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Rigorous Infidelity: Whole Text Sampling in the Curatorial Work of Henri Langlois, Dewey Phillips, and Jean-François Lyotard

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Original Citation

Mauer, Barry. "Rigorous Infidelity: Whole Text Sampling in the Curatorial Work of Henri Langlois, Dewey Phillips, and Jean-François Lyotard." *Sampling Media*, Oxford University Press, Editors: Laurel Westrup, David Laderman, pp.60-72

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Barry Mauer

Introduction

John Rajchman's "*Les Immatériaux* or How to Construct the History of Exhibitions" asks, "In what ways have exhibitions, more than simple displays and configurations of objects, helped change ideas about art, intersecting at particular junctions with technical innovations, discursive shifts and larger kinds of philosophical investigations, thus forming part of these larger histories?" This essay attempts to answer his question by discussing curating as whole text sampling.[1]

Sampling, of which whole text sampling is a subset of practices, is the appropriation and recontextualization of texts or textual fragments; it involves choosing an object or text and deploying it for other uses. Sampling always involves remixing, which means that a sampled text is arranged in new relations to another text or texts. At the least, this "other text" is a new context, itself a text. For example, Marcel Duchamp's famous work "Fountain"—a urinal turned on its back and signed "R. Mutt"—involved its removal from its usual context, the men's room, and its relocation to a new context, the museum. It became an aesthetic object rather than a functional one because the museum cues audiences to read aesthetic and cultural significance in the objects displayed there. As Dalia Judovitz notes in regards to Duchamp, "the artist functions like a mediumistic being who draws on prior traditions and the spectator's appropriation of the work contributes to the creative act" (xxviii).

Many artists sample by using small fragments of text: i.e. the DJ who uses a three-second piece of music from an archived recording in a new song. I've coined the term "whole text sampling" to describe archiving/curating activities that have existed for some time and that draw on many of the same sampling practices used by artists. Whole text sampling means selecting "whole" texts from archives and recontextualizing them in a program, exhibition, or anthology. These arrangements become "new" texts. The distinction between whole texts and fragments is nebulous since an archive can be understood as one enormous text of which any "whole" text within is a fragment. Similarly, the difference between a whole and fragmentary archive is also nebulous. Textual boundaries appear fixed and stable when contained in a physical object, such as a printed book or a library. But photography and film reveal a world of decontextualized and alterable fragments, while the Internet, with its endless links, reminds us of the networked existence of all texts. Thus throughout the essay, the term "whole" should be imagined in quotation marks.[2]

I define sampling as broadly as possible by situating contemporary notions of sampling within traditions that range from Cicero through poststructuralist theories of iterability.[3] A key component of rhetoric (and of sampling) is *inventio*: selection from the repository of the known. The next component is *dispositio*: the arrangement of the selected elements. All texts result from selection and combination. As Derrida and Barthes argued, sampling is inherent in all textuality since any text, in order to be intelligible, must be constructed from code that has been sampled and arranged. Selection involves not only the surface elements of a text but also its structural elements. In music, the surface elements of a text include the notes and the instruments designated to play those notes. Structural elements include time signatures, tempos, modes, keys, and moods. Selecting from among these elements determines what will be part of a composition. Curators may focus on surface or structural elements

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[1] The work here is indebted to that of Robert B. Ray, whose essay "How to Invent an Avant-Garde," as well as books and seminars about surrealism, Langlois, and early rock'n'roll have sparked my own interest in these topics.

[2] It is useful to recall Roland Barthes' distinction between "work" and "text"; "the work is a fragment of substance, occupying a part of the space of books (in a library for example), the Text is a methodological field." (156-7). Rather than follow Barthes's terminology, I use the word "whole text" to refer to individual works and discuss how curators recontextualize them in new paradigms.

[3] Particularly in the work of Jacques Derrida. See his "Signature, Event, Context."

of texts (or both) in their presentations of the archives. Sampled texts can be arranged (or "mixed") in various ways.[4] These arrangements appear as either collisions (highlighting differences) or as hybrids (in which some kind of fusion arises). Both approaches have been enormously important in the history of the arts and sciences.[5] In the cases I examine below, however, the curators create collisions and the artists create hybrids.

