

I-RAVE:
DIGIPHRENIA'S TRANSFORMATION OF A
CULTURE

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Abstract

Over the last five years, electronic dance music culture, originally known as Rave¹ has made dramatic shifts due to the influence of new media. Technology is a key factor. The vast majority of current EDM (electronic dance music) event attendees have smartphones that take pictures and record the event, changing the original Rave concept of “living in the moment” into a photo op for a Facebook update. The use of technology has shifted the experience of Rave culture from a model based on face-to-face interactions on the dance floor to a model based on digital/online communication. The use of technology has redefined participation in Rave culture.

I am asking three fundamental questions: *Why do people gather at Raves? How have new media cellphone technologies and social networks like Facebook changed the way people interact at Raves? What is the impact of technology on Rave culture?*

In the era of smartphones and social networking, the use of technology in popular culture demands that we are seen in photos and videos uploaded to social network sites. Therefore, the opportunity to connect with strangers through dance, unity and love is replaced with a two-dimensional image. Simultaneously, corporations easily get hold of key elements of underground electronic dance music, which transforms Rave culture into a product.

¹ Rave: According to author Bill Brewster, the word “Rave” has been used in music culture since the 1950s. The word’s original meaning was to ‘live it up’ at whatever party or music gathering one attends. Rave was casually used in the 1960s Rock and Roll era, and eventually in the 80s and 90s electronic music scenes in Europe and the US.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: RANT AND RAVE

I am an insider of Rave culture approaching this topic from a dance practitioner's perspective. To be a *raver*² is to be a part of an entire culture. A personal definition of *Rave culture* is based on a genuine love for electronic dance music. This culture began in small, underground venues where people felt uninhibited and free to dance with complete strangers. This definition of *Rave* is a place of interpersonal and intrapersonal dance practice powered by the rhythms of electronic dance music.

Music: It Makes the People Come Together

What seems to attract people to Raves is the music, which includes genres such as *House*³, *Techno*⁴, *Trance*⁵, *Drum and Bass*⁶, *Breaks*⁷ and *DubStep*,⁸ as well as the musical elements such as the *bass-builds*,⁹ *breakdowns*,¹⁰ and *drops*¹¹ within electronic music

² Raver: A dancer, participant and practitioner of Rave culture. Ravers generally embody their own unique dance styles while living their life through the philosophy of PLUR: Peace, Love, Unity, and Respect.

³ House: A genre of electronic music based on 4/4 beat structure, with Disco rhythms. It is usually 120-130 beats per minute.

⁴ Techno: A genre of electronic music based on 4/4 beat structure, similar to house, but with more emphasis on industrial, synthesized tones, rhythms and melodies. It is usually between 120 and 150 beats per minute.

⁵ Trance: A genre of electronic music based on 4/4 best structure with ambient, synthesized rhythms, in addition to long builds and breakdowns, usually between 125 and 160 beats per minute.

⁶ Drum and Bass: A genre of electronic music based on syncopated beat structure with techno rhythms and melodies, sometimes sampling Hip Hop, reggae, dancehall and breaks rhythms as well.

⁷ Breaks: A genre of electronic music based loosely on the syncopated beat structure of Hip Hop and rhythms from electro and techno, and sometimes includes trance rhythms.

⁸ DubStep: A genre of electronic music with syncopated beats with Drum and Bass influences. Includes industrial synthesized rhythms and melodies. It is one of the newest genres of EDM.

⁹ Builds: The section of the piece of electronic music that starts with one layer of sounds, and progressively adds more layers of sounds with each measure.

¹⁰ Breakdowns: The section of a piece of electronic music where the sounds are decreased or subtracted in layers with the progression of each measure.

tracks.¹² The louder the bass, the deeper the vibrations, and the better it feels physically for the dancers, and the non-dancers.

Social Dynamics of Rave Culture

The Dancers:

To be a dancer at a Rave one can bob their head back and forth, shake their hips, or jump up and down with their hands in the air. However, dancers often choose to embody specific aesthetics of Rave dance techniques and styles that include *Liquid*, *Digits*, *House*, and *Shuffling* (each of these are defined in the glossary and discussed later in my fieldwork chapter) and older Hip Hop dance styles such as *B-boying*, *Popping*, *Tutting*, or any fusion of Hip Hop and Rave-style dances.

The Non-Dance Participants

The non-dance practitioners, who are still considered Ravers, consist of the following groups. *Trainspotters*¹³ are those at Raves who are musical enthusiasts who can identify the music genre, the DJ and producer of a *track* (or piece of electronic music), and the album on which it was released, and in some cases, the title number.

*Candy Kids*¹⁴ are those who display a particular fashion and aesthetic, which consists of baggy clothes with bright, multi-colored beads worn as bracelets, anklets, and armbands. *Newbies*, are people new to the scene. They initially may come to these events to simply observe the environment. Some newbies choose to be sober, some drink, and

¹¹ Drops: The point in the piece of electronic music where the first burst of bass is released.

¹² Tracks: Slang term for a vinyl record or CD or piece of electronic or Hip Hop music.

¹³ Trainspotters: Those who can hear an electronic music piece or track and know exactly who produced it, the specific genre, and its origins.

¹⁴ Candy Kids: Slang term used to describe Ravers in the mid-90s and early 2000s.

some engage in drug use. Some choose to dance, and some choose to stand or sit and watch. Everyone in the scene starts off as a newbie.

Promoters are the people who distribute flyers and advertise the event, either by word of mouth or with online digital posts. The *producers* of Raves orchestrate the production of the event from the beginning. They are usually responsible for contracting the DJs, the venue personnel, the managers, technical support team for setting up sound and lights, and anyone else who may facilitate the production of the event.

Managers are usually in charge of the venue where the Rave takes place. They oversee the process of setting up the sound and lights, work usually provided by *techies*, or those well versed in setting up electronic equipment. Managers also hire *security*, bouncers at the door, and any other staff to secure inside of the venue.

Drug *Dealers* (and undercover narcotics agents who arrest them) often attend Raves as well. Drugs commonly sold at Raves include ecstasy, cocaine, marijuana, LSD and psilocybin mushrooms. Several years ago ecstasy was the most popular drug at Raves. Based on my observations and interviews, today because of alcohol and energy drink vendors who sponsor the events, fewer people are taking ecstasy and more people are drinking instead (See page 46 of Edward Hickman interview).

The DJ

The DJ is the person who sets the mood, the tone, and the energy level of the Rave through his/her choice of music. Miko Franconi is a veteran Raver and DJ from Honolulu Hawai'i who states: "It's my job to feel out the crowd's energy, and play beats that make everyone groove in their own way, which creates the vibe on the dance floor," (Franconi Interview).

The Vibe

Vibe is one of the most important elements generated by the music, the DJ and the people attending a Rave. In order to illustrate what vibe in this context is and its importance to Rave culture, it is important to first discuss the concept of **PLUR**, which stands for **Peace, Love, Unity and Respect**. This term has been used in Rave culture since the early 1990s and it is believed that DJ Frankie Knuckles coined the term at one of his early New York Rave parties, *Storm*, in 1993 (glowsticking.com). When a fight that broke out, DJ Frankie Knuckles went on the microphone and stated: “If you don’t start showing some peace, love and unity I’ll break your fucking faces!” (glowsticking.com). PLUR was also derived from the original Zulu Nation Hip Hop credo: Peace, Love, Unity and Having Fun¹⁵.

Each of PLUR’s words refers to a particular aspect of a collective philosophy initially shared within the Rave community. According to my interviews with Rave culture practitioners, dancers and DJs, **Peace** refers to inner peace of the soul, and outer peace with the surrounding environment and the world. **Love** refers to loving yourself and all those around you, not just your family and loved ones, but your neighbors and strangers, especially those you meet at a Rave. **Unity** represents a collective togetherness/connectedness felt by all participants of the Rave: the dancers, the promoters, the DJs, the passer-byers, everyone. **Respect** includes yourself and all those around you and includes the ability to embrace those views and background that differ from yours. Ideally, there are no pre-judgments, only welcoming, positive, accepting attitudes. However, PLUR is only part of the vibe generated at Raves.

¹⁵ Zulu Nation: Afrika Bambaataa’s Hip Hop credo he created in the early 1980s.

Veteran Raver and Liquid dance innovator Edward Hickman attended his first Rave in New York City in the summer of 1994. He describes the original vibe at a Rave as “an un-vocalized natural extension of being and experiencing a creative environment with shamanistic overtones,” (Hickman Interview). The vibe, according to Hickman, is a spiritual connection felt between Rave attendees responding to the music.

Shane Talbot is an experienced Raver. He discusses his reflections and experiences with the vibe he felt at Raves in the late 1990s and early 2000s. He says:

I think the concept of Peace, Love, Unity, and Respect was definitely present and important, although I wouldn't call it completely ubiquitous. I think more importantly, the music itself unlocks a more primitive or primal connection to the world and people around you. If music indeed reflects the pulse of life, then when everyone synchronizes to the same rhythm, it becomes very easy to make that emotional connection (Shane Talbot, Interview).

And finally, Adam Kanekoa is an established Rave DJ from Hawai‘i who asserts that PLUR is only part of the vibe, and that it is the music that “fuels the people and feeds the vibe. It sets the mood and controls the energy of the Rave” (Kanekoa Interview). As a veteran DJ, Kanekoa has learned how to control the vibe through the music he plays.

Ecstasy

One of the main catalysts for the Rave experience, especially in its early days was the euphoric experience of *Ecstasy*, an amphetamine consisting of *MDMA* (methylenedioxymethamphetamine)¹⁶ the medical term for a chemical that alters the brain chemistry to release large amounts of *serotonin* (the neurochemical that regulates

¹⁶ <http://www.ask.com/question/what-does-mdma-stand-for>

pleasure in the brain). In his book *Altered State* author Mathew Collin describes the roots of Ecstasy use in underground music culture in Britain during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

At its heart was a concerted attempt to suspend normal transmission, if only for one night; to conjure from sound and chemistry, however briefly, a kind of utopia...Simultaneously, the exponential increase in recreational drug use in Britain from the late eighties onwards, which was catalyzed by Ecstasy – the ‘miracle pill,’ as some of us saw it back then – ensured that the mainstream of youth culture became intimately connected with illegal activity (Collin, viii).

The Use of Technology

The increased and persistent use of technology at Raves appears to be a reason for the culture’s fundamental shift from a participatory activity to a spectator model.

Technology has tremendous power for positive influence within Rave culture. For instance, non-Rave practitioners who want to learn the dance styles associated with Rave culture can easily learn dances in a neutral, safe setting, such as their own living room, because of online dance tutorials produced by Ravers. Also, the music that was once exclusively heard at these underground, often hard to find events, is now instantly available online. Additionally, the blending of dance styles is enabled. Popular culture critic Douglas Rushkoff explains this in terms of what he calls “DubStep dance.” He says:

It is a blending of the language of digital technology with that of the physical world, perhaps best exemplified by the most advanced form of Dubstep dancing, called glitch. Taking up where robot dancers and pop and lockers left off, glitch

dancers imitate the glitchy stutter of low-resolution video streaming over the Internet. Their movements imitate those of a dancer as rendered by the malfunctioning video device, complete with dropouts and stutters. (Ruskkoff, Chapter 2).

The physicality of what Ruskkoff calls Dubstep dancing is actually rooted in earlier forms of Hip Hop dance styles, such as Popping, Ticking, Tutting, Waving, and Isolating, in addition to newer styles of dance associated with Rave culture, i.e. Liquid and finger Tutting, often called Digits. However, his point has merit.

The Emergence of YouTube Tutorials

Dance styles are continually influenced by technology. In today's technologically dominated society, the music, dance styles, venue/dance space, and social dynamics of Rave culture are continuously evolving. The dance styles associated with Rave culture are changing, but they are no longer developing exclusively on the dance floors, they are also developing in the privacy of living rooms and dormitory rooms fueled by the availability of YouTube tutorials. Recently Raves are held in bigger spaces, and these larger venues attract larger crowds that ultimately leave less space to dance.

Consequently, dancing at home is a viable option. The Ravers who broadcast their dancing via YouTube or Facebook are providing innovations and fusions of dance styles from Hip Hop and Rave culture.

Emergence of new technologies and its effects on Rave culture

Tim Olaveson proposes that technology central to Rave culture's original roots include vinyl records, turntables, mixers, samplers, drum machines, and bass machines, which are central to the discussion of "the role and practices of the persons who

manipulate those media to produce a Rave,” (Olaveson, 17). From 1985-2006, this technology at Raves was what helped guide the creative energy and vibe among dancers. Interestingly, from 1985-2006, smartphones (because they were not invented yet) were not used at Raves, and therefore did not exert influence on a Raver’s conscious awareness of privacy and/or comfort level. In other words, they did not fear being filmed while dancing because the digital technology to share with a global audience simply was not present.

