Dancing in the Technoculture

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To be published in:

Simon Emmerson (Ed)(2018)

The Routledge Research Companion To Electronic Music:

Reaching Out With Technology.

London and New York: Routledge

Abstract

This chapter will address a transnational network of relationships within electronic dance music in the context of the machine aesthetic of techno. It will be shown that a sense of a global music scene is nevertheless possible. Beyond historically shaped post-colonial and socio-economic links that underpin a range of global popular cultural forms, the techno aesthetic arguably responds to, and inoculates against, a sense of post-human alienation and a dominance of electronic communication and information technologies of the technoculture. Accompanied by a form of futurism, techno scenes embrace the radical potential of information technologies in a seemingly deterritorialised manner, producing locally specific responses to the global technoculture that can differ in aesthetics and identity politics. In this sense, the electronic dance music floor embodies a plurality of competing "technocracies".

Introduction

This chapter addresses transnational, yet locally definable, electronic dance music culture as it engages with and intervenes globalising experiences of urbanised life, and the digitally networked information and communication technologies that characterise and dominate what is currently know as "the technoculture" (Shaw, 2008; Robins and Webster, 1999; Constance and Ross, 1991). Electronic dance music, as it developed during the late 80s into the 1990s, can be understood here as DJ-friendly dance music, characterised by the dominant use of electronic music technologies, such as synthesizers, sequencers and digital audio workstations (DAWs – computer software for music composition, recording, editing and production).,As a rhythm-and texture-dominated genre, tempos range between around 125 beats per minute (bpm) for a strutting house-styled track, to 135 bpm for

what is now regarded as techno proper, and up to around 160 bpm, for drum'n'bass. Extremes exist, with soulful vocalised deep house at the slower side, and electronic body music and techno-styled gabber house (or "gabba") at the fast end. The development of electronic dance music roughly spans nearly four decades, encompassing a wide range of subgenres, DJs, dance parties, dance clubs, raves, and festivals across globally mediated hubs that can loosely be mapped across similar global territory as currently exists for social media such as Facebook and YouTube.or music-based streaming services that includes *Boiler Room* <https://boilerroom.tv>, a magazine format music television service that streams online DJ performances, which are next archived via dedicated online video channels. Boiler Room's programming illustrates the spread and diversity of current electronic dance music scenes well. Its DJ performances take place in a wide spread of urban locations, first from London, followed by offices in Berlin, New York and Los Angeles, expanding their reach across a wide range of cities that includes Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Tokyo, Edinburgh and Amsterdam. The spread of electronic dance music culture goes further, to cities like Bangkok, Jakarta, Hong Kong, Singapore, Melbourne, Sydney, Bombay, which feature clubs and provide gateways to dance parties and outdoor festivals in the countryside. A slightly different scenario presents itself in the Indian coastal province of Goa, where since the late 1980s long-term hippy migrant/tourists have engaged in a dance scene based on beach parties (mostly held during full moon) that eventually gave shape to Goa trance during the early 1990s, and which subsequently morphed into psytrance (see Rietveld 2010a and Davies, 2004). The processes of *glocalization* can be noticed in which a cultural concept that moves along the communication pathways of globalisation acquires local meanings (Robertson, 1995). Over time, electronic dance music has become a wide-ranging musical category that includes most electronically generated music that serves the purpose of dancing at dedicated events.

Although a range of styles can be identified under the umbrella of electronic dance music, form vocalised dance songs to instrumental noise tracks. The musical common denominator seems to be techno**,** however, a mostly instrumental form of electronic dance music that foregrounds (rather than hides) its electronic sound generation with the use of synthesizers, sequencers and digital software-based plug-ins that are associated with DAWs (digital audio workstation). Most discussions on the subject of electronic dance music do not specify the style or (sub)genres they actually address, as it seems mostly understood as a type of techno (see, for

example, Butler 2006). This includes genres, such as dub step and drum'n'bass, with mixed traces of Black Atlantic syncopations and break beats that are part of a reggae continuum, as well as what Reynolds identifies as part of a continuum of hardcore rave (Reynolds, 2013) and will here be understood through the lens of techno. Meanwhile, as a subgenre, techno is itself arguably a "post-soul" music genre (Albiez 2005) and a post-industrial amalgamation of cross-Atlantic electronic dance music. In the words of seminal techno-producer Kevin Saunderson:

> "It's all called techno or dance music now, 'cause it's all electronic music created with technological equipment. Maybe that should be the only name, "dance music", because everybody has a different vision of what techno is now.' (cited by Rubin, 2000: 108).

Amplified on a large sound system and combined into a sound track by a DJ, techno is mostly instrumental and foregrounds its electronic textures, providing a technologised sonic dance environment that has been well-documented (Barr, 2000; Brewster and Broughton, 2006; Collin, 1997; Garratt, 1998; Reynolds, 1998; Rubin, 2000; Savage, 1996; Sharp, 2000; Sicko, 1999). However, perhaps confusingly, in the United States the term "EDM" can now be understood as a 'poppy' subgenre of electronic dance music that has been associated with mega raves since 2012-13. Therefore, to differentiate EDM as specific genre from the umbrella genre "electronic dance music", this chapter will use the term "electronica" by way of abbreviation, while for the purpose of this chapter, the main focus will be on techno's machine aesthetic**.**

During the 1980s and 90s, techno music opened a space to provide a specific response to the post-industrial experience of a rapidly emerging information society (Albiez, 2005; Eshun, 1998; Rietveld, 2004). Referring to Detroit's once buoyant car industry, Detroit's techno pioneer Derrick May commented in 1988 that this "post-soul" music was partly inspired by a shift in production processes: "…today the automobile plants use robots and computers to make their cars" (a, 1988: sleeve notes). Not only automatisation, but an actual disappearance of manufacturing industries has impacted on the techno music aesthetic; when on a North English dance floor, cultural commentator Savage observed that:

> "…as machine noise swirls around us, it hits me. This is industrial displacement. Now that Britain has lost most of its heavy industry, its children are simulating an industrial experience for their entertainment and transcendence." (311: 1996).

Robbins and Webster (1999: 1) note that, "The idea of the technological revolution has become normative – routine and commonplace – in our technocultural times" where, technocultural commentator Davies (1998: 8) argues, "… the spiritual imagination seizes information technology for its own purposes". Vietnam-vet Rick Davis, co-founder of Detroit's electronic band Cybotron, imagines that transformation into a "supra-human entity" is possible through an "interfacing of the spirituality of human beings into the cybernetic matrix" (in: Reynolds. 1998: 8). Existing uniquely in a studio generated soundscape, synthesized bleeping and modulating sounds dominate techno's surreal dance recordings, allowing an exploration of the experience of a cyber-future, in which information and communication technologies play a central role: "the electronic sounds all too accurately reproduce the snap of synapses forced to process a relentless, swelling flood of electronic information." (Savage, 1996: 312). The aesthetic of techno does not only offer a musical response to the technoculture, it enables an immersive and kinetic engagement with an increasingly post-human condition on somatic and spiritual level (Rietveld, 2004). In other words, techno offers the chance to dance to the technoculture.

