to learn (see P.babs, 2011; White, 2011), it is far from being more recognized than years of practice, of recording albums and/or working with other experts:

> "Going to a recording school doesn't mean that it's going to be easy getting a job in the industry. It might help you along with the basic ideas and concepts of signal flow, microphone design and techniques, but the rest is up to you and how much you really want to work. I recently talked to a friend of mine that went to a recording school and then did his internship in New York City. He was told that he'd had to work there for a year (60-hour weeks) for free before they would even consider hiring him on!" (Meredith, 2002, p. 12)

> "(...) if you're thinking of getting an 'industry-recognized' qualification that's recognized by 'the industry', then you're in for a shock, and all the more so if you think a 'music technology' diploma or degree will act as a magic passport to a career. (...) In the modern audio industry, almost everyone is self-

employed, which means that you're only as good as your recent work (or, more accurately, as good as your clients say you are!). (...) The important thing is not simply 'getting qualified' but rather what you can learn." (White, 2011, p. 164; 166)

3.4. Doing it yourself: autonomy and empowerment in home recording

One of the curious aspects of the discourse of home recording is that while it encourages recording aficionados to become "pros", as we just observed, it also stimulates others to enjoy the possibility of home recording as an amusing, liberating and empowering activity. Whereas the discourse of home recording can be very prescriptive, providing all the necessary steps and rules for how to do things "right", it also allows the formation of both *resistance* and a *counter-discourse*. While the resistance defends that "there are no rules" (Young, 2009, p. 51) in home recording, the counter-discourse supports that home recording has "no limits but your own" (Young, 2005, p. 49). The resistance mentioned above seems to be an opposition to what the main discourse is about: following the prescribed rules for reaching a "good sound" and becoming a "pro". The counter-discourse, in turn, defends that home recording should be done however the musician/non-musician/recordist, etc. pleases. Having the power to record at home and to make his/her own rules is in this case seen as being more important than reaching a "good sound", one that is comparable to what is done in big studios.

Even though the discourse of home recording admits both a resistance and a counter-discourse, the distinction between these two forms of counteraction is not always a clear cut one. It seems that within this discourse, the resistance – defending and accepting that there are in fact no rules for home recording – functions as a condition of possibility for a counter-discourse – where the recordist is said to have full control over his/her actions and decisions within the activity.

Resisting the main discourse of home recording can mean that "Just like anything involving creativity, it's difficult to prescribe a set way of doing things, you have to find your own way" (Klepko, 2007, p. 44). According to the resistant discourse, "[recording is] supposed to be entertaining. That doesn't mean it has to fit into very tight guidelines" (Young, 2009, p. 51). Even to set up a recording studio, "Everyone's case is going to be different and it really depends on what you want to achieve" (McLaughlin, 2002, para. 4). There can also be resistance in the view that "Whether you're making music for personal use or profit, in full analog or strictly digital rooms, your preferences are likely as individual as your music. There's no right or wrong way to go about it" (Young, 2008, p. 51).

Exchanges through home recording Internet forums also show signs of resistance. As a user mentioned about gear choice, "like anything on this forum, the only solid answer is

'it depends'" (Steenamaroo, 2011). After giving tips on how to record acoustic guitar, another member states: "DISCLAIMER: This is not the only way. This just happens to be my way." (WhiteStrat, 2009) Similarly, when talking about what effects to use over a recorded instrument, a forum user claims: "There is no right or wrong. It's what sounds good to YOU that counts." (Bobbsy, 2011) It is interesting to remark, in this case, how the opposition to the dominant discourse appears to rely on arguments of individuality.

Meanwhile, home recordists seem to realize that there *is* a prescriptive way to perform all the steps related to the activity. Nonetheless, some choose to do things differently, claiming that preparing too much may lead them to miss the "moment":

> "(...) I have the utmost respect for engineers and producers and sound guys that know the stuff really well, but the process of setting everything up seems to take a lot of time. It's the right way to do it, but sometimes I would rather just plug the mic in and start recording. I think maybe you end up capturing the moment better that way." (Pearce, 2001, para. 18)

Within the counter-discourse of home recording, people are encouraged to record however they like with whatever they have. In forums, for instance, users often give advice to other users based on their gear and/or budget limitation. As one of them mentioned when giving tips on how to record guitars: "If you don't have the means to record a properly miked clip either due to volume sensitive neighbors, poor gear, lack of recording experience or any combination of the above, then amp direct recording can be the desired way." (Guitarfreak, 2011a) Similarly, another forum member suggests how a user can build his setup with $500, however considering at first the budget limitation: "500$ is tight. If it were me, I would get another [microphone Shure SM]57 and a matched pair of condensers. Then get the best interface you can with whats [sic] left. You will still be doing some overdubs most likely, but it will be workable" (Dave_p, 2010).

As we could observe, tight budgets may be regarded as obstacles for home recording, but not as complete obstructions in this case. As affirmed within the counter-discourse, "(...) it doesn't matter if you're working in your kitchen or a full-blown commercial studio." (Young, 2009, p. 56) For some, the trick is to go through the "battlefield of low-fi (...) making the best of what you've got in your arsenal" (Visconti, 2000). It is also argued that "If you put the legwork into looking, then, it is definitely possible to kit yourself out on the cheap." (Inglis, 2010, para. 57)

According to the counter-discourse, recording on a low budget is not solely

associated with beginners or amateurs. Oftentimes, "good" musicians or engineers[28] also find ways to take advantage of non-expensive gear. As one of them affirms: "I got a couple of little studio speakers and a couple of big ones. I was driving home and I saw these two really big speakers sitting in a dumpster, so I took 'em. They're great." (Silverstein, 2002, p. 47) Likewise, when asked about how he picked his vocal microphones, another "pro" musician/recordist answers: "Whatever came my way that was cheap, to be honest. They're low budget, high-quality mics." (Weiss, 2004, p. 26) Recording "on the cheap" is in fact considered a "testament to the power of home recording", regardless of the expertise level of the recordist:

> "The Shins debut album, Oh, Inverted World, is a testament to the power of home recording. A band with great songs captures those songs using the gear they can afford and manipulates the recording process to turn technical limitations to their advantage." (Sheaffer and Lowery, 2004, p. 28)

It is possible to assume from this excerpt that within the counter-discourse, the "results" of the recording – or coming up with a "good" sound – are still something for home recordists to look for; however they are "free" to use the means that they like or that "they can afford" in order to achieve that expected sound.

From the affirmations quoted above, it is also possible to observe how home recording absolutely depends on the ownership or access to a minimum amount of gear. However, in contrast with the discourse of "pros", the recordists here considered – who can be hobbyists, amateurs, experts, musicians of any level – do not seem to focus on following the "right" rules or "copying" the big studios. It seems that the gear they have, where it came from or in what conditions they are recording is less important than the fact that they can do it themselves.

Within the counter-discourse, it is also assumed that limitations related to gear, budget or even space shouldn't be a barrier for anyone to start home recording, or even to achieve a good sound: "(...) every shape and size of home studio has been featured in *SOS* Readerzone columns, proving that there isn't a space, no matter how unpromising it may appear, that is beyond conversion." (Flint, 2004, para. 2) Moreover, as it has been uttered within the discourse: "I'm often amazed at the calibre of material that has been tracked on inexpensive multitrack recording gear." (Makoway, 2002, para. 1) It is also argued that

[28] Here, I make reference to a couple of magazine articles (Silverstein, 2002; Weiss, 2004) that try to show how "pro" musicians and bands can actually make good use of "low-fi" gear and situations. Silverstein (2002) describes Saloman, his interviewer, as someone who "has recorded distinctive and creative recording music for years" (p. 47). Weiss (2004), in turn, talks about Statland as "one of the brightest guitarist/songwriters in New York City" (p. 26). Weiss describes Statland's home studio as "this lo-fi cradle of creativity" (*Idem*).

