

Detroit: Techno City

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This chapter addresses how the symbolic function of Detroit techno has shifted over the past three decades. Techno is mostly an instrumental form of electronic dance music that foregrounds the sonic textures of the electronic technology used to produce it, a machine aesthetic that resonates globally with urban populations. The genre name developed through a range of processes that will be genealogically addressed in this chapter: from Detroit in the current era we next trace back key issues, such as the mythology of Detroit as the Techno City and the concurrent elevation of its DJ-producers, differing approaches to techno in Detroit, the appropriation of (post-)industrial spaces, as well as contexts of financial, cultural and governmental power. Opening the discussion with *Movement*, the electronic festival central to Detroit's annual *Techno Week*, we argue that Detroit and its citizens use and activate techno music as a cultural heritage of the city to promote the renaissance of a once powerful industrial metropolis. Techno, and its associated cultural capital, act as value producers in the context of macro-economic urban regeneration processes within the local history and African-American futurist music aesthetics. Turning the perspective from how Detroit techno is perceived by a global music audience to the lived histories of the people who experienced its development, it is shown that techno music articulates the technoculture as it was acutely experienced during the 1980s and 90s in a city that, involuntarily, had partly changed into a post-industrial ruin. Resonating with other electronic dance music scenes, Detroit techno shaped a unique mythology with international appeal, which is not only

exploited locally but that also draws new audiences to both the city and its music output.

The Cultural Value of Techno Music

In 2016, during the 10th anniversary of *Movement*, the electronic dance music festival organized by Paxahau to take place annually during Memorial Day weekend at Hart Plaza, the city of Detroit was buzzing with events. The Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (MOCAD) held a symposium/colloquium on the development of the global techno scene with three seminal Detroit techno producers, Juan Atkins, Derrick May and Kevin Saunderson who, as will be discussed, have been mythologized as “the Belleville Three” to legendary status. During the festival, new generations of Detroit-based producers and DJs offer a wide selection of after-parties, turning warehouses, old bars and galleries into temporary party venues. Celebrations of techno music were taking place both downtown and in the inner city, creating a continuous flow of exhibitions, book launches and music events. Kraftwerk, German Synth-Pop, were the headline band of the festival’s Saturday programme, opening their breathtaking two-hour 3-D concert (see L-Yap, 2016) with “Robots” (Schneider, Bartos and Hutter: 1978). Articulating an electronic robotic subjectivity, this track and much of Kraftwerk’s music in general, resonates particularly with the early, 1980s, Detroit techno of Juan Atkins.

Although some Detroit taxi drivers were unable to hide their puzzlement in the face of an increasing wave of techno tourists, *Movement* festival has developed into one of the largest electronic music events in the US. In its previous incarnation, it was initiated in 2000 under the name *Detroit Electronic Music Festival* (DEMF), with various degrees of success. The first years were marked by discontinuous support

from local authorities and sponsors. At first, the City of Detroit and Ford backed DEMF financially. However, although admission tickets were introduced in 2005, a year later the festival went into administration. This is when Paxahau, which defines itself as “a boutique production company specialized in event management” (Paxahau Event Productions, 2017), took over and rebranded DEMF as *Movement*. Changes in the support, production and management of the festival show how the perception of techno music and its heritage have evolved since its inception during the eighties. Promoting the city, in 2012 Detroit’s Mayor, Dave Bing, declared that the week of the festival was to be recognized as “Techno Week” (Bing, 2012). Since then, every month of May the Office of the Mayor of the City of Detroit issues a certificate to proclaim the beginning of *Techno Week*. The certificate of recognition illustrates the relationship between techno music and the city that claims to be origin of this genre of electronic dance music:

Detroit becomes a tourist destination for music lovers, making the downtown entertainment venues, casinos, hotels and restaurants abuzz with activity during this 36-hour festival; [...] During this week attendees will experience the growing popularity of electronic dance music and the festivities that celebrate the rich culture of Techno, which was created in Detroit; and I, Mike Duggan, Mayor of the city of Detroit [...] encourage all to come out and celebrate the festivities, as it creates local and international awareness of Detroit’s rising creative culture. (*MovementDetroit*, 2016).

