

Reviews

We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene and Culture. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick. Sense Music & Media, Media Atelier, Germany, 2008. SENSEDVD02.

RRP: £16.49

DOI: 10.12801/1947-5403.2009.01.01.11

HILLEGONDA C. RIETVELD

London South Bank University (UK)

The documentary *We Call It Techno!* provides a German perspective on the development of electronic dance music to both a German and English-speaking audience through subtitles and the choice of an English voice-over. Based on interviews with key people in the scene, it tells the story from the definition of post-punk electronica from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s. There are two parts. The main film is illustrated by rare archive material from private collections of participants and key people of the developing scene. The second part consists of interview excerpts and additional interview material.

The following DJs, party concept designers, club promoters, label managers and record shop workers, all male except one, took part: Alex Azary, Andreas Rossmann, Armin Johnert, Ata, Boris Dlugosh, Claus Bachor, Cosmic Baby, Dimitri Hegemann, Dr Motte (of early Love Parade fame), Elsa for Toys, Frank Blümel, Hell, Jürgen Laarmann, Mark Reeder, Mike Ink, Mijk van Dijk, Ralf Niemczyk, Sven Väth, Talla 2XLC, Tanith, Thomas Koch, Tobias Lampe, Triple R, Upstart and Wole XPD. The interviewees benefit from their maturity and their insights gained over decades, while the use of the German language produces a deeply reflective mode. In particular, Mike Ink places the scene's idealism in a wider historical-materialist perspective, while Azary observes that, "Techno expresses the emotion of today's times best of all, basically the blankness of society". The resulting documentary is a serious self-searching narrative that demonstrates that the term techno was very much the electronic sound track of the millennium.

The narrative starts with the introduction of the term techno as early as 1984 by Talla in a Frankfurt record shop called City Music, to indicate "music created technologically", such as "New Order, Depeche Mode, Kraftwerk, Heaven 17, then later Front 242. I actually filed everything under Techno. And people liked it" (Talla). This was followed by the Techno Club, set up by Alex Azary and Talla, which hosted post-punk electronic bands, the *NeueWelle* (new wave), like D.A.F. (*Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft*) and *Nitzer Ebb*. This club night became a hot spot for Electronic Body Music (EBM), a sound that was led by the Belgian Front 424. It also inspired the establishment of specialist magazine *Frontpage* that self-defined the merging techno scene. Initially the club attracted suburban males, until DJs like Sven Väth, who developed his career in this Frankfurt scene, moved away from industrial and EBM to embrace American techno and acid house.

Berlin had been physically segregated from West Germany, until the fall of the wall in 1989. According to Tanith, the electronic experiments by German pioneers,

such as Klaus Schulze, were effectively forgotten by a younger Berliner generation that mainly listened to guitar rock. Until the arrival of techno-house from the US that is, which sounded more fun than the aggression of EBM. Acid house was introduced there via the radio shows of Monika Dietl, which were listened to on both sides of the Berlin Wall. When the wall came down, an extraordinary festive period emerged in Berlin, which brought together creative talents from East and West Germany. From this, the Love Parade emerged, in the summer of 1989, consisting of a sound system on a truck, playing acid house and Detroit techno.

The title of the documentary refers to a popular track of this period, "Call It Techno" (Breaking Bones 1989), an Electro Freestyle track by Brooklyn-based DJ Frankie Bones. Its musical influences seem to cover a wide range of electronica, including Kraftwerk, KLF and Afrika Bambataa, while an electronically treated vocal summarises a history of techno from an American perspective. The documentary's version of techno's story is different from the usual one, of how Detroit DJ producer Derrick May and British entrepreneur Neil Rushton marketed Detroit's electronic dance music as distinct from the Chicago house sound in 1988. It becomes quite clear that techno was indeed a concept, a sign of the times, which inspired people in Europe and the US in parallel fashion.

The documentary subsequently charts the experience of young people devoting their lives to the party scene, which went into overdrive during the early 1990s: its idealism, its creative energy, the flaunting of hegemonic common sense in terms of lifestyles and regulations and the sense that a revolution had occurred, a break in history. More women became involved and footage reveals a distinct difference in gender relations. 1980s footage from the Technoclub shows an all male punk mob; while in footage from the early 1990s one sees boys and girls with happy grins, taking ecstasy pills, travelling from city to city to follow their favourite DJs. Each city seemed to have its own distinct approaches to this party phenomenon, some supporting the super star DJ and others being much more about the music itself, the crowd and the experience. Techno, in this version of events, accommodates a clear break in German history: pre-1989 techno as post-punk electronica, angry, macho, full of fear and loathing; post-1989 techno as fun, celebratory, camp and queer.

From this melting-pot of ideas, eventually a German trance aesthetic emerged, again first in Frankfurt, with DJ Dag and Sven Väth, which further developed in the techno-trance scene that revolved around the Berlin Love Parade. In sum, this DVD corrects the Anglo-American hegemony on the history of electronic dance music with a unique collection of images and interviews. It is therefore a must in the collection of anyone who studies and enjoys electronic dance music.

References

- Frankie Bones. 1989. *Call It Techno*. Breaking Bones Records (12-inch). BBR-400. USA.
Various. 1988. *Techno! The New Dance Sound Of Detroit*. Ten Records Ltd (10 Records) UK // 303 322-406. DIXG 75. Virgin Schallplatten GmbH. Germany.