"Great tracks have been recorded on less than ideal mics. 'It depends on the style of music you're recording (...).'" (Young, 2008, p. 55) Once again, we can see that the description of "how to home record" or "how to obtain a good sound" isn't here as precise as it is in the main discourse. The counter-discourse of home recording seems to be less prescriptive than the one of "pros", since it considers that factors such as the musician's goals and music style may bring different connotations to the recorded pieces. "Everyone has their own approach – there's no hard, fast rule that says you can't make records on any platform. Occasionally, even records made on the lowest of lo-fi capture our imaginations more immediately than big budget records." (Young, 2008, p. 51-52)

It is interesting, however, to observe that while "recording with what you have" is legitimized in this counter-discourse, it is also characterized as "low-fi". The counter-discourse accepts, therefore, the existence of an ideal "high-fidelity" sound that comes out of professional studios or from "pro" home recordings. This counter-discourse is thus possible to the extent that it acknowledges that there are rules to be followed by whoever wants to achieve the "best" home recording results. It represents a resistance to that dominant discourse, forming subjects that mostly praise home recording for its empowering characteristics and for the fact that it gives them the "accessibility to the medium" (Watson, 2006, p. 42).

Having the means to record at home, whatever they are, are in this case regarded as liberating, since having a recording setup gives the musician freedom to create and distribute his/her music as he/she pleases. As argued within the discourse, "I think the world is becoming a 'get on and do it yourself world', and as far as I'm concerned, having your own studio is the first step". (Holder, 1998, para. 29) "There's enough music made from the A&R man's point of view, or from the accountant's point of view. There's a legitimate space that should be reserved for music that sounds the way the artist intended it to sound. I'm doing my best to defend that space." (*Idem*, para. 3) Musicians are also encouraged to invest in themselves before spending their money on professional facilities:

> "Long Story Short: Save your money the next time you're thinking about heading out to a recording studio and start investing in yourself. Not only is a home studio in reach, it also allows artists to take control of their music (...)." (Shanecools, 2011)

In fact, the counter-discourse admits an "empowering" aspect of having a home recording setup. As stated about a group's home recorded album:

> "I think that was the best thing about this record: the song is written, everybody learns it, goes in the room, we press record, four minutes later, the song's done. Whether we loved it or not was a different story, but empowering ourselves to do that was an amazing thing." (Young, 2009, p. 54)

Regarding this last example, we can see that simply having the means to record at home, to try and "do-it-yourself" are considered more important than immediately coming up with a "good" sound. Having the power to do it is here being more praised than "sounding expensive" (Watson, 2006).

It is also within the counter-discourse of home recording that the term "guerrilla (home) recording" mostly appears. The expression's meaning is described as such:

> "The American Heritage Dictionary defines a guerrilla as 'a member of an irregular military force operating usually in small, independent groups capable of great speed and mobility.' As unsigned musicians, we may not be military, but we are irregular, we're independent (for now), and, if we know what we're doing, we're capable of recording good music at great speed. Guerrilla warfare subverts a traditionally military force in a low-budget, underhanded way: making the greatest impact with the fewest resources. As history has proved, guerrilla warfare can be highly effective under certain conditions." (Coryat, 2005, p. 8)

Guerilla recording is thus referred to as "doing-it-yourself" even in the most adverse situations: "If your bedroom studio is more bedroom than studio, you might think that recording bands is beyond your power. But where there's a primary school, church hall or industrial unit, there's a space you can use..." (Inglis, 2010, p. 1) Therefore, guerrilla home recording can be a solution for those who don't have enough space at home, a requisite for home recording that is rarely questioned within the discourse, as if having a free or "usable" place at home was something "natural".

"Guerrilla recording" seems in many ways to represent well what the counter-discourse of home recording is about. Characterizing guerrilla recordists as an "irregular force" is accepting the existence of a "regular force". While both are forces and have a certain power, the latter follows the "rules". Hence, for the guerilla recording – and similarly for the counter-discourse of home recording – to exist and to operate differently from the discourse of "pros", it needs to speak within the "truth" of home recording and admit that it has its normative aspects. The counter-discourse regards "guerrilla tactics" in home recording as "taking the power to control the flow of the artists' work out of the hands of big companies and boardroom decision-makers." (Myers, 1997, para. 3) It goes as far as legitimizing that "It democratizes the creation and distribution of music" (*Idem*).

One of they key differences between these two opposite aspects of the same discourse is that while the main one is about establishing and following rules for becoming "the best" in home recording, the counter-discourse is also about "having fun" through the activity. Different positions as such coexist within the same discourse:

> "While it is absolutely true that a lot of the members of this forum are expecting to produce music like Barbara Streisand in Capitol Records studios without having developed enough talent and technical knowledge, it is equally true that many (most?) of the members of this forum are recording for fun and personal enjoyment. A pair of $20 dollar dynamic microphones meet [sic] my expectations (today)." (Gcolbert, 2010)

According to the counter-discourse, having fun while recording at home is more important than aiming for excellence:

> "(...) my point is that having fun and joy with your music is far more important than how good you are. We've all know [sic] great players who were bitter and unhappy with music. That's worthless ..... what's the point? I think the only competency you need is whatever level it takes to make you happy." (Lt. Bob, 2010)

Within the counter-discourse, it is often stated that having fun by recording at home doesn't depend on having the best or most expensive gear. Although it considers that "the under $500 crowd" should at first consider saving their "money a little longer", the discourse provides alternatives through advice on how to make the best within that budget: "If you have $500, a computer, and just want to have a lot of fun messing around with audio, consider a USB mic preamp. (...) You can plug in guitars, keyboards, dynamic microphones and even high-end condenser microphones." (Watson, 2004, para. 30) In fact, it is argued that low-quality gear can provide home recordists with moments of joy: "I've recently stopped relying on my Pro Tools plug-ins so heavily and started to use my crappy-but-beautiful analog gear again and I'm having so much fun." (Viscoti, 2000, p. 13)

As in the discourse of "pros", *creativity* and *magic* are also part of the counter-discourse of home recording. However, these notions are treated under a slightly different angle within the discourse presently discussed. Rather than being spoken as skills to be chased and learned by home recordists, creativity and magic are mostly considered by the counter-discourse as non-prescriptive aptitudes that a home recordist may have or find (See Klepko, 2007, p. 44). Hence, finding particular ways through creativity to reach a "good" recorded sound is "in itself is a primary motivation that leads most musicians to build a home recording set-up." (*Idem*)

Within the counter-discourse, creativity is what leads home recordists to reach a "good" sound regardless of the gear used. "The gear we use is less important than our knowledge and creativity level. With a combination of strong creative vision and know-how we can make great recordings with the most basic of equipment." (Shirley, n.d.-a, para. 9) Similarly, it is argued that "Less expensive gear in the hands of a thoughtful creative musician is way more valuable than a room full of expensive stuff owned by someone who doesn't know how to use it." (Pearce, 2001, para. 6)

In turn, the term "magic" is often used as the explanation for certain unusual, "high quality" moments in recording:

> "'I sang the vocal take for the Santana song on a bus, rolling down a highway, through a pair of panties wrapped around a coat hanger as a screen, and Clive Davis wouldn't let me change them. I wanted to, but he's like, "nope, the vocal take is great, there's something rhythmic about it, some magical quality to it.'" The bottom line is that sometimes you can't replace the magic no matter how much you revisit and retry." (Young, 2005, p. 50)