This document gives a simplified picture of how Detroit techno is regarded and exploited as a cultural product by the creative and service industries: techno draws in tourists and fans with disposable funds to mingle with the locals, who in turn are motivated to create a festive atmosphere. Nonetheless, the difference between the public image of *Techno Week* and what people actually experience is hazy, as the organization creates an exclusive event. If in 2005 the festival was charging \$10 for a

daily ticket, in 2016 the weekend pass, perhaps controversially, costs \$165. The certificate also shows a temporal fracture, stating that *Techno Week* is a 36-hour festival even though underground parties and events take place both before or after the Memorial Day holiday weekend. Such additional events fall outside the public eye, highlighting a divide between the city's attitude to authorize a music event for only 12 hours per day, as Hart Plaza shuts down just after midnight, and what it means to host a week of techno-related events, day and night. Finally, another fracture emerges around the spatial dimension of the festival: the declaration confirms that Hart Plaza, the municipal space in downtown Detroit where the festival has been hosted since 2000, is the "central point of this gathering". In effect, the numerous locations in midtown and surrounding areas, the key parts of the metropolitan area where collateral events take place, are thereby literally placed in a peripheral position. This is exacerbated by a lack of public transport to connect Hart Plaza with the rest of city, so that festivalgoers have to rely on private transport.

Despite the fragmented image of the festival, *Movement* remains one of the highlights of the city's annual calendar. It has the power of enabling connections between the local scene with a global audience. The coverage of the festival, through reviews, articles and personal stories, is usually positive (see Johnson, 2017) and brings a desired effect that any policy-maker, citizen or activist dealing with Detroit's troubled history hopes to achieve: a story of renaissance. Festivals are cultural products that can revitalize urban life (Peterson, 2012; St John, 2015). In particular, music has the ability to connect people from parallel lives. In the case of techno and Detroit, the connection is three-fold: inter-generational, bringing together different age groups; spatial, creating an alternative map of the city; and temporal, manipulating the heritage into a narrative that describes the present.

The renaissance of Detroit is a recurrent theme for its citizens. It is a key element in the narrative that guides the cultural activities and output of the city following its industrial decline. The history of techno music is intertwined with futuristic myths created by proto-techno outfit Cybotron, and techno music producers such as Model 500, Drexciya and Underground Resistance, constituted by a constellation of desires that has an affinity with Detroit's attempts to overcome its post-industrial decline (Pope, 2011). A new generation, following after the era of skilled workers, started to re-compose the dystopian hi-tech environment of the eighties into imaginings and soundings of the future (Eshun, 1998). Three decades later, techno music is invested by different actors, such as politicians, music artists, tourists, who exploit the re-creation a particular image or myth of the city. This is described prophetically by Juan "One" Atkins and Richard "3070" Davis in Cybotron's dystopian song "Techno City" (Davis, Housely & Atkins, 1984), inspired by Fritz Lang's 1927 film *Metropolis*: "The idea was that a person could be born and raised in Techno City, the workers' city, but what he wanted to do was work his way to the cybodrome where artists and intellectuals reside" (Davis, cited in Savage, 2010, para. 11). In this way, the song seems a model of upwardly mobile gentrification, the economic fall-out of which to be critiqued later by Mike Banks of Underground Resistance (UR).

Techno City Inside and Outside of Detroit

Detroit has spawned more than techno, including the music of Stevie Wonder, George Clinton and Eminem. Techno, however, characterizes a futuristic, and sometimes community-based, response to the city's de-industrialization (Vecchiola, 2011). Techno producers did so by finding a musical aesthetic that is suitable to the "technoculture", a concept that may be understood as culture shaped by processes particular to electronic information and communication technologies. According to Binelli (2013), attempts to revitalize Detroit both materially and through the discourse

of hope faced acute structural obstacles left locally by the global collapse of Fordism: a long-term industrial decline mixed with a series of fiscal bankruptcies and political failures. Politicians, citizens and artists have tried repeatedly to recompose the social fabric of the city. From the bottom to the top, and from church leaders to the motor industry, the second half of the last century was sprinkled with ideas to return Detroit to its old splendors. Detroit, however, remained emblematic of failures in the American project of optimistic progress, with post-industrial ruins of former economic glory acting as a type of “counter-memory” (Edensor, 2005: 170). *Techno Week*, then, can be regarded as an attempt to fix and commodify a more positive cultural image of the city.

