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These.Are.The.Breaks[™]: Rethinking *Disagreement* Through Hip Hop

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The idea of the “break” is central to both Jacques Rancière’s theory of disagreement and to hip hop aesthetics. Hip hop’s four elements (rapping, DJing, breakdancing, and graffiti) all practice the cutting and remixing of samples (of other rappers words, of songs, of gestures, or of images). While the Kurtis Blow quote in the title refers to the sampling of “breakbeats” (the most rhythmically active part of a song is called the “break,” and this is often what DJs sample and remix), Tricia Rose identifies “the cut” and “rupture” as a central element of hip hop aesthetics.

[1] The break is also the focal point of Rancière’s theory of dissensual politics. Arguing that “politics comes about solely through interruption” (Rancière, *Disagreement* 21), Rancière describes the staging of disagreement as “an interrupted current” that “short-circuits” the social order (13). As I will discuss in more detail below, disagreement is a “break” in a society’s otherwise coherent distribution of sensibility, a break that forces a reconfiguration or “remixing” of hegemonic distributions.

In this paper, I argue that it is productive to read Rancière’s theory of political practice – what he calls “disagreement” – with and against Kodwo Eshun’s theorization of hip hop. Thinking disagreement through hip hop helps flesh out how, exactly, disagreement works, particularly at the level of individual embodiment and consciousness. While Rancière himself gives us many examples of interruptions to the political body (the demos speaking, Jean Derion asserting the non-universality of “universal” man, etc.), I am interested in examining how these interruptions work in, on, and through individual bodies. How is it that we become aware of the ways that distributions of sensibility – particularly hegemonic ones, which are most likely to be normalized and imperceptible by virtue of their ubiquity – structure our corporeal schemas? How does one’s corporeal schema reinforce or interrupt dominant distributions of sensibility? Can we stage an interruption of our own corporeal schemas, and if so, how?

In what follows, I respond to these questions by first situating them in the context of Rancière’s general theory of politics, and in particular his concept of “disagreement.” Then, I look to Eshun’s argument that sampling is a form of “motion capture” which grants us access to and conscious awareness of the body’s prereflective habits and compartments. Early hip-hop DJs sampled a song’s “break,” the most rhythmically active part of a piece. Eshun claims that these breaks are human movement (sense perceptions, dance moves), encoded in music; accordingly, in the remixing of songs, the body itself is remade. The sampling and remixing of sounds produces corporeal disagreement – it interrupts the body’s habitual distributions of sensibility. Because, as we know from feminism and from Foucault, the personal is political, the interruption of individuals’ corporeal schemas can have wider and more far-reaching impacts. [2] Following and expanding on Eshun, I argue that because sample-based musics interrupt distributions of

sensibility, they can be tools for both raising awareness of and intervening in dominant distributions.

One final aim of this paper concerns less what it directly argues and more with how it suggests some new directions for Rancière scholarship. First, I want to begin by opening Rancière's work, which focuses almost exclusively on visual and literary arts, to the study of music, musicology, and music theory. I focus on the musical dimensions of hip hop because rapping and DJing are very well-known and widespread practices of musical sampling. In general, hip hop differs from other styles of musical sampling (e.g., *musique concrete*) because it is informed by Afrodiasporic aesthetic priorities – e.g., the cut, the privileging of rhythm, etc. – that often resonate with Rancière's own theoretical and politico-aesthetic commitments. Thus, second, because Rancière is so resistant to the very idea of "identity," I want to start to consider the ways that his critique of the Western tradition often parallel critiques made by/in the name of identity-based groups. So, I choose to focus on hip hop in this article in order to open Rancière's work to discussions of music and of social identity.

