Remixology: Tracing the Dub Diaspora

Paul Sullivan

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Paul Sullivan opens his *Remixology: Tracing the Dub Diaspora* by writing that "dub is a genre and a process", as he describes the intersection of Afrodiasporic and Rastafari soundsystem culture with bass-heavy music styles as "ethereal, mystical, conceptual, fluid, avant-garde, raw, unstable, provocative, postmodern, disruptive, heavyweight, political, enigmatic . . ." (2014: 7). Dub resonates as an echo through all of these signs, though *Remixology* tends to provide a lightweight treatment of the complex of metaphors Sullivan commences with. Less an intensive cultural study, even less so indulging in the kind of rich poetic license one would expect from a music journalist such as David Toop, Sullivan's make-do journalistic approach combines first-hand interviews with a repackaging of well-travelled tales to tell a rich narrative of dub's musical and cultural development, focusing on its producers, soundsystem operators, selectors and DJs. Avoiding the usual rounds of critique that gives cultural studies its edge—there is very little here on gender/sexuality, power/violence, colonialism/race or nationalism/politics—and leaving unremarked the sometimes provocative and interesting statements that arise in interviews, Sullivan nonetheless provides a gentle-enough grand narrative of dub's outward spread from Jamaica. In the process Sullivan lays the groundwork for naming the "dub diaspora" as a transnational network based upon postcolonial migrancy and the dissemination—through copying, remixing and versioning—of dub studio and performance practices.

Remixology proves a readable and insightful treatment of dub for lay readers and studious scholars alike, beginning with a smart retelling of dub's origins in Jamaica, where Sullivan weaves the history of soundsystem culture into the invention of reggae and lover's

rock, providing a convincing case for the evolution of dub as a creative studio practice of "versioning" reggae tracks where "the engineer could also be an artist in his own right" (2014: 47). Though there is nothing particularly new to be gleaned here for readers of Michael Veal (2007), Sullivan's at-hand interviews provide fresh takes upon the early years—from the 1970s through dancehall—by crafting a series of mini-biopics focused on individual practitioners such as Lee "Scratch" Perry ("keenly experimental" (2014: 41)), King Tubby ("polite, fairly reserved, and clean-cut" (2014: 45)) and Scientist (who created "a clean, minimal style of dub that proved highly popular" (2014: 53)). Though these biopics of these and other producers often rely upon secondary sources, they nonetheless provide a concise and efficient insight into a practitioner's background, style and creative process. Sullivan details how such producers came to dub music by articulating the social milieu of studio production—the individual quirks and social relationships that gave rise to various alliances and fall-outs—to an overview of various producers' primary recorded works and how their style differed from (or borrowed from) the work of others. Thus, for example, Sullivan smartly describes how "Tubby worked with a mixing board and vocals, while Perry constantly worked on live rhythms and compositions" (2014: 48). Such effortless wordcraft—that defines an important methodological and sonic distinction in dub music production—encapsulates Sullivan's style.

Though at times I had wanted *Remixology* to delve deeper into the sociopolitical complexes of Afrodiasporic identity, history and religion that strike through dub cultures, the attention of the text to both an accessible level of diction and argument is an achievement that cultural studies scholars, lost in the quagmire of postmodern verbiage, would be well-advised to learn from. That said, *Remixology* felt oddly lacking—given its journalistic strokes—in its descriptive exploration of dub as a musical sounding. An attempt to evoke in words what dub sounds like, particularly when addressing specific tracks cited in the text, remained strangely absent. Nor are the albums themselves evaluated from the perspective of a music critic; instead, a sparse but repetitive deployment of jazz-style journalistic clichés abound in describing its practitioners—the "legendary", "monumental", and so on. Likewise, Sullivan cultivates a particular (if not peculiar) perspective upon the undefined distinction of the "underground"—to which Perry apparently "went" to after the mysterious Black Ark studio fire (2014: 50)—to the "mainstream", the latter to which UK ambient dub house act The Orb apparently belongs to (2014: 90) (indeed, The Orb are not otherwise discussed in *Remixology*, which appears something of a strange omission).

Moving on from the demise of dub in Jamaica, Sullivan emphasises its influence upon New York hip-hop, not particularly as a bass riddim spatialised sound (which is less prevalent in most hip-hop, to be sure), but as a studio practice and structure of soundsystem performance, noting that "both grew out of impoverished urban areas as a means of self-expression" (2014: 97) (and to which we might add: "self-empowerment"). One of the more intriguing moments here is when Sullivan unpacks DJ Kool Herc, who, though of Jamaican descent, has in interviews denied that Jamaican dee-jaying informed

his "pioneering" approach (2014: 99). Here Sullivan draws upon eyewitness accounts of Herc's toasting style as well as dub and reggae musical selection to suggest otherwise, while also resampling an interview with Jeff Chang (2005) where Herc pays respect to his roots in Jamaica's Trenchtown. *Remixology* is at its most critical when questioning the reliability of self-mythologising narrative, insofar as Sullivan remains suspicious as to how memory is often recontextualised by performers for the service of other values (such as appearing "authentically" American).

