

**Reconstruction & Rhythm Science:
networks and properties of remix culture**

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degree of Master's of Arts.

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Abstract

The following thesis explores the conditions of possibility for remix culture through the work of Paul D. Miller, a.k.a. Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid. Beginning with the impact and vertigo of Dj Spooky's language and practice, it explores the reciprocal relation of media to language in the construction of the proper (property) and the author (authority). The context of Dj Spooky as a conceptual artist and the material of his book, *Rhythm Science*, provides the setting and scenario for extended readings of the paradoxes and cultural effects of remix culture, including the relation of writing to djing, practices of incorporative media, tactics of digital email, combat over copyright, and the sampling of the archive. The formalization of these effects is outlined by writing in-between the theories of Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida. This formalization signals the advent of the network over the territory, the form over the content, the formal over the expressive (while nonetheless recognising the distinction, persistence and difference of these terms). It argues that remix culture regenerates and redefines the parameters of the author and the proper through technological and political forces that nonetheless retain their structures of power. The conduit and context of this formal, paradoxical transformation are the cultural forces of global and digital networks, which is here defined as the "oceanic network." The oceanic network is elaborated in the ways it fundamentally shifts the terrain of the political to concepts of the network while retaining aspects of the former. The oceanic network is historically positioned at the level of the concept of the digital as a process of codification and quantification which has been concurrent to thought since pre-Socratic philosophy. The thesis concludes by offering the process of "rekonstruction," sampled from Dj Spooky, as a way to envision a process for re-thinking remix culture and its effects.

Abstrait

Cette thèse explore les conditions de la possibilité d'une culture du "remix" à travers une étude de l'oeuvre de Paul D. Miller, a.k.a. Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid. En commençant par l'impact et le vertige causé par le langage et la pratique de DJ Spooky, elle explore la relation de réciprocité entre média et langage sous l'angle de la construction du propre (propriété) et de l'auteur (autorité). Le contexte de DJ Spooky en tant qu'artiste conceptuel et du contenu de son ouvrage, *Rhythm Science*, offre à la fois le terreau et le scénario pour une lecture approfondie des paradoxes et effets culturels de la culture du "remix," y compris la relation entre écriture et "djing," la pratique des médias phagocytants, les tactiques de courriel numérique, le combat pour les droits d'auteur et l'échantillonnage d'archives. La formalisation de ces effets est soulignée par l'éclairage des théories de Gilles Deleuze et de Jacques Derrida. Cette formalisation signale l'avènement du réseau sur le territoire, de la forme sur le contenu, du formel sur l'expressif (en reconnaissant néanmoins la distinction, la persistance et la différence entre ces termes). Cette thèse argumente que la culture du "remix" régénère et redéfinit les paramètres de l'auteur et du propre par le biais de forces technologiques et politiques qui maintiennent néanmoins leur structure de pouvoir. Le prétexte et le contexte de cette transformation formelle et paradoxale sont les forces culturelles des réseaux numériques globaux, appelés ici le "réseau océanique" (*oceanic network*). Celui-ci est élaboré de telle façon qu'il change radicalement le terrain du politique vers des concepts propres au réseau tout en en conservant certains aspects. Le réseau océanique est historiquement positionné au niveau du concept du numérique comme procédé de codification et de quantification concomitant à la pensée depuis la philosophie pré-socratique. La thèse conclut en offrant le procédé de "rekonstruction," échantillonné de DJ Spooky, comme un moyen d'envisager un procédé qui permette de repenser la culture du "remix" et ses effets.

01 – introducing... me, myself and I: Dj Spooky and *Rhythm Science*

Suspended as particle in the sampladelic universe of remix culture: enter Dj Spooky

The role of the writer is precisely to complicate the notion of belonging: one has to belong and not belong.... Proust has all the identities in the world, and his identity is always polyphonous and extremely malleable, which is very different from saying that he has no identity. Proust enjoys a polyvalence of experiences that renders him polymorphic, even perverse, in the positive sense of the term. This experiential multiplicity is entirely different from the emptiness and destruction experienced in the loss of identity. (Julia Kristeva, *Revolt, She Said* 131)

Sampling is the best way, and perhaps the *only* way, for art to come to terms with a world of brand names, corporate logos, and simulacra. Pure originality is a myth, in any case; art and culture can only be made from previously existing art and culture. (Steven Shaviro, *Connected* 64)

It's a carnivorous situation where any sound can be you....
(Paul D. Miller a.k.a. Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid, *Rhythm Science* 008)

The record of the debate on remix culture has been played out like this:

The sound of the sample is the sound of a consensual theft. The sound of stealing what has been already stolen, time and time again, to recreate the ebbs and flows of culture. Theft. Its reoccurrence, under many names, in copyright and property law, under Digital Rights Management (DRM) and other acronyms, reinforces its structural position as a placeholder of a chain of concepts: property, originality, ownership, possession, authenticity, author/ity, creation, genesis. Arguments in favour of broad definitions of sampling claim that the act has little to do with its common ethical definition of stealing. Rather, sampling is integral to the process itself. Which goes without saying that issues of colonial, authoritarian and violent theft, thorny they may be, are not so much bracketed as cast as extreme abuses of the process (as well as theft of work by racial and gender-dominant cultures—the many examples that can be given here). “As everyone knows, when artists sample, it is theft; when corporations steal, it is business.” Theft samples itself: this is the movement of the debate into the 21C¹ after the surge of late 20th Century DJ culture.² The content of the sample is irrelevant—the spread of sampling as a network phenomenon, of promiscuous, unprotected exchange with the world's strangers, rendered concrete, physical and dense in the collage of Peer-2-Peer networks, threatens the very fabric of territory, and thus property and copyright,

the ethics and politics of possession. We are witness to the many directions of globalization, its counter-surgences, its unexpected theft by the global publics (large scale piracy factories, social software, open source codes and programs—which is not to equivocate these different modes of production). Language eats itself too—learning to snatch a word here and there in the drift between wax and hypermedia.

Then—and not only then—we have the digital, and its code and codifications.

Enter Paul D. Miller a.k.a. Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid, whose value as an Afro-American intellectual cannot be underestimated. In a mediasphere of mainstream hip-hop and its dominant caricatures of violence and sexism, Miller's aesthetic and artistic interventions in the electronic and hip-hop genres, through Dj-ing and production, through conceptual art and his talented writing, stand out as a shining counter-example to ingrained prejudice (stereotypes often enforced by dominant white culture). He is a symbol and a global nomad for good reason: he thinks in ways that are genuinely different from the rest of us. With Kodwo Eshun, he is perhaps one of the best known heirs to AfroFuturism,³ the interstellar, often non-representational art force tied to music and science fiction. Along with the writing of Samuel R. Delaney, AfroFuturism embraces the experimental jazz of Sun Ra and the later techno inventions of Detroit's electronic music producers, notably Juan Atkins (Model 500) and the Underground Resistance collective.⁴ AfroFuturism embraces sampling and remix culture along with the underpinnings of digital technology as liberatory devices that seek not to *represent* but *technivues* to eschew the territory altogether in the movement of becoming-alien.

Re-enter the 21st century and the evolution of sample culture. As Miller/Spooky writes, it's a carnivorous situation. One that ranges from the banal, the complacent or consumer level of petty sampling to the profound aspects of culture jamming. *Détournement* (to steal from the Situationists). If any sound *can* be you, what sound *will* be you? What sound have you been (already)? (What broken record spins?) Words that are already soundbytes, media flicks, advert memes... Paul D. Miller remixes D.W. Griffith's film *Birth of a Nation*—theft! desecration of idols and sacred images—but what a theft!—remixing a dominant symbol of American white racism... But not only the content, but the form: classical, feature-length film. Sampling generates the basis from which property can be defined, insofar as it structures a relation. This relation is one of appropriation, but also one of thought itself, of memory, and of the parameters of relationality itself: what steals away a concrete definition of the relation-

in-general. In this vein, thinking is a process of sampling, where each thought becomes the “already” of plural media, media that eats and incorporates its selves. Thought as the memory, and each memory as a sample—this is the way the movement of sampling begins to work, begins to chain together its associations. As Paul D. Miller⁵ writes in “Loops of Perception: Sampling, Memory and the Semantic Web,” it’s not the “kinds of thoughts”—the content—that matter; rather, “It’s the *structure* of the perceptions and the texts and the memories that are conditioned by your thought-process that will echo and configure the way that texts you’re familiar with rise into prominence when you think” [my emphasis]. Sample Steven Shaviro (from one sample to the next, a *mix*): “Today, the samples that I am using for this book are still freely available to me, according to standards of ‘fair use’, but in the not-too-distant future, they probably no longer will be, and the publication and dissemination of the text you are reading now will be illegal” (65-66).

We seek to explore the matrix of these concepts, insofar as Dj Spooky is spun as a focal point of remix culture, through his art, through his attachment to philosophy (specifically Deleuze and Derrida), through the structure and form of his name and its effects, the *myriad* aspects from which an analysis of Spooky is forced to *select* a specific slice. Dj Spooky is network density of remix culture, a quantum particle split into at least *four names*, a heteronymic, polymorphic and infallible constellation of identities... The *density* of Spooky’s book, *Rhythm Science*, leads such an analysis in *all* directions: for *Rhythm Science* is a network, and the network’s properties (and concerns over property), its claims to authority (and its authors) will guide the methodology of assessing the conditions of possibility for remix culture and Dj Spooky. We *sample from* remix culture and Spooky in tracing these conditions.

Repeat: what kind of book is *Rhythm Science*?

1 - the tactile book: hole me, feel me, touch me...

“This book is a theater of networks, of correspondences that turn in on themselves and drift into the ether like smoke-rings in an airless nightclub” (008).

To remix: a one act play that plays with the many, a theatrical drama of neoteric history that rewinds the recent via the ancient (as we shall investigate via the *digital*). Like bullet-time, perfected in John Woo’s Hong Kong shooters and popularized with panoramic viewpoint in *The Matrix*, we watch the details of complex gunplay: the tinkling of a single shard of broken glass, exploded by cascades of automatic fire, heard as the temporal filaments are

deaccelerated; the slow-motion effect of time in moments of intensity, of possible death and immanent violence, when immanence becomes etched in microscopic time. *Time* will occupy us in its relation to *space* in this *network* (or, rather, spacing and its temporizing): “Stop motion: weapons drawn, flip the situation into a new kind of dawn....” (Miller, “Material Memories”).⁶ The representations slow down, but the film still scrolls past at thirty frames per second. Such is the effect of vertigo in *Rhythm Science* as phrases repeat, rhymes infect reading, flowing across pages: “You get my drift. The uncertainty is what holds the story together, and that’s what I’m going to talk about” (004).

Miller’s arsenal: W.E.B. Du Bois, Emerson, John Cage, Nietzsche, Miles Davis, Marshall McLuhan, Thomas Edison, Gilles Deleuze, Duke Ellington, Saul Williams, John Coltrane, Adrienne Piper, and Marcel Duchamp—to name only a slight few that span fields of jazz, philosophy, science, turntablism, writers and artists, breakbeats and political theory.... *Rhythm Science* is more than just the sum of its samples. Its rhythm is seductive, and the pace of the text, the time spent to the thematic of the word in rhyme, is emphasized by the enhanced pleasure of reading itself, via the tactility of its pages and the eloquent articulation of its flow. Paul D. Miller lets loose a multidimensional and multisensorial barrage of language, deploying homophony, alliteration, metaphor, rhyme, and meaning in unconventional and arresting ways that are nonetheless delicate and sensitive.

Any analysis of *Rhythm Science* that seeks to position its author, Paul D. Miller a.k.a. Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid as a production of the text must be attenuated to these shifts in the network of media.

Rhythm science as a book and a practice—a metaphorical practice of digital media—switching symbols—the transportation of data, the digitality of the CD—wherein the ephemeral is materialized in a traditional format, a physical object, fetish object of the book, of the record itself and the mergence of words and wax (in its use of a vinyl cover, the two finally become the other). Every second page, the graphic designs of COMA interject an interruption of the reading process, extend the book twice as long as its words (“Code is Beats is Rhythm”—025). Graphic gaps in the flow of reading profoundly alter the narrow slice of the text. Or the flipside: the grapheme is interrupted, rhythmically, by authorized writing. In fact, COMA’s designs take up as much space as Miller’s words—an argument that, if this book was taken as a record, a remix in the sense of a reciprocal resampling, then the cuts—the tracks—alternating page by page as a complementary rhythm of words and

graphemes, adverts and slogans, would be granted equivalent title status, as a proper name of author/ity. That is to say, in a world where significations of different registers would be equal, would equivocate on the level of their form and function, the rhythm would be one of alternation, space and flow: a mix. Here, the registers are kept distinct, and the graphic is subordinated to the word. Does this not also constitute an aspect of rhythm *science*, this hierarchy? Contrary to expectations of a horizontal, flat milieu, the patterning of the mix levels out the collage of other kinds of information only by assigning a term of author/ity—we shall have to talk about this too, this privileging of writing, of the author and the proper name as the brand to the mix. Rhythm science, of “the physical to the informational and back again” (005): with a degree of power on the *return*...

As Miller makes clear, rhythm science is not transparent: “Rhythm science is not about ‘transparency’ of intent. Rhythm science is a forensic investigation of sound as a vector of coded language that goes from the physical to the informational and back again” (004-005). Which is to say, the structures of authority in the text sustain a narrow sense of writing, as the encoded sonic, as a name, to which design is subserviant. What is it then—is it the content of the words—the apparent signifying *content*—that sets it apart from the remix, from the design and the designers, the graphic artists, that calls for an author/ity, for the proper name of the author function? Can graphic art but also art in general, here integral to the text, not be sounded out as content of a different register? This question is perhaps one of the title: why do words still privilege the premise for a rhythm science in remix culture when the equivocal structure is one of data transversing register?

Of course Spooky later counters his first assertion: “Rhythm science isn’t just about sound, of course. Imagery, whether presented on canvas or seen as a series of repeated photographic, cinematic televisual, or digitized stills has a way of evoking ‘kinedramatic’ imaginal response” (028). However, this claim remains in writing. The book, as a concept-art-object materialized (secondary information) as well as the explication of concept (primary information), is caught in the refusal of carrying out its programme of rhythm science at the same moment as its articulation. It is this refusal which characterizes the ascendent function of the proper name against the backdrop of the “same moment,” the plane of immanence, deferred through *material* relays of the proper name.

If one can imagine kinedramatics, then *Rhythm Science* stages its acts as kinaesthetic theatre, where the book plays out a structural paradox of remix culture: where all is a remix,

the structures of writing, in the narrow sense (and perhaps for reasons we don't fully understand, reasons that maintain aspects of difference), embodied in the physical, non-digital object of the book, and even within the book, differentiating and elevating words above design, maintain the architectonics of author/ity. The same rift is found in music: the functionary of the remix attributes the mix to h/er authorship while disavowing the author/ity, in the fullest extent of the sampled concept, to the samples. One can see that remix culture doesn't necessitate the abandonment of the author, be it a wordsmith, musician, DJ or sampler. In fact, remix culture often reinforces these structures while articulating their supercession or disappearance. The structural position remains, and it does so perhaps to differentiate, despite its reversals and inversions navigated here, between advertising and the book, between art and propaganda. As much as COMA's work is art, it is also design subservient to the position of writing as the guarantee, and guarantor, of meaning. Hence, Paul D. Miller, a.k.a. Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid's signature on the cover, to differentiate the design from the overall package, i.e., as a fully flattened piece of work, a work of advertising (at which point: for whom? Spooky or COMA?). Yet does this signature guarantee this distinction alone? What would it mean to grant COMA the same authorship, thereby forging another kind of information that defers advertising while exploring relations between word and design?

It is the form of this question that will occupy us throughout...

(sudden jump cut)

Jump-cut to the academic, microphone in hand, in front of a well-worn library with spectacles perched above tie askew:

"From the '80s into the '90s. Yes, the use of technology in the process of recreation generated a culture of the remix. With the conversion of all media to digital format, the distinction between the thought (or content) and the form (insofar as that form is digital media) becomes irrelevant: both have collapsed to the bit and byte, and thus, copyrighted as *data*."

Who is this, Marshall McLuhan? Catch the rhyme: Hence, the copyright of thought is fought through the affirmative process of sampling: fighting not to reinstate the distinction, but to leverage its energy in the opposite direction, to the circulation of common data—and that's a prime conviction. A fight for the 21C's public sphere: the digital commons. While

sampling has been primarily identified with the late 20th Century, the remix of the found and the prior is as old as creation itself and is now intensified in a single and material yet nonetheless infamously ethereal format. Language is always the pilfering of the other's utterances and scrawls. Academic citation, as Steven Shaviro notes, is an act of sampling, of ghostly, future copyright infringement, even.⁷ What sound is this then but the sound of John Cage's dream of the all-sound? All molecules reverberating?⁸ Sampling on the order of the subatomic. Just because we can't hear it doesn't mean it doesn't *swing*.... "Music means making nothing as thing" (John Cage, *Silence* 64)—"Everything always made a sound, and everything could be heard; *all sound* and *always sound* paralleled *paunaurality*" (Douglas Kahn on Cage, *Noise Water Meat* 159).

2 – a theatre of networks: sampling Spooky's methodology

What reverberates is matter, and what can be made to matter, insofar as it matters enough to be protected, defended, stolen, even as sound and sample? ("A catalog of undecided moments at the edge of my thinking process" (004)). What matters with the sample—and what is the matter with sampling? And when the artist is orientated, rotated, spun around h/er archive? What matters is possession over a sequence of samples: the archive. Sampling does not negate the politics of property, rather, it amplifies it, increases the volume of the debate until it burst the tympan of the law: "It's that archive fervor that makes the info world go around, and as an artist you're only as good as your archive - it's that minimalist, and that simple. That's what makes it deeply complex" (Miller, "Loops..."). Paul D. Miller⁹ writes *Rhythm Science*, which we are approaching, through an interweaved, albeit necessary, introductory mix, a kind of slow, ambient fade, sliced jump cuts and scratched samples—"This certainly tipped the balance of the senses the other way since where one might remove light and give vision a reset, aurality would still exist" (Kahn, 159). From the visual to the sonic registers: re-viewing to re-sounding. Wordplay as gunplay:

This book is a theater of networks, of correspondences that turn in on themselves and drift into the ether like smoke-rings in an airless nightclub. This is a theater of the one and the many, of texts that flow with the intensity of bullets. Heat death, entropy, cyclical turbulence. It's all here. Technical malice in my freestyle rips the threads holding the narrative together and we see the structure beneath the structure. The words within words. Rhymes are social armor, waiting for bullets to test their integrity. (*Rhythm Science* 008)

As writing, so is music (or undoubtedly in the origin of things, vice versa): the death of the author extends to the death of the DJ (and today, beyond the DJ, the multidimensional, multitasking laptop producer: the digital dilettante). And parallel to the sample is the remix of not only the self's identity, but of the primacy of a "self," of "identity," of possession. The mask of writing, a process of sounding out, in all of its forms of inscription, the desire to render a mark—yet to retain that mark in its wholeness and integrity, to possess it, name it, love it, kill it—is the secret of our carnivorous nature. Everyone knows the secret because, in the "structure beneath structure," we all hum its tune. If any sound can be you, then the resounding echo is that of a smacking of hungry jaws as we incorporate, in the 21C, all that has come to pass: as digital media eats all history, all media, converting all form to the bit and byte (processes of digital quantization, accountable quantification, etc.). Or, the converse, the fear, the charge or critique: as all multiple identities are coalesced into one, even under the rubric of the multiplicity. Kodwo Eshun writes how "It was already clear to Rimbaud back in the 19th C that I is another" (03[038]). Voilà: Paul D. Miller, a.k.a. Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid, a.k.a. Ad Astra, the seminal spokesman of '90s remix culture. Play out colleague Eshun's refrain: "...every I is a crowd, that you are a population, that unity is fleeting, accidental convergence mistaken for an identity."

And in all of this vertigo—conscious vertigo being deployed here as a *taste* of the remix—"Nothing is out of the ordinary. Nothing." (089). Hear it out. There's too many factors at play: the presupposition of judgment; the tone and tenor of an analysis that comes into sharp contrast with Miller's laidback approach, his personal wildstyle, his armored, bullet-time freestyle; and moreover, the crossing of genres and scenes—you hear what I mean? Wildstyle, cultural analysis, philosophy, pataphysics and *writing*—"To sound like a parody, the mimic, the mime, a hybridity playing with the rhyme."¹⁰ Miller is not only a writer: he's a DJ, music producer, filmmaker, remixer, and artist, etc., who gathers his polymorphic strands under the the umbrella of conceptual art (Djing ia a conceptual art project, writes Miller—or is it Spooky?). Spooky has prided himself on his *dérive* from one scene to another, from gallery to loft party and lecture hall. As he says of himself in "Flip Mode – a conversation between Paul D. Miller, Ad Astra, and Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid" (all personas, constructs, equivocal data functions, a kind of "Glenn Gould interviews Glenn Gould about Glenn Gould" scenario, resampled in *Rhythm Science*, page 012):

Dj Spooky is one of those cats you just see everywhere. He's at a dinner party in NYC one nite, the next he's doing a show at London's ICA on new software and music on the internet, and yet the next nite, he's in Tokyo doing a show with, oh, I don't know, Dj Krush or something... Basically he's a dj that doesn't really fit into the normal roles of a beat master like Funk Master Flex or GrandMaster Flash, but he definitely rolls....

Rollin'. So me and you are going to sample it. Sample Spooky, ghost in the sentence: "Sampling plays with different perceptions of time. Sampling allows people to replay their own memories of the sounds and situations of their lives" (028). Scratch the Spooky meme, for in many senses *Rhythm Science* is as much about Spooky as it is about what Miller claims it to be about, which is, about himself (or at least: "This is not about pseudonyms or alter egos. That's already been done" (004)). That which he claims to be about: "an exploration of the cold logic of the surface." Miller's flow plays off the sound senses of who or what Spooky is (*flow*, the hip-hop term for an MC's delivery; *flow*, the movement of becoming). While Miller claims his discourse remains on the "surface," his remix of Spooky is *deep*. A cold logic: "Make the link between the names people make up, and the image resolves." Recombinant concepts are heard and sounded out, but under what name? Under the "a.k.a." of authorship? Who speaks through Miller? What image is sounded out through Spooky's name, and when does Spooky speak? Is Spooky always the a.k.a. in writing, while Paul D. Miller is the secondary byline in music? And if "Dj-ing is Writing/Writing is Dj-ing," just who decides the priority of these two names: Spooky / Paul D. Miller? Who takes responsibility? For what is written here? For the ontological violence of the flow? Spooky, that sly persona of tricks, sends out the call, and we hear the remix. Or—we remix the here, uncanny wildstyle, parroting mime, or miming parody, hear now. Either way, it's a record, a cut, and a slice askew:

Mix culture, with its emphasis on exchange and nomadism, serves as a precedent for the hypertextual conceits that later arrived from the realms of the academy. The mix absorbs almost anything it can engage—and much that it can't. (064)

Flippancy is the new irony: flip the record:

To the confession track...

3 – confessions of a rhythm scientist

To me Warhol was one of those artists who touched on so many nerve points of modern culture that he's almost like an exact mirror held up to a world gone completely blind - its eyes have been replaced by the lens, the computer screen, the random ad in Times Square, the constantly updated website... or whatever central focal point you want to focus on. You name it, he's echoed it. Almost no other artist can compare. Yes, Duchamp made room for the found object in the fine arts. Yes, all manner of painters and artists changed the way we perceive reality - but Warhol was a figure who towered over them all in his ability to absorb it all... that's why I consider him to be the first truly 21st century artist: he lived by osmosis. (Miller, "Andy Warhol's American Dream")

Rhythm Science pleads a confession of sorts, an argument for the historical origin and development of the conceptual art project, "Dj Spooky." Here, we suppose Miller at his autobiographical. We suppose, at this point, a narrator calling himself Paul D. Miller, the originator of Dj Spooky, typing the essay entitled "Districts" (36-53). And not Dj Spooky. Unless Spooky has appropriated, sampled, and respun Miller's history, his story: but the narrator, as old griot, seems to be telling a tale of family and growing-up that, in print, aims for something a little more substantial than evaporation and disappearance. Or, perhaps this is Spooky's fictive desire, his melancholic, romantic ode: to have all the trappings of home. And so he turns to Miller.

Although compressed into these pages, the elements of an artist's statement structure the entirety of the chapter to the point of genre; this is the context of a network that is also a pleading for the basis of a networked, "sampladelic" approach. Like other famous confessions—Rousseau, Augustine—"Districts" includes Miller's childhood, a list of important experiences (shout-outs), notes on his family and politics, the feeling of an era (the heyday of the '90s), college at Bowdoin and DJing in NYC. As a genre, as confession, it pleads for the basis of art that arrives through the manifestation of the art itself. And for what reasons is Miller confessing? If he defers certain answers via the slipperiness of his Spooky personalities, then to whom, and for what reasons, does he confess? Why a sudden plunge into a narrative of value? Off the surface and into a *life*...

In any case, the mix of these genres and references, essays on the future and on Miller's past, essays on the origins of Spooky and his music projects, on music in general and his own poetic musings—and the aspects of the digital sublime that Miller evokes should not be discounted—nevertheless culminate in an argument of excuse. Not an excuse for an

infraction committed, but an excuse from the topic at hand, as one excuses oneself from a dinner table. It excuses Miller from critiques directed from almost any quarter—he is not an academic, although a writer and speaker; not a real DJ (hence critiquing his skills is irrelevant), although paid to act as one; not a real music producer, although releasing several albums and considered a founder of the illbient genre (a downtempo, dark ambient strain that merged hip-hop and electronic music; see Spooky’s *Songs of a Dead Dreamer* (Asphodel, 1996)). What is Paul D. Miller then? Is he the creator of nothing less than these very problematics or did these problematics create him? (As he writes: “The music and art I create is an end result of a life lived in an environment where almost all aspects of urban life were circumscribed by the coded terrains of a planet put in parentheses by satellites in the sky beaming back everything long ago. The conflict of African and European cultural patterns, the uncertainty of origin that marks all life in the United States, the sense of living in a racially divided culture that has lost the ability to really think about anything but media entertainment – these issues act as a kind of formative crucible for anyone who is still idealistic. I don’t know of any artist who really thinks everything is locked down” (109)). Paul D. Miller: idealist and artist, perhaps by his own admission, seeks to become the super sponge, the ultimate chamber of osmosis in the attempt to surpass Warhol. A simulation of the conceptual artist... The price of admission is the image of himself, beamed back to himself, forever, to the point of oblivion, the horizon of the “I,” the “zombie and the idiot.” Spooky is the satellite, the orbital mirror: the act becomes pay-per-view. “Pay the piper, call the tune.” Or sample Hunter S. Thompson: Buy the ticket, take the ride. That’s the price of admission. From *Rhythm Science*:

Chastity, like skepticism, shouldn’t be relinquished too readily, and that’s what the sampler tells us. Play with the recognizeability of texts and see what happens. Pay the piper, call the tune. Advertising is the modern substitute for argument; its function is to make the worse appear the better. Both advertising and argument have ideal extensions that lend utility to their conditions. Nothing is really so poor and melancholy as art that is interested in itself and not in its subject. The truth is cruel, but it can be loved, and it makes free those of us who have loved it. (108)

This quote from a section entitled “The Prostitute.”

This section to remind us of the flesh behind the mix (although this is *exactly* the scale of the investigation): and to position the following exploration, critique, analysis, reconstruction.

We search not to judge Spooky, nor to perform a manoeuvre of art criticism upon the split body and ghostly shadow of his work. Rather we take Spooky as a production of a broader network, of remix culture in general, of the networks he constantly reminds us of, and as a reciprocal producer of this network... Spooky is emblematic, symptomatic, programmatic of the cultural effects of a shift between analog and digital culture as it extends its tentacles to all aspects of network society, regenerating and reduplicating its lattice on a multiple of registers (aesthetic, political, social, ethical, technological, technical, formal, linguistic, etc.). As ubiquitous and pervasive (some might say *invasive*) computing comes to paint its nanotechnology on all surfaces, Spooky will remind us that he was plugging in the art—even if at the levels of its own conceptual simulation, in the full paradox of its proper name, even if through the infinite multiples of his image and advertising—in a personal wildstyle of intelligence and verve...

01 – introducing... me, myself and I: Endnotes

¹ “21C” becomes a code name for the 21st century, a way of acknowledging the bridging of language to code, programming and data, of the abbreviation of time, the speed of passing via technology, and the focus on an “immanent” century.

² For more on this debate, which is widespread (Recording Industry Association of America lawsuits against Peer-2-Peer networks; a strong legal enforcement of copyright), see the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF): <<http://www.eff.org>>.

³ See *Social Text* 71: Summer 2002, Ed. Alondra Nelson (“AfroFuturism”).

⁴ See <http://www.undergroundresistance.com>. For more on AfroFuturism, see Eshun’s book (bibliography) and *Social Text* 71, Ed. Alondra Nelson, Duke UP: 2002. For a concise history of Detroit techno, see Dan Sicko’s *Techno Rebels*, New York: Billboard, 1999.

⁵ a.k.a. Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid

⁶ The entire quote connects bullets to drifting, Breton to police gunfire: “Anyway, feel a million flurries of now, a million intangibles of the present moment, an infinite permutation of what could be... the thought gets caught... You get the picture. In the data cloud of collective consciousness, it’s one of those issues that just seems to keep popping up. Where did I start? Where did I end? First and foremost, it’s that flash of insight, a way of looking at the fragments of time. Check it: visual mode – open source, a kinematoscope of the unconscious: a bullet that cuts through everything like a Doc Edgerton, E.J. Marett or Muybridge flash frozen frame. You look for the elements of the experience, and if you think about it, even the word “analysis” means to break down something into its component parts. Stop motion: weapons drawn, flip the situation into a new kind of dawn... It’s only a rendition of Bréton’s dream – surrealism as a mid-summer nite’s scheme, check the *dérive* in the 21st Situationist scene. A scenario on the screen: camera obscura, the perspective unbound walking through a crowd, gun drawn, firing wildly until everyone is gone... could it be another version, another situation... like the police whose 19 out of 41 bullets shot Diallo dead or the kids that walk into the schools to live out their most powerful stunningly banal lives by ending their classmates. This is how it is in the sign of the times – an advertising tie into the symbols of a lawless world, something anything to grasp onto to give meaning to the ultra swirl...
Or something like that.”

⁷ See *Connected*.

⁸ See *Silence*.

⁹ a.k.a. Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid

¹⁰ Copyright MC Futcho.

02 – “DJ-ING IS WRITING/WRITING IS DJ-ING”

On the cultural effects of the digital networks and the tactics of Dj Spooky

This is not about pseudonyms or alter egos. That’s already been done.

- Paul D. Miller a.k.a. Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid, *Rhythm Science* 004

As a dj would say, “spinning” a discourse that drifts with the casual, in the parlance of cool, incorporating theoretical soundbytes and in-tune references constitutes the force of Paul D. Miller’s viral and infectious language, the making of his thought. Miller’s relation to Spooky suggests ventriloquism as he projects, not represents, a reflexivity between at least two poles in continuous feedback: that of “himself” and his other “self,” Dj Spooky. Ventriloquism, because the relation of Miller to Spooky is one of image *and sound* entwined via multiple media and circuits of relay. (If anything, it is Spooky that speaks for Miller.) Miller and Spooky sound out reciprocal conditions of possibility: they sample each other, replay the soundbytes back-and-forth, call-and-response, as effects of a network that splits, *a priori*, a distinct, representative self, an identity bound in name, ego or consciousness. Such is the “logic” of the *also known as*, the deferral or projection to another, the “a.k.a.” of Paul D. Miller a.k.a Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid.

By engaging Spooky/Miller, I will argue that the network is the necessary, systematic circuit from which all forms of the subject—plural, split, deferred—are effects (affects and calculated, digital effects). The network is a lattice in which these concepts are effects that, at a particular level, cease to function, insofar as these concepts demand their self-identity, their unique and complete self-referentiality. Spooky demonstrates this paradox, formalizing the multiplicity of the network’s effects in the performativity of subjectivity, of the name and its (conceptual) art, its simulacra of identity, while retaining, at another level, the effects of the author (and thus authority) and what is proper to the author, his property. The network in question is a specific one: it is not *the* network. Rather, this network, which is framed by the codification of the digital (and thus its apparent opposite, the analog), is already an effect of another: at the limit, an effect of temporarization, spacing, spatiographics. That this particular network, as an effect of the broader network, might reciprocally modify the effects of the horizon or limit, is the open-ended question of this essay.¹ This broader network will be considered, after Derrida, *différance*, but also, after Deleuze, that of the island and the ocean (or rhizome, plane, etc.). Yet, there are many others, and first, Dj Spooky. If “this is not about

pseudonyms or alter egos,” this is also not about the framework of representation and identity. It *is* about something else. But we’re getting ahead of ourselves—this is *also* about Dj Spooky.

Miller and Spooky, image and sound: a binary infection. It infects us here too, these slips of the tongue, miming Spooky’s rhythms as they machine their way through the world, wrought in the performativity of the word: homophony, alliteration, isomorphic repetition, cut-and-paste aesthetics of the drop-in, the slow blend, the sudden sample. What are the articulations and chains of such a language that proclaims “Dj-ing is Writing/Writing is Dj-ing”? What are its affective forces, its undercurrents of violence? How does the forward slash, the coding of a relation and a “flipside” between statements, conduct ontological reconstruction as it binds isomorphic or at least equivocal inflections between word and mix? How does this forward slash—the “/” of flipside argument, of doubling, effects and relays between clauses—determine the grid of critique, determine questions that seek the *conditions of possibility* of word and mix, their justifications for ontological equivalency? Are there critical arguments to be posed to this operation of mining for meaning—what a Dj calls “crate digging,” Foucault, “archaeology”? Is it possible to upset a specter of rhythm that will coerce an unfamiliar style and set of criteria for analysis, for the *mix* of thought and sound, that hasn’t already inaugurated a return to ethno-phonocentrism on the one channel, hermeneutics on the other?

It can be argued that *Spooky’s* language is designed to defract and deflect the critical inquiry as it flies from one scenario to the next,² and that this deflection constitutes a movement of language and thought that ties into a broader ethic and process of sampling (in the technical as well as conceptual senses: property, theft, copyright; but also the conditions of possibility of the proper, the author, of authority and possession). At stake in a question of language (citation) as well as sound (sampling) are questions *of* ethics and *to* ethics. These are two different sets of questions: a) questions *of* existing norms of the ethico-political, i.e. the register of law, wherein the ethico-political, although questioned, is granted as the basis; b) questions *to* the ethical in general, *of* the conditions of possibility of the ethico-political terrain in which we find normative applications (and *to* the terrain “itself”). The latter infers an incisive reformatting of the “appropriate” deployment of sampling as it questions the basis of its restriction. At the judicial level of language, most contemporary legal documents based on capitalist property relations define the appropriate conditions of “fair use” (globally influential US Copyright Law in particular).³ Interpretations of these laws—especially the hazy and

international application of the United States’ Digital Millenium Copyright Act (DMCA)—lead from questions *of* ethics to questions *to* the ethical in general; yet at some point the questioning of the latter is curbed to maintain the power of certain structures (property, authority; the proper and the author).

Our question here is: how do the relations, connections and relays between language and sampling (i.e., this *network*), a kind of “rhythm science” between writing and djing, sound and word, upset the terrain upon which legal standards are erected? And when, as a network but also an effect of the network, this “upsetter” embodies itself between human and “fictional character,” Dj and writer, ghost and concept, and does so via an imaginative codification of deferral, the “a.k.a.” between “Paul D. Miller, *a.k.a.* Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid?”⁴

Explicating this chain, articulating its connections, and outlining its impact upon what will be questioned as the terrain of the ethical, the conceptual and the technological will occupy us here. It will be cause for traversing between text and track, sound and print, in an investigation that demands analysis across particular media that nonetheless bleed through their porous skins (sound and word, music and text). As Spooky writes as his own title track, “Dj-ing is Writing/Writing is Dj-ing.” If the hammer was Nietzsche’s favourite tool of the late 19th century, in the encoded “21C” we engage philosophy with a sampler.

1 - The Oceanic Network and the Island of Nettime

The setting: a respected, international email list of Net intellectuals and artists. *The scenario:* a “gaseous” debate (nay, borderline flame war) between Paul D. Miller and J-D Marston. *The run-out* (the way a record hits the centre label): what has become archived as a rather infamous public exchange that struck close to the heart of the issue...

Let’s take this public exchange on net-culture email list Nettime and delve into its context.⁵ (We will get to the meat of the debate in the following section.) The debate itself cannot stand alone as—and this is our hypothesis—it calls beyond itself, technically via hyperlinks, socio-culturally via implied references, ethically via pasted samples, sonically and rhythmically via the incorporation of sound. That is, the debate forms a *text*, writing in the broadest sense of the network that cannibalizes media. As a condition of possibility it cannot just “take place anywhere else.” Only the intricate, elaborate and complex context of the email list can provide the markers that effect the network within history and the history of the digital network. Nettime cannot be described otherwise than culturally and technically complex, at least in the sense that Nettime bridges artistic, academic and activist communities that engage

Internet media. Since its founding by Geert Lovink and Pit Schultz on October 31st, 1995,⁶ it has served as an international forum of “networked cultures, politics and tactics.”⁷ The list’s early sense of collectivity energized conferences and list edited publications; the list’s heritage has led to recent books such as Lovink’s *Dark Fiber*. In many respects, Nettime charted what Lovink coined as “net criticism”—an internet informed, savvy analysis of political economy, technology, media and global information flows, often in the form of email polylogues, creative Net interventions, and “versioned” texts (1.0, 2.0, etc., responding to critique and feedback in the process). Early emails to Nettime often become “proper” publications, as the work of not only Lovink but Mackenzie Wark, Andreas Broeckman and Coco Fusco attest. In many respects Nettime has the potential to enact a networked *agora* of “digital media”—certainly not across class, gender and race, but to the list’s credit, a site of proliferation, wherein a single post, archived immediately, becomes subject to mass dissemination—and ideally, discussion.

A word here on the “digital.” “Digital” is defined—or rather, left undefined—in the loose sense of the *codification* of what is, in the last word, uncodifiable: intensities, gestures, forces, ontologies... Brian Massumi writes that “the digital always circuits into the analog.” As well as technically, it does so via the undulations of time. “The sound is an analog as ever... It is only the coding of the sound that is digital” (*Parables* 138). Between writing and Dj-ing, the codification of the “/,” so difficult to *read*, slashes a feedback loop, bisecting the digital codification of sampling on the one channel and the analog playback—the rotation of dusty vinyl on the turntable—on the other. Massumi questions the absolute distinction between the digital and the analog in order to correlate it to Deleuze’s distinction between the possible and potential. This distinction, like the relation of Spooky to Miller, is one of processing one state to generate another. For Massumi, digital processing is codification. While the digital is distinct, it does not exist unto-itself, it requires as condition of possibility the analog. Thus the analog (and ontology) is not superseded by the digital. According to Massumi, the analog has a privileged relation to ontology’s *potential*, to becoming, while the digital remains stuck within *possibilities* via its codification. Nevertheless, this codification now effects most analog production (akin to Heidegger’s assertion that *techné* delimits the horizon of ontology)⁸. In-between the email list and the body slumped at the terminal, the network and the flame war circulates the writhing limbs of the digital and the analogue: like codependent Siamese twins, the two can no longer be separated; their entanglement threads itself as a mycelium, a Grand

Central station of time travel where hemisection would be unthinkable. “My God, it’s full of stars!”⁹

As a set of call-and-response texts, Nettime interfaces the analog process of thought to the digital relay of the email list. Nettime’s birth is somewhat of a conflict of necessary “opposites” in itself, pitting the “California Ideology” coined by Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron, furthered by *Wired* editor Kevin Kelly, against critiques emerging from Europe, specifically the ADILKNO media collective of which Lovink was a member.¹⁰ According to Lovink, the emerging “net.criticism” of Nettime demanded “a much more thorough deconstruction of this set of ideas [the California Ideology, “hippie capitalism”] (75), yet also, apropos “festive, ecstatic rave culture [which] refrained from fanatic activism” (76), “The atmosphere had turned Deleuzian. The playful, productive schizo pole blossomed” (73). As Lovink notes, Nettime was marked in the crossroads of two, generally European philosophical perspectives: between deconstruction (Derrida) and the schizo (Deleuze). Within the crossroads lay ecstatic festival culture—that is, the general milieu of remix, sampladelic music cultures that transacted between theory and connectivity (primarily hip-hop, rave and technocultures). Demarcating the two theoretical poles will allow us to move toward the productivity of this milieu; that is, the way it reconstructed Dj Spooky from its mix of writing and Djing, the analogue and the digital mix: toward grasping the *force* of Miller/Spooky’s polemic with J-D Marston.