1. Rancière's theory of politics: "Fuck tha Police"/"Bring the Noise" [3]

Here I sketch out Rancière's basic framework and describe in some detail the specific concepts that are most pertinent to my argument below. First, I explain three fundamental ideas in Rancière's oeuvre: politics, the police, and the distribution of sensibility. Then, I argue that "disagreement," Rancière's term for the specific kind of activity he considers "political," functions much like the practice of sampling and remixing: disagreement and remixing both begin from the assumption of the equality of all parts and parties, and appropriate others' utterances in ways that transform its meanings, intentions, and contexts. Most importantly, disagreement and remix both elicit a reconfiguration of parts, parties, and the relationships among them.

a. Politics and the Police

Rancière's work begins from the principle of "the sensible," the corporeal-perceptual domain that contains the set of *a priori*s that structure and make possible all other claims and endeavors. A regime of sensibility "determin[es] what presents itself to sense experience" (Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics* 13) by privileging certain modes, objects, and subjects of perception over others. As Rancière explains, "the distribution of the sensible [is] the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it" (12). For example, whiteness, heterosexuality, and masculinity are all forms of sensibility that are, in the language of much counter-hegemonic discourse, "centered" by contemporary American norms, institutions, and practices; the centering of whiteness, heterosexuality, and masculinity doles out privilege to those who are perceived to conform to these norms, and literally margin-alizes those who are perceived to be insufficiently white, heterosexual, and/or masculine. A stable, hegemonic distribution constitutes what Rancière terms "the police order" (Rancière, *Disagreement* 29).

Rancière argues that the practice of politics disrupts the police order by demonstrating the possibility of phenomena whose supposed impossibility renders a given regime consistent and coherent. Politics happens, for example, when plebes or natives show that what was thought to be the "mere noise" emitted from their mouths is in fact proper speech. "Political activity," explains Rancière, "makes understood as discourse what was once only heard as noise" (Rancière, *Disagreement*, 29-30). In the words of N.W.A. and Public Enemy, then, one "brings the noise" in order to "fuck the police." My reference to late-1980s hip hop is more than glib wordplay, because Rancière thinks that a police order of aurality can only be reconfigured through a confrontation with what this regime constitutively excludes. [4] Rancièrean "politics" is a *specific* way of disrupting the police order; it is a *break* in or *interruption* of the sensible by that which the system renders inaudible or invisible. Politics is "whatever *breaks* with the tangible

configuration whereby parties and parts or lack of them are defined by a presupposition that, by definition, has no place in that configuration – that of *the part of those who have no part*” (29; emphasis mine).

b. Disagreement as remix

When the *part sans part* demonstrates that it can, in fact, participate in the commons constituted by its exclusion, it forces a reconfiguration of this commons which, in turn, redistributes modes of participation (or non-participation) in it. “This break” in the police order “is manifest in a series of actions that reconfigure the space where parties, parts, or lack of parts have been defined. Political activity is whatever *shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes a place’s destination* (Rancière, *Disagreement* 29; emphasis mine). As an interruption or “cut” in the police order that rearranges the composition of the commons, disagreement is, I argue, a form of remix. [5] New Media theorist Lev Manovich defines remix as “a systematic re-working of a source” (Manovich 3). In Rancièrian politics, this “source” is a hegemonic distribution of sensibility (i.e., the police): “politics acts on the police...in the places and with the words that are common to both, even if it means reshaping those places and changing the status of those words” (33). Disagreement and remixing both involve cutting new parts out of an established fabric of relationships, and then seeing what arrangements can be composed from these new parts (thus “shifting” parts and “reshaping” places). Just as the DJ crafts tracks from samples of other songs, or as the MC signifies on the “proper” meaning of common words (e.g., using “ill” or “bad” to mean “good”), the instigator of disagreement “has to borrow the others’ words in order to say that it is saying something else entirely” (xi).

Such borrowing is possible because remixing assumes the commutability of different texts: any text can be put to any use. In the same way that equality’s interruption of the police “imposes on the very carving up of the social body the law of *mixing*, the law of anyone at all doing anything at all” (Rancière, *Disagreement* 19; emphasis mine), remixing treats any recording as “equal to” or interchangeable with any other. Not only can the refrain of white orphan girls serve as the background for black gangsta macho posturing, but vocal samples can be used as the rhythmic basis of a piece. [6] Thus remixing, like Rancièrian disagreement, rests on the principle of the empty “equality of anyone and everyone” (61). [7]