Lost and Sound: Berlin, Techno, und der Easyjetset. Tobias Rapp. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 2009. ISBN: 3518460447 [German only]
 RRP: €9.50 (paperback)
 DOI: 10.12801/1947-5403.2009.01.01.12

SEAN NYE

University of Minnesota (USA)

“A new Berlin is emerging – and nobody is noticing” (p.9). The first line of Rapp’s *Lost and Sound. Berlin, Techno und der Easyjetset* clearly states the motivation behind the book: the need for an update of Berlin techno. Rapp is well situated to write such an update. He reported on Berlin nightlife for many years as the editor of one of Berlin’s leading newspapers, *Die Tageszeitung*. The first line also indicates that techno is no longer the focus of the media, since most scholars and journalists associated the Berlin techno-scene with the Love Parade. Given this relative invisibility, it might come as a surprise that Berlin has become a center of the international techno-scene like never before; from the concentration of print media to the conglomeration of expat musicians.

Can it be that techno is also the soundtrack of the zero years, as Rapp calls this decade? Rapp answers affirmatively – at least for Berlin. However, the role of techno has changed. Rapp aims to pinpoint exactly what these changes are. He asserts, “This is also not the East-Berlin of the nineties, that adventurous playground forming the backdrop of the Love Parade, with its flamboyant dancers on walls that still bore the marks of history” (p.33). The book primarily concerns itself with the innovations of the zero years. Four aspects form the core of his investigation:

1. The move of the scene’s locus from the *Friedrichstraße/Leipziger Straße* club mile of the 1990s to the *Friedrichshain/Kreuzberg* club mile of the zero years.
2. The new mood of the scene in the post-Love-Parade age (after the Love Parade was canceled in 2004 and 2005 and definitively moved to the Ruhr Valley in 2007). The first techno generation is aging but remains active; simultaneously new generations of techno activists are emerging.
3. The development of a new form of techno tourism and club management through bargain airline travel such as Easyjet.
4. The replacement of hard techno (Tresor label) and pop techno (Low Spirit label) as the dominant Berlin sound by minimal as the sound of the zero years.

As his first focus, Rapp describes Berlin’s new club mile, which consists of a range of clubs, including Berghain, Watergate, Maria, Weekend, that in fact spread over five kilometers along the banks of the river Spree. These banks form the border of Berlin’s two famous countercultural districts, *Friedrichshain* and *Kreuzberg*, underscoring their continued importance for city nightlife. Rapp emphasizes that in terms of style and location, the new clubs differ markedly from the old clubs, for example E-Werk, Bunker, and the old Tresor and WMF. The old designs were innovative and playful, but also provisional. The owners knew the locations were likely to be bought out by developers. Nevertheless, this club mile prepared the ground for the rise of

techno in Berlin and for the exceptional success of the Love Parade. The route of the Love Parade in front of the Brandenburg Gate was not only of historical importance; it was also crucial for tourism. The parade drew masses of tourists, who also took part in the club events of the Berlin Love Week surrounding the parade. The entrance fees were jacked up and the number of clubbers always overwhelming, guaranteeing big profits for the clubs. Until 2003 the Love Parade and the associated Love Week were the most prominent examples of international club tourism. Even without the profits of the Love Week, however, the new club scene is financially well situated. Most clubs now have long-term rent contracts and are richly equipped with the latest sound systems, with, for example, the club Berghain named as “Best Club in the World” in 2009 by the British magazine *DJ-Mag*. The scene is now even more international, considering the number of expat musicians living here, most prominently Richie Hawtin. Yet without the media event of the Love Parade, this new scene remains relatively unknown.

The diary of a typical club-week frames the book’s analyses and assists in presenting the mood of the new underground, which is Rapp’s second point of focus. The club-week begins on a Wednesday and ends (perhaps) the following Monday. Interviews with various protagonists – DJs, youth hostel managers, rave mothers, and club owners – enliven Rapp’s analysis. Rapp’s journalistic reports are a diverse mix of cultural, sociological, and economic analysis. His third point of focus is the entanglement of the scene in international networks. He emphasizes this interdependence through the new economy of club tourism, made possible by bargain airlines. Rapp writes, “The Easyjet-raver is the definitive subject of European nightlife of the zero years. He came, without a grand announcement, and has developed into the most important subcultural figure of the present” (p.78-9). Rapp explains how the combination of new bargain airlines on the one hand, and Berlin’s economic crash after the optimism of the nineties, on the other, allowed for the emergence of this new European subject. The Easyjet-raver could both fly on the cheap and visit an exceptionally cheap city. Indeed, the failure of Berlin’s plans for an economic revolution following reunification meant that, compared to cities like London or Paris, Berlin remains a bizarrely inexpensive metropolis. In short, what has been bad for Berlin business has been good for the international underground.

The first three foci of Rapp’s analysis offer some considerable new insights. However, as an overview of the musical history of the Berlin scene the book is less helpful. Rapp’s investigation remains bound up with the minimal scene. What for him counts as the Berlin Sound of the zero years was actually only one of many trends. He does not explain that minimal only came to prominence in Berlin during the middle of the decade through the establishment of labels like Perlon and M_nus. Rapp dedicates an entire chapter to the Minimal DJ/Producer Ricardo Villalobos (p.110-120), stating plainly “he is the biggest DJ-star of the zero years” (p.110). With that he contradicts his earlier claim that the new scene has no stars, rather “the Berlin clubs and their public” (p.12). Indeed, throughout the book, Rapp repeatedly mentions Villalobos so much that he outs himself as a swooning fan and minimal-groupie. He thereby utilizes a trend that had already been purposefully hyped by him and other journalists. Rapp even includes a Berlin Discography, which is a personal collection of minimal hits – beginning in 2003 with, again, a Villalobos album. The book thus tends towards the genre of a travel guide and advertisement for minimal, instead of analyzing it as part of Berlin techno.

