From a Postmodernist Sound to a Decolonized Dancefloor

From Glitch to Deconstructed Club Music

Nadine Schildhauer

Over the last decade, a lot has been written in music journalism about »genre-bending«, »hybrid« and »redefined« club music, often brought together under the umbrella term of deconstructed club music. The style is only now beginning to be analyzed in an academic context. Because of its name, it is often associated with postmodernist theorists. A closer examination shows that this association is misleading. A genre which *does* relate and refer to postmodernist theorists is glitch, which derives from an art practice that deconstructs the object fetish surrounding vinyl records and CDs. The focus is on the deconstruction of the tool and its authority and sound, embedded in a time when less than one percent of the world's population had access to the internet. Glitch artists like Oval were not concerned with their sound's signifying quality but instead focused on a materialist critique of the music-making tools in and of themselves in the form of a melodious sound design. In contrast, deconstructed club music uses the tool – in this case a CDJ – as a means to an end: to facilitate the cut-up technique, which is often what is being referred to as the »deconstructed« element of the music, that is meant to disrupt the listener. I will argue that the hybrid sound understood as deconstructed club music, with all its cultural references and signifiers, goes beyond deconstructivism and attempts to sonically decolonize the dancefloor.

Crack, error, failure: What's all this glitch?

In its glitches and drones we could hear the digital world breaking down and re-assembling itself.
Mark Richardson[1]

Glitch as a music genre emerged in the mid-1990s, reaching its peak in the early to mid-2000s.[2] Glitch – according to Kim Cascone's famous text »The Aesthetics of Failure« – is a »post-digital«[3] genre and movement, and »an umbrella term for alternative, largely dance-based electronic music (including house, techno, electro, drum'n'bass, ambient)«.[4] Cascone calls it »failure«,[5] Caleb Kelly »cracked media«,[6] and Stephen Gard »Error«,[7] while Caleb Stuart names it »damaged sounds«.[8] Alongside glitch it is also known as »microwave, DSP, sinecore, and microscopic music«.[9] Glitch artists and bands include Carsten Nicolai (alias Alva Noto), Kim Cascone, and Oval with other important glitch artists' work appearing on the compilations *Clicks and Cuts 1 & 2*.[10]

A notable label for glitch was the Frankfurt-based *Mille Plateaux*, run by Achim Szepanski between 1994 and 2004. Named after *A Thousand Plateaus*, the label applied Gilles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's philosophical theory to their process of sound production and linked it to the concept of the *rhizome*.[11] The historical foundation of glitch has been widely discussed (by Cascone, Demers, Kelly, Diefenbach, and Reynolds, for example); of key importance is Kelly's *Cracked Media: The Sound of Malfunction*, which covers the concept and history of cracked media and how it is connected to the glitch movement and genre. According to Kelly and Cascone, by the beginning of the 1990s electronic dance music had become predictable, due to the increasingly standard use of a sampler/sequencer software, i.e. Cubase and others.[12] Synthesizers and other sound machines have always had an existing set-up and structure; musicians can either operate and create music within the existing structure, or they can manipulate or

1 Cf. Richardson 2015.
2 Kelly 2009, 7.
3 Cascone 2000, 12. Cascone explains that he refers to glitch as »post-digital«, »because the revolutionary period of the digital information age has surely passed«.
4 Ibid., 15.
5 Ibid., 13.
6 Ibid., 13.
7 Gard 2004, 1.
8 Stuart 2003, 47.
9 Cascone 2000, 12.
10 Various Artists 2000.
11 Krapp 2011, 143.
12 Kelly 2009, 271; Cascone 2000, 15.

intentionally, incorrectly use the machine. In »A Mille Plateaux Manifesto«, Szepanski states that »program standards CAN AND MUST be transformed«.[13, 14]

Theorizing Pop Music

When interviewed by *Spex* magazine, Szepanski noted that »the music of the whole Occident builds a dispositif, creates a model that filters noise, electrical interference and flows of sound, and so controls what is audible and inaudible«.[15] This dispositif[16] leads to an economy which produces machines that serve the logic of what is considered audible music. The purpose of programs such as Cubase is to create what is considered perfect music: it can connect beats and make sounds fit perfectly together.[17] Companies which sell music programs react to the demands of the composer.[18] Glitch artists understand their approach to using those machines and creating sounds as a countermovement. Mille Plateaux emphasizes »the label's output as the musical praxis to Deleuzian theory, fleshing out concepts such as the rhizome«.[19] This theory can be applied in various ways; in one example, Szepanski argues that the instruments can be given the same status, thereby dismantling the hierarchization of instruments and demanding that they don't lose their heterogeneity. Described as »rhizomatic« by Szepanski, the resulting music often sounds chaotic, with examples found in Krautrock, free jazz, or noise music.[20]