Despite the downfall of the California Ideology debate (and rave culture) with the “dot-bomb” economic recession, it is to the continuation of critique and creativity, *against* a hegemonic, technologically utopian (some might argue apocalyptic) capitalism that one finds Nettime. Yet, since the ‘90s, a seachange of the political has also taken place in this crossroads.

This shift has displaced the coding of a politics of what Critical Art Ensembled (CAE) tagged “Electronic Civil Disobediance.” The impact as well as justification to claims of this shift would require an extensive analysis, yet both its force and its apparent demise mark the context of this exchange on Nettime as well as the parameters of Dj Spooky’s pervasiveness. If the shift remains debatable, there has at least been a perceived change in those involved in self-described critiques of technology and capital. The shift can be described as moving from a temporary resurrection of the avant-garde, advocated by CAE, to a chameleon-like strategy of invisibility (the latter vowing allegiance to Deleuze while returning, as we shall see, to strategies of simulacra that are highlighted by neo-conceptualists under the influence of

Baudrillard). This shift is *prefigured* in Spooky’s own finding of himself, of “Spooky.” Spooky, as Spooky/Miller writes, was always “a parallax view of the modern world where anything goes” (44). We shall return to what this entails in light of a *perceived* shift below.

While rave culture had been ongoing since 1987 in various forms,¹¹ it was with the rise of the Internet that various attempts, like Nettime, were made to converge a new terrain of the political in which the self-described “underground” (rave culture, squatters, cyber/punks, DIY media, hackers, BBS culture, AfroFuturism) could merge with critical media practice. Both movements (if they can be called as such) were necessitated by and converged upon emerging digital media networks, already heavily invested in an aesthetic, if not politic of technics, of “cyberspace” and “virtual utopias.” Grasping the energy of the moment in 1996, CAE attempted to perform an exorcism of this convergence’s historical potential, writing that “In the case of the avant-garde, however, perhaps a magic elixir exists that can reanimate this corpse. The notion has decayed quite a bit, so one would not expect this zombie to look as it once did, but it may still have a place in the world of the living” (26). The motif of the zombie—cited by Spooky himself, not only in name but as a chapter of *Rhythm Science*—will return to haunt us later: what haunts us now is the proclaimed return of the *avant-garde*. The *avant-garde* retains particular interest, for it frames the context in which Spooky participates.

CAE understands the new *avant-garde*, circa 1996, as “Those who are ready and willing to begin to form the models of electronic resistance in the new frontier of cyberspace...” (28). Thus, the digital is spooked by its turn-of-the-previous century predecessors; any argument of a clean break from history has to contend with this return of the past. The general timing of this ghostly thematic is also to be found in the milieu of thought that marks Nettime’s discourse. In 1993, the “Whither Marxism? Global Crises in International Perspective” conference held at University of California, Riverside, presented Derrida’s first sustained meditation on Marx, later to be published as *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*. Derrida’s theme, as evident from the title, is one of ghosts: of the spectral return of Marx, of “hauntology” and of the specter as upsetting all returns in general, specifically that of a calculated future (the end of history). Fast-forward to the 21C: although CAE’s *model* of the *avant-garde* has diminished,¹² the notion of a new *avant-garde* has become comfortable within digital cultures (according to Derrida, to be buried is only to *prefigure* its return). It would be necessary to outline that the arrival of CAE’s *avant-garde* partakes in a general “spirit” of spirited returns, tying into the overarching grouping that came to be erroneously named the “anti-globalization” movement, of which we find the broad

milieu described here but easily eclipsed by a thousand other names, movements, struggles and groups concerned with freedoms in a “digital era” of “crony-corporate-capitalism” (a better designator would be “*alter*-globalization,” as few of these groups are *against* globalization per se). Nettime and Spooky are very much awash in this sea.

Also positioned within a certain return of Marx is Hardt and Negri’s *Empire*, a text that has had particular relevance to Nettime as its arguments have long been prefigured by list debate. Hardt and Negri attempt to theorise this general return as the return of a communism that has been, for lack of a better term, “remixed” by the multiplicity of constituent concerns. The plurality—often conflicting—of this “new internationalism,” which we have only touched upon, and which performs the general opening in which we find Spooky’s relation to the returning-avant-garde and to the remixing of property, has been termed the “multitude.” The multitude performs the logic we have been elaborating so far: co-dependent, but not equivocal, a relation of binarism wherein the secondary term is designated the process or remix of the other and yet the primary term’s condition of possibility. The multiplicity of the remix is the condition of possibility for the singular; the remix is against the origin yet also within it, as it prefigures it. In *Empire*, the multitude is explicitly theorized as:

...*within* Empire and *against* Empire. New figures of struggle and new subjectivities are produced in the conjuncture of events, in the universal nomadism, in the general mixture and miscegenation of individuals and populations, and in the technological metamorphoses of the imperial biopolitical machine. These new figures and subjectivities are produced because, although the struggles are indeed antisystemic, they are not posed *merely against* the imperial system—they are not simply negative forces. They also express, nourish, and develop positively their own constituent projects; they work toward the liberation of living labour, creating constellations of powerful singularities. (61)

To better grasp the ecstatic milieu in which Spooky “washed ashore,” as a kind of return from this “oceanic” network, that is from this sea of movements and discourses, would require an extensive charting of the theoretical attempts to describe (some might say appropriate) these ongoing processes, processes that are far from completing their return (will never complete their return: such is the movement of the multitude, of what Derrida sees as the “spirit” of Marx that persists in haunting “the left”). To do justice to CAE (which can be placed among “the left” via their own discourse), as well as their continuing work in 2004 on biotechnologies,¹³ would require space and consideration to the way this perceived *return* of the avant-garde and its perceived *death* have been reinscribed. Nevertheless, and whatever

conclusion such an analysis reaches, the general impression *persists* of the birth and death of the avant-garde, to which the persistence of art, after declaring rupture from representation, fashions into a refrain.¹⁴ It must relive (and re-die) a cycle that resolves not dialectically, but, as in the return and arrival of Spooky, rejoins productively (via concept, technology, technique; bifurcation, multiplicity, generation). Spooky’s return from the sea is indicative of the general repetition of the return that produces the new, the generative network of forces, wherein each rupture bears its historical traces. The cycle of the avant-garde is an effect of a “*production of a system of differences*” (Derrida, *Positions* 28), of that trait which “twists and turns its folds... pushing them to infinity...” (Deleuze, *Fold* 3). The cycle is restrained as rupture yet also disseminated as “an irreducible and *generative multiplicity*” (Derrida 45). It retains the character of a rupture undergoing continual transformation, wherein “Breaks are always, and *fatally* [deathly, toward death, hence this persistent death of the avant-garde], reinscribed in an old cloth that must continually, interminably be undone. This interminability is not an accident or contingency; it is essential, systematic, and theoretical. And this in no way minimizes the necessity and relative importance of certain breaks, of the appearance and definition of new structures...” (my italics, Derrida 24). (This is not the first time the sea has surfaced both manifestos and magicians in the ritual form of the phoenix from the ashes.)¹⁵

The sea here is more than metaphor: it’s an advance sample from Spooky’s discourse, the beginnings of the polemic too. If the context of Nettime spirals off in all directions, it is because Nettime is a node to this oceanic network which has reproduced and returned these various forces and relays as specters. The node operates in physical albeit mobile space (festivals, but also publications) as well as in a virtual, imagined space, experienced in its singularity and affectivity as the connectivity of the Net. The parameters of the milieu also determine, as Katja Cronauer has analysed via the gender and power dynamics of email lists,¹⁶ the context of discourse and exchange, of discussion, via the digital medium of email.

Preliminarily, we can analyse the context of Nettime as mediating in-between at least these two poles—that of the schizo/Deleuzian, which has taken on a playful approach to capitalism (the ideal of the “chameleon” in the “heart” of capital), and that of systemic anti-capitalism (that of CAE’s contemporary work against Genetically Modified Organisms, for example). Be it hacking or hactivism, the digital in general, as an extension of telematic technics, constitutes the oceanic network in which this debate navigates itself. This sea of relays and effects, despite speculative economic failings, has far from diminished its violently affective yet collective (as well as collectivist) impact upon the globe. This impact, the coming of the Net, remix culture,

systemic sampling and decentralized dissemination generating virtual community, is also the cradle of “Spooky,” of Spooky’s arrival in the mix of these processes, collective encounters with technology, and jubilant, apocalyptic celebrations. Spooky came about as a kind of return, a name that came back from this sea of flotsam and jetsam—a name for a multiple, for something more and yet other than just the singular known as Paul D. Miller. This return, embodied in the late analog format of the mixtape that evokes the shore, the magnetic, the spirit and the sea:

...multiple messages in bottles, scraps of magnetic tape thrown out into the ocean of community and alienation in mid-1990s NYC looking for kindred spirits. Dj Spooky washed back onto the shore. (*Rhythm Science* 44)

In this narratology which is an ontology, Spooky returns as a spirit, washes ashore as revenant ocean debris to Miller, from relay-effect of the exchange of magnetic tape, to the shore of the alienated terrain, from the ocean of the network community. What did Miller cast out? He sent out magnetic mixtapes: a mix of the other’s music, a remix of scraps and pieces of sonic alienation and community, and what returned was a patchwork, undefined, undefinable, and double, a specter of the milieu. Yet, as Spooky writes, something more than that, a scrap-spirit (the spirit of the scraps), yet never named a spirit as-such: the proper name itself announces the impact of this return—Dj Spooky. Alienated, seeking the communal, searching for “kindred spirits,” a spirit returns from the ocean of media detritus. Spooky’s writing suggests that the metaphor of the *sea*—and not the terrain, the land or earth, the ground—is better suited to understanding the “drifts” of sample culture and its “spirits.” One stands on the shore. The milieu is emblematic of the philosophical-political spirit of the decade; the coming-connectedness of the ‘90s was already at work in its concentration of desires: to remix, to cut and paste, to strew the magnetic, to revel in electricity’s spooky power to fuel a collectively virtual space, what William Gibson in *Neuromancer* called the “consensual hallucination known as the matrix” (51). In philosophy too: apropos Deleuze, “the virtual” urgently occupies the stage. Another relay found in one of Nettime’s philosophical godfathers is not only Derrida’s obsession with ghosts, but in Deleuze via the choice of metaphor: the sea. (Again, we continue with the duo of Deleuze and Derrida here because of their marked place in Spooky’s discourse, language, practice and education *as well as* in the discourse of Nettime and the development of “net.criticism”).¹⁷

Where did Spooky come from at sea?

Ghosts haunt the deserted, ancient and uncanny places, places that have been subject to forgotten trauma, if not places forgotten themselves, off the map entirely. As Spooky writes, title to a piece that samples Freud into the mix: “Uncanny/Unwoven.” As always, something more than *just* a metaphor; for a metaphor has taken on qualities of redefining the basis of the political, from earth to water, land to sea. The ethico-political import of a spook, a proper name that arrives, washes ashore, from the sea, will remain with us as we drift through sample culture and its “rekonstruction”¹⁸ of the ethico-political “terrain” via the oceanic. Perhaps we can, after Deleuze, begin to think of this rekonstruction as the remaking of the deserted island from the liminal space of the shore. (We shall turn to this in detail in chapter 2). The sea, and its necessary opposite, the island, heralds a networked perspective, forged in metaphor, for an oceanic articulation of philosophy. Land is no longer opposed to sea; rather, all land is island to the sea’s expanse, the sea encompasses the land like a deconstructed binary: *arkhe-aqua*. As distinct from the metaphysical solidification of the *terrain*, the territory upon which *arkhe*-structure is erected, the fortress of complete systems and castles of thought, there flows the relation between land and water, the oceanic network from and in which digital technologies navigate.

This will be the last delay before we return to Nettime and the discussion we wish to emphasize; it is significant, however, as it informs Nettime’s formation as a kind of island in and of the oceanic network. Nettime begins from the reverse of non-connected principles. It begins not with foundations on land. It begins as something that, like Spooky, came from the sea, from the vast, connected, virtual network “itself.” Nettime was already born from Deleuzian preoccupations, or at least, Nettime, like net-art website Rhizome.org, claims Deleuze as a conceptual heir. Deleuze provides the philosophical-visual topography, the mergence of metaphor to argument, of the history of philosophy to the production of desire.

Deleuze works well for conceptual cartography: like Case in *Neuromancer*, the text itself unfolds before us the vision of thought, the “bright lattices of logic unfolding across that colorless void” (2) that make up not only the “consensual hallucination” that is the text, but the text read virtually, digital email in the context of the virtual community: the matrix. With Guattari, Deleuze, through a topographical model developed in *A Thousand Plateaus*, nonetheless argues that, after Bergson, this map is not of “real” space but of time. The promise of virtual space is misleading: email is not a dimension *in* but a flat-screen encounter with the response and the reply. The virtual is the affective interaction of terminal text to body that produces the consensual hallucination of participation *over time*: memory and futurity. This

postal-relay system affects the rhythm and flow of Spooky’s email dialogue on Nettime. Thus we realise after Derrida how the poetic evocation of the lost postcard—delayed letters of “Envois” in *La Carte Postale*—critiques “transparent” communication, “transparency,” “communication” as constructed on the sender/receiver model. The context delays and twists the basic A to B schema; there are a myriad spatial as well as temporal buffers and relays: the postal system, the system of the *letter* that is both of the text *and* of the digital: *a double ontology slashed*. This theme, developed also in *Limited Inc.* (but also as early as *Of Grammatology* and a persistent thematic to Derrida’s work), plays upon the deferrals of the letter, that is, the “to-come” (*à-venir*) matrix of language that virtualizes and thus fragments and delays the metaphysical constructs of consciousness, identity, self-presence. Doubled language, analog circuited, digitally codified, projects its consensual hallucination of unity, of a unity of fragments, to the topological of the virtual (that never “realises”). This matrix is further complicated via the *technics* of the analog-digital (Nettime’s postal system), and complexified *once again* when one considers the virtuality of Dj Spooky as the “author” of these digital missives, a digital spook “within” a digital medium that interfaces with the actual, the flesh terminal of Miller and his interlocutors. Like Derrida to his hidden respondent (lover?), we ask: has an email been read, have we actually communicated? And who is this “we”? Is it not always and necessarily absent, the receiver to the sender (and vice-versa)? Has my reply been sent to you or disseminated to this list and if so, what is this list, is there not always a number of others in the chain of relays that delay the singular missive? Do I write to you from me, or are not all the others in me relaying to all the others in you? “je t’écris demain mais j’arriverai sans doute, une fois de plus, avant ma lettre / Dans la cas contraire, si je ne t’arrivais plus, tu sais ce que toujours / je te demande d’oublier, de garder dans l’oubli” (*La Carte Postale* 16-17), “I write you tomorrow but without a doubt once again I will arrive before my letter / In the opposite case, if I no longer reached you, you know what always / I ask you to forget, to preserve in amnesia” (*The Post Card* 12). It is this postal system that *also* weaves through the context of the “digital” email list, its textual, virtual, ethico-political and epistemological dimensions of the analog, its collective hallucination of the virtual.

(Deleuze will understand this in terms of the sea and the island: we will turn to this in chapter 2, to the “oceanic network” of Nettime.)

With no singular essence save for its archive, with its physicality residing in a few computer servers but its personality changing with the flux of its members and their contributions, the tensions described throughout the ‘90s, as coming to arrive and then pass,

of the flow of time and of change, have characterized the condition as well as the complex virtual space in which Dj Spooky engaged in an echoed conversation of sorts, picked a time and rhythm of returns and relays, a public exchange of digital email in the least, with J-D Marston, on Nettime, in February 2003.

2 - J-D Marston “/” Dj Spooky (an email encounter)

February 25th, 2003: the story begins like this. J-D Marston, responding to a post from Paul D. Miller which discussed, among other things, William Gibson’s recent novel *Pattern Recognition*, sarcastically cut into the apparently unspeakable territory of Miller’s involvement in advertising for the GAP clothing company. After partaking in a discussion in which the nebulous relation of advertising to art and cyberspace was considered via *Pattern Recognition*, Marston took Miller to task for the use of his image (or Spooky’s image?) to sell GAP clothing. This intervention on the part of Marston marks a particular break. That is, it disconnects from the easy flow of the remix that flattens art to advertising. What is actualized via this break is an implicit critique that winds its way through what Bruce Sterling calls the “slipstream fiction” (and not science fiction) of *Pattern Recognition*. Gibson’s text, set in an alternate present (rather than a fantastical future) attempts to mark some of the barriers between art and advertising. The plot itself involves a protagonist in the advertising industry who, using her intuition, decides upon logos, looks and styles for marketing campaigns. Her name is a homophonic sample from the hero of *Neuromancer*: Cayce (from the male Case). After she becomes involved in tracking the origin of a string of haunting videos disseminated on the Net, she finally encounters the artist of these strangely affective, morphing fragments of image, who lets her watch the remix-in-process of the material, an experience that can only be described as overwhelming the senses and re-establishing a rupture of the experiential: “...her face wet with tears, eyes closed, shoulders braced against plaster...” (306). She, and Gibson, ponder the ability for words to describe this experience: “She wonders if she will ever be able to describe her experience there to anyone” (304). Likewise, like the experience of watching the video’s ongoing creation, the video fragments themselves evades description throughout the novel. Gibson thus draws our attention to the event that ruptures and tears the flattened topography of the infinite exchange of the image and does so *via* the digital system of dissemination and production. The climax remains indescribable, something more than words but also something more than the image. Significantly, Gibson makes this video *digital*; through a process wrought in process and affect, it develops an obviously peculiar

relation to the virtual. As the video plays it undergoes moving mutations that invoke time, place, change; as we never see the videos—only read their of their affects and their description in words—it is to the imagined descriptor of digital’s potential that Gibson intuits. Despite that “Digital technologies in fact have a remarkably weak connection to the virtual, by virtue of the enormous power of their systemization of the possible”—writes Masumi—“They may yet develop a privileged connection to it, far stronger than that of any preceding phylum” (*Parables* 137). This may be through sound, as Kodwo Eshun writes in *More Brilliant Than The Sun*: “But machines *don’t* distance you from your emotions, in fact quite the opposite. Sound machines make you feel *more* intensely, along a broader band of emotional spectra than ever before in the 20th Century” (00[-002]). Gibson attempts to not describe but rather stage and contextualize the event of this connection; of course, this remains in words, via the analog (always via the analog):

In the darkened room whose windows would have offered a view of the Kremlin, had they been scraped clean of paint, Cayce had known herself to be in the presence of the splendid source, the headwaters of the digital Nile she and her friends had sought. It is here, in the languid yet precise moves of a woman’s pale hand. In the faint click of image-capture. In the eyes only truly present when focused on this screen.

Only the wound, speaking wordlessly in the dark. (305)

Pattern Recognition commences the debate not in slipstream fiction but via the fiction Miller slips and scratches as Spooky. It is against this backdrop that Marston reproaches and questions Miller. But Spooky was not the only artist to take part in the GAP advertising campaign; Miller orchestrated a number of other artists and apparently saw the campaign as a chance to promote electronic music and digital arts culture to a broader audience.¹⁹ However, such a tactic has many unforeseen consequences. First, the campaign didn’t do too well. Second, it has raised critiques of Spooky’s position, ethico-political and aesthetic as well as conceptual, as an “artist.” It is in the latter vein that we find Marston’s critique and his questions to Spooky concerning the GAP advertising. For his quips, Marston was rebuked with Miller’s deflective response: “This kind of stuff is mad boring.” It appears that Spooky seeks to deflate the scenario by claiming that its truth as well as its force are irrelevant (“mad boring”), insinuating that the truth of the matter is also common and banal (omnipresent). Let us return to the beginning, and read this exchange, keeping in mind the meditation on the oceanic network of Nettime, keeping in mind the many audiences reading this text and the percolating thoughts on *Pattern Recognition* that the list readers had considered; keeping in mind

that, overall, at no point are simply two humans writing to each other: the Spooky/Miller exchange is operating its own system of relays as it touches the online “identity” cultivated by Marston’s wit and sarcasm. At the beginning, Marston quips:

Wasn't it “Spooky that Sublimated Kid” who lent himself to the inspired GAP advertisements here in Manhattan a year or so ago? Its all posture, and it really is Spooky.²⁰

Marston, playing off Spooky’s namesake, offers a kind of deconstruction of Spooky’s proper name in relation to its appearance as image. In doing so he modifies the proper name of Spooky, from “Subliminal Kid” to “Sublimated Kid.” Spooky becomes repressed, sublimated (one suspects in the Hegelian sense), to return as its own ghost and image of its ghost, doubled and replicated on billboard after billboard. Also as form: as “all posture,” to which it is implied that Spooky, as a ghost, lacks substance, lacks actual content, or, a sense of political essence that would determine Spooky’s stance. Marston has carefully reconstructed his language here, as wordplay and attack, so it is not too far out of line, that is, too far in the vitriolic sense, to consider that Spooky “*lent*” himself. That is, lent or rented “himself” out, and that Spooky already implies a kind of lending-of-oneself, a lending of the proper name and of the image-of-oneself as an entity-unto-itself, a kind of rental agreement incurred through the advertising contract. Marston holds open a space for Spooky: as a rented-ghost, it does not imply that Miller was compromised or *taken*, permanently, by the advertising image, but merely that “Spooky” was *rented*. In response to a barb that was certainly an invitation to a duel—yet also, to explain and contextualize—Miller (or the email address pegged to Paul D. Miller) disowned Spooky as an actual living entity. In response, Miller delays the persona into writing and into his upcoming novel. Yet in doing so, he also confirms the figure of this *lending* operation, this split wherein Miller lends Spooky, this time to a scenario of the text, a book, an “upcoming novel:”

J - not sure what you mean. Situationnism material? Advertising? Or “Spooky” - who is a character in my upcoming novel? Please clarify what this has to do with your comments. This kind of stuff is mad boring.

In response, Miller poses a series of questions, offering a series of deflections, of possible subjects of engagement, aiming to avoid the most obvious and direct target of Marston’s

questioning. Thus we have “Situationnist material,” “Advertising,” “Or ‘Spooky’ – who is a character in my [Miller’s] upcoming novel.” The three are *exclusive* relations: advertising, “Situationnist material” and Spooky are singular and inexchangeable. While part of a chain, they are nonetheless not constructed as concomitant: advertising and Spooky cannot be paired together, despite their demonstrated coupling. The same goes with the Situationnist material; Miller *also* renounces the possibility of complexifying the issue of advertising vis-à-vis Spooky by framing its claim, in advance, as an intervention in advertising, along the lines of a proto-Situationnist *détournement*. Instead, and in a manner that reflects the *form* of aesthetics found in *Pattern Recognition*, the three options are demarcated as singular points that cannot be recombined although they maintain a cohesive relation. This hints that Miller—or at this point, Spooky—is already considering *other* reasons for not only the advertising (of which the reasons are, in many respects, and as he is right to say—to a degree—inconsequential) but for the construction of *Spooky himself* as a singular entity that cannot be reduced to other things—“advertising”—things that might also inherit *concepts*—“Situationnist material.” What is, then, Spooky as distinct category, if a category at all? Did Miller disown Spooky or grant Spooky “its” independence? Is Miller—or Spooky—not constructing a broader claim that Spooky cannot be *reduced* to an image, to advertising, even if “lent”? To which we add: is Miller already considering and partitioning himself-as-Spooky, or is Spooky “himself” not writing this email? While the rhetorical analysis of this exchange might be painstaking, it contextualizes the milieu in which we must understand the construction of Spooky’s language in *Rhythm Science*, that is, his use of deflection and citation (sampling). Whatever the case, Spooky remains as writing: as a character in an upcoming novel, a work of fiction. Next salvo from Marston:

Paul aka Subliminal Inc.,²¹

All three actually.

First, I was responding to the gaseous nature of your post concerning the intersections of advertising and freewheeling-'droppin-science' coded languages of the 'NOW' a'la situationist conceptals; moreover, how that relates to the fibrous nature of 'the old left'...

Second, I wanted to point out the interesting point that Spooky (being you, not the character of your upcoming novel) was an organ of the GAP campaign -- or as you like to put it, the global vernacular of GAP Inc. -- here in New York City. I'm not saying it compromises your ability to comment with any depth, as there are many cult studs that are

busy deciphering the semilogical and linguistic markers of advertising. But to me, that is just 'mad boring'. Its the surface. The spectacle. The depthless sheen of unreality. Kinda like your comments. The real language is in finance and economics, not hidden in the models bra.

You think the 'old left' is petrified. You're not alone. You think the left should study Diesel ads to be 1. alot smarter 2. alot more dynamic? You are alone, I hope.

And actually, there are folks in Kansas, but what would they matter to the 'NOW.'

J

To which Spooky countered, from the other end of a planet in this soundsystem clash of titans, each calling forth the unheard wax in this battle of wits and words:

J - you're kind of right. Yes, I did do the ads, and yes, I've done others. I also try to get other kinds of information out.

My name is Paul D. Miller. Dj Spooky is a conceptual art project, not a "gaseous" situation. If you have more of an idea of the notion of how pop culture works, think of it as a hybrid of what Marcel Duchamp was working on with the "Rose C'est La Vie" persona, or Andy Warhol. Just metaphors, but metaphors that work in a large scale global environment. The phrases I used were samples taken from

1. Saul Williams single with Dj Krust "Coded language"
2. a couple of old hip-hop singles...

if you'd like to compare notes on how people use this kind of quotation in hip-hop vernacular, and many other forms of folk culture, I'd be more than happy to dialog 'bout it.

there's a relatively shrill and annoying sheen to your comments, and if you'd like to dialog rather than have some annoying rant about stuff you don't know about, I'm open, otherwise - fuck off.

Two channels of questioning, two mixes, two "posts" to the list requiring a double response (a delay and echo on each track):

1. On the one channel, connected to the language of this exchange are the problematics of citation ("samples") that construct not only the text but the oceanic network: "Just metaphors, but metaphors that work in a large scale global environment." The metaphor, and thus language, are not erased with the coming of digital, global technology. In fact, language becomes the "place," the relay or the temporal pocket in which the digital determines its

material virtuality, constructing its relation with the flesh. And the flesh here is, like the author and the dynamic of authority, reasserted as the proper name, the owner and origin: “My name is Paul D. Miller.” Yet the ethico-political force of Marston’s critique cuts through the citational deflections: it cuts to the heart of Spooky, to what Spooky not only apparently represents, but what he is supposed to *be*. What Spooky “represents” is an “a.k.a.” of Miller; Marston’s critique takes this connection literally, following the path of its structural deferral. Marston’s critique is ethico-political; that is, it is ontological, concerned with the “proper” ontology, the proper category, the proper name of the artist (“All three actually”). And it seems that Miller too is concerned with property, with *his* property: with the property of his name, of who he *is*, and of defending that *here*, in the oceanic network, yet also against the oceanic network by asserting the singularity of property, in an effort to reduce the phantasmatic elements of Spooky. Thus, Miller argues *against* the character in the novel, Dj Spooky (a novel yet unpublished, unseen, unread, always in-the-making) yet *within* this characterization. As Marston corrects: “All three actually”—“Paul aka Subliminal Inc.” We should add: all four, including the “a.k.a.,” the hyphenated transport between Spooky and Paul, between the incorporation of one into the other (“Inc”), that is, their mutual, reciprocal sublimation, a sublimation that would be devouring, an operation of incorporation.

As Spooky writes, sublimation but also *subliminalation*, both incorporated into the “NOW,” the immediacy of the present of which Spooky cultivates as the horizon of his effect, that is, toward a futurity, a NOW that is very much of the future. Even when directed toward the past, it remains of and toward futurism, toward a futurity of technology and of the technological present to which the oceanic network tends and of which Nettime, via its system of temporal relays, cultivates. The NOW of Spooky is the future-present of technology: Spooky haunts as a ghost from the sampled past, the oceanic network, the archive of magnetic scaps and mixtapes, of recombinant logic, and yet *also* washes ashore from the future, as a future incarnation of sample’s force, of sample culture’s disembodiment, of this disembodiment merging with the flesh of Miller via the “a.k.a.,” the substituted *metaphori* (literally: transport system). “A.k.a.” signals a system of exchange, a one-or-the-other, a flip-toss of the two terms that nonetheless maintains their singularity in its equivocality. One name is rekonstructed via the other. Both Marston and Miller are hostile toward the spook: it lives within both of them, and without both of them—regardless of their deaths, it lives as the relay system of language and image alone. This is the path of the sample: sampling as a broad term has exceeded theories of systems of the sign; the sample overtakes the signifier as the

citationality, the quotation marks surrounding every mark. Spooky exists and will always exist through the extension of language, of the sign in the broadest sense (the mark-in-general), insofar as existence and language are rekonstructed via the digital media that comprise the oceanic network, in its materiality, actuality and virtuality.

2. On the other channel, with the archive fervor of modern technology, we bear witness to a test of Miller’s rhymes against word-bullets in a public high-noon. Marston’s barbs are sharp but pose a question on the tip of the tongue of more than one witness to Nettime’s acrobatics: Why the GAP? Why advertising? Which is also to say: how does the “artist” negotiate systems of commercialization and advertising that construct contemporary systems of patronage? (How does the *ghost* navigate...?) Yet, Marston’s question is concerned less with patronage and more with the image-of-Spooky, its property, its aesthetic uses and meanings, its symbolic references in the process of being “lent,” as a metaphor itself “in a large scale global environment.” It is exactly *because* Spooky operates as global metaphor that Marston poses the question. Perhaps the question is much larger than we expect: what is the relation to responsibility, or what are the limits of responsibility, how does it come to operate, when one’s conceptual art project—which is oneself—is lent—hired out—as an advertising image? How does the ethico-political operate in the oceanic network, the system of relays and delays of the digital where it transacts with the disseminated image and the flesh? Is it *necessary* to invoke the author and authority to call for responsibility? How is one responsible for one’s creation, a creation which is already sampled, washed ashore from the sea of samples?

Marston’s critique could be summarised as: Miller operates *with* authority and the power of the author but *without* “responsibility,” that is an authority that stems from the ethico-political terrain. Thus we are led to analyse the power of Miller’s authority as washing ashore from the oceanic network and at the same time, chart a “responsibility” that is not absent but rather, a propos Spooky, as foreign and startling to us as the ghost. To sample Spooky again, “This is not about pseudonyms or alter egos. That’s already been done” (004)—but doesn’t it, the process of this “a.k.a.,” keep doing itself again, perpetually, in order to justify its own logical rupture from the past pseudonym? It is only because the pseudonym exists, *exists as ontological category*, that Miller feels it necessary to justify, clarify and announce his proper name, even if this name is flipped. “My name is Paul D. Miller”—to whom is this addressed if not to the ghost, to Dj Spooky? Thus it *must* be re-done, re-sounded, time and time again: if it’s already been done, is the marketing of conceptual art personas already a done deal? This is a question to pose to Miller’s text, or a series of refractions: what determines the relation of Miller to

Spooky? We already know one part of the analytic is the oceanic network, the sea that exceeds the analytical. The next question: How does this relation operate through an inventive and at times brilliant text that drifts between the theoretical and the colloquial? How does it operate *economically*, that is, financially, as image, as calculated deployment of an image? If this relation between one persona and another, converging in the physical body known as Paul D. Miller yet copyrighted, for purposes of intellectual and artistic property (for income), as Dj Spooky, is the relation discovered earlier—that of sampling, of a relation in which a placeholder of theft is battled, with rhymes and bullet-time, to reshape the time and space of the political—then who is sampling whom? (A question collapses under the repetition of the same in the name game.) Next question: who bears responsibility for the effects of this sampling in the context of yet another, and this time apparently consensual appropriation, of “Spooky” by a corporation? Did Spooky sell-out Paul D. Miller?

Paul D. Miller’s response is complex yet its aim remains deflective: it delays response into *already* considering, like the tactics of deconstruction, a doubled approach (“on the one channel/on the other channel”). First, it says “yes.” It says: “yes, your are kind of right [sic].” But in doing so, in affirming then sidestepping, it defers the responsibility for the Spooky conceptual art persona to the realm of art: “a conceptual art project.” Thus it also says “no.” It says *kind of* right; a qualification here that blends right and wrong, that is, the basis of ethico-political assessment, into a sprawling network of references and citations (“quotation in hip-hop vernacular” / “metaphors”). In the oceanic network, beyond good and evil is not excess but rather the sustained networking of flipside citation (terms that necessitate not an opposite, but an “a.k.a”).

Advertising through this persona, advertising that is already the operative of metapor in a global environment, is thus of an-other category, that of “other kinds of information” and ties into the “notion of how pop culture works” (which is indebted, as we shall see, to Warhol and Duchamp—or to a particular deployment of these two “artists”). Either advertising is the other information, or there is other information to advertising. This is further refracted by the fact that this is stated *within* a citation, *within* the quotation marks of “hip hop vernacular.” This isn’t Miller nor Spooky, but one or the other quoting the other. Either way—no matter who “speaks”—the deferral—the conceptual movement which Miller performs between himself and “Spooky”—is one of metaphor. Between Miller and Spooky *also* and *necessarily* travels metaphor. Subsequently, Miller readdresses aspects of the dialogue, thereby *redirecting*

the response to this *context* of citation, which is nothing less than the overall context of the exchange itself, that of the oceanic network, that of the digital archive and its differing and deferring temporality, which operates here by way of “call and response.” Each email replies, not “like” but *as* rhythm, to the other. As the MC calls the crowd and the crowd responds, jazz players sending refrains back and forth, the “call and response” defines the flow of citation, of sampling and quotation that generates the metaphorical context in which this hip hop vernacular operates. To his credit, Miller provides the sources for his samples (Krust—perhaps a misspelling of DJ Krush), as well as “a couple of old hip-hop singles....” The latter reference is obviously a limited one: i.e., if one knew the “notion of how pop culture works,” then the “old hip-hop singles” would also be a part of one’s cultural repository. This constitutes, after the general milieu of sampling and citation, metaphor and vernacular, the *second* aspect of Miller’s response: the limits of knowledge under question, the exclusivity of an epistemology that acts as backbone via the ability to cite from the network. It delimits that which Miller is willing to discuss openly—the propriety and property of his own questionability, of an ethico-political matrix, that is, *which* questions he will answer (and what is to be considered properly questionable).

It is this second aspect that, while interwoven with the context of the oceanic network, which necessitates the metaphoric operations of citation and sampling via a rhythm of call-and-response, of the temporality of the digital email list and the archive, structurally codified as the “a.k.a.,” construes the limits of interrogation and the limits of public responsibility in this public sphere. Question one side, *flip to the other*: a.k.a.. It is in this sense that we read Kodwo Eshun, when he writes concerning the electronic producer:

The producer disappears into each alterego but the machinate name is not a pseudonym, a fake name. Rather, it’s a *heteronym*, a many-name, one in a series of parallel names which distributes and disperses you into the public secrecy of open anonymity. I is a crowd: the producer exists simultaneously, every alterego an advertisement for myself. The Rhythmachine actively sets out to manufacture as many personalities as possible. Alteregos are more real because you choose them. Ordinary names are unreal because you didn’t. Multi-egos are more real still because they designate your parallel states. (07[106])

The heteronymic relation is one of feedback. The alterego generates the unreality of the proper name. It defers the question of origin as origin becomes an effect of this heteronymity, the place or time where one simply *stops*. On the one channel, and all the same, responsibility remains: one must answer for each name, each name must answer for the other.

Responsibility is entailed in the generative capacity of heteronymic production. On the other channel, the structure does not prescribe responsibility. It entails it, *necessitates* it, but does not command it; the heteronym can defer the point in which the alterego *acknowledges* the responsibility it has already undertaken in generating its “advertisement for myself.” Thus, the Spooky/Miller matrix is isomorphic to global structures of capital wherein production can no longer be isolated to a particular strata. The interwoven fabric of the heteronymic is that of the global network of communication (the email, chat, online “handles”), the tactical placement of the subject in a position of feedback with digital teletechnologies, the circuit of connection that sustains the oceanic network. Spooky moves *within* this sphere of capital: but does he follow Hardt and Negri’s logic of the multitude and also move *against* it?

Likewise, synchronous to the “information market,” can artistic production, as we shall investigate, be differentiated from that which is simulated? At what point does the flipside exhaust its parallel states, reach burn-out, the elliptical end of the fractured self, which would be the internal limit to the extent to which this heteronymy is implemented? The flipside name is not a binary; heteronymic, it construes the very basis from which “responsibility,” “public” and “sphere” are ascertained via the oceanic network (sampling, citation, metaphor, vernacular, rhythm, etc.). At this point, the conversation or the “dialog” is now steered by Miller into discussing subjects other than “himself” (or “Spooky”). Perhaps a better tag for this deflection would be the *soundclash*, after the Jamaican dubplate tradition of dropping the most *original* and *rare* cuts, one of a kind records with toasts to the Selectah (DJ) recorded overtop of the dub rhythms, in a call-and-response between two competitive soundsystems.²² While this constitutes a strategy of deferral, it also redraws a boundary of that which is proper to the interrogator by diffusing the origin to an epistemologically authentic sonic territory; it enforces this meanwhile *via* the heteronymic. A tactical responsibility that flips with the name. Thus the caveat, or, the imperative that follows the general, quasi-affirmation (“kind of right”): if the dialogue is not unfolded in a certain direction—including an attendant remark on an apparently improper “rant” aspect to Marston’s “relatively shrill and annoying sheen”—then, well: “fuck off.”

3 - Aesthetic Tactics & Hungry Media

“By necessity, by proclivity, and by delight, we all quote.” And, he [Ralph Waldo Emerson] goes on to note something that conservative critics of hip-hop will never understand: “It is as difficult to appropriate the thoughts of others as it is to invent.” (Dj Spooky, *Rhythm Science* 068)

Throughout Marston’s exchange with Miller cascades a consideration of tactics. These tactics are largely *aesthetic*. As Steven Shaviro argues, a shift from the ground of ethics to the event, to the scenario, leaves each situational appraisal *aesthetic*.²³ Yet this is not a metaphysical nor essential aesthetics (of beauty, form, essence, content, intent or otherwise). In Shaviro’s preliminary argument, the aesthetic is derived not from Kant’s sublime but rather from the beautiful (and thus from, in *The Critique of Judgement*, “the Imagination (perhaps in conjunction with the Understanding) to the subject, and its feelings of pleasure or pain” (45)). The aesthetic for Shaviro is *affective*. For our purposes, the aesthetic is that which reciprocates affect—and thus the effects of a writing-in-general. The aesthetic is the necessary but impossible reciprocal carving of the context from, in this context, the oceanic network.

Aesthetics in this sense does not negate responsibility. Responsibility, by necessity, is incurred in the tracing of a context’s boundary; that is, the continual, infinite marking of the aesthetic.

The setting and its scenario are aesthetic and thus material as well as conceptual, cultural, social, political, etc. The aesthetic however, is not—in Foucault’s sense—a discourse. According to Friedrich Kittler, discourse circulates at a particular level of *form* which, because of its historical articulation, cannot admit *all forms* for analysis without decomposing its *form* (*Gramophone* 229). The aesthetic remains an event despite its technics, and even moreso today, *because* of its technics. Not only discourse but the overarching, irreducible event overwhelms humanism: “Singular and spatialized, material and standardized, stockpiles of signs indeed undermine so-called Man with his intentions and the so-called world with its meaning. Only that discourse analysis ignores the fact that the factual condition is no simple methodical example but is in each case a techno-historical event” (Kittler, *ibid.*). As Kittler is happy to demonstrate, Nietzsche’s typewriter (and Heidegger’s abhorrence of them), contributes to a particular technic-conceptual matrix of the event. *Not as cause, but as feedback relation, incorporative digestion, tactile and analog, affective event.* The relation of technology to thought isn’t necessarily *not* ethical (for the structure of *ethics* persists); however, it’s *necessarily* aesthetic.

Thus, the oceanic network demands an analysis as attuned to its subtle *aesthetic* effects as to its technical composition and political reconfigurations. In the form of email, it necessitates a careful attention to the “aesthetic” arrangement of the force and timing of call-and-response in the milieu of language but also the sensory continuum to which language hinges, to which language is interwoven. The sensory does not precede writing in this general sense: rather, the

sensory is an effect of writing, a generative effect that processes affect via its articulations. Language is omnivorous, cannibalistic and thus regurgitative, re-medial. Spooky’s language seeks to incorporate media and re-direct their force into words, rhymes and phonoplays. In effect, he “sounds out” a tactic of media resampling, introducing various non-linguistic archives into the play of discussion. This language avoids a simple phonocentrism (it does not claim a phonological structure of meaning); rather it is attentive to re-medialized sound, to the rhythm or *spacing* of language. This is an aesthetic tactic of hungry media. As N. Katherine Hayles writes, “The computer has often been proclaimed the ultimate medium because it can incorporate every other medium within itself” (*Writing Machines* 112). Hayles recognises that this incorporative strategy derives from the broadest aspect of writing. We can go one step farther: writing in the broadest sense (the analog that would include the digital) is the cloth in which, by necessity, the particular *re-medial* strategies of the digital are possibilized.