Edward Hickman suggests that Ravers in the early days displayed a lack of influence from the outside world on the dance floor that freed them to “create at will” and without fear of external judgment (Hickman Interview). Technology did not deter non-dancers from attending Raves either. Each attendee was free to express him or herself. However, with the introduction of the iPhone in 2007¹⁷, young people began recording themselves and others at underground music events. Posts exist on YouTube of Rave/EDM events from that same year. “All you have to do is go online and type in the phrase ‘Rave’ and then a date, and you’ll get dozens of video posts along with tags and discussions from people who were (and sometimes were not) at that Rave,” (Hickman Interview). While these video posts range in content and quality, they are all relevant to this discussion.

The Smartphone

Today, social media pressures individuals to check Facebook updates, text messages, e-mail, and talk on the phone, which discourages attendees at Raves to vibe with the people at the event. Consequently, they spend more time and energy on social

¹⁷ iPhone: According to their website, Apple Inc. released the iPhone in 2007.

networks. Many Ravers now prefer to dance privately at home instead of electronic dance music venues. The evidence is on the dance floor, or more precisely, off the dance floor. Today, fewer people are actually dancing, and more people are video capturing the evening's event or taking pictures of themselves posing at the Rave event. This shifts the experience of Rave, originally intended to be a night of spiritual dance practice to an evening of shared photo and video ops.

One theory behind this fundamental shift is articulated by Douglas Rushkoff in his book Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now. Rushkoff proposes that the average consumer of today's technology is in fact a slave to it. Because we are bombarded with instant messages, Facebook and Twitter updates, as well as 24/7 access to this online digital world we, as consumers, spend a lot of time in the digital world and less significant time in the analog, or physical, world. The following passage captures his argument.

She's at a bar on Manhattan's Upper East Side, but she seems oblivious to the boys and the music. Instead of engaging with those around her, she's scrolling through text messages on her phone, from friends at other parties across town. She needs to know if the event she's at is the event to be at, or whether something better is happening at that very moment, somewhere else. Sure enough, a blip on the tiny screen catches her interest, and in seconds her posse is in a cab headed for the East Village. She arrives at a seemingly identical party and decides it's 'the place to be,' yet instead of enjoying it, she turns her phone around, activates the camera, and proceeds to take pictures of herself and her friends for the next

hour—instantly uploading them for the world to see her in the moment. --- (From the preface of Present Shock).

From culture to product

Fieldwork took me to events throughout Honolulu that were sponsored by alcohol and energy drink vendors that hired DJs who played electronic music, where there appeared to be no emphasis on promoting creative dancing and vibing. These events instead were engineered to engage a large number of people through advertisements on Facebook and other social networks that manipulated images of popular DJs performing at previous events and the resulting crowd response. Images included the crowd moving in unison with their hands in the air swaying to the DJ's music. Others flashed still images of attendees posing for photos. The advertising and the promoters encouraged attendees to purchase large amounts of alcohol.

People spend energy and creativity at Rave-inspired events by using technology that does not contribute to the flow of vibing between dancing people at Raves. The following chapter will examine a cultural phenomenon that has developed as a result of people's increased use of digital technology.

CHAPTER 2: DIGIPHRENIA

This chapter discusses how technology has become the main ingredient for a person's decision-making processes and partially determines how much time he/she chooses to dance and where and if they interact at EDM events. Further material will link the introduction of social networking smartphones to Rushkoff's theory of digiphrenia with the proposition that they connect to the development of dance styles in Rave culture.

The emergence of digiphrenia

Douglas Rushkoff proposes an interesting theory regarding today's emerging social dynamics as a result of digital technology.

*By dividing our attention between our digital extensions, we sacrifice our connection to the truer present in which we are living. The tension between the faux present of digital bombardment and the true now of a coherently living human generates the second kind of present shock, what we're calling **digiphrenia** – **digi** for 'digital,' and **phrenia** for "disordered condition of mental activity," (Rushkoff, 4).*

Rushkoff notes that because we are constantly "bombarded" with social media updates and distracted from real world experiences, we often miss and/or neglect those experiences. Smartphones seem to have disrupted the creative energy necessary to create natural organic exchanges at a Rave because attendees seem to feel the need for instant gratification generated from a 'like' on Facebook. Therefore, the experience of a Rave practitioner or spectator can seemingly be reduced to a two-dimensional image or video clip.

“Digital technology is more like a still-life picture. A sample. It is frozen in time,” (Rushkoff 23). He goes on to say: “With digital technology, the environment is one of choice. We hop from choice to choice with no present at all,” (Rushkoff 23). In other words, time has little meaning here since the ability to navigate to any point in the past has been digitally recorded. Does this mean that we are constantly looking back, and not living in the moment? For researchers, practitioners and non-practitioners of Rave culture, some would say yes. Other researchers, practitioners and non-practitioners argue that this is today’s generation who are sampling, remixing and fusing elements of culture faster and more easily. Possibly, the opportunity to learn from a live person at a Rave, immerse oneself in the culture, live that lifestyle, and mold into a practitioner of the culture, is lost.

Conclusions

Culture and change manifest through people following others, sometimes one by one, and sometimes groups at a time. In Rave culture, music brings people together into a collective vibe and energy. Each participant enters as an individual with unique apprehensions, and may be transformed through the power of dance under the guidance of electronic music.

What has happened as a result of the immerging use of smartphone technology in Rave culture is a dichotomy of positive and negative implications for dance. On the positive side, smartphones and social networks like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have made accessibility to material much easier and instantaneous for those who wish to learn Rave dance styles in the privacy of their own homes. Anyone who desires to learn the dance styles can do so at their own pace and leisure. It is no longer necessary to travel

to an underground or mainstream music event to see and learn these dances associated with electronic music.

The use of smartphone technology seems to have disrupted the vibe that was once generated between dancers at Raves, causing a switch from Rave to EDM (electronic dance music) events. This has dramatically shifted the energy among Rave participants.

Today, it is digiphrenia, possibly compounded by a need to receive “Likes” on social networks, and to be seen and heard by people online creates a strong separation between the experience of Rave culture and its two-dimensional replacement with an Instagram pose or Facebook update. Consequently, it seems that the face-to-face human interaction necessary to generate creative vibe and energy that fuels dance in Rave culture is noticeably diminished.

Today, when people attend Rave-inspired events, the challenge is to be *present* in the moment. In order to preserve the culture’s roots, the challenge is to promote more human interaction through dance and socializing with other people at Raves, and spend less energy worrying about instant messaging, or digital extensions.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE, PERFORMANCE AND MEDIA REVIEW

Looking Through Diverse Lenses

The resources most relevant to this research on Rave culture and the media's influence include: literature in dance studies including critical analysis of Hip Hop, Rave, and media culture; performances along with dancer and practitioner interviews; and digital media (specifically media influences such as YouTube, smartphones and Facebook). The first literature category, dance studies, in the context of this topic refers to articles about many different dance styles associated with electronic dance music. The reviewed text discusses the roots, motivations, cultural implications, socioeconomic statuses, and overall settings (time and place) where each of these styles emerged.

Certain elements of Hip Hop culture that parallel Rave culture are discussed. Both cultures have been exposed by the media and have undergone fundamental shifts due to changing technology, for example the inclusion of direct sampling of old vinyl records to create a Hip Hop mix. Although electronic music is produced mainly on computers, sampling is also often used in the same fashion. For example, when listening to Paul Oakenfold's Trance remix of *Afrika Bambaataa's Planet Rock*,¹⁸ it is possible to hear the original rhythms of the *electro-breaks*¹⁹ within the track, but layered within and on top of it are newer electronic synthesized rhythms (specifically trance), which create an entirely new sound. This is one example of a DJ/producer using new technology to transform an older song (and experience) into a new one.

¹⁸ Afrika Bambaataa: A DJ, MC, and Hip Hop legend. Often referred to as The Godfather of Hip Hop. He produced a famous Hip Hop track/song called Planet Rock, which is one of the most sampled beats in history.

¹⁹ Electro-breaks: A subgenre of Hip Hop music from the 1980s that used synthesized melodies and syncopated beats to create a unique sound, often blended/mixed by DJs and producers with funk, soul and rock music.

Literature: History and Critical Analysis of Hip Hop Culture

The following texts represent testimonials and theories from authors, practitioners, scholars and dancers within Hip Hop culture. Reiland Rabaka's book The Hip Hop Movement¹ draws connections between rhythm and blues and Rock and Roll, while culturally Hip Hop is tied to the time period of the Civil Rights Movement. The Black Power Movement, and its early influences on Hip Hop culture, is discussed in detail through the lens of black popular music. One can clearly see from these readings that globalization is a common thread. The author writes that Hip Hop is a movement to express freedom through dance and socializing amongst friends and strangers of all backgrounds and cultures. Rave culture parallels Hip Hop's roots in its acceptance and embrace of difference.

In Can't Stop Won't Stop² author Jeff Chang traces the root influences of Hip Hop to young African American and Latinos in the Bronx, New York. First-hand accounts from the founders and practitioners of this culture make for a relevant and compelling manual for underground music culture. Since Hip Hop developed a generation before Rave, it seemed necessary to study its beginnings. This book discusses the roots of Hip Hop dance styles inspired by the DJ and vibe between dancers. Recently, Hip Hop dance styles have fused with dance styles in Rave culture.

In That's the Joint³, author Murray Forman looks deeply into what he calls "street authenticity--" what it means to be "real" in the world of Hip Hop. He discusses gender and racial issues, politics, and importantly, technology. The issue of authenticity in Hip Hop also applies to Rave culture. New media's influences have similar implications as to what constitutes authentic electronic dance music, and the associated dance styles.

Literature: History and Critical Analysis of Rave Culture

Last Night a DJ Saved My Life⁴ was published in 1999 and is an historical reference, both technologically and culturally, with interviews from DJs and promoters of Electronic Dance Music (EDM). Author Bill Brewster devotes entire chapters to the DJ's power to get people dancing. The author discusses influences from specific genres of music, including reggae and Hip Hop, EDM music, i.e. Techno, House, and Trance. Towards the end of the book, the author talks about the potential implications of the "superstar DJ" and his/her influence on EDM culture. This is relevant to ideas about DJ worship and the shift in Rave culture from a participatory model to a spectator model. In a way, this book foreshadows what developed in the 15 years since it was published.

Energy Flash⁵ focuses on what author Simon Reynolds dubs "generation ecstasy." Reynolds brings readers into the world of the Rave from an insider's perspective. It is clear that Reynolds was a practitioner of the culture and was an avid user of the Rave drug MDMA, commonly known as ecstasy. In addition to being a music and cultural critic, Reynolds is an excellent example an articulate Raver who has chosen to share his stories in writing. Although Reynolds writes from a non-academic perspective he assists to bridge the gap between Rave practice and research.

Dan Sicko does a particularly good job defining techno music in his book Techno Rebels⁶. The author discusses techno's original roots and explores why it became popular in Europe in the 1980s underground Rave parties (the beginnings of Rave culture). Techno was the first electronic music genre to spawn an entire generation of Ravers and influence subsequent Rave dance styles. Techno had influences from Europe and the United States. Sicko also discusses the history of the Detroit music scene's contribution

to the development of techno. He argues that techno developed from what he calls the “collective dreaming” of the city of Detroit. This is relevant to discussions of vibing through collective/creative energy while dancing and socializing at Raves.

Mathew Collin draws the reader into the world of the Rave drug Ecstasy in his book Altered State⁷. The significance of this mind-altering substance on the scene cannot be stressed enough. On one hand, it provided many Ravers a chance to bond in ways they never thought possible. Often called “the hug drug,” for some it creates a perception devoid of all insecurities and evokes an overwhelming feeling of empathy, love and connectedness. On the other hand, the governmental/legal authorities and the medical community have deemed this powerful drug a threat to American youth. “Three separate pieces of legislation were introduced by the British government during the nineties in an attempt to contain the spread of Ecstasy culture; one of them even tried to outlaw electronic dance music, if it was played in certain circumstances. All of them were unsuccessful,” (Collin, ix).

Rick Snoman’s Dance Music Manual⁸ is a unique first-hand professional guide to electronic dance music written by a professional producer and DJ who actually experienced the culture himself. It has reputable content that provides validity to the importance of EDM culture and its development into a worldwide phenomenon. Snoman translates the language of EDM production to laymen’s terms so that anybody interested in learning about the genre can do so easily. Today, learning about electronic music and how to produce it is easier than ever, since online tutorials on how to produce the tracks and use music programs are readily available. This book is included because it shows that

the original roots of electronic music are online, making it possible to revitalize the culture at any time.