13 Szepanski 2001, 225.

14 While I am not criticizing the glitch scene, which would require a separate analysis, I still want to acknowledge that research has been done in this field: Oval's »narrow focus on technology« and tools as well as their perception as heavily theory focused evoked by their interviews (Bosma 2016, 106) led to a mystified image by fans and music journalists. Their approach was directed towards the »de-mystification« (Cf. Richardson 2015) of any kind of machine-based music and turned into the opposite. Moreover, Hannah Bosmo criticized the glitch scene for mainly including labels, artists, and academics who were cis-male. Considering their »anti-authorial ethics [and] aesthetics or praxis« (Bosma 2016, 107) it seems inconsistent to pay no attention to gender politics and show that despite their political awareness they also had political blind spots.

15 Diefenbach 2017, 16-17.

16 Michel Foucault links the term »dispositif« to his concept of the apparatus, a »heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions« (Foucault 1980, 194), which exercise and structure power.

17 Kelly 2009, 271.

18 Diefenbach 2017, 22.

19 Reynolds 2017, 39.

20 Ibid.

So, how can we describe the dispositifs of Western music? What are its signifiers and points of references? Dispositifs are structured by a disciplinary canon, historical discourse, and the music industry, a structure enforced by universities, state-funded institutions, and industry players. It is therefore relevant to consider the differences in the conception of the various dispositifs between the mid 90s to early 2000s (the era of glitch) – and now. The questions posed by this, relating to the history of the perception of music, however, are beyond the scope of this essay.

I will give an example on how some avant-garde music practices are perceived as »estranging and ›unmusical‹« and their »deliberate push towards estrangement« and »towards treating the listener as if [they] were an object«, which is for Howard Slater »best exampled by noise music«.[21] Slater considers noise not only as a genre, but rather as a style and musical practice. In the anthology *Noise & Capitalism*, Slater describes dispositifs as a practice of »seamless communication« and »the production of subjectivity« with »recognizable significations and symbolizations«[22] – in other words, he means pop songs with recognizable structures and lyrics, such as a song with an intro, a bridge, and repeated refrains about relatable love themes. In contrast to what is expected from conventional definitions of music – characterized by »harmony, chord progression etc«, for Slater, noise refuses to communicate, rejects meaning, and neglects the importance of language.[23] He goes on to say that »with noise there is a disruption of such repressing representations and an embracing of what Guattari has called ›a-signification‹«.[24]

Similarly, the Oval member Markus Popp questions the purpose of a MIDI set-up that allows various pieces of electronic gear to interact like a band. In an interview with Simon Reynolds, Popp says that music software depends on »traditional music syntax and semantics« and continues by saying that »MIDI is basically a music-metaphor in itself, one that's so deplorably dated. It's so constraining in every way, you have to go beyond these protocols«.[25] In this view, electronic music gear is perceived as being a product of a structural system producing and enforcing that, which is considered audible to a majority of people.

Oval is most known for their CD skips, although they were not the first artists to use the technique. Oval reached a broader audience with a relatively new approach. The reason they became so popular in the mid 90s was because they used the crack, clicks, and chatters of damaged CDs to form melodic tracks by sticking to the structure of pop, seamlessly integrating what would usually be considered a distortion but which was here seen as a valid and audible sound. Their music was simply accessible, but at

21 Slater 2009, 157.
22 Ibid., 158.
23 Ibid., 158-159.
24 Ibid., 158.
25 Reynolds 2017, 43.

the same time interesting and new. Their experimentation with damaged CDs was later picked up by Aphex Twin, Autechre, Björk, and many others.

