Abstract (performativity of DJing)

The aim of this thesis is to analyze how digital DJ technologies have transformed the disc jockey’s craft and reshaped his identity as a collector, manipulator and presenter of music. An ethnographic approach is employed, based on interviews with established DJs from Canada and Germany as well as self-experience, which involves the production of DJ mixes with analog, digital and hybrid technologies. The resulting observations are supplemented with and contextualized by performance theory from the fields of ritual, theater and gender studies. Digital DJing is subject to controversy within the DJ community for facilitating certain aspects of the craft, which is perceived as a threat to its integrity. The thesis concludes that while the DJ’s musical, aesthetic and social identity has been reconfigured, his fundamental characteristics remain intact because performing and musical programming require fundamental skills that depend on human agency.