

Hearing Difference: The Seme. IASPM-edit.

tobias c. van Veen
McGill University

van Veen, tobias c. "Hearing Difference: The Seme. IASPM-edit." IASPM International Conference Proceedings (2003). (CD-ROM).

Abstract

The study of resistant musical practice has often theorised its status as a "subculture." Since the advent of global capitalism, however, underground anarcho-theorists and political philosophers alike have been struggling with theorising the new position of resistant subcultures. This new position is, by default, the opposition. No longer able to practice a politics of disappearance in the mode of a liberatory invisibility, "subcultures" have shifted through the same terrain as capital: networked globalisation. Hand-in-hand with the spread of tele-technologies, electronic music cultures have shifted from the practices of the Temporary Autonomous Zone to what we can begin to theorise as a network of "microcultures." No longer invisible, but weaved into the same global fabric as capital, the very terrain of politics is remixed as microcultures move from resistance to positive and affirmative ontological projects. At the same time, musical trends play out this shift as the postmodern aesthetic of sampling is complexified through the resurgence of computer music, including the digital processes of granulation and a return to an avant-garde aesthetics of failure. Spin that again, and we could say: from *memes* to *semes*.

Hearing Difference: The Seme

1

If we were to rewind the record and spin a story of the underground, at least to posit an alternative history of what is usually called the "underground," a fiction of our own, leading up to what has emerged as the microcultures of technology, we might begin where the fantasy ended, and through the most truthful of fictions...

2

The Sixties rebellion crashed, a vicious & sudden car-wreck to the counter-culture. Hunter S. Thompson narrowly misses the accident but is a casualty of the trauma. We find him penning the obituary just outside of Barstow, speeding towards Las Vegas, and listening to "One Toke Over the Line." Racing to the death of the American Dream, Thompson was "hiding from the the brutal reality of this foul Year Of Our Lord, 1971" (Thompson).

3

The Good Doctor's pronouncement on the failure of '60s counter-culture became legendary in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. No Sympathy for the Devil—it was the end of an era, and for some, a painful transformation took place: from '60s counter-

culture to the diverse mix of the subcultures. The emergence of the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ethic gave energy to a furtive and angry rebellion against State and capital. Outlaws & activism fragmented into the bowels of punk and industrial cultures, while the Afro-American diaspora fermented the brews of hip-hop and electronic music—Chicago house & Detroit techno—that were to stage the Freak Fight for the next twenty years via the conjunction of DIY with Afro-Futurism. Thompson's "Freak Power" had not failed in the '60s—it had, however, exhausted itself in its current form, fizzled out in its counter-position to the State. In Europe as well, a break was necessary after the violence of armed revolutionary groups and the intensity of May '68. A general splintering of movements and a deconstruction of the revolutionary agenda gave time to regroup & rethink strategy.

4

In the '80s, strategies gave way to tactics and the logistics were of the subculture: a music-based resistance that attempted to spread the power of revolt through alternative, DIY networks. Deleuze and Guattari would theorise this as "micropolitics." Guattari himself remarked on the emerging acid house scene of 1985 as a "molecular revolution," where "young people [are] opening up to another sensitivity, another relationship with the body, particularly in dance and music" (Stivale 215). The melding of space and time with music was theorised concurrently by Hakim Bey, who gave name to the Temporary Autonomous Zone. The TAZ was to become a meme across fledgling cyberculture, spread by San Francisco magazine *Mondo 2000*, the publication of *TAZ* in *Semiotext(e)*, BBS relays and eventually the World Wide Web. The TAZ resonated with punks, with strains of hip-hop, and with cyberculture itself. But its lasting influence was in provoking myriad challenges to laws across the planet concerning public property, the commons and the freedom to gather by granting a theoretical framework to the more adventurous members of a new subculture focused around "the rave." The era of warehouse break-ins & sonic squats had been introduced along with the terror of sampling and the sudden challenge to copyright. Property in all forms was being remixed, theft was creative, & the establishment was at a loss for a good 10 years.

5

But this raucous energy was to become condensed in its repetition of the same event. Nietzsche's return of the spiral, despite the infusion of difference in the singularity of each rave, was not to protect it from its own success—the venture capital forces that ravaged the creative commons of the Internet also found their profit in the commercialization of rave culture. From the squatted warehouse and the occupied field to the club and the Ibiza lounge. Rave culture itself, despite redefining the political terrain of the counter-culture to the mobility & transient temporality of the TAZ, was pinned down as a reactionary, if not hedonistic resistance that could only grind its teeth to the ecstasy of mindnumbing trance muzak. The TAZ itself was hemmed in. As Dutch media activist Geert Lovink notes, the "TAZ was boiled down to a late 1980s concept, associating the Internet with rave parties" (Lovink 239).