Oval's Systemisch and Yasunao Tone's »Wounded CDs«

Oval's output follows in the footsteps of musicians such as Christian Marclay, who placed items on vinyl records to make the needle skip, and Yasunao Tone, who placed tape on CDs to disturb the error-correction system and create glitches. Tone was part of the Japanese Fluxus movement, whose sole purpose in the 1980s was to create »a performance of a composition which is indeterminate of its performance«, meaning that each performance was unique.[26] Marclay was one of first artists in the 1970s outside of hip-hop to incorporate turntables into his artistic practice[27] and used music »as a form of readymade«.[28] Tone and Marclay were interested in the art practice of subverting the object fetishization and cultural position of vinyls and CDs: the idea that they must be kept spotless so the music plays flawlessly. Both of them work with the sounds of damaged records caused by »breaking« the data.[29] Marclay, Oval, and Tone all expand the function of the turntable and CD player by going beyond their standardized purposes.

> It is the defects or errors in both systems that are employed, those sounds that are not meant to be part of the listening experience. […] The seamless, high-fidelity listening experience (the very reason the CD player and its digital audio mediation were developed) is broken by these composers who seek to find new sounds and expanded practices in the systems' cracks and breaks.[30]

Whereas Oval created a planned environment and reproduced clicks and cracks during live sets to form pop tracks, Marclay and Tone weren't interested in repetition or reproduction, instead focusing on damaged sounds that emerged by chance.[31] By making pinholes on bits of tape and putting it on the CD's readable surface, Tone created a change in the »pitch, timbre, rhythm, and speed of the original piece«.[32]

26 Cage 1973, 39.
27 Demers 2010, 55.
28 Ferguson 2003, 40.
29 Kelly 2009, 215; Stuart 2003, 48; Cascone 2000, 12.
30 Kelly 2009, 215-216.
31 Ibid., 218.
32 Ibid., 236.

> Tone, much like [David] Ranada, had devised a way to override the error-correction system, and the mechanism designed to allow seamless playback was forced to glitch. The idea of a playback technology that could play pure clean audio was displaced by Tone's noisy, glitching CDs. The silence of digital audio was made to produce noise; the purity of the new medium was damaged, and this technical imperfection was exploited as a performance tool […].[33]

While Oval used a sound art practice similar to Tone's described above, Tone's »Wounded CDs« relied heavily on live performance, improvisation, and the uncertain results of how the CD player would process the damaged sections. Tone's performances were meant to be disturbing.[34]

Oval's album *Systemisch* can be placed at the intersection of pop and sound art. Released by Mille Plateux in 1994, the album manages to bridge a usually annoying skip sound with ambient-like electronica, and consists of carefully selected CD glitches from existing albums, which the band members had borrowed from the library. By using existent music and adding neither vocals nor instruments, Oval complicates the sound's initial meaning. They put the technical aspect of the music in the forefront: everything is based on samples and the CDs are being fast-forwarded, looped, and pitched using a regular consumer CD player.[35] Interestingly, through its unintended use, the CD player itself becomes the instrument here, what Cascone means when he says, »The medium is no longer the message in glitch music: the tool has become the message«.[36]

Popp explains that Oval's approach is to »overcome the manufacturer's distinction between ›features‹ and ›bugs‹«, with their interest being to mess with »standardization«.[37] Popp stresses that »the important point was that the CD player has no distinction if it's an error or a proper part of the recording, it's just doing calculations, algorithms«.[38] Oval doesn't ironize the music – they ironize the machines. They remove the authority of the machine and take apart and rearrange the music being used – quite literally deconstructing it. Kelly describes their method as a »reflexive awareness«.[39] Oval doesn't understand their releases as being music with a »capital M«, but rather as »sound-design«[40] or »file management«.[41] Their approach looks at music on a meta level. *Systemisch* poses questions like: Who is the author/subject? What is music? Who writes the codes? How can we go beyond the binary coding of 0 and 1? Oval's primary

33 Ibid., 239.
34 Ibid., 265.
35 Ibid., 56.
36 Cascone 2000, 17.
37 Reynolds 2017, 43-44.
38 Ibid.
39 Kelly 2009, 267.
40 Reynolds 2017, 43.
41 Cf. Iglis 2002.

interest lies in »sound recording, storage, and reproduction«; they are interested in a »critique of the entire system of recorded music«.[42]

When looking at glitch, a genre which became big in the mid-1990s, it is important to consider the critical mood at the time. It is interesting to note that researchers such as Kim Cascone described glitch as being »post digital« despite mass digitization having yet to occur: technology and algorithms for data, processing massive amounts of data (big data), had not been developed. According to the World Bank, less than 1% of the world population used the internet in 1995; by 2017, that number was up almost 50%.[43] Mark Richardson describes the spirit of the time accurately: »Large and ominous shifts were ahead, but we weren't quite sure when or how they would occur; culture was oriented to the future«.[44]

