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self-reference—and the experience of it as an actuality in the disjunction between consciousness and communication, the experience of something that, in a way, is impossible and yet "oscillates" before us—"reveals that the inference from nondescribability to nonexistence is not logically tenable." And this question opens, in turn, on to another that I cannot pursue adequately in this book (though it is surely already on the table in chapter 3): the relations, and disrelations, of philosophy and literature in the services of that broader thing called "knowledge."

Or as Stevens puts it in "Metaphors of a Magnifico":

Twenty men crossing a bridge,
Into a village,
Are twenty men crossing twenty bridges,
Into twenty villages,
Or one man
Crossing a single bridge into a village.

This is old song
That will not declare itself.

Twenty men crossing a bridge,
Into a village,
Are
Twenty men crossing a bridge
Into a village.

That will not declare itself
Yet is certain as meaning... (Poems, 19)

A pure paradox, an utter tautology. And yet somehow true. Or, perhaps we should say, real.

11 The Digital, the Analog, and the Spectral Echographies from My Life in the Bush of Ghosts

When Brian Eno and David Byrne's record My Life in the Bush of Ghosts was re-released on its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2006, it occasioned much reflection on a piece of music that many listeners felt was far ahead of its time—and many felt, on re-release, had never gotten its just critical desserts. The record wasn't neglected, by any means, but as Byrne points out in the liner notes for the re-release, it took some time for legal rights for many of the vocal tracks on the record to clear, and in that interim the third record of the Talking Heads, Remain in Light (produced by Eno), was released, which relied on (and thus "scooped," if you will) much of the polyrhythmic, electronic, funk-inflected synthesis that Byrne and Eno forged in the making of the earlier record. Still, what Ghosts has that Remain in Light doesn't are the "found" recordings that became the vocal tracks. It is one thing to hear the angular, clenched, square, white-guy voice of David Byrne singing "Houses in Motion" on Remain in Light; it is quite another to hear in "The Jezebel Spirit" on My Life in the Bush of Ghosts the crackling, late-night AM radio voice of an "unidentified exorcist" recorded in New York on a boom box asking an audibly hyperventilating young woman, "Do you hear voices?" over a pulsating rhythm track straight out of the Meters, or to hear the Lebanese mountain singer Dunya Yusin embodying "The Human Voice of Islam" (the source title for her tracks) as that voice, instrument—whatever this sound is—wends its way over a deep groove that recalls Sly Stone or Isaac Hayes.

This element made the record not just cool and fresh but riveting and uncanny. With its vocal elements drawn from what felt like a storehouse of anthropological field recordings—an approach that seemed to render equally strange and foreign (in an ethnographic sense) the contemporary talk radio host, the Lebanese mountain singer of ancient religious hymns, and the evangelical black preacher Paul Morton from...
New Orleans (just to name a few)—the record seemed to come from everywhere and nowhere. And with this polyglot glossolalia anchored to a musical fusion of electronica, funk, and Afro-futurism, the record seemed to issue simultaneously from both the past and the future, communicating the portents of ancient and wrathful gods and demons while at the same time constituting a kind of synth-driven laboratory for the music of the future, or what one critic at the time called "avant-funk." A record from a "Fourth World," to borrow Jon Hassell's term, from everywhere and nowhere, past and future. In a word: spectral.