To understand Detroit and Detroit techno, it is crucial to take account of the structural problems that connect the micro with the macro, the local with the global. One of the latest attempts to find a solution to the challenging governance of Detroit was led by the Bing administration, which had also initiated *Techno Week*. The urban plan was to “rightsize” the city (Glaeser, 2010) in order to adjust to its existing and problematic infrastructure and with the aim to meet urgent social needs in education and other public services. To meet the city’s austerity measures, downsizing Detroit (the area of which could contain Paris despite having a fraction of its population) practically meant to centralize some areas while excluding those living in the least populated areas. If this process had already happened to American cities such as Kansas City, the invocation of an inverse movement to the orderly explosion of suburban life, so characteristic of Fordism, was an overdue response:

Detroit had too much space. Having experienced a decades-long ongoing population bleed, the city had begun to feel like an overstretched empire in its decadent phase, sprawling far beyond its means. But after years of obstinate resistance and denial, a new consensus was finally emerging, at least in

policy circles, about what to do with those forty square miles of vacant land. Detroit would have to shrink, in some sense of the word, in order to survive.” (Binelli, 2013, p. 87).

The political move of rightsizing Detroit matched a parallel economic process. As the Marxist geographer David Harvey (2012) warns, macro changes at the urban level correspond to shifting objectives of the financial markets. Following the 2008 economic crisis, estate markets around the globe became the target of private investments, in reaction to uncertain returns in risky financial markets. In many global cities, including Detroit, this resulted in a wave of regeneration and gentrification processes that produced new lines of exclusion and marginalization following the acquisitions of land and properties in popular, working-class, or *lumpen* areas of the city (Lees et al., 2016). Global forces target local efforts, while the local, initially powerless to bring about citywide changes, is now invested with a mandate to shed light to the intrinsic potentiality of urban and suburban communities. The dangers of real or feared gentrification are tangible in Detroit, which is also palpable in the politics of Mike Banks’ techno-label, Underground Resistance (Banks, 2017). While the city has been waiting for regeneration plans to materialize, gentrification processes come at the expense of those segments of the population that are already marginalized. The cultural value produced by techno music can be seen with what Hardt and Negri (2017) claim to be today’s source of profit: the “cooperation from below” led by urban communities caring for the renaissance of their neighborhoods. Adding value through cultural capital to the local environment can attract financial capital, which next seizes the wealth produced by the community (Zukin, 2014). It is in such contexts that the renaissance of Detroit and its techno music heritage may be understood. Music, Hesmondhalgh (2013) argues, is a rich source of social value because musicians, and the scene they are part of, create cultural capital. However, once it becomes profitable, questions arise regarding who owns the added value and,

how techno music is implicated in the problems and the successes of its city of origins.

Over the course of the past three decades, from the appearance of “Alleys of Your Mind” by proto-techno ensemble Cybotron (1981) to the latest *Movement* festival, Detroit has been shrinking and attempts to gentrify the inner city have failed, while simultaneously the city’s techno producers gained global popularity. A music press-driven myth of Detroit, generated by marketing and by techno DJ-producers that include the pioneering Belleville Three, as well as Jeff Mills, Mike Banks, Blake Baxter, K-Hand, Robert Hood, Eddie Fowlkes, Scan 7, Aux 88, Dopplereffekt, and many more, quickly expanded to the other side of the Atlantic, as well as to Japan. By the early nineties, new sonic alliances were formed, with a strong Berlin-Detroit connection, marked by several collaborations, including the compilation *Tresor II – Berlin Detroit – A Techno Alliance* (1993, Mute). The demand for Detroit techno does not seem to cease. For many people experiencing the final effects of the post-industrial involution and the new tools of global governance, techno functions as a haunting and fascinating symbol of a lost future (Fisher, 2014). For young generations in, for example, Tbilisi, Georgia (currently regarded as the latest techno mecca, see Lynch, 2016), or for the disenchanting students in Athens (the European Detroit of fiscal austerity), the techno sound of the Post-Fordist era functions as a soundtrack of transformations brought about by the acceleration of electronic information technologies.