Deconstructed Club Music [Working title]

[W]e were all young, depressed, self-destructive, couldn't see an end to it, we were in debt from school or we had dreams that we couldn't afford to bring to life. You couldn't actually visualize your future, and what does that sound like? Pure fucking chaos.
Venus X[45]

There are seemingly no direct links between glitch and deconstructed club music (henceforth DCM). So why compare them? For a start, while both styles are separate in origin, there are in fact similarities: both styles work with an archive and a palette of sounds that are being recontextualized. Glitch focuses on the tool, the sound of the tool, and sonically critiques the tool, while in DCM (when being created live by DJs) the tools – here CDJs – are seen »as musical instruments«,[46] but instead of connecting two songs through »beat-matching, they'd use the cue buttons to loop and layer phrases manually«.[47] Once again, it's the unintended use of the machine that creates a new sound.
DCM is not a definable musical genre – there is DCM as a DJing style, and then there is DCM as a genre-like style of music produced by a community of DJs, cultural activists, labels, and collectives. Nor is it tied to a specific place, as gqom is to Durban or grime to London. The sound is a composite of several, loosely defined genres, and a typical

42 Cf. Richardson 2015.
43 Cf. World Bank, n.d.
44 Cf. Richardson 2015.
45 Cf. Pearl 2017.
46 Cf. Lhooq 2017.
47 Cf. Pearl 2017.

DCM set may combine Jersey club, ballroom, reggaeton, tribal, future bass, jungle, and dubstep. In threads on the social news aggregator *Reddit*, fans describe Jam City's debut album *Classical Curves* (2012) as a starting point,[48] although this is debatable considering that the seemingly distinctive characteristics detected by the music press come largely from Jersey club, which first emerged in the late 1990s. A common trope surrounding DCM is the reluctance among producers, DJs, and fans to define and name the sound, which is accompanied by the fear of stereotyping it. As of today, the notion of »deconstructed club music« is still considered a working title.

Despite the fact that DCM as a DJing style began in 2008, the term has only appeared in an academic text once,[49] and only a few individual releases have been reviewed academically. Among those referenced are Chino Amobi's *Airport Music for Black Folk* (2016), in Marie Thompson's essay about »Whiteness and the Ontological Turn«,[50] and Elysia Crampton's *Demon City* (2016) in David Bell's work about utopias.[51] Since there are only a few papers on DCM, I will now give a quick overview of the sound's starting point, influential club nights, and key protagonists.

Some of the early driving forces of the scene were Kingdom, Total Freedom, and Venus X. Kingdom put out releases on the London based *Night Slugs*[52] label before launching the American spin-off label *Fade To Mind* in Los Angeles in 2011.[53] From 2008 until 2010, Total Freedom hosted a club night called *Wildness* in cooperation with Fade To Mind in Los Angeles. In New York, DJ Venus X launched the queer party series *GHE20G0TH1K* in 2009, while Shayne Oliver, fashion label co-founder of *Hood by Air*, played a key role in shaping the fashion codes of the scene.

A common theme in DCM is the importance of collectives and the lack of a clear geographical hub. In Mexico City, Mexican Jihad, Fausto Bahía, Lao, and Paul Marmota co-founded the collective N.A.A.F.I. and organized their first parties in 2010, later founding a label and also beginning a monthly radio show on *NTS*. In 2012, under the direction of Dan DeNorch and Michael Ladner, the club night and label *Janus* kicked off in Berlin. In Stockholm, the crew around Dinamarca and Ghazal founded the label *Staycore* in 2014, which also had a radio show on the now-defunct radio station Berlin Community Radio. Also important for the scene are the Bala Club collective

48 Cf. Sheepsaysmoo 2018.

49 Frankel 2019, 16.

50 Thompson 2017, 277.

51 Bell 2017, 118.

52 London DJs and producers Bok Bok and L-Vis 1990, from the Night Slugs collective, which started in 2008 as a club night and shortly after became a label, probably wouldn't consider themselves DCM, but can be considered as affiliates because of their mix of musical influences, which range from »Baltimore breaks, Detroit ghetto-tech [to] the footwork/ghetto house hybrids« (Warren, redbullmusicacademy.com). They also regularly host a radio show on the community radio station Rinse FM.

53 Cf. Reynaldo 2019.

founded in London in 2016, which comprises a party night, label and NTS radio show; the label *Halcyon Veil* founded by Rabit in 2015; and the collectives NON Worldwide and Club Chai.