On another level, the uncanniness of the Bush of Ghosts project may be understood as a kind of "echography" (to use the phrase of Bernard Stiegler and Jacques Derrida from their conversations collected as Echographies of Television) of an electronic medium whose apotheosis (so the story goes) is the digitalization-of-all-media discussed (and sometimes debunked) in texts such as Lev Manovich's The Language of New Media. To put it far too telegraphically, my suggestion here will be that the Byrne/Eno record proleptically evokes what will become the seething, hiving "bush" of digital media and then populates it, haunts it, with analog ghosts. Moreover, that echography takes the form of a strategic resistance to a generic, disembodied, abstract "rendering" (and I mean that in a technical sense, as we'll see) of both the voice and the image under digital media whose maximal expression might well be viewed, as Donna Haraway long ago pointed out, as the U.S. military operations theory C3I—command-control-communication-intelligence—and its recent manifestation, for example, in the video images, now widely circulated on the Internet, of various "smart" weapon systems used by the United States in both Gulf Wars. It is worth noting in this connection that the original LP was conceived and recorded on the heels of the year 1979, a year of ominous geopolitical upheaval that included the Iranian hostage crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (the connections between the U.S. support of the Mujahideen resistance to the Soviets in Afghanistan and the rise of al-Qaeda are common knowledge at this point); and the anniversary rerelease took place, of course, at the height of the second Gulf War and the occupation of Iraq. In these multiple contexts, the original LP's ample use of vocal materials from Islam and, more pointedly still, the expurgation of the track "Qu'ran" from all but the initial vinyl and CD releases makes the record all the more uncanny—a circumstance made even spookier by the fact that the omission of "Qu'ran" goes unremarked in both the Byrne/Eno and David Toop liner notes accompanying the rerelease. My Life in the Bush of Ghosts is itself, you might say, haunted, spooked.

But what it is haunted by, I will argue, is not the "authenticity" of fundamentalism (both inside and outside the United States) that has emerged, in recent discussions, as the radically unassimilable other of modernity and its maximal expression in U.S. globalization (of which the speedy dissemination of digital media to all corners of the globe would be perhaps the most obvious manifestation)—a reading that the manifestly "anthropological," and in some cases explicitly evangelical, nature of the vocal materials on the record more than invites. Indeed, as Simon Reynolds points out, Byrne and Eno were attracted in the vocal materials to "a fervor that felt weirdly alluring against the bland backdrop of anomie and drift that was [Jimmy] Carter's America"; and hence the project "began to coalesce around a central idea, the contrast between the spiritual void of faithless liberalism and the rival (yet weirdly similar) fundamentalisms of East and West." Rather, the line of argument I'd like to pursue runs at a tangent to such a reading and would find, for example, the omission of "Qu'ran"—and the deafening silence around that omission—gesturing toward a kind of radical outside to the bush of digital media from which the record itself seems born as a bona fide product of elaborately produced, state-of-the-art Western (post)modernity: the outside of the analog, that which cannot be expunged by the schemata of the digital. In that light, we might emphasize rather the geo- of the term "geopolitical" to connote a different but related form of political resistance, a site of the antimodern, or more precisely the amodern—that is to say, a radical form of exteriority and materiality that constitutes what Derrida calls the "non-contemporaneity with itself of the living present."

In these terms, the spectrality of the ghosts here on display (to use Derrida's formulation from Specters of Marx) might well be understood as the exteriority and embodiment—what Derrida calls the "living-on [sur-vie]"—that resists forms of digital rendering; a rendering that might in turn be linked to the omission of "Qu'ran" insofar, as critics such as Rita Raley have argued, as digitalization is itself indissociable...
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from the globalization of capitalism, and in particular capitalism’s tightening of the relationship between information and commodification.10

Equally important is the logic of rendering in not just economic but biopolitical forms of organization. As Nicole Shukin has argued, “rendering” not only is an expression of what Foucault famously calls “biopower” but also has its roots in the process of rendering animal flesh in the disassembly lines of the Chicago stockyards of the early twentieth century—a process viewed by over a million people during the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893. It also had a profound influence on Henry Ford and thus on the first automobile assembly line processes in the United States (all of which, Shukin reminds us, were contemporary with Eadweard Muybridge’s experiments with animal images in his Zoopraxiscope in the 1890s). This fundamental discretization and reorganization of the “assemblage” of knowledges and perceptions in and around the problem of bodies, movement, and time is, Shukin argues, a prolepsis of the “cinematic”; as she puts it, “in the vertical abattoir can be discerned not only the logistical prototype of cars’ and films’ material production (assembly, suture), but also the mimetic blueprint for a new order of aesthetic experience.”11 But to read the significance of My Life in the Bush of Ghosts as only an expression of those economic, social, and biopolitical forces would be to engage in another sort of fundamentalism: a fundamentalism calculated to flee precisely those sorts of ghosts that Derrida’s work will help us identify and, as it were, reanimate.