While "creativity" is considered as a capacity that may favor home recordists who have it, magic is related to inexplicable single moments when "good" recordings simply happen: "At the end of the day it's about trusting yourself, and it's about an emotion. When we got into the business, we got into a room with a bunch of guys, started jamming and something happened." (Young, 2009, p. 54)

Therefore, according to the counter-discourse, it seems that creativity is related to having *singular skills*, while magic is associated with *atypical moments* in recording. As *creative recordists* have one of the considered "essential" aptitudes for making "art" out of their recordings, those who find and capture magical moments can similarly attain such a goal. Rather than highly demanded abilities that need to be learned, creativity and magic within the counter-discourse are considered as a characteristic and an accomplishment potentially accessible to any home recordist. Since it is argued that "Good music comes out of surprising places these days" (Emmet, n.d., para. 50), as I briefly mentioned earlier, the way these two notions are produced within the counter-discourse seems to be an additional encouragement for home recordists to "do it themselves". As uttered by the discourse, "It's music, strange things have been known to happen, things that don't seem like they will work together often leads you to a point no one has yet attained." (Fletcher, 2002, p. 12)

Therefore, the counter-discourse of home recording doesn't seem to ignore either the existence of rules for coming up with a "good" sound at home or the power exerted by those who strictly follow those rules. As I pointed above, it admits that a certain amount of

money/gear is nevertheless necessary for those who intend to record music at home. However, this counter-discourse accepts and allows one to get started with very little compared to a "pro" home recording setup. Differently from to the main discourse of home recording, it forms subjects who have different priorities, other than becoming "pros" at any cost. Hobbyists, beginners or even experts – who I referred to as those who intend to perfect their know-how on home recording, without necessarily becoming "pros" – are all subjects of a discourse that seems to support the entertaining and empowering aspects of this activity above all else. As encouraged by the counter-discourse, "This is guerrilla recording, so don't let any weak points in your gear armoury [sic] prevent you from having a go. It's meant to be fun, not perfect" (Inglis, 2010, para. 58).

3.5. About Gender in Home Recording

As I've been discussing, "Accessibility to the medium" (Watson, 2006, p. 42), "having total control over your creative vision" (Skinner, 1999, para. 22), "flexibility (...) of costs and convenience" (Pearce, 2001, para. 2) are some or the arguments used in the discourse of home recording to defend that "there's very little to stop anyone who wants to from home recording" (Young, 2005, p. 53). These affirmations drove me to seek who are the subjects of home recording. Is this activity indeed fairly open to everyone? Who is allowed to speak within this discourse?

At first, these questions led me to realize that those who have authority within the discourse are the ones who obey all its prescriptive rules, as it was previously discussed about the home recording "pro". I also observed that home recordists need to have access to a private space of their own, as well as to a certain amount of money to buy the minimum collection of gear required, points that were also explored in this thesis.

Moreover, my analysis leads me to postulate that home recording spaces and even recording studios in general are often *gendered*. A similar issue has been in fact discussed in Andra McCartney's project, "In and out of the sound studio" (2003). The author observes how institutional contexts such as the traditional studio affect the way gender is performed. When speaking of "notions of performance", she borrows Butler's (1990) theorizing, which "claims that gender is not a given, a biological necessity or determined social construct, but rather something that we perform, more of a mask than an essence" (McCartney, 2003, p. 89). McCartney adds that "when a woman enters a field that is stereotypically masculine, this troubles the stereotypical category" (*Idem*, p. 89-90). She asserted, thus, that "as an outsider either 'as a woman' or 'as a composer', a woman producer or composer may 'play' being the exceptional woman, or the stereotypical woman, or the 'genderless' composer, the technical expert, the audio engineer, the macho technologist." (*Ibid*, p. 90) According to her, specific gendered performativities "can allow much greater flexibility and freedom in the definition of roles" (*Ibid*) as it may also alienate women from parts of their life experiences.

As observed from the discourse of home recording, music recording and the studio are mostly regarded as a male activity and space, respectively. Home recording is addressed as a "thing to do with the fellas" (Watson, 2004, para. 4), and users of recording forums are sometimes simply generalized as "gentlemen" (RandomHero, 2011). Throughout magazine advertisements and articles, images of rooms filled with gear – and often a big mixing

console – very frequently depict men as well, who are shown sitting or standing next to the equipment (See, for example, Young, 2005, p. 49, 50, 52; White, 2011, p.1, 124; King, 2010, p. 49, 50, 51, 52; Young, 2009, p. 51, 52; Parton, 2005; Young, 2008, p. 54; Weiss, 2004, p. 26; Silverstein, 2002, p. 46. For a few exceptions, see Nicholas, 2002, p. 34; Sherbourne, 2009).

Another aspect of this gendered practice is that music recording – and everything it entails – is generally regarded as a *masculine realm*. First of all, the "masters" who provide tips "from the industry" to home recordists are commonly all men:

> "We've rounded up some professional advice with comments from industry experts: Jeff Pearce, bassist of Moist and David Usher as well as a partner in Vibradome; composer Amin Bhatia, who recently completed work on the IMAX film Jane Goodall's Wild Chimpanzees; Rick Emmet, former front-man of Triumph who has gone on to have a very successful solo career; CBC recording engineer Ron Skinner, who also finds time to be owner and operator of Heading North Mastering and Mike Turner, a Toronto-based musician who is best known for his work with Our Lady Peace." (McLaughlin, 2002, para. 2)

Likewise, a "panel" that provides advice and recommendations to beginner home recordists is formed exclusively by men experts:

> "John Barlett (Greenfield Main, founder of Kelp Records) (...)
> Ken Friesen (Producer, engineer, studio designer) (...)
> Kid Kut (Producer, MC, with Universal recording artist Baby Blue Soundcrew) (...)
> Rob Laidlaw (producer, composer, songwriter) (...)
> Leroy (Hollywood Records recording artist) (...)
> Mark Makoway (producer, mixer, songwriter, author, guitarist for EMI recording artist Moist) (...)
> Craig Martin (composer, producer, songwriter) (...)
> Andrew Vincent (Kelp Records recording artist) (...)." (Pearce, 2001, para. 39-46)

These observations from the discourse of home recording raise issues that are similar to those discussed by Judy Wajcman's (1991) regarding technology as a masculine culture. Amongst other points, the author reflects about the extent to which the control of technology is involved in an archetype of hegemonic masculinity. She adds that all the things that are associated with machinery – including noise – "are suffused with masculine qualities" (*Idem*, p. 143). Moreover, technical expertise is seen as a key source of power amongst men, according to this model of hegemonic masculinity (*Ibid*). It thus seems that as an activity that constantly involves the use of modern technology, home recording is part of

a culture and set of power/knowledge relations that reinforce technology as expressive of masculinity (*Ibid*).