The futurism embedded in techno music is simultaneously a seeming rejection of the past in order to empower its listeners to cope with a bewilderingly accelerating present, offering an aesthetic that has spread globally through rapidly developing electronic networks. Local differences in identity politics, have given rise to an ongoing discursive struggle regarding the ownership of the futurist memories that techno's musical hybrids embody within their sonic characteristics. DJs, producers and promoters battle out the meaning of techno through their music productions. For example, at the end of the 1980s, although the term "techno" was used earlier in Germany (Dir. Sextro and Wick, 2008), techno was marketed in the UK as Detroit's response to house music from Chicago and electro from New York. The cultural contexts in which it is listened and danced to, arguably emerged earlier, in the 1970s, during the development of disco, in which dancers would mainly dance individually or in groups (rather than as couples) to groove-based recordings selected by DJs (Fikentscher 2000, Lawrence, 2003). During the 1980s, electronic dance music genres emerged that partly took cues from electro-funk, Italo disco, post-punk electronic pop from the UK and electronic body music from Belgium and Germany. New York's electro-funk mixed hip-hop culture with post-punk electronica during the early 1980s. And, from around 1986 onwards, house music was initially exported from Chicago to New York, the UK and elsewhere in Europe, while it also inspired

the inception of techno in Detroit (Collin, 1997; Garratt, 1998; Rietveld, 1998, 2007; Reynolds, 1998)

Such discourses are further explored in dance and music production magazines and web sites. Numerous academic publications have addressed various aspects of electronic dance music and its cultures since the early 1990s, including Albiez (2005), Butler (2006, 2014), Fikentscher (2000), Lawrence (2003), Pini (2001), Rietveld et al (2013), St John (2004), while trade and subcultural magazines for DJs, music producers and dance fans have reported on its development from its inception. In 2009, a dedicated academic journal appeared, *Dancecult, Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture*[i], led by Graham St John. The journal's editorial team and advisory board both show an international but mainly English-language scholarship based in the USA, Canada, Australia and Western Europe. Topics range from dance music festivals, DJ cultures and production issues, to the genre aesthetics of psytrance, Afrofuturism and dub. Here the scholarship is mainly centred on the contexts of instrumental electronic dance music, techno and trance, defined by 'four to the floor' beats, although the range of genres under discussion is becoming more inclusive.

Certain "technocracies" have evolved, a term that is used playfully here; rather than referring to governance on the basis of technical expertise, here it refers to ongoing power struggles regarding the validity and dominance of distinct techno subgenres.. For example, the term 'techno' was coined by Andreas Tomalla (DJ Talla 2XL) in the early 1980s, when he worked in a record shop in Frankfurt, Germany, in order to indicate post-punk pop and dance music associated with electronic body music and the *Neue Welle* ("new wave"), as well as electro and the tech-noir sound of Suicide from New York, electro-funk from Detroit and, later in the 1980s, the almost always instrumental minimalist sound of acid house that came from Chicago. In this case, word 'techno' referred to music that was produced 'technologically', through electronic music technology. In Germany, then, all forms of electronic dance music, whether house music or otherwise, are referred to as 'techno'. In the English-speaking world, however, the story is told in a different way. This will be illustrated here through locating formative moments of techno in Detroit, and drum'n'bass in London, before returning to Germany, and elsewhere, for a discussion of trance.

The New Dance Sound of Detroit

In 1988, *Techno! The New Dance Sound of Detroit*, compiled by Northern Soul collector Neil Rushton for 10 Records, was released in the UK. The compilation gave techno its conceptual manifesto, written as the liner-notes by Stuart Cosgrove (1988a), who also wrote a seminal introductory article around the same time for British style magazine *The Face*, in which he quotes Detroit techno producer Derrick May giving a much-cited short-hand definition of the Detroit sound of techno: "The music is just like Detroit, a complete mistake. It's like George Clinton and Kraftwerk stuck in an elevator" (Cosgrove, 1988b: 86). The term 'techno' was employed as a marketing device to distinguish Detroit's dance music output from Chicago house music around that time. Chicago house and Detroit techno were stylistically intertwined, as can be heard on the double album in tracks such as 'Share this House' by Members of the House and the title of the 'megamix' (a DJ mix of tracks), 'Detroit is Jacking', as the word 'jacking' refers to a dance style that is associated with the Chicago house music scene. In the sleeve notes, co-compiler and techno DJ-producer Derrick May explains the difference between the local styles: "House music still has its heart in the '70s disco. We don't have any of that respect for the past. It's strictly future music." (cited by Cosgrove, 1988: sleeve notes). Chicago house music may be partially regarded as a revival of disco, albeit in electronic form; it thereby reinterprets the past for the present. Detroit techno rejects a nostalgic view on the past; its producers embed their music in Afro-futurist cultural politics (Williams, 2001; v Veen, 2013). The twelve tracks on the compilation are diverse, from the above mentioned house tracks and the commercially successful vocal dance anthem 'Big Fun' performed by Inner City and produced by Kevin Saunderson) to the genre defining electronic funk abstractions of Rhythim Is Rhythim's 'It What It Is', by Derrick May, and Juan Atkin's 'Techno Music', which ultimately defined the genre of Detroit techno.

Atkins appropriated the term 'techno' from Toffler's 1980 publication *The Third Wave*, which suggests that the 'techno-rebel' takes control of technology rather than is controlled by it, by making it part of frontline culture:

> "The techno-rebels are, whether they recognize it or not, agents of the Third Wave. They will not vanish but multiply in the years ahead. For they are as much part of the advance to a new stage of civilization as our missions to Venus, our amazing computers, our biological discoveries, or our explorations of the oceanic depths." (1980: 153)

Toffler refers here to an economic-historical three-wave model: agricultural (extraction), industrial (manufacture) and post-industrial (information). The last, third,

is post-Fordist in production structure[1], in which flexible specialisation has become a central characteristic, a response to individualized life styles, to decentralization of production, to automation, to freelance work and to a rapidly developing electronic home worker industry. Toffler speaks of "the rise of the prosumer" (265), the do-it-yourself consumer who in effect becomes part of the production process. A fledgling DiY electronic music producer could certainly identify with this model. Toffler observes that, "The techno-rebels contend that technology need not be big, costly, or complex in order to be "sophisticated" (1980: 152). The introduction of chip technology enabled the compact and relatively cheap mass-production of digital music instruments in the 1980s, resulting in widening access to music production and a mushrooming of home recording studios based on digital music systems (Katz, 2004; Théberge, 1997). This has led to the production and fluid metamorphoses of a wide range of electronic music formats, including electro, Italo-disco, house music, hardcore rave, drum'n'bass, trance and techno.

