

Sonic Bridges

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Welcome to Sonic Bridges. Within this project, there are two journeys to take. One is a journey of sound and psyche that begins with the playing of the two CDs accompanying this work. The other journey is one of sight and thought. It involves the intellectual pursuit of the following pages. The sound (“sonic”) journey has priority, yet both journeys mutually enhance one another. If you want to take the sound journey first, jump ahead and read the section “Experiencing the Journey” on page 19.



Introduction

This project is a direct repercussion of Postmodernism. I am a child of the computer age. My life like many in my generation is a constant dance of meaning and identity, floundering between a world of infinite accessibility and a world of finite value. A day in this life can witness an intricate network instantly linking 100 needs to 100 solutions, and it can witness the extinction of 100 elaborately beautiful and unique animals who will never need again. This dance, my dance, is girdled by a question: **“Why, with so much creativity and capability, is there so much destruction?”** This is one of the main questions that is propelling us into the Postmodern Age. And it is this question that has driven me to create art, which is intended to be an ever-evolving look into this dialectic.

My project is an attempt at synthesizing electronic music with the rapidly expanding awareness of the human condition. It should be noted that the condition I’m writing about is directed towards Modern Western Culture; however, because of the massive impact of this culture on the world, the awareness of this condition is imperative for all cultures. My Project is a sonic cosmology if you will, a visceral guide into the story of being human in the age of information and technology. This is a journey and a “Sonic Bridge” between the mind and the heart, and as a Native American elder once said it is, “the longest journey you’ll ever take.” The emphasis on our mind, as in Descartes placing our spirit in the Pineal glands of our head, has all but stopped our *hearts*, and thus the *arts*, and replaced our imagination with machine like deduction.

The manic urge to create a technological world arises when soul can no longer be felt as a creative force in the world. Strengthening the forces of soul, of imagination, can gradually bring about a balance that does not require abandoning technology but considerably diminishes the fantasies

invested in it. When soul creates, it does so in terms of qualities, and only as its action is severely impaired are we prone to take speed as a substitute for soul making.¹

The arts, in my case, music, are the voice of the soul, the voice of our myths and dreams speaking to us from powers that our mind will, probably, never be able to understand.

This voice must be heard. The speed and force of our technology has overwhelmed the Earth's sustainability. We can no longer afford for the creative soul to be for arts sake only. Its voice is now also dependent on the social awareness of our condition. This condition is the phase we are currently in, between a destructive Modern Era, on its last breath, and a co-creative and mutually enhancing new era. Our creative soul as well as our survival is intimately linked to the emergence of what, I believe, is a "new way" of being that Postmodernism is helping us to discover.

This Master's Projects is the creation of a sonic journey consisting of two CDs. Like the two CDs of the sonic journey, this paper has two sections. The first section, which consists of sections I through IV, is intended to create a contextual framework for the project. This framework consists of the values, the inspirations and aspirations, which have fueled this work and my desire to share it with you. Chapter V is the second section. It is a step-by-step breakdown of the CDs to show you where, how, and why, I address these values in the sonic journey.

¹ Robert Sardello, Ph.D., "Technology," *Facing the World with Soul*, (1994), [e-journal] < <http://www.cgjungpage.org/psychtech/sardello1.html> > (accessed 20 January 2002).

I. Modernism, Postmodernism, and the “New Way”

Postmodernism, like the era it attempts to describe, is polysemic. It has many different meanings. I don't want to open the box that contains decades of intellectual treatises on the subject of Postmodernism. Rather, I'll take a common theme that seems to weave its way through many of the discourses. This theme is eloquently summed up by the adage “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts,” which is what is referred to by the word “holistic.” The reductionist frame of thought led the modern era. It was believed that life could be understood by reducing it to its smallest parts. This model was consistent with the rise of patriarchy, of top down cosmology, and of a mechanistic worldview and has led to many scientific advances despite its serious shortcomings, which are consistently proving obsolete and harmful in light of our new awareness. For instance, biologists have accumulated massive amounts of information on the parts and pieces of our bodies but are rather clueless when it comes to the body's integrative actions such as neuromuscular processes. They can tell us much of the make up of our lungs, but do not know how we actually breathe. They can map out the circulatory system, but do not know how the body regulates temperature. What information the biologists did discover came at the loss of much life, because under the reductionist paradigm they could only “dissect” that which was already dead, and more accurately that which was “killed.” Postmodernism, on the other hand, is coming about, in part, through the introduction of systems theory. Systems theory, related to the revolutionary discoveries of Quantum Mechanics, does not attempt to reduce life into parts, but to view life holistically as a collection of working systems. It suggests that in order to understand breathing, for instance, a scientist might have to look at not only the physiology of the

body, but also the psychological, environmental, evolutionary, and even the cultural development of a “live” human being. It also suggests that to dissect any one of these elements would be to miss the truth. The truth could only occur through understanding the relationship and processes of these factors, not the factors themselves.