For example, as in the case of Mark Z. Danielewski’s novel *House of Leaves*: “As if imitating the computer’s omnivorous appetite, *House of Leaves* in a frenzy of *remediation* attempts to eat all the other media, but this binging leaves traces on the text’s body, resulting in a transformed physical and narrative corpus” (my italics, 112). This transformation is apparent too in the language of Spooky and Marston. Writing no longer remains the same (but it never was; it always tactically incorporated its others). Yet neither is writing attempting to *codify*: writing, and unlike the digital, does not reduce media to binary code determined via possible states. While conceptual apparatuses strive toward binary constructions as a mechanism of power, of seeking to inscribe a particular “truth,” their permanence is eroded by the historical contingencies of writing: of the infinite movement of all media. Computers do not *eat*, for they cannot digest. They are incapable of developing a taste for time. A computer isn’t flippant, it doesn’t say: “maybe.”

The vacillation of a media tactic, however, seesaws with the potential “perhaps” of the scenario and its setting. But what do we mean by the scenario, setting, context? Hayles’ “remediation” in this context takes on a new meaning. It is no longer an act of correcting an error or evil. The book may feel deficient *a propos* the computer, but it simultaneously reinjects polyglot media into its re-appropriation of media’s heteroglossic meaning (strictly, what becomes an ex-appropriation).²⁴ Thus Bakhtin’s deployment of heteroglossia to incorporate traces of other languages on the microlinguistic level, as well as the development of increasing levels of linguistic complexity due to cultural interconnection, has expanded to incorporate the traces of *other media* (past and future).²⁵ As linguistic complexity incorporates media

complexity, heteroglossia’s dialogization (its historical, contextual polyvocality) becomes that of Hayles’ *re-mediation*. Dialogic polyvocality is regenerated to incorporate plural *media* as the conditions of 21C polymorphality: the voice is no longer (if it ever was) the site of historical contestation and differentiation. The reading becomes literal: *re-media*, *re-medial*, *re-mediative*. Thus hungry, remixed, incorporative re-media in the process of *re-mediation*. Thus the re-mediative tactic of not only incorporating media into the computer but regenerating its scenario and setting, its heteromedia dialogic, *via a writing necessarily operative as re-mediation*. Re-mediation forms the cultural force of Spooky’s phonoplays, his music practice, and, if it can be posed, an axiomatic of the oceanic network.

Likewise, as multiple forms of media (apparently) overtake “print,” writing reasserts its intricity as a complex conduit of collectivity. We need to begin with the failure of media: Friedrich Kittler, in his preface to *Gramophone Film Typewriter*, observes how significant records of archived media risk losing their interface, becoming gibberish without the specific and preserved technics of playblack and display. Important media “turn out merely to be unreadable series of numbers circulating between networked computers” (xxxix). Hence, Bruce Sterling’s “dead media:” “[we] are working in a torrent of unstable ones and zeroes. We are building on digital sand” (“Built”). To consider Sterling’s “technological absences” requires a re-medial historical context that seeks to analyse the conditions upon which dead media becomes “curiosities or embarrassments.” This is why remediation cannot be accounted for by materialism. Materialism cannot account for the temporization of media, its (recurrent) death, its socio-cultural, political force via memory, temporization, spacing. A strict, materialist analysis of the application of the concept “oceanic network” would result in a codified reductionism. Thus, it is how the oceanic network transacts with writing-in-general, how writing-in-general forms the basis from which the network operates—and *not* the way in which it “incorporates” all media—that generates its *potential*. At the same time, the digital network’s technical appetite mobilizes a broader medium of dissemination: dissemination becomes *possible* via different technological articulations.

Expansive, polytechnical and pragmatic dissemination changes the way in which “content” is perceived. In the process of re-mediation, content ceases to be the primary term: it becomes collective and “free.” The metaphysical binary of content/form is displaced, and the distribution of the form—which would no longer be an “exterior” form—remaps interiorization. The form of the network is a flat circuit whose conduits are electrified via writing-in-general, which displaces its rigid mechanisms of material perspective. The oceanic

network is not concerned with its contents: it is concerned with relaying “itself” through as many *forms* as *possible*. As long as technology continues to inwardly split its extensions, the series of possibilities is infinitely divisible. For example, the advent of Peer-2-Peer filesharing networks signals a consumption of quantity over a particular value; some argue this has led to the destruction of aesthetic value. Yet, the aesthetic-in-general has flourished: it is the aesthetic of connectivity, dissemination, the conduit, the circuit. The terrain of aesthetics has shifted from the work’s interiorization to its distribution and circulation. This signals both the network’s possibilities—of acting as a re-medial, redistribution network for all media as “samples”—and of its potential: of transforming these possibilities into new forms of re-mediation. As each work is collectively distributed, its becomes transformed. The latter arc of potential is the force of the network. It poses questions *to* the basis upon which property, the aesthetic, and the category of value in general are established; the former arc, of the technical inventiveness necessary for distribution, is the instrumental means of reposing the question *of* property. In a soundbyte, myriad possibilities yield potential.

It would be naïve, however, to pretend these possibilities yield anything *better*. In K.W. Jeter’s sci-fi novel *Noir*, “connected” is an epithet. The corporate class is distinguished by their unwired existence, their privilege of *privacy* from the network’s lattice. As for the work, the values of aesthetic judgement have become deferred along with the focus on content. This is the consequence and the condition of possibility for the oceanic network. Nonetheless, and paradoxically, the function of judgement continues to act, as the oceanic network does not displace or overtake (as a dialectic) any pre-existing system. Rather, it is stratified, overlaid and interwoven into a number of existing schemas. This re-medial incorporation *of* the oceanic network is both technical (technological: the laying of telecommunications conduits across the globe, the launch of satellites) and cultural (social, political, etc.: the resulting “digital divide”). This re-medial incorporation too is a tactic, although, like all tactics, as much accidental, contingent and unintentional as guided by any particular *telos*, desire or direction. It happens as if it were an act of hunger. This is because it remains an act of language, of writing-in-general, an effect of the mark. Spooky’s language performs these characteristics:

The web is the dominant metaphor for the way we think. It is a living network made up of ‘threads’ of all the information moving through the world at any given moment. This emphasis on mobility creates a continuity between the techno-hype for the internet and everything from nineteenth-century’s obsession with railroads to the Beatnik’s mythological automobiles on the road. Information and beats and rhythms never stay in

one place. It’s all about algorithms: code is beats is rhythm is algorithm is digital. Precedents for thinking about Dj culture are out there, especially if you’re open to different interpretations of art and process. The problem is that no matter how intuitive this might sound, people still tend to be mad conservative when it comes to looking at things in a different light. But at the end of the day, the music speaks louder than any individual voice, and the music is saying that the old boundaries no longer exist. The present moment has been deleted. Any sound can be you: that’s the idea of the nomad idea. Sound and signification: This is the electro-magnetic situation. (*Rhythm Science* 24)

To this overall tactic (which, as re-mediation, is a force beyond any mastery or control), the law, seeking to defend property, responds accordingly. While the 1980’s were concerned with the content of a sample, the advent of the millenium saw prosecution of the distributor—be it network (Napster) or uploader (MP3 college kid). The *potential* of the network has arisen from the possibilization of its forms of distribution, moving from the method of distribution, its code and encoding technologies, to the distributed creativity of the network’s users and uploaders. Major corporate organisations that protect copyright to cultural archives such as the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) are less concerned with sampling *per se* than the distribution of *sampling as a tactic*. Conversely, an analysis that seeks to remap historical phenomenon as “precursors to Dj culture”—i.e. remix and sample culture—also demonstrates the *necessity* of sampling to all generative, creative forces and formations, whatever their content/form articulations. *Writing-in-general can be formalized as a priori infinite sampling. In extensio*, a genealogy of media would encompass the ways in which sampling’s force has been delimited, and the ways in which *force* has been remixed, through various techniques (social, technological, political, etc.).

4 – “Dj tools” (of expression and utility, a.k.a. the post-digital revolution is over)

“Dj tools” – stuff that people are meant to mix, and the technologies to do it – become important, but they have to leave enough room for people to check them out in their own way. (Dj Spooky, *Rhythm Science* 024)

Dj-ing lets you take the best of what’s out there and give your own take on it. (017)

Thus it is that writing, which plays such a large part in Dj Spooky’s image, sound and atmosphere, is key to tracing the tactical resurgence of the *text* (of the focus on setting, scenario, situation, etc.). The ways in which Spooky sets about doubling, shifting and manipulating writing, as a tactic isomorphic to the dissemination of the (advertised) image, to the distribution of (sampled) music, takes on performative characteristics already re-

medialized from other sources. Its generative aspect is clear: the formalization of this process is *sampling*. Yet do phonoplay utterances “express” anything “new” given that the persistence of a semiological framework, grafted to technology (such as email), remains one of a “message,” of—and here we would need quotation marks around each meaning—new forms of technology *expressing* new forms of thought, action, being, etc.? In the next chapter, we shall explore how (digital) binarism finds itself encoded in the the earliest thought of space and time. But how is it that novelty recycles as the latest reincarnation, as the resurgence of two frameworks, that of *expression* and *utility*, under the umbrella of the *tool*? This framework remains as the paradox of the sample. In the same process of “finding” the objects of sampling, of establishing a process that it is collective, found, and contextual, it becomes signed, individualized and authorized. It claims to “break free” from “old associations,” yet it can only do so by scratching out pre-existing links through the hegemony of a proper name, *even when* that proper name is heteronymic:

Sampling is a new way of doing something that’s been with us for a long time: creating with found objects. The rotation gets thick. The constraints get thin. The mix breaks free of the old associations. New contexts form from old. The script gets flipped. The languages evolve and learn to speak in new forms, new thoughts. The sound of thought becomes legible again at the edge of the new meanings. After all, you have to learn a new language. Take the idea and fold it in on itself. Think of it as laptop jazz, cybernetic jazz, nu-bop, ILLbient—a nameless, formless, shapeless concept given structure by the rhythms. And that’s a good start. (Dj Spooky, *Rhythm Science* 025)

This paradox too is nothing new: the author has always sought to *brand* the mix (of the heteroglossic, dialogic novel, for example). However, what *is* new is the claim to be formalizing, via technology, a *new process* that frees itself from old associations, associations which would include that of the author and authority, in order to replace it with rhythm. The *form* of this claim, however, isn’t new (to surpass the author, to free oneself from the past, the dream of a new language, the always new dream of the new, etc.).²⁶

The *novelty* of tactical technology and tactical media can be considered via the perpetuation of the *tool*. On the one channel, the *tool* reintroduces a consistency to the utilization of media. On the other channel, the *tool* as a “new” concept of meaning (the “*tool* is the message”) seeks to underpin utilitarian and ultimately metaphysical frameworks.

Kittler’s maxim, “How that which is written in no book came to pass may still be for books to record” (xxxix-xl), serves not only for the academe but, as Spooky demonstrates, for

the dj/writer. It is true that writing, in the narrow sense of the mark, cannot *be* everything. While ontology arguably is an effect of writing-in-general (*différance*), writing in the narrow sense is differentiated from other media. It cannot *be* the cut, the loop, the incorporative sonic strategy: “Before Hendrix, the paratrooper of the 101st Airborne, cuts his machine-gun-like guitar to the title song, tape technology operates for its own sake: tympana, jet engines, pistol shots. Writing can write nothing of that” (Kittler 114). But unlike interconnected digital technology—the materiality of the oceanic network, the massive array of globally interconnected hard drives, memory and processors—writing, by necessity, produces creative generation. Writing is necessary for the interstices that outline and re-mediate scenes, situations, settings, scenarios. Writing isn’t a computer, but it does symbolize and (re)mediate the computer’s operations: it frames its input and output. Writing can’t incorporate and playback everything in the strict sense, but it is something also than a wrench: that is, something more than a tool.

Writing as a tactic, then, isn’t necessarily a *tool*. Writing doesn’t solely *serve* a purpose, not even nor especially the purpose of a transparent, unilateral model of communication. The sender-receiver model seeks not to see, hear, taste or touch writing, save as codified: as code itself, as digital, reducible, possibilized to two terminable and enclosed points. Nor is writing eschatological, leading us to its final conclusion. But writing cannot *be* its differentiations. From this angle, the computer punctures a certain smug completeness of ontology. If ontology is an effect of *différance*, the computer can be said to hold, in its possible technical upgrades, the keys to re-medializing enough aspects of limitless experience to *formalize* the movement of disappearance and absence that characterizes ontology. Ontology, as a possible effect of *différance*, and as a possible digital codification, becomes containable, or necessarily, chaotomic. Either way (and by necessity, both ways) its effects will be unpredictable as they reconfigure the “be” in the narrow deployment of language. If a writing can take place without inscribing “being”—probably, as Derrida considers in *Positions*, in the form of a mathematical language, a computer code (34-35)—then it can puncture ontology’s linguistic hold. Thus, the possibility of sampling: writing-*sans*-being heralds recombinative tactics—linguistic, re-medial—that regenerate shifts in which a new wiring of the oceanic network might become possible—that is, unleashing an unpredictable potential, a new differentiation of *différance*.

Sampling effects its force with the retainer of phonoplay. If not *phonetic* language, sampling is a *phonic* network. Rhythm, as *spacing* (temporization), disrupts what Derrida critiques as the metaphysics of phonetic language, the link of “*logos* to *phone*” (34). Rhythm, in concert with

computer code, embraces the “extension of mathematic notation” that “goes along with the deconstruction of metaphysics” (34-35). As Derrida demonstrates throughout his texts, phonoplay is hardly excluded in the “formalization of writing” (34). Rather, it becomes dispersed and playful while nonetheless advocating a process that today we would call “sampling:” remixing, cutting, pasting, effects and plug-ins, attention to the rhythm of the sound (all of the tactics identified by Derrida in *La Dissemination*). However, for sampling to approach this “effective progress of mathematical notation” (35), it has to confront—deconstruct, but as we shall conclude, re-konstruk—*expression, utility* and the *tool*.²⁷

The digital has led to the resurgence of the *tool* and its assemblage of utility and expression. For example, electronic “glitch” music which, like automatist, random and surrealist-influenced 20th century avant-garde movements, seeks to explore an “aesthetics of failure.” For computer music theorist Kim Cascone the digital aesthetics of failure confirms that, after Nicholas Negroponte, “The digital revolution is over” (Cascone 12). In fact, we are now in the era of the “post-digital.” Digital temporality is in distinct confusion, given that Massumi claims we have yet to experience the digital—we still interface with it, in every aspect, via the “analog” (*Parables* 138)—and that the digital innovation of the glitch is certainly not without historical precedent. Cascone’s claim to a “post-digital” aesthetic appears to be premature—or, too late. Rather, the digital appears to be a *necessary* component of thought, one necessary for certain groupings of operations to take *place*, including its own epochal arrival and subsequent (theoretical?) death. We just happened to have turned this useful but also constraining and power-hungry binary-machine—the digital—into an operative, interconnected matrix under the power of electrical technics.

Although Cascone proclaims a new shift (we are still concerned with the apparent *novelty* of these concepts), the digital has always been about tools: about utility. The digital asks: is it useful? Yes/No. Does it compute? Yes/No. Is it On or Off? These statements (and/or) can be grouped into increasingly complex sets (If set 1=0, then proceed to set 2, etc.). As long as, that is, the sets do not intersect an “if” that refers to a context, to a set undefined: no maybe and perhaps, uncertain or undecideable. Ironically, the digital cannot handle its inherent property: infinite divisibility, to a *point* that is conceptual: nothingness or infinity. Infinity, either as reduced to zero (nothingness, the empty set) or to the infinite abundant (the set of all sets), cannot be calculated within digital computation. As a tool, its usefulness is infinitely limiting.

It is both with and without irony that we read Cascone’s statement when he writes—for he is absolutely serious—“The medium is no longer the message in glitch music: the *tool* has become the message” (my italics, 17). That is, the post-digital, post- to a state which, by all occurrences, hasn’t happened (if it *can*), is concerned not with media (and thus, the expressive avant-garde paradigm of “new media” that sees each new medium expressing new expressions), but with *tools*. Media is *reduced* to the tool; it becomes *directly expressive* of the tool which it transmits to the point of media’s self-erasure and *transparency*. As each work of art, for Cascone, transmits a message utilising a send-and-receiver model (negating transactions with *flesh* to *context*, with the analog, but *also* sidestepping any computer’s necessary elements of feedback and recursivity), the origin or source of this message is no longer the complex tautology of the medium (an argument that renders McLuhan’s statement deceptively simple), but rather the simplified “message of the *tool*” (which for Cascone is *software*). The tool-as-software, i.e. the message of a particular “post-digital” sound piece *being* the software plug-in from which it is composed, is equivalent to saying that the message of a symphony is the quill from which its inkstained score was penned. Of course, a symphony is not digital. But neither is the MP3 or the computer. “*The processing may be digital—but the analog is the process*” (Masumi, *Parables* 142). Software is a visual form of representation obeying laws of binary code that requires *writing*. The computer is a hunk of metal and plastic. We still transact via the analog. Learning to “read” code such as programming music in C++ is no “more” digital than software, although it *formalizes writing*. Language and writing remain, by necessity, as the broader network (oceanic, writing-in-general). We merely circulate digital *effects* via the oceanic network: we are incapable of actually circulating the digital “in-and-of-itself,” for its *effects* necessitate the analog. Thus, we are also incapable of reducing the message (which is never one-way) to the tool (which is never solely serving its design—and vice-versa).

As for the novelty of the tool: the proclamation that the *purpose*, that *utility* is the *essence* of a thing dates, reputedly, from Aristotle. Cascone’s reduction to the *tool* paradoxically limits the force of the *glitch*, for the glitch signals an unexpected possibility, a “mistake” rendered aesthetic (and remixing the “aesthetic” in the *process*). Reduced to what would be an *expression* of the tool, a glitch could never approach the aesthetic: its value would remain inscribed within a paradigm of utility, even insofar as it is *utilized* as ontological symbol of the tool for which it *merely* serves to represent.

What we are approaching is that the *thought* of the digital, like the increasing formalization of mathematical writing (“code”), is not new. Rather we witness the increasing production and

dissemination of the digital as a material-electric, technical construction of the logic of possibility which is paradoxically infinite only via its binary divisions.

The tactic of the oceanic network might be to infinitely regress along the lines of possibility. This abyssal technique can demonstrate the threading of impossibility in constructing conditions of possibility and necessity (a tactic of Derrida). Another tactic might be to analyse the context, a boundary that although it cannot be drawn, nonetheless is and must be drawn (the scenario, setting, scene, etc.). Necessity in this context *is* impossible. But it can be written.

Endnotes : “DJ-ING IS WRITING/WRITING IS DJ-ING”

¹ “*Différance* is the systematic play of differences, of the traces of differences, of the *spacing* by means of which elements are related to each other. [...] Nothing—no present and in-*different* being—thus precedes *différance* and spacing. There is no subject who is agent, author, and master of *différance*, who eventually and empirically would be overtaken by *différance*” (Derrida, *Positions* 27-28). It is our purpose not to take these statements (condensed here for reference) as dogma nor *doxa*, but to question and to extend their elaboration via the entrance of the digital, its historical force and relevancy.

² “Back at the hotel the t.v.’s glow told the usual story: There’s the usual debates over whether or not genetically modified foods would affect consumers, riots at a G-8 meeting in Genoa, Italy, the attempted impeachment of the Indonesian President, financial shennanigans amongst the wealthiest countries about the Kyoto Accord’s attempts (at least on paper) to reduce various emissions that are destroying the atmosphere, shark attacks off the coast of Florida etc etc The usual litany... Anyway, I channel surfed for a little bit (it was after all, something like 5 a.m. I had just walked into the hotel room...) and, of course, it’s mostly American titles – funny how stuff like “Bugs Bunny” over dubbed into Spanish always makes you feel so utterly surreal etc etc. [...]What else is there to do but just check the pictures and see what people do in the process of making culture.” (“The Raw Uncut”)

³ See US Copyright law FL-102, June 1999: < <http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html> >. See the statement of Marybeth Peters, the Register of Copyrights, on the Digital Millenium Copyright Act (DMCA), December 12-13th 2001:

<<http://www.copyright.gov/docs/regstat121201.html>>.

Also the website of the US Copyright Act – <<http://www.copyright.gov/>>,

<<http://www.copyright.gov/title17/>>, and the DMCA:

<<http://www.copyright.gov/legislation/dmca.pdf>>.

⁴ “Upsetter” refers to Lee “Scratch” Perry, Jamaican studio dub musician who is legendary for his “secret” studio production techniques of the Black Ark studio (which he allegedly burnt to the ground in 1981). Literally, he “upset,” overturned and helped upend reggae and dancehall by injecting “spirit” into the mix—that of Rastafarianism. See <<http://www.upsetter.net>> and <<http://www.blackark.com>>. Spooky, literally, is an upsetter.

⁵ See < <http://amsterdam.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-bold-0302/msg01634.html> >, < <http://amsterdam.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-bold-0302/msg01635.html> >, < <http://amsterdam.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-bold-0302/msg01640.html> >, < <http://amsterdam.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-bold-0302/msg01644.html> >.

⁶ See what is the first message in the archives, a subscription message, at:
<<http://amsterdam.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-9510/msg00000.html>>.

⁷ From <<http://www.nettime.org>>.

⁸ See “The Question Concerning Technology,” in Heidegger, Martin, *Basic Writings*, Trans. William Lovitt, New York: Harper & Row, 1977. pp. 283-319.

⁹ The allusion here is to the monolith in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, which Arthur C. Clarke and Stanley Kubrick describe at one point as a Grand Central station of space and time travel. See *The Making of Kubrick's 2001*, Ed. Jerome Agel, New York: Agel, 1970.

¹⁰ See *Dark Fiber* pp. 73-74: “The first real collaboration with Pit Schultz was a commissioned television interview with *Wired* editor and *Out of Control* author Kevin Kelly. Shot during a Berlin telco conference in December 1994, it gave us both a direct encounter of what Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron not much later coined as the ‘California Ideology’. What struck us was Kelly’s routine professionalism, his unshakeable belief in the religious quality of technology, and his passion for techno-Darwinism. He loved all biological metaphors as long as they could denounce and deny complex social and economic relationships.” ADILKNO stands for (in Dutch): The Foundation for the Advancement of Illegal Knowledge.

¹¹ Simon Reynolds pegs the invigoration of acid house in 1987. See “Living a dream: acid house and UK rave, 1987-1989” in *Generation Ecstasy: into the world of techno and rave culture*, New York: Routledge, 1999, pp. 56-80.

¹² Primarily for structural reasons: CAE called for “electronic civil disobedience,” i.e. hacking. As law enforcement tightened Internet security, such actions became exceedingly risky and difficult.

¹³ 2004 also saw CAE member Steve Kurtz’s arrest by the FBI under now partially-dismissed charges of bioterrorism. See: <<http://www.caedefensefund.org/>>. The research backing CAE’s recent interest in Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and other corporate privateering over the biological can be found in *The Molecular Invasion*, Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2002. Anti-copyright.

¹⁴ See for example Carl Skelton’s review of an exhibit featuring CAE, Bureau D’Études, the Yes Men and others, curated by Stephen Wright: “In general, this refers not to the art object, but to the amalgam of institutions and practices that add up to ‘Art’. It is this that Stephen Wright proposes to reciprocally readymake. The irony, of course, is that avant-gardes were political first, which would make this reciprocity some kind of a rebound” (in “This Is Not an Exhibition: The Future of the Reciprocal Readymade (the use-value of art),” *FUSE* 27:3 (2004), pp. 49-50).

¹⁵ Perhaps this cryptic comment can only be exonerated through its sequencing: “A labyrinth is said, etymologically, to be multiple because it contains many folds. The multiple is not only what has many parts but what is folded in many ways” (Deleuze, *The Fold* 3); “I bring a sword that contains its own medicine: The sour milk that cureth the body. [...] True wisdom cannot be expressed by articulate sounds. The language of fools-is words. In the labyrinth of the alphabet the truth is hidden. It is one thing repeated many times. Confined within the limits or rationalism; no guess has yet answered. [...] Reality exists but not in consciousness of such: this phenomenal ‘I’ is noumenal and neither-neither.” (A.O. Spare, *The Focus of Life*); “...neither this nor that. [...] The necessity of the phase is structural; it is the necessity of interminable analysis: the hierarchy of dual oppositions always reestablishes itself. Unlike those authors whose death does not await their demise, the time for overturning is never a dead letter” (Derrida, *Positions* 41-2); “...the ‘Neither-Neither’ principle of those two, is the state where the mind has gone beyond conception ...The ‘I’ principle has reached the ‘Does not matter - need not be’ state,

and it is not related to form. Save and beyond it, there is no other, therefore it alone is complete and eternal” (A.O. Spare, *The Book of Pleasure*). The sentence is properly unjustifiable; it remains for those interested in the traces of occult language and logic that I have otherwise left out of this document. By way of A.O. Spare, but also by way of Derrida’s interest in Artaud, np. the title of “*La Double Séance*” (in *La dissémination*).

¹⁶ See “A Pattern Language for for Living Communication: Recommendations for Uses of E-Mail Lists by Activists” at <http://diac.cpsr.org/cgi-bin/diac02/pattern.cgi/public?pattern_id=51>. See also an interview with the author here: <http://www.120seconds.com/templates/mediaModuleViewFrame.cfm?media_id=76> (1998).

¹⁷ For example, Steven Shaviro writes: “I heard an excellent lecture/demonstration tonight by Paul Miller, aka DJ Spooky. It was a heady evening of intellectual, visual and sonic montage. There was text from Miller’s book *Rhythm Science* and citations of postmodern thinkers and writers from Derrida to William Gibson, together with sound collages combining everything from Public Enemy to Miles Davis to Pierre Boulez, and video clips ranging from 1950s TV ads that featured electronic music to excerpts from Miller’s multimedia remix/deconstruction of *Birth of a Nation*” (Dj Spooky).

¹⁸ “Rekonstruction” arrives from another of Spooky’s track titles. It will be discussed in detail in “confessions of a dead dreamer: ‘multiplex consciousness’ and *rekonstruction*.”

¹⁹ Because of Miller’s reluctance to speak on these issues (he has not responded to email inquiries from this author pertaining to the GAP campaign), the information here comes from a close associate of Miller’s who has asked to remain anonymous. I plead the case of a journalistic source and will vouch for the information’s authenticity in so far as the source is truthful. Attempts at cross-checking have verified the basis of the claims here.

²⁰ All spelling and grammar mistakes have been left in all email quotes. I have left out [sic] as it would be continual intervention to the presentation of the citations. The samples stand alone.

²¹ Marston is referring to the copyright on DJ Spooky as a name. One might also recall Derrida’s polemical battle with Searle, rendering his interlocutor’s name SARL (in French: Société à responsabilité limitée, what in English is an incorporation (Incorporated/Inc.)—hence, Derrida’s title, *Limited Inc. a b c...*).

²² For a short history of dub’s chain of ongoing influence as it intersects with hip-hop and electronic music see Eschun, Kodwo and Edward George, “Ghostlines: Migration, Morphology, Mutations” in *Sonic Process*, Barcelona: Actar-A P, 2002. pp. 101-108.

²³ Steven Shaviro made this point at a talk presented at Concordia University, 24th November 2004. Such a situation would be contrary to Alain Badiou’s conception of the *truth* of the event (see *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, Trans. Peter Hallward, London: Verso, 2001).

²⁴ Ex-appropriation: “This ‘logic of the trace or of *différance* determines this re-appropriation as an ex-appropriation. Re-appropriation necessarily produces the opposite of what it apparently aims for. Ex-appropriation is not what is proper to man. One can recognize its differential figures as soon as there is a relation to self in its most elementary form (but for this reason there is no such thing as elementary)” (Jacques Derrida, “Eating Well” 269). We shall turn to the movement of ex-appropriation in “confessions of a dead dreamer: ‘multiplex consciousness’ and *rekonstruction*.”

²⁵ We are less concerned with heteroglossia as the historical development of language than the “micro-linguistic scale [wherein] every utterance contains within it the trace of other utterances, both in the past and in the future” (see Pam Morris, Ed. *The Bakhtin Reader*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994. p. 245-252). Moreover these utterances contain traces of other

languages; this can be expanded to consider *other media* in the broader sense of culture Bakhtin was interested in, such as in his analysis of carnival. See heteroglossia (*raznogolosost*) in *The Dialogic Imagination* (Ed. Michael Holquist, Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Austin: U of Texas P, 1981) and *Rabelais and His World* (Trans. Hélène Iswolsky, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984).

²⁶ This is similar to Baudrillard when he writes: “There is and always will be a major difficulty in analyzing media and the sphere of information through the traditional categories of the philosophy of the subject: will, representation, choice, liberty, knowledge and desire. For it is obvious that they are absolutely contradicted there and that the subject is totally alienated in its sovereignty. There’s a basic contradiction between this sphere, that of information, and the moral law that still masters us and that says: Thou shalt know thy will and desire. Looking at it this way, neither the media nor technology and science teach us anything; rather they have pushed back the limits of will and representation, shuffled the cards and taken from each subject the disposition of his own body, his desire and his own choice and liberty” (*Fatal Strategies* 96). While Baudrillard’s tactic is to analyse “information” from the perspective of the object *in order* to recover the metaphysical subject (and to claim a depleted subject via technology), he also recounts a basic operative law of the oceanic network: that, truly, the metaphysical parameters of will and representation, that is the ethico-political basis from which the subject, property and responsibility sprout are remixed into configurations that no longer *answer to* objections that are based upon non-oceanic principles. They will *respond*—in the following ways we are elaborating—but none of these responses constitutes the ideal of the *answer* (the truth).

²⁷ *Expression* forms a complex that we can only broach here by playing it out. In Husserl as in Hjemslev, Derrida writes how “*On the one hand*, expressivism is never simply surpassable, because it is impossible to reduce the couple inside/outside as a simple structure of opposition. [...] *On the other hand*, and inversely, I would say that expressivism is not *simply and once and for all* surpassable, expressivity is in fact always already surpassed, whether one wishes it or not” (*Positions* 33). A point of difference between Deleuze and Derrida: Derrida finds Hjemslev’s linguistics as problematic (if not moreso) than Saussure’s. Derrida calls the “couple expression/content” “naively utilized” (36). One would have to consider Massumi’s analysis of this point (and extension from Deleuze in *A Thousand Plateaus*) via *force* in *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*: “The encounter is between two substance/form complexes, one of which overpowers the other. [...] One side of the encounter has the value of a content, the other of an expression. But content and expression are distinguished only functionally, as the overpowered and the overpowering. Content is not the sign, and it is not a referent or signified. It is what the sign envelops, a whole world of forces. Content is formed substance considered as a dominated force-field” (12). The deployment of *functionality* (np. Derrida’s “the formalization of writing”) might signal an accord with Derrida’s paradox.

03 – Ocean and Enclosure (Network Time Channels and Rapids)

On the concept of the oceanic network as apparatus for analysis and conceptual cartography

Sampling is the best way, and perhaps the *only* way, for art to come to terms with a world of brand names, corporate logos and simulacra. (Steven Shaviro, *Connected* 64)

—Real time reigns supreme. That's why music is the art of reference, that is, an art of time and acceleration. It's an art of time and speed. It's even the first to have given form to speed. It's not by chance that young people only have one art, and that's music. It carries the rest of them with it. It's extraordinary that the only thing that stands in the way of television is music.

—*Music is more and more linked to technology. The hottest music to date is techno, industrial...*
(Paul Virilio in conversation with Sylvère Lotringer, *Pure War* 172)

1 – Prophets of Untimeliness in the Space Age

The *oceanic network* is the key concept to which we assign the characteristics of remix culture and is thus the terrain of Spooky. However distinguishing not the terrain but the *oceanic network* becomes the common event from which is distinguished all parameters of analysis (political, social, structural, etc.). Common sense and its metaphors fail us here: the oceanic network presupposes that there is no “common ground” but a sea wrought via relays of collective processing. From the collective network arise metaphors that verge on fleeing the common ground while nonetheless trailing the entrails of the *commons*. These metaphors do not break from old associations: rather they disfigure them through the future and remix them, as archival samples, through the past. In this sense, citational references are not common (nor necessarily, for the structure of intellectual property at least, “common sense”) although they are held in *common*.

Yet, the “oceanic network” is not *merely* nor neither *simply* a metaphor. It operates as a map to a concept that *cannot be enclosed* for its principle defies that of *enclosure*. For us, this map navigates patterns sequenced from the digital grid. As citation, as reference, as sample, it acts as the necessary interface of the analog to the digital. This relation is not from one to the other: the digital is divided, infolded or enclosed-without-limit “within” the analog. Nor is this relation “within:” the digital is not “inside” that which cannot be enclosed. To write this concept, as infinite division of the digital, would be to write interminably. We'll stop here.

On with the new! This is the sense we get from reading Spooky when he writes: “Sampling is a new way of doing something that's been with us for a long time: creating with

found objects” (*Rhythm Science* 025). In what *ways* does sampling consider itself capable of dreaming the ideal & utopic dream of the *new*?

1. Through the tactic of deferral and the dream of evasion. Although the effects of communication are sustained via a mesh of messily patched contexts that support their function while opening each gesture to the collapse of meaning, at stake is an *evasion* of even this “instability.” The dream of the sample to *evade* any canonical, epistemological density of meaning, to flee the *past* and liberate the *future* from the chains of association, is to dream of not only embracing new forms, but of a *time* of sampladelic utopia. By removing old associations (the past), the objects are properly classified as “found” (and not stolen, appropriated, borrowed, etc.).

2. Through sounding each object. Sound moves to perforate context via its rhythm: the phonoplay call-and-response of differentiating *temporization* and *spacing* is somewhat reduced to a sampled sense of “temporality” without attachment to context (“old associations”). The sample polylogue undulates temporally, across time as well as the geographical globe, dreaming of the reduction of spatial distance via a collective *hallucination* of mediated immediacy, of a shared and common *time* of the sample that transcends *space*. By transcending space and erasing time, all archives are objects, and all objects are archives for sampling.

These two points are perhaps a little too metaphorical. The dream is also found elsewhere:

The first premise of global thinking is that today, through technical means, the spatial conditions of our planet (distances, impassable conditions, etc.) are conquerable. [...] Consequently, the greatest barriers to globalization at present are not spatial thresholds but temporal ones, from biologically relevant time zones to historical thresholds. [...] In the superficial view of “global players,” these temporal barriers are obscured, of course, by the ubiquitous and impressive simultaneity of telecommunications and are hence scarcely recognized as problems. (Weinrich 1344-1345)

Through its erasure, time conquers space. Through the disappearance of time into immediacy—which is ironically a *mediated* network—space ceases to exist (or at least, like time, unable to prove a “barrier”). It is in its disappearance that time becomes an object for social theory: “Until recently, the study of time in the social sciences and social theory has suffered a more generalized neglect,” writes Robert Hassan. Thus it is that “The changing temporal organization of everyday life within the postmodern network society is the key issue.” Geert Lovink also writes of the “present temporal conundrum” (145) by tracing its history to “Industrial Empire Time” of the 19th century, a ceaseless attempt to master time for

“commerce, navigation and science,” resulting in the “colonial imperial designs on time” (*Dark Fiber* 147). At the same time, such time has been resisted: “Apart from the desire for one global time, there is also a deeper revolt against time as such, one that stretches back not 120 years, but hundreds of years, to the first timewars and the struggle against the imposition of first mechanical and then factory time” (157). It would appear that the most natural of durations is cause for constant revolution when quantified, calculated, and later, digitized. Even against time itself, against the rhythm of time in favour of space, against the revolution itself does this revolution occur: Lovink writes of Castell’s dream of a “‘timeless time,’ belonging to the space of flows, a global time characterized by the ‘breaking down of rhythmicity, either biological or social, associated with the notion of a life cycle’” (Castells 2000, in Lovink 143). Revolt, then, of timeless time against that which revolves: is this not the purest time of a presence, the very instantaneous time of a pure *space* sought by capital that, henceforth, would be *done* with revolution?

Liberal theorist Daniel Cohen, arguing for the welfare of human capital under global capitalism—and in a book titled “*Our Modern Times: The New Nature of Capitalism and the Information Age*”—provocatively writes that:

In paying workers seven times more today than yesterday, capitalism expects a worker to accomplish seven times more. Technology is there just for this result, but it is not a “neutral” assistant. In fact, contemporary humans are discovering that a society which is seven times richer more closely resembles an automobile capable of going seven times faster than it resembles someone strolling along with all the time in the world. (6-7)

Although Cohen argues in favour of “human capital” over “financial capital,” what remains—*necessarily*—absent from Cohen’s analysis is the *violence* of capitalism, in its domination of space (perpetual warfare over resources, but also its definition of space as *utility* and *resource*) and of time (as resource and utility in its quantification and mechanization). Thus he writes that hostility toward capitalism arises because of its “prosperity” which “adds more weight to the reasons they [capitalism’s detractors] give to justify their place in society” (115). Likewise, we are hostile to capital because we must “make a greater effort to master that technology,” and most of all, because of “[capitalism’s] pretension to rationalize everything... its ‘utilitarianism’” (113). However in all cases, he considers the utilitarian principle, mastery of technology, and increasing prosperity a *virtue* (“to want to do everything for the best”). The fault is not that of capital, but of a humanity unable to handle the *liberation* “from the

subserviance of necessity in many domains” resulting in this “contemporary malaise” (114).¹ As critics such as Weinrich note this is possible only through the erasure of “temporal barriers,” by smoothing out time until one is left with the “coming tyranny of one global time” (Lovink 143), a process necessitating that the Third (and Fourth) Worlds are *divided from this time*, cast aside from “our modern times” of “prosperity.” Likewise, there is no time for the concern over *human capital* as an *instrumental* term. There is no time—nor space—for revolution when the world is undergoing the rapid acceleration of “technological progress.” Or, if there is revolution, as Paul Virilio reminds us, it is because it is made “by the military institution” (*Speed & Politics* 119). What returns from the past is selective; it is *utilized* as a *resource*. Thus we have all become “*unknown soldiers of the order of speeds*” in a world where “Economic liberalism has been only a liberal pluralism of the order of speeds of penetration.” The dream of this acceleration, this penetration of time is toward a hegemony of the present (without consideration of the future, and a selective utilization of the past), a temporality of pure presence, technological immediacy, spatial dominance as the elimination of spatial difference. In 1997, Virilio writes, reflecting on his 1983 work *Pure War*, that “we’re really anchored in the present, the present of real time, an instant present. We’re not extending ourselves into the future anymore, our only points of reference are located in the past. That’s where we get the fear of the past, the fear that the past will return” (*Pure War* 166-167). That is, a fear that there will return a *useless* time, a return to a *resourceless* pastime in the revolution of time.

In the present time, time has once again come under the scrutiny of a discipline, of a particular knowledge that seeks to analyse its present state and its presence. Hassan develops these issues and questions (along with how we “experience” time, and how our time compares to “clock time”): “What is the nature of time in the network society?”²

By turning from space to time Hassan signals the impact of the study of space as a founding moment of “social theory” insofar as it follows from the work of Lefebvre, the Situationists, de Certeau, etc. summarized for the sake of expediency in Foucault’s speculation that a “whole ‘history of *spaces*’ could be written, that would be at the same time a ‘history of the powers’ (both these terms in the plural), from the great strategies of geopolitics to the little tactics of housing...” (*Live* 228). In fact Foucault pinpoints the study of *space* as the founding moment of philosophy’s divide from science:

At the precise moment when a serious-minded politics of space was developing (at the

end of the 18th century), the new achievements of theoretical and experimental physics removed philosophy's privilege right to speak about the world, the *cosmos*, space, be it finite or infinite. This double investment of space by political technology and a scientific practice forced philosophy into a problematic of time. From Kant on it is time that occupies the philosopher's reflection, in Hegel, Bergson and Heidegger for example. Along with this occurs a correlative disqualification of space in human understanding. (*Foucault Live* 228-229)

Obviously we have come full circle (for certainly philosophy no longer dictates what is proper to "human understanding"), and in both directions: the social sciences have become interested in time, and philosophy either loses its modern territory (like it apparently lost its space to speak about the world), or, it finds itself as the site of timely contestation. Time, however, is not the easiest object of study:

Time, in any case, gives nothing to see. It is at the very least the element of invisibility itself. It withdraws whatever could give itself to be seen. It itself withdraws from visibility. One can only be blind to time, to the essential *disappearance* of time even as, nevertheless, in a certain manner nothing *appears* that does not require and take time. (Derrida, *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money* 6)

Time is taken with its invisibility: that is, it remains involved in the language of space, of the disappearance of time within the visible (which implies space). Often, we find time as the *presence* or persistence of space, or, its sudden absence. In any case, the matrix of time and space, appearance and disappearance is timely now (with the advent of digital technologies, we have "lost time") yet also, as we shall see, historical (thus, as Spooky acknowledges "doing something that's been with us for a long time"). The oceanic network, although its effects are felt (like time), even visible (like time, as writing, as the mark) remains invisible (like time).