Although other once industrially leading cities, such as Manchester (UK) or Chicago, experienced similar post-industrial change as Detroit during the 1970s, the latter uniquely encountered this shift quite brutally:

> "In the period 1940 through 1963, Detroit was the greatest manufacturing city in the world, unmatched in real physical productivity. But during the period 1964-2004, Detroit became synonymous with blight and decay beyond imagination." (Freeman, 2004: web source)

Detroit was once proud of its dominant car industry (giving soul music label Motown its name) and creating a significant black middleclass with social control, even though corporate control remained in white hands. When the city's industrial economic core collapsed in the 60s and 70s, a middleclass population flight occurred, leaving behind an almost halved impoverished population in an urban ruin (Sicko, 1999). Even recording label Motown left, heading for Los Angeles' entertainment network in 1972. Many of the decaying buildings have been cleared since, making space for new corporate structures or simply left undeveloped, creating an empty ghost town. In the 90s, remaining manufacturing spaces have lent themselves well for techno dance parties, organized, for example, by Canadian Richie Hawtin (Rubin, 2000). In a haunting take on electro pop, Cybotron's 1984 recording 'Techno City'[ii] depicts a post-human city, its sound design suggesting a hollow desolate urban

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[1] Ford (a 'second wave' company) introduced a manufacturing process in Detroit in which a uniform car was mass-produced within the company – no work was shipped out and labour division was mainly static.

space; although the lyrics hold futuristic promise, the overall effect is an inescapable dystopian vortex.

The song's epic direction was not where Juan Atkins wished to go, leaving Cybotron to Richard Davis. Based in a middleclass suburban town near Detroit in the 1980s, the 'Belleville Three' (Juan Atkins, Kevin Saunderson, Derrick May), experimented further to give electronic musical form to Detroit's alienating experience. These first self-declared techno producers took inspiration from a range of sources, such as the futurist electro sound of Afrika Bambaataa's 'Planet Rock' (Tommy Boy, 1982); the dance format of Chicago house; Detroit's electronic funk by pioneers George Clinton, Bernie Worrell, Bootsy Collins of Parliament-Funkadelic; the electro-acoustic Motown soul of Stevie Wonder; and the European electronic music of Gary Newman, New Order, Giorgio Moroder and Kraftwerk. Albiez (2005) points out that early techno's 'post-soul aesthetic' should be understood in the context of "how musical production in Detroit, and elsewhere, is caught up in the global and trans-Atlantic flows (of) popular culture." (p 4). The particular mix of these musical influences was mediated by Detroit radio, especially DJ the Electrifyin' Mojo's regular show (Sicko, 1999). Techno's formation drew importantly on the Afrofuturism of 70s funk and on an interest in science fiction (SF). Afrofuturism was loosely based on the premise that African-Americans are aliens without a place to return to; although feeling fettered in the post-industrial present, there is a liberating technological future to look forward to (Dery, 1994). In this context, Eshun writes about 'sonic fiction', science fiction in musical format:

> "The bedroom, the party, the dancefloor, the rave: these are the labs where the 21st C nervous systems assemble themselves, the matrices of the Futurhytmicmachinic Discontinuum." (1998; -001)

As part of this rhizomic discontinuum, electronic imports appealed to Detroit's techno producers: "because the European music sounded as alien as they felt" (Jonker, 2002: web source) and, according to Atkins, the interest in electronic music from Europe was a black middleclass tactic, "to distance themselves from the kids that were coming up in the projects, the ghetto." (cited by Reynolds, 1998: 5).

Through such influences, Detroit's sonic fiction engaged with European futurism. In postmodernist fashion, the German group Kraftwerk has successfully pioneered an experimental bridge between the modernist avant-garde intellectualism and soul music in the 1970s to produce electronic pop. Presenting themselves as 'man

machines' that design music for the computerised future (Barr, 1998; Bussy, 1993), they stated, "We are not entertainers, we are sound scientists" (in: Shapiro, 2000: 249). A machine aesthetic can be found throughout the 20th Century in avant-garde art, film and music. Italian futurist Russolo envisaged artistic potential in the harnassing of urban and industrial machine noise, which he articulated in his 1913 manifesto 'The Art of Noises' (1973). Set in a hierarchically segregated city that inspired Cyborton's song 'Techno City', Fritz Lang's expressionist *Metropolis* (1927) offers a dystopian vision of the machine getting out of control in the year 2026; the film collapses this image with the integration of a female spirit into a robot, who becomes both a "supra-human entity" (Davis, cited by Reynolds. 1998: 8) as well as a 'vamp in the machine' (Huyssen, 1986), which subsequently leads the masses to an irrationally destructive freedom from the depths of a dehumanized industrial existence. Near the end of the century, Bradby (1993) identified a similar patriarchal construction of a sexualized feminine cyborg in the use of female vocals within techno's variants, positioning women and machines as significant others within the technocultural aesthetic.

The flowing disco funk machine rhythm of Chicago house music gave a danceable framework for the Afrofuturist reworking of the machine aesthetic in techno. Of particular importance was the cyberdelic abstraction found in Phuture's 1987 recording 'Acid Tracks' (Trax Records), a minimalist track that consists of a rigid disco drum pattern and idiosyncratic modulating bass sequence. The track was the result of an 'accident': the bass sequence was produced by a sound-generating sequencer, the Roland TR303 Bass-line, without programmed memory. Its random notes sounded as though this machine was tripping on acid (LSD). The producers, including DJ Pierre, had never heard anything like it and decided to frame this in a "four-to-the-floor" house music beat (Rietveld, 1998). Here the machine was allowed to get out of control, in order to produce alien music for alienated "cyborgs". The machine texture was enhanced by overdriving the resonance of the bass sound, put to tape and tested on the psychedelic dance floor of Chicago DJ Ron Hardy. This was the start of Acid House, which inspired not only budding Detroit techno producers Derrick May and Kevin Saunderson but also the rave craze in the UK and, eventually, the formation of trance in Germany.