The sound of hope and apocalypse

What is today known as deconstructed club music has existed for roughly over a decade and is embedded in a technological sphere fundamentally different from 1995: if we return to the questions posed by glitch, such as »Who is the author?«, »What is music?«, and »Who writes the codes?«, it is clear that these questions derive from a different time. Computer-generated music, standardization, and the homogenization of sound no longer belong to a future which we have to be warned about: music no longer needs to be written by humans (see machine learning), and large platforms and labels profit from it and adapt their content to our habits. Welcome to platform capitalism, a term coined by Nick Srnicek.[54] Music platforms such as Spotify are on the rise and not just as services which provide customers with music: Spotify is one of the driving forces behind machine-learned and AI music[55] and already generates their own music, which they place in their biggest and most listened-to playlists.[56] Nowadays, data is the biggest currency, and platforms such as Spotify, Amazon, and Netflix are not only adapting to our habits, but actively reinforcing and shaping our taste in music, books, and TV shows, all the while nonchalantly redefining ownership by rebranding it as »the sharing economy, the on-demand economy, the next industrial revolution«. Only a few years ago, people – predominantly *white* and wealthy – owned different media: word processors, mp3s or CDs and DVDs. Today everything is streamed, rented, and »shared« (with whom?); if these companies go bankrupt, our music libraries and playlists will vanish along with them.

As previously mentioned before, the origins of DCM can be traced back to around 2008/2009 – the time of the financial crisis and the subsequent Great Recession of 2007-2009, which was followed by restrictive austerity politics and rising student debts. When interviewed, GHE20G0TH1K co-founder Venus X said of this period that »No one had jobs. [I]magine DJing from 2009 to 2012[57] it sounded like the apocalypse«.[58] Not to mention that many of the key DCM artists came of age or were born after 9/11, which

54 Cf. Srnicek 2016.

55 »[F]or the album Hello World which was made by the Spotify-assembled collective called SKYGGE. [Francois] Pachet claims it is the ›first AI composed album of music‹, already using this sacredness of the new, and the magic of a ›judgement-free aesthetic‹ to help sell the work« (Frankel 2019, 90).

56 Ibid.

57 Srnicek 2016, 56.

58 Cf. Pearl 2017.

had a formative effect on their lives – a world shaped by mass surveillance, heavily controlled borders, and a hostile environment for racialized people.

DCM started as a DJing technique: beats and vocals are cut into pieces, sampled live, and then rearranged, but instead of smoothly connecting all of the parts, the songs that emerge are in *staccato* style, sounding like patches in the process of being sewn together. Sometimes, several tracks of different genres are being simultaneously layered, looped, and pitched, with effects thrown in on top. On top of this, the idea of beats and tempo needing to match is no longer a given.[59] One of DCM's distinctive features is the sudden cuts and breaks that are sometimes caused by pushing the cue button of the CDJ several times in quick succession. In an interview, Janus alumna Lotic states that her style is »a complete rejection of smoothness«.[60] The specific splicing technique only plays tracks for a short time, strings samples together, raises, and lowers the BPM and is characterized by velocity and inventiveness – exemplified by Total Freedom and other DJs who play at GHE20G0TH1K. It's *supposed* to be disruptive. CDJs provide immediate access to large sound archives stored on USB drives and allow the user to take tracks apart on the spot and mash them up with other vocal samples and beats: the specific sound emerging from this technique can also be found in tracks produced outside the club, which are also usually heavily fractured. These tracks are dissected, superimposed, and mixed with the artist's own audio recordings and field recordings, and aren't limited to one genre. Here, deconstruction is meant both literally and is in reference to poststructuralist analytical methods by »using the terminology of 20th century French philosophers«.[61] However, the association with the theory is also misleading.

