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Virtual Vodou: The Technologies of Faith in the Domains of Cyberspirituality

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A *vèvè* is both a religious symbol and part of the ritual practice of Vodou. *Vèvè* are made by taking small pinches of white cornmeal and tracing delicate, scalloped designs on the ground. They are “drawn” to make a space welcoming to the gods and goddesses, the *lwa*, of the Vodou pantheon. In North America, Vodou is often a portable, transient religion practiced in private homes, community centres and church basements. *Vèvè* sacralize these transient temples, functioning as portholes to a mystical realm. In the spaces made sacred by *vèvè* the practitioners and gods of Haitian Vodou interact with each other in a carefully woven matrix of signifiers that transmit the culture, history and religious specificity, not only of Haiti, but of the numerous places on the globe which have configured the syncretic religion of Vodou and which Vodou now, arguably, configures. Each *lwa* has a distinct and different *vèvè* associated with her or him. Although *vèvè* are not standardised, each one bears recognisable characteristics. As I researched instances of the Vodou religion on the Internet, I came across numerous variations of the *vèvè* of the *lwa* Legba. This *vèvè* has the characteristic of a large cross, embellished on each end with the delicate designs and scallops so characteristic of *vèvè*. On the right hand or “western” branch of the design is a mark which crosses the cross, creating asymmetry. Often this mark is in the shape of a cane.

Legba is the guardian of the *carrefour*, or crossroads. Most often depicted with a limp and a cane, Legba stands with one foot in the “real” world and one foot in the mystical realm of the *lwa*. He is the first *lwa* called at every Vodou ceremony. Syncretic with St. Peter, Legba opens the gate to the realms of Vodou. His *vèvè* is a porthole to a complex domain full of signs and signifiers, histories and narratives, which assume meaning and coherence by their proximity to each other. This *vèvè* appeared over and over again in my research on Vodou in cyberspace. From the home pages of individual practitioners, to the websites of more established Vodou institutions, Legba’s *vèvè* marked these domains¹. It was seldom labelled or

¹ The methodology for this on-going research is ethnographic and largely qualitative rather than quantitative. The transient nature of Vodou web sites makes it difficult to generate accurate numbers regarding web site content.

explained. Sometimes it was encoded with software that allows it to manifest as if it is being drawn by an invisible hand². Legba's *vèvè* has probably been inscribed in cyberspace in much the same way it is inscribed on the floor of non-virtual ritual spaces, to mark a crossroads, a pathway between realms, worlds or places and to open a gateway between them. Unlike more traditional inscriptions, which are bound by the tangible limits of the Vodou community and geographical locals, the transposition of this inscription into cyberspace seems to demand inquiry into who and what are coming together at this virtual crossroads.

Such an inquiry delves into the specificity of Vodou as well as the conditions of religiosity in this era of globalization. Slowly, scholars of religion have begun to look seriously at the phenomenon of religious globalization. Due, in part, to new communication and media technologies, such as the Internet, religions and religious practitioners are in closer proximity to each other and have easier access to each other's institutions. In addition, the economies of contemporary globalization have made wide spread the reach of what some scholars call the spiritual supermarket³, where practitioners are also consumers who pick and choose (and often pay for) religions, freely sorting and mixing the religious commodities available to them. The implications of the commodification and globalization of religion are multiple. However, they are hardly unprecedented. Religious mixing or syncretism, along with a global traffic in religiosity, has long occurred. A highly syncretic and diasporic tradition such as Vodou, accustomed to practices similar to those of the present day spiritual marketplace, reveals the complexity of the contacts facilitated by the forces of commodity and globalization.

However, the following are some good examples of the use of the Legba *vèvè* on the net; one long running and well known page is simply called The Vodou Page, <http://members.aol.com/racine125/>, one clicks on the *vèvè* to continue; the *vèvè*, with an unusually extended "western" arm, is a repeating icon on the web page of the established Temple of Yehwe, it can be seen at the bottom of <http://www.vodou.org/whatis.html>; the *vèvè* can also be seen at the bottom of the page on http://www.vodouspirit.com/vodou_today.html (in white); finally, the *vèvè* is located in the top left hand corner of the page <http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/6157/VoodooInfo.html>. It is interesting to note that in none of these cases is the *vèvè* explained.

² See, for example, http://www.geocities.com/drac_uber_uk/voudunintheuk.html.