Furthermore, an examination of the electro and electroclash trends is missing. For his topic, an analysis precisely of these scenes was needed because they played important roles in the first tourist waves during the zero years. If Rapp decided Villalobos was necessary to include, then an important “star” is missing: namely, Ellen Allien and her label B:Pitch Control. She is important precisely because of Rapp’s focus on the Easyjet-raver and club tourism. She has presented herself as a Berlin-DJ unlike any other, with her albums *Stadtkind* (trans: *City-Child*) and *Berlinette* and, even more strikingly, through her DVD club-tour-guide of Berlin for the *Time Out* series. Indeed, the material of her musical productions is a crossover between techno and tourism. Other equally influential stars during the zero years can also be listed: for example, Monika Kruse, T.Raumschmiere and Anja Schneider, not to mention Paul van Dyk, whose continued international stardom resulted in him receiving the *Landesverdienstorden* (Land Order of Merit) from Berlin in 2006.

To be sure, Rapp does examine other branches of the techno scene. There are interesting interviews addressing new media and technology with producers Robert Henke, Philipp Sollmann and Ben Clock. Rapp analyzes the debates regarding urban renewal with the example of Media Spree, a construction project that could have a major impact on the new club mile. He also examines new online forum *restrealitaet.de* and internet fanzine *Resident Adviser*. Nevertheless, one would expect a more diverse analysis of the many styles from electro to breakcore that make up the Berlin sound. Finally, the role of media needs more attention. Many pop-cultural festivals and institutions have moved to Berlin – print media like *Spex* and *Groove*, the music channels VIVA and MTV, the popkomm, etc. – a trend that has profited to the detriment of Cologne, which in many respects was the pop media center of Germany until 2000. Such gaps demonstrate that Rapp’s attempt to combine a personal diary with cultural analysis is not as successful as he perhaps wished. Rapp loses himself in self-absorbed scene life and gossip. Too much club jargon and name-dropping takes place, thus making some of the book comprehensible only to insiders.

Despite these faults, the book offers an important update on Berlin techno history. The literature and media that defined the popular understanding of German techno was published more than ten years ago. The following titles appeared in the decisive year 1998: Simon Reynolds’ *Energy Flash*, Rainald Goetz’s *Rave*, Iara Lee’s documentary *Modulations* and Tom Tykwer’s *Run Lola Run*. Perhaps the most internationally well-known German book on electronic dance music, Ulf Poschardt’s *DJ Culture*, appeared even earlier, in 1995. For those whose knowledge of German techno is based on such literature, Rapp’s *Lost and Sound* will be a helpful update. It makes clear that the history of techno is not over, and Rapp is correct that the zero years are an important period in this history.

Psychedelic White: Goa Trance and the Viscosity of Race. Arun Saldanha.
 Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
 ISBN: 0816649936 (hardcover) 0816649944 (paperback)
 RRP: US\$60.00 (hardcover), US\$20 (paperback)
 DOI: 10.12801/1947-5403.2009.01.01.13

ANTHONY D'ANDREA

University of Limerick (Ireland), University of Chicago (USA)

Chromatic Variation in Ethnographic Analysis

Reflecting a Deleuzian turn in social geography, *Psychedelic White: Goa Trance and the Viscosity of Race* examines rave tourism in Goa through the prism of a materialist theory of race and racial segregation. Well-written, erudite and thought-provoking, the book opens with the observation that the mostly white psytrance music fans (also known as Goa freaks) arrive at parties only after Indian tourists have departed. The author Arun Saldanha, a Belgian geographer of Indian descent, expresses his discontentment, "I felt this segregation", and adds, "This book wants to find out what sort of theoretical vocabulary is necessary to make sense of racism when it is not supposed to be there." (p.5). The basic question it seeks to answer then is, "what makes white bodies stick together?" According to Saldanha, racial segregation is a basic effect from the ethnic profile and profiling of white psytrance fans and backpackers in Goa.

The book provides a philosophically robust retheorization of race. Opposing social constructionism, Saldanha seeks to develop a materialist theory of race, centered on the Deleuzian concept of viscosity, defined as resistance to flow and perforation. Considered for its corporeality rather than representation, race is organized like a machinic assemblage, as instantiated in ritual experiences of the psytrance collective in Goa. Saldanha demonstrates familiarity with a wide range of philosophical work, including not only Deleuze and Guattari, but also Levinas, Goffman and Fanon, among other thinkers in feminism and poststructuralism. *Psychedelic White* has gained attention among geographers of race, as a number of book reviews have praised Saldanha's innovative theorization while also questioning its internal consistency at a philosophical level. This review, instead, highlights how this philosophical hypertrophy has created analytical problems in the study of psytrance.

Within a complex formulation of race materialism, *Psychedelic White* discusses the more proximate notion of "psychedelics", which Saldanha defines as the dynamics of self-transformation enabled by travel, drugs and music. Yet, these techniques are examined in relation to the racial background of Westerners. In a series of refined reviews on the history of countercultures, orientalism, hippies and drugs, Saldanha refers to the creative needs of "white men", a term repeated ad nauseam throughout the first third of the book. This bias could have been moderated in the light of the anthropological truism that a wide variety of societies, and not only the white West, nurtures more or less complicated relationships with such techniques and devices of self-transformation. As such, the reader may be left wondering how whiteness and psychedelics are causally determined, and, if so, what is the significance and implication that Saldanha attempts to address.