Keeping to NYC, Sullivan draws attention to DJ Spooky and the coining of the dub-and-dread influenced hip-hop genre of "illbient", though only over the course of a scant two and a half pages (2014: 102–04). Though Sullivan mentions Spooky's Jamaican roots, it would have been interesting to hear more about the creative connection between Spooky, British-Guyanese producer Mad Professor, and Canada's Twilight Circus Dub Soundsystem (Ryan Moore, originally from Vancouver, BC, who now lives in the Netherlands), precisely because of their overlapping series of collaborations with Spooky's *Dubtometry* (2003). Indeed, the connections forged through Spooky's album are more or less synecdoche to the entire thesis of the "dub diaspora"—a provocative thetic slogan of which much more needs to be said. More also needs to be said concerning the dub diaspora in a later chapter on dub techno. Though Sullivan mentions how the Berlin club Tresor was "heavily-involved in the formative Detroit-Berlin connection" behind (dub) techno, he doesn't explicitly reflect upon how the "dub diaspora" was manifested in, as well as was already a constitutive aspect of, this connection (2014: 169). Other opportunities are also missed to further posit the musical imaginary and means of the dub diaspora; for example, while Sullivan is attentive to the work of Basic Channel, Maurizio (Moritz von Oswald), Tikiman (Paul St. Hilaire, whom Toronto's Deadbeat later collaborates with) and the Chain Reaction (sub)label—a worthy feat considering its scant academic attention—there is oddly enough no mention of Mike Ink's label Studio One. Ink's minimalist rhythmic structures have yet to be analysed as drawing from their more famous Jamaican namesake. These critiques of the conceptual rigor of "dub diaspora" aside, Sullivan provides a useful discussion of dub techno, describing Basic Channel's nine-record M-series as defining "the dub-techno blueprint" (2014: 171) while conducting informative conversations with both Oswald and Stefan Betke (a.k.a. Pole).

Sullivan's narrative is at its most detailed when it builds into the profound impact dub has had upon British music, from digidub and post-punk to "UK rap and the dubcore continuum" (2014: 116). *Remixology* shines in Sullivan's evidently more familiar surroundings of ragga jungle, drum 'n' bass, 2-step, garage, grime and dubstep, where he traces in some detail the early import of dub music, immigrant musicians and soundsystem performance to the UK during the 1970s. Sullivan outlines how reggae and dub soundsystem and production styles mutated into post-punk, '80s dancehall, '90s electronic music and millenial dubstep developments, providing one of the more efficient reviews of the UK dub continuum. Particular attention is paid to the influence of dub soundsystems—such as Lewisham's Saxon Studio International and Coxsone Outernational, and their complex series of named

allegiances to their Jamaican counterparts—providing a sociohistorical context that is not always present in other chapters. Of particular interest too is the focus on dubstep; Mala's quote that "Britain isn't Jamaica but it's still an island, with an island mentality" (in Sullivan 2014: 142) resonates with the larger patterns of postcolonial migrancy and cultural adaptation at work in the British context that likewise remains marked by its "island" posture of structural racism. While Sullivan is attentive to how racism has factored into the British Jamaican cultural context, he is not as critically aware as to how his own prose often implicitly replicates the paradigm of race itself; for example, he describes how "employment and housing were denied to [Jamaican immigrants] because of their race" (2014: 57)—rather than the critical and important understanding that discrimination takes place *because of racism* (or more accurately here: *because of white supremacy*). Sullivan pays particular attention to the year 1976, when Eric Clapton's infamous on-stage "drunken rant" to "stop Britain from becoming a black colony" mirrored similar "racist diatribes" from Conservative MP Enoch Powell that likewise reflected the IMF-imposed welfare cuts under the Labour government (2014: 71).

While *Remixology* is not primarily concerned with audience responses or the transactional and circuitous relations between dancefloors, music, performers and technologies, I was pleased to note that Sullivan grants some quasi-agency to the technological objects and devices that led to dub's characteristic bass-space of reverb and echo. Sullivan notes some equipment throughout, from the defining use of the Soundcraft mixing board and "Roland Space Echo drum machine" (not a drum machine, of note, but a reverb tape-machine) (2014: 42), through to the use of the Sony Playstation in producing grime (2014: 137) and the creative repurposing of misfunctioning technologies to produce glitch dub and techno, notably Pole's infamously broken Waldorf Pole filter (2014: 175). However, there is little description of what these devices do, how they work, and how they are creatively disabused to make novel and unworldly sound. Media studies and production studies scholars will find many signposts here, but the in-depth unpacking will have to be furthered elsewhere.