In *Techno! The New Dance Sound of Detroit*, one can hear the range of influences that contributed to the manifestation of techno. Albiez has argued that Detroit techno was an African-American response to acutely felt "racial antagonism"

in "a post-industrial, postmodern, post-soul America" (2005: 18). Williams (2001: 171) similarly states,

> "Detroit techno represents an African American aesthetic approach to technology, but one that has been so muddied by cultural exchange that it cannot be tied to one single physical place… (Black) alienation is converted to cyborg identity; and the practice of international musical data exchange become s a utopian myth of non-property-based, "open source" collaboration that functions as a resolution to the contradictions and inequities of global electronic capitalism".

In doing so, techno embraced both European and Afro-futurisms, dislocating the African-American subject from the past, producing an intense yet deterritorialised sound that moves towards the future. This has enabled techno participants elsewhere to make sense of their experience of alienation in the rapidly emerging global technoculture. Rhizomically, techno's hybrid futurist notions have dispersed, intermingling with local sensitivities and cultural sensibilities. This will be illustrated by the formation of drum'n'bass, which uniquely developed in the UK, contrasted by a discussion of a distinctly different formation of trance.

Black Secret Technology

In 1995, A Guy Called Gerald released acclaimed drum'n'bass album *Black Secret Technology*, containing washes of synth sounds, sampled segments from dance music recordings, and intricate break beat rhythms. An occasional female vocal sounds hauntingly sensual, at times as if from across a deserted plain, at other times twisted in digitally warped sonic space. The album was re-released by the artist in 2008, stating that,

> "Balanced on the razor edge between mysticism and frenzy, Black Secret Technology remains a powerful comment on the eternal struggle between man and his future". (Simpson, 2008: web source)

The album bridges the technocultural experiments of Detroit techno and the development of UK break beat music. Gerald Simpson hails from a working-class Jamaican family in post-industrial Manchester (UK), where he made early waves in 1988, not least in the local Haçienda club, with a haunting techno track, 'Voodoo Ray' (Rham! Records), partially a response to the Detroit techno he heard being played on local radio by DJ Stu Allen. Experimenting with a then novel digital audio sampler, a female vocal is processed and reversed, with the effect that it sounds otherworldly. Its sonic treatment seems to resemble the acoustic space of the now demolished high-rise buildings of Hulme council estate in Moss Side, the inner city

neighbourhood where Gerald grew up. The album track 'Voodoo Rage' revisits this earlier recording, digitally deconstructing the now longer version of the sampled vocal and lining it up alongside time-shifting percussive break beats within lush synthesized textures (see also Rietveld 2014). In between these two recordings, in 1990, Gerald went to Detroit to meet Derrick May, who eloquently clarified their difference in approach by describing Gerald as a raw diamond that should not be polished.

Drum'n'bass emerged in the UK during the mid-90s, just a little later than jungle, or jungle-techno, which developed in the early 1990s and is culturally closer to dancehall reggae and ragga than drum'n'bass. Still, the terms are often used synonymously as from a historical distance there is more resemblance than difference. These genres are, like 'hardcore rave' music, characterized by speeded up versions of electro break beats. For example, an accelerated drum sample from The Winstons' 1969 soul B-side 'Amen Brother', itself a faster version of gospel song 'Amen', has become the beat source material for the ubiquitous 'Amen Break' (Butler, 2006), which was deconstructed and popularised by electro producer Kurtis Mantronik (ya Sallam and ya Salaam, 2006). An example is Luke Vibert's pastiche 'Junglism' for the project Amen Andrews (Rephlex, 2006) [iii] On average, with variations on either side, drum'n'bass and jungle recordings typically have a speed of around 160 beats per minute (BPM). In contrast to the rapid break beats, the genre's basslines often seem superimposed from dub reggae and half the speed of the drum programming. This, in turn, lends it to multi-dimensional way of listening, as can be seen in dance styles that range from rapid jungle-rave crew jump up and flaying hands, to occasional jazz-steps or a sensuous hip swing.

Like techno, drum'n'bass and jungle embrace futuristic technologised sensibilities that seem to break with the past. Yet, break beat genres embody distinct memories of Black Atlantic musical pathways, which is not only audible in the pattern and low bass of the bassline. Jonker, for example, shows how *Black Secret Science* points to a rhizomatic concept of machine magic:

> "It's important to note that in Jamaican patois, "science" refers to obeah, the African grab-bag of herbal, ritual and occult lore popular on the island. Black secret technology is postmodern alchemy, voodoo magic." (2002: web source).

Drum'n'bass and jungle are as much part of the techno-continuum, as they are related to reggae. In a discussion about DJ-producers Fabio and Grooverider, promoters of jungle defining London club Rage, Collin states,

> "Like reggae sound system DJs, they consciously sought to transform the very nature of the music they played, part of long black futurist lineage dating back through Detroit techno and Jamaican dub, Jimi Hendrix and the cosmic bands of Sun Ra" (1997: 241)

Jungle DJs are supported by MCs (masters of ceremony / 'mike controllers', while the reggae residual 'dub plate' (a unique single pressing of a version or remix, see, for example Belle-Fortune, 2004, and Rietveld 2013b) is central in break beat DJ practices. In addition, the jungle DJ trick of the 'rewind', exciting the crowd with a return to the start of a record, stems directly from the reggae sound system. According to the 1995 TV documentary *All Junglists; A London Somet'in Dis* (Sharp Image Prod, 1995)*,* showing interviews with many of the main protagonists in the scene, jungle was a black British response to a perceived white dominance of British acid house raves and it enabled the bonding of multi-racial youth in their shared experience of alienation in post-industrial Britain. UK break beat music is thereby not necessarily homologous to the black British experience, but has formative links to this. Gilroy's concept of a fluid, discontinuous 'changing same' (2004) is useful here. Responses to varying cultural formats may be changing, but the historical context of (post-)colonial racism remains. In this manner, the technological experimentalism and sonic alienation of Jamaican dub in the 1970s parallels the embrace of techno-rebellion by Detroit techno producers in the 1980s and the techno trickery of drum'n'bass.

Stylistically, and in terms of MC delivery, Jungle seems closer to Jamaican dancehall ragga than drum'n'bass. Collin traces the historical development of break beat dance music back to London:

> "East End duo Shut Up and Dance crystallised a direction for the breakbeat house of 1989 and 1990, turning it into a recognizable genre all of its own: raw, urgent and noisy." (1997: 243)

It developed partly from the rave scene's hardcore sound, itself a mixture of techno and house music, plus electro heard at sound systems owned by second generation Jamaicans during the 80s. Sharp (2000: 139) explains the hardcore aesthetic was a resourceful creation within limited material circumstances,

> "Hardcore's graininess and garishness were largely forced on it by limitations of the equipment on which it was made."