We are led to outline a complex but interrelated and *preliminary* matrix of questions that can be distinguished into three assemblages:

1. That of the *nature* of time and space in the oceanic network, of their relation to each other, to the analog and the digital, and to "nature" itself. Even if reciprocal, paradoxical, tautological, and even if impossible to think without the analog, is it that the digital specifically generates a "time" and "space" or is the digital a product of an *a priori* (and thus, "natural") "time/space"? Is the digital, as a *technics*, a "new" intervention to "natural" time (and space)?

2. That of divisibility and indivisibility as essential questions of time and space, of enclosure and property. How do these concepts transform via digital and analog technics? This transformation in correlation to the oceanic network insofar as the digital is numeric and thus (endlessly) divisible, although always necessitating the *indivisible*, thus also endless and infinite analog. What are the effects of *divisibility* and *indivisibility*? How can the *effects* of the indivisible be calculated even if unquantifiable, and the effects of the divisible be quantized if nonfinite?

3. That of calculation and quantification as approaches to quantization (“digitization”). How are the effects of oceanic network *space* and *time* assessed, even if its spatial references (along with its “temporal barriers”) have all but been removed, erased, overdetermined? Thus, is the time and space of the oceanic network *open to the social sciences as an object of study*—as an object that can be quantified? Or can the effects, even if incalculable, be calculated according to a certain “process”?

2 – A Revolution in the New Natural Nature Time

As we enter the third millenium, there has been an implosion of time into real time, an emergent global consciousness that is reshaping the ways we have come to think about time. (Geert Lovink, *Dark Fiber* 142)

Hassan contextualizes the question of time by asking “what is the *nature* of time in the network society?”—i.e., metaphorically, what is the *essence* of time in the connectivity of the network, its social play of forces, call-and-response relations, disappearances, deferrals, arrivals and absences, what we have termed the “oceanic network”? By posing the question of time as a question of *nature*, Hassan metaphorically re-establishes a question of essence, that is, of a thing’s thingness, its interiorization, at the limit, its ontology. On the one channel, this is a *temporal* perspective from which to linearize, which is to say to analyse as a *cycle*, the analysis and its object (nature’s linear yet cyclic seasons establishing the *essential* relation of all relations, of humanity to the world, of the sun and its circle).³ Even temporally, nature is always of space; the metaphor of *nature* encompasses the matrix in which *space* and *time* operate as “natural” concepts: “And let us not insist upon the optic metaphor which opens up every theoretical point of view under the sun. What is fundamental corresponds to the desire for a firm and ultimate ground, a terrain to build on, the earth as the support of an artificial structure” (Derrida, “White Mythology” 224). Thus, and on the other channel, “nature” re-establishes a *spatial* perspective, in relation to the sun, from which to *ground* time (as the social

sciences also prefigure a *society* of the network, a territory of social relations).⁴

This is probably too much—isn't nature just metaphorical in posing the question? Yet what *is* “metaphor” when considering two terms—space and time—that couldn't be more natural, yet, in their complexity, never so artificial? Like the question of the *tool*, the concept of nature's deployment of *metaphor* derives from Aristotle. As Derrida comments, “Nature gives itself in metaphor. Which is why, moreover, the metaphoric capacity is a natural gift. In this sense, it is given to everyone (*Rhetoric* III, II)” (244). This gift, however, is not a pure gift, but an economy, an uneven distribution, as Foucault was apt to point out in the division of labour in the study of space and time: “But, following a framework we regularly come across, nature gives (itself) more to some than to others. More to men than to beasts, more to philosophers than to other men” (Derrida). Philosophy, of course, has always sought to suppress the metaphoricity of language (even though, according to Derrida, it has ironically been granted more of this *natural* metaphor; it is this paradox—the “natural” relation of philosophy to metaphor—that guides “White Mythology”).

According to Derrida's reading of Aristotle, “Univocity is the essence, or better, the *telos* of language. No philosophy, as such, has ever renounced this Aristolian idea. This ideal is philosophy” (247). Thus, not only to encompass writing's heteroglossia but to handle the remedial *sampling* of the oceanic network in the investigation of time and space might be cause for distinguishing from “philosophy” a number of investigations that are nonetheless “philosophical” (phenomenology, Deleuze, Derrida, all of post-structuralist inquiry, etc.). At the same time, such a distinction would not be without its similarities in distinguishing “metaphor” from apparently “univocal language;” that is, an impossible although *essential* and hardly “natural” distinction.

Given the fundamental circularity of “nature” in regards to a philosophy that, essentially, would seek to *contain* and *reduce* its effects, what can be said about the history of nature as *metaphor* in philosophy?

On the one hand, the deployment of metaphor *as natural*, argues Derrida, returns the metaphorical as a function *of* the proper name, the latter which properly remains nonmetaphorical (a direct, phonologic meaning that excludes itself from metaphor). On the other hand, Derrida, *via a writing* neither “properly” philosophical yet entrenched in philosophy, undermines this division (as does “Spooky”) by incorporating a “natural” metaphor that would remain concrete yet metaphorical within the proper name: *the sun*. Thus, in Aristotle as in Hegel, “There is only one sun in this system. The proper name, here, is the

nonmetaphorical mover of metaphor, the father of all figures. Everything turns around it, everything turns toward it” (243). The sun is the natural centre (the proper name), the nonmetaphorical metaphor of all nature (like that other centre, the ground or earth which rotates around the sun). The relation of the earth to the sun, as commonly held “in space,” concerns, of course, the revolution of time. These relations are not *just* metaphorical, yet neither are they *natural*.

The consequences for philosophy—that is, *any study which would seek to analyse time and space by asking a question of “nature”*—continue: as each man is a proper name, “metaphor then is what is proper to man” (246), which comes to insinuate that the proper name is metaphorical (that is, the final point of univocity, the one meaning that refers only to “itself,” is transported outside itself, given to import and export, *metaphorai*). Moreover, that “Philosophy, as a theory of metaphor, first will have been a metaphor of theory. This circulation has not excluded but, on the contrary, has permitted and provoked the transformation of presence into self-presence, into the proximity or properness of subjectivity to and for itself” (254). I.e., the tautology of metaphor to “natural” language, philosophy to metaphor, is the “ground” of metaphysics.

If we were to consider the digital, for example, as an artificial technics constructed on the grounds of the natural, the tautological question of whether the digital is a natural effect of (natural) time and space, or, time and space an effect of the digital (natural or artificial), simply becomes the translation, which would be a transformation, of metaphysics.

If social science is to consider the “time” (which would also be the space) of the oceanic network, it must do so facing the following:

1. That, like orbit, metaphysics is inescapable. The “oceanic network” offers a significant challenge, via *technics* and its *effects*, to the *event* of “time” and “space.” At the same time, this event remains inscribed to metaphysics insofar as the “digital,” as the thought of divisibility, can be traced—at least famously—back to the pre-Socratic philosopher Zeno.

2. Thus, “the very opposition of appearing and disappearing, the entire lexicon of the *phainesthai*, of *aletheia*, etc., of day and night, of the visible and invisible, of the present and absent—all this is possible only under the sun. Insofar as it structures the metaphorical space of philosophy, the sun represents what is natural in philosophical language” (251). I.e., the sun, as the guarantor of time, *is* what is “natural,” which is the basis of a series of metaphors. We *should* not shy away from metaphors in the investigation of “network time.” In any case, we won’t have a choice.

3. Yet is it true that the digital, the oceanic network operates “under the sun,” even if, in hacker darkness—the absence of the sun—is this not the mark of the “disappearance of time” to which we began?

Thus, we have returned full circle.

Let us return to the ocean.

3 – “I’ve got some waterfront property for sale...” : space and time in the 21C

The global email list Nettime is often described, metaphorically, as an island in the oceanic network of information, data and digital detritus. While, on the one channel, technology’s acceleration to spaceness necessitates an infinitely moldable “space of flows” (an *a priori* “empty space” with no inherent qualities), on the other channel we find that in the call-and-response articulations of email exchange, each temporal event tends to actualize the ocean network of connectivity as it *upsets* the predisposed notion of *a priori* space. Call-and-response, as a network effect tied to the movement of affect (the anger of debate, etc.), reduces a spatial conception of “empty space.” Nothing *feels* empty across the oceanic: everywhere there are islands, connections, links and bridges. Yet never has so much data felt so vast, and thus meaningless, either. Each particular event of the network displays these paradoxical conceptions of space: never so distant in its meaningless presence, never so empty in its rich connectivity, never so *a priori* in its infinite malleability, never so *spatial* as it blends into *time*.

It is clear that the oceanic tends to disrupt the concept of strict, unchangeable *a priori* space; if not in actuality (the globe remains the “same”), then in our perception of global space, as it becomes “flow,” or ceases to function altogether in “network time” (space, if perceived, is often considered in temporal terms: as *lag* from one point to the next). Yet, *a priori* space is not necessarily determined in the sense of capitalist globalization—of *eliminating* existing, geographical space—but in the sense of empty space as the abstract container that encloses, holds or restrains time (as a “content” to this “empty form”). That global space “shrinks” via the oceanic network’s speed requires a concept of space *relative* to time. This too can rigorously still be defined as *a priori* space (as a modular space in which time effects its qualities: size, distance, etc.). Although relative, is it not that such space is thought in terms of an empty space, which can be shrunk at will via the “time-saving” devices of digital technologies? Hence, *a priori* space, whether static or fluctuating, is thought in its form as a *property* (a resource). Either it can be parcelled and divided until its impact (and size) is negligible, or *given* as a prefigured, empty property from which flow contorts *time* (as an

instrument of this space). *In both cases, space is a priori* insofar as it is a homogenous medium.

In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson gives us some clues to the complex problem of *a priori* space. The Kantian claim to “endowing space with an existence independent of its content” (92) structurally underpins the concepts of space in “the network society.” “Kant separated space from its contents: the empiricists ask how these contents, which are taken out of space by our thought, manage to get back again” (93). While it may *seem* that space has somehow, simply become eliminated via the network, what it in fact reveals is that space has simply become *separated* from the network (that is, truly independent). Space is reduced to a homogenous but irrelevant “fact” that can be overcome; its abstractness as a concept is accelerated, via technology, to the point of its dissolution. Yet, the *concept* of space remains; for space remains that which is tied to *thinking* number: space, although eliminated in the drive for the immediacy of global technology, is nonetheless the essence of the digital. For Bergson, the relation between number and space is entwined: “But as soon as we wish to picture *number* to ourselves, and not merely figures or words, we are compelled to have recourse to an extended image [i.e. space]” (78). This leads Bergson to argue that “space is, accordingly, the material with which the mind builds up number, the medium in which the mind places it” (84). Space, as extended, consistent, and infinitely divisible, is the *conceptual* stuff of digital codification.

As Bergson points out, the *concept* of homogenous space “enables us to use clean-cut distinctions, to count, to abstract, and perhaps also to speak” (97). Yet this *concept*—which would also be the basis of the concept of *property*, of “In a word, I already possess the idea of space” (102)—only functions via the reduction of a “different kind of reality,” the “heterogenous, that of sensible qualities,” “that heterogeneity which is the very ground of our experience” (97). The matter is complicated, however, because homogenous and heterogenous space are inseparable. Thus, space as *homogenous*, open to *mastery*, possession, property and control, calculable and quantifiable, is, a *necessary* conceptual framework (as the framework of the framework) as it allows us to think *heterogeneity*. (This is a predictable logic.)

In a word, the critique of the *effects* and *structure* of space is directly concerned with the deconstruction of metaphysics. Space, like the binaries it presupposes (quantification, number, the digital, but also heterogenous/homogenous) is *necessary* because it allows for its very *thought* (the tautological stuff of its own abstraction). The complexity of this conceptual relation is found in Derrida’s “spacing,” as a necessary condition of language that also defers and delays the pure presence of what would be homogenous “space.” This “spacing,” along with its *temporization* (delay, deferral, “detour and postponement”) is more or less the unfolding of

différance: “the systematic play of differences, of the traces of differences, of the *spacing* by means of which elements are related to each other” (*Positions* 27). For Derrida, although spacing and heterogeneity “do not signify exactly the same thing... they are absolutely indissociable” (81). This can be demonstrated in the *deployment* of spacing (its event): “Spacing certainly operates in all fields, but precisely as different fields. And its operation is different each time, articulated otherwise” (82). It is this description which is isomorphic to the spread of “sampling” as a *tactic*, as the ways in which the oceanic network regenerates itself *as* and *through* differential domains.

Deleuze, in his reading of Bergson, will write of homogenous space in a similar fashion, as a particular *schema*: “Space, in effect, is not matter or extension, but the ‘schema’ of matter, that is, the representation of the limit where the movement of expansion (*détente*) would come to an end as the external envelope of all possible extensions” (*Bergsonism* 87). Space is both the condition and effect of the representation of the limit and the limit of representation; its movement ceases only as the *limit* of conceptual thought (thus, always producing thought itself as the limit). As a distinction between the homogenous and the heterogenous, Deleuze samples from Bergson two multiplicities, what he will shift from the metaphysical opposition of *quantity* and *quality* (space and time) to the *actual* and *virtual*: “Bergson moves toward a distinction between two major types of multiplicities, the one discrete or discontinuous, the other continuous, the one spatial and the other temporal, the one actual, the other virtual” (117). In Derrida, time and space become entwined (as do the actual and the virtual) via processes of becoming: “An interval must separate the present from what it is not in order for the present to be itself, but this interval that constitutes it as present must, by the same token, divide the present in and of itself, thereby also dividing, along with the present, everything that is thought on the basis of the present, that is, in our metaphysical language, every being, and singularly substance or the subject. In constituting itself, in dividing itself dynamically, this interval is what might be called *spacing*, the becoming-space of time or the becoming-time of space (*temporization*). [...] *différance*. Which (is) (simultaneously) spacing (and) temporization” (“Différance” 13).

We are probably at the limit of what we can reasonably consider here (as usual, not enough space nor time). Our meditation on space and time has led us to consider that space and time cannot simply be eliminated nor reduced. What *is* reduced is the conceptual schema, the context in which space and time are inscribed. And this has direct and calculable effects (property law, intellectual property, time as penalty, as resource, etc.). For, in their reciprocal

and mutual becoming, space and time constitute, *in this context*, the *analog* process of the digital's quantization and reduction of "space" and its acceleration (to irrelevance) of "time." Their reduction is merely a reduction of a particular *schema* via a particular *technics*. Nonetheless, the effects of this schema are very real: the object of time and space, although not strictly quantifiable "in itself," open a history *of* quantification, a history *of* the quantization, numeration, calculation *of process* which would be a history of the conceptual schema "itself" (the conceptual chains of metaphysics, for example; the internment spaces of prisons, for example).

The digital attempt to eliminate, reduce or mold space (and time) is heir to an entire history of the attempt to *reduce* and *master* space and time to the *conceptual framework of the concept* (*logos*), which is both the limit of thought (as the thought of infinite number or nothingness, on the one hand, and heterogeneity, or difference without number, on the other) *and its condition of possibility*, as the thought *of* the limit. Whether it homogenizes, quantizes or quantifies heterogeneity, *différance*, the feedback relation of the actual to the virtual, etc., and each time although it remains specific and irreducible to the event, it remains the repetition of this "same." It is through the event that we encounter the effects *of* process (the subject "is" such an effect). This violence of the same is the violence *of* writing-in-general (the mark, the concept, etc.) and yet *also* those elements which generate fields of differences and multiplicities, writing that articulates, connects, undermines, and liberates. While always within the paradoxes of this "schema," it is *through* the schematological *limit* that we are able to encounter the limits *of* this schema in the themes of property, authority, mastery, etc.

If we contextualize this schema to the connection between global capitalism and digital technology, the reduction of geographical space via the supposed immediacy of the digital generate, as the conditions of possibility *for* the schema's conceptual "dominance," new *articulations* of spatial barriers, pockets and eddies of space and time that disconnect from capitalist circuits. The inheritance of metaphysics is the insistence *upon* immediacy, of the present as determinable, calculable context and ultimately surplus presence which produces profit (the "future," in this schema, is only ever a *calculated return*). Digital globalization is constructed upon a discourse of the *present*, of reducing spatio-temporal differentiation of the unfolding of process to spatial numerosity, rendering the call-and-response of rhythm *accountable* to calculable exchange of spatial objects that can thus be possessed and owned: the laws of (intellectual) property.

4 – Enclosed Ports: Oceanic Network Firewalls

Media cross one another in time, which is no longer history.
– Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone Film Typewriter* 115

The attempt to reduce to the present, not only via ubiquitous tele-technologies but via the laws that instate property and thus declare space over rhythmic exchanges, is not unlike the Enclosure Acts of the late 18th to mid-19th century that terminated and eventually eliminated most commonly held land in Britain.⁵ The Enclosure Acts (especially the General Enclosure Acts of 1801 and 1845) were specifically designed to privatize commonly held land and centralize worker production in factories. The elimination of commonly held geographical space procured control over *time*, over the freedom and mobility of the working classes. Ford Runge establishes that “the property rights which confer entitlements to individuals and firms to exclude others from a stream of benefits or rents... take various forms in economics and law: title to land and property, patents and copyrights” (3). The oceanic network actively disrupts this schema of spatial and temporal dominance while, at the same time, reasserting a complicated implication of the oceanic network to globalization and control over “properties” of time and space (the extension of *global property*). For example, while Nettime disseminates a flow of transaction, Miller attempts to control Spooky via the citation of reference. Sampling is tactically deployed to sustain a cohesive property relation (that Miller owns Spooky, that Spooky is tied into certain flows of power/knowledge). Yet, at some point the ghost gets away from Miller as Marston’s implicit language explicates the scenario’s multiplicity. Somewhat paradoxically, the oceanic network disrupts *via* the supposed “immediatism” of mediated tele-technologies by highlighting the rhythms of *temporization* necessary for *spacing* geographies. It returns to geographical space in order to combat the collapse of space that capitalism commences as it encloses ownership over space-as-property. As a concept, the oceanic network forces us to recognise that the ownership of space-as-property is an attempt to calculate and demarcate the rhythms and flows of time as accountable and numerable.

The oceanic network convolutes the notion of mechanized time and wrests it from a model of self-presence and of present-time, while nonetheless partaking in the consensual hallucination of the matrix’s immediacy. That is, while it partakes in the production of globalization it not only carves niches of insurgency (alter-globalization) and critique (as constituent to its intricity). Production produces not only in favour and against a model of “globalization” founded in property, but produces modes of production that are themselves

subject to the sample, the remix, the open source paradigm. The oceanic disassembles, copies, remixes and makes re-assimilable unbelievable and alien modes of globalization, of “itself” and of the way it reconstructs the globe and the “globe” itself: the territory, the enclosure, the geometry of property, possession, authority. In a way, all terms are reduced but also connected, as they become flattened as samples to play with. This is the trade-off of this particular “schema” of space and time. Sample Shaviro on Spooky: “Everything is a sample, everything is waiting to be sampled; and everything is renewed when it is sampled, broken down, reconstructed and recontextualized” (“Dj Spooky”). The oceanic network produces alternative *forces* of “globalization” that are fall-out from the meshwork’s slow blanketing of the earth with its packets of property. It is, after Hardt and Negri, both *within* and *against* structures and enclosures of property, *as well as* generating forces that are ultimately seeking to remix—that is, materially, conceptually and temporally redefining—“property” and “production,” “globe” and “globalization,” etc. (Like Miller, who as we shall see operates *within* such structures while Spooky seeks to operate *against* them—the two proper names being reversible metaphors.)

The oceanic network operates not unlike Foucault’s analysis of power that “produces the very form” of its articulation (*Foucault Live* 158). For Foucault, power produces not only the forms of, for example, “desire and the subject” but that which “makes up” these forms. The oceanic network moves one step farther: it produces that which makes up the form of production, i.e., the production of production which produces articulations of its form and yet is not *strictly* production. This can be observed when Shaviro writes that in the milieu of global technologies “Production is subordinated to circulation, instead of the reverse” (*Connected* 129). The articulation or form of production, like power, is designated *circulation* when it is conceived in terms of calculable space. Production becomes subsumed to a circuit, a grid with particles that travel conduits of exchange, a form that nonetheless produces, and what it produces *is* production. Yet another name would be: sampling. In writing, the practice of this flow we call citation, its circuit the text. Circulation and text are the limits of the schema and the schema of the limit. However, temporally, production is not *subsumed* under circulation. Rather (and this would only be one attempt to explain this *temporizing* circuit) circulation inhabits the temporal dimensions of production at the point where the steadfastness of a spatialized (and thus canonized) past loses contact and seeps through the present as the future (what Bruce Sterling calls the “slipstream” of science fiction). I.e., the remix of a disco hit into an unheard bassline of tomorrow’s charting pop mantra. *We don’t even recognise the return.* The

result? Generalized uncanniness, too (we shall turn to this later). Everything reminds us of the future. Circulation has effected temporal structures of expectancy: we expect to own the intangible at the same time as we demand access to the archives of the past. If we can disassociate the latter from the former (the expectation of owning space from the demand for time, the archive, for conditions of epistemology and the remix, the alteration, regeneration, citation, sample), or if we can pinpoint the movement of this complex disassociation, then we can argue that a shift in the conditions of possibility for production, property, ownership and authority marks the advent of digital technologies and their circuits of dissemination. It marks both a connection and a difference to mastery of time and space. Such a change seeks not to eradicate space but rather displace its power, a power granted on the *terrain*, and of the terrain, of enclosure. The difference is that of the *oceanic* which disrupts the assumption of the *grounding* of this network.

What is at stake? As Jacques Derrida responds in *Echographies of Television* to Bernard Stiegler, this question is framed by the following: “A new ethics and a new law or right, in truth, a new concept of ‘hospitality’ are at stake. What the accelerated development of teletechnologies, of cyberspace, of the new topology of the ‘virtual’ is producing is a practical *deconstruction* of the traditional and dominant concepts of the state and citizen (and thus of ‘the political’) as they are linked to the actuality of a territory” (36).

The spatial metaphor—which is more than a metaphor—dominates descriptions of this network. Characteristic of the “logic” of the oceanic network, sampling is identified and thus constrained as a “space of flows” (Castells 407). Exchange (in the broadest sense) is constrained as a “circulation” of properties and property (constrained by spatial configurations). However, the uneasy enclosure of sampling within property and its inability to be easily circumscribed in property relations of enclosure signifies its relation to time, to production *sans* or in excess of space that shortcircuits the global wiring of spatial patterns of pro-duction, re-production, the entirety of the –duction network.

But what are the limits of archival sampling? Derrida argues that the limit is responsibility. Responsibility is framed by the assumed right to inspect—not to mention sample, reconfigure, engage—the archives, and the right to do so *entails* a responsibility: “Obviously, this right implies the duty of responsibility, that is to say, the concern to be able to calculate the effect that saying this is going to *produce*” (my italics, Jacques Derrida, *Echographies* 48). Remix culture is not a free for all (although it could be; but this would not be a remix, but a theft in-the-name-of, a plunder of property that seeks to maintain property by negating it, stealing it all,

hoarding it).

Responsibility entails a duty toward production: toward understanding and negotiating the changing relations of production (it is here that we can identify a certain “spirit” of Marx), to the shift *in* and *of* production. This would be a calculation that exceeds numerosity; as the effects are never totalizable, neither is responsibility. Responsibility never ends, and it begins before the first sound is echoed. Derrida has argued that meaning—whether in writing, sound, art, or any generalization of the mark—entails responsibility via its process (the “yes yes” of Joyce, for example). As a process of responsibility to the other who arrives unexpectedly (hospitality of the to-come, *à venir*), the process is also one of sampling: of citation, reconstruction, framing, context, displacement, dissemination. Every first and original word is a sample, a word from and of the other, yet retains its irreducible context of the event. This is what Derrida understands as “framing, rhythm, borders, form, contextualization. I don't think it would be easy to enact fixed rules, in a rigid fashion, with respect to this” (52). What are the limits? This question occupies us in regards to sample culture overall, to Dj Spooky in particular.

Under a responsibility that would be the condition of possibility for sampling-in-general, neither is sampling theft. In this case, theft serves as a catch-all designed to entrap the act within the terms of a spatial discourse that fences ethics and law as property, via the schema of time and space as resource and property. Loosely, we identify this with what Heidegger called “standing-reserve [*Bestand*]:” “Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering” (“Question” 298). The network would thus not be a “tool,” in the sense of “Hegel’s definition of the machine as an autonomous tool. [...] Seen in terms of the standing-reserve, the machine is completely unautonomous [that is, part of a *network*], for it has its standing only from the ordering of the orderable” (298-299). The network is part of the network: it folds its resources and its resourcefulness upon itself; it considers everything part of the network, transformable to relations of property, reducible to immediacy. This results in both the schema of space/time as property, and of the unfettered and unlimited possibilities of *sampling*.

When reduced to enclosure, spatial discourse seeks to cement the power of control and property as analyzed by Foucault, “a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself; it culminated in the privilege to seize hold of life in order to suppress it” (*History of Sexuality I* 136). Although we stretch Foucault’s sample here to reach the ultimate finality of this logic (the hold of property *over* and *as* life/death), the terminus can also be found in K.W.

Jeter's post-apocalyptic sci-fi novel, *Noir*. In *Noir*, the punishment for copyright infringement is disembodiment and eternal torture, as the brain and brainstem are removed and encapsulated in a "trophy" given to the copyright owner. As Shaviro writes concerning this bleak prospect, "the question of intellectual property is not merely a technological one. It is political and economic, first of all. [...] For Jeter... it is struggles over property that determine which technologies we develop in the first place" (62)—that is, struggles over the determination of space *as property* that negate the implication of a time that is *not* tied to owned-space. After Castells, Shaviro recognises "the overall subordination of time to space" (131) in the property of the network. We add that this space, even if a "space of flows," flows only as the conditional trading of property; its *flow* only actualizes its potential insofar as it *disrupts* this flow. It is thus to *time* that we turn to consider how it is that the oceanic network rearticulates production so that it produces forms of its conditions that are not productive in the spatial sense, but rather in the production of the elimination of time and space, of *immediacy*.

5 - Archipelago and Island ("take me to the beach"—*Sous les pavés, la plage!*)

As Bergson and Deleuze elaborate, we are always living the immediate past, that is, as Derrida explores, into and via the futurity of the past. We are delayed or relayed via futurity and its multiplicities, not in number but in what Bergson will introduce as "virtual" and "qualitative" ways, what Derrida will call "spectral," as neither fully present nor absent and thus disseminating endless yet, to a degree, calculable effects. In this sense, time is not only prevalent in this analysis of *property* in the age of the oceanic network (and thus authority, ownership, production, etc.), but guides the "rekonstruction" of time and space in both Deleuze and Derrida. (We will turn to "rekonstruction" in the last chapter.)

For Derrida, time and space are always inter-reciprocally becoming as *différance*. "Time" and "space" are not separate things but rather processes of crosswired becoming: *spacing* and *temporization*. The operation of "spacing" become a (temporizing) rhythm and not a territory, a trace of forces that operates at the limit of all binaries: the possible, the decideable, the present, the absent. Time spaces in and through difference in its repetition. It is easy to encapsulate this relation by sampling Deleuze's title: *Difference and Repetition*. It's a soundbyte, but oft misunderstood. And if we are to avoid diving into the pit of time and space (again), we must wire a connection via the articulations of time and space to the pressing problematics of not only property in the oceanic network, but to the viability of the concept of the "oceanic."

Already, the “oceanic” has been positioned as undermining (if we can use that term) the “terrain” or “ground” of metaphysical thought. Hence a prerequisite justification of time well spent investigating this crevasse: both Deleuze and Derrida’s rigorous attention to space and time aid in sensing the myriad temporalities of the oceanic network, in combatting buzzword spatial metaphors of the Net, and in coming to terms with the effects of digital teletechnology, its processes of dissemination and the inherent, pre-existing operations of sampling on the ontological frameworks that sustain property.

For Derrida, the deferral of present-time—of the “is”—is its spacing. It spaces not in space but from and of itself, “...a diastole or fold of the same act. [...] *Différance* is not [merely or simply] a temporizing, and if it designates also a spacing out of time, such spacing is not—or not only, not merely—the spacing out of successive moments into a distension of linear time. It would be, rather, the interior spacing of the very line of time: that which distance from one another the two edges of this line, which, however, has no thickness whatsoever, in accordance with the coming of being, the coming of a singularity, of an ‘instant’ (or of an ‘eternity’) of existence. The *coming* is infinite... [...]” (Nancy, *Sense* 34–35). Nancy’s elaboration of *différance* is “nought but a turn of writing that one must not stop rewriting” (34). It is always in motion. Time becomes, as Derrida writes in *Of Grammatology* (166), the spacing of *différance*,⁶ the attempt to dictate “time” not from the present (“Immediacy is here the myth of self-consciousness”) but the present from *différance*. “The present is that from which we believe we are able to think time, effacing the inverse necessity: to think the present from time as *différance*.” Between the spatiotemporal topography of Deleuze and Guattari (I will focus on that which is explicitly drawn from Bergson), and Derrida’s temporizing “spacing,” differed and deferred, *différance*, lies the milieu in which the oceanic network operates, as an *effect* of these processes (we are not seeking to collapse their differences; merely to chart and navigate their effects via the oceanic network). This milieu which gives birth to ghosts (Dj Spooky), that washes ashore its deserted islands, that returns as a relay system, a network language, forces and affects. For Deleuze, creative space is an entire opening of conceptual metaphor, of a cartography in which sampladelic operations take place, each metaphor not the abhorrence of philosophy but rather philosophy’s potential, its linguistic multiplicity enjoining unexpected networks. Let us grant Deleuze the time to speak of the sea, the liquid depths, and the deserted islands, for this constitutes another system of relays, of passages and network reroutings, nonetheless concerned with the place of the “human” in space:

It is no longer the island that is created from the bowels of the earth through the liquid depths, it is humans who create the world anew from the island and on the waters. Humans thus take up for themselves both movements of the island and are able to do so on an island that, precisely, lacks one kind of movement: humans can drift toward an island that is nonetheless originary, and they can create on an island that has merely drifted away. On closer inspection, we find here a new reason for every island to be and remain in theory deserted. (“Desert Islands” 10)

Deleuze suggests the island is always deserted, never fully prefigured as a space, always rebeginning, finding its shores destabilized by the tide. This is not an *a priori* space nor space-in-itself. It is space of movement only: drifting toward or away in the throes of creativity. From this destabilization, humans inevitably create (and at the same time, territorialize) their world (as “their’s”). The drift toward an originary island is a neverending voyage, and an island drifted away is an island lost. Thus both always deserted, which is to say, open, never fully possessed, oft *forgotten*, a distant speck on the horizon of impossibility. It is impossible that humans inhabit a deserted island. Nonetheless, this is the case, this paradox. But it is only a paradox if we consider property and ownership the condition for its impossibility. The island is deserted as Deleuze profoundly displaces humanism. To engage a later distinction from Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*,⁷ the island exceeds its simple, calculated *possibility* to take on the characteristic of *potential* (the *virtual*) (211). Humans may lay claim to advanced technologies that calculate infinite effects of the possible, but the virtual, potential, eludes their *grasp* (as does *différance*). We cannot possibly *possess* the deserted island. Rather, we can travel what Jakub Zdebik calls a (potential) “archipelago:” a relay or system of island-water combinations. The island is not a *tabular rasa* but can be (and always has been) remade anew. The two drifting movements, of “drifting toward” and “drifting with/from” are two movements of temporization via spacing: of calculating possibility from the past toward the infinite (drifting toward an “origin” that would be nonetheless “deserted”); of exposing potential immanence as futurity comes to pass as infinite difference (the “already” desertedness of every creation, the virtual). (This is only possible if we are surrounded by the sea—from all dimensions):

So the plane of immanence as a diagram of thought is much more dynamic than a preliminary sketch of an object. If this is the multiple directions of the plane as diagram and that, as breath, suffuses the concepts, spreads from within, around, and over them, we can see that geographically, this archipelago is not a flat ensemble of islands with water

between them, as flat as a map of an archipelago, but that it is a three dimensional, underwater archipelago. (Zdebik 142)

Three dimensions interject the aspect of time, not as a dimension, but as the liquid viscosity, the medium of water itself. Time is the stuff in which dimensionality floats. This remains a spatial metaphor; but it has the advantage of a topographical map for explicating a temporal concept. One cannot own the stuff of water, and one cannot own the islands. It is via the relation of the land to water—the tides—that Dj Spooky situates his return from the ocean. In a constant, necessary relation to the ocean, the island is populated by its ghosts that come and go with the tide as they “wash ashore.”

On the strength of a metaphorical (which is to say, conceptual) linking of Deleuze and Derrida via the postal-relay and the oceanic, a topographical map is generated to navigate process. It is generated to further a temporal-spatial navigation of the *network* (what is also an aesthetic, ethico-political, contextual cartography), extending only insofar as we can chart the metaphorical, that is, only insofar as we can write the complexity of the scenario we are preparing, of the relation of the metaphor and the concept to *spatiality*. The horizon of metaphysics (of presence, property, topography) remains. A disassociation of these relations (of space from property) does not negate one term in favour of its opposite *or* alternate. The archipelagological topography merely displaces the concept: it leaves property, for example, as an enclosure of context invoked by *force only* (battleships on the sea, massacres over Okinawa, for example). Property is thus visualized as a relation of power, and not a “natural” form to which liberal theory has *right*. Deleuze’s technique of conceptual topography operates under limitation: it avoids an engagement with the textual, linguistic—sampladelic, citational—constructions of its *perspective* (it privileges the visual, deferring the significance of writing-in-general). Thus we have approached the limit of conceptual cartography although not to the extent of metaphor nor the visualization of problematics of time; only of our particular imagined paradise. In order to explicate this dynamic in a well-known philosophic conceptual quandary, let us turn to the pre-Socratic philosopher, Zeno. Zeno will also provide us with the scenario for an encounter between Deleuze and Derrida over the problematic of space (and thus property, enclosure and production), as well as an outline of space in its relation to calculability and the digital. Finally, Zeno will lead us to elaborate the temporal field—its rhythms and eddies—of the oceanic network.

6 – Zeno did too many lines

Zeno—Sometime between 490 and 425 BC, Zeno of Elea argued that there is something wrong with things being apparently *divisible*. As a student of Parmenides, he sought to prove Parmenides's theory that "all is one," an infinite, eternal Being (*indivisible*). Thus, any differences within or between things of the continuum—plurality and multiplicity, difference and dissemination—are impossible and false (a trick of our perception). In Zeno's logic, that our senses are fallible is a much less serious claim than that the logic of non-contradiction is false, or worse, functions via impossibility, if not tautology (the latter which will be Derrida's claim). For, if things are many, they are "both like and unlike" (Robinson 128), that is, both singular (a whole) and yet indefinitely divisible, that is infinitely many.

For example, said Zeno, if one studies an arrow on path to a target, one realises the paradox of the fraction. Take the finite distance from archer to target. Divide it up into quarters. Again; again—and so on, *ad infinitum*. With an infinite amount of space, how does the arrow reach its target? Does it somehow "jump" between infinite segments? Does the arrow also not have extension? According to Simplicius, Aristotle summed up Zeno's argument by saying "that it is impossible to traverse an infinite distance in a finite time (because it is impossible to complete an infinite series), and thus [Zeno, after Parmenides] does away with the existence of motion" (*Physics* 1289, 5; sources from Robinson). Such perplexing questions led the ancient Greeks to generate the basis for a transcendent ontology based on the failure of our senses and the implici (usually invisible) truth of *logos*. As has been commonly critiqued, metaphysics constitutes a system of hierarchy, usually between what remains hidden (the truth of reality) and (mere) appearances. This allows a strategy of domination (power/knowledge, the philosopher-king, etc.). In the 21C, we are witness to the birth (again) of *technics*, of the supplement at the origin of reality. That is, of immersive technology ("virtual reality" of all kinds), of philosophy-as-immersive technology, the "prosthesis of origin" that accounts for the origin's faulty appearances (the reduction of space/time for the super-resolution of digital technologies).

It would be reductive to claim that this is the *same* problematic of the postal relay system of the "Envois" of *La Carte Postale*, yet Derrida's poetic performativity of the missed encounter, the absent, haunted and delayed postcard seeks to demonstrate that it is *through* and *via* logical impossibility—by overturning, displacing and exceeding the law of non-contradiction and contradiction—that time and meaning are staged. Derrida performs a displacement that is an affirmation of the infinite fraction by insisting that it only through the

abyssal other that meaning functions at all, thus evoking the paradox of *language* in its relation to time (*différance*). In fact, it is oft overlooked that when Zeno/Parmenides visited Athens in 450 BC, Plato/Socrates (much like Miller/Spooky) responded, with his usual wit, to the problem of the one and the many via a joke that plays on language. Comparing Parmenides' tactic of arguing for the positivity of the one to Zeno's strategy of denouncing the many, Socrates says "So one of you says that it is one [Parmenides] and the other says that it is not many [Zeno], and each expresses himself in such a way that in spite of the fact that what you say amounts to the same thing, you seem not to have said the same thing at all—a feat quite beyond the powers of the rest of us" (quoted in Robinson 128; *Parmenides*).⁸ On the sly, Socrates insinuates that there is difference—the many—but that it has come to *mean* the same, and does so via the function of language and power, thus setting up the re-elaboration of the paradox in terms that characterize the projects of Deleuze, Foucault and Derrida. However, what sets both Deleuze, Foucault and Derrida apart from Socrates is their concern with the many, and not only in the limited sense of the truth, or of the good life, but of the sociopolitical *many* that Socrates laments in his *Apology*: "[I'm a] man who has never had the wit to be idle during his whole life; but has been careless of what the *many* care about—wealth, and family interests, and military offices, and speaking in the assembly, and magistracies, and plots, and parties" (my italics, Plato 758).

What sets Deleuze and Derrida apart from each other is the focus on the "same." Neither focus on the *same* elements (Derrida's attention to presence and language; Deleuze to multiplicity, desire, power—a schema that fails to sum up their oeuvres, in short). Yet both are obsessively attentive to the *same* and its return and differences. Nonetheless, and for both, the juncture is repetition (rhythm and becoming).

What language demonstrates is that it displaces the *calculative* paradox of the arrow, of the one and the many. Derrida demonstrates time and time again that writing-in-general (as the singular, irreducible experiencing of experience, context, meaning, event, etc. as spacing and temporization), is marked by the trace of the other, even, and to begin with, as that which is incorporated into ourselves as the many. Attentive to the forces of language as they express different forms of multiplicity, Deleuze argues that there are two kinds of many: the numerative (possible) and the incalculable (qualitative, potential, virtual). Together (although never complete nor whole), they assemble the schizophrenic self, the declaration (with Guattari) that the "I is a crowd" ("Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd"—*A Thousand Plateaus* 3). According to Zeno's strict schema that reduces space (and its

temporization) to the geometric line, the arrow never reaches its target, nor the message its receiver. Yet it *happens*, and *both* events (possibility and impossibility) take place within language, within systems of conceptual thought that entertain *both* elaborations of the arrow's event. Regardless of the "truth value" of either claim, an exchange peculiar to language and meaning circulates ceaselessly, through delays, relays, samples. This incalculable exchange forms the condition of possibility for the message and the archer, number and geometry, the one and the many. Neither does this necessitate faulty senses or the certification of an ideal, transcendental realm. Rather it has something to do with the way in which time is overdetermined as space, and space as geometry (number).