³ See, for example, Wouter J. Hanegraaff's "Prospects for the Globalization of New Age: Spiritual Imperialism Versus Cultural Diversity", in *New Age Religion and Globalization* (Mikael Rothstein ed.), Aarhus University Press: Aarhus Denmark, 2001. 15-30

A religion with no central text, standardised creed or central religious figure, the polytheistic tradition of Vodou is in continual flux. In many ways, Vodou is a religion constituted in motion, from the traffic of the middle passage⁴ to the migration of Vodou across North American and Europe from its more traditional “homes” of New Orleans and Haiti. Since Vodou is a syncretic and aggregating religion, it picks up different religious and cultural signifiers as it establishes itself on new geographical terrain, creating new Vodou centres around the globe. Analysis of the way in which this travel, along with an increasing influx of migrating practitioners⁵, has impacted on the practice and discourse of Vodou inevitably destabilises simplistic notions of ethnic, cultural and religious identity as reified, bound to a single locale, or even a single tradition. The way in which Vodou identity is constituted and reconstituted within a climate of constant change is a means of elucidating a “Vodou epistemology” which insists on cultural and religious specificity while undergoing continuous transformation. Always in motion, Vodou has navigated routes through differing cultural and religious worlds. This ebb and flow of Vodou traffic, and its uneasy counterpart of traffic in Vodou, is also navigated on the routes of information highways.

The purpose of this analysis is to suggest the possibility of generating cartography of the pathways and routes between the places, both literal and conceptual, that new media of religious dissemination connect. How the traffic between geographic, virtual and mythic places—as mediated (to varying degrees) by a matrix of new technologies—may affect the constitution and practices of religions, is central to an understanding of Vodou in cyberspace. Communication technologies have always had a profound affect on the transmission and dissemination of religious knowledge. From the development of written language, to the advent of the printing press⁶, new technologies facilitated changes in the shape of religiosity.

⁴ The term “middle passage” refers to the ocean voyage of African slaves to the “new world”.

⁵ The legacy of Black Nationalism, which has left an ever increasing interest in African and African derived spirituality, the search for “new age” spiritualities in a secular world, and the missionistic tendencies of Vodou itself, may all account for a growth in Vodou practitioners in North America. Regardless of the reasons, Vodou is growing in North America (Barnes 1989; Constetino 1993; Glazier 1998), and many of these new practitioners have no direct ties to traditional Vodou centres such as Haiti.

⁶ The development of the printing press and related developments of vernacular languages allowed the laity of the late Middle Ages access to the bible (hitherto the domain of scribes and clergy), and facilitated communication between disparate groups. The advent of printing is often credited with leading to the Protestant Reformation. Parallels can be drawn between this historical context and more modern communication technologies. See, for

However, sociologists of religion who explore the point of contact between religions and contemporary forces of globalization illustrate a more symbiotic relationship between the two. By making the “global context” the dominant frame for analysis, transnational religions and religious practices engender seemingly elliptical communicative processes. As Peter Beyer explains in *Religion and Globalization*; “religion within the global system can be antisystemic and prosystemic at the same time: it can further globalization in opposing its effects” (3). Religion both resists and acquiesces to the forces of globalization, in part because it functions as a resource for other social systems. Although there exists a popular conception of religion as a system that insists on continuity and tradition, the movement of religiosities play a vital part in the development of a discourse that oscillates between validating and opposing the ideological and economic forces of globalization. Religiosity, which spans time and space on an arguably larger scope than many other “global” identities, responds to this era of globalization with the development of a mobile insistence on cultural and religious specificity within a system that seemingly disseminates hegemony or cultural universalisation. Vodou is a particularly vivid example of adaptable cultural specificity. An increasing number of new Vodou practitioners learn, interact with, and “appropriate” the language, history and culture of the small, economically disenfranchised nation of Haiti through the rituals of Vodou, even though they have little or no geographic or genealogical connection to the cultural specificities of that place. As Vodou is shipped, in no small part via cyberspace, to the aisles of the religious supermarket the cultural specificity of Haiti takes on a new significance in the global context. Although syncretic religious traditions such as Vodou seem particularly adept at negotiating new contexts or territories, this tendency is not unique to Vodou. Nor is it necessarily a result of the willingness of religious communities to unconditionally embrace the new technological developments that defines the parameters of cyberspirituality.