6

Yet the '80s also saw the birth of cyberculture. Its emergence cycled at a different frequency to the subcultures it was attached. Likewise, the musicians involved with once

proudly anarchic rave culture began to separate themselves from the childish circus rave had become. While the Detroit musicians sustained an offworld tradition of Afro-Futurism that stretches back to Sun Ra and George Clinton, others found their solace in a turn to the avant-garde through the immersion in the aesthetics of electronic music. A subtle shift was occurring. While originally house and techno were stitched together with MIDI and produced with synthesizers, sequencers, and the ubiquitous sampler stealing riffs from funk and jazz, the evolving technology of the computer, and eventually the laptop, began to redefine the creative boundaries of the electronic musician.

7

The DJ as the necessary "speaking hands" of electronic music began to fade into the background as the laptop musician stumbled forth from the studio. With rave culture long appropriated, the millenium saw a shift in electronic music as it struggled to remix itself exterior to any actual event-based lifestyle-politics. Taylor Deupree, for example, once a hard techno producer, founded one of the quietest labels of all time—12k/L_ne, whose recordings are barely audible (1). Likewise, microsound and lowercase sound explored the minimalist aesthetics of ultra-low volumes and frequencies, while throughout the spectrum an aesthetics of failure began to cement the aesthetics of the glitch and the "click and cut." These newfound sonic experiments were limited not only to the obscure. House and techno found themselves transformed by the digital possibilities of composition and deconstruction inherent to endlessly programmable, algorithmic computer software such as Max/MSP. Digital manipulation reopened the potential for areferential sound, and gave way to the first "clicks and cuts" manifesto from Achim Szepanski. The move was strangely ahistorical, or at least forgetful of its history. For the general introduction of areferential sound precedes clicks and cuts by at least half a century via the experiments of *Musique Concrete*. What was forgotten in the remix of the areferential through an "aesthetics of failure" was that *Musique Concrète* founder Pierre Schaeffer declared the project a failure. An aesthetics of failure born, then, from the failure to remember the failures of history.

8

Nevertheless, the clicks and cut can perhaps be seen as a digital permutation of *Musique Concrete's* archives, as the magnetic tapes of composition are exchanged for not only samplers, but the digitization of all sound—and thus its transformation into information. The click and the cut, therefore, is the realisation that "Today music is information," and that music, like information, can become areferential and transactive. It is this concept that comes from Achim Szepanski, an ex-academe who founded the *Mille Plateaux* record label in the early '90s (the name is obviously in homage of Deleuze and Guattari). "Clicks & cuts," writes Szepanski, are omnipresent and non-referential. Here one hears the in-between," what Szepanski theoretically connects to Deleuze and Guattari's "permanent ecstasy of and...and...and," and which manifests in the movement of the "transfer, transduction, trans...interface politics and (music mutates into a transfer politics and) music" (26). For Szepanski, the areferential radicality of the click & cut was in its transaction with the network, where all music is information, infinitely translated through differing forms of expression. Thus "music becomes graphics, becomes information, politics makes music, music videos act politically, hacking becomes music, etc."—in

other words, the music of the rhizome was the internet, and the internet was the computer, our portable plug-in to the horizontal world of techno-tubers and beat-bulbs.

9

But the radicality of the click and cut remain ambiguous. Counter-culture had produced its own DIY engagement with the machine at a level at once frighteningly Futurist and retroactively avant-garde. The digitization of information rendered history immanently mutable, and thus, forgettable. *Musique concrète* had become just another email attachment to the virus of history. But this self-executing message sold promise—and it was opened by others, at least to allow the virus of history to take hold of the potential that the machine promised. Areferential sound could promise the plug-in of ahistoricity, and it defined the ambiguous historical moment of this emerging post-subculture. This mix of post-subcultures that we shall recognise as mediatized micro.cultures of technology.