Based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork conducted in northern Goa between 1996 and 2002 (and again in 2006), the empirical horizon of *Psychedelic White* is constrained within a sharp racial angle, as organized across the book in three analytical sites: the shared experiences of Goa freaks, the visual economy of rave tourism, and the politics of location in Goa. The philosophical work so interestingly advanced by Saldanha results in a racial determinism under which psytrance formations are forcefully examined. Political economy is reduced to “phenotype and foreignness” (p.163). “Goa freaks are microfascists” (p. 89). The book is permeated with “depressing conclusions”, as Saldanha well puts it, following anecdotal analyses of white exploitation, segregation and indifference toward Indians. Psytrance formations, Saldanha argues, have paradoxically thickened rather than transcended racial segregation in Goa. The book is thus marked by a predominantly negative assessment of countercultural formations in India. In Deleuzian words, *Psychedelic White* focuses on the lines of death traced by this war machine, and says virtually nothing about the emancipatory potential of chromatic variation. Some readers may even find that the impressive philosophical apparatus delivered by Saldanha tends to lose connection with the empirical reality it seeks to explain.

Indeed, psytrance freaks are eccentric individuals, often elitist, arrogant and troubled. In a decadent and dystopic scene such as northern Goa psytrance, most freaks and backpackers would likely feel more comfortable interacting with phenotypically similar peoples, whereas some individuals may express racist behavior at times. However, the argument that psytrance in Goa is essentially reaffirmed through racial segregation would require stronger empirical testing and support. Incredibly, important factual questions were overlooked in the book. Firstly, psytrance insiders reject tourists – regardless of race – whether in Goa or elsewhere. Spatial segregation between insiders and outsiders is a basic feature of electronic dance scenes around the world, and Goa is no different, for its members regularly attend other scenes interlinked across global countercultural circuits. In this connection, trance (ecstatic) experiences generally occur with no essential reference to issues of racial identity or segregation. Internal bickering is pervasive within white psytrance subgroups in Goa (p.152), and clashes involving national, generational and class difference are at least as common as those predicated on race. Moreover, several Indians (and other not exactly white individuals) occupy significant positions in the scene, as DJs, party promoters and well-off diasporic fans. Mating relationships across racial groups are common, even against India’s backdrop of patriarchy and sexual harassment, considering white females’ frequent complaints about native males. Furthermore, Saldanha does not account for the violence, exploitation and segregation that some Indians explicitly perpetrate against third-world immigrants working in Goa. Likewise, he neglects that white travelers’ attitude of indifference towards Indians is more often than not a Simmelian response to the overwhelming demand incessantly posed by street vendors, beggars and sexual predators across India. All in all, EDM studies indicate that class, gender and sexual orientation, alongside race, are all important factors in the makeup of electronic dance scenes. The psytrance scene in Goa embodies complex multiplicities that cannot be easily explained by means of reduction to a single analytical category alone.

As an ethnographic study, the claim that psytrance identity is founded on racial segregation is perplexing, particularly when argued on basis of empirically grounded evidence. No significant discrepancies can be found by cross-checking my fieldwork with Saldanha’s ethnography *at the level of observed behaviors*. At a closer look, how-

ever, it becomes evident that Saldanha has neglected the cultural point-of-view of psytrance people. In fact, he explicitly states that their representations on transcending prejudice would have misled him; and that he would not have been able to understand white identity in Goa by approaching it discursively or psychologically (p.130). Instead, Saldanha chooses to observe their forms of sociability, at a distance, without ever addressing underlying meanings, intentions and desires. As such, the dismissal of native representations remits *Psychedelic White* to a pre-Geertzian moment, strangely resonating with classical British functional-structuralist anthropology. Not by accident, in both British and Deleuzian versions, subject interiorities become effects of larger social and material structures (machinic assemblages). As a possible remedy, what is the *meaning* of white bodies sticking together would have been a legitimate, even safer question. In other words, how problematic race actually is according to foreigners and natives in Goa would be a question that largely defines the social and explanatory pertinence of a theoretical framework.

However, Goa freaks and Goan villagers rarely speak in *Psychedelic White*. In fact, they become largely incidental against the philosophical apparatus weaved across the book. In its appendix, Saldanha correctly notes how difficult it is to interview psytrance freaks in Goa, even though he seemed to possess a remarkable ability to socialize with them. Conversely, Saldanha provides a list of interviewees including a relative majority of Indian authorities, intellectuals, journalists and activists, all of whom have been opposed to rave tourism. More widely, in a world of complexities, ethnographers ought to be supple in finding ways to engage, translate and interpret examined ways of life, initially in their own terms of sociability and intelligibility. Concurring with Saldanha, the locus of truth, as Bourdieu puts it, rarely resides at the surface level of discursive representations alone. However, they provide critical clues towards a persuasive account that is both intellectually compelling and empirically accurate. In dismissing the voice of Goa freaks, Saldanha has paradoxically incurred an act of segregation by only allowing his own representations to speak and prevail.