At the very close of *Remixology*, Sullivan outlines a debate between contemporary dub practitioners over the authenticity of digital versus analogue dub studio practices (2014: 214–21). Canada's dub techno artisan Deadbeat (a.k.a. Scott Montieth), who is a professional music software designer, argues that digital effects today are "near one-to-one copies" in "software form" of "nearly every piece of vintage hardware today known to man" (2014: 217), while the likes of Clive Chin, who apparently was "lured" back into the studio to combat the rise of digitally-produced dub, argues that digital "just doesn't sound as pure and warm as analogue" (in Sullivan 2014: 218). Deadbeat nonetheless does not champion the digital as superseding the analogue, as he makes the point that what matters isn't so much the effects themselves, but what is fed into them (2014: 217). An attentive media scholar would perhaps suggest that the technicity of the object does in fact *matter*, at the material level, in the composition of sound but also the reciprocal and physical relation of the body/self to technicity, but unfortunately *Remixology* does not enter into a meditation upon these interesting positions.

Rewinding *Remixology's* highlights, one only wishes Sullivan had entered into some interpretative forays over the very meaning of dub, both as a sounding and to its practitioners. The Pop Group's Mark Stewart, for example, says that he sees "dub as a skeleton key to reality" (in Sullivan 2014: 151), suggesting a technico-ontological explication of reverb space and delayed time through resounding sound, while at the same time, Sullivan discusses dub as a "tool to transport listeners to the past" (2014: 9). How this occurs or what this means is unclear. In his introduction, Sullivan also claims that *Remixology* "looks at dub's role as a 'meta-virus'" (2014: 11), but precisely what this means, other than a meta-metaphor, and how it applies to the dissemination of dub, or the structure of the book itself (which is linear enough in a traditional biopic formulae, and not as a viral spread of replicants—expect no quasi-Deleuzean dreaming here) remains as unclear in the conclusion as it is posited in the introduction. Of course such metaphors are welcome concept probes for further thought—in McLuhan's sense—though one wonders why, ultimately, the book is called "*Remixology*", given that the signifier sees little use inside the book's pages nor significant definition in relation to dub. Insofar as the book is a discourse (*logos*) on the remix, it isn't, really—*Remixology* is more concerned with the history and worldwide spread of dub music, its practice of versionings, its significant personages and locales of influences, and its forging of what might be called a "diaspora" of sonic and cultural networks, moreso than any particular discourse upon the "remix" as such. Nonetheless, *Remixology* remains a must-read for any scholar of Afrodiasporic music culture, and certainly for any enthusiast of dub, be they a lay reader or academe deep into the haunted echoes of bass culture—though with the caveat that, if the latter, its claims should be listened to with a critical ear, attentive to what is left out of its empty spaces as much as to what resounds within.

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Sonic Bodies: Reggae Sound Systems, Performance Techniques and Ways of Knowing

Julian Henriques

New York: Continuum, 2011.
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Sonic Bodies: Reggae Sounds Systems, Performance Techniques and Ways of Knowing by Julian Henriques offers a fresh and illuminating exploration of Jamaican auditory culture through the reggae sound system, making a significant contribution to an aspect of Caribbean and Jamaican culture that is in dire need of interrogation and epistemological grounding. The book's originality stems from Henriques' formulation of thinking through sound: "this can only be expressed through corporeal practices of thought, rather than the more commonplace discursive line of thought" (xviiii). This approach, coupled with what he calls "sonic dominance", allows Henriques to distance himself from the established and growing literature on Jamaican music culture. Henriques explains "sonic dominance" as a total immersion of its participants in the phenomenon known as the reggae sound system, with its vibration frequencies connecting with every fibre of the participants' beings. *Sonic Bodies,* according to the author, is the incarnation of the sound system crew, the audience, the innate knowledge and the pulsating response to the bass culture of Jamaica. Relying on a bricolage approach, Henriques employs his theoretical model, "thinking through sound", fusing it with disparate disciplines such as Greek philosophy, geometry and grammar, sound theory and postcolonial theory in his exploration of the sound system. These theoretical considerations are operationalized through "a dynamic model for both raising questions about the world as distinct from the way the trope of the visual image is often used to settle them" (xviii).

The book is divided into five distinct sections. "Preamble: Thinking Through Sound" introduces the concepts of sonic dominance, sonic bodies and thinking through sound. Thinking through sound is offered as an alternative to normative behaviour of thinking through images, hence Henriques attempts to position the auditory senses at the forefront of theoretical interrogations. The study is located within the realms of the discipline of cultural studies with its multidisciplinary approaches. A brief literature review acknowledges noted work that informs the book, and some biographical information about the author is also gleaned here.