Digital media, as Bernard Stiegler puts it, depend above all on a “systematic discretization” and “grammaticalization” of content—itself part of the larger regime of what Derrida calls “calculation,” whose philosophical and ethical resonances I have explored in some detail in earlier chapters.12 Unlike the analog photographic image, for example (and here we will return to some of the questions of visual media that occupied us in chapter 6), in the digital image one has, as Stiegler puts it, “access to the diacritical manipulation of the light and of all of the elements which are differentiated therein” with “surgical precision” (154). This eventuates in the compilation of lexicons of animated objects in “the movement industries,” in the ability of digital technologies to “recognize automatically different camera movements, identical ob-

jects present in a film, recurrent characters”—all of which was first developed, as he points out, for the colorization of black-and-white films. To this must be added “synthetic libraries of objects and movements, expressions, sounds,” of “‘morphing,’ cloning, embedding, and capture,” which are crucial to the computer-generated-image industry and the process of digital rendering (157). For example, as Mary Flanagan points out, research teams working on earlier forms of the digitalization of movement used “custom software to choose areas such as the mouth, eyes, and face of simple 2D photographs and . . . algorithms to mathematically control the 2D image.” In this way, one can “create inverse kinematic animation to simulate human movement without parsing stream after stream of real user body data,” but the trade-off is that a “former whole” is “segmented, proportioned, and divided.”13

More recently, such processes have given way to extremely sophisticated kinds of modeling that go far beyond even motion-capture technologies that render movement by means of mathematically plotting data from sensors or markers placed on a moving body. One particularly striking example of this new form of rendering, reported in the New York Times on October 15, 2006, is the work being done by Image Metrics Inc. in California, which uses software “to map an actor’s performance onto any character, virtual or human, living or dead.” While motion capture wires actors with small digital sensors, and a newer technique called Contour “tracks actors’ facial and body movements by coating them with phosphorescent powder,” Image Metrics “starts with a generic model of the human head and layers onto that a mathematical distillation of an individual’s expressions.” IM thus solves the main problem with motion capture and standard computer-generated imagery (CGI)—how to convincingly render the eyes, the inner part of the lips, and the tongue. The technique is remarkably convincing, so much so that IM’s chairman declares, “I like to call it soul transference. The model has the actress’s soul. It shows through.”14

The Times reporter, upon observing a demonstration at Image Metrics, says that the computer-generated avatar appears to possess “something ineffable, something that seems to go beneath the skin,” and calls the effect of watching actress and computer model side by side “more than a little bit creepy.” But what is creepy here, I would suggest,
is the presumption of the image's transparency and exhaustibility, that there is nothing hidden to rendering—not even the soul. Or as Stiegler puts it, "the machine sees' planes, detects them automatically, mechanically. Because it neither believes nor knows anything, it isn't afraid of any defect, it isn't haunted by any ghosts." It is the restoration of those ghosts that the Byrne/Eno project engages in, and I mean "project" here in the broadest sense: not just the record My Life in the Bush of Ghosts but also the visual art elements associated with it (album covers, etc.) and, beyond that, Brian Eno's own video works.

What is particularly interesting, however—and here we can begin to appreciate the full resonance of the line from Hamlet that Derrida seizes on: "The time is out of joint"—is that the Byrne/Eno project engages in that restoration or reanimation before the advent of the pervasive digitalization of media. In fact, as has been widely noted, My Life in the Bush of Ghosts engages in what would come to be known as "sampling" before sampling had really become a widespread practice, much less a codified term. As Byrne points out in his Ghosts liner notes:

At that time there were no samplers, so the found vocals were often flown in (this consisted of two tape machines playing simultaneously, one containing the track and the other the vocal) and, if the Gods willed, there would be a serendipity and the vocal and the track would at least seem to feel like they belonged together and it would be a "take." It was all "played" and very seat of your pants—there was none of the incremental tweaking and time correcting that is possible with modern samplers and computers, throwing the vocals against the tracks was in our case almost a performance. Sometimes we'd record radio sermons after-hours on our cassette players that were built in to our late 70's boom boxes.