Curators provide texts that artists may not be able to find on their own. Additionally, curators create new paradigms that artists come to appreciate as their own inheritance. My attitude towards curating is inflected by Victor Shklovskij's theory of defamiliarization, the idea that art should make us perceive the familiar as strange. When curators defamiliarize the archives by sampling and mixing across discourses, they liberate the materials.[6]

Whole text sampling has played a critical role in the development of modern aesthetics such as French New Wave cinema, early rock'n'roll music, and information art. This chapter theorizes the work of whole text sampling pioneers including film archivist Henri Langlois, Memphis radio DJ Dewey Phillips, and scholar/curator Jean-François Lyotard who helped create these aesthetics by means of their innovative work with their archives. There were no "canons" yet when these sampling pioneers began their work, so they set about inventing them. The methods they employed were baroque and extravagant, closer to those of the artists they admired rather than to conventional archivists. I chose to discuss these archivists/curators because of their impact on the arts. Langlois, by refusing to discriminate between documentary and fiction and between "high" and "low" aesthetics, defamiliarized the history of film; he provided new paradigms for the French New Wave critics and filmmakers. Phillips treated recordings, rather than live performances, as primary texts and refused to discriminate based on genre or race; he provided new paradigms for early rockers. Lyotard in his 1985 art show, *Les Immatériaux*, refused to discriminate by media type or genre and he sampled and mixed audio and visual media, as well as visual art, philosophy, literature, and technology; he provided new paradigms for electronic artists.

The archivist/curators discussed here demonstrate that there are multiple routes through the archives. Lyotard literalized this strategy by creating a five-part labyrinth through his exhibit. Langlois and Phillips implied it by showing how the films and music they presented could be endlessly remixed, creating new histories with each recombination. Robert Ray notes that Langlois juxtaposed material from different traditions, which he "forced to live side by side as incompatible intellectual heirs." (Ray, 90) Ray coined the suggestive term "rigorous infidelity" to describe Langlois' relationship to his materials. I extend the term to Phillips and Lyotard as well.

The whole text sampling projects of Langlois, Phillips, and Lyotard stand in contrast to positivist modes of knowledge with its assumption of stable categories which typically informs curating and archiving. The work of Langlois, Phillips, and Lyotard trains a different sensibility, one more sensitive to the chance discoveries inherent in juxtapositions. Nevertheless, there was a rigor to their work, a testing of arguments about the rightness of accepted paradigms and a keen attention to the emergence of new paradigms. Ultimately they discovered or invented new paradigms that artists and critics explored.

This essay seeks to refine the concept of sampling as an aid to its practitioners. It argues that whole text

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[4] Sometimes, artists reprocess or manipulate samples, as happens frequently with recorded sound; for instance, an audio sample can be played backwards, slower, faster, or put through any number of effects that alter the pitch, timbre, tone or volume. For the purposes of this chapter, however, I only discuss sampling as selection and combination.

[5] As Lakoff and Johnson have pointed out, all discourses are hybrids. Pythagoras invented physics, but he did so by crossing musical with mathematical discourses when he demonstrated the vibration of strings.

[6] Various theories of creativity focus on the importance of crossing materials from multiple disciplines and perspectives. Gadamer and Bakhtin theorize discourse crossing in dialogue, Marjorie Garber theorizes the cross dresser in *Vested Interests*, and George Lipsitz's *Dangerous Crossroads* theorizes cross-cultural hybrids. This is a partial list, but it demonstrates the fecundity of this line of inquiry.

sampling has immense power to shape new aesthetic, critical, and political movements and traditions.[7] It explains how DJs, curators, and scholars have used whole text sampling to provoke artists to invent anew. This study also aims to help us learn how to use whole text sampling to provoke new movements in the arts, within the academy, or within political spheres. In the conclusion I discuss ways in which we can transfer the lessons of Langlois, Phillips, and Lyotard to our poetics and praxis in digital/online databases.