By introducing the principle of equality into an otherwise stable and manifestly unequal distribution of sensibility, political disagreement *is* “the interminable war between ways of declaring what a body can do” (Rancière, “Thinking Between Disciplines” 11). While Rancière repeatedly emphasizes the fact that disagreement concerns bodies – which kinds of bodies can have what kinds of capacities – he never focuses explicitly on how disagreement plays out in and on the body. For example, he describes “dissensus” as “the sensible rupture of the relation between a body and what it knows,” but locates this phenomenon as a “division of the body politic within itself” (7). [8] But what happens when this division is within one’s own body, when disagreement concerns not the body politic, but one’s own corporeal schema? This is an important question not only because a fractured corporeal schema is, as Frantz Fanon has famously argued, a characteristic feature of non-white identity in a normatively white/Euroethnic regime, but also because our body is our primary interface with “the sensible.” Regimes of sensibility are not abstract structures; they are realized in, on, and through individual bodies. Following Judith Butler’s claim that if the personal is indeed political, then one can work on the political by working on one’s own body, I argue that one’s own body is a particularly productive theater upon/within which disagreement can be staged. [9] Thus, while some readers of Rancière argue that politics can only be public and collective in the most traditional senses (i.e., as opposed to the private and the personal), feminist theory teaches us that distinctions between the public and the private, the individual and the collective, are, at best, quite slippery. [10] Supposedly “individual” experiences that may appear to be mere “self-involvement” (May 116) – e.g., bodily comportment or musical taste – are in fact productive stages of political

contestation.[11] In the following section, I read Kodwo Eshun's theorization of hip hop practice as an attempt to account for the corporeal dimension of disagreement. Because it both stages disagreement and gives rise to new distributions of sensibility, "motion capture," as Eshun theorizes it, functions as "political art" in Rancière's narrow sense.

2. "Express Yourself": hip hop as political art and corporeal disagreement

In the same way that, in Rancière's account, not all misunderstandings are "disagreements" and not all manifestations of government or relations of power are "politics," not all art objects function as "art" (Rancière, *Aesthetics* 25-26). "Art," "politics," and "disagreement" only occur when established distributions of sensibility are contested and reworked. "The specificity of art," Rancière explains, "consists in bringing about a reframing of material and symbolic space. And it is in this way that art bears on politics" (34). Artistic objects and practices become "art" when they perform the work of politics in Rancière's narrow sense: "art" interrupts, upsets, and reworks dominant distributions of sensibility. Like politics and disagreement, the practice of art is concerned with "bodily positions and movements" (Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics* 19), and effects a "change of the rapport between what the arms know how to do and what the eye is capable of seeing" (Rancière, "Thinking Between Disciplines" 4) – that is to say, art works in, on, and through individual bodies and their "corporeal schemas" (i.e., one's own cognitive and kinesthetic sense of one's body and embodied relation to the material and social world). In this section, I examine Afrofuturist music theorist Kodwo Eshun's notions of "motion capture" and "metafoolishness" in order to (1) show how hip hop is a *musical* instance of "art" in Rancière's narrow sense (which is also to say that it is "politics" in his narrow sense), and (2) think through some of the ways that disagreement contests not only broad distributions of sensibility, but individual corporeal schemas.

a. Motion Capture: Eshun's theory of hip hop

Eshun uses the idea of sampling as aural "motion capture" in order to explain how hip hop remixes not only music, but corporeal schemas. In visual animation, motion capture is the process of transforming human movement into digital data: an actor wears a suit fitted with many small sensors that a computer program then uses to track and create a 3-D model of the actor's movements. Similarly, musical recordings are, for Eshun, "kinesthetic engines which capture your motion" (Eshun 02[108]), because they exist between human movement (i.e., the danceability of the breakbeat) and code, thus doing musically what motion capturing does visually. Early hip-hop DJs sampled a song's "break," the most rhythmically active part of a piece.[12] If these breaks are human movement (dance moves, sense perceptions), encoded in musical notation, then DJs do more than merely "capture" human motion – they induce new aesthetic experiences and new ways of living one's corporeality. In the remixing of songs, the body itself is remade. "Music is the science of playing human nervous systems" (Eshun 09[161]). It is not only musical structures that are being reconfigured here, but also (and perhaps more importantly) distributions of sensibility.

