



Handout 2 - New York Magazine Excerpt

Excerpt from Sasha Frere-Jones' "The Gerbil's Revenge: Auto-Tune corrects a singer's pitch. It also distorts—a grand tradition in pop," *New York Magazine*, June 9, 2008

"Someone once asked [Andy] Hildebrand [Auto-Tune's Inventor], if Auto-Tune was evil. He responded, 'Well, my wife wears makeup. Is that evil?' Evil may be overstating the case, but makeup is an apt analogy: there is nothing natural about recorded music. Whether the engineer merely tweaks a few bum notes or makes a singer tootle like Robby the Robot, recorded music is still a composite of sounds that may or may not have happened in real time. An effect is always achieved, and not necessarily the one intended. Aren't some of the most entertaining and fruitful sounds in pop—distortion, whammy bars, scratching—the result of glorious abuse of the tools? At this late date, it's hard to see how the invisible use of tools could imply an inauthentic product, as if a layer of manipulation were standing between the audience and an unsullied object. In reality, the unsullied object is the Sasquatch of music. Even a purely live recording is a distortion and paraphrasing of an acoustic event."



Screen shot of a track being processed through Auto-Tune