Jungle has kept this rough-cut, even anarchic, approach to sound. By 1994, the assertive sound of jungle and ragga breaks had exploded in the London dance scene, DJs glitching, rewinding and cutting up tracks. At times jungle sounds like hysterical rave music with accelerated vocal samples, break beats and melody lines, for example the seminal old School jungle track 'Junglist' by Rebel MC's Demon Boyz (Tribal Bass Records, 1992)[iv]. At other times, rasta MC Congo Natty presents a dancehall styled 'Junglist Soldier' (Zion 10, 1998)[v]. At other times, jungle can be reflectively moody or deeply dark, belching out aggressive low bass lines, as can be heard in Dead Dred's 'Dred Bass' (Moving Shadow, 1994)[vi].

James (1997) identifies drum'n'bass as arguably lighter in texture than jungle, more thoughtful and more melodic, while Sharp notes that,

> "If hardcore was a collage – a roughneck ride through a succession of intense experiential instants – drum and bass synthesized those experiences into a swathe of new texture." (2000: 139)

In the album tracks of *Black Secret Science*, drum'n'bass takes on board Detroit techno's leanings towards jazz, funk and the suggestion of a cinematic sonic space. LTJ Bukem's atmospheric drum'n'bass sound has paved the way in this jazzier ambient direction. In 1994, he established London club night Speed, to promote drum'n'bass to a wider audience. Trained in classical piano, and musically developed in the 80s acid jazz and rare groove soul scene, LTJ Bukem has brought a carefully constructed ambient approach to techno's conceptual direction. For example, his recording 'Rainfall' (Looking Good Record, 1995)[vii] uses a sophisticated sonic palate of soothing sounds that suggest digitized raindrops and an almost Japanese music scheme, hinting simultaneously at a pastoral escape from city grime as well as at a broad awareness of a global force in electronic culture, Japan. Presented to a soundscape of lush electronic string pads, the break beats are no longer necessary for dancing, but rather function as a rapid flow of data, which slots seamlessly into a world of informational overload.

The 'darkness' that is spoken of in relation to certain break beat subgenres seems to relate to a black majority dance scene (Hesmondhalgh and Melville, 2001). However, in particular darkcore and dark-step, darkness suggest an almost Gothic or

post-punk sensibility, oozing an eerie and angry dystopian feeling of living in an encroaching ghoulish automated city (Christodoulou, 2015). In this sense, it signifies a similar notion of the dangerous city as film noir, and is even comparable to the nihilist tech-noir recordings of New York's electronic post-punk duo Suicide. This direction can also be heard in Goldie's epic drum'n'bass triptych 'Timeless', in which the digital design of part 1, 'Inner City Life', suggests the dark sonic space of a lonely rainy night in a concrete housing estate. Such musical darkness appeals to an ethnically diverse crowd and seems related to an avid consumption of SF films and computer games. Listening to London's (illegal) pirate radio, some examples of jungle can sound like rumbling artillery to defend against a coercing machine, like a refusal to become an obedient component that works according to the manual and to march, on the hegemonic beat, according to the rules and regulations that are perceived to produce social inequalities. As memory traces of acid house and dub meet, it is the ruptured flow of the runaway renegade machine that is celebrated.

Trance

Trance produces an industrial spacious soundscape that veers away from rhythmic rupture. In 1992, German recording label Harthouse, co-owned by DJ Sven Väth (famed for his marathon hardhouse sessions), released Hardfloor 's genre-defining track 'Hardtrance Acperiance 1' (Harthouse, 1992). The recording returns to the acid meme of Phuture's acid bassline, Acid Tracks (Trax Records, 1987); on this occasion, however, the modulating squelching sequences are multi-tracked, looped and exaggerated into more ornate sonic shapes, producing a baroque version of techno that contrasts starkly with its minimalist predecessor. In addition, breakdowns (pauses in the drum patterns) are programmed to allow the whooshing electronic textures of sequenced arpeggios to dominate. Such breakdowns are based in a DJ-practice to occasionally turn off the bass frequency; they tease and bond the crowd, who halt their dance movements, expecting the kick-drum to return for another round of slam-dance. In the recording, the drums are re-introduced by a snare riff that sounds like the announcement of a circus trick, running along the 16s (semiquavers) of a mid-high textured sequence, adding to the increasing intensity to excite the dancer. This simple 'fort-da' suspense trick has proven to be so successful, that most contemporary trance recordings sport several quite lengthy breakdowns in each.

Trance is characterised by metronomic arpeggiated monotones, of which sections shift up, and then down, by half a note, adding to a perpetual state of focused desire and a powerful feeling of immanence that something important may arrive soon, keeping the dancer engaged, hypnotised, to go on and on and on. Trance offers swirling repetitive sequences in an epic expansive space, seemingly wide open to be explored and possibly conquered. Psy-trance, a subgenre favoured at countercultural raves, adds to this a spiritual encounter with the sonic equivalence of mandala shapes. Musical structures spiral into a virtual trip through an infinite time tunnel, to nowhere in particular. In emphasizing a mid to high frequency range, trance seems to physically affect one's upper body more than the lower body. Dancers often move their arms in the air without moving their hips, hopping on the spot. Mixed seamlessly by the DJ, the tracks glide into each other, deleting individual differences between them. As tracks often start and end with synthesized layers of sound, the harmonic blend overtakes beat mixing. The repetitive structures of trance tracks do not pose an intellectual challenge to change the future; instead, their predictability sooths the dancer, making it safe to indulge in an experience of amnesia or to focus deeper on the moment of the trip through movement. In the words of Goa Gil, the oldest trance DJ in Indian hippie tourist resort Goa: "Dance! Dance is active meditation." (cited by Saldanha, 2007: 71).

Europe's 20th century machine aesthetic has contributed an industrial dimension to techno. In 1987, Kraftwerk's member Ralf Hutter described their experimental electronic tracks 'Autobahn' (Phillips, 1974) and 'Trans-Europe Express' (EMI, 1977) as a type of trance music:

> "Letting yourself go. Sit on the rails and ch-ch-ch-ch-ch. Just keep going. Fade in and fade out rather than trying to be dramatic or trying to implant into the music a logical order, which I think is ridiculous. In our society everything is in motion. Music is a flowing artform." (Toop, 1992: 21)

Trance travels, it transports – taking the dancer on a journey in a mesmerising ebb and flow of machine noise that resonates with the cyberdelic qualities of acid house:

> "Trance is trippy, in both the LSD and *motorik* senses of the word, evoking frictionless trajectories of video-games, virtual reality … hurtling through cyber space" (Reynolds, 1998: 184).