"Introduction: Practising and Theorising Sounding" begins with Chapter One that exposes the traditions of orality, music practice and sonic architecture that establish the bass culture of Jamaica. The proposition of thinking through sound is elaborated on, and Henriques then outlines the notion that all sonic bodies are configured in these vibrations of bass culture. He proposes that these vibrations can be categorised into three distinctive wavebands. Firstly, they are material, a by-product of the sound system itself and the equipment and its phonography; secondly, there is the corporeal waveband encompassing the crew's performance and the crowd response; and the final waveband relates to the sociocultural—the interaction, behaviour, traditions, style and cultural practices within the dancehall environ. It describes the feeling and understanding of participants of the dancehall scene. The "vibes" are a way of making sense of the sociological and philosophical underpinnings of the dancehall while in a sense valorising the ordinary but deeply rooted activities and traditions of urban dwellers in Kingston's inner city and suburban enclaves. Other theoretical approaches are considered in relation to this "vibrational waveband model". Henriques manages with skilful facility to engage in a serious theoretical discourse on the reggae sound system and its attendant socio-political, cultural, technological, postcolonial and musicological trajectories.

Chapter Two extends the reader's understanding of the vibrations of the waveband as periodic movements that are only facilitated through three elements. The elements prioritized by Henriques are: the medium for dissemination; the instrument for making the noise; and the techniques for using the instrument. A critical feature of this "propagation model" is that the three elements are triangulated, that is, "they are present together at the same time" (39). Elaborating on the elements, Henriques continues his theoretical foundation and proposes that the media of soundings is split between the "material vibrations of a speaker cone" (xxxiii), as well as the sociocultural realities of the music scene and space. The instrument of sounding would include the sound system equipment embedded in the material waveband and the mortal embodiment of the sound system players situated in the sociocultural waveband. The techniques of sounding located in the sociocultural waveband include "the crew's kinetic skilled performance skills, such as the selector's dextrous skills on the turntables" (xxxiii).

"Part One: The Audio Engineer and the Material Waveband" commences with Chapter Three, in which the important but hitherto ignored role of the engineer of the reggae sound system takes centre stage. Considerations are made for the pre-performance rituals of what Henriques calls "compensation". This is explained as the process for fine-tuning and adjusting the auditory dimensions of the sound system, which is a critical imperative in the sound world. This iterative exercise is achieved through the three procedures of manipulating the electronic components to achieve that ideal sound quality; then monitoring the subsequent sonic output; and finally evaluating the "auditory qualities" of "balance", "weight" and "attack", which is vernacular technical-speak utilised in the sound world. The final exercise of evaluation invariably leads to compensation, as the phonographic output is never constant. This trait explains the recursive nature of this performance trope. Henriques gets to the

heart of a phenomenon with this exposition and it is clear that his extensive fieldwork achieves thick descriptive quality with Geertzian precision.

Chapter Four establishes a historiography of sound system development through the prism of engineering and the tradition of apprenticeship. This technical journey starts with Headly Jones, the creator of the modern day sound system. The engineer is then given a unique position of being everywhere and nowhere in the context of all three wavebands of sounding. A trajectory is also laid out for the journey of a skilled engineer, from apprenticeship to master craftsman status. Henriques again expands the possibilities by engaging in a theoretical and methodological juxtaposition of ideas from a variety of scholarship (Stern, Chavannes, Gates, Levin) which he dubs "sonic engineering".

"Part Two: The Selector and the Corporeal Waveband" starts with Chapter Five, titled "Juggling". The selector as a skilled technician and performer is interrogated: "This includes building the vibes or intensities of the session, and 'steering' the crowd along the procession of the night" (xxxiv). The skilled performance techniques of the selector are outlined in detail, which continues the thick descriptive trajectory of the book. Techniques such as "bass drop", "the touch", "mixing" or "juggling", and "pull ups" are offered as unique skill sets of these re-performance specialists within the three vibrational wavebands of sounding. In Chapter Six the selector's skill is juxtaposed with Jamaican studio techniques to examine these processes in a broader context of auditory techniques and their role in the sound world. Additionally, a comparative analysis of the two concludes that "to the extent that there are parallels between the selector's and engineer's performance, it is taken as evidence for the common characteristics of the different wavebands of sounding that the propagation model describes" (171).

"Part Three: The MC and Sociocultural Waveband" contains the last three chapters and the epilogue "Dubwise". The role of the MC is elaborated in Chapter Seven. Utilising several performance styles, lyrical techniques and personal traits, the MC encapsulates a "distinctive sociocultural waveband to the sounding of the session" (xxxv). Chapter Eight, "Rhetoric and the Logic of Practice", is the most epistemologically challenging portion of the book. Here, Henriques laboriously enunciates a theoretical model, steeped in Greek philosophy, of the MC and his trope of voicing. This formulation is further complicated by the introduction of Bourdieu's "logic of practice" and the esoteric Pythagorean concept of harmonics by Hans Kasyser. Henriques' arguments and postulations are both infuriatingly dense and at the same time absolutely stimulating. Depending on your position, one wonder if this was necessary at all or an essential and engaging treatise. In Chapter Nine, the "sonic logos" is introduced, which is articulated in a manner that leaves the reader trying to unravel this complex set of thoughts. "Dubwise" is an attempt to address some of the weaknesses inherent in the inquiry and summarises the journey of thinking through sound with sonic bodies within an environment of sonic dominance.