Ultimately, the book fails to address a critical counter-hypothesis: psytrance fans reject Indian tourists and beggars because they egregiously disrupt psytrance practices. “Trance parties” are ritual practices of a quasi-sacred nature by which scene insiders can ritually express their anger and opposition to the modern self, morality and system. Logically, those who don’t appear to share or respect the meanings entwined in such countercultural practices and ideologies are deemed unwelcome outsiders. In this light, the book’s main premise – that white freaks reject Indian tourists *because* of their race – is empirically flawed. Consequently, its main argument – that foreign countercultural formations in India are essentially reproduced on the basis of racial segregation – must be questioned. The fact that these are “mostly white” formations struggling with native and alien majorities does not suffice to define them as founded, identified or reinforced by racial segregation. Segregation and racism are not the same.

Psychedelic White must be commended for its philosophical ingenuity. Nonetheless, in order to do justice to Saldanha’s exquisite contribution to race studies, the book would have benefited from a more nuanced and cautious analysis of psytrance formations empirically and methodologically. It would have been more persuasive by better calibrating its racial determinism vis-à-vis the multiple, complex and polysemous injunctions of global psytrance locally, and particularly by means of a more direct dialogue with the scholarship on psytrance, travel and tourism in India and Southeast Asia. In battling against social constructionism, *Psychedelic White* has lost sight of the empirical dimension it sought to explain, along with alternative philosophical explana-

tions. In their double folding, war machines are defined both for their lines of flight and death, as well as for their viscosity and chromatic variation. How to account for race as chromatic variation would have opened up a whole new range of empirical and theoretical possibilities. All along, the fixity of psytrance in northern Goa (as in elsewhere) can be assessed as an ambivalent tactic of resistance for keeping the space of creative experimentation, one that is continuously threatened and reinforced by external formations, linkages, and power/knowledge arrangements.

Global Nomads: Techno and New Age as Transnational Countercultures in Ibiza and Goa. Anthony D'Andrea. London and New York, Routledge, 2007
 ISBN: 041542013X (hard) 0203962656 (ebook) 978-0-415-55376-4 (paper)
 RRP: \$132 (hardbound), \$28 (paperback)
 DOI: 10.12801/1947-5403.2009.01.01.14

CHARLES DE LEDESMA

University of East London (UK)

Anthony D'Andrea is a “transnationalist” researcher who has set out to explore the fissures and contradictions of twenty first century globalisation. *Global Nomads* is the end product of six years of field work in the byways of alternative cultures, and covers multiple visits to India and Ibiza. It is a singular work and an indispensable contribution to a growing body of accessible academia on the curvature of globalisation, critical studies and counter cultures. As well it is an immensely readable ethnography of the lives, passion, habits and thoughts of overlapping sets of “expressive expatriates”, as D'Andrea calls them. This label loosely corrals a colourful cast including DJs at techno trance parties, traders in textiles at the hippie markets of Goa and Ibiza, artists, digital developers and international drug dealers.

D'Andrea defines “expressive expatriate” early on. “As a counterpoint in migration studies, the terms ‘expressive’ and ‘expatriate’ depart with the predominantly utilitarian and essentialized understanding of the mobile subject” (p.7). Also weaving through the book is the concept, the global (neo) nomad, which D'Andrea suggests is the philosophic base of the expressive expatriate. “Many have abandoned metropolitan centres where they enjoyed a favourable material situation” (p.8). But, D'Andrea cautions, his expressive, neo-nomadic, alternative subjects are not free of all the trapping of contemporary life nor do they wish to be. He applies Foucault's concept of bio power and judges that these peripheral, although not marginal, social vectors ride in tandem with neo liberal regimes. In the hands of a less radical, committed writer, a cynical edge – end of 1960s countercultural traditions; decimation of 1980s' rave culture energies; creeping commoditisation of the global trade in goods and artefacts – could undermine such an analysis. But, thankfully, not; D'Andrea remains steadfast in spirit and calling. *Global Nomads* is a resolutely optimistic work, theoretically fluent and empirically fascinating.

Divided into five main parts, D'Andrea sets out his stall admirably in the opening chapter, “Neo-nomadic”, which adds to the multiple voices in the Graham St John-

edited collection, *Rave Culture and Religion*, and in various work from Robin Sylvan and Paul Heelas, by connecting new spiritualities and techno dance culture with globalization. Before nailing neo-nomadic as his defining meta-concept, D'Andrea helpfully provides a short overview of critical work on the nomadic per se; using Deluge's famous epithet, "the nomad does not move" to clarify that the neo nomadic need be understood as a state of mind and being, not merely a state of movement.

D'Andrea begins his field report in La Isla Blanca – Ibiza – with a colourful narrative spotlighting various neo-nomadic lifestyles encountered on the island during peak season. There is yoga teacher Nora, clothes retailer Rochelle, new age body practices seeker Barbara and island long-stay Kirk who, like D'Andrea, is an anthropologist. A rather bucolic scenario builds of creative types running a busy clock of night time events, markets, yoga and "bio dance" classes, although the picture clouds in the ethnography's next section with an exploration of the hippie and club scenes in the island's resort, San Antonio. D'Andrea charts how conflicts develop in the increasingly commoditised spaces of package tourist density. He less successfully summarises field work conducted at the island's largest nightclub, Privilege, offering few surprises beyond a rather functional listing of expected details and views. We learn too of the antics of the highly extrovert couple who ran club night Manumission, and how they 'performed live' sex acts during the night. D'Andrea is revealing on the club industry economy, its army of bohemian workers who work the club season, and the party promoters behind club profitability. Beyond its crass commerciality, he identifies that there are some opportunities where "exceptional parties were able to break through the nationalism that underlies mainstream clubbing in Ibiza and become exciting references in the global club scene" (p.107).

