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We live at the times of remix. People remix popular pieces of music, films, art and texts. On the face of it, remixing seems to be the child of the modern era with its modern art and the new media. On one hand, it is criticized and combated; on the other, its innovative nature, originality and creative potential are put to the fore. Perhaps, it is a fad, something to be described in the language of sociology or media studies. It seems that remix is but one of the many elements of our postmodern condition. Is this really the case? Can the phenomenon of remix be interesting for philosophy? Does remix tell us anything about the world we live in? Finally, does the category of remix have any philosophical value?

In his book *Ethics and Aesthetics after Remix*, David Gunkel tries to answer these difficult questions. Right at the outset, he takes note of the fact that there have already been a lot of publications on remix, including philosophical ones. Is there really a point in writing another? Yes, there is. What makes Gunkel's reflections different from those of other authors is their transcendental nature which is especially valuable in the case of remix. Gunkel writes that his objective is not to analyse individual forms of remix, its manifestations or the concept itself, but rather to reflect on how 'his object has been identified, formulated and objectified' (p. xxiii) in different remix theories and studies. This inherently Kantian perspective, which Gunkel is right to associate with reflections of such modern philosophers as M. Heidegger, J. Derrida, G. Deleuze or S. Žižek, opens up the possibility to answer the following questions: What is creation? Who is an author? What is the difference between the original and its copy? Transcendental analysis is focussed not on objects themselves but on conditions for their possibility which Gunkel relates strictly to the discourse about them[1] thereby disclosing a poststructuralist modification of Kant's traditional proposition. Adopting this perspective, he demonstrates that the dispute over remixing is nothing 'new', but has been present in philosophy ever since Plato. More importantly to me, however, although Gunkel does not say it explicitly, the entire dispute is shown to be deeply ontological and defines what Nietzsche and his followers vilified as Platonism in philosophy.

Gunkel unfolds his argument in three stages encapsulated in three parts of the book. These are *Premix, Remix* and *Postmix*. The first part is mainly focussed on what is called remix; the dispute between its proponents and opponents as well as Platonic analyses of writing which replaces original, living speech[2] just like a copy replaces its original. In *Remix*, Gunkel does away with the Platonic solution, drawing upon the concepts developed by French structuralists such as difference, simulacrum or repetition. He demonstrates how Platonic philosophy, rooted in the concept of 'fidelity' (pp. 67–70), has left its mark on the concept of 'remix' which may be interpreted not just as a faithful or even imitative copy of the original but also – as suggested by Deleuze, Baudrillard and the author of *Of Remixology* – its creative continuation, a simulacrum which brings about a new quality each time it is repeated and thus goes beyond the original. From the perspective of these thinkers, remix is innovative, novel and constitutive for its practice. Surpassing the perspective established by Plato's dialogues is strictly related to reversing

Platonism as suggested by Nietzsche (Deleuze, 1990: 253). Remix refers to difference, repetition and simulation. These concepts outline a new ontology of the process and difference juxtaposed to Plato's ontology of essences and appearances. This is why Gunkel writes that 'digital media can be described as "the end of Platonism"' (p. 111). The end of Platonism is also the end of the concepts of 'original' and 'representation' as well as the 'Essence – Appearances' and 'Model – Copy' differentiations.

In *Premix*, Gunkel lays bare the ethical and axiological perspective of reflections upon remix. He underlines the revolutionary nature of the remix theory based on the proposal to reverse Platonism and the Derridian deconstruction of philosophical discourses. To reconsider remix is to reconsider our present concepts of values, creativity and authorship. Interpreted ontologically, remix changes the way we understand these concepts, whilst reflection upon it becomes a new object of philosophy. Gunkel also claims that remixing may be a philosophically fertile method as in the work by J. Lacan or S. Žižek (pp. 162–164).