Literature: Thesis Papers on Rave Culture

Ashley Lynn Cordes's thesis paper entitled Rave Identity and Self-Reflexive Compartmentalization: An Exploration of Rituals and Beliefs of Contemporary Rave Culture⁹ is an excellent, current and relevant thesis devoted to identity in Rave culture. The paper focuses on rituals, practices, beliefs and identity, specifically within the Australian Rave scene. Cordes's interviews with practitioners reveal why they attend Raves and how they identify themselves. The author begins to open the discussion of technology's influences on the culture and the commercialization and commodification of the music and dance styles within. The author even suggests future studies be conducted on possible links between "commercialization and capitalist expansion" of Raves and its possible influences of Raver's beliefs and identity.

Tim Olaveson's thesis *Non-stop Ecstatic Dancing: An Ethnographic Study of Connectedness and the Rave Experience in Central Canada*¹⁰ is a 300-page document wherein the author explores first hand the Rave experience in Canada, specifically in cities like Toronto. Although the author stresses that the most effective methodology involved in the study of Rave culture is through experiencing the culture itself, the interviews provide in-depth experiences for the reader. Dancers and practitioners describe Ravers' sense of "connectedness," which is achieved through dance, occasional drug use, and the collective unity of the entire experience. Each chapter outlines vivid first-hand accounts that analyze elements of Rave culture, including the genres of electronic music and its history predating the development of Rave in the United States. The author admits

that writing about Rave culture is a big challenge because it is constantly shifting and changing, therefore he felt his thesis was “out of date” before he was finished writing it.

Deena Lesley Cox’s thesis is entitled Old School: A Rethinking of Subcultures Theory in the Context of Adult Ecstasy Users and Ravers in British Columbia.¹¹ This documents an often overlooked and underrepresented demographic: practitioners in their late 20s through late 40s. The author juxtaposes the media’s misleading portrayal of Ravers as predominantly teenagers with interviews of older Ravers who voice their “authenticity, intention and spirituality” from a more mature, adult perspective. The impact of this research may consequently shift the perceptions of outsiders, and the experience of insiders (along with the social dynamics).

Performance Text

Reading articles from the performance studies discipline also was influential. Performance studies scholar Dwight Conquergood, states that: “The constitutive liminality of performance studies lies in its capacity to bridge segregated and differently valued knowledge, drawing together legitimated as well as subjugated modes of inquiry,” (Conquergood, 151). Conquergood provides an essential lens through which to view this research. His article entitled *Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research*¹² captures the importance of what he calls differently valued knowledge. This article helped clarify positions and perspectives as a practitioner of the culture, and as a journalist and a scholar outside the culture.

In Halifu Osumare’s essay, *Global Breakdancing and the Intercultural Body*¹³ the author describes the vivid, first-hand accounts of breakdancers in their authentic environment: a cypher (circle of other dancers) in an underground Hip Hop nightclub.

Osumare makes a clear distinction between performance and performativity. She views dance performance “as a series of bodily enactments that bring conscious intent and purpose to the physical execution of rhythmically patterned movement,” (Osumare, 31). She elaborates by explaining that dance performance encompasses codified dance forms, gestures, and movement practices that “represent implicit sociocultural value,” (Osumare, 31). In contrast, performativity is the “unconscious” representation of dance, defined by “meaningful series of bodily postures, gestures and movements that implicitly signify and mark a sense of social identity or identities in everyday pedestrian activity,” (Osumare 31). Osumare uses this model to study Hip Hop dance culture, specifically breakdancing, in Hawai‘i.

Media Review: Literature: History and Critical Analysis of Old and New Media

Douglas Rushkoff’s Present Shock¹⁴ is a bold analysis of technology’s influence on today’s popular culture. His revolutionary concepts such as digiphrenia (the digital disordered condition of mental activity), and connections he makes between social dynamics and social networks (like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc.) help inform this research on technology’s influences on Rave culture.

Retromania¹⁵ by Simon Reynolds flips popular culture on its head as it examines our own fascination (or proclivities) of past popular culture. According to Reynolds, a society has an underlying tendency, need, and “addiction” to the past. Humanity craves things like reunion tours from bands seen decades prior, remixes of songs that are loved, and anything that brings a sense of nostalgia into our lives. The author asks the questions: “What happens when we run out of past? Are we heading toward a sort of cultural ecological catastrophe where the archival stream of pop history has been exhausted?”

(Reynolds, 3). The author makes a critical point that we are running out of ideas, and therefore the very definition of “originality” has shifted completely.

Documentaries

Hip Hop is based on the fundamental structure of call and response. Raves function in the same way, especially when it comes to dancing. Participants are engaged with each other non-verbally through movements powered by the rhythms of electronic dance music. Call and response is noted in interviews from the documentary *The Freshest Kids*¹⁶. In this film the founding fathers of breakdancing reveal breakdance history and developments. Also, a great deal of discussion is spent on the media’s negative impacts on the exposure of breakdancing.

*Delta Heavy*¹⁷ is a documentary that features superstar DJs Sasha and John Digweed. This film digs deep into the process of producing large electronic music events while maintaining true to the roots of Rave culture. This is one of the few available first-hand documentaries from a DJ’s perspective. This documentary reflects certain aesthetics of Rave culture’s roots as perpetuated by two big-name DJs in the summer of 2002, before smartphones entered the scene.

The majority of written works available on these genres are either how-to commentaries or blogs about these dance styles. Thankfully, film documentaries, YouTube clips, and primary sources (dancers who physically embody these styles) are available. In their online tutorial (the first of its kind) the members of the *Liquid Pop Collective*¹⁸ demonstrate the foundations of Liquid dancing and provide commentary on the proper execution of each technique. Such techniques include builds, splits, contouring, tracing, rails, and flow. It also demonstrates proper elbow placement, hand

distancing and speed control. This particular YouTube video influenced an entire generation of Liquid dancers and fusion Rave dance styles. The original video has over 117,000 YouTube hits (or views). There are also a dozen YouTube sectioned-off clips of the video, so one can see specific techniques or specific dancers, such as Eric Liquid Pop's solo, which has over 100,000 YouTube hits alone. One of the top comments under this video states: "This dude has been an inspiration for the art (of Liquid dancing) for the past six years. As a dancer, my heart goes out to this guy," (AlterFunktion, posted YouTube comment).

I interviewed Edward Hickman (AKA Fu Manchu), one of the original members of the *Liquid Pop Collective* on his experiences in the New York Rave scene, and asked why he chose to produce this video. He said: "At the time, we were just goofing around. We never thought it would get so popular," (Hickman Interview).

CHAPTER 4: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE ROOTS OF RAVE CULTURE

In this chapter the historical background and development of Rave culture is discussed. The first section touches on Disco and the Chicago gay underground music scene, particularly the early influences on the music and dance styles. The next section outlines the European influence of the Acid House scene during the mid 1980s. The following section describes the early Raves that developed in large cities across the United States. Next, the Midwest Rave community is discussed from a personal perspective. And finally, Rave in Honolulu Hawai‘i and the shift from illegal to legal venues that cater to electronic dance music culture is examined.

The Chicago Gay Underground Disco Scene and Hip Hop: 1975-1985

Tim Olaveson states in his thesis that “Disco was in fact a part of a movement for increased rights and public visibility of gays and African-Americans,” (Olaveson, 24). Although this association of gay African-American culture is one of the “least acknowledged” it is nonetheless a tremendous influence on the underground music scene, from the peak of Disco to the birth of the Rave in the 90s¹⁹.

At the peak of the Disco *scene*²⁰ one DJ was *spinning*²¹ records with a particular sound and energy that eventually shaped the foundations of an entire genre of electronic music, as well as the dances that would follow. His name was *Frankie Knuckles*²², often referred to as “The Godfather of House Music,” (Kalaeo Ten Interview²⁰). Author Bill

²⁰ Scene: A slang term often used to describe particular music and dance cultures associated with practitioners, dancers, DJs, promoters, fans, etc.

²¹ Spinning: Slang term used for the action of playing vinyl records on turntables.

²² Frankie Knuckles: (1955-2014) Knuckles was born in the Bronx New York City, and eventually moved to Chicago where he established himself a legendary House DJ.

Brewster surmises that while the term *House*²³ had not yet been invented, the vibe that Frankie Knuckles created within the underground gay nightclub scenes in Chicago and other large cities throughout the United States became legendary for their vibe, which perpetuated a spirit of love and unity, not just among other gays in the scene, but for all who were dancing to the music (Brewster, 293).

Bill Brewster had this praise for Frankie Knuckles:

As well as popularizing the funky, the soulful – the dangerous – side of Disco that the city had rarely heard, he also imported its spirit, fostering among these polite, god-fearing Midwesterners the communal, emancipating hedonism of Disco’s gay underground. In doing this he was the catalyst of an unprecedented explosion of musical creativity. His club would give name to a new genre of music; he would become known as its godfather. The music was house,” (Brewster, 294).

*Housing*²⁴ would ultimately contribute to the development of the fundamental Rave culture philosophy known as PLUR (peace, love, unity, respect) (Edward Hickman Interview). In the world of the Rave anyone and everyone was welcome and free to express themselves through dance and vibing.

Hip Hop’s Influence

In the mid-1970s a small group of young African Americans and Latinos in the Bronx, New York began a cultural revolution broadly known as Hip Hop. The role of the DJ in Hip Hop was to bring the neighborhood community of the Bronx in New York City

²³ House: A genre of electronic music derived from Disco. It encompasses a four/four beat structure with electronically synthesized snares, bass beats, and melodies. House is also used as slang to describe the entire dance culture associated with the music.

²⁴ Housing: A unique form of vibing and dancing specifically catered to House music. The term Housing originally stems from the early disco era.

together. Kool Herc, party promoter and DJ provided the space, the sound system, and the DJs for these early underground Hip Hop events. In his introduction to Can't Stop Won't Stop, Kool Herc states: "To me, Hip Hop says 'come as you are,' we are a family," (Chang, xi).²¹

Kool Herc befriended and hired DJ Afrika Bambaataa, who played Hip Hop music that promoted an alternative to gang violence, especially among young African Americans and Latinos who lived in the Bronx. Instead, Bambaataa's music promoted positivity and acceptance through dance and socializing at Hip Hop events. These ideas of positivity and acceptance led to the Hip Hop philosophy of peace, love, unity and having fun. The vibe generated enabled a dance genre to develop, which was originally called *B-boying*,²⁵ otherwise known as *breakdancing*.²⁶ "Breaking isn't just an urgent response to pulsating music. It is also a ritual combat that transmutes aggression into art," (Chang, 157).²²

By the 1980s this underground phenomenon spread throughout the world due to television and cinema. "Breaking hit the West Coast with a fury, in '82," (*The Freshest Kids*, 2001). The following year, *Beat Street* was released in movie theatres internationally. The film exposed the roots of Hip Hop in all four of its original forms: The MC, the DJ, the Graffiti Artist, and the B-boy. Since that time, the worlds of Hip Hop and Rave culture have merged.

²⁵ B-boying: B-boy stands for Break boy. B-boying, the verb, was the original term used to describe a Hip Hop dancer's improvised footwork and acrobatics to the music played at a Hip Hop party.

²⁶ Breakdancing: This was the mainstream media's interpretation used to describe B-boying.

From Acid House to Rave: Europe 1985-1990

Acid House

The European continent's biggest contribution to Rave was *Acid House*,²⁷ which developed in the mid 1980s in the UK. Yet, "as rapidly as it had taken Britain by storm as the latest scene to be part of, Acid House was termed *passé* by those in the know, illustrating just how quickly the new dance cultures could mutate," (Olaveson, 64).

Bill Brewster states: "When Acid House and Rave culture blossomed in the late 80s it would find in itself all manner of evocative echoes from the 1960s," (Brewster, 65). Here, Brewster refers to the Hippie culture of the 60s that generated a feeling of free love, spirit and unity, all under the umbrella of Rock music culture. During this era of "free love," the drug *acid*²⁸ was the drug of choice. And, since Rave culture perpetuates similar unity through PLUR, Brewster goes on to state that people should simply "try it," referring to taking Ecstasy while dancing to electronic music at a Rave with everyone else who is *rolling* (slang term for being high on ecstasy) and vibing.