According to this thesis' analysis, the relation that home recordists establish with gear also seems to be gender – and sometimes sexually – oriented. Not only is recording equipment sometimes addressed as "she", but it is also contrasted to some "bad boy" gear:

> "[Image of the Vintage NEVE 8038 console] She's a beauty! But honestly... for that much $$$ you could probbably [sic] by [sic] a new production high-end analog console + a ton of great rack gear." (Miroslav, 2011)

> "So... what? No built-in effects like this bad boy? [Image of the Behringer EURODESK SX2442FX Mixer] :)" (Famous Beagle, 2011)[29]

Also, advertisements for equipment display images of women provocatively dressed standing next to analog gear (Blevins Audio, 2002a, 2002b). Specific gear is also addressed as being "sexy" (Holder, 1998, para. 21) and as being somehow responsible for the male user's "happiness":

> "I was desperate for that monophonic beast over there [points at the *Waldorf Pulse*][30], which has fulfilled my dreams and made my life complete. (...) Ever since it's come into my life I've been a very happy man. (...) It's just all there, and MIDI-wise it's just so sexy (...)." (*Idem*, para. 20-21)

As Wajcman (1991) also argues, "machines can clearly evoke powerful emotions and sensual delight for men", being "a source of intense pleasure, even arousal, at the core of innovation" (p. 145). As I intended to demonstrate, these expressions of masculinity can be clearly seen within the discourse of home recording, reinforcing once again the idea of home recording as a male-dominated activity. In addition to the multiple evidences of masculine performativities identified in the discourse, much of what is said seems to be aimed to men.

Similarly to the professional studio, the home recording setup is often conceived as a male territory and, in this case, detached from female space. Recording at home, as addressed by the discourse analyzed, frequently implies negotiating space with a female partner. The "girlfriend's apartment", for example, is mentioned as one of the possible places where home recordists "can make very serious recordings" (Watson, 2006, p. 43). It is with the wife, however, that agreements mostly need to take place, as I briefly mentioned when discussing the matter of *space* in home recording:

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[29] In this comparison, the very expensive console – sold for US $200,000.00 through eBay (Ebay, 2011) – is regarded as the female, while the much cheaper although equipped with effects Behringer mixer – being sold for $543.99 (Musician's Friend, n.d.). – is referred to as the male.

[30] Waldorf Pulse is a vintage synthesizer. For details, see Vintage Synth Explorer (n.d.).

> "My wife and I had been using our garage as a workspace and storage facility. She is an artist day and night, and I'm a musician and recording engineer by night as the muse favors. We had wanted to insulate and drywall the interior ever since we moved in, but were reluctant because it would reduce the height of the already low ceiling. (...) Because of the size limitations, I designed a single room studio with the potential to expand into a 2-room (live room/control room) configuration later (of course, my wife will probably be concerned by this small detail when she reads this article)." (Krikawa, n.d., para. 14,16)

While the recording setup may occur in the same physical space where some of the wife's activities take place, the home studio or equivalent may also be built or conceived deliberately as an

> "Available space, detached from your spouse's space! (...) I came home one day to tell my wife I had been offered an early retirement with an attractive package and when I saw how my wife's face fell I figured I had to have something to keep me out of the house during retirement." (Ipdeluxe, 2004)

This men's space detached from the woman's is also seen as a way to "to avoid [the] wife's 'HoneyDoNow' list. Hiding in a home studio is a good tactic, especially if the doors lock. Plus my gear has to go somewhere..." (Frederic, 2004)

It is interesting to observe that the home itself is often regarded as a feminine private space, as Keightley (1996) also remarked when discussing the use of high fidelity audio technology in the 1950s. The author mentions that at the time, there was a "concern on the part of some men to locate a site of freedom, whether inside or outside the home" (*Idem*, p. 154), since the domestic space was too subjected to "female control" (*Ibid*, p. 155). According to Keightley, home audio was conceptualized as "a masculine technology that permits a virtual escape from domestic space" (*Ibid,* p. 150). Very similarly, as we could remark through the discourse of home recording, the home studio or recording setup can be conceived as a masculine private space inside the home: a place of "mess", "noise" and isolation from the female's domestic regulation[31].

Once again, the discourse of home recording seems to appropriate meanings and values that are also associated with professional studios. While home still seems to be considered a feminine zone, studios – regardless of their status, size and location, as it seems

[31] This reference to Keightley's work also allows us to remark that both in domestic spaces the 1950s and more recently through home recording, music and technology – or as well *music technology* – are associated with masculine performativities. It seems that this association – rather normalized, as it appears – is part of another discourse that crosses the one of home recording.

– are mostly regarded as spaces of masculine dominance. Although women have been entering this masculine territory, they are still a minority in the studio.

3.5.1. Women in the (home) studio

According to the corpus analyzed, women are rare in the discourse of home recording in many different capacities: as authors in blogs and magazines, as professionals from the recording industry, as home recordists, as musicians or simply as people who are talked about. This fact is recognized even by the discourse's male subjects. As a male producer mentioned in a magazine article, "Most [professional] studios can't afford to employ people any more to go through the old apprenticeship of tea boy -- *or tea girl, we need more women in engineering* -- assistant engineer, engineer, producer." [My emphasis] (Tingen, 1996, para. 30) Generally, however, this scarcity of women isn't discussed within the discourse of home recording. Although it is perceived, as I just illustrated, the topic is rarely approached. It seems thus that the masculine dominance is some kind of "truth", or another normative aspect of the discourse of home recording.

When women are actually referred to in the discourse of home recording, they are usually portrayed as artists being produced by men, instead of being the home recordist themselves. In the studio, they are guided by the men's authority. As stated by a male producer:

> "We tell them what we want. (…). I think for girls it could be okay, because of the sexual aspect. If it's a girl with a boy producing there's always something charming between you, there's a sort of seduction between you, and seduction is something very important in music. But with a boy there would be more (…) competition." (Crane, 2004, p. 47)

Women, in this case, are considered "easier to work with" than other men, since the "seduction" of the male studio producer will ensure that it's his, not her decisions that will be taken into account[32]. In other words, it is the male who holds the "*truth*" within that discourse; the female's "wise" choice, therefore – if she also wants to be within this "truth" – would be to let herself be guided by the one who has the *knowledge* about the recording/producing process.

[32] This example also shows traces of the discourse's heteronormativity, since "seduction" seems to be limited to relations between men and women.

Women also identify the studio as a male-controlled environment. The masculine government in those spaces, similarly to what was described by the producer mentioned above, can be regarded by women as "bad experiences":

> "(...) as a woman, I've had enough bad experiences with men in recording situations that I like to have as many decisions already made before I go into any room with a male engineer – even though Chris is really supportive and awesome to work with. Just from previous bad experiences I like to have made the decision about how I want my vocal [sic] to sound [before going into the studio]." (Nicholas, 2002, p. 36)

The studio can be such a constraining space for women that even a certain "psychology" may be needed so they can feel less "intimidated" within that space:

> "(...) I'd really love to (...) bring the stuff I've learned from being in bands for a long time, the psychology of being in the studio, to use my knowledge of that as a way to make other women feel comfortable in the studio and feel creative as opposed to feeling intimidated and under pressure." (Nicholas, 2002, p. 37)

Similarly to what was observed from the discourse of home recording, Andra McCartney also found through her project that recording studios are mostly seen as restraining spaces for women. According to her, women who tried to work in private recording studios often reported gender discrimination. The scholar describes a particular case that shows such exclusion:

> "One woman (who now runs her own studio) said that initially, when she went to rent equipment at a music store to engineer a live show, she was told that women don't do sound production. (...) This same participant stated that studio owners refused to hire her because they claimed that she would distract the other workers. Eventually, she was hired by one studio, but was never able to rise beyond the rank of assistant engineer, despite her abilities and technical skills" (McCartney, 2003, p. 90-91)

McCartney adds that for women to be admitted to and for them to succeed in such masculine networks, they need to be extremely persistent to achieve their goals.