Techno Mythology

At the imaginative level, techno stands for the future beyond the social disintegration of the present, but also as a dystopian translation of the traumas brought by cognitive capitalism. This is hinted at by Pasquinelli (2015) in the edited collection *Alleys of*

your Mind, which title pays “a tribute to a generation and a movement that always showed curiosity for alien states of mind” (p. 17). The word “techno”, as associated with the Detroit sound, originates in the compilation *Techno! The New Sound of Detroit* (1988), and is further defined by the seminal track *Techno Music* by Juan, aka Juan Atkins, who is regarded as the originator within the trio of seminal Detroit techno producers, the Belleville Three. The idea of a compilation of electronic dance music from Detroit was initiated by Northern Soul aficionado Neil Rushton, then head of Kool Kat Records, by convincing Mick Clark at Virgin, which in the UK released the soul music sound of Detroit’s Motown Records during the sixties the final years of the city’s Fordist years to release a compilation at its sub-label, 10 Records. According to Sicko (1999), Rushton became acquainted with Detroit’s electronic dance music while on a business trip in Chicago to sign artists given the success of house music across the UK, from 1986-87 onwards (Rietveld, 1998). A compilation of Detroit’s electronic dance music seemed a good idea with an initial working title of “The House Sound of Detroit”. It features similar graphics to a collection of recordings released initially by Chicago’s house music labels Trax Records and DJ International, *The House Sound of Chicago*, a series that was released from 1986 onwards by London’s label London Records and its sub-label FFRR.

To differentiate Detroit from Chicago, Juan Atkin’s description of the music, “techno”, was used instead of house music. Atkins took his cue from Alvin Toffler (1980, p. 153): “The techno-rebels are, whether they recognize it or not, agents of the Third Wave”. Toffler suggests that the “techno-rebel” appropriates the technologies of the “third wave”, a popularization of the concept of a post-industrial era that is based on an information-economy. His accessible work on a rapidly changing world not only inspired producers in Detroit, but also electronic musicians such as New Order in the UK. In turn, British post-punk electro pop artists (including Gary Numan, Section 25, Depeche Mode), as well as German electronic pioneers like Kraftwerk were a source

of inspiration to the early Detroit techno producers, together with the sound of New York's disco and electro, Chicago's house music, and Detroit's Afrofuturist P-funk of George Clinton (Rietveld, 2018). Afrofuturism takes its cue from a sense of alienation experienced by African-Americans, for whom there is no return to a nostalgic and innocent past. Instead, there is no choice but to make the most of a technological future (Dery, 1994), a prophetic "noise", to borrow from Attali (1986), or "sonic fiction" (Eshun, 1998). Moreno (2014), Pope (2011) and van Veen (2013) each argue that the Afro-Futuristic and science-fiction elements, including cyborgs, aliens, and hybrid creatures, that can be traced in the sonic fiction of Detroit techno, represent a break with a dystopian past. Cyborg and futuristic identities are open to new becomings and invested of a difficult role: making sense of technological development. Detroit techno is thus manipulated in different directions. It can represent a response to dystopic processes, as well as a positive vision of how technology can change people's lives and living spaces, even retrospectively (Eshun, 1998).

Dan Sicko (2010) explains that the techno rebels attempted to escape R&B; in Juan Atkins' words they sought "to distance themselves from the kids that were coming up in the projects, the ghetto" (cited by Reynolds, 1998, p. 5), a middle-class tactic to create a futuristic outwardly focused African-American sound. Sicko (2010) observes though, that Detroit's techno producers still ended up "hearing American soul music (but) through unfamiliar filters" (Sicko, 2010, p. 11). The result is what Albiez (2005) calls a "post-soul aesthetic", observing that "musical production in Detroit, and elsewhere, is caught up in the global and trans-Atlantic flows (of) popular culture" (p. 4). The deterritorialized sound of techno resonates globally with local experiences of the technoculture. For example, in France, Gaillot (1998: jacket) writes that techno, this "new music, eminently cosmopolitan, will be that of the commons of the world".