The First Raves in the United States

In the late 1980s, a subculture of dedicated electronic music fans and dancers formed in the industrial areas of Chicago, New York, Detroit and Philadelphia.²³ The name of this underground, taboo culture was cautiously whispered in order to avoid detection from the police, who deemed this type of electronic dance music gathering a R.A.V.E.: Renegade Alternative Venue Event in the 1990s (Brewster, 362). Although

²⁷ Acid House: A genre of electronic music predating Rave culture.

²⁸ Acid: Also known as LSD: Lysergic Acid Diethylamide; a powerful hallucinogen commonly taken to induce a state of synesthesia and euphoria.

MDMA was influential to the Acid House and Rave scene, it was only a part of the culture's success and why it spread to the United States.

Early U.S. Raves generally took place in the industrial areas of large cities, usually in abandoned warehouses, where an entire generation of dance styles evolved, including Liquid dancing, *Shuffling*,²⁹ *House dancing*³⁰ and various fusion forms of older Hip Hop dance styles. Each of these styles spawned from the creativity of Ravers dancing to rhythms of electronic music. Law enforcement naturally focused on the illegal use of narcotics (because, of course – that's their job).

To authority figures, such as police, concerned parents and politicians, the word Rave became synonymous with negative events (i.e. Raves are where children get high), consequently producing fear, ignorance and hatred of the culture it represents. The negative attitude towards the word "Rave" stems from stereotypical notions of parents' fear of their children attending Raves, "where drugs are rampant and gangs may pull out guns or knives," (Olaveson, 10). Therefore, Ravers began to describe their spiritual underground dance music world as parties, events, clubs, and festivals in order to avoid negative associations and misconceptions. Shifting the language to a less threatening words, such as *party* (which has a broader, more ambiguous meaning) and event (again very general), and festival helps alleviate some serious concerns.

The stigma associated with Raves has been shared among concerned parents and authority figures since its infancy (Collin, ix). Therefore, the way a Rave was promoted and set-up was largely secretive and hidden deep within the underground warehouses of

²⁹ *Shuffling*: A style of dance commonly performed at a Rave. Similar to the Running Man, it involves quickly stomping, stepping and hopping to match a 4/4 beat from electronic music.

³⁰ *House Dancing*: A style of dance founded in House music. For more, see Chapter 5.

large cities. In the first decade, Raves were promoted two ways: word of mouth and paper flyers (Talbot, Interview). These paper flyers usually had a phone number to call, which was usually the answering machine of the party's promoter. The message on the machine gave directions to the underground music event and was sometimes vague to throw-off potential undercover police and/or narcotics agents, and sometimes other authority figures.

The allure of a forbidden, illegal world full of bliss and electronic music attracted many people who were strangers to Raves. Even the puzzle of locating the Rave event was an adventure in itself. Once the attendee arrived at a specific intersection, a clue, such as a glow stick, let the Raver know he/she was heading in the right direction. Adam Kaneokoa is a DJ and dancer who went to his first Rave in 1998. "The journey to actually find the Rave was a big part of the experience. It was almost like a treasure hunt in a way," (Kaneokoa interview).

In 1988 the earliest Rave parties took place in the industrial areas of London England in underground warehouses. One of the earliest promoters of these events was Tony Colston-Hayter. He invented the info-line system that consisted of passing out flyers with only a phone number (Olaveson, 61). The number would only be active the night of the party. Callers were told to drive to a location, and meet another person at a checkpoint. And, depending on the location of the Rave, sometimes multiple checkpoints were used in order to maintain the secrecy of the event. This enabled Raves to thrive longer without being detected and/or shut down by the police, who were looking for Ecstasy dealers. Colston Hayter's info-line system was an example of a technology adopted within Rave culture, instead of technology imposed on it.

“Colston-Hayter wanted to create a hedonist Wonderland; he had even hired a children’s bouncy castle for clubbers to cavort upon like weightless astronauts...like being freed into a fantasy playground sparked with the fairy dust of MDMA,” (Collin, 88-89). In his mind, Colston-Hayter viewed MDMA as the key ingredient in fostering an atmosphere of pure bliss, fun, and enlightenment. Dealers profited, and customers purchased (for various reasons).

The Roots of the U.S. Rave Scene: Big City Parties (1990-2000)

The roots of Rave culture date back to the underground Hip Hop events in New York City, specifically the Bronx. Rave musical influences can be traced to Kraftwerk, the first exclusively electronic popular music group. Raver, DJ and electronic music producer Miko Franconi states that two prominent figures in the U.S. Rave scene were DJs named Frankie Knuckles and Keoki Frankoni. They were two of the first people to promote Rave events that catered to an audience dedicated to dancing all night to electronic music rhythms.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, an interesting blend of Hip Hop and Rave culture combined several different sub-cultures and sub-genres of music and dance. For example, in 2005 the emergence of *DubStep*³¹, a subgenre of electronic music merged with the deep gritty bass lines of Drum and Bass with the raw, underground industrial techno-sounding rhythms commonly heard at Raves.

Evidence of merging dance styles remains deep within the music genres and cultural philosophies produced in recent years. Some examples of this include emerging dance styles that fuse *Tutting* (from Hip Hop) and *Liquid dancing* (from Rave culture)

³¹ Dubstep: A genre of EDM that combines Hip Hop and electronic music synthesized rhythms. The blending of techno rhythms with Hip Hop bass creates a unique sound.

together. One such practitioner is *Tiny Love*, who is famous for his online tutorials in such dance practice. His videos have reached a global audience.

The Midwest Rave Scene: 2001-2006

Geographically speaking Rave culture stormed into *Tornado Alley*³² near the end of the 20th century. As the east and west coast underground dance parties began to shift from illegal venues to the nightclubs in Chicago, New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles, the Rave music and dance, along with the essence of the culture it inspired, spread from the coasts to the U.S. interior states.

This was the era of the Midwest generation of Ravers, known as *Candy Kids*.³³ As mentioned before, *candy* (multi-colored beads) was sold as fashion accessories.

Furthermore, another major fashion influence of the Midwest Rave scene was the use of oversized baggy pants with lots of pockets. The baggy clothing trend stems from an earlier Hip Hop trend from gangsta rap's use of baggy clothing. However, at a Rave, the purpose of baggy clothing was an aesthetic choice. The baggy pants created the illusion of Liquid dancers gliding and floating across the dance floor. The baggy hoodies helped facilitate the fluidity of the Liquid dancer's flow with the arms, wrists and hands.

Two forms of headgear were popular: visors and beanies. The visors were commonly bright, solid colors that helped highlight (or hide) the faces of Ravers. Similar to the Hip Hop scene, beanies were also used for breakdancing, but more often just for show. Overall, the collective vibe of Midwest Raves directly reflected the original roots

³² The area of the Midwest U.S. where the most tornados occur in the world each year include: Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri.

³³ Candy Kids: Slang term used to describe a Raver. The term was commonly used in the Midwest Rave scene in the late 90s and early 2000s.

of Rave culture. Most people came to dance, and everyone participated, in one way or another without the distractions of technology.

Honolulu, Hawai'i Electronic Music Scene: 2006-2013

Upon moving to Honolulu Hawai'i in 2006 I discovered a far different Rave scene from the mainland Midwest. The first nightclub I went to was called Venus, and the music spun at this "Rave night" event was Trance music. There was a small group of dancers *glow sticking*.³⁴ But, no one else was even attempting this. There was one person who was dancing with a combination of Shuffling and House dancing. I was the only breakdancer, and the only one who knew how to Liquid dance. Most of the younger attendees were not dancing.

Despite the Hawai'i social and cultural differences, I found that in my earliest experiences at these Honolulu Rave events that the vibe from the Midwest was not present. I felt comfortable enough to introduce myself to most of the people, but very few seemed receptive to an outsider. This would prove to be one of my greatest challenges in becoming involved with the local Honolulu electronic music scene, which makes sense considering Raves are different culturally and aesthetically in different geographic regions.

The Shift From Illegal to Legal Venues

One cannot always dance as freely at a nightclub due to rules about crowd control, space constraints, and club owners who cater to a specific audience. As early as 1996, Edward Hickman witnessed the Raves that took place at illegal venues such as abandoned warehouses later shifted into legally established nightclubs. He says that

³⁴ Glowsticking: Slang term used to describe liquid dancing using glowsticks to create visual light tracers and patterns.

changed the dynamics of the scene because clubs have rules to follow, such as what people can wear, how people can or cannot dance, and what music is played. This consequently shifts the vibe as well. Hickman says that early venues such as New York City's *The Roxy*³⁵ imposed strict dress codes and rules for dance floor etiquette, such as no breakdancing. Hickman says that having Raves at legal venues "dilutes" the quality of dancing. "B-boys can't break at these venues because the managers fear people getting hurt and the possibility of lawsuits," (Hickman Interview).

According to Adam Kanekoa, a DJ and promoter of electronic music throughout Hawai'i since 2006, the average lifespan of a nightclub in Honolulu ranges from three months to a year (Adam Kanekoa Interview). Many clubs have shut down numerous times, changed owners, changed names, and consequently changed the vibe of the place entirely.

The original essence of Rave culture is alive and well in underground venues and events throughout Honolulu. However, the creative energy (*active creativity* from a *potential dancer*) at a Rave has shifted from what was traditionally thought of as "underground."

³⁵ The Roxy: A popular New York City Nightclub that began as a roller skating rink and disco in 1978. In the 1980s, it was a popular place for Hip Hop events. In the 1990s, it brought in electronic music DJs. It officially closed in 2007.

CHAPTER 5: FIELD RESEARCH IN HAWAI'I

Fieldwork was conducted in Honolulu, Hawai'i. The state's cultural diversity and experiences of veteran Ravers and newcomer participants there make it an interesting research site. In order to research Rave culture's dramatic shift from a cultural, personal experience to a product, and a participatory experience to a spectator event, the majority of this field research is in the form of interviews with dancers and DJs who experienced Rave in its early days on the Mainland U.S. and currently live in Hawai'i. Additional interviews were conducted with dancers, DJs and promoters of the current Honolulu, Hawai'i electronic music scene over a three-month period from October through December 2013. Each individual was chosen for specific areas of expertise, experience and insights related to this thesis. While they all agree that the music is what brings people together, they also acknowledge that today's Rave participants have been impacted by digiphrenia.

The discussion of this fieldwork is divided into three parts. The first section consists of an interview with veteran Liquid dancer Edward Hickman. The second includes interviews with veteran electronic music DJs: Mathew Griffith, Adam Kanekoa, and Gin Carter. The third section discusses House dancing and its influence on Rave culture highlighting interviews with Kaleo Ten, Lyanne Brooks, and Linda Kuo.

PART 1: A Dancer's Perspective

Fu Manchu: Liquid Dancing Innovator

To help address my first question: *Why do people gather at electronic music events?* I interviewed a veteran Raver from the mainland United States, Edward Hickman (AKA Fu Manchu), who began dancing in the summer of 1994 in the New York and

New Jersey scene. Hickman said that he, along with the vast majority of Ravers who attended Rave events went because they were drawn to the environment itself. He said a Rave represented a safe place for anyone who desired a sense of unity, connection, vibe and the interactions on the dance floor.

Hickman shared that the first time he danced was at an underground Rave party that his older sister brought him to. She was 18 and Hickman was 14. Hickman took Acid and Ecstasy for the first time that night. He reported that the drug experiences alone were intense, but that they enabled Hickman to socialize with no inhibitions or insecurities. He said he felt able to freely move his muscles to the music. He added that his experience was unparalleled.

Although Hickman's first Rave was intense and life changing, he grew increasingly attached to the music and dance, and less to the drugs. For Hickman, the most unique portion of the Rave experience was the music, which was unlike anything he had ever heard. "It was all electronic music, and almost all to quad-based sound or some four/four beat, what they used to call Techno." The music, the drugs, the underground venue, and the people created a sense of freedom and comfort, which fostered a creative energy and atmosphere for Ravers like Hickman to practice, perform and refine Liquid dancing.

When Hickman was introduced to Liquid dancing he saw the majority of dancers used *glowsticks*³⁶ between six and nine inches long and half an inch thick. They usually glowed a solid color, such as bright green, blue, yellow, red, purple or white. With glowsticks an observer could easily see the tracers and patterns formed by each Liquid

³⁶ Glowsticks: A common Raver prop used to enhance the imaginary lines and tracers created from Liquid Dancing.

dancer's unique flow. Hickman admits that despite their aesthetic appeal he preferred to dance without glowsticks. He vividly describes performing Liquid as creating a shape and deciding where the dancer's energy flow travels in space. For example, in Liquid dancing a basic *rail*³⁷ involves one set of fingers following the other in a straight line, usually across the chest, then up the torso, across the face, and back down the torso in one continuous flow, creating an imaginary box shape around the body. Hickman adds that when using rails a dancer should be able to go both directions along the path, but feel as if the path he/she is drawing is actually present and real. In other words, if you as the dancer convince yourself that the imaginary path you are running your hands along is there, the viewer will see it too.