Gunkel's book cannot be overestimated. Besides the author's passion combined with his hard work and erudition, the great value of the book resides primarily in the subject matter itself and the way it is analysed and described. The book surprises the reader as its perspective of critical reflection on remix not only goes beyond the analyses in the domains of ethics, media studies or the theory of music but also makes them possible by disclosing their ontological and epistemological roots. I interpret remixology as a new ontology which is adequate to the modern era where new technologies and media as well as the new way of recording, reproducing or creating open up new research areas for philosophy. The objective of this new ontology is to work out a new language which will overcome the ossified framework of traditional philosophy based on such conceptual oppositions as 'fact – essence', 'object – subject', 'form – matter' or 'original – copy'. Gunkel's book fits the bill perfectly.

If I were to point out a weakness in the analyses in *Of Remixology*, it would be the lack of the author's definition of the category of 'Platonism' which is of key importance for the book as well as the insufficient justification for the pragmatic criterion to differentiate the 'good' remix from the 'bad' (p. 171). Nonetheless, these drawbacks do not disrupt Gunkel's clear and convincing argument in any material way.

Finally, we may ask about the position the book has within the landscape of modern philosophy. It seems to me, as I have tried to demonstrate, that Gunkel's work is first and foremost ontological and may be safely read with the books by Deleuze, Žižek or Baudrillard. What is perhaps even more important, it is also an interesting counterproposal for the so-called speculative realism of G. Harman, Q. Meillasoux or R. Brassier, which stems from similar philosophical inspirations, but calls for a radically different approach to ontological and epistemological problems. Paraphrasing Husserl, we could say 'Back to remix!'.

Notes

1. '[…] the point of the critical effort is not to decide, for example, whether remix is a new form of creativity or not, but to identify and reevaluate the concept of creativity that has already been mobilized and operationalized in these disputes' (p. xxv).
2. Gunkel interprets the problem in the categories of Havelock and Ong's anthropological theory of orality. See Piekarski M (2016) on the relationship between Wittgenstein's and Derrida's analyses of writing and their anthropological vision.

References

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Piekarski M (2016) Czy znaki kształtuję myślenie? Wittgenstein, Derrida i Havelock [Do signs shape our thinking? Wittgenstein, Derrida and Havelock]. *Studia Philosophica Wratislaviensia* 11(1): 143–157.

Maurer Bill, *How would you like to pay?: How technology is changing the future of money*. Duke University Press: Durham, 2015; vii + 163 pp.; ISBN 9780822359999, $19.95 (pbk)

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In *How would you like to pay?* Bill Maurer debunks a common linear view of money – from shells, to coins, to paper and plastic – with apps and digital currency heralded as the last stage in money's greater history. This evolution story confounds the different types of money that are used in various monetary ecologies and assumes that newer forms of money are most efficient. Maurer argues that this perspective often overlooks technological, legal and communicative bases of payment.

The purpose of this book is twofold: first to present and historically place changes in payment and second to contextualize them in relationship to financial inclusion for the poor, development in the global south and multicultural repertoires of money. Maurer asserts that money is not just a store of value but a 'system of relationships, a chain of promises, and a record of people's transactions with one another' (p. 46).

The book first presents innovative thinking in the payment world, which includes digital currencies like bitcoin and initial flops including the Square Wallet application for smartphones. The book considers failures and disruptions in payment processing as significant developments in their own right. Maurer then moves into the larger question and discussion of what money is. As the chapters progress, specific examples of poverty are honed in on, highlighting how money is shaped by technological infrastructure and human communication. The next chapters go further into the evolution story of money, arguing that money is a significant social and cultural form: there are rituals, gifting, politics and practices surrounding it. Maurer highlights that communication technologies often have unintended uses, complicating the degree to which money needs to be liquid in different technical contexts. The book spends the last few chapters focusing on cultural repertoires of money and uses and potentials of mobile phones as payment technologies and beyond.

While Maurer argues mobile hucksters often exploit the evolution or linear story of money, bitcoin, Apple Pay, Square, M-Pesa and other money technologies afforded by new media are ushering a reimagination around a newer wave of payment processes. One key focus is the case study of M-Pesa, Kenya's successful mobile phone–based money service. More people subscribe to M-Pesa in Kenya than have bank accounts, purchasing airtime that can be traded for money using inexpensive basic feature mobile devices. This section engages the uses and potentials of mobile phones as payment technologies and as innovative forms of poverty alleviation.