Even the word “techno”, to indicate a music genre, is not unique to Detroit, as also Sicko (2010) indicates in his history of Detroit techno. In Frankfurt, Germany, as early as in 1984, the term “techno” appeared in a record shop called City Music, where Talla used this tag to group “music created technologically”, such as “New Order, Depeche Mode, Kraftwerk, Heaven 17, then later Front 242” (Sexto & Wick, 2008). He started a club night with Alex Azary, the Techno Club, to host the *Neue Welle* (“New Wave”) consisting of post-punk electronic bands, such as Nitzer Ebb or DAF, and the genre electronic body music (EBM), which is still going strong at industrial techno events. The budding techno scene was defined further by a specialist magazine, *Frontpage*. Eventually Detroit techno and Chicago’s acid house emerged on the scene, causing it to morph into the slicker four-to-the-floor (see Butler, 2006) electronic machine beats of what we now understand as techno. It was this sound that was embraced in Berlin during the time that the wall between east and west literally came down, in the summer of 1989. Techno and acid house became the sound track of the celebratory Love Parade and the dance clubs that sprung up in a decimated Berlin, a city that attracts tourists and talent from Europe and elsewhere for its dance music scene (Garcia, 2016). Berliners were able to put into practice the futuristic imagination of techno myths by filling its empty urban spaces with cyborg creativity. Something similar is happening in Detroit, with the Detroit-Berlin connection (see Detroit-Berlin Connection, 2017), as if Berlin and other cities helped to define the content of the city’s renaissance strategy. It is as if, in other words, Detroit would now be destined to import the future it imagined for itself by being forced to buy knowledge and solutions it helped to create. As Jon Savage (2010, para. 12) puts it,

Cybotron were not alone in seeking to remap their inner urban environment: artists and musicians in New York, Sheffield, Berlin, Cleveland, Manchester

and several other cities in Europe and America were inspired by dereliction and emptiness to project themselves into the future.

However, such projects risk being caught up in what Garcia defined “a loop of hype and speculation” (2016). The multi-functional symbolism of Detroit techno marks out the course of its evolution and its theme: the social trajectories of technology.

Visions of Techno

During the nineties, the Detroit scene was marked by the global growth of two different visions of techno music and its cultural politics, which can be identified, respectively, in the production work of Richie Hawtin’s Plastikman and Mike Banks’ Underground Resistance (UR). Hawtin lived in Windsor, Canada, which is positioned just across the American border, drawn by the Detroit River, on the opposite shore of Detroit. His family, originally from England, moved there in the early eighties so that his father, a music and electronics fan, could take a job as an engineer in the motor industry. Hawtin’s first introduction to techno was through Jeff Mills’ radio shows (Sextro and Wick, 2011). Mills would notably play a mix of different genres, from hip hop to industrial, a genre close to Hawtin and his brother’s tastes. Hawtin, who later became known as Plastikman after a night spent with friends taking “acid” (the psychoactive drug LSD), was increasingly attracted to the sounds coming from Detroit and decided to book Jeff Mills at Hopper’s, a small club in Windsor in need of some fresh energy. By spending weekends in Detroit going to parties and buying records, Hawtin became an unpaid “intern DJ” at the Shelter, an underground basement that catered mainly for a white crowd, where he played the “warm-up” set for resident DJ Scott Gordon, his first break in the city. Following this new adventure, Hawtin befriended DJ and producer John Acquaviva, with whom he would go to late night after-parties at the Music Institute, a popular club with an African-American

crowd, where the first generations of techno producers used to play music and socialise. As the techno originators had little interest in releasing the music of a white guy from across the border (Bredow, 2006), Hawtin and Acquaviva established Plus 8 Records (Sextro & Wick, 2011). The fascination towards Detroit is traceable since the label's early releases, including "Technarchy" (Acquaviva, Bell & Hawtin, 1990), a white label with a red capitalised stamp, "THE FUTURE SOUND OF DETROIT". Such a brazen claim, by a white "kid" from across the border, upset some of the African-American Detroit techno producers, who felt this as being fleetingly inauthentic.

Marketing his stage persona to a white audience in search for ritualised transgression, the success of Plus 8 Records, and Hawtin's white middleclass privileged transient position in Detroit enabled him to leave the confines of the city. By the early nineties started to perform in Europe, particularly in England, Germany and the Netherlands. After the first experiences in Europe, where warehouse parties and raves dominated the acid house and techno scenes, Hawtin returned to Detroit with new ideas to implement (BBC World Service, 2017). Now known under his alias Plastikman and for his minimalistic sound (which was partly inspired by the paintings of Rothko), he organised rave-style parties around Detroit, including the ritualistic Spastik events in 1994 at the famous Packard Plant, an abandoned automotive factory, attracting a white suburban audience in downtown Detroit and, with it, a growing competition with the pioneering African-American techno DJs and producers (Sextro and Wick, 2011). Hawtin next moved, via New York City, to a libertarian and arty Berlin, a city that had suffered its own traumatic decline and creative resurrection. Like other Detroit techno artists, here he was proclaimed as one of the global DJ stars.