Back then we had a term that was called being locked: that is to say if you are watching someone/me and I'm moving with a steady enough pace and I'm doing complicated enough things where I can make you follow my flow long enough, you just realize you've been looking at me for the past ten minutes, and it only felt like a minute went by. As liquid dancers, that was our goal: to dance in our own space and to lock the lookers (other Ravers), to get them to come over and be like "whoa, what the hell's going on?" (Hickman Interview).

Glowsticks, a technology appropriated from outdoor and emergency gear, were often referred to as "toys" for Ravers to express themselves. Over time, Liquid dancers began using other, more complex lights: some that could fit on individual fingers like rings, and some that were attached to white gloves that glowed in the dark, especially under black

³⁷ Rails: A foundation concept in Liquid Dancing referring to one hand or set of fingers following the other along a pre-determined path in space.

lights. This is another example of using technology to enhance the impact of the Rave experience, specifically for Liquid dancers.

Ravers who are non-dancers played, and still play, a vital role as observers who inspire dancers at Raves to perform for them. This is an example of performativity.

Edward Hickman demonstrates performativity in his Liquid dancing in order to capture the attention and imagination of Ravers. This act of performativity is one of the things that made the Rave experience so unique and wonderful for Hickman in part because his creativity was encouraged. In Hickman's experiences, Ravers felt a strong sense of euphoric unity through vibing on the dance floor, often times through Liquid dancing.

Hickman suggests that a Liquid dancer's main goal is to create an illusion or pretend that something's there, not just for the viewer but for himself, as well. And in learning how to manipulate, bend, twist and create a fluid series of shapes through Liquid, the dance manifests itself. There has to be some kind of relationship or interplay going on that ultimately captures the audience's attention. What Hickman calls "being locked."

As a dancer, Hickman agrees that the use of alcohol (instead of ecstasy) at electronic music events, combined with digiphrenia has disrupted the social dynamics necessary to create the vibe between dancers at Raves. He also acknowledges that digiphrenia affects the DJ. But, as discussed in the next section, DJs do not always mind.

PART 2: A DJ's Perspective

Mathew Griffith: DJ NorthStar

Mathew Griffith (AKA DJ Northstar) and Adam Kanekoa (AKA DJ Fathom) help address questions about digiphrenia's impact on Rave culture. They are two DJs who provided important insights about the aesthetics of electronic dance music and its affects on the crowd and Rave culture.

Mathew Griffith has been DJing for ten years, on the Mainland US and in Hawai'i. He first learned to spin records on turntables, using a genre of electronic music called *break beats*.³⁸ "I chose breaks because that was the vinyl I was able to purchase most of the time," (Griffith Interview). Over the years he increased his repertoire by spinning House, Trance, DubStep, and DnB (drum and bass).

Griffith was as an electronic music fan, and ultimately became what he calls "a music junky." He couldn't stop buying and playing music that he loved. At the time Griffith was learning how to DJ from books at libraries and magazines about mixing records.

In the fall of 1998, Griffith attended his first Rave at a Minnesota farm. Griffith describes the vibe as being free, different, and a place to leave your inhibitions behind. And it was all because of the music, mostly a combination of House and Techno. He found out about this event through friends roughly his age. When asked how to describe his first Rave experience he said this:

³⁸ Break Beats: A genre of electronic music that originally stems from Hip Hop breaks and its syncopated/broken beat structure.

It was like reading a book that you read when you were a child and you read it as an adult and you understood more. You already read it, you already knew about it, but then when you read it again you realize some things that you didn't know of. And that was kind of what that was, because I'd heard of a Rave, I'd listened to the music before, but that night it all came together, and it finally clicked.

(Griffith Interview).

Griffith talked about the different stage areas at a Rave event. Each stage has different dance and music style. "I saw this one style that looked like people were skiing backwards," referring to a specific style of shuffle dancing known as *Nordatreking*³⁹. He says that in Minnesota there was a lot of Liquid dancing. And as the scene progressed over the years, the "gadgets and props" like glow sticks and hula-hoops with electric neon lights became more common.

In approximately 2000, Griffith noticed that B-boying and House dancing became popular at Raves, especially in large cities like Chicago. With these two dance styles now merging in Rave culture, an interesting fusion of dance styles began to surface. Simultaneously, the scene attracted dancers from all over the world. Griffith described one occasion where he met someone from South America who had a style that he couldn't describe because it was "so awesome and beautiful."

When asked about the Hawai'i electronic music scene, Griffith explained that the dance styles and vibe remains more connected to Hip Hop than Rave culture. His belief is that Hawai'i is also about five years behind the mainland in terms of EDM culture's

³⁹ Nordatreking: A series of steps in Rave dancing, similar to the Running Man, a form of shuffling. The main difference is brining the knees much higher and swinging the arms as if marching.

innovations. He says: “The Hawai‘i music scene is a budding tree that was transplanted from a forest,” (Griffith Interview). Griffith admits he has recently lost interest in playing electronic music partially because the scene has changed. He acknowledges digiphrenia’s potential affects on the scene.

Adam Kanekoa (DJ Fathom)

Adam Kanekoa was born on Molokai. He started breakdancing in 1998. That same year, he went to his first Rave in Arizona and started DJing electronic music. He started with *Hard House*⁴⁰ and Trance. In his experience, Trance was one of the genres of EDM that consistently evoked feelings of euphoria. “I used to sit in my room working on spinning vinyl, blending and mixing music. *Beat matching*⁴¹ is the key,” (Adam Kanekoa Interview).

Interestingly, Kanekoa also began *scratching*⁴² vinyl Hip Hop records, despite the fact that he was most interested in electronic music from the Rave scene. He said that Hip Hop sound scores were more challenging than those for EDM because of Hip Hop’s lyrics and *sampling*⁴³. He spent several years developing his DJ skills in both EDM and Hip Hop.

In 2006, Kanekoa decided to move back to Hawai‘i. He moved into a large house with five other DJs. “We called our place *The Tree House* because it was in the middle of

⁴⁰ Hard House: A subgenre of House music that is typically a lot faster in tempo than normal House beats; the rhythms have a combination of ambient, industrial and disco samples.

⁴¹ Beat Matching: The smooth transition from one music track to the next on a vinyl record.

⁴² Scratching: The practice of using the needle on a turntable to create distorted sounds from the vinyl record played.

⁴³ Sampling: Sections of sounds from music, movies, television commercials, or any other digitally reproduced sound placed into a recordable format (i.e. a vinyl record, tape, CD, etc.)

the rainforest and you had to hike up 100 steps to get to the front door.” This place was the main inspiration for Adam Kanekoa’s DJ endeavors and experimentations in producing and hosting underground events. He and his friends threw parties at The Tree House (located off the Nuuanu Pali Valley just outside Honolulu) almost every weekend for a year, building a following and forming connections throughout Honolulu. For Kanekoa, Rave culture took place at The Tree House.

In 2007, the creative energies of Rave culture shifted again from the Tree House to the Chinatown Club Scene of Honolulu. “It all came together at a club called *Next Door*.” He described this venue as warehouse-like, but with a full bar, and club vibe.

Although Kanekoa was happy playing the EDM he loved for a “mainstream audience,” (those who do not engage in the dance, DJing or social practices associated with EDM) he and his friends were not entirely satisfied with that experience. The downtown nightclubs, in Honolulu’s Chinatown, had regulations that affected the vibe generated, as well as the people who attended. Plus, Chinatown nightclubs shut down at 2am, no exceptions. “We wanted to start our own afterhours nightclub.” And in 2008, Kanekoa and his crew started their first afterhours nightclub called *Epix*, which was located a few blocks away from Chinatown.

We had it on Friday and Saturday nights from 2am to 8 am. In the beginning it was all for the love, not making much money. Having a safe place for people to go. But, it was taxing on us. It’s no secret that Hawai‘i has been behind in electronic music. A track that was big on the mainland 2 years ago gets played now. Hawai‘i has been going through a major transition recently. I feel our crew

has helped out so much because of the Dirty Bird Crew and the DJs that people SHOULD know about. (Adam Kanekoa Interview).

After the short-lived Epix experiment Adam Kanekoa, Willis Hamilton, and Andy Koch formed *The Asylum*, Hawai‘i’s only after-hours nightclub. The Asylum primarily played House and Techno, but occasionally DubStep. For the last five years, the Asylum has brought mainland and International talent to Hawai‘i, placing the nightclub “on the map.” According to *DJ Mag*,⁴⁴ Europe’s biggest DJ Mag that also rates the top 100 in-demand/best nightclubs in the world, ranked the Asylum Afterhours Nightclub 60th in 2011, and 50th in 2012. “We are one of the smallest clubs on the list since we only hold a capacity of 136 people, but we are guiding our futures and making a name for ourselves,” (Adam Kanekoa Interview).

One of the technologies used at the Asylum is a \$30,000 state-of-the-art sound system. The Asylum’s *resident DJs*⁴⁵ acknowledge that their club has grown in numbers of regular attendees. Kanekoa says that they network with different groups, including *G-Spot*, the biggest promoter in Hawai‘i. But most importantly, the Asylum brings out talent that Hawai‘i has never seen. Kanekoa shares that for the first three opening years of the Asylum none of the resident DJs got paid. Only within the last two years have profits allowed payment for the resident DJs, in addition to flying out and paying guest

⁴⁴ DJ Mag: An electronic music magazine that often surveys the demands and popularity of nightclubs throughout the world.

⁴⁵ Resident DJs: DJs who are regulars; they routinely play/spin records at a nightclub. They are well known to people who attend on a regular basis.

*headliners*⁴⁶ from the mainland and elsewhere. Some headliners include Justin Martin, Taren Ross and DJ T.

Kanekoa describes the Asylum as preserving the original Rave philosophy of PLUR in an adult environment (ages 25 to 45). He believes that through producing and consistently spinning quality music (specifically new *techno*⁴⁷) the Asylum will continue to thrive. “New music must be constant and fresh to keep people on their toes,” (Kanekoa Interview). And since he is used to seeing people dance to his sets at the Asylum, and people come there for the music, he does not see evidence of digiphrenia in his surrounding environment. “People dance their asses off all night and when they’re not, they’re out back smoking cigarettes and talking,” (Kanekoa Interview).

Although Kanekoa’s observations about the Asylum may be true, it is important to note that this venue caters to a very specific group of adult individuals with a highly developed taste for a particular sound, and venue location for dancing to electronic music. In other words, the level of participation compels the group to dance more, and spend less time on their smartphones, than their younger counterparts.

Gin Carter DJ Saya

Gin Carter’s DJ name, Saya is inspired by a little girl from a Japanese *anime* cartoon who doesn’t talk. Saya means “I” in connection with the rest of the world. Carter’s first exposure to electronic music was in college at Virginia Tech University in 2000. She was introduced to Trance at first and did not like it. “Trance makes me fall

⁴⁶ Headliner: A big-name, special Guest DJ well known within the EDM scene; usually flown out from the mainland or elsewhere.

⁴⁷ Techno: The original genre of electronic music through which all other genres stem from; Consisting primarily of a quad-bass four/four beat structure with industrial electronically generated sounds sampled and produced by computers.

asleep. Shortly after that I was complaining that electronic music is too happy” (Gin Carter Interview). But then a friend of hers gave her a *Drum and Bass*⁴⁸ CD, mixed by DJ Andy C., and Carter’s love for Drum and Bass was born.

Carter’s first Rave experience was in Kentucky. The venue was an old airplane hanger, and the headliner was Drum and Bass DJ Dieselboy. “Some of my DJ friends played sets at one of the side stages at that event.” Carter went to the *Winter Music Conference*⁴⁹ in Florida in 2003. She went specifically for the Drum and Bass scene.

When she was in graduate school she spun records privately until she moved to Hawai‘i in 2005. She became business partners with local Honolulu Drum and Bass DJs Milo, Antikkz (Shane), Synrgy, and Empyre. The four of them started producing music together and formed *Audiolab*,⁵⁰ a monthly Drum and Bass event at a Honolulu nightclub called Mercury. Once this nightclub became an established success (within a year), Carter started *Subphonix*⁵¹ and *Pacific Jungle*,⁵² which flew DJs from the UK to Honolulu. Some big names associated with *Pacific Jungle* and *Subphonix* are Dara, Diesel Boy, Goldie, Ed Rush and Optical, John B, Shimon, Red One, and Evil Intent. At the events these DJs headline, digiphrenia does not play a role in how people interact. But once again, this is a smaller event, at a smaller venue, much like the Asylum, catered to a very

⁴⁸ Drum and Bass: A subgenre of electronic music with ultra-fast syncopated beats. The beat structure stems from Hip Hop and breaks, but the melodies usually consist of industrial techno, acid house, and sometimes (but rarely) ambient, progressive rhythms from trance.