Within the discourse of home recording, women are often portrayed accompanied by men. While some have men as their recording producers, others try to learn from them:

> "While recording a great deal of her sophomore record entitled Snarly Girlpop in her home with producer and husband Packman, Arlene Bishop found that there were both good and bad sides to recording at home." (Skinner, 1999, para. 19)

> "... I was doing my solo record, Julie Ruin, which I recorded and mixed on my own on my Tascam, with a little help from my friend Paul." (Nicholas, 2002, p. 36)

Even through images, women are mostly depicted as "learners", instead of as recordists who could do recognizable work on their own. While men often appear in studios next to big mixing consoles, as I mentioned before, pictures of women are mostly seen in advertisements for audio recording courses (Conservatory of Recording, 2000) and in articles concerning careers and courses in music recording (White, 2011, p. 165). In both cases, women appear next to men. Moreover, when a woman in shown reading a guide on how to home record (*Idem,* p. 8), the front cover of the same guide illustrates a man, already home recording[33] (*Ibid*, p. 1).

It is also common for women to be directly associated with singing – especially through pictures and microphone advertisements (See King, 2010, p. 53; White, 2011, p. 104, 107, 169) – or with making electronic music (see Nicholas, 2002 and Sherbourne, 2009). Women are rarely shown playing instruments. It is equally difficult to find references of female home recordists at another level than the professional. Those presented are frequently professional musicians with a certain level of "industry" recognition (see Nicholas, 2002; Sherbourne, 2009)[34].

Interestingly, it also seems that the few women depicted as self-sufficient home recordists – who can control all the recording steps by themselves – have to get over some emotional struggles related to being in the studio:

> "Producing an entire album alone had the benefit of complete creative autonomy, but there were also challenges, both production-wise and emotionally. (...) More difficult was maintaining the head space to keep going on such a large project, dealing with the mental chatter and expectations. 'It was such an intense period. It was really emotional being down there with my thoughts. I didn't actually enjoy most of it, because you're just left to your own demons in your brain going 'You can't do it! Don't go to the studio today, you won't be able to do anything good'". (Sherbourne, 2009, para. 38, 40)

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[33] I assume that the man is home recording because the referred image depicts an adult man sitting in an apparently small room. He is using headphones and playing guitar. In front of him, on a desk, there are a keyboard, a small mixing console, a microphone, a laptop running a DAW – one can see that some tracks were already recorded –, two speakers – one by each side of the computer – and an acoustic foam covering the back wall of the room.

[34] Amongst the material analyzed for the present research, only two magazine articles had women home recordists as their main sources, Nicholas (2002) and Sherbourne (2009). I couldn't help but realizing that in both cases, the women interviewed are artists with a minimally established music career. I couldn't find, for example, interviews with females as home recordists that had just recorded a good album at home, as could be seen regarding some male artists (see, for instance, Silverstein, 2002; Sheaffer & Lowery, 2004).

Meanwhile, even though men may agree that it is a "frustrating way to do it, working on his own" (Paron, 2005, para. 4), males are not associated with emotional struggle in the studio, be it at home or elsewhere.

Similarly to how professional studios are considered as "alien environment[s]" (Myers, 1997, para. 24) by some home recordists, recording studios in general and the recording practice are regarded as "unnatural" spaces and activity for women. Even though women are present in the discourse of home recording, they are not one of its subjects. It is not for or by women that the discourse is being produced, but for and by men, who as subjects legitimize the rules while enunciating and following them.

Furthermore, while women are a minority in home recording, they are still not associated either with its counter-discourse or with its resistance. As I mentioned before, their exclusion from the discourse doesn't seem to gather much attention or discussions; instead, it seems in fact to be part of the discourse's normativity.

Considering these reflections, the idea of "democratization" in the discourse of home recording can be clearly problematized. It is possible to assume that the exclusion of women from the discourse is essential for the idea of "democratization" to be enunciated. It seems that "home recording for anyone who wants" considers the gendered aspect of home recording as a normativity. The discourse's exclusions are thus part of what makes the notion of "democratization" possible.

For women, being "in the truth" of the discourse of home recording may demand more than the accumulation of gear and the achievement of a good sound at home. In fact, women may also need to play certain roles or adopt specific gender performativities, consciously or unconsciously (McCartney, n.d.), in order to be allowed within the discourse. According to this thesis' analysis, some kind of masculine performativity seems to be needed from anyone who wants to be within the discourse's "truth". The exclusion of women and its normativity thus seem to be part of the rules that allow home recording to be considered and spoken as "democratic": it can be possible for anyone who wants, as long as it is accepted that performativities other than masculine ones are simply not accepted as part of this discourse.

Chapter 4: Power relations, negotiations and exclusions

As the analysis has showed, home recording isn't an activity performed exclusively by professional musicians. Although these musicians might have started home recording in the 1970s, the possibility of recording through a home computer made the activity available to music aficionados of different levels of expertise. Interestingly, the discourse of home recording doesn't make a clear distinction or provides a prescription for what is or for what can be a musician. Likewise, producers and engineers don't have their roles clearly distinguished. The discourse is mostly addressed to – and prescribes for "how to be" – home recordists, who may often take up the role of musicians, producers and engineers at the same time. In this case, home recording seems to confuse these three subjectivities, while also blurring the distinction between musicians and non-musicians. Although all these subjectivities are articulated by the discourse, their boundaries are rarely discussed, making them somehow open for varied interpretations.

Based on the analysis, I believe that this confusion of roles may be in fact a result of negotiations within the discourse of home recording. It is through multiple negotiations – amongst musicians, experts, writers, producers, amateurs, etc. – that the subjects of discourse are formed and legitimized. Subjects such as the "pro" or the "good home recordist", in turn, seem to be a hybrid of many of the blurred roles mentioned above. The discourse, therefore, seems to allow this indistinctiveness of roles so as to give place to its heterogeneous subject, the home recordist. It is possible, I suppose, that keeping these roles confused is part of the regime of "truth" that allows the notion of "accessibility" to be enunciated within the discourse, since having the "status" of musician, producer or engineer is not considered a prerequisite for one to start home recording.

As it was also observed, the discourse of home recording often intersects with other discourses. For example, the negotiations for space at home seem to cause and be caused by the intersection of the discourse of home recording and the discourse of home. The discourse of home, in turn, has its own subjects, objects and power relations. Therefore, being a subject of authority at home seems to be one of the first rules for those who want to be "in the truth" within the discourse of home recording. Having a private space at home, making noise, gathering gear and making modifications for acoustic isolation are some examples of what a home recordist needs to negotiate at home – with family, housemates, neighbors or the city, as it was discussed earlier.

These negotiations in the domestic space form home recording subjects who not only have a certain authority at home, but also available space to dedicate to the activity. The fact that the discourse often treats this access to space as "natural", as something that "anyone" would have makes me realize that the discourse is addressed to a specific group of people, which presupposes exclusions. The absolute lack of a private space at home, for example, is one of the factors of exclusion from the discourse.

Similarly, I observed that these subjects formed by the discourse need to have a minimum average of $500 to invest in the activity – value often mentioned as the least required for one to home record, as shown in this thesis' analysis. Combining this "norm" to the one mentioned above regarding available space, I assume that home recordists are subjects who have a certain buying power and financial stability. In this case, the discourse excludes all music aficionados who can't have access to that spare money. Likewise, it excludes many citizens from countries where people have less buying power than, for example, Western Europeans and North Americans. Taking this factor of exclusion into account, it is possible to realize that even "lo-fi" recordings – which are far from being what is expected from a "good" home recordist, as we observed from the discourse – become a privilege of a few music aficionados. Therefore, statements regarding "accessibility to the medium" are only possible within an elitist discourse, one enunciated and legitimized by subjects of a certain economic power.