A great example of this thinking is the “Gaia Hypothesis,” coined by the chemist James Lovelock and the microbiologist Lynn Margulis. Simply put, the hypothesis states that Earth, like the human body, is a living organism that exists as a collection of self-regulating systems that also consist of a collection of other individual organisms. Fritjof Capra put it well in “The Turning Point:”

Her [Gaia] properties and activities cannot be predicted from the sum of her parts; every one of her tissues is linked to every other tissue and all of them are mutually interdependent; her many pathways of communication are highly complex and nonlinear; her form has evolved over billions of years and continues to evolve.²

Much criticism has been generated since the first proposal of the hypothesis in the late eighties. Most of this criticism has come from scientific and religious types who have a hard time placing the human species into the context of “Gaia.” This seems to be because in order to place humans properly, means to see them as members of Gaia’s self-regulating systems and equal to other animals, trees and oceans, etc., instead of autonomous beings held above nature through some divine or supernatural importance. Understandably, it’s easy to see how the distinction is made. The human species does seem different. As far as we know, for the first time in the Earth’s history evolution is significantly dependent on the actions of humans. Through our actions, we can, and have,

²Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), 285.

erased or manipulated entire sections of the biosphere, and some postulate that human kind could even make Earth uninhabitable to all life as we know it.

Yet, what is clear to those like Capra, who are trying to foster a paradigm shift, is

that for humankind to avoid certain annihilation it must begin to incorporate systems thinking. We must begin to open our consciousness to the paradox that is a simultaneous existence of an individual and unified nature, or as Thomas Berry has put it, “a communion of subjects [rather than] a collection of objects.”³ The New Cosmology is an excellent example of this holistic approach. It accomplishes two very important things for the transition to a new paradigm. One is creating a scientific framework that places the human in a contextual relationship with the Earth through evolution, and the other is a catalyst for the invitation of mythology back into our culture.

Humans and all other life on Earth evolved from a singular point. We grew together through 15 billion years of evolution, and thus are intimately connected in an intricate and delicate web of harmonious balance. To remove any element of this evolutionary process would erase evolution altogether. Every animal, every child, every atom in this story is so intrinsically relevant that nothing would exist today without their involvement.

The New Cosmology, because it reinvents the scientific recognition of evolution into a story, creates an invitation for mythology to enter our cultural awareness again. With the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, mythology was all but replaced by scientific perception. Ever since, we have placed incredible weight on scientific proofs and have learned to accept them as objective truth. This has not only acted to remove us from an inner, spiritual, and intuitive experience of the universe, but it has also, naturally, separated us from the earth. The loss of our myth put us on a course to a mechanistic worldview where cause and effect made spirit and matter completely separate.

³Lauren de Boer, “Fuller Being, Closer Union: Relationship and Imagination as the Key to Health,”(2000), [journal on-line]; available from *EarthLight Magazine*, < http://www.earthlight.org/essay37_deboer.html > (accessed 8 September 2002).

Throughout our indigenous history our wisdom and knowledge was passed through referencing our connectedness in nature. All of our actions were made culturally significant according to, for example, the seasons or migration routes. But with the decimation of our myth, we began to see nature as “other” and were able to introduce terms like “natural” and “unnatural” into our language. I believe postmodern tools like the New Cosmology can put us in touch with our bones again. It can link us to our ancestors and the Earth without having to disregard scientific advancement and, in fact, we can bring back a mythical consciousness through science.

The New Cosmology is a great analogy for the intentions of my project. It is my hope that through the creative use of technological advancements in electricity and then computers (electronically produced music) that I can produce an experience which can be a “bridge” into the emerging Postmodern consciousness, or what I call the “new way.” Much has been lucidly communicated, through intellectual writing, about what Postmodernism can look and sound like, but it is time for the artistic and cultural (“creative soul”) application of these thoughts into a “new way” of being.

