ANTHONY MOORE

Transactional Fluctuations 1
Towards an Encyclopaedia of Sound

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On the Form of Fragments and Non-existent Remains

When fragments are uncovered there is often a tendency to assume further pieces remain missing, that that which is discovered fills but part of a whole whose completeness is yet to be revealed. However, there are circumstances where no conclusive state can be expected, where nothing other than fragments will be found. Incompleteness as an authorial strategy may not have arisen in response to archaeology; rather, it may have pre-dated and indeed induced the origins of the subject! In addition, arriving at a state of completeness may also be thought of as undecidable (as in logical systems, notwithstanding that completeness and undecidability are different creatures), leaving infinite numbers of fragments that never sum up to a whole. Thus it is, in part, the nature of fragments to suggest they are both the beginning and end of all there is, and that Empedocles may have chosen to write—even to the extent of interrupting himself in mid sentence or word—in such a form. And yet again, there are situations where disclosed fragments form part of a work in progress, which is to say that that which seems to be missing never did or does not yet, and perhaps never will, exist. This is most likely the case in the following assemblage of texts, where we are clearly dealing with the primary stages of some sort of collection, encyclopaedia or fragmentary genealogy of acoustic phenomena and accompanying theories of movement that provide the watery fundament for a physics of sound.

> "Fourier succeeded in proving a theorem concerning sine waves which astonished his, at first, incredulous contemporaries. He showed that any variation of a quantity with time can be accurately represented as the sum of a number of sinusoidal variations of different amplitudes, phases, and frequencies. The quantity concerned might be the displacement of a vibrating string, the height of the surface of a rough ocean, the temperature of an electric iron, or the current or voltage in a telephone or telegraph wire. All are amenable to Fourier's analysis."[1]