The 'motorik' is an insistent beat emphasizing rhythm that was introduced in the early 70s by German drummer Klaus Dinger, founding member of rock band Neu! and of Kraftwerk (Reynolds, 2000). The motorik can be heard in the 1980s sound of the Neue Deutsche Welle (such as German electronic outfit DAF); industrial electronic body music (such as Belgian Front 242); HiNRG (a type of Eurodisco); Dutch gabber house; and trance-techno. Like a relentless machine, averaging a speed of 145 BPM, trance moves along a 4/4 kick drum and regular semiquaver electronic sequences. Although Hutter voices a desire to move away from "a logical order", the motorik shows a rationalist approach to music: its machine motion is industrial in its repetitive rhythmic time management, fast like driving a car on the German motorway (autobahn) and hypnotic like taking an international train across Europe. (TEE).

In Europe, the notion of 'trance' seems common when addressing electronic dance. For example, as early as in 1988, raves in Amsterdam, which often hosted acid house DJs from London, were referred to as 'trance parties' (Rietveld, 1998). In Berlin, trance and techno have dominated the annual Love Parade during the 1990s to celebrate the demolition of the Berlin Wall, consequence of Germany's re-unification. By the end of the 1990s, this sound system street party attracted over a million young people in one day. The slogan for the 1997 Berlin Love Parade was: 'One Nation Under a Groove', which recontextualised Funkadelic's 1978 recording (Warner Bros) to a statement for national peace, celebrated underneath the historical Siegessäule (Victory Column). During the mid-90s, Berlin even became a temporary hometown to various successful Detroit techno DJ-producers, such as Jeff Mills. The two cities had, for different historical reasons, experienced abrupt change that urgently necessitated a new noise, a new music, to enter a shared global technoculture.

By 2004, Dutch DJ Tiësto famously DJ-ed a trance music set at the opening ceremony of the Olympics in Athens, 'Parade of the Athletes' (Magik Muzik, 2004)[viii], as athletes from around the world paraded into the arena, in view of a global TV audience. Such exposure seems to indicate that trance music offers an all-inclusive soundtrack to the global technoculture, a musical aesthetic for transnational 'non-places' (Augé, 1995). In an ethnographic study of countercultural trance parties in hippy resort Goa, India, Saldanha observed a variation on this:

"… transcendental experience in white psychedelic counterculture is considered a means to *overcome* one's kind of racial formation to embrace all of humanity or all of the planet" (2007: 72)

Detroit techno's deterritorialized escape from racial identifiers made its abstracted format a suitable accompaniment to transcendental dance parties. By default, techno is often hegemonically designated as 'white' or 'European' (Albiez, 2005). In addition, in the alternative party scene of Goa and psytrance, a hyperreal nostalgia is mixed with the machine-aesthetic of trance; technologised versions of imaginary ancient, pagan, spiritual practices can accompany especially psy-trance parties (Moreton, 1995). An example is in the title of a DJ mix, *Shamanic Trance*, compiled by the Japanese trance DJ Tsuyoshi Suzuki for London-based label Return to the Source (1996)[ix]. In an embedded study of the Goa trance scene, Saldanha (2007) wonders "to what extend techno-shamanism escapes white modernity" (73), concluding that trance-psychedelics are about "whiteness reinventing itself" (74). As the demographic composition of long-term tourists in Goa is mixed, perhaps the notion of "whiteness" may be best understood as a complex and uneven relationship between the escapist parties of global travellers and daily material realities of the local population.

Taking the problematic further into a global context, trance offers an opportunity to investigate how technoculture re-imagines itself musically. A combination of cosmopolitanism and a deterritorialised format make trance a conveniently 'odourless' (Iwabuchi, 2002) exportable product that can be localised: "… trance in all its forms has truly conquered the world, forming the backbone of the rave scene in America as well as the expanding club circuit …" (Brewster and Broughton, 2006: 370). Trance has spread in directions where the global economy dominates, including Europe, the US, Japan, Singapore, Australia, Greece, various backpacker holiday destinations, from Goa and Thailand to Peru, and especially Israel (listen, for example, to Infected Mushroom's 2003 album *Converting Vegetarians* (Yoyo Records)[x] where rock, European classical melody lines and middle-eastern tonality are mixed into spacious yet pulsating digital danceable soundtrack). As a functional response to techocultural anxiety, which abstractly combines a countercultural mission with post-industrial traces of techno rebellion, trance has been adapted to various youth cultural agendas. On one end of the spectrum anarchic outdoor raves, fuelled by psy-trance, and on the other end a version of trance is utilised in a corporate endeavour, favouring brand names that market international club concepts, recording labels and DJs. In between, trance flavoured dance pop can be heard in various local DJ bars, from Thailand to Britain and back. In a process of rapid hybridisation, memories of the future seem to

dissipate, displaced by a seemingly forever present, that forgets the genealogy of a musical journey that is, nevertheless, traceable. Although trance, is a subgenre under the umbrella term of electronic dance music, within the popular imagination it is often confusingly regarded as synonymous with electronic dance music. With its deterritorialized digital sound and relatively simple musical structures, during the 1990s this trance's trajectory partially morphed into a popular genre that was briefly referred to as 'epic trance'. By 2012 it developed further in the American 'mainstream' rave scene as a pop-dance genre that is now referred to as 'EDM' (Reynolds, 2012; Rietveld, 2013a), an abbreviation of 'Electronic Dance Music', yet not to be confused with previous academic uses of this term.

DJ Aesthetics

The DJ cultures associated with electronic dance music have been instrumental in forging music genres in specific urban locations, and subsequent musical tourism has developed to globally connected cities that are associated with such genre formation. When the DJ segues or mixes two records a "third record" is produced that results in both recombination and innovation (Rietveld, 2007 and 2011). In common between the different subgenres, including house music, techno, trance, drum'n'bass, dub step and a myriad others, electronic dance music is characterised by a functionality that enhances an extended dance experience through DJ-friendly musical structures. For example, by starting and ending a recording that enables a layering of two recordings, seamlessly segueing one recording into the next, dancers can escape a rationalised sense of time and instead enter into a different here and now, of living forever in a sonic space that seems without boundaries. Being locked in a groove within a dance space that is delineated by sonic dominance, which is produced through an powerful sound system, can create a contemporary ritualised type of transcendence that leaves dancers free to vote with their feet: with just one messy mix or mistaken music selection, the magic can be broken.