Before heading for north Goa, where sound system parties most resolutely weren't in this mould, D'Andrea stops off at point 2 in his transnational research, neo-spiritual guru Osho's "International Meditation Resort" in Pune, south India. D'Andrea is refreshing on this ashram turned "new age resort" as he holds centre ground between the Osho supporters, sannyasins, and Osho bashers, although the tone is largely one of a distanced disappointment with the commercial direction taken. This section ends with a reminder of the translocal connections between Ibiza, Pune and Goa, three key nodes in a neo-nomadic, counter cultural lifestyle pattern which may take in goods trading, new age therapies, mind altering drug bouts and all night dancing at beachside full moon trance parties.

It is Goa that D'Andrea travels to next and it is here that *Global Nomads* truly finds its pace and footing. After setting the scene with a brief history of the tiny, once Portuguese-held, south India enclave, and Western interest in it, D'Andrea launches into a field report on "rebel sannyasins", trance party promoters; backpackers after sun, parties and drugs; mornings sipping lattes and smoking hash chillums in the famous cafe, the German bakery, and attempts at elucidating information from the traveller freaks and hippy elders at the centre of the action. In an interesting ethnographic aside he finds that "at a methodological level, the politicized silence of freaks constituted a challenge to conventional methods of data collection" (p.189). But D'Andrea, in exchanges parallel to those of Arun Saldanha in *Psychedelic White*, beavers away patiently and soon finds his subjects full of views and stories. One, Bojan, believes India to be a land "that is female, round, and the karma yoga instantaneous" (p.193).

Later in this masterly field report, D'Andrea reaches a ravishing climax. The sub section "The Techno trance assemblage: aesthetics of power and limit-experience" remains the strongest, most ethically powerful and revealing writing on the psyche-

delic trance party to date, certainly in an academic context, if not anywhere. So many nights and mornings spent searching for and, on occasions, finding, techno trance parties, has fully rubbed off on D'Andrea and, unlike in the more extensive *Psychedelic White*, the reader feels fully and disarmingly there, propelled into the vortex of chromatically varied digital beats aiming to upset and re-constitute subjectivities. Locating the trance dance, first as a limit-experience which can 'tear the subject from itself' (p.209), the writing collapses key elements – music, technology, raver psychology, bodily gesture and dance and potent chemical enhancers – into enchanting, hypnotic and critically consistent prose. "Trance parties have been designed to engender a magic aura that remits participants into a cosmic temporality" (p.210). D'Andrea's use here of the Deleuze and Guattarian concept "assemblage" is judicious, not overstated, using a nomadological spirit to generate potency and mystique in the writing; attempting, successfully, to enact in words the process it sets out to describe.

No matter, really, that there are one or two factual gaffs in this section. D'Andrea, for example, states that the 1980s were a fallow period in the north Goa party scene, picking up strength in the early 1990s. Not so. DJs Goa Gil and Laurent played stupendous, night-long, tranceified electronic mixes at numerous parties in those years, with events attended by many hundreds of revellers. A stylistic weakness is the occasional repetition of phrases and sentences as D'Andrea unveils his conceptual framework across various chapters. But this is no surprise given a keenness for publishing finished segments as the research project elapses. D'Andrea has simply had a number of go's at re-defining and re-casting his ideas. This doesn't detract at all from a book which is thoughtfully crafted, stimulating, syntactically evocative and critically valuable.

D'Andrea's study of neo-nomadism in expressive expatriates, his turn-of-the-century field work in multiple nodes where alternative cultures still flourish and, particularly, his sharp dissection of the trance party cosmos, is invaluable material for students of, well, just about any discipline you can imagine which touches ostensibly on globalization, cultural anthropology, neo-religious studies, cultural studies and popular music. Feel free to add to the list.

Breakcore: Identity and Interaction on Peer-to-Peer. Andrew Whelan. Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. 337 pp.
 ISBN: 1847186572
 \$60 US (hardcover)
 DOI: 10.12801/1947-5403.2009.01.01.15

EMILY D. FERRIGNO
 Yale University (USA)

The study of virtual music communities is a fascinating and timely endeavor, given the widespread phenomenon of "bedroom production". Musical subcultures are often shaped by and mediated through online means, such as forums, chatrooms and list-

servs. Virtual environments provide vital space in which musical practitioners share creative methods of musical production, define genre, hold aesthetic debates and socialize. Virtual ethnographies are not yet numerous, and scholars interested in identity, gender and race as they exist in the virtual realm would do well to consult Andrew Whelan's study.

Whelan's book is an informative examination of virtual community from the chatrooms of Soulseek, a file-sharing application used by electronic dance music producers. Whelan focuses on users involved in breakcore, a breakbeat-centered genre influenced by jungle, industrial, and hardcore techno. Whelan draws upon the theories and practices of his discipline (sociology), and illustrates concepts with robust sections of ethnographically-culled data, working with a 2100-page transcription of conversational text from Soulseek chatrooms over a period of six months, as well as e-mail interviews with producers. Whelan's analytical focal point is chatroom dialogue. He uses textual analysis to illustrate how the individuals in his study define themselves, how chatroom dialogue creates and ascribes musical meaning, and how Soulseek users employ discursive cues to identify "insiders" and "outsiders."