On the visual side of the project, his account of working through the alternate album covers is also noteworthy:

Having tried a few different directions for LP cover art, we decided to incorporate the video monitor as a painting tool, as Brian and others were doing here and there. By pointing the camera at the monitor and
generating video feedback, a few little cutout humanoid shapes pasted on the screen would be infinitely multiplied. And by fussing with the color setting on the backs of the TV sets one could saturate and skew the color quite a bit. I also took some pictures of just skewed vortexes and whirls of color, and then we did some images where we skewed the color on pictures that had been taken of ourselves and then took polaroids of the results. Somehow... these techniques also seemed analogous to what we were doing on the record.  

Indeed, they are analogous for reasons that Eno's descriptions of his own contemporaneous "video paintings" help to bring out. Eno started out working with a Panasonic industrial video camera that he bought from a roadie for the band Foreigner, who were working in an adjacent studio while Eno was producing the Talking Heads' third album, Fear of Music. As he recounts it, the camera had no automatic controls, and the manual controls, which were analog, had extremely wide ranges and tolerances. "You could do absolutely mad things with this camera," he recalls; "in fact it was very hard to do anything realistic with it." Moreover, shortly after he bought the camera, he made the mistake of leaving it on and pointing at the sky for four days, which completely fried the tube. But after that, he says, "it produced the most magical results" and "responded to light and colour in a way no other camera did." 

Similarly, the discovery of his signature video format came about by serendipity. After he got the camera, he didn't have a tripod, so he laid it on its side on the window sill with the lens pointed out toward the Manhattan skyline, which meant he also had to turn the TV onto its side to read the image. The result, he recounts, was "an absolute breakthrough," because suddenly the screen looked not like television but like painting. And this was important for two reasons: first, "you lose the reference to theatre and cinema" associated with the television surface and format, and this is important because in the proscenium format you expect narrative, which entails, among other things, an entire formatting (indeed, "calculation," to use Derrida's term) of time and event. And second, as Eno realized years later when he attempted the same thing with digital TVs, the distortion on the television screen...
created by the horizontal scanlines enabled, with the screen turned on its side, a unique rainfall effect, turning mere analog static into valuable atmosphere, as it were.18

Eno’s perceptive comments underscore an important fact: what undoes the calculated formatting of narrative and time is the interplay of form (and the cultural expectations elicited and reproduced by it, as in the proscenium or screen format), with what Gregory Bateson calls the “real magnitudes” of analog media; it depends for its effects on the specific, embodied positionality and movement of its components (for example, the proximity of the video camera to the television screen on which it creates feedback and distortion).19 This means that analog is spooky or spectral for the regime of rendering because, among other things, it depends on the interplay of material forces and bodies, including even things like the weather; it is not wholly subsumable or predictable by programs and schemata, simply because the interplay of real magnitudes in space-time is fundamentally and even inexhaustibly contingent, creating a reservoir of complexity and contingency that is, in principle, bottomless.

That is not to say, however, that the analog is the opposite or the “real” other of the digital that it haunts. Rather, the structure of any “discretization,” any diacritical system, is that of a trace in Derrida’s sense—the iterability in and through which it can function, and only can function, as a medium and archive (hence my earlier emphasis on “interplay”). As Derrida puts it, in a passage I have invoked more than once in this study, “this pure difference, which constitutes the self-presentation of the living present, introduces into self-presentation from the beginning all the impurity putatively excluded from it.” And what this means, in turn, is that “the trace is the intimate relation of the living present to its outside, the opening to exteriority in general.”20 Such is the “corrupting” and “contaminating” work—but also the haunting or spectral character, if you will—of iterability, which thus “entails the necessity of thinking at once both the rule and the event, concept and singularity,” that “marks the essential and ideal limit of all pure idealization,” but not as “the concept of nonideality,” as ideality’s pure other. In this sense, as Derrida puts it, it “remains heterogeneous” to, rather than simply opposed to, the order of the ideal and the calculable—that is to say, to the realm of grammaticalization and discretization.21 The analog, in short, does not exist as a presence, a substance, an “as such” or the “the” of “the body.”