Decolonizing the dance floor

Despite the DJ technique and recording practice being connected (at least in spirit) to Jacques Derrida's method of deconstruction,[62] the style is also closely linked to *Postcolonial Studies*: Chino Amobi and Angel Ho refer to »an experience of colonial and personal trauma«[63] and to artists »using sound as their primary media, to articulate the visible and invisible structures that create binaries in society, and in turn distribute power« and »creating sound opposing contemporary canons«.[64] On his album *Paradiso* (2016), Amobi depicts his soundscape as a fictional territory, and remarks that

59 Cf. Lhooq 2017.
60 Ibid.
61 Cf. Harper 2015.
62 Cf. Derrida 1967.
63 Cf. Lozano 2016.
64 Cf. NON 2020.

»it's interesting to think of sound itself as a territory. That way, you can appoint yourself as your own governing body creatively«.[65] Writers such as Reynolds[66] and Frankel[67] perceive the militant sound aesthetic as being »dystopian« and »hostile«, but Amobi primarily sees hope in his music: »We're protecting one another and looking out for one another, so it's this symbol of unity. It's like we're our own troops. We are our own people, and we are together«.[68]

> [J]ust because my music and art sounds / looks dark doesn't mean its dystopic. And if it is »dark« I see a great amount of hope and new use in darkness. The idea that light or harmonious music/aesthetics is connected to optimism as an end doesn't go far enough.[69]

In *Paradiso*, Amobi creates a fictional space that he wishes to exist in the material world, a characteristic often found in postcolonial theory. According to Johannes Ismaiel-Wendt, this reflects the »opposite tendency to topophilia«, closely linked to the experience of the diaspora and »motion-oriented« vocabulary[70] reflected in notions such as the »third space«,[71] treks,[72] or routes,[73] which exists in contrast to the idea of a static or pure culture. Pop culture cannot be understood as something »pure«, existing outside of Europe or America, but rather as embodying the aesthetic traditions and legacies of colonialism. Amobi's territory is a non-place[74] shaped by hope, fear, and violence.

Marie Thompson compares Chino Amobi's previous album *Airport Music for Black Folk* with Lawrence English's *Airport Symphony* (2007),[75] albeit noting that English's aesthetic is primarily ambient in comparison to Chino Amobi's more disruptive sound. Despite the stylistic difference, both works are characterized by »noise and electronic hums«.[76] She describes Amobis's tracks as »eerie«, »unnerving«, and »acerbic«, aim-

65 Cf. Electronic Beats 2016.
66 Cf. Reynolds 2017.
67 Frankel 2019, 129.
68 Chino Amobi 2016.
69 Chino Amobi 2019.
70 Ismaiel-Wendt 2011, 38.
71 Bhabha / Rutherford 1990, 211.
72 »Trek«, the exhausting journey, stands for the dynamics and central paradigms of postcolonialism: slavery, diaspora, and migration (translated by N. Schildhauer; Ismaiel-Wendt 2011, 53)
73 Gilroy 1993, 80.
74 »Non-place« is a concept that was developed by Marc Augé (Augé 1992, 122). »Nonplace« is also the name of the label founded by Bernd Friedman in 2000.
75 Thompson 2017, 275-276.
76 Ibid., 277.

ing to present »alternative racialized experiences of airports«.[77] In an *OkayAfrica* interview, Amobi says: »I was thinking a lot about what a black experience is in that space, how it feels to walk through the airport with confidence and not feel like Western culture has superiority over you«.[78] In contrast, English's *Airport Symphony* is a compilation of tracks from eighteen artists based on field recordings – a tribute to Brian Eno. Thompson describes the tracks as depersonalized soundscapes. She links English's ambient aesthetic to a white aurality,[79] which considers noise as something abstract, and »holds apart sound art's abstract materiality from lived sociality«,[80] an observation which applies in a very similar way to Oval's output. Relatedly, Oval's *Systemisch*, despite their criticism of standardization, has a pleasing ambient aesthetic. On *Paradiso*, Amobi makes reference to Elysia Crampton's second album *Demon City* with both albums featuring different versions of the track »Children Of Hell«. Crampton centers her album around the brutal murder of Aymara indigenous revolutionary leader Bartolina Sisa by the Spanish colonial powers in Bolivia, creating a tangible narrative and bringing mythical history back to the present. Crampton, who identifies as Ayamara and trans, recounts in an interview that »the logic of colonialism pervades everything in the society of settlers - not just one world, but the whole universe, the past and the future«.[81] One sound element she uses throughout the album is an undefined laughter, seemingly bodiless, with no given reason or cause for its presence, which has the effect of being both confusing and ambiguous as well as haunting. The mixture and distortion of folkloric genres such as Huayño, cumbia, and crunk, a drum-machine-heavy, hip-hop genre, creates a flustered feeling in the listener, and it's precisely the cut-up juxtaposition of samples, vocals, poems, and field recordings that run counter to the homogeneity of music industry sounds. Crampton's *Demon City* doesn't portray a consistent or pure picture of the Aymara, but instead develops a sonic aesthetic that attempts to make hybridity[82] audible – recalling the »treks«[83] through reference to her heritage and colonial history, like the track »After Woman (for Bartolina Sisa)«