By capturing and remixing human movement and perceptual faculties/habits, sample-based music can point to contradictions and inconsistencies within a regime of sensibility, in turn revealing its contingency and constructedness. When you hear a familiar sample in its unfamiliar original context (e.g., when a fan of MC Hammer's "U Can't Touch This" first encounters Rick James's "Superfreak"), the sample is "a Motion Capturer that seizes your skin memory, flashbacks your flesh" (Eshun 03[058]). Hearing the familiar in its original yet unfamiliar context produces a corporeal uncanniness that, according to Eshun, leads the listener to a critical awareness of the sample's involvement in artistic and social discourses. Eshun describes this process:

It's the habitualness.... The motions you have to make to put a needle onto the record as the flight of the stylus takes across the groove: think of the hundreds of thousands

of times that you've made that motion, the habitualness of putting it on.... When you hear a sound, you have a memory flash, but you almost have a muscular memory, you remember the times you danced to it. You don't just remember the times you danced to it, you remember the times you bent over to put the needle on the record to play that bit. Sometimes you love that bit so much, you even remember going over and over that bit again. So when you hear that sound that you love, when you hear the recognizable sample in the middle of alien sound, *that sound is recognizing your habitualness, and it's really incredible, you suddenly get a glimpse of yourself as a habitform, as a habitformed being, a process of habit formation.* You suddenly see yourself over the years, how you loved this record. It's incredible, the sound takes a picture of your habits; it snaps your habits. And you suddenly see it very clearly. (A[190]); emphasis mine)

As Eshun describes it, sound produces, in corporeal experience, the sort of critical clarity conventionally described with visual metaphors – “you suddenly see it very clearly.” Hearing a familiar sample in an unfamiliar context, one's habitual corporeal response to it is disturbed. In Rancière's terms, this “shift in [the sample's] discursive register, its universe of reference, or its temporal designations” (Rancière, “Dissenting Words” 120) interrupts established distributions of sensibility and gives us pause to reconsider – and, if we follow Eshun – rework them. What are samples if not “blocks of speech circulating without a legitimate father to accompany them toward their authorized addressee” (Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics* 39)? Deregulating the *musical* order of who can say what and what can go where, “these locutions take hold of bodies and divert them from their end or purpose” (Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics* 39), and thus deregulate the general *police* order. [13] If we closely follow Eshun's account, we see that this interruption occurs not in some collective and/or abstract “sensible,” but in one's own corporeal schema: it's *your* habits that get snapped and reorganized. An example will help me cache out this phenomenon of corporeal disagreement that Eshun points to in the quote above.

b. “It's Dre on the Mic Gettin' Physical”

Upon hearing, in a Botox ad, the sample from Charles Wright Watts 103rd Street Band's “Express Yourself” made newly famous in NWA's track of the same title, one might first recognize the groove in the sample as belonging to its most recently familiar context – a classic 1990s G-funk track about the disenfranchisement of economically underprivileged black men. [14] [15] Even though the “groove” (the horn line and the lyric “express yourself”) on both the Watts Band's and NWA's version is basically identical, each version implies a different set of dance moves, a different mode of bodily comportment. The different comportments can be seen in the different ways the women in the Botox ad dance to the Watts Band, and the way Dr. Dre and NWA carry themselves in their video. In these two contexts, one “expresses oneself” in differing ways which quite neatly map onto race and gender stereotypes. The women in the ad dance in a stereotypically white, feminine, sensual way, while Dre and NWA walk and gesture to the beat in ways that reinforce both their masculine toughness and their fluency in the gestural rhetoric common to West Coast rappers of the era. In fact, when I first saw the commercial, I went over to the television, and, upon seeing the white women dancing in the ad, I realized that I, a white woman (albeit one who grew up watching a lot of hip-hop videos), was dancing and “expressing myself” to this music in a way completely different than the way the white women in the Botox ad were. In fact, I was moving more like the black men in the NWA video than I was the white women in the Botox ad (I was keeping the beat with my head and shoulders while using hand gestures for emphasis, as rappers commonly do in hip hop videos. The women in the commercial were moving mainly from the pelvis/hip area.) While it was entirely appropriate for dancing to 90s G-funk, my movements seemed, in the context of the ad, totally inappropriate for my race and my gender. The recontextualization of this Watts Band/NWA sample literally captured my motion in a way that allowed me to first recognize and then reflect on both the complexities of my