Bergson argues that "the mistake of the Eleatics arises from their identification of this series of acts [the motion and flight of the arrow as *acts*, i.e. events], each of which is *of a definite kind* and *indivisible* [as events], with the homogenous space which underlies them" (*Time* 113). In the process of motion, Bergson recognises a process of *repetition* of the nonetheless *unique* event: a series of unrepeatable differences that remain irreducible (and thus indivisible). Zeno forgets "that space alone can be divided and put back together in any way we like, and thus confusing space with motion" (113-114). Space itself, however, is only "homogenous" insofar as it is "a symbolical medium" (115). Space *itself* is never singular nor divisible "as such:" it is *always* in the process of becoming (not as one, but through *différance*, etc.). Neither is space split into divisible space and indivisible space (space-in-itself), as in a metaphysical hypothesis (i.e., Kant). This leads Bergson to argue that there is no space in the sense of an "empty container," that rather "immediate intuition shows us motion within duration [*durée*], and duration outside space" (114). That is, *motion* (movement, the generative aspect of *spacing* and *temporizing*) is excluded from Zeno's analysis. Bergson's concept of pure time (*durée*), while remaining metaphysical, nonetheless *incorporates* motion (a movement of heterogeneity). Thus, in our context, space as homogenous is only a construct within a certain conceptual framework of property that would seek to *freeze* time, reduce space to ownership, and exclude the *process* of becoming and difference (for example, colonial ownership of aboriginal lands enforces property to the present in exclusion of the past; in each instance, the circumstances are defined by power). According to Bergson homogenous space is *already* symbolic (a numeric, geometric abstraction of heterogenous space). This process of homogenous abstraction ("totalization") is condition of possibility for property. It *makes* the ground upon which "natural" property constructs itself. The symbol of homogenous space materialized is the

ownership of intangible—what we call today “intellectual”—property. That these are second and third order symbols does not in any way reduce their effective power or “reality.”

We can remix Bergson in the following fashion: although Zeno based his paradox in common sense, it eludes all senses. Thus the *way* Zeno visualized, that is conceptually calculated or *framed* his paradox prefigures its solution. Zeno’s paradigm is a conceptual mapping of the world framed by spatialized language and conceptual cartography, i.e., “common sense” grounded in property. Bergson notes that “common sense, which usually carries over to the movement the properties of its trajectory,” as well as “language, which also translates movement and duration in terms of space,” led Zeno to form his paradoxes (*Matter and Memory* 191). First, Zeno’s paradox arose because the *property* of a state was applied to a process based on the experience of space *as* property (a socio-political event). Second, the conduit of this application or transfer operates via spatial metaphor deployed in language (a discourse event of the *polis*—enclosed property). Third, this spatial metaphor also disguises the subtle operations of the *spacing* and *temporizing* of language⁹ which is confused for the enumeration of the *territory*. Thus in Zeno as in Bergson we return to language and property.

To continue the chain of our context, is it surprising that in the fragments of an ancient philosopher related as a story yet codified as argument through Plato, Aristotle and others, we find the “nature” of the digital?

What Zeno assumes without question is the equivalence of number to space and of space to geometry, to the infinitely divisible property of the line. An infinitely divisible line functions only through its impossibility. But as a *field* (a space), its impossibility becomes *possibilization* of perception. Zeno required *digital perception* to conceive of the world as one and not many. Zeno argued that our perception is wrong for it is impossibly “seeing” infinite division where, logically, and visually, there is none. And this problem is doubled: although logically we can “see” infinite space (as conceptual cartography), visually we see *finite* difference, which is, according to Zeno, *false* because of our *false* logic. These two negations lead to Zeno’s conclusion that *neither* is correct, that *all is one*; that *both* our logic and senses must be incorrect (the former because it is derived from the latter). In order for Zeno to construct this equation, *Zeno’s logistical apparatus is digital*; that is, it reduces difference to quantity, number, geometry, code. Moreover, it *excludes*, through this reduction, the problematic that *logic* and the *senses*, both in their negation *and* *utilization*, are that which lead to the conclusion of the one (this is a skeleton problematic of language’s inherent movement to dissemination, *différance*). To exclude heterogenous, incalculable difference (potential), Zeno had to utilize perception in order to

negate it. The result was a code: a selective, *binary* logic that reduced to the one (what Derrida calls a “transcendental signified” via the language of semiology). *The one is the pure presence of the absent digital state*. Under the logic of the digital, it is necessarily *not visible as one*. Its absence demonstrates its property of infinite divisibility, while its true presence is always absent; its sensual presence is only its false infinity. An infinitely divisible line can be codified as a string of divisions: 1010101010. In Zeno we find the paradoxical binarism that assembles the basic code of the digital in its *force* of reduction. This is more easily written in French, where the word for the digital is “*numerique*.”

The logic we have been tracing so far is somewhat predictable: the general form of Zeno’s reduction is isomorphic to the quantization of the digital and digital reduction of all language to binary code. In terms of the line, all movement and motion, acceleration and deceleration, heterogeneity, difference and speed are reduced to a continuous yet divisible line between two points (this is the essence of the paradox). In terms of language, all indeterminacy is reduced to determinate states of absence which signify the missing presence.

Zeno’s conceptual map eradicates the difference between different kinds of differences (multiplicities). This reduction determines the negation of difference as the necessarily correct answer (that “all is one”). Zeno is also blind to a logic that operates other to the logic of (non) contradiction. Thus Zeno generates his paradox by situating it from an atemporal vantage point that calculates its possibilities from the assumption of *a priori* calculative space reduced to binary code. Space is reduced to geometry (and thus, territory, property, etc.) at the same time that time and motion are reduced to space. Overall, the mistake of Zeno “consists in making time and movement coincide with the line that underlines them [geometry], in attributing to them the same subdivisions as to the line, in short, in treating them like that line” (*Matter* 191). Neither is this the “interior spacing” of the line that Nancy unfolds as *différance*. Zeno’s line is a straight, divisible line, a line of strict digital operations that would seek to binarize and codify *différance* as *one*. Zeno’s line is the straight arrow path of not only metaphysics, but little fortresses of all kinds, where the lines turns at right angles to collapse upon themselves, forming an “epistemological” property.

Enough of lines: we have come to the end of the line.

7 – The end of the line: networks of time

In the process of assembling his “toolbox” of thinkers, Deleuze samples from Bergson—along with the differences in multiplicity—the assertion that we are never “in” the

“present:” we are always back-forming the possible from the immediate past. The past is linearized only by *calculating* its passing, by subjecting time to measurement and numerosity, to—as Hume noted—cause and effect after the fact, operations that *can only work* upon an already calculated past (thus, as every fortune teller knows, we cannot calculate the future while we can tell you—for a fee—*why* it happened).

Deleuze is careful not to stake out what *is*. Rather, that which we have *conceptualized* as what *is* has been determined through the logic of calculation. It is thus at the ontological level that Deleuze places the domain of the political, the *polis*. He *places* the problematic of space (and its calculation and enclosure) as that which *prefigures* ontology. As long as ontology is thought *in terms of* space-as-property, the present remains static and subject to the socio-political and ethical systems of calculation (property, ownership, authority, etc.). Deleuze reverses the equation (the problematic before the transcendent), and displaces its terms (the problematic’s particularity puts into *motion* the transcendent term: ontology becomes *becoming*). Deleuze’s tactic is to reassert qualitative change, potential, virtuality and difference in the prefiguration of ontology via repetition of difference as becoming (*en-devenir*). It is here that Deleuze’s conceptual cartography, when read at the spatial level of becoming-space, can be engaged to dismantle the edifices of property. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari seek to undertake just such a conceptual as well as pragmatic endeavour via the concept of deterritorialization:

The town is the correlate of the road. [...] It is a phenomenon of *transconsistency*, a *network*, because it is fundamentally in contact with other towns. It represents a threshold of deterritorialization, because whatever the material involved, it must be deterritorialized enough to enter the network, to submit to polarization, to follow the circuit of urban and road recoding. (432)

We find in this metaphoric but literal passage, the entire problematic of the line and the property, the network and the digital.

Yet to do so requires a process that cannot be accounted for solely by the visual models as proposed either by Deleuze, Bergson or Zeno. It requires turning to language. Plotnitsky notes the difference between Derrida’s “philosophical ‘algebra’, especially his algebra of undecideables,” to “the mathematical concept of manifold, *manifold*, [which] brings together geometry and topology and is crucial to all of Deleuze’s philosophy, and may be argued to constitute the primary *quasi-mathematical* model for it” (“Algebras” 101).

Yet it is *also* here that we find Derrida's elaboration of "spacing," for it too is *written* in what appears to be a similar, tactical fashion at the heart of ontology as becoming-space. However, it becomes apparent that "spacing," when performed upon the operations of language, of the text and context, exceeds spatial *metaphor* (in the narrow sense which Derrida seeks to constantly undermine); it leads to the *literality* of textual de-formation (the many plays Derrida intervenes through language and the "logic" of deconstruction). The language of spacing is a language that enacts within thought the disintegration of the law of contradiction and non-contradiction. As a process it dismantles all the reductions of time to space, space to geometry, while reconstructing, via citation, via a sampling that knows no bounds save for the horizon of meaning-in-general (and possibly beyond), a profound movement of conceptual displacement that has as its effect a certain *revolutionary* displacement. This too has certain effects on property. It doesn't necessarily lead to a particular "politics" but rather reconfigures the field of the political, in a sense, from the territory to the oceanic, that is, toward thinking of the network of forces, effects and affects as eddies, pockets, velocities and accelerations of temporalities. The "ground" upon which property resides becomes quicksand; the same can be said for philosophy. Christopher Fynsk writes of the "question of the political as a *limit-question* for philosophy in the period of its end ["the ends of man"]" ("Political" 87). For Fynsk, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, this question can be characterized as a "retreat" that is also a *re-trait* of the political (np. *Retreating the Political*).

A shift in tactics? The struggle *over* property in the oceanic becomes the tactic of global capital (it already buys into the business). Rather, one struggles to combat the (en)forcing of a bounded, enclosed definition of the *proper* by generating the circulative, remixing and sampling, re-producing surges of spacing and temporization, and tracing new conceptual cartographic maps not to reassess the terrain, but to flood the terrain's tautological fundament with the dimensions of the "oceanic." By acting accordingly to the law of the sea, abut minding the laws of territory. But what are these oceanic axiomatics, principles, laws? They no longer *stand* upon a principle; rather, power exposes its tendency to become diffuse and productive as well as laying down the law of interdiction. The strength of power in the oceanic network is its differential roll-out of temporizing spacing, its *potential*.

For Deleuze, the calculation of the possible is always one step behind the unfolding of futurity. As Derrida argues in *Specters of Marx*, we remain haunted not only by what is to-come (*à-venir*), by the potential future, but by this *logic*, that is, by the logic of the present, by the present "itself" (always the persistence of presence: supposed immediacy of the digital via the

imposition of omnipresent global capital). Possibility remains this side of potential; it is through impossibility that one taps the virtual. It is tempting to think of the virtual as *différance* (but to do so would negate complex differences). Nonetheless, impossibility opens Deleuze's topology to Derrida's algebraic of impossibility (paradox, but also undecideability) to demonstrate the complex co-implication of reciprocal feedback, of *différance*.

Brian Massumi's writing of this "logic" seeks to broaden Bergson's reading of Zeno and explicate the relation between the possible and the potential, the actual and the virtual in Deleuze. Massumi again alludes to Bergson's reading of Zeno's paradox of the archer (that of the impossibility of an arrow hitting its target if we segment—that is, calculate or *count*—time and motion through reduction of space to geometry).¹⁰ Massumi counters Zeno from time rather than space. Thus, possibility is a certain mode of the temporal past and only possible itself in hindsight: "Possibility is back-formed from potential's unfolding... Possibility is a variation *implicit* in what a thing can be said to be when it's on target. Potential is the *immanence* of a thing to its still indeterminate variation, under way... Implication is a code word. Immanence is a process" (9). Immanence is not presence (which would remain *possible*); rather, immanence is potential's futurity, what has already passed as the future and the future to-come (as the past: the haunted future). Immanence is the *always already* indeterminacy of *différance* as an effect of undecideability.

In the narrow sense, immanence is connected to the oceanic network though the emphasis on an "instantaneity" of communication. Yet this deployment retains immanence only in the *possible* reduction—that is, elimination—of space and time to infinitesimal irrelevance. For Deleuze and Guattari, immanence is a horizon always in the process of becoming. Like Derrida's emphasis on futurity's undecideable unfolding of the to-come (*à-venir*).

To return, one last time, to the island—The island is deserted, calling to attention a more subversive theme playing out in Deleuze: the emptiness of humanism, of man as the guarantor of meaning and permanence. The two movements of drifting (away from the island; toward a receding one) imply that man is never in control of the drift "in itself"—never in control either of the calculative (all possible avenues) nor that which exceeds possibility (the virtual, the future to-come and the forgotten past). The island "is not creation but re-creation, not a beginning but a re-beginning that takes place. The desert island is the origin, but a second origin. From it everything begins anew" ("Desert" 13). The desert island is the second origin, the sample or the remix from which *everything begins*. The remix is the condition of possibility for the "origin," the oceanic for land. Part of a cycle of rebirth, of the phoenix from the ashes

and of the ghost that hauntingly returns, the island and the sea are reminiscent of Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche's eternal return, wherein the cycle of time is affirmed as the rebirth of difference in its repetition, as "the moment of the revelation and affirmation of eternal return," the opening to futurity's unfolding (to potential, to the virtual, to always-already immanence) (*Difference and Repetition* 92).¹¹

Ocean and Enclosure Endnotes

¹ Perhaps when Cohen (and others like him) find themselves "made useless by technological progress" (105) will they take the time to consider those, like themselves, marginalized from this dream.

² Geert Lovink provides a detailed account of the "global time wars" over dictating a numeric internet time. See "Net.Times, Not Swatch Time: 21st-Century Global Time Wars" in *Dark Fiber*, pp. 142-159.

³ For more on this relation, see "White Mythology" in *Margins of Philosophy*, pp. 207-273.

⁴ Insofar as Derrida inscribes the sun as the problematic of the *circle* and the limit of the circle (the return, repetition, horizon, etc.), it is conceptually akin to Manuel de Landa's concept of Deleuze and Guattari's Body without Organs (BwO) as limit. Thus, "Human history has involved a variety of Bodies without Organs. First, the sun, that giant sphere of plasma whose intense flow of energy drives most processes of self-organization on our planet and, in the form of grain and fossil fuel, our civilizations" (*A Thousand Years* 261-262). De Landa goes on to mention five BwOs: the sun, lava, hydrosphere and atmosphere, genes, solar energy. Each BwO here is "local," that is, because they retain "forms and functions," "local limits of a process of destratification, and not *the* BwO, taken as an absolute limit" (262). The question, however, of the limit of the *metaphoricity* of the BwO as concept, for example, in relation to the sun wherein the sun is literal but also *metaphorical to the BwO (as local and, necessarily, at the limit, as absolute)*, thus the sun as both metaphor and *absolute limit*—in fact, in Derrida, each "local" limit as *the limit*—distinguishes the implicit organisation of De Landa's BwOrgans (*its stratification*) from Derrida's insistence on the questioning of the distinction, via metaphor in philosophy, of "local" to "absolute" limits.

⁵ See Leigh Shaw-Taylor, "Parliamentary Enclosure and the Emergence of an English Agricultural Proletariat," *The Journal of Economic History*, 61:3, Sept. 2001, pp. 640-662: "Between 1700 and 1850, parliamentary enclosure extinguished the openfield system of agriculture in perhaps half the villages and towns of England. Fully private property in land, characterized by the owners' exclusive use rights, replaced an older system of shared use rights" (640).

⁶ "'Differance' also designated, within the same problematic field [metaphysics, the "classical system"] , that kind of economy—that war economy—which brings the radical otherness or the absolute exteriority of the outside into relation with the closed, agonistic, hierarchical field of philosophical oppositions, of 'differends' and 'difference': an economic movement of the trace that implies both its mark and its erasure—the margin of its impossibility—according to a relation that no speculative dialectic of the same and the other can master, for the simple reason that such a dialectic always remains an operation of mastery" (Derrida, "Outwork," *Dissemination*, Trans. Barbara Johnson, Chicago: U Chicago P, 1981. p. 5). One possible

exegesis of the term. Johnson also writes in footnote three of the same page: “*Differance* is a Derridean neologism combining the two senses of the French verb *différer*—‘to differ’ and ‘to defer or postpone’—into a noun designating active non-self-presence both in space and time.” Space and time granted that the two terms—time as self-presence (the present) and space as *a priori* (the calculation of extension)—are deconstructed. See footnote 11 for the full quote from *Of Grammatology*.

⁷ Quotation could be extensive here, although this passage from *Difference and Repetition* lays out the basic distinction: “The only danger in all this is that the virtual could be confused with the possible. The possible is opposed to the real; the process undergone by the possible is therefore a ‘realisation’. By contrast, the virtual is not opposed to the real; it possesses a full reality by itself. The process it undergoes is that of actualization... Every time we pose the question in terms of the possible and real, we are forced to conceive of existence as a brute eruption, a pure act or leap which always occurs behind our backs and is subject to a law of all or nothing. [...] The actualisation of the virtual, on the contrary, always takes place by difference, divergence, or differentiation. Actualisation breaks with resemblance as a process no less than it does with identity as a principle. Actual terms never resemble the singularities they incarnate. In this sense, actualisation or differentiation is always a genuine creation. It does not result from any limitation or of a pre-existing possibility... For a potential or virtual object to be actualised is to create divergent lines which correspond to – without resembling – a virtual multiplicity” (211-212, Trans. Paul Patton, New York: Columbia UP, 1994).

⁸ Jowett’s 1871 translation reads: “For you, in your compositions, say that the all is one, and of this you adduce excellent proofs; and he [Zeno], on the other hand, says that many is naught, and gives many great and convincing evidences of this. To deceive the world, as you have done, by saying the same thing in different ways, one of you affirming and the other denying the many, is a strain of art beyond the reach of most of us” (Plato 1155).

⁹ “It is also the becoming-space of the spoken chain—which has been called temporal or linear; a becoming-space which makes possible both writing and every correspondence between speech and writing, every passage from one to the other” (Derrida, *Positions* 27).

¹⁰ See Bergson, Henri, *Matter and Memory*, Trans. Nancy Margaret Paul, New York: Zone, 1991. See p. 191 for the introduction to Zeno’s paradox, to which Bergson argues: “The arguments of Zeno of Elea have no other origin than this illusion. They all consist in making time and movement coincide with the line which underlies them, in attributing to them the same subdivisions as to the line, in short in treating them like that line” (191). This argument can be found in an earlier form in *Time and Free Will* when Bergson argues against Kantian space as “homogenous”—see Chapter II, “Numerical Multiplicity and Space” (Trans. F.L. Pogson, New York: Dover, 2001).

¹¹ For an excellent discussion of Deleuze and Derrida’s relation to Nietzsche, Plato and each other, see “Ontology and Logography: The Pharmacy, Plato and the Simulacrum,” by Eric Alliez, Trans. Robert Rose and Paul Patton, in *Between Deleuze and Derrida*, pp. 84-97.

04 – *Who Is Dj Spooky?*

On the positioning of Spooky and remix culture as oceanic network to knowledge, technology, politics, art.

Who Is Dj Spooky? - The question and its response are no doubt suspended between the obvious and the obscure. Spooky is an appendage, an “a.k.a” and prosthesis, art project and production, concept and simulacra of Paul D. Miller. But focus in on the ontological urgency of the question: who *is* Dj Spooky?

This isn’t a question of Spooky: it’s a question of the processes that cohesed Spooky as he *becomes* through the network. Spooky is not on trial for remix culture, nor is he a witness. Remix culture is such a broad phenomenon, a shift of history and in history, of *techne*, time, culture, politics, and their conditions of analysis, that it becomes necessary to zoom in on particular points of reference that are not stable nor solid in their element but rather contains the universe within each grain of sand. Spooky is reconstructed by the expansive element of which we dream of writing an immense analysis (others are trying, desperately, to narrate this verbosity of the “network society”). The network is as intensively folded as extensively doubled: in Spooky, in “its” curious relation to Miller, we find demonstrated certain principles, axioms that would not be universal nor strictly justifiable (the remix is not in court, philosophical, *de facto* or *de jure*; rather, it sets the conditions for its epistemology). A necessity of the event: we target a particle of floating analysis that is descriptive yet genealogical, inquisitive yet critical. We seek to unpack the “mix” in which we observe, trace, sample, remix, sound-out and play Spooky, yet in which we strive *not to judge* Spooky.

But before we begin, it remains to consider *why*. We cannot justify in any sense of the truth of the matter. Structurally, thinking on Spooky arose out of other projects and has grown to encompass the cardinal directions of remix culture.¹ We can only refract Miller when he writes: There’s always something to think through when you create a mix” (*Rhythm Science* 93). What is this mix? The thick and thin of analysing the contemporary field of the political, insofar as it courses through digital teletechnologies and cultural currents, necessitates something of a focus if this analysis is to consider not a diagrammatic history but rather a process of questioning. Who *else* than Dj Spooky, writer, artist, Dj, intellectual, AfroFuturist, Afro-American, genre innovator, musician, remixer, producer, man of many names and masks?

Like his image, his doppelganger “Spooky,” his music, art and mixes, Miller appends polymorphality to each permutation of the heteronym: polyvocality, polymediality, polypracticality, what comes down to polyontology of becoming (the list goes on...). Miller’s self-dissemination, a system of “advertisements for myself,” supplants what would be, at the minimum, a study of Miller-as-artist but also the reconfiguration of the concept of “artist” in the face of each *face*, a faciality that would lead from the face to the hands, to the machine, the analog to the digital, the words to rhythm science... The circuits of disappearance wired by Miller, casting not him into the limelight but drafting his shadow from the underground, reconfigures the tactics of not only conceptual art, but bridges the relation between expanding networks of global, digital teletechnologies (and their circulative operations) and their embodiment, or disembodiment, in singularity, at least the singularity of a double shift of appearance and disappearance, of Miller/Spooky. Miller’s relation to Spooky is analogous to the relation of each particle to the net’s matrix, each particle reflecting not its antithesis but its digital detritus, its recursive refraction, its mime & rhyme scheme, etc. There is a spectral magic to this relation, between the analog and the virtual and the self and the ghost:

Dj Spooky started out as a sticker with a *veve* (a Haitian symbol that is used to summon the spirits in voodoo ceremonies) on the front of the cassettes that I would pass out. The stickers? They said simply, “Who is Dj Spooky?” Stickers are infinite multiples, small spots on the landscape that convey a brief message, a pun, an intent. They were advertisements for myself, missives from a character in a novel that wanted to get in touch with you. (*Rhythm Science* 041)

Is it not because Spooky is emblematic, symbolic of an infinite multiple, of the permutations of remix culture granted disembodiment that he provokes such curiosity? That Spooky acts as the missive between fiction and reality and puts “himself” as the bearer and carrier of this transaction? That he blends the digital dream and the analog aspiration of becoming the 21C “renaissance man”? But also of a particular moment not only as an “artist,” but surfacing from a slice of society considered a subsection, a “subculture” that has developed the remix tools which global media technology utilises and detractors villify? And at that, a witty representative able to articulate, in the language of the “intellegentsia,” the “deconstruction” of remix culture, or the “rhizomatics” of the sample and its theoretical vestiges?

The interlinked forces of not only digital technology but a remix culture sampling concepts & theories alongside sounds & images have irrevocably shaped the sonic specter

known as Dj Spooky. And although Dj Spooky is one possible detritus among many washed ashore from the oceanic network, he remains one of the most intriguing for his global everywhere-ness. The impact of the digital upon the text, upon a primary method of representation and communication for Dj Spooky, the written word, the essay, the missive, the book, is also the impact of the digital upon the processes that shape language and meaning, of the definition and understanding of communication and its forces, hierarchies and structures. N. Katherine Hayles claims that “*the physical form of the literary artifact always affects what the words (and other semantic components) mean*” (*Writing Machines* 25). How does this operate in the form of the digital/analog hybrid when its performance is human, conceptual, sonic? When the medium is at once both digital and analog, simulated yet conceptualized?

Rhythm Science, in its collage as well as its content, its intents as well as its discontents, exhibits many of the questions that crevice remix and sample culture in general, the relation of digital technology to property, ethics, ownership and authorship in general, will and representation and the subject. Remix culture wishes to play out “sampladelia” yet also retain an authorial name, a stamp or brand to the mix.²

1 - The burn-out of subculture and the spring of the post-subculturalists

If emblematic of remix culture, where does the term “remix culture” fit in sociological and cultural discourse? Is not “remix culture” the subculture of the digital age?

Although outlawed, banned, fought and out-legislated, remix “subculture” has managed to wage a vicious battle against the privatization of cultural and intellectual property. This makes this particular “remix culture”—which would embrace all sonic, visual, textual, cinematic, digital, hacker, Net movements of the “underground,” from Open Source and free software movements, rave culture, alter-globalization and IndyMedia, Burning Man Temporary Autonomous Zones, Napster networks, etc.—not a *subculture* at all, but rather a *networked* phenomenon embracing the technical extension of the sample, the remix and its digital modes of distribution at not only technical levels, but at the level of the concept, the performance, the “practice of everyday life.” As Geoff Stahl writes in his critique of subcultural theory: “No longer understood as being restricted to physically bounded sites, existing cultural and social formations exemplify the insinuation of cultural activity into global flows” (“Tastefully” 39). Thus, “The institutional and infrastructural mechanisms

which enable this mobility have produced networks, circuits and alliances, all modes of communicative and community action, which traverse the globe” (“Troubling” 12).

Remix culture is global and connected; it is tempting to celebrate its connectivity as the “new international” were it not for the fact that its first agenda, its founding political gesture, has been to blast national borders into obsolescence through the sharing of art, ideas, tactics. Rather than being apolitical for lack of participation in “democracy” or for lack of a vocal creed (punk was much easier to pin down in this respect), remix culture is at once both more ephemeral and yet more strictly bound to various coda, pervading more aspects of life and leaving its trace in a far more profound transformation of the globe, for its media (perhaps its message) is the formalization of a process of recombination and potential wrought by the technical formalization of language: sampling.

At the same time, never has a particular culture been so immaterial, unable to archive itself in media that retain their records without requiring software and hardware interfaces which are so blithely tied into a capitalism of consumption and trendy obsolescence. Bruce Sterling:

In the year 2004, it is blatantly obvious that so-called new media - digital media - die much faster than any previous form of media. Digital media are dying in such numbers, and in such profusion, and in such variety, that it is impossible for anyone to keep up with the death toll. They die without even stabilizing long enough to establish a subtle terminology. (“Built on Digital Sand”).

Dj Spooky is nexus to all of these paradoxes and attributes: he is an infinite multiple of this “movement,” and a ghost at that, the embodiment of this omnipresent extinction that remains disembodied, this disappearance of the individual which, like the sticker, becomes everywhere and everyman. It is from this angle that we read Hervé Fischer when he writes: “A basic law exists which it would be well to state explicitly here: *The more that knowledge becomes a consumer good, the more that it spreads and becomes ‘everyday’, then the more it becomes fragile and ephemeral.*” The more it is consumed, like language, the more its “subtle terminology” disappears. There is no value judgement here. To construct a value, one would require emphasizing the essential parameter of the territory to delimitate the grounds of judgment. Somewhere and everywhere is a dream that dreams to be done with judgment: fluid potential of remix culture, fast enough, like time, invisible enough to escape the trap of enclosure, slow enough to accumulate the archive of meaning. The dream is tied to remix culture, as Shavero

writes, its “utopian” values (“Spooky”), even when they are expressed in the dystopian form of post-apocalyptic landscapes, cyberpunk, and ultra-violence.

It is tempting to consider remix culture a “post-subculture,” as it focuses less on “style” developed as the “heroic” criterion of the CCCS (the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham) and more on nebulous, global formations. By doing something other than style, it appears to function without a politics of the visible panache nor a presence of the phonocentric lyric (punk’s provocative anger). The form of the nebulous operates in ways that are isomorphic, circulating, metaphoric, sonic. Sonic not in the sense of phonocentric (a correlation of sound to *logos*), but rather of technique, as the rhyme and construction of language’s rhythm. As author Jeff Noon writes,

...we live daily in a web of connections, all of us becoming adept at riding the multiple layers of information. This is the fluid society. Tracing pathways through this intricate landscape needs a different kind of narrative art. [...] What are the prose equivalents of the tracking shot, the hyperlink, the remix, the freeze-frame? [...] Words can be stretched, broken, melted, drugged, mutated, forced into submission, set free. We need writers who revel in the wild excitement of language, at this deepest level, creating a kind of dub fiction. (“Film-makers”)

Noon calls this fiction (of which he cites Mark Z. Danielewski’s *House of Leaves*) “post-futurist.” For Noon (like William Gibson), the future *has* arrived, but unlike Gibson’s claim that “it’s unevenly distributed,” for Noon it’s “disappointing.” Noon sets forth for a call for another future that would seek to re-medialize the book.

Certainly its analysis here is far from the “more pragmatic approach” that Muggleton and Weinzierl contrast to the “romanticism of the CCCS” by advancing the term “post-subculture” and the field of post-subcultural studies (“What is” 4). Pragmatic in what sense? The remix bears more than a few resemblances and tactics from the “semiotic guerilla warfare” analysed by the CCCS. “Semiotic guerillia warfare” can be translated as DiY: Do it Yourself. At the level of organisational economy, the shift from subculture to post-subculture is perhaps inefficient in describing the persistence of what Graham St. John calls “DiY technocultural youth formations” (“Post-Rave” 15). In this sense “*post*-subcultures” are simply not *a propos* the “subculture,” for their formation is perhaps more tied to global technological expansion and the networking of capital than their *cultural* determinants bound

by a particular society. This would place the history of remix culture as preceeding “subculture” as a study.

Likewise, the emphasis on post-subculture as a “lifestyle choice” reduces its force to that of a consumer option. The “postmodern subject” may be a complicated process of relays and feedbacks, never fully active nor passive, always incorporated via the other, but nonetheless, this has far from rendered “post-subculture” inert, apolitical, passive consumers simply “choosing lifestyles” from a panoply of products. Remix culture’s vitality is not in its opposition but rather its complicated, coercive relation to capital that dreams of the assassin and the chameleon of its headmasters. If it chooses, it does so in order to remix.

Remix culture is simultaneously extraordinarily pragmatic (it works in real, quantifiable ways) but also nebulous and abstract (as the many genetic genres of electronic music and its complex, interwoven cultural fabric attests). Thus the turn to “clubcultures” and the plethora of alternative terms offered in the *Post-Subcultures Reader* (“temporary substream networks,” “subchannels,” “neo-tribes”) seek to affirm various shifts since the analysis of CCCS subculture. Many of these terms, however, retain two aspects that are inadequate in conceptualizing *remix* culture:

First, many of these terms retain the term “sub” (post-*sub*culture, *sub*channels, *sub*stream), thereby implying a relation of “underground” culture to the “mainstream” and the bivalence and dialectic of this “counter-cultural” economy;

Second, the terms that don’t retain “sub” embrace either a narrow descriptor rooted in a particular social space (“clubcultures”), or, they romanticize the rhetoric of DiY as “tribal” (“neotribal,” etc.), and often *still* as a manifestation of “youth” (“technocultural youth formations”—when remix culture can be said, through its impact, to encompass entire swaths of generation and age).

At once these terms are too narrow and yet too broad as they sustain concepts of territory and space (“sub,” “tribe”) which dialectically resolve in a linear history (“post”). Remix culture is at once both global and connected yet regional and particular. It is highly aware of itself via technology and practices awareness *of* this technology. It is consumerist yet seeking to produce its own alternatives (free culture, sharing, open software and hardware). It is political *yet not in any sense recognisable to the polis*. Nor is remix culture a utopian dream: it is vicious, violent, and hypocritical, shoegazing and protective. Remix culture is the broader net, the oceanic network, in which we find the *microanalyses* proposed in the *Post-Subcultures Reader*.

The analysis of remix culture is both technical and conceptual, operating at levels pragmatic yet, like the culture itself, seeking to recombine the limit, the thread of “mobility” that remix culture wires to media, technology and the political. If a difference can be drawn between remix and post-subculture, without wishing to exclude the benefits of research carried out in post-subcultural studies (for the term is not the territory—the analyses within the book explode past the term’s reductive signifier), it would be:

“Post-subculture” and its analysis designates a specific, linear term and form of analysis that hypothesizes a directional if not dialectical historical process, within a particular conception of history that is teleologically sequential, and within a methodology that sustains the parameters of territory and linear time as the *basis* of analysis (rather than as effects thereof).

“Remix culture” and its analysis designates a polymorphous, irruptive yet networked term and form of practice that focuses on process and technique. It hypothesizes not a model but the specific intervention in the rhythm of an actual infinite multiple, within a particular conception of history that is bounded by the resurrection of onto-theology; yet, also the production and circulation of regenerative tactics of becoming. At the same time, it constructs itself within a methodology that seeks to consider the parameters of remix culture as mobile components that deploy situational analyses.

2 – [digital signature 1] email, algorithm & database

An example of a mobile component that reconstructs remix culture as a technical circulation of effects and affects is email. The digital medium of email has something to say, insofar as it possibilizes the limits of responsibility found in the Inbox³ and formalizes a process of algorithm and database that make up its technical operation. Email defines the way in which Spooky is *inscribed* back into the digital as well as the general formalization of the near-instant exchange of digital letters that constitute the primary conduit of digital communication.

Email demonstrates the fighting techniques of remix culture as it forces oppositionary although recombinant stances (its weakness and its strength). It does so through the very medium which suspends its worldwide dominance: the digital system of transmission. It allows us to exhume an exchange that may have laid buried for decades had humanity remained submerged in paper. Digital archives dream of an accelerated, near-instantaneous ecstasy of retrieval and reference while taking advantage of the digital calculation of time to

normalize the wonder of Borge's library of the universe to the banality of a Google search. Yet, as Kant argues in the *Critique of Judgment*, perhaps it is only through disinterestedness that an object—in this case, a streaming multipoint field of ever-changing data—can be mined in its *aesthetic* qualities.

The explosion of “private” discussion in “public” forums has expanded the ability in which intellectuals and pop stars alike find themselves in “public” situations, hostile or friendly. Every engagement becomes a protracted moment of disengagement. The oceanic network has distributed the call-and-response of citational metaphor to a global scale insofar as it has reconstructed this rhythm (of the email exchange, of fast writing) as the temporality of its archive. As Lev Manovich asserts in *The Language of New Media*, this archive is of the database, and we may call its rhythm—what Manovich calls “narrative” and “sequence”—that of the *algorithm*. Coded algorithms (patterns generated by specific numerical sets) are ideally designed to construct two patterns from the database: analog narrative (cohesive meaning) and digital sequence (cohesive numerical values). Call-and-response, the rhythm of sampling and citation, constructs its temporal movement between the analog and the digital, utilising digital sequence to deploy possible narratives and analog narratives to remix digital sequences. The algorithm draws from the database, which is also an analog/digital hybrid (the ordering of data via number, but also conceptually compartmentalized). “In computer programming,” writes Manovich, “data structures and algorithms need each other; they are equally important for a program to work” (226). He then proceeds to ask: “What happens in the cultural sphere?”

Indeed: what *is* happening in the cultural, political sphere as the concrete, yet also entirely abstract binary of digital/analog constructs remix culture of the 21C?

The oceanic network, as a concept designed to articulate these paradoxes and translations (what would be transformations *and* codifications) between analog and digital modes, acts as the plane on which material contradictions and classifications are constructed *and* in which their feedback effects are felt (feedback that reshapes the surface of this intermediary). In this context, the oceanic network is the name we give to the limitlessly contextualized experientializing of the algorithm-database relation through global teletechnologies.

The narratives being woven from this algorithmic interaction between database and narratology lead to predictable elements of *fragmentation*. “Many new media objects do not tell stories; they do not have a beginning or end; in fact, they do not have any development,

thematically, formally or otherwise that would organise their elements into a sequence. Instead, they are collections of individual items, with every item possessing the same significance as any other” (Manovich 218). Thus it is perhaps not that, as Fredric Jameson writes, “the subject has *lost* its capacity actively to extend its pro-tensions and re-tensions across the temporal manifold and to organize its past and future into coherent experience” (my italics, *Postmodernism* 25). This narrative of *loss* is more telling of Jameson’s *focus* on a negative critique of “postmodernism.” This “loss” hasn’t stopped—and this is the paradox of Spooky, as emblematic of exactly the “literal superficiality” of the “surface” Jameson describes—the actions of organisation, indeed, even to the point of global dominance via technology and widespread onto-theological conflict. There is less loss and more *extension* of the processes of the subject as the subject is formalized and disseminated through and via the network. Jameson confuses a symptom for the sickness; likewise, the tension of database and algorithm to narratology has *resequenced* the ordering of collection (and thus collectivity, of which the subject remains an effect), but not surpassed or broken with “order,” “subject,” “author,” the “modern,” etc.. However true it may be that “it becomes difficult enough to see how the cultural productions of such a subject could result in anything but ‘heaps of fragments’ and in a practice of the randomly heterogenous and fragmentary and the aleatory” (25), this remains a missing fragment for Jameson who grants not quite enough time to the “positive conception of relationship” (31) he nonetheless identifies in the work of Nam June Paik. To Jameson’s credit, often a generative capability is defined in its negative aspects before its reconstructive force is ascertained (especially when, like Adorno, one’s role is as cultural *critic* with a particular Marxist schema from which to distinguish the negative from the positive). Yet it still must be even more surprising for Jameson to encounter complex, interwoven *stories*—for such is the claim of remix culture in the fragmentary reconstruction of the *mix*—that not only seek *temporal* qualities but *expresses* a rhyme-scheme of the Dj.

Nonetheless, and contrary to Manovich’s assertion that “many new media objects do not tell stories” (and Jameson’s focus on loss), their assembly *generates* a rhythm in which narratology reasserts a distinct if complex cohesion. The digital narratological structure has *not* come to challenge the concepts of beginning and end; to that we can credit avant-garde writers since at least Mallarmé and Hölderlin (but also, cannot we consider Zeno, Parmenides, Heraclitus?). An abstract algorithm generating a pattern indescribable, at least in the canonistic, linear sense as “narrative” still constitutes a temporality; and thus it still

constitutes the power of generating a sequence of marks, and thus meaning, of generating its own parameters for cohesion (and its own *own*, that is, the way it reasserts its *properties*). It still generates power as certain objects nonetheless continue to dominate others, *be it* via their digital *or* analog constituents, and despite their apparent digital equivalency (as the “detritus” of the oceanic network). Metaphorically speaking, the numerical dream of ideal equality (that all bytes are equal) must obliterate its nightmares and drench them in forgetfulness to memorialize and monumentalize its utopia. All the barriers were in place as soon as the first byte: firewalls, safe data havens, filtering, automated censorship, technological obsolescence in the digital realm; target surveillance, monitoring and tagging, reporting and spying in the analog realm; and above all, the digital signature appended to each datum: who wrote it, and what is their socio-cultural, authorial (if not legal) power?

Thus, we are still within language: all signifiers are equal, but some are more powerful than others. All signs are performative, but some media sapped of their force while others conglomerated into hegemonic stature. What renders the translation of theories of language and philosophy to the digital pertinent is the archive’s functioning, in-time, as a *database*. Power is the myth of immediacy over the database via the algorithmic search function that claims to control filtering of the oceanic debris. This structure of power remains analogous to that of the “myth of consciousness,” of mastery over self-presence, over time, and thus, over space and the world. Baudrillard may be correct in asserting the irrelevancy of metaphysical categories in their *categorical value*, that is their utility and explanatory power, but he underestimates the persistence of the various permutations of a metaphysics of presence, not of the *authentic* violence of will, but rather its continuing *aesthetic* violence of will.