Despite the symbiosis between cultural specificity and cultural universalisation mapped (within the context of globalization) onto the praxis of religion in cyberspace, resistance to the infrastructures of these systems can also provide a site for the renegotiation of religiosity. In the interplay between tradition and innovation technologies such as the Internet not only fall

example, Dale Spender’s argument about the history of technological implications for religious organisations in *Nattering on the Net: Women Power and Cyberspace* (Melbourne, Australia: Spinifex Press, 1995).

under the rubric of innovation, but also are sometimes posited as threats to tradition. While many religions have a cosmological structure that can accommodate social and cultural changes associated with technology (and science), some religions officially oppose technological innovations. Many Amish⁷ sects resist what they understand to be modern technologies in the form of motorized machinery, electricity, and all computerized technologies. Modern technology is associated with a moral corruption that must be avoided by practitioners (Amish discourse clearly limits the definition of technology to motorized and electric objects). For traditional Amish people, technology is both a set of objects to be resisted and signifiers of larger cultural meaning and structure. Interestingly, while the Amish themselves may disavow the use of modern technologies, such technologies are employed in their name (and, presumably, with their blessing). There is a large Amish presence on the Internet where Amish goods, restaurants and tours are advertised predominantly to the non-Amish⁸. How religious groups such as the Amish understand the technological innovations that result in cyberspace, and how they may indirectly utilise the very signifiers they resist in order to ensure the ongoing viability of the religion, is a significant part of the mapping of cyberspirituality.

Cyberspirituality is not simply instances of religion in cyberspace, but how those instances come to shape contemporary religious ethos. It is not simply about websites devoted to the Amish, but how those websites work to preserve or dismantle Amish communities. Equally, it is about how such websites influences discourses about the Amish. It is the intersection of traditional methods of mediating religious traffic with often innovative uses of new technologies that constitutes something that can be termed cyberspirituality. As Brenda Basher explains in *Give Me That Online Religion*,

the computer and CMC are electronically bulldozing the symbolic terrain for religions around the world. Providing the means by which a new set of players can disseminate religious ideas, cyberspace makes a popular transformation of religion more probable. At the same time,

⁷ Although the exact origins of the Amish are unclear, the tradition emerged after the Christian Reformation early in the sixteenth century. They are a Protestant sect, which emerged as a counter movement to more traditional Lutherism and they are primarily characterized by a desire to keep religion separate from state institutions as well as a reliance on lay preachers rather than trained clergy. For more information see *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity* (McManneram J. ed., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁸ For example, the web site <http://www.amishexperience.com> advertises Amish retreats for non-Amish practitioners.

it is a vehicle through which religious authorities can promulgate “orthodox” messages into the home of every online follower they can attract. (29)

Spirituality, which can be understood as both an identity and something with which people identify, is seldom bounded to any one nation or place but always has mythic and diasporic ties with specific places and histories. Similarly, cyberspirituality is unbound from place. Although it involves the semantics and institutions of cyberspace, cyberspirituality extends beyond the intangibility of cyberspace to a reshaping of religiosity in tangible environments, altering the social organisation of places, from nations and diasporas to urban spaces.

Computer-mediated communication is shaping and reshaping spiritual practice. Activities, rituals and ceremonies that once needed to be performed face to face are now accomplished remotely. As a result, analysis of cyberspirituality asks for a rethinking of such analytical categories as congregation (or community), ritual and practice, embodied spirituality, heterodoxy and orthodoxy and religious or spiritual identity. But while new technologies may change the dimensions and scope of religiosity in the “connected” world, the discourses of religion also impact upon the articulations and practices of the technoscientific. Virtual worship is projected onto a discursive ground where *a priori* assumptions about religion and technology already exist. Despite the newness of cyberspace and the technologies associated with it, cyberspirituality very often harbours a deep resonance with tradition, a type of mirroring of the old in the new. The popular understanding of cyberspace is of a place (ambiguous and mythic though it may be) that can be entered and left via the portholes of computer technologies⁹. In conjunction with this understanding of a space accessed by new media technologies, is the idea that the matrix of technologies implicated in cyberspace is generating a new and pervasive form of religiosity. Cyberspirituality is a conceptualisation of religiosity that interfaces with history, location, religious currency and identity within the specificity of a world shaped by new communication technologies. Often, cyberspirituality

⁹ There are many “academic” definitions of cyberspace, from Donna Haraway who defines it as “the spatio-temporal symbol of postmodernity and its regimes of flexible accumulation” (238) in *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan?_Meets_OncoMouse?* (N.Y.: Routledge, 1997) to the early definitions proffered by Michael Benidick in the introduction to *Cyberspace, First Steps* (ed. Benidick) (Cambridge Mass: MIT, 1991).

seems to be a reflection of spirituality in tangible locals such as North America, but this reflection does not create a simple duplicate image separated from the original. Like the sci-fi narratives of alternate realities, either side of this mirror is both similar and dissimilar—parallel universes that are inextricably linked.