own corporeal habits (i.e., the mode of my dancing), and of raced and gendered norms/habits of embodiment more broadly.

Eshun calls this reflective attention to normative embodiment “metafoolishness.” A “sudden awareness of the game you’re in[,]... metafoolishness hips you to how the human biocomputer metaprograms itself” (Eshun 08[145]). In Rancière’s terms, these “metaprograms” are the police order, and this sample is an agent of political subjectification. According to Rancière, “political subjectification redefines the field of experience that gave to each their identity with their lot (Rancière, *Disagreement* 40). The “Express Yourself” sample points to two parties or “identities” in the contemporary American police order – white femininity and black masculinity – but it does so in a way that forces a redistribution of these parties and parts. Insofar as “a well-ordered society would like the bodies which compose it to have the perceptions, sensations and thoughts which correspond to them” (Rancière, “Thinking Between Disciplines” 9), I *should* identify with the women in the Botox ad. However, because I associate this sample with a specific performance of black masculinity, I *actually* feel estranged from the norms governing both their and my embodiment as a white woman. A “political interval” has been “created by dividing a condition” – i.e., white femininity – “from itself” (Rancière, *Disagreement* 138). Though I am, by all accounts, a white woman, my experience with this Botox ad demonstrates that my corporeal schema is neither that of a “white woman” nor a “black man” – if these are even meaningful categories anymore. The fact that I, a white woman, can more readily identify with the black masculinity in a 90s G-funk video than the white femininity in a recent TV commercial destabilizes *both* identity categories or “metaprograms.”[16] What is specifically “black” or “masculine” about this mode of bodily comportment if I, a thirtysomething middle-class white woman, can perform *it* more convincingly than some modes of middle-class white female bodily comportment?[17] By carving a break in two songs, the “Express Yourself” sample affected a break in my body’s capacity to perform/inhabit prescribed race-gender norms.

This break induces “disagreement” in Rancière’s narrow sense. Regardless of which context is considered the sample’s “original” or “proper” one, this sample, like the plebes’ affirmative response to the “Do you understand?” question, is an “utterance...[that] finds itself extracted from the speech situation in which it functioned naturally. It is placed in another situation in which it no longer works” (Rancière, *Disagreement* 47).[18] To hear this sample that I and many other people primarily associate with ‘90s gangsta rap in an ad meant to convince wealthy white women that this cosmetic medical procedure will not prevent them from “expressing themselves” (Botox is widely known to reduce wrinkles by paralyzing facial muscles) juxtaposes the privilege accorded to Botox’s target market (they’ll pay to lose the expressive capacities they already possess), and the marginalization of those whose situation NWA describes (whose voices are already discounted in the mainstream media, or, those for whom “expressin’ with full capabilities” lands one in “correctional facilities”). If “the political act... consists in building a relationship between these things that have none, in causing the relationship and the nonrelationship to be seen together as the object of dispute” (41), then the “Express Yourself” sample functions as a political agent by producing a commonality between two things that supposedly have nothing in common: middle-class beauty regimes and the prison-industrial complex.[19] In so doing, the sample shifts our attention from the songs’ lyrical and musical content to the situation of the parts and parties involved in its production and reception; it has produced a situation of disagreement. Because it does the work of art (i.e., interrupting and reconfiguring the police order of race-gender identities), this Botox advertisement is no mere product of the culture industry, but “art” in Rancière’s narrow sense.