What are the main contributions of the volume to auditory scholarship? *Sonic Bodies* manages to achieve Henriques' intentions of departing from the established literature and presents a theoretically fresh approach to the study of Jamaican sound system culture. In so

doing, he demonstrates a critical link to not only the theory-to-praxis trajectory but also privileges an alternative epistemology, which shuns language notation and representation. However, it is done at times in what would be best described as an extremely cumbersome and unnecessary detailed language style that leaves the reader intermittently frustrated. *Sonic Bodies* manages to elevate the conversation about the Jamaican sound system culture from its usual sociocultural and political orientations to an auditory exploration of sound culture and theory. One of the end results of this novel approach is it poses a challenge to a reliance on visual cues of word, images and discourse, which is commonplace. While the bass culture of Jamaican society, the skilled technique and performance of MC/ selector, and the sonic architecture of the Jamaican dancehall are all effectively explored, Henriques fails to link his wavebands to any serious sociocultural notions of reception and production within the context of Jamaican music production aesthetics. Despite this, Henriques demonstrates an extensive understanding of the literature of auditory theory, cultural studies and philosophy which is very enriching for a variety of disciplines, and has added an outstanding cross-/multi-disciplinary work that will be used by scholars from varying disciplinary and theoretical orientations.

The Routledge Companion to Remix Studies

Eduardo Navas, Owen Gallagher and xtine burrough (eds.)

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Co-editors Eduardo Navas, Owen Gallagher and xtine burrough describe remix studies as "the result of a long process of rich cultural production directly informed by computing technology" (1), a study area that has developed from 1990s remix culture that can be linked to internet and copyright activism. In a nutshell, the remix is "based on the act of using preexisting materials to create something new as desired by any creator––from amateurs to professionals" (1). As such, remix culture can be understood as a set of cultural practices that depend on the reproduction and subsequent recontextualisation of images, sound and text. In particular, in the era of digital cloning and subsequent morphing of existing, authored materials, the legal aspects of private copyright ownership versus the populist idea of shared communal goods has created a space of complex cultural conflict that provides a rich set of starting points for critical debate.

"Remix", as a word, came into existence in relation to a musical practice that developed during the emergence of underground disco and hip-hop cultures in New York during the 1970s, when three-minute songs were not lasting long enough to engage dancers, who gave preference to rhythm sections over melody. Although the role of the DJ has shifted over the years, at that time DJs could be regarded as performers who used mass-produced consumer items, in this case music recordings, as narrative elements to produce a unique dialogue with dancers. In response to the need for strong danceable grooves, hip-hop DJs extended rhythmical break sections of pop records by interchanging two identical vinyl recordings between two turntables. Meanwhile, for the disco dance floor, some DJs would overlay instrumental recordings with *a cappella* vocals to produce a new "third record" (Rietveld 2011), currently understood as a "mash-up". Since the mid-70s, professional club DJs began to adopt the role of remixer, extending and restructuring three-minute pop recordings into lengthy dance mixes in the recording studio, and producing special versions on reel-to-reel tape and 12-inch vinyl discs. Blurring the distinctions between music makers and music consumers, it was often via their experience as remixers that DJs turned into music producers.

In a parallel world, in the context of Jamaican reggae, dub emerged as a type of remix practice. When multi-track tape became available at the end of the 1960s, generic bass and drum tracks were produced that could be dubbed over by different singers, thereby keeping recording costs low. The practice of the dub was extended, however, when in the early 1970s sound engineers produced dub mixes for specific sound systems on unique acetate cuts, or dub plates, to compete for dance crowds; most functioned as backing for the "toasts" (a type of rap) of the DJ (the MC). Versioning and the echoic dub aesthetic became intertwined within this particular remix practice, eventually influencing dance producers in the post-disco scene.

Such recombinant processes have cross-fertilised across genres, especially within various forms of electronic dance music. The emergence of affordable digital samplers during the mid-1980s helped to enhance the music remix. Cutting and restructuring had so far been achieved by hand during the DJ set with vinyl records, and in the studio through splicing tape or by dubbing over multi-track recordings. Although the early samplers offered an audibly low sample rate, resulting in deterioration or loss of sound quality, and recording only small snippets of audio, here we can identify a beginning of digital "copy and paste" culture. During the early 1990s, this resulted in a number of legal test cases, in particular in the US against hip-hop recordings, and intense debate emerged regarding authorship, authenticity and the notion of shared cultural goods.