As Spooky goes on to say, it’s the samples that make the DJ. We add: not necessarily the categorical properties of aesthetics, such as technique, skill or talent, dependent on the qualities of a subject (will, genius, consciousness). Rather, the samples assemble the value of the recombinant artist. That is, the wealth of one’s *access* to the database, the *ease* at which one can plunder. The algorithm—the way in which one accesses the database but also the *privilege*—is therefore (and also) a *political* distinction. The ability to access the archive is a mark of a particular class. Arthur Kroker and Michael Weinstein write of the “virtual class,” and consider if access to the archive does not imply the characteristics of an “impulse to nihilism that is central to the virtual class” (“Global”). Yet in the 21C what appears to remain is not the *ethical* charge of nihilism imported by Kroker and Weinstein but rather the

formalization of its infrastructure: “**The virtual class** has driven to global power along the digital superhighway.” However, it hasn’t retained its particular economic power, nor even its capitalist “California ideology” (*apropos* the economic crash of the “dot-bomb” economy in 2000). Rather, on the one channel the “digital class” has embraced a newfound collectivity that seeks to expand its sampling techniques to a broader aspect of culture, the political, etc., from which it plundered its concepts of the “commons” to begin with. On the other channel, it has found ways to reassert the values of the author and authority by fortifying access to the archive, by hemming in data, and by securing archival sample material as a distinctive trait of a particular individual. If we are to understand that teletechnologies have bled far into the practice of everyday life, and yet that nihilism has *not* profoundly arisen as the doctrine of technological community, then it is to the general *formalization* of a “virtual class” that we might seek to position Spooky as a *collective* product. Kroker and Weinstein’s positioning of the virtual class’ ethics remain strangely metaphysical in their assertion of nihilism rather than considering the situational and temporal complexity of technological engagement. In an interview with Ira Bassin, Arthur Kroker designates a shape of the virtual class that may well describe access to the database:

The virtual class is a term that I would give to the new technological class. The virtual class is the class that comes to power on the back of cyberspace or the internet and they’re not confined to the internet by any means, they’re simply the class that expresses the dominant interests of information technology. (“CBC Sunday Morning”)

What remains structurally forceful in Kroker’s analysis is the minute analysis of dominance. And to this we seek to position the persistence—in what amounts to a necessity—of the author. As a tactic, what better way to access the oceanic network than to create the network in one’s own image, to strew it with infinite multiples of one’s self, a conceptual yet material entity? This too is a ceaseless “digital dream,” an almost cinematic vision with ontological implications that Spooky describes in terms of the stuff of his own self-description, writing:

I like to think of this kind of writing as a script information - the self as “subject-in-synchronization” (the moving parts aligned in the viewfinder of an other), rather than the old 20th century inheritance of the Cartesian subject-object relation. What are the ontological implications for such a shift? What does this kind of “filmic time” do to the creative act, and how do we represent it? It’s been well documented that music has engaged these issues from the beginning of the cinema moment. (“Material Memories”)

The cultural aspect of algorithm is rhythm. No aspect of contemporary culture has eliminated the subject. The subject isn't lost: it's just, like the emperor, wearing no clothes that have new invisible attributes of power. The subject is extended via sample-based music immersed in a culture of citation, of recombination from the cultural repository. The subject becomes a sample to reconfigure, which implies a subject to do so: the process becomes self-refractive, not self-reductive. Thus Dj Spooky is not the subject of this meditation or investigation: Dj Spooky is simply the emblematic spook, a particularity of this oceanic network that perchance washed ashore.

On the island, we are left standing burning the remaining ashes. On the brink of paper's depletion, the trees cut, we turn to the ocean. Yesterday's public letter exchanges, developed over years of painful writing, in the manner of Kafka or Proust, are today's email lists, discussion boards, and blogs. The underlying structure is one of the database, and the concentration of power is in searching this database via a rhythm which, although an algorithm, is still the rhythm that sways between becoming rigid or free. The latitudes of this rhythm are in the processes of the remixer that seeks to combat the grip of resurgent ontotheology and global capitalism of the 21C. Neither remixer nor authority (and its authoritarianism) are separate from the other: it's a case of tactical exposure, the generation of the logic in which we *search*, in which we wait (the search not for lost time, but time regained, added back into a life all too lacking in time).⁴ And aren't the denizens of the 21C a particularly vicious lot! None of this shrill and gaseous flame-war has been burnt: it smolders on.

3 – [digital signature 2] a character in a novel that wants to get in touch (with you)

Who Is Dj Spooky?—he later spins: “Who speaks through you?” (113).

“Today, the voice you speak with may not be your own” (071).

There is no better place than to question what it is about the digital that grabs our attention. The digital is not to be mistaken for the virtual (nor the “virtual” in the Deleuzian sense with “virtual reality” (VR)). The digital is the database, the numerative, calculative reduction of the virtual and actual in Deleuze, the reduction of excessive “experience,” via numerative processes, algorithmic, synthetic, deductive, etc. As Massumi writes, “The digital is a numerically based form of codification (zeros and ones). As such, it is a close cousin to

quantification. Digitization is a numeric way of arraying alternative states so that they can be sequenced into a set of alternative routines” (137). The digital is the machinic process in which we find Spooky engaged, “despite” his virtual panache. Yet the digital does not conclude remix culture: re/mix culture and its processes are inherently “analog.” The cut-and-paste aesthetic, the technicality and medium of vinyl and turntables are all analog in the technical sense; moreover, the analog is the stuff of which the digital is a codification. However, in both cases—and this is what justifies the focus here on language, on process, on text, on topology, on time and on philosophic considerations from Deleuze and Derrida—the virtual, that is, along with but not equivalent to *différance*, is the horizon of the digital. The digital may warp and twist the return of time, it may reproduce visual futurities and program historical possibilities, but it is incapable of actualizing potential although it is riddled the continual refraction of the abyss of all thought.⁵ This relation has been far from explored: Spooky as secret agent of the digital/virtual mix occupies us here as one entry-port to this expansive global networking that is redefining the basis of these questions.

Thus Miller/Spooky, the sampled voice, as the “I.” The deferral and the delay tactics of Miller’s email exchange are expanded into a structuration of-the-self-as-Spooky, “a.k.a.,” in *Rhythm Science*.

The digital signature, signed by a spook—a signatory to the flow that nonetheless, operating in digital media, avoids the responsibility that such a name would “usually” confer. But what have we meant by “usually” save that we take the paper signature as performatively testifying to the existence of a present human subject? How is this signature rendered across, within and without the expansive oceanic network of the Net and its virtual-digital relation, its imaginary, metaphoric yet material topologies and temporalities of call-and-response? Thus, certain tactics of deferral begin to come into play as one approaches aspects of the book, *Rhythm Science*, in its materiality as a book and in the construction of its narratology, its “flow.” These tactics emerge from the construction of the book itself and its text (and all the ways a narrow conception of text is spread thin via the book’s materiality—text as CD, as design, as sound, music?). And for these reasons, *Rhythm Science* offers a reading that traverses beyond a simple “surface,” *unless* one understands a surface as a myriad-faced, glittering jewel whose shards extend in infinite directions, linking to every possible imaginable wave of light that refracts the image to every linkage. Does the ocean have a surface? A “theater of networks” in the age of links (where, arguably, the *stage* has become William Gibson’s

unevenly distributed future:). Yet the theater is also a staging: if we can contain the network to a stage, then we can *stage* its scenario. Miller conducts aspects of such a staging (of course it is staged—as a conceptual art project) but is often upstaged by Dj Spooky.

For these reasons, *Rhythm Science* is a compelling text that sustains a number of questions—questions that are often suspended or kept in secret, as part of the operative force of a remix culture that, as a path of the global future, is still coming to terms with its differences, its past, its own frameworks for positioning in a dream of flows that often collides with other worldviews, sometimes collapsing into and colluding with them (property, copyright, advertising, the image, the consumer, the corporation, marketing, sometimes avoiding and hiding from them, *dreaming* of reconstruction). Who or what is Dj Spooky and does Dj Spooky have a passport and copyright benefits of “his” own? Does Dj Spooky have gender, for that matter—is Spooky capable of *possessing* anything at all, gender or ontology?⁶

Thus this discourse, a meta-mix of Miller, has taken on significant viral aspects. We follow Miller’s encounter with Spooky: it reads as a surface, but only to bounce one surface off another. Delivering quickly as flow. But its dance is complex too: at times, incorporating and miming not only Spooky’s styles, but the way in which Paul D. Miller has incorporated, sampled, taken as his *own*, a specific interpretation of remix culture that is also one of deconstruction. Throughout the ‘90s Miller linked Djing more specifically with deconstruction (including shouting it out after Dj sets).⁷ This is not to hold Miller to a strict engagement with deconstruction *per se* (i.e., with the themeatics of Jacques Derrida’s work). Rather, Spooky’s citation—that is, sampling—of “deconstruction” as a shout-out, a sonic sample, mediates on the performative level, similar in some respects to the ‘80s art-world fascination with Baudrillard. Yet more than name: Spooky is implicitly claiming that he has *performed* a performativity of deconstruction that constitutes its *force*, here taking the sonic and literal play of the exchange of language and transforming it to the Dj mix-set. This sampling of deconstruction is similar, for example, to the appropriation of the psychogeographical elements of the Situationist International by mobile and digital media artists and programmers,⁸ or, for example, the use of the rhizome to describe the internet in the re-emergence of Deleuze and Guattari (“rhizomatics as the new deconstruction”). For example, Miller samples the SI, but leaves Debord’s critique of the image, and image value, based on Marx and Lukacs, behind:

In 1960s Paris, the Situationists initiated concepts like the *dérive* or psychogeography [actually it was the late 1950s - tV], but these days that sense of wandering through an indeterminate maze of intentionality can become the totality of the creative act. Selection, detection, defining morphologies, and building structures, that's what make the new art go round. (*Rhythm Science* 017)

An entrance to a first question wherein we can begin to determine *who/what* speaks (or ghostwrites): if “wandering” is now the “totality of the creative act,” then how does this drift to a concrete plan of “building structures”? That, is, how does wandering lead to reconstruction? How is this “new art” when it consists of cutting short a constituent element of the SI’s anti-capitalist, counter-spectacle programme that was *discarded* in favour of coming to terms with the SI’s revolutionary *inaction* save for *writing*? How “new” if it remains a static sample of a certain selection of history that has been *reduced* to a “totality”? Such a sampling is, although via the text, inherently *digital*: it reduces the potential topology of the *dérive* to a possibility, that is, to a totality of the creative act (notwithstanding Debord’s complicated deployment of “totality”). Instead of leaving the *dérive* open, the totality of wandering is reduced to never becoming other than wandering (the critical aspect of “unitary urbanism” is discarded, etc.). This operation can be thought of in two ways: on the one channel, it exposes the digital as a reduced effect of the analog (the digital as a reduced possibility of the analog, an archivable sample without consequence). On the other channel, it exposes the degree to which the digital bleeds-back, or feeds-back to the *conceptualization and pragmatic deployment* of the analog (the way in which *digital* processes of sampling are effecting the operations of thought and affecting their delivery). These options are not exclusive: they are mutually reciprocal. The first signals the arrival of the digital as a possibility inherent to the analog (further, the analog has only been defined in light of the digital); the second constitutes the relation of the two, which is not between two but between the relation that has been characterised as the relation between possibility and potential, or in a more complex fashion, between operations of mastery and *différance*.

In a satirical fashion, are we condemned to *wander* the halls of history? It is not that Spooky’s sampling should be *judged* based upon the SI’s strict values. Rather, the operation should be considered based on what *happens* to the sample and to sampling-in-general, for its conditions of possibility is *inherently* this reduction (technical: but the question is, is this *necessarily* also conceptual?). If the sample—a fragment—becomes the totality, it either signals that every sample can become an enclosure, a new territory from which to command a new

practice and system, or, it exposes the fractalization inherent to each sample, to each fragment, wherein each sample opens-up “within itself” an array of unfolding layers. Both are at work: the difference in operative treatment, then, is left up to the way in which the sampler exercises—and here we pause—“his” “will.” Is this actually the case that *artistic intent* is the loophole in which the analysis of conceptual sampling, via text and into sound, dissolves? The Debordian critique would rightly claim that the “new” art spins around like a record: in circles.

4 – “There’s room for everything...” (authors & fascists)

Let us turn to a second example. In conversation with Mathew Shipp,⁹ Miller evokes a perspective on the rift between the drift and the act of building. This could be situated rather conventionally between theory and act. However this is complicated by the fact that Miller’s style of sampling often, and unlike deconstruction, attempts to delimit the force, the violence, of the context and its sample. The sample is determined to a particular boundary which is then inscribed as the totality. A sampling of surfaces. When confronted by a strong statement *against* closed systems, *against* “fascist” systems that attempt to, in this case, sample the past and reproduce it as the perfect totality of an artistic-aesthetic statement, Miller’s response is to drift past and grant that system its room *as well as* its antithesis or critique. First, Miller, here inscribed as “Paul” talks a little about deconstruction:

Paul: And then also in terms of the French tradition, some of the French composers, like Boulez, this goes into point vector lines, clusters, really has a resonance with what you're doing with jazz, even with a lot of the titles of your material, there's this fascination with geometry... it's hybridity made into science... that's what made America so frightened of how deconstruction really related to how we think of identity... it showed that, beneath the surface, we're all linked, and basically that fucked up the power dynamics of the conventional artworld, conventional experimental music scene of the '80's and even left the whole ballgame open to some kind of revision of what constituted experimental music. That's where turntables come into the picture... Edison meets the dark side of contemporary culture. Kinda funny... The '80's must have been a weird time...

Miller then goes on to comment on another turn in contemporary jazz and experimental music, a return to purism and idealism. In dialogue, Shipp bluntly articulates his opinions, to which Miller sidesteps (a deflection). As we shall see (and hear), this is necessitated by

Miller's own investment in the idea and idealism of Dj Spooky, that is, an investment we have witnessed in the sampling of the SI:

Paul: And the great thing that's happening now is this idealistic sense of, how should I put it? Ummm.... If we had Wynton Marsalis sitting here ...

Shipp: That guy is such a blockhead. Probably if you took that guy's brain out of his head, it'd be shaped like a block. He definitely must suffer from some kind of serious disease or something. I just don't understand how people can get that way, these people who walk around saying "this is right, this is wrong." The universe just isn't closed like that, I mean, if you look at nature, they would see how fluid things really are. How fluid language is, how you can't try and define things like that. And these people are like dictators, or fascists, trying to control language and the definition of jazz because that's how these people make money.

Paul: Well, to me, there's room for everything. If someone wants to have such a closed, fixed view of something, then I guess that's interesting thing. The Lower East side has its share of people who think experimental music should only be one thing too... But don't apply it to me! I'm not going to apply my rule system to them. It's that '80's squeaky sound scene who can't deal with beats etc etc they have a lock on alot of the downtown experimental scene, but yeah, I'm working on breaking that. So much of that stuff sounds the same... There's alot of friction between me and the '80's 'establishment' (laughs...)

Is it really an "interesting thing" that, if Mathew Shipp calls Wynton Marsalis a (musical) fascist, that "that's [an] interesting thing"? Is there really "room for everything"? Or is Paul perhaps more wittily replying that there is room for even Shipp's (totalizing, reductive) condemnation? That Shipp replicates the system of judgment he abhors displays the entrapment of any value schema; yet nonetheless he faces this paradox, acknowledges it, articulates it. Paul does as well: he articulates the existence of his own "rule system," to which he won't apply to others but which he has in common with Marsalis, the "downtown experimental scene," etc. Any friction between Paul and the "establishment" is certainly not over technique: both, it seems, have rule systems of which sampling the past to define a totality, that is, maintaining an aspect of the past to determine a "correct" aesthetic schema determine a concurrent methodology. Paul, insofar as "Paul" is a part of Miller and Dj Spooky (and vice-versa), realises the necessity of closed-sampling in which to enact a certain parameter or property. But what is this "rule system"? Could it be the name itself, as title to the mix, as the author, the conceptual artist of the samples that, once cut and shaped from the past, become the trademark, the signature or the predicate to the set?

Baudrillard's gap between media and ethics in *Fatal Strategies*, between the "object-ness" of the media and the subjectivity we continue to apply to ethics, is rendered explicit in "Paul's" response as *deferral*. The reasons for this deferral are structural to Spooky: that Shipp identifies an aspect of past-sampling as "fascist" (or at least authoritarian in the totalization of an aesthetic ideal to the point of master, possibly transcendent value) is deferred in favour of *not* desiring to undermine the position from which Dj Spooky operates as sampler-of-the-past. These are of course questions, questions being posed as contextual quibbles between practitioners of music. But the formula holds for remix culture: it guides the practice and conception of sampling. There's room for everything: including the practised sidesteps around ethico-political questions of value and judgment in the field of sound and aesthetics, of aesthetic value but also where the aesthetic meets the ethical, for the form of the sample, that of the digital calculation of time, becomes inherent to a number of operative samplers. With Shipp's polemic *contra* Marsalis, we also demonstrate the problematic of the digital *avant* the digital, in the heart of analogue jazz-purism itself. The digital is also a stance: of the perfect sample, the perfect reproduction elevated to the point of sacred object, aesthetic, ideal and practice (in Zeno's case, the one becoming all).

How is history determined as available, open to sampling and to being constructed as sample-material? It is just this question that digital sampling seeks to avoid: by perfecting the calculable, it seeks to render obsolete the analog questions of indeterminacy, polyvocality, plurality, etc., replacing it with a hegemony of codification. This reveals a "complicity," in the sense in which Miller describes, between Miller's position and the aesthetic of his interlocutors. But has not the sample has taken on a life of its own? Is the conflict between Miller and the "downtown experimental scene" or between Miller *and Spooky*? Spooky, as sample drifted and washed ashore, finds itself under the control of a human will, subject to representation: yet it cannot be the case; Spooky seeks to flee. As disembodied concept, it grants Spooky a position beyond judgment, beyond good and evil, thus surpassing Shipp's ethico-political domain but at the same time rendering the concept of Spooky, embodied, a near infallible identity: a name or signature unto-itself, yet without the usual trappings of the self and the subject. As untouchable as a character in a novel looking to touch you (as long as you don't try to touch back—because you won't find it). It is not entirely surprising that Miller would wish to maximize yet attempt to reign in such a spook. It is apparent when he writes: "The Dj 'mix' is another form of text and its involutions, elliptical recursive qualities

and repetitions are helping transform an ‘analog’ literature into one that is increasingly digitized. Dj-ing lets you take the best of what’s out there and give your own take on it” (*Rhythm Science* 17). The Dj mix as *digital progress* is open season for property—for *owning* that which washes ashore.

This movement of the infallible identity arguably has the *appearance* of Nietzsche’s revaluation of all values.¹⁰ Two qualities of the surface movement of revaluation: the movement appears post-humanist; the movement appears to aid in a “death of the author” scenario:¹¹ the sample speaks. Yet how does this operate when the sample *is an entity* (Dj Spooky) endowed with the characteristics of an “author”? Avoiding this question, remix culture has been fashionably celebrated for its gratuitous deployment of a sampladelic arsenal in its overturning of the authorial principle; however the doubling found in Spooky trainwrecks the party. In *Rhythm Science*, Spooky deploys narratological techniques to render this authorial yet sampladelic aesthetic via language: “In a short space, my narrative has switched formats and functions, time and place—all were kind of like fonts—something to be used for a moment to highlight a certain mode of expression, and, of course, utterly pliable” (*Rhythm Science* 100). Narratological form, like a font, is *chosen* based upon its *utility* for a certain mode of *expression*. It is pliable because the author makes it so: form and function are tools to be *used* by the persistent author of the mix of citations as well as sounds. The sample *does* speak for itself, in two fashions: 1) it will always suspend the parameters of *utility*, *expression*, etc., imposed by any author or spook; 2) it *also speaks* as the *sample-as-author* that defines what the author-function has *become* under these conditions. Moreover, the general scenario is doubled and amplified once we consider that it is *Spooky* who writes here, as well as Miller. The author remains for reasons that cannot be easily negated: rather they are transformed, via the oceanic network and the digital, into paradigms that are at once familiar yet foreign. *A propos* sampling, authority persists: in fact, its surface-function acts opaquely to mask authorial-functions that operate regardless. It is not that the problems remain the same while technology has changed; the material construction of the scene has transformed alongside technology, become a part of the shift of *technics* itself, and cannot be disassociated from it.

Thus what, in this context, do we mean by “the author”? It would have to take into account everything said so far concerning the oceanic network, concerning Spooky as doubled entity, concerning the digital. The “author” assembles not only *ideas* in the classical

sense but operates across registers, across sound, text, objects; the author constructs the *narrative* that it has constructed *itself* as the master of what Spooky calls “material memories.” It does so at the expense of reducing the sampling operation to a mere acquisition of property rather than acknowledging that the oceanic is the condition of possibility *for* the author and the sample.

That which has been reconstructed *in turn*, *a propos* the “death of the author” is a far more complex relation to the authorial, humanist complex of power, to the manifestation of *will* that nonetheless strives for *intent* and, above all, for credit to the proper name, to the author’s name as the signature of creation than its Enlightenment or modernist variants. The surface appearance of deconstruction has led to a cyclic revaluation: that is, a reversal or revolution, a swing of the eternal return, wherein Nietzsche’s observations should be heeded in turn: “Mankind does *not* represent a development of the better or the stronger or the higher in the way that is believed today. ‘Progress’ is merely a modern idea, that is to say a false idea” (*The Anti-Christ* 128: 4). To think that remix culture has “progressed” since the tactical declarations of the death of the author by Barthes, or the historical positioning of the “author-function” by Foucault, would be to mistake Spooky’s revolution for revaluation. Nietzsche: “onward development is not by *any* means, by any necessity the same thing as elevation, advance, strengthening [progress].”

5 – transgression and other misdemeanors (such as Nietzsche)

The second aspect, alongside an apparent *death* of the author which has seen its cyclic, shifting placement, is that of the “post-humanist,” wherein the remixer or sampler operates as a postmodern transgressor of humanism, of humanist will, mastery, ownership, etc. Spooky indeed appears to enter the scene this way as a castaway of the oceanic network. Yet he is also inscribed *as such* by the doubled authorship of Miller-Spooky. He is self-made, in this sense, as well as made-by-the-self, and yet, also made by no-self, a product “of the times.” He is written in this fashion as narratological expression, a form and function utilized to engage a particular strategy that demands the authorial function. Spooky is a pliable, tactical deployment that, in the narratological schema, serves a certain aspect of expression. In the humanist schema, this expression serves Miller as the inviolable author. In the cyclic revolution or return, this expression serves Spooky. In this analysis of the transgressor, both cycles replace one master with the other: human or ghost. As both remain particular

functions that rotate and invert the other as individuations, we remain within the broader aspect of Foucault's *episteme* of *individualization* ("What Is an Author?" 364). Which is why Spooky cannot *be* transgressive, whether as the expression of Miller or as the other to Miller which *expresses* Miller, even if the movement of such return, revolution or cyclism implies, that is operates ontologically across boundaries *as* the "transgressive." As Chris Jenks writes, "Transgressive behaviour does not deny limits or boundaries, rather it exceeds them and thus completes them" (7).

On the one channel, Spooky cannot be "transgressive" as the oceanic network is not *bound* (thus it comes at no surprise that he partakes in advertising). On the other channel, internal axioms of each event delimit certain thresholds. In this case, it buffers the boundaries of the author to which it is bound.

Thus, Spooky's "digital signature" is wrought in both proper name and calculation of samples; this signature ensures that Spooky transgresses the author-function in order to secure it.

From the digital signature, Spooky must be approached as the proper name. The proper name enfolds Spooky *inevitably* within the structure of the author. Thus Spooky remains, on the one channel, a *possible function* of revaluation, that is, a calculated, digital derivative operation of return; revolutionary, but possibilized. As a possible function, Spooky operates as a digital signature that signs work constituted by the sampling of the past.

On the other channel, Spooky's bivalent and displacing heteronym ("a.k.a.") generates the *movement* from which to generate something other than the author (at least as we've understood this term so far). As Nietzsche says, this potential, of the movement not of progress but of elevation, a movement that would be vectorial rather than linear, dimensional (of the ocean) and neither forward nor backward, would be not of anyone's plan, intention or making. It suspends the *judgment* that a critical logic would assign to Spooky:

What alone can *our* teaching be?—That no one *gives* a human being his qualities: not God, nor society, nor his parents or ancestors, not *he himself* (—the nonsensical idea here last rejected was propounded, as "intelligible freedom," by Kant, and perhaps also by Plato before him). *No one* is accountable for existing at all, or for being constituted as he is, or for living in the circumstances and surroundings in which he lives. The fatality of his nature cannot be disentangled from the fatality of all that which has been and will be. He is *not* the result of a special design, a will, a purpose; he is *not* the subject of an attempt to attain to an 'ideal of man' or an 'ideal of happiness' or an 'ideal of morality'—it is absurd to want to *hand over* his nature to some purpose or other. *We* invented the concept

‘purpose’: in reality purpose is *lacking*.... One is necessary, one is a piece of fate, one belongs to the whole, one *is* in the whole—there exists nothing which could judge, measure, compare, condemn our being, for that would be to judge, measure, compare, condemn the whole.... *But nothing exists apart from the whole!* —That no one is any longer accountable, that the kind of being manifested cannot be traced back to a *causa prima*, that the world is a unity neither as sensorium nor as ‘spirit’, *this alone is the great liberation*—thus alone is the *innocence* of becoming restored.... The concept ‘God’ has hitherto been the great *objection* to existence... We deny God; in denying God, we deny accountability: only by doing *that* do we redeem the world.— (*Twilight of the Idols* 65: “The Four Great Errors,” 8).

Nietzsche’s well-known aphorism resounds with us in the era of the digital. The death of God is also the death of the author, of Man, and of authority and *causa prima* in general. Denying accountability, that is, the calculative, does not deny the digital: rather it seeks to eradicate the *author* of the digital, its *authority* while *affirming responsibility*. It does not deny responsibility; on the contrary, responsibility is granted in the death of accountability. We become responsible not as authors who seek to master and control the sample but as samples ourselves, as the sample shapes us and shapes a “terrain”—the oceanic network—upon which we are learning to move.

Nietzsche: “To grasp the limits of reason—only *this* is truly philosophy....” (*The Anti-Christ* 186: 55). “For the most part, creativity rests in how you recontextualize the previous expression of others, a place where there is no such thing as ‘an immaculate perception’” (*Rhythm Science* 33).

6 - a.k.a. the sample, the simulation, the concept of “art”

Spooky raises extraordinary and complex issues concerning the role of that which assumes movement and positioning of the proper name, the author of sample-based work in material and conceptual realms. Coupled with claims concerning property, identity, and art, and when this art is the extension of the person, but also the radical undermining of samples of other people’s art, and thus the “self,” the person merely becomes the appendage to an untouchable entity, to the *mix* or neverending flow of sound and sample that becomes Dj Spooky (like Burrough’s talking asshole that also plasters the mouth shut,¹² art in this sense no longer has any need for the “artist”). Artist as prosthesis to art: the role of possession itself, the definition of relation-as-property (“his” art), which is the definition of relationality in general, as possession and property, is contested in its severance. The attempts to maintain

the political terrain against the rising tide becomes folded, antagonistic. Possession and property are desired and severed at one and the same (that is, in every multiple instance of this form and function). It is this incision that validates, by reconstructing an abstract form of validity, the continual sampling of other's severed works: for the entire process is one of things sampling things. (No subjects, no authors—a theatre of networks). Yet these things apparently still require embodiment. Or do they? Is it not Paul D. Miller who requires Dj Spooky, and not the other way around? Although Paul D. Miller is the body, the host, in the immunological and pathogenic sense, of Dj Spooky, won't Dj Spooky live on *sans* Miller's flesh, past Miller's death? Hasn't this been the role of art (as well as the proper name, and of writing-in-general) since time immemorial, and hasn't Miller merely *embodied* this process, and brought it to the level of concept art, if not simulation, to the level of spectacle and the image, which is a consequence, a necessary one, and an unavoidable one of the digital?

A construct that is no longer in the control of the artist exposes the limit case of all identities, and especially, the public aesthetic-artistic identity: it is as much shaped by its discourse (narratological form and function), by its context (oceanic network), as it is by any process instigated by the artist “behind” the construct. Spooky, like Stelarc, can be seen as conducting a series of tests upon the very limits of doubling oneself, a kind of doppelganger of himself, but also in the sense of duplicity, of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. As Massumi writes of Stelarc, Spooky's tests are possibilities which open to a futurity of potential. This occurs through the “dis/embodiment” of Spooky. Just as Stelarc treats his body as “obsolete,” Spooky necessitates an “obsolete” body as a homologous conjunctive: a short-term connectivity to decaying flesh provided by Miller. How? Responding requires—as we have had to so far—taking up the problematic of time. Massumi writes: “The body is in a state of invention, pure and not so simple. That inventive limit-state is a pre-past suspended present. The suspension of the present within a past fills each actual conjunction along the way with unpossibilized *futurity*: pure potential” (103). So far, so good—until: “Each present is entirely filled with *sensation*: felt tending, pending.” Can Spooky *feel*? That response will require dissecting Spooky's *affective* entrails, so to speak. But Spooky has no innards—although Paul D. Miller does, and he certainly feels.

Spooky is different, however, from Stelarc in two ways (or at least Massumi's claims concerning Stelarc). First, Spooky *is*, or at least claims, to be a conceptual artist (or a concept of a conceptual artist): “Remixing my own Dj-ing with more aesthetic-historical references

[we note the sampling of the past implied here] opened up my performing and recording to new zones, including museums and galleries [the name “Spooky” became attached to historical sampling, granting entry to the artworld], and allowed me to create Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid as a conceptual art project [not his own sampling, but the sampling of-another, of the *zeitgeist* of remix culture, which is Miller’s audacity-tV]” (*Rhythm Science* 48). For Massumi, Stelarc “is not a conceptual artist. He is not interested in communicating concepts *about* the body. What he is interested in is experiencing the body *as* concept” (89). (Massumi does sidestep the way in which Stelarc, however, controls the dissemination of his conceptual-body as a way to profit from the art-market: a ticket perfected by ‘60s conceptual / ‘80s neoconceptual artists. That Spooky, despite claiming to be a conceptual artist, still resonates with Massumi’s distinction perhaps speaks to the fact that conceptual art cannot be so easily distinguished from Stelarc’s claim to the “physical experience of ideas.”)

Second, unlike Stelarc, Spooky disseminates his (or “its”) name (Stelarc prosthetizes his body, although he has *advanced his name* as a similar symbol, a signifier that embodies his art). This strategy is not unlike Andy Warhol’s. For example, the films *Andy Warhol’s Frankenstein* and *Andy Warhol’s Dracula*: not only are the legends remixed, but the apparent involvement Warhol had with these films, besides initial ideas and watching the action, was to lend his name, his identity, in a possessive gesture, to the title. The proper name, in and of itself, but also of its function, its author/ity and its transcendent returns (beyond death), becomes art (as concept, idea, simulation).

Likewise, Miller’s strategies of deferral participate, throughout the text, and his texts in general, in the impression that he is the creator of that which is the creation of his own *subject*—DJ Spooky, as art project, which constitutes, for the most part, the subject of the book and the fabric of the text. But also Dj Spooky as meta-creation: as the digital signature of creative faculties, generated in turn by Miller. That is, a project come alive (like Frankenstein), a subject with *intent*, that wills and selects, and that is profoundly invested in the *idea*, if not an *idealism*. In this sense, Dj Spooky *is* an idea, and commands ideas, as author of the Dj mix. In the *Rhythm Science* chapter “The New Griots,” Spooky writes “The Dj crafts the physical form around an idea.... The rhythm scientist proves that there’s more at work, more in the process, than the computerized musical automaton” (20). The idea precedes the digital. The “more” signals the overflow of the idea to the oceanic network. It signals that the oceanic network is not just automated, a process of calculation, yet overflowing with all kinds

of spooks. Yet, the positioning of the idea as central and *avant* the physical form in turn reinforces the singularity, that is a claim to the creative origin of the idea over the network's dimensionality, intertextuality, and spectrality. It will be necessary to explain this paradox in-depth, for it also informs the movement of Spooky's deployment of "rekonstruction."

7 – Conceptual authority and other fractal figures of an intellectual's property

As a conceptual artist, Spooky is concerned with the idea as it ensures the digital signature—the authorship and authority which Spooky commands as master of the mix. Spooky is also *necessitated* by the idea, for apparently he is also an idea *of* Miller's. It is not just that there are two authors laying claim to Spooky (the oceanic network, Miller). Rather, there are two levels of authorship and authority in this doubling of the idea. First, *both Spooky and Miller* claim the idea and are only resolved by becoming ideas of each other in their joint embodiment (which is also a disembodiment, as Spooky continuously runs off without the proper name nor body of Miller). Second, between the Spooky/Miller matrix and the oceanic network lays not contested authorship but rather contestation as to the very figure of an "author" and its shapes: authority and authorship, and where it intersects with property, the signature, the proper name; the mechanics of possession, ownership; the characteristics of art and the problematics of identity. This figure encompasses all the ways in which it essentializes its determinants: form, structure, force and meaning.

This is not as confusing as it sounds; it merely exhibits tendencies of the hazy *epistemes* Michel Foucault outlined while playing pattern-recognition with the structuration of history, institutions, power, and ideas. To analyse the Spooky/Miller relation, one "accedes to a complex methodology of discontinuity" (*Foucault Live* 20) which is nonetheless contrasted by "the very contrary of a discontinuity...the very form of passage from one state to another" (22). One is forced to double the system of analysis and respond to the "double obligation, a double and simultaneous postulation: that of hermeneutics, interpretation, or exegesis: one must understand a hidden meaning; and the other: one must formalize, discover the system, the structural invariant, the network of simultaneities" (15). However, even if we analyse Spooky/Miller via several levels (exegetic, concerned with language, yet also structural, formal), and are bound to consider such an analysis alongside a similar analysis of the oceanic network (technical, social, temporal, spatial), we have to come to terms with the overarching "schema" utilized to construct what is, at its core, a comparison of differences and

similarities that demand oppositional strategies. Even if this realises Foucault's desire to ignore traditional shortcuts of history such as "influence, crisis, the realization of something" (22), and also self-reflects upon the metastructural or metaphysical accounts to such difficulties (jumping to other registers to explain a problematic), it nonetheless leads us to consider that Foucault's desire to "describe statements, entire groups of statements, by making the relations of implication, of opposition and exclusion which could link them appear" is also subject to a similar critique as to that which he poses to the "history of ideas." What Foucault later approaches, in fact, is a critique of the *similar*. What is it about a ghost concept art project, Dj Spooky, that intersects with remix culture, the Net, digital technology, sampling, in not only material but conceptual registers? It is not one variable: rather, each folds into the other. While this might seem an easy-out to the problematic, it comes down to trying to explain as well as justify a certain sneaking suspicion—what Bergson called "intuition"—concerning the relations of property to authority vis-à-vis what we have called the digital signature, the oceanic network, rekonstruction, etc. That is, that the digital does not accede to profound rupture; it remains in part of a broader moment of history.

We might understand the precarious position of "rekonstruction" (which we have yet to define) as it flows via remix culture and the oceanic network like this:

In trying to discover the "branch" (15) from which the two variants of the hermeneutic/exegetic and structural/formal "forked"—a hunt for the focal point that Derrida would critique¹³—Foucault came to touch upon the *fractal* nature of such work. It is not apparently fractal until one considers the doubled-inverse relation of the periodization to layers: "Each periodization marks out in history a certain level of events, and, inversely, each layer of events calls for its own periodization. There lies a delicate set of problems, since, according to the level one chooses, one will have to delimit different periodizations, and according to the periodization that one is given, one will attain different levels. Thus one accedes to a complex methodology of discontinuity" (20). This is not only a grid: if taken to its limit, as a topology, it folds back upon itself. There are no limits to the layers and periods; like Zeno's abyss, there is no zero at which calculative fractions stop. The number of periods and limits will in-fold infinitely, for their number is only limited by the particular figure of description: language (and everything that could be called writing-in-general, the mark of meaning in general). It is true that Foucault, especially in his earlier work, schematizes this methodology (subsuming the analysis to each branch in turn), which, as Derrida notes,

“risked making him less attentive to long sequences, in which one might find differences at work beyond even the Cartesian moment [i.e. the latter of “divisions, ruptures and passages”] (*For What Tomorrow* 12). That is, “Foucault’s typical gesture consists in hardening into an opposition a more complicated play of differences that stretches along a more extended time.” Yet it is not only Foucault’s gesture: it is the gesture of movement, here, of Dj Spooky. This hardening process is the gesture of the author: of authority and authorship. It is *necessary* at some level, of what would be every level, even to dream of a non-subject, the ghost. Here, in a formulation almost classical, the “idea” plays a primary role—as we shall see, as “primary information”—in this complex deployment. Deployment of what? It is certainly a figure of some kind, and after Massumi, drawing from Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, it is tempting again to offer the *model* or *figure* (and what can only ever retain itself as model) of the *fractal*:

Being is fractal. [...] In spite of its infinite fissuring, it *looks like* and *can function as* a unified figure if we adopt a certain ontological posture toward it: monism as produced meaning, optical effect. On close inspection, it seems to be a network of bifurcations: duality. On still closer inspection, it becomes a web of proliferating fissures in infinite regress toward the void (Massumi, *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia* 21-22).

How does the fractal aid an analysis of Spooky, the oceanic network, remix culture? The fractal serves as a leitmotif for the relation between algorithm and database, for the Net itself (for every “relation” that circuits the oceanic network), not to mention the self-recursive and ultimately refractive processes of sampling and its techniques of modification (tweaking, reversing, splaying, granularizing, etc.). We imagine the oceanic network as a “smooth space,” open, dimensional, horizontal, free from walls or borders, with no higher dimension save for that which it operates upon, “a flat multiplicity” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 488). Yet this is imaginary: the oceanic network is nonetheless traversed, as concept, by the strictures of authority and property; as *concept* it necessitates demarcation (“islands”). In the world of technology and law, the striated takes effect as copyright, ownership, firewalls, domains, privacy, etc. Deleuze and Guattari, using their “Maritime Model” to envision smooth space, write that “the sea is a smooth space par excellence, and yet was the first to encounter the demands of increasingly strict striation” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 479). The relation between the smooth and the striated is a possible way of topologizing Foucault’s periodizations and levels

while granting it substantial flexibility, addressing the “hardening” schematization by offering continuously *different* ways of envisioning the scenario.

Different mixes, different registers: Deleuze and Guattari *enact* Foucault’s fractal, that is, they subtly critique it. The fractal enters when Deleuze and Guattari ask: “Is it possible to give a very general mathematical definition of smooth spaces?”—to which they reply: “Benoit Mandelbrot’s ‘fractals’ seem to be on that path” (486). The fractal becomes a more general way of inscribing Foucault’s archeology and genealogy, as he would write, “superimposing” it to the topological figure set forth by Deleuze and Guattari. The fractal remains within the critique delimited by Derrida to Foucault of a particular *topology*.¹⁴ Topology is not an *answer*; it is a mix-technique, a figure of *technics*. The question is whether this figure *matters*. Massumi writes that “Whatever medium you are operating in, you miss the virtual unless you carry the images constructed in that medium to the point of topological transformation” (134). Thus the topology itself has to transform in order for it to chart pathways of navigation.

Thus Massumi claims that the topological offers a pathway to the virtual, to potential.¹⁵ The paradox of Deleuze and Guattari—which is a paradox of Spooky and remix culture—is *not* that the dream of the smooth cannot exist *without* the striated. The constraint is of the figure of topology in the first place, of the *first place*, and how it grants primacy to the smooth over the striated *via* its figure. Pre-figured. Spooky, for example, operates, at times, only as a “character in the novel,” claiming this fiction as its respite from critique while, in other turns, he claims the rewards of the proper name and its authority, as author to a mix, concept, idea, etc. What hangs in the balance is responsibility. If, after Foucault, we write here a series of “traces,” it will be through Spooky’s focus on what he *is*, as idea, in the moves he makes—an undulating series: hence the “*rhythm* scientist.” The lesson is tactical. Spinning one’s rhythm is a tactical decision, albeit always in response to another rhythm. This does not leave the process as reactionary, but as process. It is this process, somewhere between topology and deconstruction, that figures reconstruction.

03 – *Who Is Dj Spooky?* : Endnotes

¹ This entire project grew out of a book review of *Rhythm Science* for *ElectronicBookReview.com*, ed. Trace Reddell, the “Music Sound Noise” thread. Earlier drafts of this thesis were sampled for publication as a “remixed review.”

² The term “sampladelia” comes from Kodwo Eshun (see *More Brilliant than the Sun*).

³ Of note, see a related discussion on the media arts discussion list –empyre– <<http://lists.cofa.unsw.edu.au/mailman/listinfo/empyre>>. See Charlotte Frost’s post at <<http://lists.cofa.unsw.edu.au/pipermail/empyre/2004-August/003157.html>> and the resulting discussion.

⁴ On a pragmatic level, see, for example, the ongoing critical assessment of Google, the search-engine, as defining what we *know* as the Internet. The digital is redefining the basis of epistemology: of how we know what we know, of parameters of “authenticity,” “property,” etc. See, for example, Abe Burmeister’s blog post on Google’s desktop application, October 18th, 2004:

<http://www.abstractdynamics.org/archives/2004/10/18/selling_the_desktop_to_google.html>.

⁵ In fact, Masumi goes so far as to write: “Digital technologies in fact have a remarkably weak connection to the virtual, by virtue of their enormous power of their systemization of the possible” (137). The relation between this systemization and Spooky’s invocation of filmic time in lieu of the subject deserves further exploration.

⁶ (These questions, this format, this tone—this mix—is particularly stereotypical—if not a trademark infringement of—various academic authors. A modernist pastiche, or a postmodern mix, which amounts to the same.)

⁷ As witnessed by this author in Vancouver at Sonar nightclub circa 1999, also in Detroit circa 2000 (source: ThinkBox Collective, Windsor, Ontario).

⁸ I touch upon this in “The Reverb Engine,” *Unsorted: An A to Z for Sonic Acts X*, ed. Arie Altena, Paradiso: Amsterdam 2004. pp. 104-110. Also in “(Code+City+Counterstrike) ÷ Flow,” Conference Paper: SLS (Society for Literature and Science) International Conference 2004, 06.25.06, Cité Universitaire, Paris.