While this example evinces a fairly by-the-book instance of political disagreement, it also effects “disagreement” at the level of individual bodily experience. Here, disagreement concerns not just a speech situation, but also a corporeal schema. My experience with the Botox ad neither disrupted nor reworked the regime of white Western heteropatriarchy. It did, however, disrupt

my own performance of classed and racialized gender norms. Race, class, and gender (and other social identities) are primarily norms governing bodily difference (or, in more Rancièrian terms, they are ways of distributing bodies around a white / Western, bourgeois, heteromale ideal). Thus, in order to transform the consensus / postdemocratic “identity politics” Rancière so detests into genuinely counter-hegemonic *politics*, it is necessary to politically engage individual bodily experience – i.e., to stage disagreements that are corporeal.

So, how might one go about staging corporeal disagreements? If “the need to create another body and another way of seeing than that which oppresses them” (Rancière, “Thinking Between Disciplines” 3) is a necessary component of liberatory struggles, how does one do this? How might art help? Eshun offers some suggestions. In Eshun’s account, audio technologies such as samplers and synthesizers elicit new aesthetic experiences that in turn change the way one experiences one’s habitual body; he describes this phenomenon as “hyperembodiment via the Technics SL 1200” (-002; Technics, pronounced “techniques,” is a brand of turntables widely used by DJs). By producing sounds and compositional structures that are too fast, too complex, or otherwise materially impossible to make with analogue instruments and human musicians, technologies like turntables, samplers, synthesizers, and drum machines produce sounds and aural experiences for which we have yet to develop adequate listening and analytical conventions. In other words, musicians are making works that we haven’t really learned how to hear, for which our ears are literally not trained and conditioned (in the sense that an athlete is trained and conditioned for physical performance).[20] Accordingly, Eshun argues that these new musical technologies and the works produced on them “deman[d] a new neuromuscular interface” (01[003]). These new sounds make our bodies work differently. As Eshun puts it, “the nervous system [is] reshaped by beats for a new kind of sensory condition” (A[182]). Hip hop reprograms our metaprograms, so to speak.

3. Conclusion: “To magnify the misperception inherent in everyday hearing” (Eshun 03[047])

Eshun’s account of motion capture illustrates some specific ways that art – in particular, hip hop – creates new modes of sense perception. Rancière claims politics in general “make[s] visible what is not perceivable” (Rancière, “Dissenting Words” 124), and that art is political when it is “concerned with aesthetic acts as configurations of experience that *create new modes of sense perception*” (Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics* 9; emphasis mine). Clearly, then, hip hop as Eshun describes it is a practice both political and artistic. Rancière’s discussions of sensibility and sense perception tend toward the abstract and the broadly generalizable: he focuses mainly on “regimes,” “distributions,” and orders, on the body politic rather than specific experiences of concrete embodiment. Feminist, queer, and critical race / postcolonial theorists have established that one’s personal corporeal schema is political in the general sense, and I argue that it is also “political” – and artistic – in Rancière’s narrow sense. Both art and politics can do their work on, in, and through both individuals’ corporeal schemas and a society’s regimes of sensibility.

Charles Mills has argued that white supremacy / normative whiteness is a “cognitive dysfunction that is socially functional”: while the perception that non-whites are not fully human (and thus not fully entitled to human rights) is empirically incorrect, normative whiteness masks this error and posits the empirically unsound position as the only credible, consistent, and coherent view (Mills 18). In his discussion of the plebes’ demonstration of their ability to speak words (rather than make noise), Rancière gives an example of this “socially functional” erroneousness: “before becoming a class traitor, the consul Menenius, who imagines he has heard the plebes speak, is *a victim of sensory illusion*” (Rancière, *Disagreement* 24; emphasis mine). This “illusion” is like the “dysfunction” of which Mills speaks: while apparently incorrect, given the norms of the dominant distribution of sensibility, it is in fact completely and brutally accurate (in more Rancièrian terms, it recognizes the police order’s “miscount” as such). While Mills focuses on the cognitive, Rancière’s work draws attention to the corporeal dimension of this “dysfunctionality.” The problem then becomes how to incite more of these “sensory illusions.” As my Botox

ad/NWA example and Eshun's discussion of the effects of technological innovation on sense perception demonstrate, art practices like hip hop can successfully rupture hegemonic modes of perception, "magnify the misperception inherent in everyday hearing," and cause one to see, hear, and experience one's embodiment in new ways.