Although the word "remix" as well as the specific customization of sound recordings is rooted in the genealogy of electronic dance music, cultural practices that re-contextualize ready-mades can be found elsewhere, not least in the early 20th century avant-garde. Before the Second World War, collage techniques, photographic trickery and film editing were pushed to the edge of surrealism in Europe. In other political realms, photographic images were altered to suit the propaganda machines of repressive state regimes. Cut-up art

practices continued in literature, as some writers tried cutting up text to create unexpected meanings, and during the 1960s visual pop artists spliced up everyday popular imagery. In other words, the remix is not necessarily tied to digitalized creative practices or to the realm of musical production techniques.

Within remix studies as described in the collection under review, however, the aim is to investigate the aesthetic, ethical and political potential of digital media in particular. Within its 41 chapters, covering 515 pages, the scope of subjects in this reader is therefore wide. In terms of the remix in music, Kembrew McLeod makes a contribution on the history of sampling in the form of a collage of his interview material with music artists, as does Roy Christopher with a focus on musical memory in the digital age. Also of direct interest to the readership of *Dancecult* is an essay by Nate Harrison, by now famous for a viral YouTube video in which he explains the origin of the "Amen Break", a museme that is significant in electronic dance music genres based on breakbeats, such as electro and jungle; here Harrison traces the way in which his version of this narrative started out as an arts installation, and how its online video version was subsequently adopted, and even plagiarized, in unexpected ways.

Although it is not made explicit by the editors, the broad subject matter of this collection of essays demonstrates how music can effectively be used as a mode of cultural and conceptual analysis. A similar point is made by dub theorist Michael E. Veale (2007), with reference to the work of Paul Gilroy and other authors in the realm of black identity politics and music. And Henriques (2011) shows in the context of reggae sound systems that music is "a way of knowing", an idea that is partially inspired by Attali (1985), who regards noise as prophetic, heralding future social structures. From here, it may be possible to argue that the versioning and remix practices employed by dance DJs and remixers are echoed back and forth within current flows of remix culture, making this collection of essays in remix studies extended versions of what could, arguably, be understood as being part of the "dub diaspora".

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Groove: A Phenomenology of Rhythmic Nuance

Tiger C. Roholt

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A fundamental expression of Zen Buddhist theology, attributed to founding Patriarch Bodhidharma, states that a true understanding of enlightenment lays in a "special transmission outside the Scriptures" (Jap: *kyôge betsuden*), unwritten and unreasoned—inexpressible knowledge passed down the lineage. And though Tiger C. Roholt's *Groove: A Phenomenology of Rhythmic Nuance* is decidedly non-theological, it makes a vigorous and compelling case for its own kind of special transmission outside of the "scriptures" of Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological writings: kinesis over thesis, embodiment outside of analysis, the phenomenon of "groove" in music.

Taking on the subject after the "Husserlian Reduction" of the world-as-experienced (Carr 1967: 372) rather than the ontology of world-as-existing, Roholt examines the titular concept of *groove*, generally understood as a particularly influential drumbeat, or the feel of rhythms within songs (1). His argument is thus: that (1) grooves have a particular feeling, (2) they somehow involve the body, (3) are embodied and not theoretical/conceptual, and (4) to understand a groove is just to feel it. Groove is an essential part of many genres of music and, as Roholt reasons, an affective theory of groove will aid in better communication between musicians, critics, producers, and so on. In the attempt to do so, Roholt creates a type of informal Cartesian reversal: *sum ergo cognito* . . . I am *thus* I think, and therefore the body can know *a priori* through movement what the mind by its very nature seeks *a posteriori.*

This distinction is important because it allows Roholt to move forward from the canon(s) of philosophy in order to situate the reader in their own body, a truly remarkable feat for a philosopher, especially one who does not hold simultaneous graduate degrees in ethnomusicology or psychology. Choosing, and then moving on from, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of *motor-intentionality*, he both entertains the reader and upholds the top standards of philosophy (clarity and utility) without theoretical monism. As Merleau-Ponty himself stated in "Eye And Mind": "Science manipulates things and gives up living in them. It makes its own limited models of things; operating upon these indices or variables to effect whatever transformations *are permitted by their definition*. It comes face to face with the real world only at rare intervals" (1964: 159). To return the reader

to this real world then, Roholt creates particularly interesting taxometries, which I have organized into a tripartite form.