1. **Henri Langlois**

A review of the work of film archivist Henri Langlois in terms of whole text sampling helps to explain his extraordinary impact on the young filmmakers of the French New Wave. The French New Wave burst into public view in 1959, showing the world that cinema could do anything that other arts could do and more with films as thematically and stylistically diverse as François Truffaut's *The 400 Blows,* Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless,* and Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*. Without Langlois, however, the movement may never have emerged. Jean-Luc Godard, one of the New Wave critics and directors devoted to Langlois, called him "one of the greatest French film directors, director and scriptwriter of a continuous film called the Cinématèque Français" (qtd. in Roud, xxvii).

Having started the Cinématèque Français early in his life, Langlois dominated the film scene in France for over 40 years. Langlois transformed people's ideas about films by recontextualizing them in new settings and in new combinations. "[Langlois] would run three films every evening in unexpected yet revealing juxtapositions, placing an Eisenstein before a Raoul Walsh, or a Hitchcock after a Mizoguchi" (Roud, 66). As Jacques Rivette said, "One could see there successively at 6:30 p.m. Griffith's *Broken Blossoms* and at 8:30 Andy Warhol's *Chelsea Girls. . . .* It was the perpetual interaction of the present and the past of the cinema that was so exciting" (qtd. in Roud, xxvii). These apparently odd juxtapositions enabled audiences to notice things they might otherwise miss. For instance, in both *Broken Blossoms* and *Chelsea Girls*, there is the formal problem of how to indicate simultaneous action: cinema's "meanwhile." Each director handles this problem differently, Griffith by cross-cutting and Warhol by projecting scenes from four rooms simultaneously in each quadrant of the frame. Both films deal with "damsels in distress." The lessons of each film become apparent through their juxtaposition.

Langlois' love of Surrealism might account for his predilection for sampling. He shared many of the Surrealists' habits, such as recontextualization and transformation (i.e. he treated as fine art films that were made as entertainment). Langlois sampled and mixed across conventional boundaries to include films from the past and present, films of French and international origin, and commercial and art films. No other cinema houses in France at that time crossed these boundaries.

Langlois' open-mindedness to intertextuality and boundary blurring, so central to the sampling aesthetic and impulse, was evident in his attitude towards films that others overlooked. He refused to accept critical judgments about which films were worth saving and he made a point to save "all the work of any director he considered to be of interest" (Roud, 24). On the other hand, Langlois's occasional choice to organize screenings by producers instead of directors presented another category shift; it challenged the notion of film as an auteurist art, like literature, and implied it was a corporate product, like a car.

Langlois' sampling of American B-movies inspired François Truffaut to write his infamous attack on the French film industry titled "A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema." Truffaut's work led the French film industry to break from its "tradition of quality," which he argued produced dull literary adaptations. Just as earlier artists, such as the Cubists had revalued found materials and cultural detritus, Langlois did the same with the old B-movies that the Hollywood movie industry had abandoned as virtually worthless, since their commercial runs were over.

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[7] This chapter is about experimentation with whole text sampling rather than with run-of-the-mill compiling. Such experimentation involves challenging the contexts and categories (genres, periods, styles, and academic designations) to which these texts had been consigned.

Langlois provided a historical context from which artists and critics could develop their conceptual tools. As Eric Rohmer remarked, "Can you imagine a budding musician who was unable to listen to the works of Bach or Beethoven, a young writer who was not able to read the works of the past by going to a library?"(qtd. in Roud, 65). The great critic André Bazin articulated the concepts that young artists needed to draw lessons from Langlois' work. From Bazin, the artists of the French New Wave learned that there were basically two traditions in film—Lumiere's realism and Méliès's illusionism. The young filmmakers wanted to combine these traditions into a hybrid; Godard said he wanted to "do research [Lumiere's tradition] in the form of a spectacle [Méliès's tradition]" (qtd. in Milne, 1972, 181).

Informed by Langlois' whole text sampling, the New Wave directors practiced a relentlessly intertextual cinema in which they cited and mixed various formal elements in their films. For instance, Godard said of his film *A Woman is a Woman* (1960), "I meant it to be contradictory, juxtaposing things which didn't necessarily go together, a film which was gay and sad at the same time. One can't do that, of course, one must be either one or the other, but I wanted to do both at once" (qtd. in Milne, 1998, 6). Another site of Godard's hybridity derived from Langois' whole text sampling practices his mixing of essays and novels: "I think of myself as an essayist, producing essays in novel form or novels in essay form: only instead of writing, I film them" (qtd. in Milne, 1972, 171). His *2 or 3 Things I Know about Her* (1966) is both an essay about the transformation of Paris into a modern city and a novel about a married woman who becomes a prostitute in order to support her Parisian family.[8] What began as a radical approach to sampling became a hybrid form of filmmaking, marrying documentary and fiction, instruction and entertainment, ethnography and melodrama, writing and images, the essay and narrative, and high culture and pop culture.