During the 1970s, some New York-based disco DJs would remix a song so that the rhythm section would start the track before voices and melody enter (Lawrence, 2003). During the start of the 1980s, the use of reasonably affordable drum machines, (soon even cheaper when obtained second-hand) enabled the production of stable beats that are easier to mix than recordings based on the organic 'feel' of human drummers. Within the electro scene in the Roxy club in New York, DJs used the drum machine (especially the Roland TR-808) as a basis to mix music from vinyl

records to, and soon this became, together with rap, a signature sound for the electro funk genre. In Chicago, innovative DJ Frankie Knuckles remixed existing recordings with additional drum machine sounds to 'beef up' the bass and the 'foot' of his music selections, playing these on reel-to-reel tape, mixed in with vinyl-based recordings; for example, his mix of Jamie Principle's 'Baby Wants to Ride' (Trax Records, 1987)[xi]. This, in turn, gave rise to the formation of house music (Rietveld, 1998). By 1987, this was closely followed by acid house in Chicago and techno in Detroit. The processed sampled sounds of the Roland TR-909 provided a biting sound palette as was not only heard in the mix work of Frankie Knuckles., Derrick May, for example, had informed Knuckles of this drum machine, and later made musical history as Rhythim is Rhythim with the seminal Detroit techno track 'Strings of Life' (Transmat, 1987)[xii]. Even though these drum machines were taken out of production by Roland not long after their introduction, the sound of the TR-909 drum machine is iconic, dominating the sound of techno and related dance music genres. Listen, for example, to the intensely pulsating UK techno recording 'Pagga' by Surgeon (Kickin Records, 1996) [xiii] or Detroit techno recording 'Jaguar' by The Aztec Mystic a.k.a. DJ Rolando (Underground Resistance, 1999) [xiv]. Hereby a standard for current techno productions was shaped. As can be heard on, for example, Ansome's revival acid techno recording 'Halyard Hitch' (Mord, 2014)[xv] Techno producers still use the sound of the TR-909, whether with the original machine, the revival Roland Boutique TR 09, or its sampled sounds within the virtual music production spaces of DAWs.

DJ-friendly track openings can also be heard in drum'n'bass, jungle, and related UK break beat genres that have followed since, such as UK Garage and dub step. Simon Reynolds presents this sequence of genre formation as the hardcore-continuum, as these styles have some of their beginnings in East London's hardcore rave scene, yet there is also a detectible reggae-continuum in these specific styles of electronic dance music. DJ styles for these subgenres not only developed from a beat-matching layered DJ style that can be heard at techno and house music events, but also from the ruptured reggae sound system performance styles. During related dance events, the manner in which DJs manipulate the crowd and MCs pick up the mike to address the crowd seems comparable to what Back (1988) found in their studies of reggae sound system events of the 1970s and 80s. As the older reggae sound systems only used one single record player, the MC (called the DJ, comparable to a radio DJ) spoke between records to keep the crowd engaged. In turn, the DJ (called the selector) would add energy to a dance by teasing the crowd,

stopping a record after the intro. At times, people would demand a stop and ask for a "rewind", which literally means rewinding a vinyl recording while leaving the needle on the groove, and starting it again. In particular, this may be the case when the unique pressing, the *dub plate*, is used, as this would be the only opportunity to hear this recording. In this specific context, a beat-matched layered mix between two recordings is not necessary – instead, the recording needs to be instantly recognisable. Reggae recordings are often structured like pop songs on 7-inch vinyl, without a mix-friendly set of melody-free beats at the start (as one normally finds in disco, house and techno)[2]. This format means that recordings in the reggae-continuum do not necessarily always start with a sparse rhythm track, even though their mixed genealogy in house and techno music makes this a possibility. In other words, the DJ-friendly mix is less uniform in these subgenres of electronic dance music. The routes of influence work in a broken and roundabout manner, via multiple routes that in the case of break-beat-related electronic dance music include dancehall, electro-funk and the impact of house, techno and trance in UK rave culture.

For trance the development of DJ-friendly mixes differs again. This is a dominant genre at events such as Boom Festival in Portugal, Burning Man in Nevada, or Voov Experience/Vuuv Festival in Germany. As the style of this subgenre is based on a mix of techno, acid house, industrial, and electronic body music, trance tracks follow a similar structure as many house music and techno tracks by starting a recording with quite a sparse rhythm track to enable a beat mix. However, as trance partly developed within a countercultural context of the Goa scene where, with other DJs such as Fred Disko, DJ Goa Gil developed his unique tantric DJ style during long sets that start relatively funky but finds its peak during the deep night when the crowd dances to a nightmarish world of pounding machine rhythms of industrial music and repetitive musical components that have the effect of animated mandalas, to finally mellow at sunrise, enabling subject 'rebirth' into the normalising visual space of the light of day (see also Davies 2004, Rietveld 2010a and 2013a). Up to the mid-90s, the format of the music was affected by a combination of climate and available audio medium, as in the heat of a tropical climate, vinyl records tend to buckle, making digital audio tape (DAT) attractive (before the embrace of the CDR) enabling DJs like

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[2] A "mix-friendly set of beats" is an opening and ending of a recording without the clutter of other instruments that would demand a sometimes impossible harmonic blend

Goa Gil to play imported productions before their release. This had an effect on the formation of Goa trance and psychedelic trance, as audio-tape does not lend itself well to beat-matching. Instead, devoid of beats, the introductions of Goa trance recordings tend to open with washes of sound; for example SFX' 1995 recording Celestial Groove (Outmosphere Records)[xvi], which after an ambient start develops to a fast moving (and TR909-driven) melodic trance track. Although neither DAT nor vinyl are of major consequence since the use of CDJ players and digital DJ software, which gained popularity since the start of the 21st Century (Rietveld, 2016), this musical structure has left traces in subsequent psy-trance and its subgenres, demonstrating how also a genre that prefers not to emphasize the past carries within it a specific genealogy of relationships that have shaped its aesthetic.

Technocultural Networks

Similarly to other music genres, fans connect via communication networks (Thornton, 1995), which have increased in efficiency and speed. Whereas during the 1980s there were still print based fanzines and an exchange of mix cassette tapes, during the 1990s mail-based and online electronic dance music discussion forums appeared that, by the end of 1990s migrated to the World Wide Web and peer-to-peer music exchange networks. An example of a discussion group is UK-Dance (Rietveld 1999). The current website, set up in 2007, states that, "UK-Dance was started in 1992 as a place for people to discuss everything to do with dance music culture in the UK: clubs, parties, special events, record shops, radio, records and anything else to do with the underground scene." (www.uk-dance.org) In addition to reviewing records, dance events and other related cultural items, such as documentaries and film, the participants are also sharing some other aspects of their personal preferences, whether food or politics. This has lead on occasion to engaged debate and in helped as social glue between participants who would otherwise not really know each other.