In the introductory chapter, as well as in the concluding section of the book, Whelan engages with the "rationalization/democratization" debate, a discourse central to his study. He confronts the hypothesis that technology serves to inhibit and ultimately dehumanize music, which stands in opposition to the utopian vision of technology as an agent of social change, allowing the voices of socially excluded groups to be heard (p.24). Whelan provides a useful introduction to the peer-to-peer environment and file sharing protocol, and examines the MP3 file (the medium of exchange) as a "sociocultural fetish". Whelan describes how "rip crews" encode new music into MP3 format, "tag" the files, and distribute/disseminate them to the larger community. Each MP3 is accompanied by an "nfo" file, which identifies the MP3 and its creator. These files are written in a source code that allows the creator to insert jokes, illustrations, and the like into the nfo. Several examples of nfo files are provided in the text.

Whelan focuses on three practices that he describes as "shibboleths," or "terms indicative of social location or origin, the use of which therefore serves to distinguish between groups" (p.14). These are the use of 1) *nigga/nigger* (Chapter 5); 2) *gay/ghey* (Chapter 7), and 3) the "Amen break" (Chapter 8), a widely sampled drum break from The Winstons' 1969 hit, "Amen Brother". Whelan provides lengthy analyses of textual exchanges in Soulseek chat rooms, in which social boundaries are defined and redefined, and multiple conversations occur at once.

The use of the terms "*nigga/nigger*" is presented in the context of "ritual insult exchange," as well as flatly racist discourse. As Whelan explains, "the term [*nigga*] is embedded within a matrix of ethnic and subcultural identity politics, and as such tells us much about the orientations of those who deploy it" (p.144). He bases his analysis on the use of "nigga" as a style-marker common among US youth, a characterization which is perhaps too superficial to provide the reader with sufficient context for virtual analysis. The verbal presence of "*nigga/nigger*" in American society is extremely complex, and quite different in its "real world" application, as opposed to the anonymous environment of virtual chatrooms. Anonymity presents significant difficulties for social analysis, in that age, race, nationality, and even (spoken) English language fluency of chatroom users may be unknown.

The second shibboleth "*gay/ghey*" is also examined within the context of chatroom discourse. Whelan bases his analysis on the concept of "gay" as not only homo-

sexual, but also encompassing characteristics and ideals rejected by hegemonic masculinity (p.182). Noting that, “the ‘joking’ exploration of the semantics of gay is a popular trope among young men” (p.200), Whelan presents several examples of chatroom dialogue related to anal eroticism. He then explains the use of “*gbey*” in the chatrooms to describe something “lame” or “generic” (the homosexual connotation orthographically removed). The discussion concludes with an examination of masculinity, a frequent theme in Whelan’s study, given the scarcity of participants identifying themselves as female in breakcore chatrooms.

In Chapter Eight, “Junglist,” Whelan begins to focus on the music around which his study is centered. He discusses the aesthetics of breakcore via chatroom discourse, addressing polarities such as old school/new school and mainstream/underground. Whelan regards the “Amen break” as a third shibboleth, a time-honored (and well-worn) sample used in electronic dance music. However, he also highlights the debate within the breakcore community as to whether the use of the Amen is creative, progressive, or even interesting. This problematizes the classification of the Amen as a shibboleth; while the Amen is well known in the breakcore community, its utilization is not a given. Perhaps, then, the Amen is a shibboleth used to distinguish subgroups from one another, rather than distinguishing the entire breakcore community from outsiders. Whelan’s book ends with a lengthy “journey through the media” (p.319), covering a range of topics from sampling ethics and branding, to utopian visions of peer-to-peer culture.

Whelan characterizes his book as a “collage,” and, in fact, his theoretical discussions are dense, at times unfocused and difficult to follow. Whelan’s own ideas are often obscured by his prose style and frequent quotation of others’ work. This also limits the accessibility of the text to specialists, which can be a serious shortcoming when writing to an interdisciplinary audience. In addition, Whelan’s engagement with musical analysis is not a strong point of the book. He describes the Amen break as embodying “polyrhythmic hesitancy,” the snares “sketching an idiosyncratic, irregular pattern”. Like many drum breaks, the Amen is characterized by syncopation, a basic feature of funk drumming—hardly idiosyncratic, and, in fact, very “regular”. The reader is not given a particularly clear description of what breakcore and its related genres *sound like* (beyond the discography). Whelan does participate in the breakcore scene (as a chatroom member and perhaps a producer), but the reader is not privy to this information. The inclusion of reflexive ethnography would have added necessary transparency to his study, for when the reader is well acquainted with the author, ethnographic authority and agenda are made clear, and thus can become secondary to the voices of the observed.

Despite these shortcomings, Whelan makes a rigorous contribution to the study of musical culture in the digital age. He delves into an examination of the sometimes crude nature of chatroom discourse, thoughtfully employing textual analysis to unpack the complexities of race, gender and social interaction. Whelan’s discussion of the Internet, society and identity is enlightening. He introduces the term “networked individualism” in which “identity is organised and expressed through consumption practices” (p.319), whereby participatory and collaborative consumption are encouraged, in opposition to the model of passive consumption set up by the music industry (p.305). This observation suggests that (somewhat problematically) Whelan embraces a utopian (and democratic) vision of peer-to-peer file sharing, in which recorded sound is free and open to all—collected, utilized, manipulated and most importantly, shared.