II. Orientation on the Myriad Themes

Now that I have introduced my explanation of the emerging consciousness in Postmodernism, I want to touch on the main themes of my project, which I believe will support the transition into this “new way.” I like to think of the project as an intelligent mirror reflecting back some of the progressive features of our current culture that can aid in a smooth transformation into the new culture.

There is one feature, one *pod theme* that each of these *seed themes* disseminate from. This core theme is: that our relationship with technology, possibly above all other things, has greatly enabled human evolution, and without serious reflection on this relationship, humankind will be in for a very violent or very short future. Much of the cultural changes of the past occurred through violent revolution. If things go too far (particularly ecologically) that could be the course for this change as well. The difference, however, is that this change is more a spiritual change than a socio-political or economic one. It is actually a change that would cause every cultural institution to change with it.

The first and most obvious piece to my project is the “mix.” The project is made of two CDs. Each CD is a DJ mix blending various songs and quotes into a seamless adventure of message and sound.

The DJ is an archetype for postmodernism. For one thing, the DJ is a *metaartist* (an artist transcending current definition). The DJ isn't concerned with creating music of her own; she is concerned with creating an experience with other peoples' music that ultimately would be nothing like experiencing any of the songs heard individually. This mixed experience or “whole” is “greater” than a collection of the songs or “the sum of its

parts” played without conscious integration. Also, with the DJ there is no need to reduce the music into certain genres or specializations. Though, more recently, through social and economic pressure this ideal has eroded some. The DJ acts in service to creativity, not art. Otto Rank understood this as an evolution into a new being when he wrote, “The creative type who can renounce this protection by art can devote his whole creative force to life and the formation of life will be the first representative of the new human type.”⁴

The DJ can also be a sonic mythmaker. Her musical technique combined with the energy of the crowd can tell a story. The story is about a journey that each individual listening to the DJ is on. Many musicians are also proficient at taking their audience on a journey; however, my experience is that the consciousness and the language of a journey are much more deliberate in DJ culture. The journey led by the DJ may have a happy ending or a sad ending. It may have no ending at all. The journey is relative to the individual’s experience of the DJ’s mix, and how they interact with it. Both the DJ and the listener/dancer have no intention for the story. They are both making it up as they go along, and where it goes is dependent on infinite variables, but mostly what they communicate to each other through a feedback loop of dance/body language, mood or other minute energetic levels of dialogue (auras, chakras, intuition, you name it). This moment-to-moment interaction is another key element to the new way of being, which is “presence.”

The presence I’m speaking about is what the Buddha was replying to when asked why his disciples, who lived simple and quiet lives, were so radiant, “They do not repent the past, nor do they brood over the future. They live in the present. Therefore, they are radiant. By brooding over the future and repenting the past, fools dry up like green reeds

⁴ Otto Rank, *Art and Artist* (New York: Agathon Press, 1975), 427.

cut down.”⁵ Presence is the state of constant revitalization where we are made fresh and green from the appreciation of the moment. The irony here is that I have rarely experienced this presence in the setting of a DJ mix, though I still believe it is a core component to the DJ journey. I believe the capability of the person, who is listening/dancing to the DJ, to experience presence is subverted by a conditioned drive to escape the reality of their lives.

Western capitalist conditioning has created an escapist culture that has infiltrated every part of our lives especially our entertainment. Many songs, these days, created for DJ culture have lyrics like, “Take me away,” or “This isn’t reality,” or “We can fly to another place.” There is great potential for a Postmodern DJ to actually take us deeper into recognition and an appreciation for the “now” of our existence. Yet, the modern world is constantly pushing us to project ourselves everywhere but here. Our scientists spend all of their time in the future striving for progress. Our Politicians spend all of their time in the past romanticizing a hollow promise to make things great like they once were (they never were). Our advertisers persuade us to project ourselves in the future sitting in that SUV with the plush leather or dunking like Michael Jordan after we buy those shoes.