Although DJ mixes were swapped on cassette and CD during the 1990s, this activity has been mostly replaced now by links to music upload websites like Soundcloud and Mixcloud, the audio equivalents to the video format of YouTube. In the case of some participants of UK-Dance, music labels were created – a good example being Hyperdub, which was at the forefront of the development of Dub Step during the early part of the millennium. In other cases, journalistic and academic work developed through discussions, my own included. In the US, the Hyperreal list

[http://music.hyperreal.org/] engaged a similar mix of fans, practitioners and authors, reaching out beyond the borders of the US to include a wide range of specifically Detroit techno fans, which included the writer Dan Sicko, who produced the definitive history of that genre (Sicko 1999). Such networks merged into a social media format during the mid-noughties, at first with MySpace a Web 0.2 site that was embraced particularly by American, UK-based, West European and also Japanese underground dance DJs and producers during the first decade of the twenty-first century. There is less debate, as these sites are not text-based, and although there are links to journalism, reviews, mixes and music videos, formats like Facebook seem to encourage the visual spectacle for a distracted generation.

Streaming tailor-made DJ performances online from a global range of urban hubs, *Boiler Room* [https://boilerroom.tv/] has expanded considerably since its inception in 2010, starting first in London, next in New York, Los Angeles and Berlin, and now from a wide range of cities, including Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Tokyo, Edinburgh and Amsterdam. Videos of the show are placed on sites such as *YouTube* and *Daily Motion*, while additionally it offers background articles to specific artists and local scenes. Initiated by Blaise Bellville with Thristian 'bPm' Richards and Femi Adeyemi, this website started out in London as a streaming platform in Spring 2010, with relatively simple DJ set ups of two turntables and mixer in front of a camera (BNTL, 2012). The audio-visual shows are streamed live, although some shows are repeated during one day, while there is also a growing online archive that can be found on *YouTube*. Since 2012, there have been offices in Los Angeles, New York and Berlin. Especially the latter proved popular with an international online audience.

The site mainly shows dance DJ and electronic music performances in the presence of small audiences in a variety of large cities around the world. The attraction to online audiences is to be able to feel part of its exclusive shows; they can even make online comments as it occurs. Auslander (2011: 196) observes that, traditionally, liveness implies the "physical and temporal co-presence of performer and audience" but, by contrast, that a website is perceived as live when it can be interacted with through the possibility of feedback, whereby the cultural order has shifted from personal "relationships" to online "connections" (ibid: 197). This may leave this platform open to the accusation of a type of social impoverishment. Yet, In a study of Boiler Room, Heuguet (2016: 83) argues that, as the online shows are open access, a broadcasting event is offered, rather than a closed club experience, which is supplemented by social media chat features, taking "advantage of the

connotations of social affinity organized on Facebook and Twitter to suggest that the DJ-mix resembles a community of experience.",

The added attraction of *Boiler Room* is the proximity of the camera(s) to show the techniques of trendsetting DJ-producers in what seems an intimate (V.I.P.) closeness to the viewer, yet at a mediated online long distance (Rietveld, 2016). Performing artists include underground favourites, and emerging as well as established artists, such as Theo Parish, Laurent Garnier, Richie Hawtin, Masters At Work (MAW), James Blake and Flying Lotus. The site has further expanded into other musical styles, such as hip-hop, jazz and local ethnic ('world') music. In 2014, performances were also streamed from other cities, such as Buenos Aires, and performances in studio settings were explored, as well as classical music. According to *Rolling Stone* (2014), "Both its listeners and guest DJs demand surprises and proper set creation, bringing back DJ sets to the notion of a proper dance floor journey rather than a hit parade".

The site has partnered with international festivals such as *Sónar* (in Barcelona, Spain) and *Amsterdam Dance Event* (*ADE*, in the Netherlands). The cultural credibility of *Boiler Room* with its audiences makes it an attractive vehicle for selected advertising, which means it can offer a free service. In particular, it has a deal with *YouTube* (Stolman, 2013) and it organizes events within the annual *Red Bull Academy*, an international project that provides scholarships to DJ-producers to meet and learn from each other and from their role models. As recordings of some of the performances can be viewed at a later time, this site seems a useful research tool, providing insight into some of the practices and performance technologies of the digital DJ.

Unlike the more predictable pop-sound of EDM and the embrace of trance-related styles by superstar DJs, the musical performances of the Boiler Room, DJs differs widely. Despite the appearance of a global village the question raised by such online performances and musical exchanges is how a sense of a cohesive global music scene is possible despite the different cultural contexts. With reference to Auslander (2008) would it be possible to understand this cultural phenomenon as a type of mediated *glocalisation* (Robertson, 1995)? Or is a new understanding of transnational electronic music dance culture required, one that may point to shared

post-colonial links, comparable metropolitan experiences, and similar relationships to electronic technologies?

Compilation

The dancer can enter the musical experience by embodying its electronic sound. As I have also shown elsewhere (Rietveld 2004 and 2010a), whether club nights, raves or dance festivals, during a peak experience on the dance floor, a type of cyborg subjectivity is produced, helping participants to culturally internalise a sense of post-human alienation. What otherwise may be an experience of abject horror, is instead socialised and internalised as part of a regime of pleasure. Meanwhile, the ongoing repetitive beats provide a temporary escape from the knowledge that life is finite: time is now — despite the dominance of a futuristic trope in techno, and musical intertextuality achieved through the DJ's music selections, there is no sense of past or future during the ritual of dance. As also Till (2016) shows, with reference to processes of entrainment, the shared experience of dancing to techno can produce an empowering group experience. Specific ecologies of affect, that includes the vibe of the event (St John, 2009), in terms of sociality, and vibration of the music; the sonic qualities of techno (including rhythm, deep bass frequencies and electronic textures), produce a powerful shared feeling that in effect changes the individual dancers (Till, 2016).

When understood as techno, electronic dance music becomes a type of transnational *lingua franca*, that is shared across global networks that currently operate via the internet, whether through social media, distribution sites, videos, discussion forums, blogs and journals on the world wide web or within a range of smart phone apps. Techno is not just a simple music genre, but more a musical aesthetic that can be found in a range of subgenres of electronic dance music. There is, I also argue elsewhere (Rietveld, 2004), a specific reason why electronic dance music seems to be globally embraced despite, and perhaps exactly because of, its relatively abstract machine aesthetic. Non-vocal instrumental versions of techno and trance seem to enable the dancing subject to relate to the experience of ubiquitous electronic technology. Although the cultural contexts within which techno and trance are danced to can differ significantly, and physical mobility across borders may not be the same for all dance fans, the DJ producers and dance participants of electronic dance music share technological and logistical experiences of intense urbanisation and digitalised communications, which can be (literally) shockingly alien to the

organic rhythms and needs of our evolutionarily developed physical bodies. Electronic dance music, in particular its techno aesthetic, offers an opportunity to engage sonically with the experience of electronic technologies and of acceleration that characterise the post-human world of what may well be termed the technoculture.

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