As I debated in this work, government in home recording seems to be exerted by two main subjects: recording professionals and home recording "pros". As discussed above, these subjects are in turn governed by rules established by professional studios. The rules of home recording seem in fact to be a replication and an adaptation to the home environment of the organizing principles of professional studios. That seems to be the reason why home recordists are compelled to be skilled in every step of the recording process, all of which are usually managed by specialized professionals in the big studios. Reproducing at home what is done in professional studios is thus the main rule that allows the formation of specific subjects – the "pros" – and that legitimizes their power over other home recordists within the discourse. While it is argued that "anyone" can home record, it is definitely not "anyone" who has the power/knowledge to do so.

As we also observed, some of the requirements for being a "pro" tend to instrumentalize and naturalize notions that are in fact rather abstract. Being creative, having "critical ears" and differentiating "good" from "bad" sound, as I mentioned earlier, are demands treated as the hardest to acquire; nonetheless, it is argued that they can be achieved

through lots of practice and determination. Even the counter-discourse of home recording suggests, for example, that a "good sound" can sometimes be found through "magic", legitimizing once again the importance – or even the necessity – for every "good" home recordist to control or to "find" skills that would at first seem to be non-prescriptive.

On the one hand, this instrumentalization regarding the acquisition of certain abilities seems to reinforce the idea that anyone who wants and puts effort into it can become a "good" home recordist. Considering that all the "secrets" about music recording have been made "available" through mentors, music magazines, the Internet, etc., it is said that it depends mostly on the home recordist to find, gather and apply this knowledge to his/her sonic material. Being a "good" home recordist can thus be reached through commitment, which is usually talked about as an investment of time, patience and money from the home recordist.

On the other hand, it seems that these "naturalized" notions – such as being creative and having "critical ears" – are formed by the discourse as instruments that serve to regulate the "classification, ordering and distribution" (Foucault, 1971, p. 12) of subjects in terms of the power they can exert over others. As I discussed earlier, those who manage to develop "good listening abilities", for example, seem to have a greater authority in the discourse of home recording comparatively to those who don't have such "critical hearing". Therefore, the prescriptions and rules to attain those abilities seem to be part of an extremely regulatory discourse, one that excludes many music aficionados from its "truth" by the several conditions it imposes.

It was also suggested through the analysis that the discourse of home recording is gendered. The exclusion of women is in fact one of the "rules" that make possible the notion of "democratization" to be articulated within the discourse. Whereas home recording is said to be "accessible to anyone who wants" and "liberating" to musicians and other home recordists, a gender-oriented look at the same discourse shows the struggle of women to be allowed within it. It seems that their efforts need to go beyond having knowledge, gear and creativity, as it was previously argued.

As we could see, exclusions from the discourse of home recording are legitimized through the regulations established within it. This system of rules, in turn, often follows the logic of the professional studio, as I've been discussing. The discourse of home recording thus prescribes not only the simulation of a professional studio at home – even if minimally – but it also establishes the home studio as a space of masculine performativities, similarly to what happens in professional facilities.

4.1. "Democratization" of music recording?

In light of the last discussion about home recording, negotiations, exclusions and power, the idea of "democratization" in home recording becomes problematic. Under what circumstances is this notion part of a prescriptive, normative and therefore excluding discourse? What allows "democratization" to be enunciated? How does this notion constitute the discourse of home recording?

The notion of "democratization" is usually articulated within the discourse as a consequence of recording technology's "accessibility". This "accessibility", in turn, is often considered to be a result of technological "progress" – such as the development of digital recording and, later, DAWs –, as well as of a recent price reduction of recording gadgets and of home computers' popularity. "Accessibility" also refers to how recording at home has become an "easy" activity to perform, since the technology has become cheaper, easier to use and since knowledge regarding the recording process has become "openly available". Meanwhile, this discourse ignores – or excludes – those who don't have access even to the most basic recording gear, those who don't have the minimum required skills or knowledge to home record, and those who don't perform "accordingly" so as to be accepted within the discourse.

Therefore, "democratization" as enunciated and produced within and by the discourse of home recording articulates the discursive notion of a "contemporary accessibility" in terms of technology and knowledge to the exclusions that make this discourse possible. Home recording's specific notion of "democratization" can only be possible within that discourse, one that normalizes the exclusion of women and people of limited means. In other words, "democratization" functions as long as female-gendered and financially-limited people are excluded from the discourse.

The enunciation of "democratization" in the discourse of home recording thus legitimizes the elitist, limiting and excluding aspects of this same discourse. This "democracy" takes into account that the discourse of home recording is ruled by specific subjects who have the power/knowledge to guide the conduct of others, structuring their possible field of actions (Foucault, 1982). "Democratization", thus, can be seen as a tool for the exercise of power within the discourse of home recording.

4.2. Further questions and reflections

Home recording is said to be slowly taking the power out of the hands of professional studios. However, this thesis shows how this discourse is still closely linked to the organizing principles of these professional facilities. Is "power" being really transferred in this case?

Considering that discourses are discontinuous bodies of knowledge (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 3) where "highly-complex relations of forces" (Foucault, 1980, p. 61) take place, changes regarding their "truth", norms and regulations don't happen overnight. The discourse of home recording being closely attached to the "model" and principles of the professional studio, it seems unlikely that these facilities will lose their "power" to home recording any time soon. Although home recording's counter-discourse also legitimizes norms that aren't directly based on big studios' principles – such as home recording for fun and with "whatever gear you have" –, that doesn't seem to be enough for professional studios to be put into jeopardy by home recording. Big studios' norms are still very much alive through the discourse of becoming a "pro": this discourse's many requirements for one to become the "ideal" home recordist mostly follow what it has been established as "true" in professional studios, proving that the latter's authority keeps on being legitimized.

On the other hand, this doesn't mean that the discourse of home recording is stagnant. On the contrary, discourses are productions that systematically form the objects they talk about (Ysmal, 1972). Notions and roles get blurry within the discourse of home recording, new subjects are created to the general recording discourse – such as the "home recordist" – and concepts are revisited as more people are entering the practice – even though many people are still excluded. Could the discursive and counter-discursive power relations one day restructure the discourse of home recording, allowing it to have its own concepts, notions and subjects, less dependent on the professional studios? It is a possibility, although only time will bring us a proper answer to that question.

In turn, the exclusion of females and financially limited people from the discourse raises the following question: What kinds of actions and efforts could be done so as to make home recording available to those subjects?

Firstly, I believe that debating the issues of exclusion and the power relations that make this discourse possible are the first practical step to make them "visible", thus problematic. Understanding why and how these exclusions occur is thus crucial for the development of a possible counter-action, one that goes against certain normative

regulations so as to open up the discourse to other subjectivities. Also, realizing the repressive presence of the "not-said" (Foucault, 1976, p. 25) within the discourse may inspire us to develop possible counter-discursive or resistant acts.

The exclusion of women from the discourse of home recording thus deserves more attention. Why is the recording studio mostly said to be uncomfortable for women? Could it be because it is regarded as a place of masculine constitution? How could home recording be also considered a place for feminine performativities?

As many discussions about home recording are held online, it could be interesting to have specific websites, links within bigger websites or blogs that brought to the fore the exclusion of women from the referred discourse. It could be a space not only for debating practices and how "accessibility" can be less exclusive, but it could also be a place where men and women would encourage girls and other women to feel less intimidated around such a male-dominated activity. Similarly to general home recording websites that already exist, this could be done through the sharing of knowledge, stories and experiences in home recording. In the case of websites for encouraging women, however, the focus of home recording should switch from "reaching the best possible result" to "doing it yourself" and enjoying the process, regardless of the level of expertise of what is produced in the end.