2. Dewey Phillips

Like Langlois, Dewey Phillips, a Memphis radio DJ whose WHBQ radio program, "Red Hot and Blue," broadcast from 1949-1958, the years prior to and including the birth of rock and roll, practiced rigorous infidelity in his sampling of the audio archives. He crossed musical boundaries, revalued degraded materials, and taught his audience of young musicians to treat recorded music as raw material for inventing new music.

Crucial to the invention of rock'n'roll was the category crossing featured on Phillips' shows. He remixed genres such as country, blues, R&B, gospel, bluegrass, and pop. Jim Dickinson, a legendary Memphis musician who began his career at Sun Records, recalls hearing Dewey Phillips' show on the radio: "He'd play Little Richard, then he'd play Sister Rosetta Tharpe. He'd play a country song, he'd play a rock song, he'd play a blues song" (qtd. in Gordon, 16). In another interview, Dickinson added, "He had a mind-set, he didn't just play music, he played it with an idea. Dewey would jump from blues, to gospel music, to country, to rock 'n roll - it all tied together in his weird mind and he could sell it to the audience as if it were all the same thing. So people in Memphis think it is!" (qtd. In Hutton). Phillips heard rock and roll before there was rock and roll. He left it to his audience of young musicians to realize the potential in his whole text sampling.

Phillips chose unusual songs to champion, songs that often turned out to be the most aurally interesting or the most evocative, even though they were not "well made" songs, at least by the standards of the popular songwriting industry. Similar to Langlois' interest in the "degraded material" of American B movies, Phillips and the artists who listened to his show chose to misread the degraded material of blues and rural country music as potential pop music. Among Phillips' favorite performers was Arthur Crudup, whose song "That's Alright, Mama" became the first record Elvis Presley released on Sun Records.

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[8] Godard also credits Bertolt Brecht, who mixed education and entertainment in his theater.

Crudup's music was too raw and crude for most ears, but Phillips and Elvis valued its vitality.

Phillips also privileged recording over live performance and thus altered artists' sense of the recorded archive. Until Phillips, the popular music industry usually treated recording as a pale imitation of a live performance, a kind of souvenir. But if the record is the primary text, then the recorded archive becomes a valuable repository of texts to be sampled and recombined in new recordings. While rock and roll has seen tremendous innovations in live performance, it is also the first genre of popular music in which artists treated the recording as primary.[9] While early rockers did not literally sample and mix recordings the way hip hop DJs do today, they demonstrated a sampling mentality, borrowing ideas freely from other recordings and developing studio sounds that were difficult if not impossible to reproduce live.[10]

In the U.S. South of the 1950s, segregation made ignoring racial boundaries taboo, but Phillips' show, which was heard by approximately three-quarters of the people of Memphis, both blacks and whites, brought the music of blacks and whites together too. Robert Gordon, in his book, *It Came from Memphis*, describes Phillips' impact on race: "His listeners learned not to distinguish between races or genres. He demonstrated that the boundaries of 'normal' were arbitrary and heralded a freedom that society shunned. . . Nowhere else in society was such nonconformist thought publicly condoned" (15). Phillips' sampling and remixing of the record archives threatened the South's racial caste system.

The whole text sampling practiced by Phillips enabled musicians to become aware of the political implications of their art. "Many of Elvis's ideas had been formed by listening to Dewey. Where the hell else did he hear the black records? Elvis Presley was in awe of Dewey Phillips, as he should have been" (Jim Dickinson, qtd. in Marsh, 35). Just as Langlois provoked Godard and other filmmakers to create genre hybrids in their films, Phillips provoked Elvis and other early rockers to create musical hybrids. The rock and roll revolution, with Elvis in front, did more to alter white youths' perceptions of black Americans than nearly any other factor besides the civil rights movement itself. To segregationists, rock and roll was like a virus infecting their kids with black DNA. Additionally, Elvis changed the concept of youth, infusing it with hitherto marginal ideas such as the glamorous rebel and the wish for eternal adolescence.