The High Life: Club Kids, Harm and Drug Policy (Qualitative Studies in Crime and Justice Volume 2). Dina Perrone. Monsey (NY), Criminal Justice Press, 2009.

ISBN: 978-1-881798-46-0

RRP: \$35 (paperback)

DOI: 10.12801/1947-5403.2009.01.01.16

LUCY GIBSON

University of Manchester (UK)

Dina Perrone's study of "club kids" based in New York City presents an illuminating analysis of the cultural and situational context in which club drugs are used. While most literature on drug use tends to focus on users from impoverished communities and the harm they experience, *The High Life* challenges the typical drug user stereotype by showing the "hidden" deviant behaviour of seemingly conformist, affluent and well-educated young adults. Perrone opposes America's war on drugs and argues that the focus of drugs policy should shift from a criminal justice approach (abstinence-only strategy) to a more balanced response that includes principles from both the cultural and health fields and focuses on the well-being and lifestyles of drug users.

The book begins by outlining two assumed flaws in America's current drug war: that drug users have a pathology, which is the only factor leading to the "drug problem"; and that all illegal drug use leads to harm. Perrone challenges these assumptions by asserting that the "...culture and capital of the user and the social environment in which the drugs are used greatly influence use, abuse, and harm" (p.2). Chapter One builds on the introduction by providing an overview of how Perrone met the club kids and offering initial insights into their lives. Moreover, the chapter describes the ethnographic field methods deployed to study the participants' use of club drugs such as MDMA, methamphetamine (crystal meth), ketamine and GHB. The book is based on Perrone's observations, discussion with club kids during fifteen months of fieldwork and interviews with eighteen club kids aged between 22 and 33.

The subsequent chapters are separated into two parts: (I) Club Kids' Dance Culture and (II) Drug Use among the Club Kids. The first part examines the club kids as a subcultural group by assessing how they correspond to subculture literature and earlier drug-using subcultural groups such as hippies, mods and skinheads. The book demonstrates that, in contrast to traditional subcultural groups, club kids do not wish to reject the dominant culture, but rather, they adhere to the consumerist norms of conventional American society. Club kid culture and the clubbing experience are explored using theories of consumption, commercialisation and globalisation, and by situating the club kids within postmodern theories of the nature of late capitalism. Throughout Part One, Perrone neatly uses the club kids' perceptions of clubbing, its importance and the suitability of using drugs in club settings to illustrate the fantastical, "carnavalesque" and commodified nature of contemporary club culture.

The second part of the book explores the club kids' patterns of drug use. Perrone shows how club kids maintain their jobs and uphold family responsibilities whilst using relatively large quantities of drugs. Through their social and economic privileges, the club kids are able to avoid criminal justice sanctions and limit harm. The author employs a theoretical framework, which refers and adds to the prior work of Norman

Zinberg, to describe how factors (drug, set, setting, timing and capital) in club kids' lives allow controlled and safe drug use. Perrone expands on Zinberg's (1984) framework of "drug, set and setting" by adding supplementary concepts of timing and capital drawn from primary data. Timing and capital include both club kids' resources and stages or transitions in the life course. The author demonstrates how a drug's properties, the setting in which the drug is used, the user's mood (set), resources (capital) and phase of life-trajectory (timing), shape drug using practices and impact on the relationship between drugs and harm. Perrone uses rich and detailed quotations from her respondents to demonstrate how club kids negotiate drug use to minimise harm and avoid criminal justice penalties, while also revealing the larger contradictions in club kids' lives.

Chapter Seven provides a final discussion of the study's findings and offers a wider examination of their implications for drug policy in the U.S. Perrone pertinently argues that "...Socially and economically privileged drug users, such as the club kids, are better equipped to manage their clubbing and drug-using behaviors than are less privileged users...The war on drugs is disproportionately a war on poor people. Thus, White, middle-class users are more capable of concealing their drug use and escaping public and police detection than their lower-class counterparts" (p.205). For Perrone, the War on Drugs has been lost and future policy should de-stigmatise users and help to minimise the harm resulting from drug use rather than concentrate on arrest or punishment.

Perrone's study offers a convincing account of the social, cultural and environmental factors that shape drug use among club kids. The book provides a fascinating insight into club kids' lives and how regular drug users are able to occupy conventional social roles and sustain typical social relationships. However, two minor criticisms remain. Although numerous references to relevant work are evident throughout the book, the statement "...cocaine can benefit those with asthma" (p.130) is not supported by academic evidence and readers may want to know the basis for such a claim. Moreover, recent post-subcultural literature (e.g. Bennett 1999; Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004) has been omitted from the discussion. Perrone states that club kids are not a subculture in the traditional sense of the term. Yet, she continues to use this term to describe the club kids as a distinct social group.

That aside, the book offers a stimulating analysis of club kids' drug use by highlighting the reasons for clubbing, and exploring club kids' motivations, and cultural practices. Perrone provides a thought-provoking discussion that challenges the majority of literature on drug use. The study is invaluable for students of electronic dance music culture as it questions current failing policy in the U.S. and offers new ways of conceptualising the culture and context of drug use.

References

- Bennett, Andy. 1999. Subcultures or Neo-tribes? Rethinking the Relationship Between Youth, Style and Musical Taste. *Sociology*, 33: 599-617.
- Bennett, Andy and Kahn-Harris, Keith. 2004. *After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture*. London: Palgrave.
- Zinberg, Norman. 1984. *Drug, Set, and Setting: The Basis for Controlled Intoxicant Use*. New Haven: Yale University Press.