What this means, as I suggested in chapter 3, is that, in Derrida’s words, “tele-technology” (and finally tekhnē generally) “prohibits us more than ever... from opposing presence to its representation, ‘real time’ to ‘deferred time,’ effectivity to its simulacrum, the living to the non-living, in short, the living to the living-dead of its ghosts.”22 This unmappable difference impels us, in turn, “beyond present life... its empirical or ontological actuality: not toward death but toward a living-on [sur-vie], namely, a trace, of which life and death would themselves be but traces... a survival whose possibility in advance comes to disjoin or dis-adjust the identity to itself of the living present.”23 The “living present,” in other words, is haunted by the ghosts or specters of what will have been once any kind of archive, analog or digital—or the most fundamental archive of all, language itself (in the broadest sense of a dynamic semiosis that, as we saw in chapters 3 and 4,
encompasses language proper and is in no way reducible to it)—is activated. It is "spectral," Derrida holds, "because we know that, once it has been taken, captured, this image will be reproducible in our absence, because we know this already, we are already haunted by this future, which brings our death. Our disappearance is already here." 24 "The logic of the specter," he continues, thus "regularly exceeds all the oppositions between visible and invisible, both phenomenal and nonphenomenal: a trace that marks the present with its absence in advance" (117). In short, the analog never manifests itself as a purity, a presence, or an ideality.

Far from being a kind fatalism or necrophilia, however, it is precisely in this fact that futurity itself resides—the fact that the words we record now, the images we make now, will be iterable in our absence, and indeed in the absence of any "empirical being" currently alive in "the living present." We are "spectralized by the shot," as Derrida puts it, "captured or possessed by spectrality in advance" (117), but such is the price of a futurity in which our media, our archives, are to be legible in our absence. And here the logic of spectrality shades over in Derrida’s work into the question of the "messianic"—we die so that they, the future ones, may live—but it is, as he puts it, a "messianism without a messiah," since, after all, that future, and the ones who live it to whom we reach out, may not come to pass. It is not guaranteed, in other words, and that is precisely what makes it an ethical act, an act of faith. 25 As Derrida puts it, a messianism without guarantees, without a particular incarnation of the messianic, might elicit despair in some, but "without this latter despair and if one could count on what is coming, hope would be but the calculation of a program... Some, and I do not exclude myself, will find this despairing 'messianism' has a curious taste, a taste of death." 26

All of which provides a context for understanding the inadequacy—in a way, the backwardness—of the often observed and lamented fact about digital media, that, as Raley puts it, "tele-presence absorbs immediate presence and produces distance." 27 But Derrida’s point—and it would lead us eventually to the observation that David Wills makes about "the almost Platonic lament" that sometimes characterizes Paul Virilio’s discourse 28—is that the "deadening" or "derealization" typically associated with digital technologies versus the ontological "umbilical cord" of analog is always already in play with any form of representation, any semiosis whether of the word or the image. Indeed, the human is itself a prosthetic being, who from day one is constituted as human by its coevolution with and coconstitution by external archival technologies of various kinds—including language itself as the first archive and prosthesis. As Wills puts it, we have here in the insights of Derrida and Stiegler an investment in forms of exterior memory that will continue all the way to the computer revolution of the end of the twentieth century. The upright hominid stance inscribes a definition of the human that is utterly determined by the idea of exteriorisation, the hand reaching outside the body to enter into a prosthetic relation with a tool, the mouth producing or adopting the prosthetic device that is language. As a result, the archive is born, the human species begins to develop a memory bank, and its relation to time begins to be catalogued by means of the traces of an artificial memory—the artefact, the narrative. 29

In other words, there is no "immediate presence."