⁴⁹ Winter Music Conference: One of the largest electronic music festivals in the United States held annually. The conference lasts for two weekends.

⁵⁰ Audiolab: A monthly Drum and Bass event at Mercury Lounge in Chinatown, in Honolulu.

⁵¹ Subphonix: A monthly Drum and Bass night at Mercury Bar in Chinatown, in Honolulu. It is currently the only consistent one in Hawai‘i.

⁵² Pacific Jungle: A promotion company consisting of DJs and Producers of Drum and Bass music; cater to Drum and Bass, as well as Breaks and Dub-Step Events on occasion.

specific group of adult individuals who have a highly developed taste for a particular genre of electronic music.

PART 3: House Dancing and its Cross-Cultural Influences on Rave Culture

Kaleo Ten Interview

Another layer in the complexity of Rave culture is House dancing. Around 1994, Kaleo Ten discovered House dancing in downtown Honolulu. “There was a lot of house music everywhere at the clubs, underground parties, all ages parties. Not really what might be called “Raves” though. But people were mostly just dancing, not much talking,” (Kaleo Ten Interview). In 2000, he left Hawai‘i and went to New York where House dancing was strikingly different in terms of footwork and music. That same year he was filmed in a House dancing documentary. When it was finally released in 2005, Kaleo Ten watched himself dancing and said to himself: “That’s not House,” (Kaleo Ten Interview).

His perception of House dancing would dramatically shift in 2002 when Brian “Footwork” Green flew Kaleo Ten from LA to the Bay Area. During this time he became fascinated with what he calls “the actual technique” of House dancing. In 2004, Kaleo Ten went to a dance camp taught by Brian Green, where he finally understood what House music was.

In 2010, Kaleo Ten began to learn *Lofting*⁵³: The original style before House dancing.

I started meeting the originators when I went to this place called The Funk Box,⁵⁴ which was open until 4am. Later on we’re at this dinner around 6am, all these dancers who taught House, and the guys who came before them. I learned that all

⁵³ Lofting: The original style of House dancing.

⁵⁴ The Funk Box: An underground nightclub in Honolulu

these guys that teach House never really went to the clubs to learn it, because they weren't old enough. (Kaleo Ten Interview).

He explained that the resulting style was actually a series of Hip Hop dance steps presented as House dancing. “You have to remember that House represents spiritual dancing together and vibing. It creates a sense of up lifting togetherness and camaraderie.”

He elaborated on the aspect of dancing on a *technical level* (knowing all the technical moves). He said that individuals may be able to execute a few technical House steps, but they are not necessarily House dancers if they lack the *flow*⁵⁵ of the dance. This relates to Halifu Osumare’s ideas about performance and performativity in that Kaleo Ten’s example illustrates someone who is simply performing the dance movements because they can, as opposed to someone who “owns” those movements and executes them with style.

Kaleo Ten’s thoughts on technology were two-fold: “Technology can share the culture. But the true way to get the culture is to be part of it.” His perspective is one of a dancer who believes that participation is largely dependent on people who actually engage in dancing to the music.

The people who taught Kaleo Ten his foundations in House dancing were not part of what he calls the “real culture.” So he went back to its roots. In 2013, the Hip Hop steps that he was taught had become part of House dancing. He does not believe that current House dancing is a “fusion” but rather has evolved. “I think of *culture* as the

⁵⁵ Flow: The ability for a dancer to effortlessly execute a specific style of dance.

accumulation of all the intellectual wisdom and understanding of a specific people. And language, dance, is the technology,” (Kaleo Ten, Interview).

Lyanne Brooks Interview

Lyanne Brooks was born in 1974 and raised on Oahu. In the early 80s, she learned what was “left over” from *funk dance*,⁵⁶ which she developed into her own personal freestyle. “During this time, poppers and lockers were already on their way out. Breakers were also around. This was the early days of Hip Hop.” (Lyanne Brooks Interview). Around 1991, Brooks saw House dancing up close at *Pink’s Garage* (The Garage), in Honolulu, which was a completely legal large warehouse club venue with a state-of-the-art sound system.

Brooks witnessed groups of dancers displaying footwork and gestures that she would later learn more about. “By then, I was already doing street dancing (to rap music); but then when I saw this club style dancing, it was completely new. I was blown away. The combination of the dance itself and the floor all matched; it didn’t look like a style, it was all freestyle. She was watching House dancers who were all 21 years old and up, and she was 17 at the time.

The energy, the music, the vibe of the dance and the dancers themselves attracted Brooks to the scene. For her, the entire experience freed her imagination and creativity in movement. “It didn’t look intellectual or aggressive, no battle element to it,” (Lyanne Brooks Interview). She said that people danced with passion, which had nothing to do with showing off and had no competitive vibe. “In other words, people just wanted to get

⁵⁶ Funk Dance: Slang term for freestyle dancing based loosely off of Locking, Popping and other Hip Hop dance forms.

off and let loose.” Brooks used to spend up to \$50 to get into venues that played House music every weekend.

In New York City the House dance scene is deeply rooted in urban street culture (Harlem, African American Dance) with a long lineage, and House was part of it. Brooks describes New York City as a cultural melting pot that helped generate the dance style with diversity and openness. “In the Big Apple, it’s the presentation: the Djs, the programing is off the hook and on another level” (Brooks Interview). She talks about the diversity of music and was eventually able to tell the Djs are *music heads*⁵⁷ (they listen to everything). “They know how and when to be with the crowd, move the crowd, and they do their best to not lose the crowd” (Brooks Interview). This is a direct reflection of the interviews I conducted with DJs Adam Kanekoa, Mathew Griffith, and Miko Franconi.

Brooks described the Los Angeles House dancing scene as a mixture of 90s -style Hip Hop, Rave steps, and fusing it together to match up with House music and vibing. As a result, she said the scene was not quite as passionate. “The music is more minimal. The sets are not as diverse. Most DJs stick to particular styles of sets: such as *Funky House*⁵⁸, Hard House, Tech House, etc.”

In Hawai‘i, Brooks went on a mission in 2007 to create what she called the full color spectrum of experience with House music. So she established a monthly House Dancing night in downtown Chinatown called *Soulgasm*⁵⁹. “In Hawai‘i the House scene was dying so I decided to build something that would last,” (Brooks Interview). She said

⁵⁷ Music Heads: Someone who not only listens to a lot of music and possesses an understanding of how the music is structured, and therefore able to manipulate it in such a way on the turntables to produce a new, unique sound.

⁵⁸ Funky House: A subgenre of House music that combines disco rhythms with modern electronic music samples.

⁵⁹ Soulgasm: A monthly House dancing night in Chinatown, Honolulu, HI.

that the 1990s marked the “golden era” of House Music. The scene was strong because of record stores (*Tower Records*⁶⁰), CDs, radio, which all brought much more exposure to the music. Today, *Soulgasm* continues to thrive as Honolulu’s number one monthly House dancing night.

Linda Kuo Interview

Linda Kuo started dancing when she was three with pre-ballet. As a teenager she performed Hip Hop dance at a Honolulu studio called *The Movement Center*.⁶¹ “It was more like early-90s – style choreography and party moves,” (Linda Kuo, Interview) She was not taught the foundations of Popping and Breaking until she went to New York City in 2004. She eventually met *Ejoe Wilson*⁶², one of the top House dancers in the world. He taught her the foundations of House dancing and simultaneously, Kuo experienced House music for the first time. “But I wasn’t really ‘into it’ yet because I was still focused on the Popular dancing scene,” (Linda Kuo, Interview).

Then she took *Brian Green’s*⁶³ House and *All-Styles*⁶⁴ class. Kuo met more New York-based dancers who grew up *jamming*⁶⁵ on the streets and in underground clubs. “My first underground dance party was in 2005 called Soulgasm New York City. But, I was in a contemporary dance company,” (Linda Kuo Interview). After this in 2009 she moved back to Honolulu for a year and tried to focus on what she loved about dance. “This was when House found me,” (Linda Kuo Interview).

⁶⁰ Tower Records: A large record store chain popular in the 1990s. Now closed.

⁶¹ The Movement Center: A dance studio in the Kaimuki district of Honolulu

⁶² Ejoe Wilson: House Dance expert from New York City, New York.

⁶³ Brian Green: House Dance and All-Styles Expert

⁶⁴ All-Styles: A term used to describe fusing multiple dance styles together in a free-form improvised dance set.

⁶⁵ Jamming: Dancing with other dancers in a non-competitive way.

In 2010, *Jo Jo Digs*⁶⁶ became one of the youngest *Mop Top Dancers*⁶⁷. Kuo met her in New York, and she invited her to a Mop Top workshop, where she took classes from the world-renowned teachers. The deeper Kuo got into House dancing the more she realized that she needed help to preserve it. Therefore, she started supporting House dancing events in Honolulu, such as *Revival*⁶⁸.

In 2012, Kuo founded *The Loading Zone*.⁶⁹ Kuo describes her organization as a combination and collaboration between visual and performing artists. That same year, Kuo started her dance company called *Dancers Unlimited*.⁷⁰ Kuo has also been an advocate of and participant in *National Dance Week Hawai'i*.⁷¹ Through this, Kuo started partnering with *Soulgasm Hawai'i* under the guidance of Kaleo Ten. "House itself is very grounding, welcoming and inclusive. It's not about battles or dancing 'at each other,' but dancing together," (Linda Kuo Interview).

Kuo explains that Hawai'i does not have an underground dance culture as well-preserved as that of New York. This may also be why Hawai'i trails Rave trends by about five years. However, in the 1980s, Hawai'i had a strong underground music scene. It shifted when large outdoor Rave events like *Love Fest* brought in corporate sponsorship, such as alcohol vendors like Coors Light. "Dancers do not drink when we dance," says Kuo. She elaborates and says the alcohol vendors consequently attracted a more

⁶⁶ Jo Jo Digs: Famous Mop Top Dancer

⁶⁷ Mop Top: Stands for Motivated On Precision Towards Outstanding Performance. Mop Top dancer Buddah Stretch came up with this definition based on a conversation he had with his father. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8qqqBjy5J0>

⁶⁸ Revival: A House Dancing night at 39 Hotel in downtown Chinatown, Honolulu.

⁶⁹ The Loading Zone: A dance studio consisting of a collaboration of dancers

⁷⁰ Dancers Unlimited: A dance company catered to Street Dancing: Hip Hop and House Dancing

⁷¹ National Dance Week Hawai'i: The annual weeklong dance festival held in Honolulu, HI.

mainstream crowd less concerned with dancing and more concerned with consuming alcohol. This is another example of local Hawai‘i vendors attempting to replace dance and unity with products to sell.

Another critical area of this dramatic shift in energy was through *First Friday*⁷². She says that First Friday started by promoting arts, where street artists performed live. But when alcohol vendors introduced their products into the scene, the vibe began to change. “And eventually more people were drunk and stupid, and the cops came down and it ruined it. And the same thing happened to Hawai‘i underground dance culture,” (Linda Kuo Interview). She explains further that with National Dance Week they actually do use money from big sponsors. But, she is quick to point out that the real problems are the promoters of the events. One primary example of this is an event held at the Neil Blaisdell Arena called *World of Dance*⁷³ “They had *GoGo dancers*⁷⁴ all over the place and the promoters of this event just threw a B-boy event into the mix just for the “Hype.” (Linda Kuo Interview).

In terms of dance styles and cultures coming together, Kuo says that the younger generation of dancers (such as the B-boys) are finally coming to House dancing experts (commonly referred to as *House heads*⁷⁵) and asking them to teach them House dancing. Kuo believes that the Honolulu dance scene in general is growing.

⁷² First Friday: The first Friday of the month where clubs and bars open and promote live music and art events to the general public in Downtown Chinatown, Honolulu.

⁷³ World of Dance: A large mainstream car show event that has random pockets of dancers dispersed throughout the venue.

⁷⁴ GoGo Dancers: Female dancers dressed in skimpy, erotic clothing who dance seductively on tabletops.

⁷⁵ House Heads: Someone who is deeply rooted in House Dance Culture and all its qualities.

The bottom line is it takes everyone to keep supporting. It's why I go to SoulGasm every month and bring 4 people with me. Lianne cannot do it by herself. When I bring out world-renowned teachers I lose money every year but it's worth it. If no one comes out here, then everyone just learns from YouTube. So, if you are a dancer, even if you don't have a house, go and support it anyway! (Linda Kuo Interview).