Similarly, how can home recording become available for those who don't have access to a private space at home, gear or even knowledge? The answer is maybe around an idea of a more *collective* home recording. Interestingly, the discourse of home recording often considers home recordists as the "all-in-one musicians", as it was mentioned earlier in this thesis. As we also saw from the discourse of "becoming a 'pro'", "pros" need to be "good" musicians, producers and engineers at the same time. The discourse of home recording thus considers the activity as individualistic: since home recording is regarded as "accessible", it is argued that "anyone" – and everyone – can have their own home setup and exert full control over their own musical creations. Even "guerrilla" home recording – which according to the discourse encourages home recordists to record with the minimum possible and to borrow gear when they can't buy it (See Inglis, 2010) – seems to consider the activity as mostly an individual and personal endeavor.

However, imagine the following situation: a music aficionado who is interested in home recording doesn't have spare money to spend on gear, but he/she has a space at home that could suit a home recording setup. One of his/her friends with the same interests has some spare money – albeit less than $500 –, but he/she lives in a tiny apartment shared with three other people. A second friend of this first music aficionado doesn't have money or

space, but he/she has been reading about home recording for over the past three years. What would stop those people from putting their "power" together and building a collective home recording setup? The presence of a discourse that doesn't enunciate this kind of construction as being "home recording"?

Obviously, sharing relatively expensive technology may bring these people in conflicts. However, the main point to be stressed here is that the encouragement of a more collective "do it yourself" home recording could possibly open up the activity to a greater number of music aficionados. As suggested above, this encouragement could be done through websites, links or blogs. The idea could also be debated and developed with music aficionados from undeserved communities through music-oriented community activities. Similarly to what was said about encouraging women to home record, giving emphasis to the process rather than to the "professional quality" of the final results can potentially be a factor of motivation for these excluded subjects to start claiming their space in the discourse of home recording.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to analyze the discourse of home recording, emphasizing the power/knowledge relations that form and legitimize it. My intention was to investigate what makes certain statements in home recording possible. It somehow intrigued me how it is argued that home recording became "accessible to anyone" after the so-called digital revolution, while some go even further and say that it either "democratizes music creation and distribution" (Myers, 1997) or that it "potentially" provides this democratization (Homer, 2009). This thesis thus looked at how home recording is talked about in certain music magazines and Internet discussion forums, so as to grasp from within its discourse what are the norms and regulations for anyone to be "within its truth". Through examining how power/knowledge is exerted in the discourse of home recording, it was also possible to identify some of the subjectivities that this discourse excludes, as well as some of the reasons why they are not accepted within the discourse.

The first chapter of this thesis introduced the topic of "home recording". Firstly, it provided a historical overview of the referred musical/cultural practice, from its beginning in the 1970s up to the present. It considered some of the key factors that have somehow altered the way the activity has been done, such as the price decrease of recording technology, the digital revolution, the popularization of the home computer, etc. Secondly, this chapter explored some of the main issues this activity brings to the fore – such as technology, the recordist as gear consumer, the home space, music making and "becoming a musician" etc., which seem to be central for home recording to be performed and enunciated as it is. Finally, it explained how and why home recording can be acknowledged as a discourse, following the Foucauldian conceptualization and theorizing of discourse. Home recording is discussed as a discontinuous activity of regular series and distinct events (Foucault, 1971), something that "constructs, defines and produces objects of knowledge, while excluding other ways of reasoning" (Baker & Galasiński, 2001, p. 12).

The second chapter presented the thesis' methodology. It described the approach known as *critical interpretation* (Johnson *et al*., 2004) and its overall principles, which are located in the parameters of Cultural Studies and privileged in this research. The chapter explained how, through this approach, we can explore cultural practices as sites of power (*Idem*, p. 10); it also discussed the *positionality* of the cultural researcher, and how the researcher is in constant dialogue with her sources and objects of research. It explained that

cultural researchers employ their means of cultural representation and communication through language (*Ibid*, p. 44-45), which contributes to the idea that all knowledge is partial (*Ibid*, p. 49); moreover, it showed how research is seen as *praxis*, a political activity, "an intervention in the situation studied and knowledge about it" (*Ibid*, p. 50-51). It also explained how this thesis' corpus was chosen based on the Foucauldian concepts and suggested strategies. It discussed, for example, that the discourse should be treated as and when it occurs, instead of being referred to the distant presence of its origin (Foucault, 1976); for that reason, this thesis' corpus was formed by contemporary music magazines and recording forums, considering articles and posts that dated from the 1990s up to the present. It also described in details the methodological rules underlying the analysis of the corpus, considering the heterogeneity and discontinuity of discourse (Foucault, 1971) and given the limits of this thesis.

The analysis, developed in the third chapter, explained *the notion of home recording*, or how it is enunciated in the magazines and forums that form this thesis' corpus; *making music*, or how according to the discourse almost every step of recording music as home – such as pre-production, recording and mixing – seems to be part of the music compositional process; *the matter of space*, a section that explored issues of space related to home in home recording: the negotiations that need to be established with family, cohabitants, neighbours and city, as well as the mutual adaptations of two different environments (the home and the studio) that are to coexist in that context; *the matter of sound*, where I explained how "good sound" is conceptualized within the discourse, showing examples of the discourse's prescriptions for how to obtain a "good sound" at home, regardless of the recording setup; *becoming a home recording "pro",* or how the discourse prescriptively encourages home recordists to become "pros", who are articulated as the ideally "good" home recordists; *Home recording for fun and empowerment: "doing it yourself"*, or how the prescriptive and normative discourse of home recording makes possible the formation of a counter-discourse, one that encourages home recordists to "do it themselves" and to have fun, rather than following the given rules to become "pros"; and, finally, *about gender and home recording*, where I discussed how and why the discourse of home recording can be regarded as gendered, where masculine performativities seem to be one of the "rules" for anyone to be in the "truth" within that discourse.

This thesis' discussion, developed in chapter four, addressed the power relations, negotiations and exclusions that, according to the analysis, make statements about home recording – such as "democratization" and "accessibility" – possible. I explored issues that

seemed to be part of home recording's regime of "truth" and system of rules – such as the blurriness of the roles of musicians, non-musicians, producers and engineers, the necessity of being an authority at home and the exclusion of females and people of low income. Furthermore, I suggested that enunciations regarding "accessibility to the medium" are only possible within an elitist discourse, one enunciated and legitimized by subjects of a certain economic power and who embrace masculine performativities. This chapter also explored the notion of "democratization" in home recording, suggesting that it articulates the discursive notion of a "contemporary accessibility" in terms of technology and knowledge to the exclusions that make this discourse possible. "Democratization" functions as long as female-gendered and financially-limited people are excluded from the discourse of home recording, legitimizing thus the elitist, limiting and excluding aspects of the discourse. Finally, this chapter provided further questions and reflections. It discussed the relation between home recording and professional studios, and debated if home recording could ever become a more independent practice, more detached from the guiding principles of big studios. It also suggested how home recording can be opened up and become available also for its excluded subjectivities, such as women and financially-limited people.

This research represents the very beginning of what can potentially become a more complex exploration of home recording, musical practices in general and/or even contemporary cultural expressions. The topics and issues analyzed here are far from being a totality of what can be explored and debated about the discourse of home recording. In fact, I acknowledge the limitations of the corpus chosen for this research. A more complete analysis would certainly demand a corpus that comprised the discourse beyond what is said in North America and Western Europe. It is equally clear that the discourse of home recording can't be thoroughly grasped from four or five magazines and three discussion forums. Moreover, the time to develop a master's research is limited, which represents another constraint to a deeper exploration of the problematic proposed. However, the corpus chosen – albeit limited – fulfilled the purposes of this exploratory research. It was nevertheless possible to come up with an initial notion of how and by whom power/knowledge is exerted within the discourse of home recording, which allows us to characterize home recording as a site of power.