From this vantage, instead of what Wills calls "the Promethean melancholy" that the "deadening" or "distancing" effect of technology often elicits, we might view it instead as a source of creation—and not just from a Derridean point of view. Indeed, it is this distancing that makes possible—makes unavoidable—the recursivity and folding that is key to the emergence of the virtual, the movement that Derrida long ago dubbed the "temporization" and "spacing" endemic to the dynamics of the trace. In this sense, we would certainly agree—to lace together now the ideas of Derrida with those of Deleuze—with Brian Massumi’s assertion that "nothing is more destructive for the thinking and imaging of the virtual than equating it with the digital." 30 Or more precisely, the economy of the iterative trace, which, as Derrida puts it, has "to be extended to the entire field of the living, or rather to the life/death relation, beyond the anthropological limits of 'spoken' language," 31 would itself instance what Massumi imagines as a kind of encompassing of the digital by "analogic process," in which "what is coded is recursivity. . . . The digital processing becomes self-modulating: the running of the code induces qualitative transformation in its own loopy operation." Against this background, we can more fully appreciate
Massumi’s observation that “images of the virtual make the virtual appear not in their content or form, but in fleeting, in their sequencing or sampling. The appearance of the virtual is in the twists and folds of formed content, in the movement from one sample to another.” In a sense, then, the logic of the virtual is the logic of sampling itself, a sampling that is always leaving its source by the time it reaches us, always in the process of vanishing.

This is directly related, I think, to the power of the voice and of the vocal tracks on My Life in the Bush of Ghosts. As Stiegler notes, the “grammaticalization” of the visible by the digital image is analogous to the grammaticalizaton of speech . . . brought about by the generalization of alphabetic writing. Speech, too, would engender effects of continuity which are largely transformed, in their conditions of analysis and synthesis, with the appearance of writing . . . We, the literate, believe we know, that there is, in all speech, a play of analyzable, diacritical combinatorial elements, which form a sign system, but the “spontaneous” attitude, especially in a society where there is not writing in the everyday sense, is to perceive this as a whole. As a continuity.

In light of my discussion of the voice and Björk’s vocal performance in chapter 7, this helps explain the cumulative effect of the vocal tracks on the record, in which the “desemanticizing” aspects of the voice (to use Michael Fried’s term from chapter 6) combine with static and the low-fi resonance to override the vocal tracks’ denotative dimension. And this is clearly one of the qualities to which Byrne and Eno were drawn in their selection of vocal material. As Eno put it succinctly at the time, “When people speak passionately, they speak in melodies.” Or as he elaborated the point in an interview at the beginning of 1980, reprinted in the liner notes to Ghosts, after he had become interested in listening to North African vocalists, “Mentally, I’d already given up on the idea of writing songs . . . one of the reasons being that, after hearing those Arabs, I’m less interested in the sound of my own voice. So I started thinking that the dialects are already music, and you could point to that fact by putting them in a musical context.”

As we saw in some detail earlier in the discussion of Dancer in the Dark, the voice is always already becoming a musicality, instrumentality, and exteriority, a not-ours, that points toward the more general condition—and it is in the end for Derrida both an ethical and political condition—described by Roland Barthes in A Lover’s Discourse: “It is characteristic of the voice to die. What constitutes the voice is what, within it, lacerates me by dint of having to die, as if it were once and never could be anything but a memory. This phantom being of the voice is what is dying out, it is that sonorous texture which disintegrates and disappears.” In short, what makes the voice the voice is not that it is presence (as the philosophical tradition tropes it according to Derrida) but that it is spectral. One might argue that the fact of the permanence of the recorded voice meets this objection, but as we have already seen, the recorded voice, precisely in its repeatability and iterability, only testifies all the more to the radical absence of “every empirically determinable subject” (to use Derrida’s phrase), to the becoming-ghost of its origin in a bush of virtuality that its own ability to be sampled feeds and populates.