10

The avant-garde had returned in the exploration of the areferential, which is to say, via the aesthetics of failure—as a break-down in composition, exploring the moment where software and hardware fail. Where the transactional moment produces the unexpected glitch (or ghost) in the machine. The ghost in the machine was history. For all its radicality, the burn-out effect of rave culture and the crash of the Dot-Com industry gave birth to a retreat into ahistorical formalist aesthetics. For others, this retreat was a welcome return to formalist art aesthetics that had become abandoned and neglected in the era of subcultural sonic politics. The micropoliticos had in fact come full swing, as Kim Cascone notes, to dig through the high-art tradition of electronic music. Names like Pierre Boulez, Morton Subotnick, and John Cage began to resonate in the non-academic circles that once dosed E and danced all night to slamming techno. Marinetti, Russolo, the Futurists and *musique concrète* were in; dancing was out (2).

11

Cascone puts it like this: "it was only a matter of time," he says, "until DJs unearthed the history of electronic music in their archeological thrift store digs" ("Aesthetics" 15). Cascone sees the flock returning to the fold as they embrace the masters of the tradition: "Fast-forwarding from the 1950s to the present," warmly says Cascone, "we skip over most of the electronic music of the 20th century, much of which has not, in my opinion, focused on expanding the ideas first explored by the Futurists and Cage" (14).

12

A skip in the record lands us where we are today.
But what did we miss where the needle of history skipped?

13

For one, if we are to follow Cascone, we skip over the entire history of subcultural politics and its tie to electronic music, including the radical experiments of industrial music and culture (and its counter-fascism), the anarchism of techno gatherings or Teknivals, and the social communion of house music. We even skip the politics of

electro-acoustic composers devoted to acoustic ecology, such as Murray Schaeffer, and his student Barry Truax, who at SFU in Vancouver, Canada, invented the digital techniques of granular synthesis that dominate much experimental electronic music today.

14

Secondly, we skip the entire history of Afro-Futurism—of the psychedelic black underground that understands the concept *through* movement and *in* movement. The politics of funk, of Sun Ra, of George Clinton, of Detroit techno, and later, of Underground Resistance—an entire history that can be read in the writings of DJ Spooky, Dan Sicko and Kodwo Eshun.

15

By skipping the needle over "most of the electronic music of the 20th Century," i.e. the subcultures, but also the forgetful place in which the prior avant-garde becomes reinscribed in the contemporary electronic music moment, we skip over the politics—or the ways in which "the political" came to be remixed as a mobile fight against not only State and capital, but institutional frameworks that attempted to define and enforce the boundaries of high art and its history. By forgetting subcultural history, we forget its challenge to these frameworks; and by forgetting the challenges of the prior avant-garde, such as *Musique Concrete*, we ahistorically posit the new experimental electronic movements as *both* radically innovative and yet of the return *of* history. A history, we could say, *of select cuts*, one in which, at the same time, the present is seen as *continuing* this age-old avant-garde history at the same time that it negates it.

16

The cornerstone of the avant-garde return is *rhythm*. Or rather, its lack. Although in Szepanski, clicks and cuts affect all music, in Cascone, rhythm cannot be inscribed to the tradition. Rhythm will remain populist, and as such, cannot contribute to the ideas of the Futurists and Cage. Rhythm *is* pop, and as such, traffics in the manufacture of "authentic aura," which is, in reality and according to Cascone, the false halo reproduced to sell the spectacle (3). There is no concept to rhythm that can speak up, it seems; the voice, in its deterritorialization through electronic music, had nothing to say in the first place. Rhythm is therefore meaningless, and cannot speak to the avant-garde. It is excess, and gratuitous. Moreover, it cannot speak its own history. Rhythm is of the body, and the *history* of the avant-garde is of the *concept*. In the reinscribed return to the avant-garde, we find a return to a powerful dualism of mind and body that opens the very moment of its return as ahistorical even as it closes over the subcultural gap in its history. Even in the radical writings of Michel Gaillot do we find this assertion, where the lack of voice, of having something to say, is mistakenly celebrated as a sonority (4). The question is one of the *voice* and of the *concept*—and what voice *became* in the era of the subcultural *body*. This question is too large to broach here, but we can remark that without subcultural history, we cannot understand this question. We cannot hear it; it requires a different set of ears—a different way of hearing the remixed political.

17

In any case, if we are returning to the avant-garde, what were the ideas of the Futurists, beyond the glorification of noise? No doubt there is much to be learned from the Futurists—including their commitment to war and fascism, as noted by Anna Friz and Owen Chapman. And what of John Cage? John Cage, truth be told, said it all, in 1937—that rhythm and percussion, in the deconstruction of tones and scripts, are to provide the potential for the future, and that, already—as of 1937—an Afro-American tradition of "hot jazz," if not one of "Oriental cultures" in general, is far, far ahead of the supposed avant-garde (Future). On the other hand, and as well all know, Adorno hated jazz.