Though some critics, Public Enemy, for example, complain about Elvis appropriating black music, the appropriation narrative tends to ignore the mutually beneficial interchange between black and white musicians. Elvis' "Mystery Train" was based on Junior Parker's recording of the song, which derived from the Carter Family's "Worried Man," which in turn derived from earlier folk songs by both blacks and whites. Many black musicians of Elvis' time were grateful to him. Little Richard, for example, credits Elvis: "I thank the Lord for sending Elvis to open that door so I could walk down the road"(qtd. In Coleman, 23). Elvis popularized rebellion against racial boundaries, which helped lead rebellious white fans to seek out black musicians and to turn against the music and the beliefs of their parents. Phillips' rigorous infidelity and whole text sampling previewed the musical and social convulsions that rock and roll unleashed on the world.

3. Jean-François Lyotard

Like Langlois and Phillips, Jean-François Lyotard was a showman. Although he is known primarily as a philosopher, he curated a show renowned in the history of modern art, "Les Immateriaux," which opened

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[9] There had been earlier experiments with sampling and electronically-produced sound by avant-garde art music composers such as John Cage, who experimented with variable speed turntables as early as 1939 and who, in 1937 had declared his intention to make "music produced through the aid of electronic instruments which will make available for musical purposes any and all sounds that can be heard" (qtd. in Ross, 398). But Cage was not popular music.

[10] Chuck Berry's sped-up masters at Chess come to mind, as do Buddy Holly's double-tracked vocals on "Words of Love" for Clovis Records, Elvis' slap-back echo at Sun, and the flat, dry sound of Little Richard's Specialty records. The live performances by these artists, though inspirational as well, sounded quite different from their studio recordings.

March 28 and closed July 15, 1985 at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. Lyotard's exhibit conveyed the idea that all human and machine activity is inscription, thus information. It shared the poststructural epistemology of a flattening of information; everything is surface. Every act can be imagined as a process of sampling and mixing that involves the selection, juxtaposition, and manipulation of the world's information as script. Lyotard is undoubtedly the most radical of the archivists/curators I discuss, since his work implies that the world outside the walls of the museum is an archive already; everything can be understood as information, inscribed history. To write such an archive, one samples and remixes the world of information, which includes the entire world itself.

Since I did not attend Lyotard's show, I do some of my own sampling and remixing by using others' descriptions of the show interspersed with my comments. Below is an account by Johannes Birringer from 1986, interspersed with my comments:

> When I visited "Les Immateriaux" . . . I felt as if I had walked into a theatre. Upon entering a long, airport-like tunnel, I was given a set of headphones, and to complete the *Verfremdungseffekt*, I first heard a low electronic hum in my ears, followed by a dramatically recited fragment from Beckett's *The Unnamable*, a convoluted monologue of an "I" who can neither speak nor remain silent. But when I looked, I found myself in a dark, mirrored vestibule, entitled "Theatre of the Non-body." Apart from my headphoned reflection in the mirror, there were five dioramas displaying images of stage sets evacuated and empty but for imperceptible shifts in the lighting. As if I had met the last riddle of the old subject/object dualisms at the crossroads, this disembodied remainder of a theatre opened onto five meandering paths that provided passages—interrupted by music and spoken texts transmitted along separate radio wave-lengths—through the gigantic metallic labyrinth into which the Beaubourg exhibition in the fifth floor gallery had been arranged. It was a labyrinth of sounds and sights, indistinctly divided by silver gauze screens and lighting effects into sixty "sites" yet interpenetrated by the broadcast "zones" and their invisible infrared signals.

Lyotard grapples with the complexities of sampling and mixing texts via multimedia, complexities which Langlois and Phillips were not required to face. Multimedia offers multiple "channels" which can be open simultaneously. Lyotard's spectator/participant has to process audio input, visual input, and orientation in space. These channels need not be in sync; they can be in a variety of relationships, including interdependent or independent. Lyotard also grapples with the problem of figure/ground; are the images of stage sets works in themselves or frames in which the lighting is the "actor" or "object"? While figure/ground issues were not new to art, these questions were a radical challenge to conventional ideas about curating art. Lyotard suggests that the exhibit is the text and each "whole text" within it is a component of the larger text.