Mirrors are prevalent divination tools in many religions and folk traditions, including Vodou. In Vodou cosmology, mirrors or reflections (much like the symbolic of the crossroads discussed earlier) represent the place where the dividing line between two worlds is the most permeable. Once the surface of the mirror is broken, mythic waters can be used to carry a seeker on an expedition to find information or power. In Vodou, the watery realm¹⁰, accessed through the mirror, is one of the places where the past and present collapse, where the *lwa* interact with humans outside the laws of reality. Interaction in the timelessness of the mythic domain affects the conditions of the real world. On the surface of things, the mirror work of Vodou appears to be a parallel of cyberspirituality, where practitioners can go on expeditions seeking knowledge and religious know how. However, like the “through-the-looking-glass” world of mirror work in Haitian Vodou, cyberspace dislocates religious traditions from linear histories and local specificity, allowing surfers to jump from signifier to signifier, icon to icon, and narrative to narrative without the cohesion and structure suggested by more formal religious practices. Knowledge generated by travel through the routes of cyberspirituality can manifest symbolic and literal multiplicities, concurrent religiosities that circulate in the practices demanded by cyberspace and, more specifically, cyberspirituality. Cyberspirituality is a mediation of place and time, location and travel that can be mapped in relation to more tangible religious practices. What emerges is a set of concurrent technologies that evoke non-local selves, identities that are not bound to, or bound by, place.

But even while these non-local selves scoff at the seeming permanence of place, they navigate a domain that is filled with the reflections of those more permanent places. These reflections of place, signifying home and belonging, become transcribed onto the space of

¹⁰ This mythic realm is known as *Ginen*. For a discussion on the concept of Ginen in Vodou liturgy see “The meaning of Africa in Haitian Vodou” by Serge Larose in *Symbols and Sentiments: Cross Cultural Studies in Symbolism*, (I.M.Lewis ed., London: Academic Press, 1977).

cyberspirituality. In *We Gotta Get Out of this Place*, Lawrence Grossberg provides an analysis that can be mapped onto an exploration of conduits of cyberspirituality. As he explains;

Places are the sites of stability where people can stop and act, the markers of their affective investments. They define the possibilities of people's identifications and belongings and construct the systems of authority in which they live. Spaces are the parameters of the mobility of people and practices. They define the trajectories along which different groups can travel and the vectors which make different connections possible or impossible. Every organisation of places and spaces is constantly being constructed—territorialized—by lines of articulation and escaped—deterritorialized—by lines of flight (295).

The trajectories along which spiritual practitioners and seekers hurtle through cyberspace are marked with the signifiers of more specific, local places, which are constantly being rearticulated in a polytheistic global matrix.

In my research into Vodou on the Internet I came across sites which post pictures of landmarks in Haiti or New Orleans, only some of which have direct relationships to the Vodou tradition, many being pictures of churches and other historic landmarks. Still other Vodou pages make reference to Jamaican Rastafarian communities, Oromia struggles in Ethiopia and Coptic churches in Egypt¹¹. These references to locales outside of cyberspace are sometimes references to socio-religious groups with which Vodou practitioners feel a kinship. Other times they are references to landmarks that have historical significance for the Vodou tradition. Sometimes these local references are conceptualised in a discourse that makes explicit their significance in the history and cosmology of Vodou. More often they are left decontextualised, sometimes in the form of links that whisk a surfer away from Vodou altogether. In the context of cyberspirituality, these links, which are often images of geographic locals, are the trajectories along which the constitution of religions, such as Vodou, is constantly being territorialized and deterritorialized.

Routes to and from Vodou Internet sites via links to spaces that may seem totally unrelated to Vodou bear closer scrutiny. The processes of territorialization and deterritorialization, which they symbolize, are reflected in more tangible Vodou practices.

¹¹ See for example the links listed at The Vodou Page, <http://members.aol.com/racine125/>.