18

The academic attention that had once focused on sampling and hip-hop began to rotate 360 degrees to the coming attractions of the laptop and the formalist aesthetics of Cascone's theorisations. The force of Szepanski's Deleuzian argument was lost to a fascination with the technology and this new breed of globalized, jetset luminaries. Perhaps it was easier to digest, as it lacked the political anti-institutional force of its subcultural predecessors and had distanced itself from the skeletons of the drug culture. Articles on CTheory on microsound became in vogue and an entire journal of *Parachute* was devoted to the "micro_sounds" (5).

19

But what was happening? Was this the happy marriage of radical thought in the institution and the practices of the post-rave digerati? Or had the whole movement become co-opted somehow? Where was the force of the subcultural politics that drove the face-to-face resistance of rave culture?

20

Like cyberculture, electronic music in its experimental, evolving forms had become rarefied. "We are not speaking of the usual tragic cycles of appropriation here," says Geert Lovink, here again with the wisdom cut, "Unlike pop cultures such as rock, punk, or rap, cyberculture—born in the late 1980s—has refrained from any gestures of resistance towards the establishment. This makes its rise and fall different—less predictable, and to a certain extent softer, though perhaps even more spectacular" (338). Replace "cyberculture" with experimental electronic music—and this is where we are today: realising that we are speeding backwards through history. Here we are, in the Future: and we dream of the Futurists... In reverse, at 90 m.p.h., the death knell of the subculture has been struck—and once again we are faced with a fear and loathing. But where are we speeding to as we scrawl the obligatory obituary?

21

This fear & loathing is different. It is different in three respects.

22

First, it is beyond, as Lovink notes, the normal cycles of appropriation. The resistance music of rave culture fell not only to commercialization, but was reappropriated by the

rebirth of the elite avant-garde—to the point where the history of rebellious rhythm was erased from the record (and we might add, the vinyl record from the revolutions of wax).

23

Second, these movements are global. The digitization of movement and its trans-movement as information, as Szepanski theorises, is not *only* "political," but profitable and powerful—it begets power. As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri demonstrate in *Empire*, capital is the strongest force of deterritorialization. The internet is a commercial, capitalist venture alongside a worldwide information exchange. If music, today, is information, then it suffers the same *internal* tendencies to disseminate like a plague—meaninglessly, violently, like *money*.

24

Third, the processes are close to immanent. The content of sampling is no longer the issue; what is at stake is not the content—the traditional territory of politics—but the form, or method, of distribution. The fight today is primarily not over sampling and copyright, but the transference of information-music into a different form and its global dissemination—ie, from sampling a '70s funk record to ripping MP3s via peer-to-peer filesharing.

25

Thus the terrain of the political is no longer that of the subculture. It is no longer of an "in-between" position, of a politics of disappearance, where the TAZ can act as a third-way, liminal escape from State capital and State communism. For one, and as anarchists and philosophers from Hakim Bey to Kojin Karatani have noted, the fall of State communism means there is no third-position: the subculture becomes the default opposition, and as such, becomes something else (6). "You're either with us or against us" is the slogan of today's world. The subculture is no longer below: it is now the opposition, thanks to history—for unlike counter-culture, which was in opposition by will, sub-culture was unwillingly thrust into the opposition. As soon as it became apparent what had happened, it had already been staked as a new market. This new market faced two choices as the opposition: to colonise its radicality into product, or be destroyed as useless, if not dangerous, excess. What cannot be assimilated will be plundered, and what cannot be plundered will be scorched from Earth. But there was a glitch in the globalization of the subcultures.

26

The subcultures that could take advantage of this global glitch became *microcultures*. This glitch was their ambiguity—ambiguous not only in their political status, but in their status as "subcultures," for these "subcultures" exposed themselves as a global force alongside capital. The subculture was suddenly *part of* the force of globalisation, and this fuelled the ambiguity. Ambiguous because the old terrain of the political—the voice of a subculture, its anger, its fury, its rebelliousness—had been hijacked by both the forces of capital and by the institutions of art—the power of history itself. And we have not yet learnt to recognise, or to hear, the ways in which the political are being remixed, reshaped, and redrawn in the global microculture. What we have are microcultures that

are no longer "underground," operating at angry odds to the Establishment, either in fragmented or unified, "counter-cultural" form, but horizontal packets of micro-scenes that *operate globally*, and thus, are interweaved with the same fabric as capital. And just as often as these microcultures open a radical opportunity to embrace transactivity by attuning it to *transformation*, and thus a transformative politics, we are reminded that this is otherwise known in the business community as "networking."