> One's first impression of the exhibition, then, had to do with the uncertainty of the itinerary and the unsettling experience of audio-visual juxtapositions: the sound in one's ear (e.g. literary and theoretical texts by Borges, Artaud, Baudrillard, Barthes, Blanchot, Virilio, etc.) did not refer to the technological displays and objects in the "sites." During the walk, one could lock into a computerized index of the concepts of the exhibition. But both the index and the catalogue of the show were "illegible" as a guide; they referred to new scientific theories of circuits, cells, energy states, genetic manipulation, etc., in physics, biology, and micro-electronics. I heard several visitors complain that the catalogue offered no help at all—that was precisely the point.

Lyotard makes a critical move by refusing to privilege the aural, which featured more conceptual texts, over the visual displays and objects, which highlighted more technological and aesthetic concerns. By refusing to create a hierarchical relationship among these channels, Lyotard signals that we are living in an age in which everything is information; all texts, whether audio or visual, are relativized by the digital medium.

> . . . the five paths that started in the "disembodied theatre" also turned out to follow a certain logic that made them eventually converge in a concluding site entitled "The Labyrinth of Language." This site, with its profusion of computer consoles and text processors, repeated what was implied by the dispersed jumble of projectors, photocopiers, electro-microscopes, spectrographs, VCR's, sound synthesizers, microwave ovens, and designer robots (including a set of Japanese "sleeping cells" equipped with radio, TV, telephone, and climate control!) in the preceding sites: first, we live in a world of invisible wiring, surrounded by machines that are not only ubiquitous but that facilitate a flow of plural messages with which we as individuals can no longer keep up. Second, if everything is the immaterial function or effect of messages, then "Les Immateriaux" would seem to suggest that the labyrinth of reproduction and technoscientific reinvention is organized, after all, according to general interactions within a communicational system (Birringer, 6-8).

What made Lyotard's exhibition unique at that time was his interest in ideas rather than in objects. His exhibition dramatized knowledge: "Far from the informational ideals of 'communication', *Les Immatériaux* presented a condition of unease, a sense of disarray, itself given and facilitated by the great aesthetic figure of the labyrinth" (Rajchman). When we conceive of the world as an information space, we reimagine ourselves as critics and artists, making sense of the world in order to make the most of our options. We perform our relationship to the ultimate archive, the world, by treating our actions as inscriptions. A new wave of electronic artists such as Ai Wei Wei has been living Lyotard's lessons, publicly documenting their lives for artistic, political, and social purposes. By imagining the world as an archive, and understanding the vital role of sampling in realizing its potential, we see ourselves as writing with it and through it; we identify the forms we wish to perpetuate, we invent new forms, and we are free to imagine a better world for ourselves. We are all whole text samplers, though we may not know it yet.

Conclusion: Rethinking Digital Archives

Do we still need archivists and curators? Online databases such as iTunes and Rhapsody give us many options for creating our own archives and organizing them using various principles: by artist, album, song, genre, date, rating, grouped in folders or set to random play. Why should one playlist have more merit than any other? In terms of cultural impact, however, the playlists of some people matter more than the playlists of other people.

At any time, a few tastemakers have great influence over the creative directions of artists. These tastemakers represent what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls the "field," since they set the criteria for quality and determine what meets their standards. The music field is made up of established musicians, DJs, programmers, promoters, critics, and talent scouts. Their tastes have more impact than other peoples' since they determine what gets through their gates to wider audiences.[11] Of course, in the age of Youtube and Facebook, there are growing numbers of exceptions in which the field plays little part in the relationship between artist and audience.