77 Ibid.

78 Cf. Remi 2016.

79 Thompson 2017, 273.

80 Ibid., 278.

81 Schildhauer 2017, 91.

82 I understand the term »hybridity« as a reaction to Edwards Said's criticism of the Western understanding of a generic, exoticizing Orientalism that imagines the Orient geographically and culturally (Said 1978, 73). I refer to Homi K. Bhabha's use of the term, since Elysia Crampton operates far from the world music and major label industry: »hybridity to me is the ›third space‹ which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom. The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation« (Bhabha 1990, 211).

83 Cf. Ismaiel-Wendt 2011.

while blending and layering them with immaterial voices, distorted sounds, electronic clatters, sound effects, and loops. In this mode, deconstructed club music references the aesthetic experience of diaspora and movement instead of tracing it back to one geographical determination. Through this, I understand *Paradiso* and *Demon City* as attempts to decolonize the notion of electronic dance music.

Conclusion: Hybridity in sound

In this article, I have sought to establish the sociopolitical context in which glitch and deconstructed club music exist and show that – despite their common reference to postmodernism[84] – both contexts constitute a different set of questions: there is a sonic shift from »Who is author?« and »What is music?« to »What does the apocalypse sound like« or »What does sonic hybridity mean?«. I have argued that deconstructed club music creates a fictional space shaped by experiences, desires, and hopes, which are made audible through DJ sets and tracks using real world sounds such as sirens, laughter, vocals, poems, and radio voices that work as signifiers and create meaning. This leads to an apparent contradiction: what Amobi describes as hopeful doesn't necessarily appear enjoyable to the listener. As the name of his label (*NON*) reveals, *Demon City* and *Paradiso* may refer to geographies but are in fact non-places. I have sought to emphasize that hybridity – here an important reference towards postcolonialism – isn't just defined by a mix of genres: instead, it's the aforementioned signifiers that make the music ambiguous and layered. Genres only allude to potential geographies, but don't appear as actual places, instead forming (for now) in the imaginary space.

Sources

Appiah, Kwame Anthony (1991): Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?, in: Critical Inquiry, 17(2), 336-357.

Augé, Marc (1992): Non-Places: An Introduction to Anthropology of Supermodernity, London.

Bell, David M. (2017): Rethinking Utopia: Place, Power, Affect. London.

Bhabha, Homi K. / Rutherford, Jonathan (1990): The Third Space. Interview with Homi Bhabha, in: Rutherford, Jonathan (ed.), Identity: Community, Culture, Difference. London, 207-221.

84 The »post« in postmodernism and postcolonial isn't same, which has been widely discussed, including by Kwame Anthony Appiah (Cf. Appiah 1991).