Even the most cursory examination of Haitian Vodou reveals that it is both Haitian and unbound from Haiti, it is both saturated with the cultural and historical specificity of that nation and intrinsically diasporic. In part, it is the diasporic nature of a fluid and fluctuating religiosity that makes for moments of recognition between “real” and virtual Vodou. In the cultural traffic of the Internet where everything bumps up against everything and everyone else, where the tiniest icon is a link to another religion, another culture, another interpretation, another place and time, there is a resonance sounded for practitioners of diasporic mystical traditions. Vodouists are cosmologically connected first to Haiti and then to the mythic world of *Ginen*, a virtual Africa—a homeland that is not the real, present day African continent, nor the homeland of the past from which slaves carried their spiritual practices to the “new world”—but is intrinsically connected to both concepts of home. It is these virtual homelands and a sense of disconnection from one or more of them that shapes the cosmology of Vodou. In many senses Vodou is a deterritorialized religion, which structures itself around the active remembrance multiple homelands. These homelands, with all their cosmological significance, are reflected in Internet links to communities and struggles in places around the world. Although sometimes distorted, this reflection provides a durable link between Vodou in cyberspace and Vodou in geographical place.

Reflections such as these lead to an analysis of Vodou traffic in cyberspace that resonates deeply with the larger narratives, structures and movement of the Vodou tradition. However, it would be naïve to paint a simple picture of symbiosis and correspondence between cyberspirituality and more tangible religiosity. Often the relationships negotiated, in part in cyberspace, are oppositional. As Brenda Basher explains in *Give Me That On-Line Religion*,

As the boundaries between religion and other cultural creeds thin, the ability of traditional religions to adjudicate interpretation of their myths and symbols is diminished (170).

In the marketplaces of cyber spirituality these boundaries are virtually non-existent, but like the movements of cyberspirituality, difficulties in policing religious borders are not unprecedented. While Vodou traffic is central to this analysis, it is impossible to ignore the traffic in Vodou on the web. Vodou has been a much-maligned religion both in the histories of Haiti and those of the rest of the world. The word Vodou may conjure up notions of black magic, graveyards,

dolls and pins, witches and warlocks. The Internet, like popular culture, is full of voodoo that is not Vodou. A cursory search under the colloquial spelling of the word reveals games and gaming software, music, videos and clothing lines that make explicit use of the term voodoo. The term voodoo also peppers the Internet as an adjective to modify words such as economics and politics. The collision between popular cultural meanings and understandings of Vodou and the “reality” of the tradition is not something that can easily be ignored in an exploration of virtual Vodou. In part, the collision is made explicit in Vodou websites that address popular understandings, or misunderstandings, of the religion. The Vodou tradition, in all its creolizations, has long been a religion practiced in secret both in Haiti, where colonial rule outlawed non-Christian religious practice¹², and in North America, where prejudice and persecution often kept the tradition underground.

Perhaps as a consequence of this legacy of secrecy, Vodou websites employ far fewer techniques allowing for contact with other people, groups or gatherings than can be found on other religious websites. Vodou websites seldom make an explicit connection to a geographical location outside of cyberspace. Even other “marginal” spiritual traditions (such as Wicca, for example) seem to allow for access to people and places far more freely than Vodou websites. Communication on most Vodou websites is highly mediated. Forums are moderated, very few “real” locations are given out, and contact with “real” people is mediated by obvious pseudonyms (often utilizing the names of Vodou gods or *lwa*) and is limited to email. Only two Vodou web sites present unmediated and easily accessible co-ordinates outside of cyberspace. The Temple of Yehwe is a *peristyle*, or temple, in Philadelphia and the Temple’s address and phone number do appear on the web site, although in an inconspicuous place¹³. The other site that publishes a “real” geographical coordinate is The New Orleans Voodoo Cemetery Website¹⁴. Although a viable virtual Vodou site, which gives information about the religion and access to spiritual imagery, the New Orleans cemetery is a historically recognized tourist site in New Orleans. Like the Temple of Yehwe, The New Orleans

¹² For more on the history of Vodou in Haiti and Vodou’s relation to colonial rule in that nation see Joan Dayan’s *Haiti, History and the Gods* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1995).

¹³ It seems significant to note that the Temple of Yehwe is a recognized religious institution (receiving tax exempt status in the U.S. under Section 501:3), giving Vodou one of its few instances of recognized institutionalism in the United States.

¹⁴ The Temple website can be located on the web at <http://www.access.avernus.com/~rogue/temple/>.