Plastikman's European approach towards using Detroit's decaying urban space to

promote techno parties intercepted and partially collided with Underground Resistance's inner spirit of collective black resistance to "fake" corporate music and mentality. Mike Banks, also known as "Mad Mike" and founding member of Underground Resistance (UR), saw a different purpose for the new Detroit sound: a vision of unity, integrity and peace to limit the risks connected to a life in the challenging inner city (Fisher, 2007). The politics of the UR label address issues of race and marginalisation; this is particularly explicit in the output of Drexciya, which produces a veritable mythology of sea creatures delved from the brutal history of trans-Atlantic slave transport while simultaneously finding strength in a post-human technologized future (Eshun, 2016). For many young artists and early DJs, techno was a vehicle to explore places other than Detroit, however. This was also the case for Jeff Mills and Robert Hood, who started their career as early members of the collective and ended up leaving the city to establish their music-careers in New York and across the Atlantic.

The international dimension of Detroit techno is a recurrent element of its history. As Mike Banks told Mark Fisher (2007):

The guy who really laid the blueprint for Detroit Techno [...] was Electrifying Mojo. Mojo was a Vietnam war veteran, he was a radio man in Vietnam, he did DJing for the troops, and that's where he learned all the different types of music from around the world, and when he got back from Vietnam, he brought that to Detroit, that perspective, so we got to hear progressive rock up next to Falco, Euro synth pop.

The global influences on the first techno productions seeded by Mojo remain a key feature of UR's Detroit sound. While Plastikman developed a deep minimal sound that matched the "gothic", darkly romantic, aesthetics of a decaying Detroit (BBC

World Service, 2017), the productions behind Banks' label continuously evolved the sound that feeds techno into sophisticated hybridisms. From UR's early release "Nation 2 Nation" (Banks and Price, 1991) to the more recent "The Conscious Dream" (Banks et al., 2014) performed by UR live band Timeline, future jazz, house music and acid house combine to produce a groovy vision of the interconnectedness of urban life. Through UR, young artists from Detroit can travel this urban network (Ratel, 2016), to play from Chicago, to Marseille and London. Under a ban on substances imposed by UR founder Mike Banks, in the early 1990s members of the collective also together in order to promote themselves to a German audience and found in Berlin's dance club and record label Tresor the transmitter of their fame in Europe (Denk and von Thülen, 2014: 141-55).

As Schaub (2009) outlines, UR's self-understanding of the causes behind the decline of Detroit is in line with a selective analysis of the present, characteristic of futurist movements. Grounded and linked to the community that gives form to techno, UR's musical aesthetic attempts to escape rigid class and anti-capitalist discourses (Fisher, 2007) in order to keep constructing positive narratives of resistance. Through the science-fiction myths that UR helped to create, urban identity, rather than one particular class, became the central subject of the Detroit techno sound. Mike Banks remains involved with Detroit's globally informed local politics and highly rates those that remain loyal, rather than leave the city (Ratel, 2016). According to Williams (2001, p. 167), Mike Banks and Underground Resistance "took Juan Atkin's fascination with Toffler's Third Wave one step further, to the point where the local city connects with the new electronic space of global capitalism ... transmitting communiqués of subversion worldwide." It is this interweaving of the local and global that is of importance in understanding the relationship between Detroit and the emergence of its particular brand of electronic dance music.