Bosma, Hannah (2016): Gender and Technological Failures in Glitch Music, in: Contemporary Music Review, 35(1),102-114.
Cage, John (1973): Indeterminacy, in: Silence, London.
Cascone, Kim (2000): The Aesthetics of Failure: ›Post-Digital‹ Tendencies in Contemporary Computer Music, in: Computer Music Journal, 24(4), 12-18.
Chino Amobi (2016): Airport Music for Black Folk, NON, US.
Chino Amobi (2017): Paradiso, NON, US.
Chino Amobi (2019): https://www.instagram.com/chinoamobi/, 11.10.2019.
Deleuze, Gilles / Guattari, Félix (1993): A Thousand Plateaus. Minneapolis.
Derrida, Jacques (1967): Of Grammatology, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (trans.), London.
Demers, Joanna (2010): Listening through the Noise: The Aesthetics of Experimental Electronic Music, Oxford.
Diefenbach, Katja (2017): Making Sound Streams Quake, in: Anz, Philipp / Walder, Patrick (eds.) Technodeleuze and Mille Plateaux. Achim Szepanski's Interviews (1994-1996), Reggio Emilia, 15-30.
Electronic Beats (2016): Chino Amobi On The Development Of His Music-Making Process, https://www.electronicbeats.net/native-instruments-komplete-sketches-chino-amobi/, 29.09.2019.
Elysia Crampton (2016): Elysia Crampton Presents: Demon City, Break World Records, US.
Ferguson, Russell (2003): The variety of din, in: Ferguson, Russell (ed.) Christian Marclay, Los Angeles,19-51.
Foucault, Michel (1980): Truth and Power, in: Gordon, Colin (ed.) Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977, Sussex, 109-133.
Frankel, Emile (2019): Hearing the Cloud: Can music help reimagine the future?, Ropley.
Gard, Stephen (2004): Nasty noises: »Error« as a compositional element in contemporary electroacoustic music, Sydney.
Gilroy, Paul (1993): The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness, London.
Harper, Adam (2015): The Voices Disrupting White Supremacy Through Sound, https://www.thefader.com/2015/08/11/non-records-dog-food-music-group-scraaatch, 10.08.2018.
Igles, Sam (2002): Markus Popp: Music As Software, www.soundonsound.com/people/oval-markus-popp, 03.10.2019.
Ismaiel-Wendt, Johannes (2011): tracks'n'treks. Populäre Musik und Postkoloniale Analyse, Münster.
Jam City (2012): Classical Curves, Night Slugs, UK.
Kelly, Caleb (2009): Cracked media: the sound of malfunction, Cambridge, MA.
Krapp, Peter (2011): Noise Channels: Glitch and Error in Digital Culture. Minneapolis.
Lhooq, Michelle (2017): The art of disruption: How CDJs are changing DJing, https://www.residentadvisor.net/features/3087, 08.07.2018.
Lozano, Kevin (2016): An Introduction to NON Worldwide, https://daily.redbullmusicacademy.com/2016/05/non-worldwide-introduction, 04.10.2019.

NON (2020): https://www.facebook.com/pg/NONWORLDWIDE/about/, 21.09.2020.
Oval (1994): Systemisch, Mille Plateaux, Germany.
Pearl, Max (2017): The art of DJing: Venus X, https://www.residentadvisor.net/features/2966, 26.09.2019.
Remi (2016): Non Interview: Chino Amobi, http://www.okayafrica.com/audio/non-chino-amobi-interview, 26.08.2020.
Reynaldo, Shawn (2019): Kingdom Launches Fade to Mind Label, Preps New EP from Nguzunguzu,https://xlr8r.com/news/kingdom-launches-fade-to-mind-label-preps-new-ep-from-nguzunguzu/, 30.01.2019.
Reynolds, Simon (2017): Low End Theory, in: Anz, Philipp / Walder, Patrick (eds.), Technodeleuze and Mille Plateaux. Achim Szepanski's Interviews (1994-1996), Reggio Emilia, 31-46.
Richardson, Mark (2015): A Glitch in Time: How Oval's 1995 Ambient Masterpiece Predicted Our Digital Present, https://pitchfork.com/features/resonant-frequency/9730-a-glitch-in-time-how-ovals-1995-ambient-masterpiece-predicted-our-digital-present/, 27.09.2019.
Schildhauer, Nadine (2017): ELYSIA CRAMPTON: Sprache ist Gewalt, Tanz unzerstörbar, in: Spex, 373, 91-93.
Sheepsaysmoo (2018): What does ›deconstructed club/deconstructed electronic music‹ mean to you?, https://www.reddit.com/r/cxd/comments/aaxdbg/what_does_deconstructed_clubdeconstructed/, 26.01.2019.
Slater, Howard (2009): Prisoners of the Earth Come Out! Notes Towards ›War at the Membrane‹, in: Iles, Anthony /Iles, Mattin (eds.) Noise and Capitalism, Gipuzkoako Foru Aldundia-Arteleku, 150-165.
Said, Edward (1978): Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient, London.
Srnicek, Nick (2016): Platform Capitalism, Cambridge, UK.
Stuart, Caleb (2003): Damaged Sound: Glitching and Skipping Compact Discs in the Audio of Yasunao Tone, Nicolas Collins and Oval, in: Leonardo Music Journal, 13, 47-52.
Szepanski, Achim (2001): A Mille Plateaux manifesto, in: Organised Sound, 6, 225-228.
Thompson, Marie (2017): Whiteness and the Ontological Turn in Sound Studies, in: Parallax, 23/3, 266-282.
Various Artists (2000): Clicks and Cuts, Mille Plateaux, Germany.
Warren, Emma (2013) https://www.redbullmusicacademy.com/lectures/bok-bok, 04.11.2019.
The World Bank (n.d.): Individuals using the Internet (% of population), https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/it.net.user.zs?end=2018&start=1995, 26.10.2019.