First of all, grooves (affective beats or rhythms) are classified by Roholt as outside writing (taxometric number 1): program notes, music theory, biography, ethnography, musical notation, dynamic markings; *outside the musical score*. He begins this process in Chapter One by giving an example of two different drum beats created for the Beatles' song "Love Me Do", comparing the differing accents and flow in the performance of session player Andy White's album version to band member Ringo Starr's 45 rpm version. In doing so, Roholt creates an initial reference for use throughout the rest of the book. Noting that their beats, when notated, look the same but sound different, this example reveals that what makes each unique are nuances of timing. But the problem here is that Roholt is using a drumbeat that does not fit another very common description of groove as a *quality of feeling*. Grooves have a feeling, but certain songs are "groovy", and have a genre-specific groove that has a greater (more intense) effect on listeners and dancers than "Love Me Do." A drummer can also groove (intransitive verb) and create a powerfully affective drumbeat, and "Love Me Do" is slightly *groovy* at best. Indeed, throughout the book, Roholt does not clearly define the differences between groove the noun, adjective, or intransitive verb, and much of what is defined as black music, for example, contains grooves of such impact that the light and airy beat of the Beatles' song pales in comparison. Roholt's later use of Sly and The Family Stone's "Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)" is such an example (113) and one could argue that his thesis would have been better served focusing on such grooves for their intensity and bodily affect. Also, Roholt uses the terms "pushing" and "pulling" as a way to describe the rhythmic tension that a great groove contains, when in actual fact the terms playing "behind" or "ahead" of the beat are more common (and I argue, *better*) metaphors amongst jazz musicians, for example. But, that being said, the idea of pushing and pulling foreshadows Roholt's conclusion in Chapter Four, and thus what occurs in or as a *result* of the process of pushing/pulling is the true key to his argument.

A positive aspect of referencing a notated drumbeat vs. personal nuance raises the issue of non-standard notation, in particular graphic scores. "To standardize notation is to standardize patterns of thought and the parameters of creativity" argues Sylvia Smith (in Sauer 2011: 11), and though Roholt immediately leaves the idea of the score behind, it could be argued that it is notation itself that needs to expand beyond the standard to somehow include the "outside body". In this sense then it is not what lies outside the scriptures but rather what the scriptures themselves need to address. The answer, in this case, may lay in part in the improvisation that accompanies many graphic scores, the potential for groove to occur spontaneously. Expanding notation thusly, the musical score is not static or predictable.

Secondly, (taxometric number 2): grooves are in the bodies of musicians and audiences. Using the drums (Roholt's main instrument) as an example, some movements are technically required while others are not but are valuable as part of facilitating the feel of a rhythm. This example provides a gateway to the study of non-rhythmic nuance as part of grooves, as woodwind instruments such as the Arabian *naï* flute require both grand and subtle

un-rhythmic movements (nodding) of the head to create vibrato, but are highly flexible and personal in the process of evoking powerful ecstasy (*tarab*) in the listener. As well, the player of a Noh theater flute (*nohkan*) can change the timbre and pitch of a note by merely waving or flicking a free finger near an open tone hole, a process open to great emotional potential even within its own acoustic indeterminacy. Noh also provides another excellent example of the marriage of emotion to rhythm in the syllables (*kakegoe*) shouted out by Noh drummers before or as certain beats are played. These cries and shouts play into the overall effect of the drama, putting the spectator in a state of semi-mystical ecstasy (*myôfû*)—an immediate essence of being which is "beyond all possibility of enunciating or explaining" (Arnold 1957: 86).

What matters are the feelings imbued/aroused in both the musician and audience, via an imprecise kinesiological act of shouting or instrumental fingering. Thus, musicians move their vocal chords and bodies intentionally; they direct their motor skills toward a specific end, what Merleau-Ponty calls *motor-intentionality*. The feel of a groove is the "affective dimension of the relevant motor-intentional movements" (105). As one "feels" their way along an icy sidewalk with their feet, our knowledge of ice is embodied as much as conceptual. Directing the *body*, rather than theoretical analysis, toward the experience and creation of groove provides the opportunity to experience a/the groove personally and non-cognitively understand its power with our hands, throat and feet.

Finally, Roholt's third taxometric is rather profound in that it opens up a field of study that has yet to be addressed: *there are specific things to feel and approaches to feeling them*. There is a way to live in the world with motor-intentionality that understands groove rather than acknowledges its conceptual veracity. This is because rhythmic nuances "push" and "pull" against the general pulse (fundamental tempo) of a song or beat, and thus motor-intentionally *creates a certain feeling of enjoyable bodily disequilibrium*, which is emphasized by movements of the body. This sense of disequilibrium—motor-intentionality towards *oscillating* balance and *pleasant unbalance*—is such a perfect description of what grooves feel like from both a drummer's and dancer's perspective, it is rather amazing that no one has yet discussed it at length. Rather than being unpleasant, bodily disequilibrium is a potent state found widespread in music and dance, routinely felt in any style of music in varying degrees depending upon the nature of the genre (pitched-based, percussion-based, etc.). Implied in this terminology too is that there can be taxonomies of *disequilibria*, differing in praxis and pedagogy; swing feel in jazz, the "stumbling," lilting flow of Turkish *aqsaq* rhythms, and the wonderfully disequilibric relationship between the handclaps and spoken syllables of South Indian *konnakkol*—without which the art of *solkattu* could not exist. An excellent example of this are the expanding and contracting *yatis*, augmented and reduced sets of syllables ("rhythmic design" Sankaran 2010: 30) that also create geometric patterns when transcribed (in essence, another kind of *graphic score*).