Kuo's statements reflect Kaleo Ten's sentiments that dance is key to participation.

Conclusions:

The last concept Mathew Griffith addresses is that of acceptance. He sums up his idea by stating that at a Rave "it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from, you have a place in this space," (Griffith Interview). What I concluded from his remarks was that in relation to today's computer-dominated Facebook world, the accepted space for dance and socializing at Raves is in the form of a smartphone. People are more comfortable dancing in their own rooms/homes, which ensures the necessary privacy, comfort, and freedom needed to create and innovate dance. Anyone who desires to share their dance styles to the world can do so by posting their footage on a link to YouTube, Facebook, or other social networks, and they have the option to be absolutely certain that what they have produced is to their satisfaction.

Each dancer I interviewed believes that smartphone use has disrupted the vibe at Raves. However, the DJs I interviewed have mixed feelings/opinions about this theory. Mathew Griffith, Adam Kanekoa and Gin Gaya all agree that smartphone use affects the average person's daily life. However, from their points of view, Griffith, Kanekoa and Gaya see smartphones as a tool for obtaining information. Kanekoa and Gaya do not see

the attendees of their nightclub events engaging in excessive cellphone use on the dance floor.

In the end, the bottom line is this: energy level plays a crucial role in maintaining the true essence of Rave culture. Each individual I interviewed expressed a genuine love for the dance and music culture they live and perpetuate. They each acknowledge the influences of technology (both positive and negative). But one thing is clear: participation in Rave culture has been redefined by the use of smartphone technology.

In 2006, I moved to Honolulu Hawai'i. I thought Rave culture would be easy to find. Thankfully I befriended a small group of Hawai'i's finest electronic music DJs and promoters who introduced me to the local Electronic Dance Music community. People flocked to house parties across the island to experience the essence of mainland Rave culture. Since the island is small it remains a challenge to produce an event that caters specifically to underground music and dance. The police are in full force to crack down on any parties they deem unfit or unsuitable. To further complicate things, the majority of the local Hawaiian and mainstream public appear to not support such a scene.

CHAPTER 6: RAVE-ON! FROM CULTURE TO PRODUCT

Dwight Conquergood wrote: “The constitutive liminality of performance studies lies in its capacity to bridge segregated and differently valued knowledge, drawing together legitimated as well as subjugated modes of inquiry.”¹ Conquergood’s quote resonates with me because he believes in differently valued knowledge. In the context of this paper, this differently valued knowledge is represented by personal understanding as a Rave practitioner and by academic and journalistic experiences outside the culture. In order to understand the implications of outside influence (whether it is through the use of smartphones or manipulation from alcohol and energy drink vendors), academic documentation of Rave dance and music styles may be a way to facilitate academic discussion. To be clear, academia is not an end. It is simply the beginning of a conversation to assist a recognized vocabulary with which to share research and have informed discussions.

The interface of Rave dance, music styles and smartphones

One major influence from smartphone use in Rave culture is the cross-blending of dance styles. For example, Digits, a dance style that involves the use of fingers to create geometric and abstract patterns was inspired by electronic music and first surfaced as a sub-genre of Liquid dancing. However, over the last decade, digits have advanced in intricacy and skill level by instant online access to such dancers as Rozvan Gorea (AKA Tiny Love).

In the 1990s, Gorea moved from Romania to New York City and started going to Raves where he evolved his unique and intricate techniques of swift Finger Tutting and

Liquid combinations⁷⁶. As one of the pioneers of Finger Tutting, Gorea feels a strong sense of responsibility to preserve this dance style at its roots, along with the culture it came from. Therefore, he posts online videos of random freestyle performances and how-to videos through YouTube.

Rave Culture, Reality Television and MTV

This section addresses specific examples of how and where Rave aesthetics are commercialized. The first example is a television program that exploits specific elements of Rave culture to make the episode more current or perhaps relevant to viewers. In 2010, the hit reality series *Jersey Shore* remained the number one cable television show among 12 to 34-year-olds.⁷⁷ *Jersey Shore* uses the concept of unity from in Rave culture to attract consumers. In one episode, the show's characters coined the "fist pump," a trendy dance gesture involving electronic dance music at the nightclubs. In the midst of excessive alcohol consumption, the cast sometimes portrayed EDM culture as they danced to electronic music with a group of strangers. As *Jersey Shore's* DJ Pauly D spins electronic dance music, similar to a Rave, the audience is shown manipulations of specific images of sex appeal, alcohol consumption, large crowds, and fist pumps that are also reminiscent of Raves.

"Consumers perpetuate the ideals of underground dance music culture through the consumption of a mass-media product, which consequently reduces the quality of the culture it came from," (Hickman, Interview). Hickman notes tension between the "purity" of Rave culture and its commercialized adaptations.

⁷⁶ <http://www.darkmattersquad.com/talent/tinylove/>: Source for Tiny Love's bio

⁷⁷ www.zaptoit.com : Source for television statistics.

Conquergood said that: “The state of emergency under which many people live demands that we pay attention to messages that are coded and encrypted; to indirect, nonverbal, and extra-linguistic modes of communication where subversive meanings and utopian yearnings can be sheltered and shielded from our surveillance,” (Conquergood, 148). This is a direct reflection of the underlying motivations behind the 2013 Xenadrine ad, which created an illusion of unity under the mask of a false image of Rave culture. On the surface, these commercials may seem harmless and fun. However, commercials such as the Xenadrine advertisement reinforce stereotypes that often undermine and marginalize the music, dance, and the practitioners of dance within the Rave scene. The weight-loss pill company Xenadrine released a commercial that alluded to the experience of being on drugs at a Rave. The setting is a futuristic digital world where everyone is dressed in white and moving together as one to electronic music. The visual imagery of the crowd is similar to what one might experience at a large Rave event. In the commercial, the camera zooms in on the sweaty bodies and euphoric facial expressions of the dancing females. At that point, a female voice declares that Xenadrine is: “An electrifying weight loss formula so powerful, it has to be experienced to be believed. Feel the extreme energy of Xenadrine. Join the weight loss revolution.”

Often the music used in these commercials resemble hybrid examples of the original genre, specifically, electronic music sounds that create loud, energetic feelings to get the consumers attention. In, 2012 Absolut Greyhound Vodka released a commercial that references *Burning Man*,⁷⁸ one of the largest annual outdoor art, music and dance events in the United States. The commercial begins with partygoers dressed in Raver

⁷⁸ Burning Man: An annual outdoor music and art festival that takes place in Nevada’s Black Rock Desert.

attire, about to witness a futuristic dog race across the desert sands of Nevada, powered by the rhythms of electronic dance music. An amazing display of technology, music and fashion, stripped from Rave culture, is used to sell vodka.

The Local Effects

Dwight Conquergood says: “It is no longer easy to sort out the local from the global: transnational circulations of images get reworked on the ground and redeployed for local, tactical struggles.”² Popular vendors such as Redbull and Coors Light have commercialized Rave culture in Honolulu Hawai‘i as well. Consequently, since 2006, the word RAVE has been replaced with the acronym EDMF: *electronic dance music festival*, in order to advertise these events to a larger number of people. This has boosted attendance from a few dozen dedicated practitioners to tens of thousands in Honolulu at events like *Love Fest*, one of the largest (and only) annual outdoor music and dance festivals in Hawai‘i.

Due to vendor sponsorship attendance has increased. And each vendor is building its own culture in order to sell products, ignoring the culture it is using. Because of electronic dance music’s reach and appeal to a mass audience, alcohol and energy drink vendors in particular have found clever ways of selling their products to the young adults who attend.

Conclusions

On YouTube, Liquid, Tutting, Popping, Shuffling, House dancing and Breaking, the dance styles commonly found within Rave culture, are presented in a format that is accessible and authentic. This reflects Conquergood’s theory of harnessing the power of differently valued knowledge, as well as different ways of obtaining knowledge. Through

YouTube the teacher of the dance is able to break down dance styles step by step, as well as provide commentary on its origins. The viewer has access to this knowledge, as well as the genuine interest to learn dances that come from Rave culture. I believe that Rave music and dance styles should be passed on to the next generation. Through academic documentation (including interviews of practitioners) I hope to preserve my dance culture's integrity and to continue conversation with those who desire to learn more about it.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

There is no question that the use of smartphone and social media has shifted the music, dance styles, and social dynamics of the Rave scene. Elements of the culture have been appropriated and commercialized by alcohol and energy drink vendors. The use of smartphones at Raves is one of the main catalysts for the dramatic shift in participation. People's conscious awareness of surveillance has prompted digiphrenia, a subconscious behavioral pattern that caters to less dancing and more social networking at Raves. And when digiphrenia enters the Rave scene, that Rave is no longer a place to exercise freedom of expression through dance or vibing. This is clearly evident in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

At one time, Rave represented a place of spiritual dance practice where strangers were free to vibe and communicate in a safe environment accompanied by electronic dance music. From the 1990s through the early 2000s, Raves commonly took place in underground venues like warehouses, wheat fields, and abandoned buildings. These venues, which were separate from the pressures of outside mainstream influence, fostered a strong sense of community and togetherness that aspired to transcend race, cultural and religious differences. Before people started using smartphones at Rave events, Rave dance styles remained underground, and a mystery to those who were not practitioners. Smartphone video footage of Rave events is constantly posted on sites like Facebook and Instagram.

What has emerged as a result of this new media technology invasion is a new generation of dancers who choose to broadcast their creative dance styles from the

privacy of their own homes, one of the few places left where privacy still exists. Consequently, the participation at Raves has been redefined.

Perception Is Key

American Studies Professor David Goldberg says:

It is almost impossible to judge across generations or to create a natural hierarchy, because one person's emotional investment is real even if another doesn't recognize, respect or endorse the triggers or context. The groups of kids who take "selfies" (photos of themselves) at the Skrillex, Rusk or Deadmau5 show are experiencing an emotional investment that is real for them (and also pleasurable, so worth repeating) even if it appears thin to us, (David Goldberg Interview).

This means that researchers must be cognizant of personal pre-conceived notions, beliefs, and experiences that influence us. In the end, an individual's perception is what will compel him or her to dance or not at an EDM event. Yes, smartphones are present, but they are not necessarily the only factor. Dance space is often a major issue. Akela Celebrado was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawai'i and has been breakdancing since 1996. As a veteran House dancer and B-boy, Celebrado attests to the issues of space and time by stating: "If there's no room for me to dance, I'm not happy." This is why he chooses places, such as the streets of Waikiki, to dance and perform, where there is room, and where people do not judge in negative ways. "They come out to see us. Everyone always leaves excited and feeling good."

Further Research Is Needed

This researcher's goal is to work towards a Ph.D. and to continue research on technology's influence on electronic music culture. In-depth interviews with today's generation of EDM fans, dancers, DJs, practitioners, etc. need to be conducted. It is imperative to blast away my outside perspective from what is considered outdated perspective. Yes, I am still an insider in terms of the culture and dances I practice, but I have discovered that I am an outsider of the new culture, in many ways because I choose to be.

When analyzing a dance culture and its fundamental shifts it is necessary to take an interdisciplinary approach to the subject. In *Dance [and] Theory* by Gabrielle Brandstetter, the author states that in many dance cultures "theory" is not presented in a written, scholarly or classroom contextual setting. "Within a colonizing framework, theory promotes strategies of 'othering' and, of course, has the power of 'othering'" (1). This "othering" can act as a form of colonization, and consequently makes the body and dance the "other." This article tackles early definitions of the word "theory," as well as its connotative values to specific time periods. When I continue my research on Rave culture, Brandstetter's writings will provide a foundational lens, since much of the dance associated with Raves are considered 'other.'

Possibly the most important thing I have learned throughout this entire research process of reading, writing, and interviewing is that the conversation is a continuing process. This thesis does not answer the reasons for why things are the way they are in the Rave scene. Nor does it suggest how new or old dancers should feel about the aesthetics of the culture itself. My personal practice will continue to inform me as a

writer, scholar and teacher. It is up to each dancer to preserve dance culture's roots, its essence and integrity, while simultaneously remaining open minded to change and new ideas that emerge within the field. After all, I Rave, therefore I embrace PLUR in all aspects of my life.

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Glossary

Acid: Also known as LSD: Lysergic Acid Diethylamide; a powerful hallucinogen commonly taken to induce a state of synesthesia and euphoria.

Acid House: The popular electronic music genre in Europe in the mid-late 1980s that was the predecessor of Rave culture.