27

The new political is thus not necessarily fragmented, but globalized. In this globalization, the horizontality of the network opens both the opportunity to reclaim what was radical for the establishment at the same time that radical forces attempt to outreach past their confines—their genres or forms. Thus, today, in speaking of electronic music, we cannot simply speak of music. Today's apparent formalism is an attempt to rein-in the node-jumping of the digital. Form is also an expression, and the political resides not only in the content but in the manner of its force, its dissemination. But form alone cannot fuse connections that are anti-capitalist—conceptual voices remains necessary, the content must also be created, albeit this voice is not one but many, and globalised, becomes a sonorous cacophony of virtual bodies operating at nodal points in the real. For what is sorely lacking in today's electrofied microcultures of technology—which includes the entire milieu of experimental electronic music, tactical media, renegade theorists & net.artists, social software programmers, surrealist turntablists, etc.—are the content providers.

28

Content that would be generated not from an underground or interiorization of the political, nor from an identity, but in the transversal of space through the virtual, through the Net, and, at the limit, through forms that we cannot traditionally theorise in the way we usually understand "content."

29

[snip]

30

The content, then is the intervention of the global network. The content *is* the network, although the network changes in each application of the content. The network, in itself, is politically ambiguous as content.

31

If, in the age of the subculture, concepts travelled as memes through the fledgling networks—as concepts to be remixed into new *contexts*, and where the concept was about the application of the content—then today the concept *is* the network. In fact the network is both concept *and* context, and the meme is only the static concept within the network's transactions. The active idea that expresses itself as a force is the *seme*. What matters is not the meme, but the point at which the meme becomes inverted, where the idea is no longer sampled into different contexts, but the context is sampled into different ideas, and where the context itself is already the network. The *seme* is the point at which the meme

is forced to undergo a translation and an extroversion at the limit of its identity by the force of its trajectory—the act of its self-sampling. The inversion of its innards now expresses the trajectory of its form. The seme thus comes to express the force of form in the stitching of the network to the content of the meme. The seme is the meme of the power of dissemination. It's the name we give to the transformational properties of the network, where the network forms the content. The seme is the theoretical framework in which the practical forces of contemporary microcultures express themselves. It is not an idea-thing that travels, like the dualist concept of meme, but the point at which the thing, at the moment of its translation or transformation at becoming something other to itself, undergoes a forceful expression of the path of its movement—its network. The seme demonstrates the digital network of transduction. If we may sample Brian Massumi: "There is no inside as such for anything to be in, interiority being only a particular relationship to the exterior to itself (infolding)" (115).

32

If the TAZ was a meme in late-80s cyberculture and '90s rave culture, then the TAZ today finds itself living up to its acronym—Temporary Autonomous Zone—as the context of today's ideas, rather than being the idea itself. It thus becomes a problematic of how to disseminate the context in an expression that fosters anti-capitalist networks. In other words, how to expose the movement of the seme itself, in its multiplicity of difference.

33

[snip]

Works Cited

- Bey, Hakim. *T.A.Z. The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1991. Anti copyright.
- Cage, John. "The Future of Music: Credo." *Silence: Lectures and Writings by John Cage*. Hanover: Wesleyan UP, 1973: 3-7.
- Cascone, Kim. "The Aesthetics of Failure: 'Post-Digital' Tendencies in Contemporary Computer Music." *Computer Music Journal* 24.4 Winter (2000): pp. 12-18.
- Chapman, Owen and Anna Friz. "Too Big for their Beats? Questions for the Microsound Revolution." *Graduate Researcher: Journal For the Arts, Sciences, and Technology* 1.2 (2003). (With accompanying audio CD).
- Lovink, Geert. *Dark Fiber: Tracking Critical Internet Culture*. Cambridge: MIT P, 2002.
- Massumi, Brian. *Parables For the Virtual: Movement Affect Sensation*. Durham: Duke UP, 2002.
- Stivale, Charles J. "Pragmatic/Machinic: Discussion with Félix Guattari (19 March 1985)." *Pre/Text* 14.3-4 (1993): 215-250.
- Szepanski, Achim. "Digital Music and Media Theory." *Parachute* 107 (2002): 24-31.
- Thompson, Hunter S. *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. New York: Vintage, 1998.