Given the rapid changes in information technologies and audience behaviors taking place, cultural institutions need to change, but they need to do so while calibrating the balance sameness and novelty. Sameness addresses the need for continuity while novelty addresses the need for adaptation. Csikszentmihalyi, in *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Invention*, writes:

> In order to survive, cultures must eliminate most of the new ideas their members produce. Cultures are conservative, and for good reason. No culture could assimilate all the novelty people

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[11] Langlois and Phillips were certainly tastemakers and created new pantheons of great works and artists, though not everything they exhibited was meant to be included in their new pantheons. Langlois and Phillips included less-than-excellent films and recordings in their shows. They chose certain materials because there were lessons to be learned from them.

produce without dissolving into chaos. . . . a culture could not survive long unless all of its members paid attention to at least a few of the same things (41-2).

Too much sameness, however, leads to stagnation. Langlois, Phillips, and Lyotard, leaders in their fields, emphasized novelty by sampling and mixing existing whole texts in novel combinations. At first they were outliers but their versions of history became accepted by other members of their fields. Because they brought outsider perspectives to their fields but changed them significantly, we might call them expert amateurs. What separated Langlois, Phillips, and Lyotard from other archivists, moreover, was a sense of showmanship and theatricality, a way of treating the materials of the archives not as venerated objects, but as materials to be reused in new ways; their practices prefigured the sampling and remixing culture that has emerged since.

Curating is a paradox; it involves both an effacement of the self as "origin" of the work–the curator generally presents other people's work–and also a way of asserting the self via structure and design. This is *my* taste, these are *my* priorities, the curator asserts. But in the later stages of curating there is a movement towards effacement of personality. For instance, while Langlois, one of the first major film curators, imposed his tastes imperiously, curators at major institutions– the BFI, AFI, and the Cinématèque Français after Langlois– establish institutional criteria, rather than strictly personal ones, to guide their work.

The pioneers of whole text sampling were necessarily anachronistic since no institution could survive indefinitely by their methods. They created no explicit metadata systems for tracking their holdings. As Roud notes of Langlois' Cinématèque, "there was no proper inventory of the collection" (136). This state of affairs may work well enough when only one person is in charge, but when an archive is institutionalized we need a reliable system.

How do we maintain the paradigm for inventiveness without ceding institutions to idiosyncratic personalities? I suggest two moves: 1. the invention of new methods for data mining, and 2. the involvement of amateurs in the formation of new paradigms. In relation to the first, I suggest we build into our digital databases a capacity for data mining similar to these sampling pioneers' methods. We must identify and translate their methods into a digital poetics.

We need to experiment with metadata far more than is the norm. For instance, in the realm of the media discussed here–film, audio recording, and electronic art–words go only so far. For films, we can tag information such as director, studio, genre, year, and stars. What if I were to screen only films that include shots of falling leaves? Can we tag all films at a granular level? These issues seem relevant to artists today. For instance, Christian Marclay's 24-hour film collage, *The Clock*, which won him the Best Artist award at the Venice Biennale, features images of timepieces taken from over 10,000 movie clips. All of the clips had to be located by human assistants and edited over a three-year period; Marclay had no way of searching the film archives using metadata. The sheer volume of texts now available makes automated search engines desirable, even necessary. The curatorial pioneers I discuss provided methods for challenging today's prevailing paradigms of metadata: the ways in which we tag art. They made cultural metadata the real show, making it available so we could disassemble and reassemble it.

My second suggestion, though hardly new, is to increase the involvement of outsiders. In his essay, "The Bordwell Regime and the Stakes of Knowledge" (1988, 164), Robert Ray commends Paul Feyerabend, who "urges us to gamble more recklessly: by ignoring disciplinary boundaries, by listening to 'outsiders' or even dilettantes, by suspecting experts and, in particular, by adapting for research the methods of the twentieth century's avant-garde arts and non-traditional sciences" (1988, 160). Langlois, Phillips, and Lyotard acted like outsiders and dilettantes. They mimicked the avant-garde and "primitive" artists they admired and turned their own curatorial work towards future-directed ends. They developed conceptual metadata that allowed others to continue their work in more formal ways. I suggest we institutionalize their examples by making our work in digital archives more interdisciplinary. We need to include artists

and activists as well as scholars and technicians in this work.

Let us revisit the lessons these pioneers of whole text sampling offer as we consider how to design our digital archives. From them we learn how to use cultural "detritus" as raw material, to challenge conventional categories while inventing new ones, to produce new forms of metadata, to invite the participation of outsiders, and to approach the archives with a commitment to rigorous infidelity.

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