Likewise, the observations presented in this thesis probably represent one possible angle of what the discourse of home recording is about. As Johnson *et al*. (2004) defend, researching "culture in relation to power (...) reflects both the traditions of cultural studies and our own concerns as researchers" (Johnson *et al*., 2004, p. 44). Not only did my

questions lead me to research home recording through specific lenses – amongst which the one of the Foucauldian discourse –, but also the corpus chosen, the academic books and articles on which this research was based and even my personal experience – as a beginner home recordist, daughter of an "expert" home recordist and sister of a well-gear-equipped home recordist – may all have led me somehow to make certain arguments, to ask specific following questions and to draw on particular assumptions from the discourse.

I also regard as a limitation the fact that many of the notions and concepts brought up in this thesis' chapters and sections weren't explored to their full potential. Issues such as the space related to home, the conceptualization of "good sound" in the discourse of home recording, the discourse being gendered, as well as the notion of "magic" within the discourse seem to, each one of them, open up a much wider range of possible discussions than what I was able to explore in this thesis. Concepts and notions such as space, gender performativities, gendered spaces along with the constitution of femininity and masculinity, and even the "DIY philosophy" in the digital era seemed to resonate in this thesis as open doors for a myriad of other questions and problems. However, I believe that these and other issues that were only briefly discussed in this thesis can still be extended, as they might excite other researchers' curiosity and interest.

Moreover, some of the issues that emerged from the constituted corpus were excluded from this thesis' analysis. As I started explaining in this thesis' methodology (see 2.3. Principles of Analysis), the corpus' analysis started showing evidences that the discourse of home recording also brings to the fore issues related to technological progress and a certain representation of time. Within the discourse, it is argued that "Power and performance previously unthinkable in an analogue studio can be realised with this continuing advance in technology" (White, 2011, p. 3) or that some things couldn't have been made "any other time than now" (Parton, 2005, para. 33). Moreover, some gear advertisement claim that their technology represents "the future" in recording: "How does it feel to hold the future in your hand?"[35] (Audix, 2002) Although this could be the beginning of another interesting analysis of the discourse of home recording, this thesis' corpus maybe wasn't complete enough to provide me with sufficient material to explore it further. Also due to time constraints, I decided to leave issues of time within the discourse of home recording out of this particular thesis.

While these represent some of my thesis' limitations, they can also be seen as the starting point of other research projects. More than providing answers, this thesis'

[35] This advertisement shows a colored hand holding an Audix SCX-25 microphone.

development and results incite many new questions, such as: How does the discourse of home intersects with the discourse of home recording? How does the space of home and the space of the studio transform one another? How can the notion of "good sound" within the discourse of home recording be related to notions of "high fidelity"? How is "do it yourself" treated and conceptualized now – within or outside from the discourse of home recording – in relation to what it meant in the 1970s, when it defined "punk against the 'mainstream pop and rock' of the period" (Homer, 2009, p. 86)? How do women claim their space in the discourse of home recording? How does the negotiation between men and women happen in the studio? How are gender performativities affected in the context of home recording? How does the negotiation between cohabitants happen in the home studio? How different or similar is the discourse here analyzed from the discourse of home recording in continents such as the African and the South American? How can the discourse of home recording be analyzed in terms of its own construction of space and time? These are only initial suggestions, as I believe that many other questions can be raised from the reflections done in this research.

Finally, this thesis' critical interpretation of the discourse of home recording, as well as the analysis of its power/knowledge relations and heterogeneities allow us to observe who is left outside of the discourse, which also makes us think of why it is so. By analyzing this discourse's system of rules, it is possible, to a certain extent, "to question our will to truth; to restore to discourse its character of (as) an event; to abolish the sovereignty of the signifier" (Foucault, 1971, p. 21), as I also mentioned when discussing this thesis' methodology. While the discourse of home recording is the result of power relations, a system of norms, rules, and a certain claim to the "truth", its normativeness and regularity can and should be questioned, as the "truth" enunciated by the discourse is also a result of these systems and negotiations. I believe that by developing an understanding of the struggles within the discourse of home recording, this knowledge can be eventually used tactically (Allor & Gagnon, 1997). It is by understanding its formation and questioning the "truth" in the discourse of home recording that, for example, women and financially-limited people can contest its actual rules and eventually act towards delimiting their own space within the discourse. I acknowledge that critical reflections as such may be the first practical step towards change, given that they lead us to question and make problematic what is considered "abnormal" (Foucault, 1980, p. 62) within "normative" discourses.

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Annexes

I. Glossary

ADAT (Alesis Digital Audio Tape)
An 8-track digital tape recorder developed by the company Alesis in the early 1990s, the ADAT was the first recording machine designed for the amateur recording musician that rivaled the sound quality of professional machines.

Amp (Amplifier)
An amplifier or amp is an electrical device that increases the power of electrical signals. Amplifiers are often used to boost the audio signal of the human voice, instruments such as electric guitar and electric bass, etc.

Audio Interface
Device that connects the external recording environment – such as microphones and instruments, for example – to a computer's audio software. It passes audio data to the computer, being the physical bridge from analog to digital.

Condenser
It usually refers to a condenser microphone, which uses a capacitor that converts acoustic energy to electric energy. Widely used for recording vocals, these microphones tend to be sensitive for capturing sound, resulting in a stronger audio signal than other microphones, such as the dynamic. These, in turn, are better suited to record high-volume instruments.

DAW (Digital Audio Workstation)
Computer software that, through audio interface hardware allow digital, multitrack and non-destructive sound recording, editing and reproduction.

EQ
The acronym refers to equalization, or the balance and adjustment of the tonality of a sound. While simple stereo systems may have knobs that allow simple equalizations, such as the balance of bass and treble frequencies, sophisticated equalizers are also available to provide detailed sound adjustments.

FX
The term refers to "effects", which can be added to sounds via multiple software or hardware devices.

Mastering
It refers to a form of audio post-production that prepares the mixed audio for it to be finally stored in an often physical storage device.

MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface)

It is an interface format and a coding system that allows the communication of instructions between compatible devices, such as electronic musical instruments and computers.

Mixing

The process of combining multiple audio signals together. It may comprise, for example, equalization and the addition of effects so as to "enhance the quality" of a recorded sound combination.

Multitrack recording

The recording of different and multiple audio sources in separate channels (or tracks). These tracks are then mixed and put together, usually to form a cohesive song. This method allows each recorded audio to be mixed separately. See recording track.

Overdubbing

A recording technique which consists of recording different parts at different times (such as, for example, instrument first, then voice), and layering those performances so they can be listened simultaneously.

P.A.

P.A. systems are a set of equipments used to amplify the sound of a performance and bring it to the audience. Such an amplification system includes speakers, microphones and often a mixing device.

Recording Tracks

"Lines", spaces or regions in a recording device (software or hardware) that "store" audio or different recorded parts. "To track" can also mean to record in a track. See multitrack recording.

Sampling

The act of taking music samples – or pieces of audio than can be reproduced and replayed under MIDI control – and reusing them as a new instrument or as a new piece for a song. The reproduction or replay of samples is often done through devices known as samplers.

Synthesizers

Devices – hardware or software – that create sounds electronically. These electronic instrument may imitate the sound of other instruments or create new ones.

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