⁹ See “Dialectics of Entropy/Code/Cybernetic Jazz: a conversation between Paul D. Miller a.k.a. Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid and Matthew Shipp.”

¹⁰ Three samples: “...we believe that severity, violence, slavery, danger in the street and in the hart, secrecy, stoicism, tempter’s art and devilry of every kind,—that everything wicked, terrible, tyrannical, predatory, and serpentine in man, serves as well for the elevation of the human species as its opposite:—we do not even say enough when we only say *this much*; and in any case we find ourselves here, both with our speech and our silence, at the *other* extreme of all modern ideology and gregarious desirability, as their antipodes, perhaps?” (*Beyond Good and Evil* 32-33: 44). The remixing of opposites here needs to be considered with what Nietzsche says (quoted below in the text) in *The Anti-Christ* concerning the difference between “progress” and “elevation, advance, strengthening” (128: 4). Thus we find (which will be quoted in the text): “What alone can *our* teaching be?—That no one *gives* a human being his qualities: not God, nor society, nor his parents or ancestors, not *he himself* (—the nonsensical idea here last rejected was propounded, as ‘intelligible freedom’, by Kant, and perhaps also by Plato before him). *No one* is accountable for existing at all, or for being constituted as he is, or for living in the circumstances and surroundings in which he lives”

(*Twilight of the Idols* 65: “The Four Great Errors,” 8). There is both fatality and freedom to this human.

¹¹ See the well-known essay, “What is an Author?” by Michel Foucault, in *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies, 4th Edition*, Ed. Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer, New York: Longman, 1998 (1969). pp. 364-376. Foucault opens by saying: “The coming into being of the notion of the ‘author’ constitutes the privileged moment of *individualization* in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and the sciences” (365). See also “The Death of the Author,” by Roland Barthes, in *Image-Music-Text*, New York: Hill & Wang, 1978 (1977). Barthes opens his analysis by writing “Probably this has always been the case: once an action is recounted, for intransitive ends, and no longer in order to act directly upon reality — that is, finally external to any function but the very exercise of the symbol — this disjunction occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters his own death, writing begins. Nevertheless, the feeling about this phenomenon has been variable;...” For Barthes, this forms the birth of the reader (somewhat after Mallarmé, and arguably Derrida, writing/language speaks, and not the author *per se*: the author does not “own” language).

¹² See Burroughs, William S., *Naked Lunch*, New York: Grove Press, 1992.

¹³ Notably in “Cogito and the History of Madness” (collected in *Writing and Difference*, Trans. Alan Bass, Chicago: U Chicago P, 1978, pp. 31-63), which critiques the deployment of Descartes in Foucault’s *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique* (in English as *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, Trans. Richard Howard, New York: Vintage, 1973). Derrida follows this critique, much later and after Foucault’s death, in “‘To Do Justice to Freud’: The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis” (found in *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, Trans. Peggy Kamuf, Pascale-Anne Brault & Michael Naas, Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998, pp. 70-118), where he explicitly defers from returning to the debate (although says much about Foucault via indirect commentary on Freud and madness). Most recently, and perhaps Derrida’s last words on Foucault are in the intimate and valuable interviews with Elisabeth Roudinesco (*For What Tomorrow... A Dialogue*, Trans. Jeff Fort, Stanford: Stanford UP, 2004). Derrida responds: “What has always left me a little perplexed with Foucault, beyond the debate on the *cogito*, is that while I understand very well the necessity of marking divisions, ruptures, and passages from one *episteme* to another, at the same time I have always had the impression that this risked making him less attentive to long sequences, in which one might find differences at work beyond even the Cartesian moment. [...] Foucault’s typical gesture consists in hardening into an opposition a more complicated play of differences that stretches along a more extended time”(12). As we have seen, Foucault recognizes and binarizes this problematic in the same gesture by splitting structural analysis from exegesis/hermeneutics, when for Derrida, these two moments could be seen as part of a larger schema. We will turn to this briefly in the body of the text.

¹⁴ Derrida poses this critique throughout his work concerning the visible and the invisible, presence and absence. Topology and topography comes under a sharp reorientation in “*Fors*” (see Works Cited); blindness and seeing is considered in, among many works, the “visor” of the ghost of Hamlet’s father in *Specters of Marx* (Works Cited) and the framing of painting in *The Truth in Painting* (Trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod, Chicago: U Chicago P, 1987), where Derrida writes, perhaps more directly addressing the consequences of Deleuze and Guattari’s ontology: “For *becoming* has perhaps always had as its concept this determination of difference as opposition” (11)—that is, *becoming* demarcates itself as concept, from concept, and thus implies opposition via its very concept and *not*. The issue

here is much larger, however, and would have to address Derrida's earlier work on presence as well as what he appears to suggest in *hearing*—such as the “Replies” to various questions in *The Ear of the Other* (Trans. Peggy Kamuf and Avital Ronell, Lincoln: U Nebraska P, 1988)—as well as multisensorial *touch* in *Le Toucher: Jean-Luc Nancy* (Paris: Galilée, 2000).

¹⁵ “Whatever medium you are operating in, you miss the virtual unless you carry the images constructed in that medium to the point of topological transformation. If you fall short of the topological, you will still grasp the possible (the differences in content and form considered as organised alternatives). You might even grasp the potential (the tension between materially superposed possibilities and the advent of the new). But never will you come close to the virtual” (*Parables for the Virtual* 134). To consider this issue in depth would require a study of the “would:” of the *would* in Derrida's cautious imperatives and necessities and Massumi's, drawn from the direct ontological imperatives of Deleuze and Guattari (especially Deleuze, as is his philosophical style).

05 – The New Griots: Concept and Art in Dj Spooky

On Dj Spooky as simulated conceptual art and advertising

Rhythm science makes possible a music of permutation that tries to convey a sense of how conceptual art, contemporary technology, and timeless idealism might function together today. (*Rhythm Science* 20)

Like the “author function” rendered equivalent to the data flow of the network, Spooky is always in the process of letting others speak through him. Expand the hands while maintaining the presence of Spooky, as a ghost, meme, brand, concept, name, tag: an author, that is, a self-conscious advertisement but conscious only within the realm of the idea which is singular. The idea-as-idea is transcendent; it coheses the order of the *multiplex*. A data-density-sample: conceptual art simulated, data density reciprocated as the infinite multiple of the sticker...

“Where Dj Spooky is, Paul D. Miller is not.” There is a “double consciousness” of Dj Spooky/Paul D. Miller, and when he speaks of “double consciousness,” after W.E.B. Du Bois, it is through-and-through: in name, concept, idea and *form* does Paul D. Miller a.k.a. Dj Spooky that Subliminal Kid explore “double consciousness.” Double, doppelganger, doubled and mirrored—and beyond double: Spooky furthers Du Bois via Charlie Mingus to add a third, and thus “triple consciousness” (*Rhythm Science* 61). And why stop? From double to triple, Spooky writes, following the path of “density” we have observed here: “Where Du Bois saw duality and Mingus imagined a trinity, I would say that the twenty-first-century is so fully immersed in and defined by the data that surrounds it, we are entering an era of multiplex consciousness” (61). Which isn’t to deny, writes Spooky, the “racial oppression that prompted Du Bois’ initial interest in duality.” For—

...what Paul Gilroy called the ‘Black Atlantic’ is just a small part of the ocean of rhythm science. All the issues involved with aliases, multiple narrative threading, social engineering environments, and identity as a social cipher are tropes brought to the forefront of immigrant culture in America. When the slave experience of cultural erasure encountered the immigrant phenomenon of identity *reconstruction* in the city, the culture as a whole moved away from the melting pot of the model to become a frequency centrifuge: cultures in conflict, messages etched and pasted on every street corner, images raining down, thoughts like rain, the city fragments and coalesces. Freud calls the situation “unheimlich” or “uncanny” but the sense of alienation and familiarity is reminiscent of the Situationist critique of the urban landscape. They simply called it “psychogeographic”—the layers of the city unfold in the mind of the person who moves through the landscape. What could

be a better parallel to “systems culture” where everyone can contribute to rhythm science; whether it’s Linux, or hip-hop, or mix-tape culture. (61-64)

Spooky as “conceptual artist” and Spooky in the throes of advertising demonstrate two aspects of this multiplex consciousness of remix culture.

1 – sampling the image of conceptual art: rhythm scientist

The rhythm scientist reinvests an aesthetic of the idea *prior* to sound although not before vision. There is a hierarchy and placement of the idea vis-à-vis other art expressions and sensory faculties. For Spooky, the visual “soundscape” is deployed *as* the idea itself which is then executed as music through the samples of others. This music, cobbled via the sampling of the archive, drawn from the visualization of an idea, acts as a metaphor for the idea’s visualization. This is the chain of process of Spooky, as conceptual artist: “Start with the inspiration of George Herriman’s *Krazy Kat* comic strip. Make a track evoking his absurd landscapes. Determine the atmospheric flows of wind. What do tons and tons of air pressure moving in the atmosphere sound like? Make music that acts as metaphor for that kind of immersion or density. Visualize soundscapes; create imaginary projections” (*Rhythm Science* 20). Writing of the whole process, Spooky writes, just above on the same page: “Rhythm science makes possible a music of permutation that tries to convey a sense of how conceptual art, contemporary technology, and timeless idealism might function together today.”

Spooky can be traced to the conceptual artists of the 1960s, especially those working with curator Seth Siegelaub. For both, the idea is *a priori*. This in-advance aesthetic forms an ontology for Dj Spooky *as* conceptual idea: Spooky *exists* as art-idea, or as pure idea before art, before being executed (if executed) as a Dj, as music or metaphor. Or, is Spooky the metaphoric execution of *another idea visualized*? This remains unclear: either way, he is idea before material, before embodiment, before the body of Paul D. Miller. In the tradition of conceptual art developed throughout the ‘60s, such as that of Lawrence Weiner and Robert Barry, the execution often becomes irrelevant or optional as secondary to the idea itself. The idea is considered “primary information.” The “secondary information” is either the executed work, or, as developed by “consultant” and eventually “catalyst” Siegelaub, documentation which is usually sold as the art-itself, such as a catalogue or contract. As Alexander Alberro writes in *Conceptual Art and the politics of publicity*, “This idealist conception of meaning as an *a priori* construct existing before its embodiment in form raised the issue of substitution and

exchange in a social and economic sphere” (56). That is, calculation: conceptual art has always been of the digital concept.

Despite statements to the contrary (including Weiner’s objections against “aesthetic fascism”), Conceptual Art by 1972 was—after a short period of initiation—appropriated by the 1970s art market, through the very system Siegelau created with lawyer Robert Projansky: the “The Artist’s Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement” (163). This commodified “the idea” in standard legal language, ensuring compensation but also enforcing the status of idea-as-commodity and ultimately the validation of “revolutionary” conceptual art in the art market. In the language of Guy Debord, art as commodity became image-value through the *formalization* (the “form and function” of narratology, inscribed in a legal document) of the ability to sell and trade the *idea* of art (the very idea of the *possibility* of an image, an act, a non-act, etc., calculated from its *potential*). It circulates as a self-sustaining image detached from objecthood; it becomes advertising, it becomes part of the art-market spectacle by projecting the art-market as yet another piece that can be sold (the art-market folds upon itself, doubles itself: the art-market is now for sale, in pieces). It becomes the traded *idea* of spectacle, as the image-art of advertising (or art’s absence). Art (but is it art, or a philosophy of the concept, and a concept of philosophy?) merged with economy at the conceptual level. If we consider Baudrillard’s critique of “postmodern” art, art had become purely symbolic value; it had become hyperreal, and thus, simulation.

The paradox of conceptual art—that it sought to challenge and undermine the art market yet ended up reinforcing its economic power through symbolic investment (investment in image-value as the idea), blessing a whole generation of “artists” who no longer did anything at all, who abhorred skill and sought new ways in which *not* to produce, create or generate art. The irony (or is it flippancy?) is not lost on Alberro’s analysis. Likewise, Sylvère Lotringer notes how “neconceptualism emerged among some of those more socially conscious young artists of the late seventies, like Jenny Holzer and Barbara Kruger, who had been preoccupied with money and the stock market. Like Richard Prince, Robert Longo or Jeff Koons, who had worked as a stock broker for a few years, they were moving to the ‘real world’ of consumerism, advertisement, and corporate productions, outwardly confronting the capitalist image, or mirage” (145). Lotringer sees them as aspiring to semiotic strategies that “*turn it [the market] against itself,*” only to unknowingly, be “caught in the logic of simulation” (146). Seeing eye to eye, Alberro argues that:

Reading the emergence of conceptual art through the perspective of Siegelau's practices of exhibition and distribution thus provides a glimpse into the inherently contradictory nature of this art movement—in which the egalitarian pursuit of publicness and the emancipation from traditional forms of artistic value were as definitive as the fusion of the artwork with advertising and display. (5)

The legacy of conceptual art is incorporated in Spooky. Aesthetic judgement becomes suspended and difficult to frame when one claims his or her work—i.e. *as a Dj*—as the concept and not the “mix itself.” It offers the conceptual artist an escape hatch from normative critique of skill. Yet it remains that Spooky's work is performative and produces objects that are genres and commodities: books, music, LPs, CDs, Dj sets and mixes, Dj performances, remixes, essays, etc.. Each of these products has its aesthetics and its schema of value. A Dj is expected to mix well, beatmatch, scratch, program; a music producer, especially within subcultures of electronic music and hip-hop, to generate aesthetically fascinating and pleasing sound that references its histories and projects toward its future (innovation). It is only by viewing Spooky as Lotringer views Baudrillard—invested in “radical nihilism” (146)—that one realises Spooky's strategies of deferral as homologous to what Lotringer calls Baudrillard's “‘strategy of deterrence’ *encoded in his own text* (and not just described in it)” (147). For Spooky this text stretches to its broadest sense as a remedial medium incorporating all media. In all “art works” by Dj Spooky, all “releases” to which Spooky attaches his signature (often his prominent graffiti tag), there performs this strategy of deferral or deterrence.¹

Notably, the paradox of what is, essentially, the *political*, identified by Alberro in early conceptual art is, in the thirty years of conceptual art since the 1960's, taken to an intensive and conflicting level. It is almost entirely impossible to distinguish the “conceptual artist” from guerilla marketing. On the tail end of Baudrillard's trickeries, his impact on the '80s New York art world and his subsequent refusal of the same (“there can't be a simulationist school because the simulation can't be represented”), Spooky aims to utilise Baudrillard's tactics while claiming nonetheless the status as a (neo)conceptual artist. That is, he mixes *simulation* and *conceptualization*. He thus incorporates not only the paradoxes of conceptual art, but those of Baudrillard. “He” is double in strategy as well as in name. “He” is able to deftly avoid aesthetic judgement (as well as creating “his” own work) as a conceptual artist (thus music and Djing cannot be critiqued), while, at the same time, deftly avoiding the paradoxes of conceptual art by grinning a ghostly smile of Baudrillardian simulation, dismissing it all as pataphysics. The two can then be reversed upon the other (conceptual-art-of/as-simulation; simulation-of/as-

conceptual-art). In fact the reversals are necessary, for they construct Spooky's texts: the way in which it constantly flips through narratology. According to Lotringer, Baudrillard's "old situationist mistrust of 'culture,' of the aesthetic object" also meant that "For him art had come to a close after Andy Warhol managed to turn banal images into pure fetishes" (146). Spooky has gone one step farther: he has managed to turn the fetish of sample culture, of archive fever, into the image of a conceptual artist, and the conceptual artist into a simulation—that is to say, an image of a dead art, if such a thing can be said to exist given Dj Spooky's ghostly status.

Image as point of network density—Which is why that, although Duchamp and Warhol are named as primary influences, Spooky's conceptual double, his historical doppelganger, is arguably Joseph Kosuth. Kosuth doubled as his own critic under the pseudonym Arthur B. Rose. Likewise, we can remember Spooky's alias as "Ad Astra" (np. the invocation of the "Ad"): "Kosuth cultivated his image as much as his art... [he] evidently understood the value of organizing the mass media's attention in his favor" (Alberro 27). And like Spooky, Kosuth ingeniously mixed the actual art object, namely "Art as Idea as Idea" photostats of dictionary definitions that conveniently hung like paintings in a gallery setting, with the concept (just like Spooky's concepts are conveniently indistinguishable from a CD or Dj set that can be performed, distributed, marketed). While Kosuth's peer Lawrence Weiner strove to destroy the art object, only failing through the extremity of his actions that resulted in shockwave reappropriation (the legal contract), Kosuth's more modest stance (yet rockstar, Warholian image), ensured his sustainable caché at the outset *within* the existing gallery system. Spooky, however, despite a marked post-Warholian image that samples Kosuth as well as his advertising tactics (newspaper advertisements, stickers), cannot be "caught" in either paradox, for the tactical reason that the trap has not been deployed within a written concept or statement: Spooky has issued no statements clarifying the purpose or intent of his conceptual art. In fact it is unclear as to what the "concept" of Spooky's conceptual art is, besides its dissemination, remix and sampling. Is the concept the concept of sampling itself? The message as dissemination? Spooky's conceptual art is almost entirely composed of—and requires the metaphysical distinction of—form. There is no concept in its meaning, in its idea-as-idea doubling; the concept is no longer unique, whole nor contained, like the conceptual artist, in a statement or even a body. The concept is the (form of) the name—the medium. And the density of such a concept is subject to transformation, to the point of irrevocable mutation. Only the form can be traced: the content is deferred, sidestepped, becomes

irrelevant. Without clarification, the concept becomes the marketing itself, of marketing itself: of the dissemination of a sample whose content becomes secondary, if not irrelevant. In this case, Spooky's work exemplifies a stance that tests Marshall McLuhan's mantra that the "medium is the message" (nonetheless a favourite of Spooky's). The medium has not only become the message; there simply is no structural place for the message at all. The possibility of any message has been *deterred*: not by medium, but through an absence of intent (which, as we have considered, is an intent unto itself).

Whether as a covert conceptual artist or agent of semiotic forces, Spooky remains publicly critiqued as a musician. That said, his writing is often considered "pretentious" in the eyes of music journalism (a charge that we won't get into here, although it does mark a certain divide between the appearance of mix culture as presented by Spooky and its reality—that is, its distrust of articulate and expressive writing). Spooky's investment in conceptual art can be viewed as another tactic. It extracts his work from the context of sound to (conceptual) art; and from music journalism to academic discussion (as we witness here). Although, in the movement of this extraction, it also deforms that which it is engaging. No discipline of the human sciences can envelope Spooky. Spooky is a diagram of a machine no one (yet) knows how to operate. This diagram is a graft, a schema, or a cut-up of simulations: sound, Djing, Afro-American music, etc., all of which *simulate* the form of the concept *of* art. No one knows what this machine does nor whether it is an actual machine or the image of one (a simulation of a simulation machine). This machine is the general map of technology in the 21st century: a possible sketch of a possibility of technology, of where technology and art and concept might meet, without yet understanding what will pass, that is, what content such a merger might produce, and without being able to distinguish between the sketch (the map) and the machine (the territory). Thus, the oceanic network.

2 – critique of the malleable function of aesthetics: consumerism and concept

The possible encounter, meeting, or merger between conceptual art, digital technology and timeless idealism is a "function." The machine must *function*. This functionality occurs only by ensuring a timeless distinction (idealism) between subject and object, the artist in full control (the ideal and the idea). Spooky, as idea, as timeless, as concept art and as technology, and as focal point of remix culture, harnesses intentionality as a self-serving sample. Yet, the audience, apparently, does not listen within the same parameters. While the Dj is an idealist, concerned with the deployment, in sound, of an idea, the audience only cares whether it

“like(s) it or not.” While the rhythm scientist gestures toward a future mapping, if not a futurism, of technology, art, concept and idea, the audience listens as *consumer*. The audience is consumer, and its aesthetics are those of “likes:” “At the end of the day, when you press PLAY on the CD, you don’t necessarily care what the Dj was thinking about. You’re just going to see if you like it or not” (20). Thus, while the Dj is ideal intentionality, the audience is consumer, working not with the idea but an aesthetics of entertainment that centers around the “like.” Likes it or not: on or off, an object that is either there (likes it, buys it: is an audience that can be identified as it consumes) or not (don’t like it, won’t buy the CD: an absent audience, so to speak). Can the “like” permit critical faculty or inquiry? An audience conceptualized as such allows Spooky to claim that “Music is always a metaphor. It’s an open signifier, an invisible, utterly malleable material” (20). Thus, a material that is profoundly ahistorical, profoundly removed from the myriad forms of its “reception” (that is, its articulation, actualization, representation). It is “timeless idealism” *as* music. Either the audience likes it or not: either way, the audience doesn’t ask questions. The complex reasons for liking or not liking a release, aesthetics values such as *skill* and *technique*, are sidestepped via the effects of the simulated concept.

How does such open malleability function within Spooky’s concern for *memory* and *narrative*? Malleability, profoundly metaphorical, would call for an indifference or blindness to the sampled material. That is, to the source artists and *their* ideas on property and ownership. Their aesthetic ideas, their aesthetic materiality, strategies of appropriation. In general, it would require burying the idea of the source artist *in general* in favour of the idea of the remixer. Given that the audience can often spot the sampled material (and identify it), to say that the audience “likes it or not” circumvents an analysis of the relation between the remixer and the material. What if the audience doesn’t like it because of the way a sample has been formalized? What kind of aesthetic framework is at work in such a concern? I.e., how does Spooky approach that which he is remixing and how does an audience concern itself with the way in which remixing operates? And, if we take Spooky at his conceptual level, through the problematic of simulated conceptual art coupled with “material memories,” how does the aesthetic operate?

These are only critiques that can be posed here. Memory and narratology, in the burial and mixing and layering of samples, becomes unconscious, even at the cusp of disappearance and evaporation. It is this “malleability” of sound which, even though never as purely malleable as the pure ideal of which the artist of remix culture desires, would nevertheless govern the

impulse of the “like” insofar as it triggers *material memories* of a sample’s historical positioning. This malleability is in constant transaction with narrative, with the history of its sample and *its telling*—the form or the way in which the sample is sampled. That, is with the story: “Sometimes the best way to get an idea across is to simply tell it as a story” (Miller, “Material Memories”).

3 – the New Griots: malleable narratology (the logic of recursive storytelling)

In this scenario, the site of the transaction itself, this conflict between malleability and materiality, between sample and remix, the simulated conceptual artist is the idea itself. Spooky describes as much in introducing the “griot,” the storyteller:

The best Djs are griots, and whether their stories are conscious or unconscious, narratives are implicit in the sampling *idea*. Every story leads to another story to another story to another story. But at the same time, they might be called “music before the impact of language,” or pre-linguistic stories. Core myths from the binary opposition at the center of the human mind. In the twenty-first century, stories disappear and evaporate as soon as they’re heard, a sonic and cultural entropy. Mass counterbalances rhythm science’s entropic drift, though, as the physical density of information becomes a new field open for interpretation. (*Rhythm Science* 21)

A griot is a “a storyteller in western Africa who perpetuates the oral tradition and history of a village or family.”² And a “new griot?” Connected to remix culture, a storyteller of stories always disappearing and evaporating. Once these stories become dense enough, their origins are lost. This “physical density” is what opens “a new field...for interpretation.” With no source to speak of, density permits open-ended malleability. On the one channel, responsibility in this context is intensified, for the context and deployment of the sample becomes the criterion of an aesthetics of remix culture. On the other channel, convenient density provides no end of reasons to have none.

Unlike the oral genealogy of the griot, the new griot’s stories are not histories or traditions, and have no socio-geographical “roots;” they are soundbytes, spots, memes, ads. They are data particles in a pool of information rendered shy of meaningless through plenitude. Sampling grants meaning back to archives lost in obscurity.

New griot samples are also ads. They *are*, without consequence (just as they could also be testimonials, death notes, diaries, last rites or reality television). It is only, however, by resurrecting the “timeless idea”—an idea without origin, like a griot’s story—and juxtaposing

it to the density of information, that a remixer can operate in a mode that seeks to transcend one's epoch. The timeless idea is the idea of timelessness: of the possibility of escaping time. The "timeless idea," in this scenario, becomes the *form* of the new griot's density in and of itself. The structure of the timeless idea is the idea of information becoming so dense that no time (and thus, no author) is attributable. What is also timeless in this idea is a matrix of property, as the timeless idea becomes deployed to the proper name of the remixer who seeks to become timeless: "...the sense here is one of prolonging the formal implications of the expressive act – move into the frame, get the picture, re-invent your name" ("Material Memories").

Take the *idea's* existence (as simulated conceptual art project). In a strategy homologous to—although only in form—the artist's statements of '60s conceptualists, writing about itself is the way the idea justifies itself. The concept is primary, even if the concept defers its content (such deferral into secondary information is the prerequisite of the information's primary status as master term). What is secondary is its deployment (i.e., skill), although here the entire operation has become simulated; thus skill has been deferred. What is a book, then? It is both primary and secondary. It is both the development of the primary information (the idea or concept explained, justified, given to narrative and biography) and an object of the secondary (an art-object of and in itself, although not subject to a critique of skill). It is both above aesthetic criticism as primary information (*idea*) and beyond aesthetic criticism as secondary information (the execution is irrelevant); moreover the operation is simulated. The idea has written a narrative that sustains its own actions: that of placing itself before and above all other "functions" that might question the governing strategy. The strategy that connects primary and secondary information is that of the *function*. It glues the ensemble Spooky designates when determining rhythm science. Thus it functions not as art—but as *science*.

Yet the idea is not science for it retains a proper name: Dj Spooky. It is the closed circuit of the pure idea. The idea cannot sense what is beyond the horizon of the idea. It is bound to the idea's limits, which are the limits *sans* body. It requires Paul D. Miller as body, but in writing, in language, it can only think at the limit of the idea. Nonetheless what functions is rhythm science. The other name for this function is Dj Spooky: an absolute idea that is nonetheless fragmented, unattached to a functioning body, spread thin across all networks, attached to all technologies, corporations, peoples, non-humans, automobiles and planes, for example, without center, that nonetheless *must* grant itself the role of "designated driver." This *sounds* crazy: as idea that *functions* as function of the idea. It comes to the fore when Spooky

writes, as idea, as “I,” when Spooky takes a survey of what it is that he is, as idea constructed, already, by another idea, by the idea of ideas, the network:

A deep sense of fragmentation occurs in the mind of the Dj. When I came to Dj-ing, my surroundings—the dense spectrum of media grounded in advanced capitalism—seemed to have already constructed so many of my aspirations and desires for me; I felt like my nerves extended to all of these images, sounds, other people—that all of them were extensions of myself, just as I was an extension of them. Trains, planes, automobiles, people, transnational corporations, monitor screens—large and small, human and non-human—all of these represent a seamless convergence of time and space in a world of compartmentalized moments and discrete invisible transactions. Somehow it all just works.... all of these media representations still need a designated driver. (*Rhythm Science* 21-24).

Here Spooky describes the process of reciprocal feedback that characterizes remix culture’s paradoxical relation to the author in terms of the author’s authority. When Dj Spooky came to Dj-ing, as a “dense spectrum of media,” a networked entity, he found himself intrinsically connected to all aspects of the oceanic network, and thus, unable to assert disconnected “aspirations and desires.” In the confusion of self-extension, a struggle arose to control “all of these media representations.” Spooky assigned himself as the “designated driver:” that is, he assigned himself control of all of these representations. Yet this control, this desire for aspirations and desires was already part of the contextual construction of aspiration and desire in the “dense spectrum of media grounded in advanced capitalism.” The action of the network upon itself, as the very form of the network’s particles, generated Dj Spooky, through recursive feedback, as the network’s “embodiment” (although disembodied), and did so as a repeated series, thereby necessitating the continual dissemination of Spooky’s proper name *qua* concept (*qua* idea, etc.). Spooky is indicative of recursive difference in remix culture. On the one channel, Spooky is “posthuman:” “the two central dialectics involved in the formation of the posthuman are presence/absence and pattern/randomness” (Hayles, *Posthuman* 247). The “designated driver” demands the concept of the dialectic, as the dialectic becomes conceptually necessary to designate intent and authority to otherwise fractal reciprocity and recursivity. On the other channel, Spooky is a conduit: a network-(un)consciousness self-arising from an interconnected system of stories. Artificial intelligence of (and from) the semantic web. Yet requiring its reciprocal, as transcendent form arising from the plane of immanence. The political is thus held in suspense between the network and the name, the deferred immanent and the dialectically “ascendent” (ibid.).

Dj Spooky is thus a density. Density calls itself to being, but confronted with the fact that it never did so—that the networks regenerated density from the repeated form of connectivity—it assigns itself a story to self-necessitate its existence. And this story, in its general form, is a classic narrative of philosophy, if not of science fiction: the coming-to of alien consciousness. In this latter aspect, Dj Spooky's relation to AfroFuturism, which invests in science fiction as an alternative vehicle of reimagining black futures,³ constitutes a process of network-actualization of these myths (the network becoming the actualizer and the actualized). But as these myths did not originate from Paul D. Miller (the old griot), the new griot, Dj Spooky, must re-announce itself, reimagine itself from its environment to sustain a degree of autonomy “from” the network. Incessantly. Otherwise, Dj Spooky knows no name and is only the current of the passing phase that tracks the archive, be it of data or time, sample or ontology.

Another way to spin this: Spooky, as a mix, is always spun or mixed by a Dj (another idea, another context, another paradox). In this case, Dj Spooky, a kind of ontological feedback loop that removes Miller from the picture (or the soundtrack). Miller is only “there” as the body that travels along. It is this kind of twist that defines the mix's constantly shifting deployment of context via the connections of its samples. Where *Rhythm Science* the book offers reflections on other topics, such as software, music and technology, it is always in the mode of this mix. Rhythm science, as the functioning of the network that names its function, i.e. its functionary, Dj Spooky, is a possible form, structure or medium for the posthuman. All metaphysical categories of the aesthetic, political, ontological, etc., within this scenario, are reinscribed, that is reconstructed, on and through this tension of the gap, or the touch, between the concepts of the ascendent dialectic and fractal reciprocity.

4 – Advertising as idea of advertising : *Rhythm Science* as advert

If advertising can be seen as a vehicle of pop communication for a simulated, conceptual, pop art project, then *Rhythm Science* disseminates its status as advert for Dj Spooky. Analysing the aesthetic strategies of Baudelaire in response to the rise of the commodity in the 19th Century, Baudrillard writes that:

the work of art becomes one with fashion, advertising, the ‘fairy land of the code’—a work of art that bewilders in its venality, mobility, effects of missing referent, chance vertigo—a pure object of marvellous commutability, since, the causes having disappeared, all effects are virtually equivalent. (*Fatal Strategies* 117-118)

The disappearance of the griot heralds the “New Griot,” who basks in the equivalency of “all effects,” “the causes having disappeared.” It is not that they “naturally” were lost. Rather, their erasure is part of the process of digital quantization. Yet, working with surfaces without histories, sounds without stories, history and story are regenerated as a network of “advertisements for myself:” the sticker blitz from which Spooky began. In this sense, Dj Spooky heralds a spectacular embodiment of Baudrillard’s call for the work of art to “shine resplendent in the pure obscenity of commodity” (118). Yet, has it followed Baudrillard’s demanding and second requirement—did any of the ‘80s art world so influenced by Baudrillard’s writings?—to “annihilate itself as familiar object and become monstrously foreign?” Dj Spooky is slowly annihilating Paul D. Miller; the result, however, is hardly foreign: it is the context of the ancient idea of the digital under the “new” technology. The monstrous occurs elsewhere—take the extreme plasticity of the ultimate alien Michael Jackson, “becoming more commodity than commodity, since even farther from all use-value” (Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies* 117).

Concept as idea, pasted as paragraph stickers:

Condensation: Code is Beats is Rhythm (*Rhythm Science* 25)

As a sticker, intimately adhered to the surface of the world, Spooky bonded with the surface, becoming the griot of the new networks. Plastered onto everything, Spooky felt a part of it all as he is a part of the all, a surface effect, mobilizing the surface of affect. Ending with a narrative of disappearance, disseminated through a popular academic press (MIT), the text’s effects return to the question first posed in Spooky’s advertising campaign of origin, or, conceptual art project as the birth of Spooky’s self consciousness of multiplex unconsciousness, as advertising: *Who is Dj Spooky?*

Endnotes: The New Griots

¹ As well as a deferral of naming those who often create the work *with* him: the “conceptual artist” takes precedence in signature. This is by no means uncommon.

² Merriam-Webster 2004. Online at <<http://www.dictionary.com>>.

³ See science fiction writer Samuel R. Delaney’s work as well as *Social Text* 71 (Summer 2002), Ed. Alondra Nelson.

06 – the idiot & the zombie (incorporations)

On the fractal “I” of Dj Spooky as formalization of network and digital in/divisibility

The idiot and the zombie in *Rhythm Science*:

There is our beginning, and there is our narrative path. The person without qualities who cannot say “I.” The person whom others speak through, who has no central identity save what he or she knows. And what they know is that they know there is nothing else. That is the narrative role of the idiot in this journey, and that is where I begin this scenario. (009)

Reading this paragraph becomes a spiralling process wherein the voice of the “I” becomes self-refractive (the function of the “I” becomes multiplex) while reinforcing its presence (speaking in first person concerning its own singularity). It serves as a marker for reading Spooky and for reading remix culture in general. It marks the formalization of a paradox of which we have been outlining so far: that of in/divisibility as the formalization of *technics* via digital network technologies.

Observable is that the “I” nonetheless speaks, and still speaks, even under these conditions, which might be the conditions of the “I” in general as the “man without qualities.” If what we assume as Miller begins, as the idiot and the zombie, “this scenario,” it is more likely that the “I” designates the function of Spooky, writing of the “I” as Paul D. Miller. The human is thus the idiot, a “zombie.” A person who cannot say “I” is, in the schema of psychoanalysis, paralyzed in the fracture of subjectivity, in the throes of mourning, of psychoanalytic incorporation. We will sample here a reading of incorporation from Abraham, Torok and Derrida into this narratology of the “I.” Thus we seek to trace the impact of re-medial incorporation on the structures of subjectivity in the oceanic network.

What we discover is that the “I” is cognisant of its “multiplex consciousness,” to a break from the body of Paul D. Miller, a body that will eventually expire and no longer be integral to the author function, the carrier of data in a material medium. At this point, Spooky, as the functionary, gains spectral autonomy. The fracture of the “I” is thus related to the mourning, in language, of the death of the *material carrier* before the immortality of the proper name. This subjectivity is thus strictly, in one sense, Cartesian: the soul mourns the death of the body. Yet the difference between this and Descartes’ account is that now, via technology, the proper name risks crossing the threshold of becoming material, of becoming a new form of embodiment through the network. Posthumanity threatens the absolute death of the body,

and this tension is found exemplified *as* the form of the concept of the “I” in the Miller/Spooky matrix. Psychoanalysis, here, may aid us, at least a particular branch from which Derrida has derived his work on mourning. Let us turn briefly to Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok.

For Abraham and Torok, incorporation is the psychoanalytic process of *introjection* (the “normal” process of love and mourning) gone wrong. To love you—or mourn for you—in what is constructed as an apparently healthy and socially acceptable way, I introject a bit of you, assimilate the love object that is you, your desires and instincts: and so when I love or mourn the object-you, I love or mourn my “self.” Introjection is the extension of primary narcissism, of what Ferenczi called “autoerotic cathexes” (Derrida, *Fors* xvi). Incorporation, however, occurs at the limits of introjection when, for whatever reasons (usually trauma of some sort) introjection has failed. The slow, gradual process of introjection is superseded by “instantaneous” and “hallucinogenic” incorporation, which marks the *refusal* to mourn/love, *and* the live burial of the love object and its subsequent desires and instincts inside of “me.” This irrevocably fractures the topology of the I, constructing an unfolding, haunted, *topoi*, which contain the grounds of a crypt (xvi) that splits *both* Ego and Id. This is not a box of secrets inside the self: rather, this *double* incorporation to both Ego and Id creates a tunnel between the two domains that destabilizes their territories. In this intrapsychic topos of incorporation, this secret “crypt” is erected to commemorate the refusal of not only the loss of the object, but also the associated desires from the introjection process, while simultaneously maintaining those desires through a spectral, performative paradox that never achieves synthesis: incorporation as subjectivity (xvii).

Jodey Castricano, in her study of Jacques Derrida and the American Gothic, notes that “the fantasy of incorporation is understood by Derrida as an inhibition *necessary* for the *very possibility* of the ‘subject’” (my italics, 58). Thus, Derrida understands the paradoxical topos of incorporation not as pathology, but as an integral inhibition necessary for the very possibility of what we understand as un/consciousness or subjectivity. According to Derrida, incorporation mimes an impossible origin that sets in motion the economy of “consciousness,” a myth of self-presence that secretly circulates through the other, a mythic origin that speaks to the “myth of consciousness” (*Of Grammatology* 166). This circulation is always already effected through writing-in-general (the very possibility of the mark). Castricano calls the *writing* of this process *cryptomimesis*. Because of its fundamental yet

performative undecideability, the question over the actual, sensible difference between incorporation and introjection for Derrida is never resolved, much like how the intractable conflict of desire “within” incorporation is never synthesized. It is in this irresolvable sense that, written in Spooky’s language, our inability to pinpoint who is writing the “I,” and of whom the “I” refers, is set to motion as the play between the “idiot” and the “zombie.” This undecideability over authorship and the struggles over authority over what is proper to the “I,” property, marks all of remix culture.

The narrator, as idiot “I” without qualities begins: “...and that is where I begin this scenario” (009). To begin with the nothingness of the “I,” the obscenity of the truth of Spooky: is not this narratological framework one of the “I” in general? A feedback loop of subjectivity that, through the other of the media and the media of the other, flattened to data, becomes the very plane of a “multiplex consciousness” that is always in the process of networking its deferrals and relays at the *technical* level?

All of these questions are held in suspense, for the reading is at least double, or doubling. The plane of the multiple that occasions the form of author/ity, the zombie narrator, is also that of pop culture itself (a dense point of origin from the new griot milieu). Like pop culture, the narrator as lacking qualities is a *mirror*. Baudrillard writes that the object, eclipsing the subject, “knows nothing of the mirror phase, where it would come to be caught by its own imaginary;” rather, “It is the mirror” (*Fatal Strategies* 113). For Baudrillard, the object, like the operations of the crypt, *returns* the subject to its impossible position. However, and unlike Baudrillard, we have no desire to return to a *pure* subject: rather this mirroring *has always been* the process of subjectivity. What marks the difference of the oceanic network is its formalization (technological and technical).

We come to the following formula: Spooky, as conceptual object, desiring to become a subject but impossibly caught in a context of the idea, that is, equivocated to the concept of the idea (simulated), of the object network, unable to know or experience Paul D. Miller’s subjectivity feedback loop, constructs the subject as pure will and intent *sans* the division of subjectivity (the mirror stage). The object wills itself but only in recognising, then effacing, its creation by the network, by circulation, by advertising, images, transmissions. And in another doubled respect, it already is one half of subjectivity: Dj Spooky marks the crypt of Paul D. Miller, just as, at some point, Miller becomes, via the image, a particle in the density of networks of Dj Spooky. The narrator, as object and not subject, yet as “that which returns

the subject to its mortal transparency” (Baudrillard), performs (which is to say formalizes) the mirror to pop culture’s logic of the surface. Dj Spooky as the slave of pop culture:

The idiot as processing device, slave to the moment, outside of time because for him there is only the moment of thought. No past, no present, no future. The idiot is a zombie, a character straight out of *Thriller*, one of Michael Jackson’s chorus line of decaying bodies moving into y’all’s neighbourhood. Watch the idiots dance to rhythms they do not feel or understand. There is our beginning, our narrative path. (009)

In another sense, aren’t we, as readers, as an academic audience, the zombies, dancing to rhythms we do not feel or understand? An image, but an image of sound: Michael Jackson’s face is the perfected image of pop culture, for it is that of the zombie. Decaying, fetishized, plastic, dead like the dancers in *Thriller*. The pop icon becomes Spooky’s iconography, becomes his music, his rhythms.

The dead are trickier than we think. Just when we thought we had pegged the narrator as the zombie, it becomes clear the narrator is only provisional, presented-as-such. A deadly ruse, a joke. And this layering strategy (more than one track in the mix), constitutes the difficulty of this text, and the difference between its surface and its vectors. What reads as flow is nonetheless suspect to Deleuze’s virtual dimension. The virtual dimension for Deleuze functions as time and as the potential *of* and *for* time, as receding apace both from being and becoming.¹ As the “I” writes, it is torn in two virtual directions; it memorializes this schizophrenic struggle in writing. This would be another way to think of cryptomimesis. To *be* in such a position, to write from one, like Deleuze’s masochism,² is to be a “slave to the moment,” to the now of an impossible demand: immanence.