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Endnotes

1. See Rose, 1994.
2. In a somewhat Deleuzian reading of Rancière, Yves Citton suggests that such a corporeal or "molecular" level of sensibility grounds the more macrocosmic "political" stagings of disagreement that Rancière's work focuses on. Citton claims that "the spectacular gestures of reconfiguration enacted on the political or literary stage merely repeat, on a large scale, the type of minute reconfigurations that are performed at the molecular level when we process sensory data into affective or intellectual perceptions" (Citton 138).
3. See N.W.A., *Straight Outta Compton* and Public Enemy, *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*, respectively.
4. Whether this "part sans part" is called "noise" or not depends on the regime of sensibility in question. Rancière frequently contrasts *speech* to noise, particularly in the second chapter of *Disagreement*. "Noise" is that speech which is disavowed as such. In this regime, then, "speech" is the commons around which the sensible is distributed. However, in a more general regime of aurality, "noise" describes an identifiable type of sound; "noise" is not what is constitutively excluded from the regime, but included within it as one variety of sound among others (e.g., music, language, etc.). In this sort of regime, "sound" itself is the commons, and noise is one of its constituent parts – not the part sans part. In his essay "Metamorphosis of the Muses," Rancière seems to suggest that "noise" can operate in the first way listed above, i.e., as that which forces a redistribution of a particular musical police regime. He describes a sound installation as "a space shot through by the voices of elsewhere – reconfigured by their noise" (Rancière, "Metamorphosis" 18).
5. Though Lev Manovich defines remix very broadly, as "any reworking of already existing cultural work(s)" (Manovich 2), in this article I follow Miller's more detailed definition of remix, which turns on the idea of equality or commutability: remix culture is one in which "any sound can be you" (Miller 5), and where "it's all just data.... The sampling machine can handle any sound, and any expression" (Miller 6).

6. See Jay-Z, "Hard Knock Life (Ghetto Anthem)" on *Hard Knock Life*, New York: Roc-A-Fella, 1998. This track uses a sample from the musical *Annie*. See also Lil Wayne, "A Milli" on *The Carter III*, New Orleans: Young Money Records, 1998, and T.I. et al, "Swagga Like Us" on *Paper Trail*, Atlanta: Grand Hustle, 2008.
7. This equality is particularly evident in a digital environment where every sound, image, or text is equally a string of zeroes and ones. As DJ and theorist Paul D. Miller says, "it's all just data" (Miller 6).
8. Citton does claim that redistributions of sensibility (what he calls "re-presentation" first occur on/through individual bodies, and only then are staged for others. He explains: "before taking place toward other people, the re-presentation takes place within us, within the activity that defines our sensitivity" (Citton 137).
9. Butler argues that "the feminist claim that the personal is political suggests, in part, that subjective experience is not only structured by existing political arrangements, but effects and structures those arrangements in turn.... There is, latent in the personal is political formulation of feminist theory, a supposition that the life-world of gender relations is constituted, at least partially, through the concrete and historically mediated acts of individuals.... If the personal is a category which expands to include the wider political and social structures, then the acts of the gendered subject would be similarly expansive" (Butler 485).
10. Todd May reads Rancière as arguing that "by themselves, individual speech or action is not politics but rather the invitation to it. It is when a group takes upon itself the refusal of a police order in the name of equality that politics happens.... To engage in the practice of equality, to become a subject, while it is above all a demonstration to oneself and the formation of a community, it is not simply an affair of self-involvement" (May 116).
11. For more on gendered bodily comportment, see Iris Marion Young, *On Female Body Experience: Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays*, London: Oxford UP, 2005. On the gendering and racialization of musical taste, see Angela Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminisms*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998, and Suzanne Cook, "'R-E-S-P-E-C-T: find out what it means to me': Feminist Musicology and the Abject Popular" in *Women & Music*, 2001.
12. "I call it motion capturing: in films like Jurassic Park and all the big animatronic films Motion Capture is the device by which they synthesize and virtualize the human body. They have a guy that's dancing slowly, and each of his joints are fixed to lights and they map that onto an interface, and then you've got it. You've literally captured the motion of a human; now you can proceed to virtualize it. And I think that's what Flash and the others did with the beat.... They switched on the material potential of the break" (Eshun A [176]). "Grandmaster Flash [et al] are human samplers who isolate the Breakbeat... to capture its motion" (Eshun 02[017])
13. While he doesn't develop this claim, Rancière does suggest that remixing (i.e., the use of turntables to make music rather than to consume it) can be a form of political disagreement: "When the instruments of reproduction become instruments of creation and configure a space where the very distinction between the model and the copy, activity and passivity, is lost... it is every bit as much a political and social manner of dividing up – with the possibilities of art – the spaces and times, the places and roles which define a community" (Rancière, "Metamorphosis" 21-23). His claim here is that the practice of remixing disrupted a certain regime of art, art making, and art consumption. I argue that remixing's disruptive power has purchase beyond the artworld / regimes of art.