All-Styles: A term used to describe fusing multiple dance styles together in a free-form improvised dance set.

B-boying: B-boy stands for Break boy. B-boying, the verb, was the original term used to describe a Hip Hop dancer's improvised footwork and acrobatics to the music played at a Hip Hop party.

Beat Matching: The smooth transition from one music track to the next on a vinyl record.

Breakdancing: This was the mainstream media's interpretation used to describe B-boying.

Breakdowns: The section of a piece of electronic music where the sounds are decreased or subtracted in layers with the progression of each measure.

Break Beats: A genre of electronic music that originally stems from Hip Hop breaks and its syncopated/broken beat structure.

Builds: The section of an electronic music piece of music that starts with one layer of sounds, and progressively adds more layers of sounds with each measure.

Candy: Slang term for a Raver's décor; the multi-colored children's beads laced together to form bracelets, necklets, and arm bands. Candy Kid: Slang term used to describe a Raver. The term was commonly used in the Midwest Rave scene in the late 90s and early 2000s.

CDJs: These are turntables that use recordable CDs instead of vinyl to play electronic music or Hip Hop.

Decks: Slang term for a DJs' turntables.

Drops: The point in the piece of electronic music where the first burst of bass is released.

Drum and Bass: A subgenre of electronic music with ultra-fast syncopated beats. The beat structure stems from Hip Hop and breaks, but the melodies usually consist of industrial techno, acid house, and sometimes (but rarely) ambient, progressive rhythms from trance.

DubStep: A genre of EDM with strong Reggae influence and electronic music synthesized rhythms. It blends techno rhythms and bass.

Ecstasy: A methamphetamine drug composed of MDMA, a substance that releases all the serotonin in the brain all at once, creating a state of pure euphoria.

Electro-breaks: A subgenre of Hip Hop music from the 1980s that used synthesized melodies and syncopated beats to create a unique sound, often blended/mixed by DJs and producers with funk, soul and rock music.

Flow: The ability for a dancer to effortlessly execute a specific style of dance.

Funk Dance: Slang term for freestyle dancing based loosely off of Locking, Popping and other Hip Hop dance forms.

Glowsticks: A common Raver prop used to enhance the imaginary lines and tracers created from Liquid Dancing.

Funky House: A subgenre of House music that combines disco rhythms with modern electronic music samples.

Glowsticking: Slang term used to describe liquid dancing using glowsticks to create visual light tracers and patterns.

GoGo Dancers: Female dancers dressed in skimpy, erotic clothing who dance seductively on tabletops.

Hard House: A subgenre of House music that is typically a lot faster in tempo than normal House beats; the rhythms have a combination of ambient, industrial and disco samples.

Headliner: A big-name, special Guest DJ well known within the EDM scene; usually flown out from the mainland or elsewhere.

House: A genre of electronic music derived from Disco. It encompasses a four/four beat structure with electronically synthesized snares, bass beats, and melodies. House is also used as slang to describe the entire dance culture associated with the music.

House Heads: Someone who is deeply rooted in House Dance Culture and all its qualities.

Housing: Slang for House dancing. A unique form of vibing and dancing specifically catered to House music. The term Housing originally stems from the early disco era.

Jamming: Dancing with other dancers in a non-competitive way.

Liquid dancing: The foundation dance style associated with Rave Culture; the dance creates invisible lines outside and around the body using fluid-like movements with the hands, wrists, fingers, elbows and forearms.

Lofting: The original style of House dancing.

Mixing: The blending of two different tracks, or pieces of music to create a new sound.

Music Heads: Someone who not only listens to a lot of music and possesses an understanding of how the music is structured, and therefore able to manipulate it in such a way on the turntables to produce a new, unique sound.

Nordatreking: A series of steps in Rave dancing, similar to the Running Man, a form of shuffling. The main difference is brining the knees much higher and swinging the arms as if you are marching.

Popping: A Hip Hop style dance that encompasses muscle flexing, purposeful isolation of the limbs and joints, and postural gesturing.

Rails: A foundation concept in Liquid Dancing referring to one hand or set of fingers following the other along a pre-determined path in space. Rave:

Raver: A dancer, participant and practitioner of Rave culture. Ravers generally embody their own unique dance styles while living their life through the philosophy of PLUR: Peace, Love, Unity, and Respect.

Resident DJs: Resident DJs: DJs who are regulars; they routinely play/spin records at a nightclub. They are well-known to people who attend on a regular basis.

Rolling: Slang term for being high on the popular Rave drug MDMA, also known as ecstasy.

Sampling: Sections of sounds from music, movies, television commercials, or any other digitally reproduced sound placed into a recordable format (i.e. a vinyl record, tape, CD, etc.)

Scratching: The practice of using the needle on a turntable to create distorted sounds from the vinyl record played.

Scene: A slang term often used to describe particular music and dance cultures associated with practitioners, dancers, DJs, promoters, fans, etc.

Set: The time and order of music that a DJ spins.

Shuffling: A style of dance commonly performed at a Rave. Similar to the Running Man, it involves quickly stomping, stepping and hopping to match a 4/4 beat from electronic music.

Spin: Slang for playing vinyl records or CDs.

Techno: A genre of electronic music based on 4/4 beat structure, similar to house, but with more emphasis on industrial, synthesized tones, rhythms and melodies. The original genre of electronic music, through which all other genres stem from; Consisting primarily of electronically generated sounds sampled and produced by computers.

Ticking: A style of popping that mimics the visual affect of a body walking through a strobe light.

Tracks: Slang term for a vinyl record or CD or piece of electronic or Hip Hop music.

Tutting: Creating geometric shapes with the hands, fingers, wrists and arms.

Trance: A genre of electronic music based on 4/4 best structure with ambient, synthesized rhythms, in addition to long builds and breakdowns.

Trainspotters: Those who can hear an electronic music piece or track and know exactly who produced it, the specific genre, and its origins.

Waving: A Hip Hop dance style that creates waves through the body; the term is often associated as an essential element of Popping.

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Appendix

Throughout my fieldwork I documented my personal experiences. I have included a few of these notations in my appendix to demonstrate the personal narrative perspective I reflected on in my research.

Journal Notes #1 Excerpt:

The following is an account and story of my first rave.

On January 22, 2001 a caravan of friends and I drove two and a half hours from my hometown of Manhattan, Kansas to Kansas City, Missouri. My heart raced in anticipation of the night. I only had a vague impression of what we were about to experience. The flyer was a glossy three by five inch cardstock that stated the name of the event in Graffiti-style print: Krush Groove.⁷⁹ “You’ll see, David, it’ll blow your mind,” one of my good friends said to me as we pulled up to the abandoned warehouse. I could see the line of 100 or more people, all dressed in baggy clothing, colorful shirts, and their arms decorated with multi-colored beads, which they called candy.⁸⁰

As my friends and I got to the line, I began to hear the booming bass from deep within the venue. It rumbled as loud as a freight train, and I could already feel the bass moving through me. We finally entered the warehouse. I remember the green laser lights and strobes illuminated a series of cascading images of dancers grooving to Trance music. I had never seen anything like it. Each dancer moved like they were made of water. Every person I watched danced by

⁷⁹ Krush Groove: A reference to the name of a 1985 Warner Brothers Hip Hop movie that explored the elements of Djing, graffiti, MCing, and Breakdancing.

⁸⁰ Candy: Slang term for a Raver’s décor; the multi-colored children’s beads laced together to form bracelets, necklets, and arm bands.

themselves, and for themselves, yet there was a strong sense of collective unity and positive energy.

This unspoken connection of positive energy, which I understood as a vibe inspired by P.L.U.R (Peace, Love, Unity, Respect), oozed out the pores of my fellow Ravers. Many people were under the influence of ecstasy, and at several points I was asked if I was rolling⁸¹ (or high on ecstasy). That night I chose sobriety, mainly because the experience was new, and powerful enough to stimulate my imagination and creativity. I mimicked some of the dance styles I encountered that night. For the first time in my life, I was in an environment where I felt free to express myself through dance and free-form movement. It did not matter that I lacked the technical skills the veteran Ravers embodied. I was having fun dancing and vibing. Krush Groove was my first Rave. And the vibe was alive.

Journal Notes Excerpt #2:

My First EDM Event: Redefining P.L.U.R.

Attitudes associated with PLUR have been replaced by what I affectionately entitle: SUCK: Seduction Under Concealed Knowledge. The consumer is *seduced* by manipulated images, *under* the umbrella of a name associated with youth cultural while the motivations remain *concealed* by the corporations that possess the *knowledge* to attract us (the consumers). The following narrative explores how Rave has been replaced by EDM, PLUR redefined by corporations into SUCK, and how current practitioners have redefined participation through smartphone use.

⁸¹ Rolling: Slang term for being high on the popular Rave drug MDMA, also known as ecstasy.

*On October 28, 2012 I attended an event in Honolulu Hawai'i at Aloha Tower. Haunted Wonderland was **technically not a Rave, but it was my first EDM event.** I observed a group of friends from a few feet away. I was dancing, but carefully watching their body language. To me, their posturing and facial expressions appeared as if they were wondering what they were doing was cool enough, and if their image looked good enough to post on Facebook. After a brief conversation, it was determined by the group that their next task was to find the best place take a picture for social networking purposes. Instead of dancing, they concerned themselves with a two-dimensional image that served as the main source of evidence that each individual was physically present at the right place, and the right time.*

*Suddenly, a small circle of dancers emerged next to the group I was watching. One dancer at a time improvised his or her unique dance style to the rhythms of electronic music. Yet, the same group of teenagers I had observed walked around the dance circle, completely ignoring the amazing display of physical genius that took place among the dancers, and instead continued to stare at their smartphones. And with no vibe – no engaged-spectatorship – to fuel the dancers, the dance circle ended as abruptly as it began. I call this **Peace Redefined.** Instead of being attracted to the diversity and creativity of others on the dance floor, the individual remains at peace with himself in an isolation zone. Simultaneously, the corporate sponsored event has **seduced** the attendee into believing what they are doing is cool and normal.*

*Next, the headline DJ enters the stage. A fired-up MC yells at the top of his lungs “Waz up Hawai’i, how y’all feeling!? Are you ready!? Put yo hands together and show your love for Jason Blakemore!” Fireworks and various pyrotechnics light up the stage, and the majority of the crowd began to pump their fists as Jason Blakemore drops the first beat. I call this **Love Redefined**. The participants, now morphed into spectators, “show their love” by staring directly at the DJ for his entire set, jumping up and down, pointing and pumping their fists as if to demand “entertain me.” Instead of being guided by PLUR, attendees are **under** the influence of an MC with an agenda: Praise the DJ.*

*I did my best to blend in with the crowd as I observed carefully. Of course, in order to do this I had to dance less, in other words, play it cool as if I was there because it was the popular thing to do. I noticed with several groups that any time someone even thought about deviating from their social click, he or she was pulled back either through the call of the group photo op, or the vibrating buzz of their individual smartphone alerting them of the latest social update. I call this **Unity Redefined**. It was as if the people said “We all came here together, it’s the best thing ever, and this photo and video clip proves it!” And **concealed** within these social network images taken at the event is the product of corporate manipulation: images of a happy crowd that will be sold back to the same attendees in order to get them to attend the next event.*

Throughout the night, individuals flocked with their friends inside the venue via a pre-determined path that perfectly fit their social dynamic collective. Inevitably, they all ended up at the bar. Teenagers ordered energy drinks (like

*Monster and Redbull since they were the sponsors of this event), while the adults ordered alcohol. At one point the MC came on the Mic and said “Last call for alcohol, tip your bartender!” I call this **Respect Redefined**. Instead of respecting your fellow Ravers and venue through positive energy and dance, you show your respect through the purchase of a substance (alcohol). When EDM attendees purchase alcohol, they do not realize (or care) they have been tricked into attending an event only cares about profit, and only the managers and corporate sponsors of the event possess this crucial knowledge: the truth is that PLUR has been replaced by SUCK.*

Journal Notes Excerpt #3:

Before the disassociation described by digiphrenia, Rave culture was a physical/spiritual experience for practitioners. What is endangered is the loss of human camaraderie. The following is another personal narrative experience from one of my journal entries.

I am dancer free to move in an environment filled with nothing but positive energy. Every track of electronic music bliss echoes through my veins as I ride home. My muscles, limbs and joints ache with fatigue at the end of the night, but it is worth it. Conversations between strangers, now my friends, fill my soul with gratitude. I now belong to a collective unit, a culture, and am living a lifestyle I never thought possible. I am not just a breakdancing dude, I am a Raver, and I Rave. Thank you to everyone who made this possible. (David Heller, 2002).

Endnotes

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