In his introduction to *Parables for the Virtual*, Massumi writes a paragraph that serves us well here. It ties the relation of the crypt, of the void of infinite divisibility, to that of the virtual, a performative paradox that is inscribed throughout *Rhythm Science*, for the unity of this “I” remains “purely virtual:”

A word for the “real but abstract” incorporeality of the body is the *virtual*. The extent to which the virtual is exhausted by “potential,” or how far into the virtual an energeticism can go is a last problem worth mentioning. For only an “insensible body is a truly continuous body”: there’s the rub. There’s the ultimate paradox of the dynamic unity of movement and sensation: the unity is purely virtual. For the virtual to fully achieve itself,

it must recede from being apace with becoming. This problem (of the void) is not entirely absent from the “parables of the virtual” that follow. (*Parables for the Virtual* 21)

Social armor, indeed. Spooky plays intellectual games of the freakiest order. Games that incorporate an implicit reading of the network through their expansion of identity, beyond death to the zombie. Meanwhile, it leads us through performativity to the limit of any general theory of identity politics, to the point of decay, the exposure of incorporation, the obscenity of flesh, the subject rotting off its sinews as object.

Grab your shovel: get grave digging.

Endnotes: the idiot & the zombie (incorporations)

¹ This will be justified below via Masumi. Deleuze’s thought on the virtual, drawn from many sources but in particular Henri Bergson, finds its articulation vis-à-vis the history of philosophy in *Difference and Repetition*, Trans. Paul Patton, New York: Columbia UP, 1994. See chapter II, “Repetition for Itself,” pp. 70-128. For example, “The past and the future do not designate instants distinct from a supposed present instant, but rather the dimensions of the present itself in so far as it is a contraction of instants” (71). This can be compared to Miller when he says that “...it’s all about selection of sound as narrative. I guess that’s travelling by synecdoche. It’s a process of sifting through the narrative rubble of a phenomenon that one of my favorite conceptual artists, Adrian Piper, likes to call the ‘indexical present:’ ‘I use the notion of the ‘indexical present’ to describe the way in which I attempt to draw the viewer into a direct relationship with the work, to draw the viewer into a kind of self critical standpoint which encourages reflection on one’s own responses to the work...’” (“Material Memories”).

² See Deleuze, Gilles and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty and Venus in Furs*, Trans. Jean McNeil, New York: Zone, 1991.

07 – the chameleon and the capitalist chimera

On the remix artist as chameleon in the heart of capitalism

Miller/Spooky is an important artist, both because of the sheer vitality of his sampled/remixed sounds, and because he so thoroughly registers and reflects upon what it means to live in our 21st century network culture. Miller speaks to and for a world in which everything is hybrid, everything is continually being transformed and “remediated” – but also everything is instantly commodified and branded, reduced to an identifiable and marketable tag. He reminds us that we are constantly being bathed – literally as well as metaphorically – in sound waves and electromagnetic waves of all conceivable frequencies, carrying messages intentional or not, and whether we are aware of all these messages or not. Miller *plays* with all these messages, both ironically and seriously, and encourages us to play with them in turn.

Everything is a sample, everything is waiting to be sampled; and everything is renewed when it is sampled, broken down, reconstructed and recontextualized. If architecture is, as they say, frozen music, then – Miller says – music is liquid architecture. Music fills and reconfigures space, puts it into motion. All that is solid melts into software – actually, into free software or shareware. I found Paul Miller's lecture exhilarating, as it envisioned – but also pragmatically demonstrated, in brief – the utopian potentialities of postmodern culture. Remix/Remodel. Deform in order to Transform.

– Steven Shaviro, “Dj Spooky”

Although aspects of Spooky's process seek to seat the audience and control the questions, the very presence of the paradox of the proper name—of an audience asked to partake in remix culture yet mind the name of the Dj, “Dj Spooky,” as the brand on the mix—or, the very absence in recognising this problematic, leads to a critical reconsideration of the relationship between art and advertising in remix culture.

Are remix culture artists chameleons in the heart of capital, shedding skins to disguise the work of subversive activities among global players?

Is the surface simply the paradox it *appears* to be: somehow, both art and advertising?

This is first of all a question of the function of surface and appearance in remix culture. For Spooky, in homage to Deleuze, it's all about the “cold logic of the surface” (005), a “knowledge and pleasure in the play of surfaces” (076). A surface that nonetheless is a conduit for transportation, or a form of transportation itself, insofar as sound is memory and metaphor: “Music is always a metaphor. It's an open signifier, an invisible, utterly malleable material” (021). An “endless recontextualizing.” This endlessness nevertheless shutters with the closure of the text, and its surface, seemingly infinite in thought, finalizes with the last page.

In *Echographies of Television*, Derrida and Stiegler discuss how music is reconstructed from the archives. The digital archive rendered into sound, as in hip hop and electronic music (53), leads Stiegler to say: “If I have understood you correctly, the addressees must themselves participate in production...?” (the old avant-garde dream of levelling the producer/audience distinction). To which Derrida responds: “It is precisely the concept of the addressee that would have to be transformed. And isn't this essentially what is happening?” (55). It's not quite the case that the audience becomes the author; rather, the *audience* undergoes a few profound changes.

From a cultural studies perspective that often considers resistance and transgression its points of departure, what does it mean to sustain the *transformation* of the addressee? What if this transformation is simply one of “marketing”? What this transformation implies above all is an expansion of *technics*; it certainly doesn't imply a technological utopia as its result, nor the empowering of the transformed audience.

It is necessary to consider this expansion as its effects concern the context in which we would wish to analyse any claims to the chameleon. As Derrida pointed out in “Signature Event Context” and subsequent discussions in *Limited Inc.*,¹ the network of *techné* expands as the context of contexts, the general conditions for all iterability as “experience” not-identical-to-itself (earlier, in *Margins of Philosophy*, he calls this the “circle of circles”).² The integration of *techné* to general iterability, in the language of the network, through technical means of pervasive technology, is what draws our attention here, for it also reformulates, extends and exceeds these propositions. While for thirty years the saying “Il n'y a pas de hors-texte” from *Of Grammatology*³ led to relentless debate over the *narrow* form of the text and the way in which such a statement was read as *confirming* the theory of Saussurean semiotics over *all* domains, today the emphasis is starkly upon the technical, actual network of data we all know and encounter on a daily basis. And when art enters the picture, when the artist-as-remixer scans the physical density of data in which s/he is immersed as an origin in which to begin, then perhaps a re-reading of Derrida not via the sign but through this *expansion* will take force as the embodiment of *techné* in living-dead concepts such as Spooky.

Spooky's writing treads this line of philosophical influence, hinting not only at deconstruction and Derrida but Deleuze, often uncritically embracing what are often resampled (and thus also, transformed) neo-futurist motifs of mobility, speed and nomadism. It is perhaps here, in the process of transformation that we can articulate the chameleon. But is this a form of sly resistance or a covert strategy of guerilla marketing? And if both?

Élisabeth Wetterwald writes of this new form of “resistance” that defers resistance, a form which no longer consists of “getting your back up,” but rather “of being light and mobile, of becoming attuned, of constantly adapting, shifting and re-situating yourself” (86). There’s an element to this form of resistance that is seamless, rather than obstructive: it is the current ideal of the 21C artworld that began its partnership with global capitalism long before conceptual art formalized its relation. Spooky begins his “Material Memories” by quoting Deleuze (“Time is invention, or it is nothing at all...”), and delving into a meditation on the saying: “Money is time, but time is not Money.” He writes: “From the construction of time in a world of images and advertising, it’s not that big a leap to arrive at place like that old Wu-Tang song said a while ago ‘C.R.E.A.M.’ – ‘Cash Rules Everything Around Me.’ That’s the end result of the logic of late capitalist representations *redux*.”

If that’s the end result, then what differentiates the artist from the advertising agent? Aren’t they *all* producing rhythm science? The question has to be reframed to consider that the *end result*, the ultimate reduction, is also a construct of the “late capitalist” moment. What is this “end” in a network of process? Any claim to *redux* would have to entail not a blockage of flow, but rather its quantification, calculation, quantization, digitization...

As Wetterwald writes, analysing the work of Maurizio Cattelan, in the 21C “we should not expect too much of art and artists: art often consists of lies, trickery and theft” (87). Yet, by default, Wetterwald seems to believe that these “new” strategies of mobility will somehow maintain an aspect of *truth* to art—even in its lies, or, to renounce the old “revolutionary, avant-garde art,” an artist of nomadism and the smooth surface, of reflection, mimicry and strategy, becomes in its *redux* C.R.E.A.M. incarnate. The artist/advertising line becomes thin, and the celebration of vaguely Deleuzian motifs gains ground as some kind of alternative, as either harmonious with capitalism or, perhaps more honestly, unable to map—and not retreating or deferring—a victory granted *to* capitalism itself.⁴ (“Deleuzian”—although watered of all anti-capitalist critique). Wetterwald argues that such artists “within” systems of institution, artists who, like Dj Spooky, “work with major brands and companies, exhibit their work in upscale boutiques and luxury hotels, lay their hands on high technology and the tools of production, use the most advanced communication devices and the most modern tools, and create images using the same means of fashion, advertising or television,” “no longer see themselves as outsiders: incorruptible, righteous and politically committed. They are chameleons and, as such, they know perfectly well how to use capitalism’s colours” (88).

What are they *using* these colours for (and has this not implied a *redux* to *utility*)?

And is not capitalism simply *using* them?

Two properties remain of the 21C artist that are exemplified in Spooky through the character of the chameleon: “author/ity” and “proper/ty.” Authority of the author, even if its skin is beyond its control, changing not at will but as the product of its networked environment, because a chameleon must be able to determine the level of camouflage and exhibit a chosen blend; and property, because such a chameleon must mimic the claims to territory endemic of capital. The chameleon must properly authorize h/er work. An entity with many names, an entity that might overcome its body, but an entity nonetheless that exhibits the characteristics of any proper name. In other words, there is something of the old dynamics of will and individuality, of authorship and ownership, even when this artist *isn’t* “completely integrated into the neo-liberal system:”

Nevertheless, there remain artists who are not completely integrated into the neo-liberal system of contemporary society and who are not its direct agents; who do not submit their artistic project to the needs of the technological system or to the injunctions of productivity, much less to direct profit; who do not seek to homogenize experience but to *individualize* it. (my italics, Wetterwald 88)

Likewise:

For these artists, what is at stake is to see the world not as a monster alien to oneself but as something in which one fully participates, like a giant hypertext made up of *intelligible* fragments. Fragments which can always be moved about at *will* or arranged differently. (my italics, 90)

While such a position, when identified with “movement,” “mobility” and so forth might be identified, at least superficially as Deleuzean, or, when conjoined with a discourse of “rearranging, adjusting, reframing and displacing” (90), might be identified with a Derridean strategy, the determining factors of “management,” of becoming an “operator” of capitalism rather than a victim (88), establish a discourse of becoming a *master* (than a slave), a will that imposes individuality on a network, and calls upon the world to display its totalizing intelligibility. As we have already read, Spooky would rather be a “slave to the moment.”

Likewise, the avant-garde’s strategy of unintelligibility, of a play that recognizes the paradox of it’s self-imposed distance, of its difference, should not be so easily severed in light of where the argument of “operational management” delivers the “artist.” Is becoming a

manager the end movement of art in the 21C? Again—why be an “artist” at all? Why sustain the title? Why not rearticulate the zone in its entirety, as Seth Siegelaub did, and become a “consultant” for corporate tax write-offs?

Miming Foucault’s critique of Derrida in “My body, this paper, this fire,” Lawrence Grossberg’s critique of a particular, narrow reading of deconstruction anticipates this discourse of will and individuality, by recognising the inherent mastery in a discourse of reframing and displacing. He writes how such a strategy institutes “‘a little pedagogy’ that reestablishes an origin and gives authority to the ‘master’s’ voice” (“Experience” 75).⁵ The *transformation* of Derrida—(and Deleuze)—by Wettelman is exactly the sort of appropriation of tactics that Grossberg has every right to critique. A rereading of Deleuze and Derrida at their intersection, their points of transformation, distance and contact, in view of the paradigm of the new/old griots, is thereby necessary in order to rearticulate strategies of operational management. It is this task which will befall all strategies of the 21C: the grappling with the explosion of data, the physical density of writing, of philosophy inherited from the twentieth century.

It is this *telos* which holds out the hope for utopia (as long as we just go along quietly, secretly, undercover). While saying that “we no longer live in an era of promise but in an era of management,” Wettelman writes that we are nonetheless promised, as if in a dream, the “utopia” of the chameleon’s true identity (90). Wettelman claims that chameleons “occupy a territory at the same time that they mine it” thereby using “capitalism’s arsenals, energies and strategies” to “reflect capitalism’s own image back to itself” as well as “create a parallel reality in which everything is recognizable, identifiable, plausible and even rather seductive, but in which, however, nothing is the same” (90). This remains a territory; this utopia remains that of capitalism’s dream: for how is this different from *capitalism itself*? In process or outcome? Such a mirroring operation, even if refractive, if “re-directed, a little fuzzy, warped or re-mixed” is not at all *different*, nor does it produce any *alternative* to capital, as Wettelman seems to imply, from the base operations of capital.

It remains impossible to reveal a chameleon, unless the mimicry of corruption has become a viable alternative or strategy of deflection. To become a chameleon, to harbour camouflage, to disappear, to guard a secret, means to play with the invisibility of networks, to do nothing less than “managing” capitalism. Spooky hints at something else than hiding *inside* capital. He calls for us to travel and *expand* outward:

If there's anything the 20th century taught us, it's that there are so many cultures out there that are mixed beyond anything we can possibly really contain in one image, one thought, one word. Acceptance of the pluralism and being open to diversity all starts with your crew. (Miller, "The Raw Uncut")

Perhaps Wettelman leaves secret, leaves camouflaged, these elements? Or perhaps Wettelman becomes an agent for capital, here camouflaging as a progressive art critic and theorist? We cannot know once we enter strategies of disappearance and secrecy that are present in their otherness to their true identity. Think of the dream of the artist as the assassin, as sampled by William S. Burroughs from the myth of Hassan i Sabbah.⁶ The secret "hashasheen," lying in wait for years within the enemy institution or encampment, biding the time to draw his knife and strike at the heart of the enemy, revealing the pure moment of revolution—this is *not* merely a dream. The moment of uncovering and sudden strike is all too prevalent in 21C global warfare. But will we be able to recognise when such revolutions happen, when such sudden strikes occur? Strategies of disappearance within the arts will have to investigate and ask whether giving up political commitment furthers camouflage or merely allows the appearance of camouflage to act as yet another tactic of self-promotion and advertising. Nothing sells better within capitalism than the secret rebel. Nothing sells better television than an assassination.

But the danger within writing, of taking sampling too far – too much citation, not enough synthesis – leads to the break with the old form. Who speaks through you? Sound creates a way of thinking about these issues in a way that the visual and the narrative flow into that rupture in the system of seduction. It perfects and popularizes before the other arts even adopt to the changed conditions. That's what the transactional reality reminds you: This is not a polite situation. (Spooky, *Rhythm Science* 113)

08 – the chameleon and the capitalist chimera : Endnotes

¹ See *Limited Inc*, Trans. Samuel Weber, Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1988.

² See *Margins of Philosophy*, Trans. Alan Bass, Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982. Specifically, “*Ouisa and Gramme: Note on a Note from Being and Time*,” pp. 29-67, and note 32, page 52, discussing Hegel: “Time is the *existence* of the circle, of the circle of circles spoken of at the end of the *Logic*. Time is circular, but it is also that which, in the movement of the circle, dissimulates circularity; it is the circle in that that itself it hides from itself its own totality, in that it loses in difference the unity of its beginning and end. [...]” As for “Signature Event Context” in *Limited Inc* (see footnote above), see p. 10: “Are they [the system of predicates: iterability, rupture, spacing] not to be found in all language, in spoken language for instance, and ultimately in the totality of ‘experience’ insofar as it is inseparable from this field of the mark, which is to say, from the network of effacement and of differentials, of units of iterability, which are separable from their internal and external context and also from themselves, inasmuch as the very iterability which constituted their identity does not permit them ever to be a unity that is identical to itself?”

³ See *Of Grammatology*, Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997 (corrected edition), p. 158.

⁴ See, for example, Slavoj Žižek’s “The Ongoing Soft Revolution,” *Critical Inquiry* 30 (winter 2004), pp. 292-323. “One could call Deleuze the ideologist of late capitalism. The much celebrated Spinozan imitatio affecti, the impersonal circulation of affects bypassing persons, is the very logic of publicity, of video clips, and so on, where what matters is not the message about the product, but the intensity of the transmitted affects and perceptions” (293). To a large degree these arguments have underlined what has been said here, while at the same time, like Žižek, seeing both a necessity of Deleuze and Derrida.

⁵ There is not space to entertain a full reading of Grossberg’s critique here. However, needless to say, Grossberg’s assertions: 1. that there is an “inability to talk about the historical determination of particular texts” (74) reveals a poor reading, from the start, of even early texts such as *Of Grammatology* (the historical context of Rousseau being a prime counterexample); 2. that Derrida is an idealist, and that there is an “underemphasis of the materiality of discourse as practice in the reduction of everything to *différance*” (74) displays an inattention to the meaning of “context” as developed as early as *Of Grammatology* but significantly discussed in “Limited Inc a b c” and “Signature Event Context,” wherein textuality is understood as the un/intelligibility of the world—the context of contexts, the problematic of the circle of circles, of the outside—i.e., wherein the ability of language to delimit its horizon specifies a relation with *forces that exceed the signifier* and not, as Grossberg claims, a “primacy of the signifier” (75). In confusing the theoretical object for the claim in the case of the latter, Grossberg misidentifies the object of critique, of deconstruction, with its argument. Derrida’s focus on the signifier has waned as have theories of Saussurean linguistics and semiotics. Moreover, this development is described in his earliest texts as being concerned with *forces* and not in arguing in *favour* of the signifier (the focus on force requires a sustained analysis in light of *force* in Deleuze, in order to understand the intersection with Deleuze and Guattari, the two theorists who culminate as a kind of theoretical, post-metaphysical “answer” in Grossberg’s search for a “revolutionary subject”).

⁶ For example, see *A William Burroughs Birthday Book*, Ed. Paul Cecil, London: Temple P, 1994. Also see the Wikipedia article on “assassin” at: <
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassin>>.

08 - Rekonstruction

On writing and analysing the processes of remix culture (conclusion)

Deconstructing Derrida requires coming to terms with the absence of a vocabulary valorizing the **reconstructive** tasks of forging solidarities, cooperative networks, or planning regimes. We need historically and sociologically determinate, yet comprehensive, social theories that can pose possible new regimes capable of cultivating environmental responsibility, democratic redistribution and participation, and, most importantly, sustainable alternatives to nearly globally hegemonic neoliberalism. This task requires articulation of forceful, focused, and somewhat singular normative arguments (i.e., which distinguish assertively good from bad ends) and arguments that are finely attuned to historical and sociological conditions that may favor or block prospective policy aims. We must go beyond Derrida, but remembering deconstruction and deploying its critical sensibilities in a supplementary way might help avert some of the terrible blinders and bloody mistakes of the last reconstructive era. (Antonio, “Remembering”)

On “Rekonstruction,” a collaborative track with Organized Konfusion’s Prince Po and Pharoah Monch,¹ Spooky MCs the opening to the hip-hop track. In this introduction he talks about expanding past the speech of the hands. The hands have remained the traditional tactile communication device of the DJ while, at the same time, that of the philosopher’s paradox (“on the one hand, on the other hand...”). Here, Spooky aims to expand past the tactile, the flesh, via his voice, the voice of a ghost, this “character in an upcoming novel.”

This is music made from fragments of the world... Just thinking about how people can reconstruct, you know what I’m saying.... We live in a time where things are changing. A lot of Djs just speak with their hands, you know, it’s time to like—expand.

Echoing from this sonic statement is a play on words. The track, spelled “rekonstruction,” we hear as “reconstruct” in the second sentence. Yet one suspects that Spooky is trying to emphasize the “rekonstruction,” the “reconstruct,” with a “k.” While language ploys have become somewhat passé in academic domains, they nonetheless continue to occupy Spooky and the group he is collaborating with (Organized Konfusion). Is this because language, slippery and infinitely resourceful, is able to stage a ceaseless encounter with the infinite reproduction of the digital sample? The play of language is not merely an exercise; its force encounters the substantial impact that the switch of proper names and subtle letters has for Miller/Spooky in determining his own relation to the practice of the dissemination of technology and the technology of dissemination.

Likewise we encounter “expand.” Not transgress, exceed or surpass, but expand, as a bubble, not even necessarily against an outside, but simply in a direction of all directions. Such an expansion is an expansion of movement: it implies a ceaseless movement, a ceaseless global travel. Expand past the hands. Although this could imply an expansion to other aspects of the body, it is left to expand in general, to expand its meaning in general. The motion of expansion is directly tied to the meaning of what “rekonstruction” comes to enact, as an axiom of the network. Its deployment in the normative sense of the word, from a network of dictionaries, carries the following meanings.² Each meaning resonates with the network:

1. The act of constructing again; the state of being reconstructed. (To which we add: of putting things back together *again*; not once, but at least the second time around, and the state of the process of doing so, which implies a memory, perhaps incorporated or buried, but nonetheless drifting around, of having done it once before.)
2. A rebuilding of a nonfunctional patented article that amounts to creation of a new article and constitutes infringement of the patent (the complete replacement of the mechanism was a *reconstruction* and not a repair). (To which we add: the fact that reconstruction has a certain *legal* sense, of *patent* and *infringement*, resonates with the questions concerning sampling. What would it mean to undertake a reconstruction via sampling wherein the process has been tampered with—the “c” switched to a “k”? Already, this infringes the proper name, the word, as Spooky infringes upon Paul D. Miller. Perhaps we can ask, is Spooky the “expansion” of Paul D. Miller, his “rekonstruction”?)
3. The practice or process of recreating an incident (as an accident) for the purpose of investigating the specific facts and circumstances surrounding it (heard testimony on the speed of the vehicle from an expert in accident *reconstruction*). (To which we add: this is why here we have titled the overall prospect of investigating these issues via Spooky a “reconstruction”—this is the practice of recreation of which we have sought to regenerate.)
4. Repair of an organ or part by reconstructive surgery (breast *reconstruction*). (To which we add: beyond the hands, what parts of the body, what body needs to be rekonstructed as the spook, the ghost, as Spooky? The rekonstruction of this body’s memory, and hence its ghostly nature?).
5. The period (1865-1877) during which the states that had seceded to the Confederacy were controlled by the federal government before being readmitted to the Union (To which we add: the historical position of reconstruction in its relation to Afro-American and AfroFuturist culture, the historical position of what it means to enter a state of expansion, beyond the confines and shackles of a previous body, to rebuild via the memories of what has already been experienced as subjection.).

Reconstruction in its normative senses implies a movement of assembly, once again, of the pieces and fragments, be it historically, legally, politically, conceptually, technically, etc. The word has particular relevance to Dj Spooky. Pieces that have been broken, at least once, if not disassembled at their origin, in the process of being put back together—perhaps incessantly, as the expansive movement, the time of the “expand”—although nowhere does this imply a correct order, a perfection of the whole.

From the fragments, and from a fragmented approach, expansion is a technique hitherto practised as de-construction. Rekonstruction, perhaps, is an attempt to expand de-construction. Thus, “rekonstruction.” It is uncanny how “rekonstruction” approaches Heidegger’s original term for the destruction of metaphysics, via the reintroduction of the “k:” *destruktion*.³ There is something of finding an *older* letter buried by deconstruction, that “k,” in the latter’s reassembly that resonates on so many levels. What prompted Spooky (consider that Miller is well versed in philosophy) to insert the “k” beside the obvious shout-out to Organized Konfusion? This isn’t hunting for a secret—we could ask: why the “K” in “Konfusion”? (This question could also be expanded to Richie Hawtin’s use of the “K” as Plastikman in the genre of techno, and across his events and track titles—what in the English language marks the switch, the necessity of this gesture, from the “c” to “k” *within remix culture*? There is something of the machinic, haunted aesthetic—something more than an aesthetic—that figures the electronic operatives that are Spooky and Plastikman.) True, determining an answer via texts of the philosophical tradition—even when they seek to traverse, reposition and render undecidable such a tradition, such as Jacques Derrida’s own translation of Heidegger’s *destruktion* to de-construction⁴—will only reimplant a historical scene that has, here, been upstaged. And more than subtly: any hiphop head would point out the *obvious* gesture here to Organized Konfusion. Yet there are a few clues worth pursuing in philosophy, clues that are directly sonic yet literal, that might lead us to consider how the process of writing, here, undergoes and faces as its limit the movement of rekonstruction.

In her Translator’s Preface to *Of Grammatology*, Spivak notes that “Derrida uses the word ‘destruction’ in place of ‘deconstruction’ in the first publication of *Of Grammatology*” (xlix). This signals a much more direct following from Heidegger, who was concerned with the operation of his *Destruktion* via the “*guidelines of being*” (and the question of Being as “de-constructing” the imposition of onto-theology, and later, *techne*). Nonetheless, reconstruction remains not so far off. As Paul de Man remarks (also quoted by Spivak in her Translator’s

Preface), “His text, as he puts it so well, is the unmaking of a construct. However negative it may sound, deconstruction implies the possibility of rebuilding” (quoted in xlix; p. 140 *Blindness and Insight*). At some point, Derrida shifted from destruction to de-construction to deconstruction. It could be argued that, as he approached his work on justice as *undeconstructible* in the ‘90s, that the rebuilding aspects of deconstruction become highlighted over its destructive capabilities.

Through a certain practice that has its debt to deconstruction (in the overarching sense of the *movement* of Derrida’s project), a reformulation—what can only be termed, in this context, a “remix”—takes place: a certain *expansion* of deconstruction from the usual appropriation of its meaning in pop culture, in the sense of expansion from sampling-as-the-fragment, expansion from the reduced understanding of deconstruction as the “taking apart” of structure. Throughout Spooky and remix culture we encounter delayed continuities, narratological complexity, and fragmentation, but ironically the process of remix culture reassembles from archives always already deconstructed as much as it rekonstructs by sampling from media (the processes of re-medialisation). It may be wise to link the force of the “expand” to Derrida’s reading of *ex*-appropriation as contrasted to philosophy’s *expropriation*. If rekonstruktion signals a link to *Destruktion* and deconstruction, then the movement of the expand, expansion, signals something of the *ex*-. (What better pop definition of deconstruction *than* “organized konfusion”?) In “Of the Humanities and the Philosophical Discipline,” Derrida writes something of “expropriation:”

There are other ways for philosophy than those of appropriation as expropriation (to lose one’s memory by assimilating the memory of the other, the one being opposed to the other, as if an *ex*-appropriation was not possible, indeed the only possible chance). Not only are there other ways for philosophy, but philosophy, if there is any such thing, is the other way. And it has always been the other way: philosophy has never been the unfolding responsible for a unique, originary assignation linked to a unique language or to the place of a sole people. Philosophy does not have one sole memory. Under its Greek name and in its European memory, it has always been bastard, hybrid, grafted, multilinear and polyglot. We must adjust our practice of the history of philosophy, our practice of history and of philosophy, to this reality which was also a chance and which more than ever remains a chance.

It is to this movement that we follow Derrida’s movement of the *ex*- in the flow, sound and writing process of Spooky. Spooky plays that “other” philosophy which has been, from the start, at the core of philosophy itself. Reading Spooky and tracing remix culture will mean

undertaking this process of “adjustment” to which Derrida alludes. This adjustment is already, has already been taking place. While perhaps its place has not been “within” philosophy, philosophy is nonetheless finding itself suddenly within the changes wrought by this “other” philosophy. Philosophy remixed.

In a practical sense, the spooks have come to haunt the halls. As of 2000, in *Inside Subculture* David Muggleton notes that there are “a new cohort of academic taste-makers for whom the deficiencies of established theories are likely to be thrown into sharp relief by their own personal experiences as, say, punks or clubbers” (4).⁵ That is, the event and the context are remixing theory; theory is finding its own expansion from the inside-out as the outside pours in. Dj Spooky is one such taste-maker: “I headed north to Bowdoin College in Maine, where I studied philosophy and French literature and came to feel that music could become a dynamic expression of what I was reading, even the dry, rationalist approaches I found in Kant and Hegel. My senior Honours Thesis was titled *Ludwig Feuerbach’s Place in European Rationalist Thought and Wagner’s Ring Cycle: A Manifesto of Post-Rational Art*. Yeah, stuff like that was what was on my mind at the time” (*Rhythm Science* 40).⁶ The movement of the one to the other is one of the expand, or at least, of the *ex*-. An *ex*-academic, *ex*-radio Dj, etc., where this movement is *out* to the *in* and back *again*...

Whether one *likes* it or not, Spooky’s discourse now informs, as Muggleton notes, an incoming movement of thought that is nonetheless an expansion of the old domains of deconstruction. After Spooky—reconstruction. As Spooky summarizes, “DJ-ING IS WRITING/WRITING IS DJ-ING.” Like Derrida’s claim that speech is not opposed to writing but rather an extension that rewrites writing as origin but also expands the narrow scene of writing to a general writing, an *arkhe*-writing,⁷ Dj-ing / Writing herald a relation that is not oppositional but expanded within its movement out, to the limit, that is, of the *ex*-. This would imply containment only through its impossible movement outwards—to the limits of its inwardness.

Miller becomes Spooky, something *ex*-Miller, *ex*-man, *ex*-gender, *ex*-race, in essence, *ex*-essential. This logic is described by Derrida as “trace,” and it determines the movement of what we have been signalling as the *ex*-:

This “logic” of the trace or of *différance* determines this re-appropriation as an *ex*-appropriation. Re-appropriation necessarily produces the opposite of what it apparently

aims for. Ex-appropriation is not what is proper to man. One can recognize its differential figures as soon as there is a relation to self in its most elementary form (but for this reason there is no such thing as elementary). (“Eating Well” 269)

That is, we understand the *ex*- as deferring a simplistic reconstruction *or* deconstruction.

The relation to Derrida and deconstruction is not tenuous. It exists in Miller’s heritage, his thought, his writing, his Dj-ing. To a degree a relation can also be claimed to Deleuze. The influence and words of Deleuze also pepper *Rhythm Science*. With precautions, one could outline this movement to the “out,” to the *ex*-, as a bridge from Derrida to Deleuze, a kind of kindred travel of the *ex*-, in a kind of practice of or attention to the *event*.⁸ Protevi and Patton write, in the introduction to a volume considering the relation between Deleuze and Derrida, that “while Deleuze seeks to begin with the pure outside or plane of immanence and show the construction of the inside or transcendent plane by restriction or folding of the outside, Derrida seeks to show that the outside or plane of transcendence is prior or interior to the supposed inside or plane of immanence” (7). The figure, in fact, of these two philosophers, is that of the moebius loop, or, in any case, the 69.⁹

But it’s also—and this is the same movement and our point here—a connection of philosophy to pop culture. One feeding off the other’s dissemination. This feedback *happens* as Spooky, in the real event of Spooky. This connection is nonetheless performed, deconstructively, yet productively, that is, at the limits of identity, at the limits of a certain performativity of deconstruction, an aestheticization of deconstruction as well as rhizomatics that also comes to enact a performativity of the network. This tension between the fragmented approach to deconstruction, a “pop” deconstruction, and the desire to produce (and to produce desire, a kind of pop-rhizomatics), we can *also* loosely articulate as rekonsstruktion. We apply this term not from the outset, but through Spooky himself, as introduced for us by Spooky. It returns to us, in the reading of a ghost—of Spooky—of what Derrida came to call a “hauntology,”¹⁰ an embodied process, a rhythmic track, something that expands all the categories (authority, property, etc.). To the point that Spooky, like writing, as the DJ, eclipses Miller. Writing that eclipses the bearer of the death of the proper name.¹¹ The insertion of “haunting” into every becoming echoes the insertion of the “/” between writing and dj-ing that disrupts the double “is” of the title, “DJ-ING IS WRITING/WRITING IS DJ-ING.” Formalization.

But it would be a mistake to take Spooky too seriously. There is a façade that is also the “surface” of which Spooky wishes to play upon. As Spooky says, this is the logic of the surface: the surface itself is all there *is* in the movement of rekonstruction. But the surface folds, repeats, rewinds, and so on. The surface acts as the plane of immanence, the *ex*-movement of ex-appropriation, that “other” sampling that twists back upon itself to the point where it isn’t itself—like the relation of writing to dj-ing, Spooky to Miller. Like the beauty of plastic, plasticity is flow, moldable, and yet it also conforms easily, almost too easily, to any “scenario.”

Rekonstruction Endnotes

¹ Hear *Riddim Warfare*, Asphodel/Outpost, 1998.

² Via <http://www.dictionary.com>, which sources its meanings from The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition; Merriam-Webster Dictionary of Law, © 1996; Merriam-Webster Medical Dictionary, © 2002; Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, © 1996, 1998; WordNet ® 2.0, © 2003 Princeton University; On-line Medical Dictionary, © 1997-98 Academic Medical Publishing & CancerWEB.

³ A short excerpt from *Being and Time*: “If the question of being is to achieve clarity regarding its own history, a loosening of the sclerotic tradition and a dissolving of the concealments produced by it is necessary. We understand this task as the deconstructing [*Destrücktion*] of the traditional content of ancient ontology which is to be carried out along *the guidelines of the question of being*. This deconstructing [*Destrücktion*] is based upon the original experiences in which the first and subsequently guiding determinations of being were gained” (section 22, p. 20, Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Trans. Joan Stambaugh, New York: State U of NY P, 1996). Heidegger accounts for *Destrücktion* in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Trans. James S. Churchill, London: 1962, pp. 221-222. It is useful here to again quote Spivak from the “Translator’s Preface” to *Of Grammatology*: “[Heidegger] thinks of his own task as a ‘loosening up’ of the ‘hardened tradition’ of ‘ontology’ by a ‘positive destruction,’ a ‘destructive retrospect of the history of ontology’ which ‘lays bare the internal character or development’ of a text” (Heidegger quotations from *Kant* above, xlviii-xlix).
see *Being and Time*, sections 22-27, 39, 89, 392.

⁴ In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida writes, in speaking of the “supplement” (what will be coined *différance*) that “The supplement is neither presence nor absence. No ontology can think its operation,” thereby implying the difference and the distance of deconstruction from Heidegger’s project, that is, “the *designation* of that impossibility [which] escapes the language of metaphysics only by a hairsbreadth. For the rest, it must borrow its resources from the logic it deconstructs. And by doing so, find its very foothold there” (314). Gayatri Spivak notes the difference via the language of Derrida’s “attention to the minute detailing of a text” (xlv).

⁵ For example: “Drew Hemment is an AHRB research fellow in Creative Technologies at the University of Salford, a freelance writer, curator and producer. He has a background in poststructuralist philosophy and cultural studies, was involved in the early development of dance culture in the UK [read—a raver] and founded Futuresonic, a festival dedicated to

electronic music and media arts, in 1995.” Biography introduction to “The Telephone Exchange” by Hemment, *Receiver* 11 (2004):

<<http://www.receiver.vodafone.com/11/articles/indexcenter06.html>>. One should note that *Receiver* is sponsored by mobile technology company Vodafone. The exact impact and link of this sponsorship has yet to be ascertained.

⁶ The irony is not lost on how I, here, might read my own work in later years.

⁷ See, out of numerous works, “Plato’s Pharmacy” in *Dissemination* (Trans. Barbara Johnson, Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981, pp. 61-156) and *Limited Inc.* (Trans. Alan Bass, Samuel Weber, Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1988). Writing of the three predicates of “narrow” writing (subsistence, force/rupture, spacing, p. 9)—of which we do not have the space to fully analyse here—in “Signature Event Context” (*Limited Inc.*), Derrida considers that “Are they [these predicates] not to be found in all language, in spoken language for instance, and ultimately in the totality of ‘experience’ insofar as it is inseparable from this field of the mark, which is to say, from the network of effacement and of difference, of units of iterability, which are separable from their internal and external context and also from themselves, inasmuch as the very iterability which constituted their identity does not permit them ever to be a unity that is identical to itself?” (10). In “Plato’s Pharmacy,” the Greek word for writing, *pharmakon*, is subject to the dual meanings of both remedy and poison. The significance of the *basis* of opposition comes to delimit the meaning of opposition as-such: “Plato thinks of writing, and tries to comprehend it, to dominate it, on the basis of *opposition* as such” (103). Speech (*logos*), it is discovered, is *also* a *pharmakon*: “If the written word is scorned, it is not as a *pharmakon* coming to corrupt memory and truth. It is because *logos* is a more effective *pharmakon*. This is what Gorgias calls it” (115). *Pharmakon*, as the impossibility of opposition, its limit yet its functionary division, expands the notion of what is already included in writing (as its outside, exteriority—in the general, broad sense, what Derrida has called “*arke-writing*”—see *Of Grammatology*).

⁸ See, for example, *What is Philosophy?*: “The plane of immanence is . . . an outside more distant than any external world because it is an inside deeper than any internal world: it is immanence” (59, Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

⁹ This connection should keep Slavoj Žižek happy—and rightfully so—in its formal connection to the logic of Lacan’s mobius loop, that of the feedback operation of the split subject, and all its affinities to Bergson’s conception of time—the “cone” of memory described in *Matter and Memory*—and Derrida’s elaboration of incorporation and the self-other relation in *Of Grammatology*, p. 166: “Conversation is, then, a communication between two absolute origins that, if one may venture the formula, auto-affect reciprocally, repeating as immediate echo the auto-affection produced by the other. Immediacy is here the myth of consciousness. Speech and the consciousness of speech—that is to say consciousness simply as self-presence—are the phenomenon of an auto-affection lived as suppression of difference. That *phenomenon*, that presumed suppression of difference, that lived reduction of the opacity of the signifier, are the origin of what is called presence. That which is not subjected to the process of difference is *present*. The present is that from which we believe we are able to think time, effacing the inverse necessity: to think the present from time as difference.” Bergson, in speaking of time and memory and the operations of the “mind,” writes that “The essence of the general idea, in fact, is to be unceasingly going backwards and forwards between the plane of action and that of pure memory” (161). The next page is the infamous inverted cone diagram, consisting of the point at which consciousness occurs, and

ascending into the expanding rings of memory. A page earlier, Bergson writes (in *Matter and Memory*, Trans. N.M Paul and W.S. Palmer, New York: Zone, 1991), invoking the formal structure of a feedback relation (as Massumi will later describe this operation in *Parables for the Virtual*) or that of the mobius loop: “In order to generalize, we said, we have to abstract similarity, but in order to disengage similarity usefully we must already know how to generalize. There really is no circle because the similarity, from which the mind starts when it first begins the work of abstraction, is not the similarity at which the mind arrives when it consciously generalizes” (160). There are thus two different similarities that are nonetheless of the same similarity, a relation-of-the-relation, that moves as does the return-to-the-same that is nonetheless different. This general movement is that of Nietzsche’s eternal return (a subject that preoccupies both Derrida and Deleuze, the latter especially in *Difference and Repetition*). As for Lacan, this relation is formalized as “the interior 8” (see p. 156, “Sexuality in the Defiles of the Signifier” in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI*, Trans. Alan Sheridan, New York: W.W. Norton, 1998). This “topology” defines the general topology of Lacan’s entire discourse: of libido, the signifier, the gaze, the split subject, the abyss, etc. Lacan writes: “This surface is a Moebius surface, and its outside continues its inside. There is a second necessity that emerges from this figure, that is, that it must, in order to close its curve, traverse at some point the preceding surface, at that point, according to the line that I have just reproduced here on the second model” (156). This point of re-traversing is that which occupies Bergson, Deleuze, Derrida, Lacan, the point of un/consciousness, and is the problematic of the point-in-time, of time, the point, and of the line in-general.

¹⁰ For example, in *Specters of Marx*: “But we are trying to accept the necessity of complicating it in an abyssal fashion, there where the supplement of an internal-external fold forbids simply opposing the living to the non-living” (109, footnote 7, 187). The term is explicitly named on page 161: “To haunt does not mean to be present, and it is necessary to introduce haunting into the very construction of a concept. Of every concept, beginning with the concepts of being and time. That is what we would be calling here a hauntology. Ontology opposes it only in a movement of exorcism. Ontology is a conjuration.” This could also be read as a commentary on Deleuze’s theory of philosophy as the production of concepts (also the running theme of immediacy).

¹¹ As I write this, Jacques Derrida has passed, Friday, October 8th, 2004. I leave this: <<http://www.quadrantcrossing.org/blog/C625679076/E302526524/index.html>>.

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