14. Clips from one of these advertisements are used in Sarah Haskins' "Target Women" segment, which appeared on Current TV.

The segment is available here:

http://current.com/shows/infomania/89053755_sarah-haskins-in-target-women-botox.htm.

Another version of the commercial is available here on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9QoXkjS4N0>.

15. Interestingly, the track is itself both an instance and a narration of Rancièrian politics. Many of the track's lyrics reflect on the fact that Dr. Dre, who is usually a producer, has left the mixing desk to rap on this record. In the beginning of the track, Ice Cube remarks: "Yo Dre, you been doin' all this dope producing, you [haven't] had a chance to show 'em what *time* it is." Saying that "some drop science [i.e., mix records], but I'm droppin' English [i.e., rapping]," Dre asserts the same claim as the Greek plebes Rancièrè makes an example of in *Disagreement*: that he can do more than just make noise, because he, too, is capable of speech. The track is both the manifestation of and a reflection on a redistribution of roles, parts, and parties.
16. Insofar as "politics is the art of... mixed identities" (Rancièrè, *Disagreement* 139), then this example is clearly a case of politics. As I argue in the main body of the text, my experience of hearing this "Express Yourself" sample in the Botox commercial undermines the stability and coherence of a variety of identity categories.
17. Insofar as my identification with black masculinity is an impossible one (it doesn't work, it doesn't make sense, it's not accurate), I am identifying with black men in the same way that the May '68 protesters identified with Holocaust victims when they said "We are all German Jews." This "We are all German Jews" formulation is one of Rancièrè's privileged examples of political subjectification (see Rancièrè, *Disagreement* 59).
18. The logic of disagreement, as expressed here, is quite similar to Rancièrè's definition of the artistic strategy of "collage": "Collage can be realized as the pure encounter between heterogeneous elements, attesting *en bloc* to the incompatibility of two worlds.... The issue here is no longer to present two heterogeneous worlds and to incite feelings of intolerability, but, on the contrary, to bring to light the causal connection linking them together. But the politics of collage has a balancing-point in that it can combine the two relations and play on the line of indiscernibility between the force of sense's legibility and the force of non-sense's strangeness" (Rancièrè, *Aesthetics* 47). Collage is like disagreement insofar as it focuses attention of the simultaneous propriety and impropriety (or sense and nonsense, or understanding and not understanding, etc.) of the part sans part. Hip hop has often been linked to the postmodern practices of collage, bricolage, and intertextuality. I argue here that Eshun's account of "motion capture" demonstrates that hip hop can function as collage in Rancièrè's narrow sense.
19. Sandra Bartky's Foucaultian feminist work suggests that female beauty routines manifest the same logics of surveillance and discipline that Foucault abstracts from his archaeology of prison practices. See Bartky, Sandra, *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
20. I'm taking it as a given that each culture has its own listening conventions that discipline (in the full Foucaultian sense) members' auditory system, training the body to, for example, either recognize or not recognize half-tones as "real" pitches.

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