Post-industrial Party Music

Detroit established itself as the sound of the technoculture, celebrating an electronic machine aesthetic in response to the ambivalences of new technologies and in perennial connection with how people perceive urban life and urban changes. In this sense, techno, now strictly linked to the myths surrounding the destiny of Detroit, is also closely linked to the house music sound Chicago. Like Detroit, this once powerful industrial city similarly hosts areas of post-industrial ruins, which opened the possibility to reimagine the city and its cultural meanings. A “sensual disordering” occurs in such ruined contexts, and as a consequence, Tim Edensor (2005, p. 169) observes, “the performative conventions of the city must be discarded in the ruin”. In Chicago, such spaces were explored within the limits of underground scene activity for all-night dance events with fluid sexual norms. It is no accident, then, that the dance music that emerged here was called “house music”, with reference to music played at nightclub The Warehouse. Here, disco, soul and European electronic music, mostly from the UK, Germany and Italy, were melded by New York DJ Frankie Knuckles, between 1977-82, into a non-stop sound track for black and Latino queer dancers. Eyewitnesses remember large a dark space where the sound dominated the floor, where Knuckles would include his remixes, customized to his crowd with a boosted “foot”, or heavier kick drum, which was popular with his crowd. Knuckles next left to set up another club, The Power Plant, its name an industrial reference. DJ Ron Hardy took over at The Warehouse, which was renamed by owner Robert Williams as The Muzic Box, where the dance party was taken to a wilder level. Whereas Knuckles has a smooth style, working the crowd subtly to a peak over several hours, Hardy would be less concerned with sound quality, overdriving the volume and including post-punk electronica, new wave and rock. For him, it was about energy. Not only did this inspire the Belleville Three, as in the case of the

young Derrick May (who used to spend time in Chicago, bringing over Kevin Saunderson to organize warehouse parties there), it was also in this mainly African-American club that the sound of acid house emerged. In "The Muzic Box" (2015, *Exploited Ghetto*), a homage by German producer Click Click to Chicago house mythology, a sample of what sounds like Derrick May's voice states the club "inspired everybody I know".

Inspired by the dance clubs, loft parties proliferated within derelict areas, which reached a peak between 1984 and 1986. As disco had become unpopular, dance music heard on the radio or at the parties were reinterpreted with the use of relatively cheap Japanese-produced electronic instruments that entered the market around that time, including Roland's now revered TB-303 Bassline machine, as well as a sequence of rhythm composers (drumboxes) such as the TR-808 and TR-909. The musical aesthetic was focussed on immediacy, in response to what works best for dancers to lose themselves into the dance party. It is in this context that the introduction of acid house must be understood. Without pre-programmed sequences, the Roland TB303 Bass Line machine emits a random set of notes, which can next be modulated, producing a squelching sound. This is not the sound of a bass guitar, as intended by the manufacturers, but it was certainly a sound that seemed to suit Ron Hardy's manic DJ sets. Although the alien sound of "Acid Tracks" by Phuture (Trax Records, 1987) was rejected on first listening, it was embraced by the dancers by the end of the night, its machinic gurgling perhaps speaking for an alienated state of being. This new unhinged sound was so powerful that it inspired a genre in its own right (Rietveld, 2013) and a moral panic in the UK where acid house warehouse parties morphed into rave culture (Rietveld, 1991; Collins, 1998), as well as the sound of trance and techno during the 1990s. It is this wobbling sound that can also be heard in much of the output of Detroit's Underground Resistance, in which, Williams 2001, 167) states, "Atkin's robot has been replaced by the cyborg". The uncompromising instrumental simplicity of acid house thereby provided the grounding

for a techno style that enabled an articulation of the soul of electronic technology (Rietveld, 2003), the ghost in the machine, as it is embodied within the particular local and global parameters of Detroit.

Concluding Comments

If the relation between techno music and the technoculture is taken seriously, it is possible to argue that techno music has as its central theme the role of technology in shaping relations and environments. Techno music addresses possibilities, both negative and positive, offered by electronic technology and the material effects it provokes, initially addressing a shift, from Fordist Detroit to post-industrial urban decay. From this perspective, the relatively young history of techno music articulates the acute experience of transformation in Post-Fordist cities. As a musical and artistic response to the collapse of Fordism, techno can also be understood as a creative outcome of the Post-Fordist era, representing the ambivalence of the role of technology in shaping social relations and urban space. For example, although different in political vision, both UR and Plastikman emerge from the myth surrounding *Detroitness*, which they play out as characters of a real story, the decline and resurrection of a post-Fordist metropolis. Detroit's techno musicians have signposted the relevance of techno music for the future, with urban rituals rich in underground symbols that can metabolise, and can even act in opposition to, the deep transformations brought by a model of technocratic capitalism that relies on territorial social relations to operate. In this way, it is possible to see how the myth of Detroit navigates through space and time, and helps to shape, contemporary articulations of new processes of urbanization that resonates elsewhere, to echo back onto itself, bringing in tourists to celebrate the *Movement* festival in "Techno City".

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