To put it another way, My Life in the Bush of Ghosts abstracts the vocal material from its original anthropological, religious, or political context, but only the better to underscore its strangeness: not an Orientalism or exoticism but a musicality and exteriority that exceeds intention, denotation, and sense, confronting the listener with his or her own nonknowledge in the face of what Byrne called these “transmissions from a desperate planet.” Hence the resistance of the voice in My Life in the Bush of Ghosts to the regime of rendering, its “grammaticalization” and “discretization,” is not provided by any kind ofessentialism or clinging to identity or origins. Rather, we would do well to recall Byrne’s observation that at the time some people found this use of found vocal material “disturbing” and even “repulsive” because, he wrote, “they would prefer to see music as an ‘expression’ of emotion, . . . to believe in the artist as someone with something to ‘say’”—a “queasiness connected with the idea of authenticity” that, as he notes, “as a contentious issue was resolved years later by electronic and hip-hop artists” and their methods of music sampling, production, and collaboration (19). And we might also remember, as Byrne and Eno point out in the rerelease liner notes, that at the beginning of the project they “fantasized about making a series of recordings based on an imaginary culture.” Against the biographical background that Byrne grew up listening to Smithsonian Folkways field recordings and Eno had been
immersed in similar work on the French Occra label, the idea "was to make the record and try to pass it off anonymously as the genuine article." And even though, Byrne writes, they eventually "abandoned the imaginary-cultural-artifact idea... I suspect this fantasy continued to guide us in a subconscious way." 37

All of that does not mean, however, "nonserious." In fact, the political and ethical dimensions of that "subconscious fantasy" might be teased out by way of Richard Beardsworth's observation that it is the lack of identity and ideality of any "we," of any community whatsoever—the fact that, strictly speaking, "we" are irreducibly and inexhaustibly heterogeneous and different (even to ourselves, of course; what else does the concept of the unconscious name in another theoretical vocabulary?)—that "will have returned from the beginning to haunt any determination of the community." In this sense, the "we"—including the "we" of incipient globalization and its expression in digitalization that animates the Byrne/Eno project and its legion of voice—marks "the excess of time over human organization." 38 It marks the subjection of any "we" to the alterity and radical otherness of time. This lack of an essential identity is all the more apparent in contemporary society, in which "any country, any locality determines its understanding of time, place and community in relation to this process of 'global specialization'" (146)—a process in which, as Beardsworth puts it, "the real time of teletechnologies risks reducing the difference of time, or the aporia of time, to an experience of time that forgets time" (148). And here—to cast a backward glance for a moment—we should remember once more Eno's intense valuation of slowness and nonnarratological time in his video work.

As we saw at the end of chapter 3, what this means, as Derrida argues, is that in being "spectralized" by the medium—whose maximum thematization is the alienating and distancing effect attributed to the digital—the other comes "first, always first," as he is fond of putting it: "This is why I am an inheritor: the other comes before me." 39 The point here, in other words, is not just that the human is not reducible to its Pixarization via digital mass media, whose aural equivalent would be that everyone would speak in the same synthesized voice. The point is that what transcends that reduction and schematization is not a substance, content, presence, or place—not, in short, an ontological or anthropological authenticity—but rather a "beyond" (as in Byrne's "voices from another planet") that is at the same time radically intimate, a beyond that is not, in Derrida's terms, a place. In short, the transcendent must be rethought as the virtual.

Such a line of argument would eventually lead us to Derrida's sense of the messianic in relation to the spectral, but therefore to "a messianic without messianism," without content or assurance—in short, to the "living-on" of a futurity "to come," without guarantees. 40 But it also leads us back—or forward—to the odd temporal dislocation, the asynchronicity of the "living present" with itself, remarked on by Eno in his reflections on his video piece Mistaken Memories of Medieval Manhattan: "They evoke in me a sense of 'what could have been' and hence generate a nostalgia for a different future. It is as though I am extracting from this reality (the one the camera is pointed at) the seeds of another" (Video Paintings liner notes). And—need it be said—one can have "nostalgia for a different future" only if the present is not itself. Only (to borrow the quotation from Hamlet with which Derrida begins Specters of Marx) if "the time is out of joint."