Endnotes

1. See: <http://www.12k.com>
2. For an extended analysis and critique of Cascone's thought, see: van Veen, tobias c. "Laptops & Loops: The Advent of New Forms of Experimentation and the Question of Technology in Experimental Music and Performance." Conference Paper. November 1st, 2002. University Art Association of Canada, Calgary. Available online at: <http://www.quadrantcrossing.org/papers.htm>. See also: Ashline, William. "Clicky Aesthetics: Deleuze, Headphonics, and the Minimalist Assemblage of 'Aberrations.'" Interview with tobias c. van Veen. *Strategies: Journal of Theory, Culture, Politics* 15.1 (2002): 87-104. For another subtle critique see: Hecker, Tim. "Sound and the 'Victorious Realm of Electricity.'" *Parachute: electrosons_electrosounds* 107 (2002): 60-68.
3. See Cascone, Kim. "Laptop Music—Counterfeiting Aura in the Age of Infinite Reproduction." *Parachute: electrosons_electrosounds*, 107 (2002): 52-60.
4. See Gaillot, Michel. *Multiple Meaning: Techno, An Artistic and Political Laboratory of the Present*. Trans. Warren Niesluchowski. Paris: Editions Dis Voir, 2002. Also see: van Veen, tobias c. "It's Not A Rave, Officer." *FUSE* 26.1 (2003).
5. See: Turner, Jeremy. "The Microsound Scene: An Interview with Kim Cascone." *CTheory.net* A101 (2001) and "Neuro-Transmit Me These Empty Sounds: An Interview with Janne vanHanen." *CTheory.net* A102 (2001), as well as: vanHanen, Janne. "Loving the Ghost in the Machine." *CTheory.net* A099 (2001). Historical footnote: these interviews and vanHanen's paper came out of the *Refrains: Music Politics Aesthetics* conference which I organised at UBC in September, 2001. See: <http://www.shrumtribe.com/refrains>. Brady Cranfield's article in the *Parachute* 107 issue on "micro_sounds" also came from this conference. A selection of the conference proceedings were also published in the UBC online journal, *Intersects*, available here: <http://www.iisgp.ubc.ca/whatsnew/intersects/issues/dec01/opening.htm>. Also see *Parachute: electrosons_electrosounds* 107 (2002).
6. Although I remain troubled with Karatani's turn to Kant via Marx (and vice-versa) in a discourse of positivity that comes to re-embrace "futurity" as a possible "utopia," his motives for shifting from a proto-anarchist position in the '80s to a "positive" mode of production is emblematic of a general shift in anti-capitalist politics: "Up until the climate change of 1989, I also despised the all ideas of possible futures... The collapse of the socialist bloc in 1989 compelled me to change by stance... When [the Communist bloc] collapsed, I realized that my critical stance had been paradoxically relying on their being. I came to feel that I had to state something positive. It was at this juncture that I began to confront Kant" (*Transcritique*. Trans. Sabu Kohso. Cambridge: MIT P, 2003: ix). The problematic with Karatani's position is that it reverses backwards through history to confront past teleologies as a *possible futurity*. What remains unrealised is the role of *potential* in the "positive," a role which would turn a simple relapse to "futurity" to a (yet) to-come, still immanently "productive" (and yet still deconstructive) (political) project.

Nonetheless Karatani's discourse initiated through Kant and Marx outlines a point at which to contrast the latter project from discourses that seek to re-embrace old teleologies; and along the way Karatani's position allows us to historicize the ways in which "theory" has been transformed by actuality. Hakim Bey, however, attempts to understand *what happens* to a politics of disappearance once the subculture becomes the opposition: "So the choice remains: —either we accept ourselves as the 'last humans', or else we accept ourselves as the opposition" (*Millenium*. New York: Autonomedia & Garden of Delight, 1996. Anti-copyright. p. 30.). Such a position, however, doesn't mean the negation of the TAZ or of a politics of disappearance (as Karatani implies, and follows to its self-made doom): "the temporary autonomous zone thus retains its value not only for its own sake but as a historicization of lived experience, perhaps even a mode of propaganda-in-action" (53). It retains its *force*—as the real, the actual—and its *virtuality*—as both a historicization *and* "propaganda-in-action." Conjoined, the TAZ evolves from meme to *seme*.