Cemetery is a (rare) instance of institutionalized Vodou. For the most part, however, virtual Vodou is, at least for the casual surfer, circumscribed by cyberspace. Although almost all of the sites publish a discourse that seems aimed at newcomers, providing basic information on the religion and demystifying stereotypes about Vodou, the realms of virtual Vodou and actual Vodou seem disconnected and the surfer may be left with the sense that “real” Vodou is a little difficult to penetrate. It is not impossible to pursue links to people and places associated with Vodou through the information scavenged on the Internet. Vodou requires more effort, more interpersonal communication, more “jumping through hoops” to access the real than do many other cyberspiritualities. Unlike other web sites, which make links to concrete geographical locations, Vodou sites leave a more ethereal footprint on geography.

Cyberspirituality encompasses techniques that allow religious practitioners to connect to religious practice both inside cyberspace and outside of it. The ease of movement between the two illuminates something of the status of a given religion within the context of North American computer mediated religiosity. Although cyberspiritualities are often linked in some way to spiritual or religious places that exist outside of cyberspace, the explicitness of this “dual-dimensionality” varies considerably. While a dominant and recognised religious tradition may make an explicit link between cyber and geographical temples, the links made between marginalized and maligned religions, such as Vodou, are necessarily less explicit. However, the lack of explicit connection between virtual and actual Vodou cannot simply be explained through dualistic understanding of dominant and subdominant spirituality. At the outset of this paper I spoke of the predominance of the *vèvè* of Legba, the guardian of the crossroads, on Internet Vodou sites. Connecting Legba, an Afro-Caribbean deity, to communications technology is not unprecedented. In *Africa's Ogun: Old Worlds and New*, Sandra Barnes tells the story of Ysamur Flores-Pena, a santereo, or practitioner of the syncretic religion of Cuba, who names his computer Eshu, the trickster god of openings and communication. In the introduction to latest edition of this seminal text, Donald Constantino connects this act of naming a communication technology to a larger discussion about the adaptability of an Afro-Caribbean religious and cultural ethos which repeats and re-appropriates parts of dominant culture in an act of mirroring that is never exact. Legba's *vèvè* is part of a creolised, hybrid epistemology in which the very act of mirroring creates a

'transitive resistance' to the structures and organizations of dominant power, building continuity and tradition into change and innovation. New World gods such as Eshu and Legba are at home on the World Wide Web not only because they can adapt or conform to the newness cyberspace, but also because they are able to transcribe a very old traditional narrative and significance onto their existence in cyberspace. I came across one variations of the Legba *vèvè* which seems to speak to the character of this "at-home-ness". In this representation Legba's cane, a symbol of his movement through places both mystical and geographical is replaced by a bolt of lighting symbolizing, perhaps, his movement via the conduits of electricity and cybernetics. The fluid virtual realities made possible by computer technology are a continuation of the ways in which African and Afro-Caribbean belief systems challenge the dualistic tenets of Western metaphysics, even while residing within an economic and technoscientific system which owes much of its development to Western interests.

The formerly secret religious tradition of Vodou is now available for public and widespread consumption in cyberspace. The implications of this availability for Vodou and for other religions are, undoubtedly, significant. However, the structures and discourses of cyberspirituality have implications for religiosity beyond the specifics of this case study on virtual Vodou. Cyberspirituality is a condition that encourages a transitional and transient religiosity. It is a condition of religious interconnectedness, a site where religions interface with each other and practitioners, and where the techniques of rituals interface with computer technology. Cyberspirituality is not a simple representation or reflection of real religions in real places, but is a dynamic entity which structures and informs religious knowledge, identity and cosmology. It is a mirror of religiosity in geographic locals shaping diasporas, inter-religious contact, and even pan-religious movements. Cyberspirituality suggests a new constitution of religiosity in the modern world, a new way of being religious. But despite the newness and innovation associated with it, cyberspirituality works, it is viable, because it is a mirror of religious tradition. The traffic between virtual Vodou sites on the Internet and the traffic in peoples and cultures that makes up a Vodou diaspora, or the way in which Vodou sites address popular misconceptions of Vodou such as the voodoo doll, are all part of a religious logic which constitutes cyberspirituality as much as religion is being constituted by new media technologies. The throughways between innovation and tradition are mapped out

in cyberspirituality where a religious ethos that embraces and intersects with comprehensions of technology, new media communications, and virtual existence. In a globalized climate in which religion plays a significant role in the organisation of society and culture, an analysis of cyberspirituality can generate a through-the-looking-glass cartography of the routes trafficked by people, artefacts and epistemologies in an increasingly unbounded landscape.

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