In this case, Roholt's work also creates a significant gateway into groove phenomenology amongst non-musicians, the groove-receiving body being as potent experientially as

the groove-creating body. Thus, taxonomies of general disequilibria after Roholt can be fruitfully situated in EDMC; further studies engendered by both academics and emerging groups of musical *disequilibrians*.

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Deviance and Risk on Holiday: An Ethnography of British Tourists in Ibiza

Daniel Briggs

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Drink, drugs, debauchery and deviance. Daniel Briggs offers an insightful ethnographic account of young working-class Brits on holiday in the Balearic party island of Ibiza. In what is a captivating and enjoyable read, the book is a welcomed ethnographic addition to the field—a field historically reliant on quantitative survey research and dominated by a public-health focus. Set in San Antonio's infamous drinking strip, the West End, and adopting a critical realist stance, Briggs follows a group of young working-class men from "Southside" as they indulge in unrestrained hedonism and excessive consumption. In doing so, what unfolds is a window into San Antonio's casualties, viewed as the victims of social

conditioning in what is essentially the dystopian antithesis to "living the dream".

Branded "the place to be" and located at the height of their "holiday career" after summers of sampling pre-packaged experiences in other European party resorts, Briggs' status-seeking, identity-shaping subjects come to Ibiza for the "Superclubs", the consumption of alcohol and illicit drugs and freedom from the world of work and responsibility. Briggs notes the centrality of leisure and the instrumentality of work in the lives of his research participants: "There seemed to be a general consensus in my sample that the role of work, if they had any, was to sustain leisure pursuits and that every opportunity in their youth had to be seized to celebrate the moment before either responsibility and/or old age started to interfere" (54).

However, in reality Briggs' research participants "can't really afford to go [to the Superclubs] so end up most nights on the West End" (8). Wrapped in an ideological blanket of market capitalism and "hyperconsumption", critically Briggs suggests that visitors to the White Isle engage in inauthentic, "structurally conditioned" (3) experiences or what he terms "unfreedom". Yet, by painting Ibiza-goers as passive victims of consumerism, Briggs fails to empower the consumer and in turn suggests that freedom is illusory and young consumers are culturally hypnotised by the ideology of hyperconsumption with little or no choice or resistance. Limited consideration is given to the discerning consumer or the potential of consumers to negotiate risk and self-regulate and moderate their behaviour. In stripping the agency of the working-class consumer, Briggs is in danger of homogenising working-class culture and sidelining cultural *difference*, a critique synonymous with subcultural theory's past.

Early on in the book Briggs draws our attention to the limitations of his work. Critically, Briggs' inattention to classed, ethnic and gendered diversity on the island misses the possibility of producing a number of *different* versions of Ibiza (Bhardwa and Moore 2014). This then reproduces the class-based stereotypes that plague both popular imagery and commentary on the island. Furthermore, the focus on *problematic* behaviours forfeits the *pleasures* associated with participation in dance music cultures (Bhardwa 2014).

In Chapter Two: The Flexible but Entirely Serious Methodology (and revisited in Chapter Eleven), Briggs outlines his position in the field as a participant observer and highlights the ethical dilemmas that accompany research with intoxicated participants. However, he notes that his transparency and reflexivity is not applauded by the academic community, who not only cast doubt on the academic worth of his research, but also remain uncomfortable with the study of pleasure. He writes, "If only I could convince some of the world's leading drug and alcohol journals which have outright rejected my work because they considered it to be 'unscientific' or have accused me of 'enjoying myself'" (208). As Briggs notes, the challenges of conducting research in dance settings raises much ethical debate—an important debate to have—and Briggs' research is pivotal in opening up the muted dialogue.

A timely strength of the book is Briggs' reference to the salient and perpetual role of social media and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter in the production of online narratives. The pre-"holiday hype" gathers pace online, and Facebook posts consisting of photos and status updates continue to provide "live" narratives once out in Ibiza, but post-Ibiza this content is also a valuable bank of online memories.

As an essential read for any post-rave culture scholar, the book taps into a wide range of themes from identity construction and dance music culture to consumerism and the study of leisure. Through the combined use of rich fieldwork description, in-situ research and humour, Briggs has produced a fantastic, thought-provoking and highly-recommended contribution to the field.

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