Instead, the “new way” is a way towards clarity, free from the madness of progress and “manufactured consent.” It is a way towards differentiated individuals celebrated over specialized institutions. It is a way towards culture that appreciates diversity over conformity. It is a way towards people who can experience their abilities consciously and holistically, opening their senses to wonder rather than certainty. It is a way towards a freedom to accept the paradox that whenever and wherever we think we

⁵Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York: Grove Press, 1974), 72.

may be going, we are always here and now. Herman Hesse gave this complex “being” poetic simplicity through the words of Siddhartha:

Is this what you mean? That the river is everywhere at the same time, at the source and at the mouth, at the waterfall, at the ferry, at the current, in the ocean and in the mountains, everywhere, and that the present only exists for it, not the shadow of the past, nor the shadow of the future?⁶

But what is this escapism? And how has it gained so much power? I believe it has grown much of its power from our spirituality. Some of our first ideas of spirituality, our primary theology, created in us a belief and a drive to escape ordinary life. In the Judeo-Christian creation myth, which greatly influenced the development of Modern Western Civilization, Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden for eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. I believe much of the destructive repercussions of the modern patriarchal worldview (including misused technology) can be seen in how this myth has been either literally, unconsciously, or falsely interpreted (particularly by Christians). In each case, the interpretation is the same: 1) women (the feminine) and snakes (poor snakes!) are evil, 2) we will never again live in paradise, and 3) God is vengeful and spiteful. Each of these views has one thing in common: they have caused the separation of humankind from the Earth.

In almost every indigenous culture of the world, the Earth is seen as Mother or as the definitive expression of woman, pregnant with endless creative and nurturing characteristics. From a warped interpretation of the Judeo-Christian creation myth, Eve, who like Earth is symbolic of the universal woman, is viewed as the temptress that spurs God’s wrath. Then from this perspective both women and the Earth are seen as evil.

⁶ Joachim-Ernst Berendt, *The World is Sound, Nada Brahma: Music and the Landscape of Consciousness*, (Vermont: Destiny Books, 1983), 169.

It is apparent in the bible that there was a time when Adam and Eve lived in perfect harmony amongst the animals and plants in the Garden of Eden where everything was provided without effort. But God punished them for their actions and placed them on land that they would forever have to work and farm for sustenance. Literally perceived, all of the land that we have lived on since (Earth) is, in effect, a curse and a hurtful reminder of humankind's original sin.

Lastly, we have the conception of God as a malicious deity. This is the sentiment that may be one of the main grounds for the destructive evolution of technology. In my research, for quotes and samples from scientists, I was struck by how many of them made reference to God. In most cases, the reference pertained to ability rather than theology or philosophy, like "How did God create the universe?" rather than "Why did God save the Jews from Pharaoh?" More specifically, the reference was usually made in comparing current technological advances to God's vast capability. This truly surprised me, particularly from the likes of esteemed physicists, because I had thought that the Scientific Revolution relegated any inquiries mentioning God to being pursuits of fantasy not science. What I started to realize is that in fact, our religious conditionings were far too strong for a single paradigm shift like the Scientific Revolution. They had only been repressed under a cloak of reason, and from the powerful place of our shadows have actually manipulated our scientific pursuits. This unconscious religious fervor manipulated scientists to use science for the sake of advancement alone and not for the sake of truth or human need.

Today two of science's greatest quests are for artificial intelligence and for cloning. These two "crusades" then bring us to a reflection of the causes of our repressed

drives. **We long to be like God, and more accurately, we long to be a God.** Both endeavors, cloning and artificial intelligence, are humankind's attempt at creating its own form of life; its own Adam and Eve. What was ultimately repressed by our belief in God's banishment of our ancestors was outrage and anger towards God. These emotions, unspoken, became an unconscious drive to spite God and all of God's creation. Primarily this drive is manifest as an ability to destroy that which God has created (Earth) because destruction is the easiest power to wield. Eventually, parallel to technological advancement, the drive has become the supreme form of spite: to become, through technology, a God ourselves, who with infinite faculty has no subservience to the biblical God or "his" creation (Earth) anymore (no more farming!). This drive also prompts a complete expression of transcendence away from all "natural" things to a fully human and "unnatural" reality.

For a while at least, like the repercussions of our primary drive to be separate from Earth, this supreme drive will be at the expense of the Earth and the Earth's resources. However, a curious thing may eventually happen since the true repercussion of this drive is creativity. Science may begin to see that the most creative advancements would be in the areas of sustainability and recognize the important scientific application of the holistic systems approaches to life. In this way, our collective shadow can help transform our culture into an acceptance of our interdependence in "Gaia," and could be a wondrous evolutionary healing. Then with clear hindsight, we will look back into the creative, not destructive, revelations of our Judeo-Christian Myth.

We will then be able to see the multiple shades of wisdom that the creation story offers: one of which would certainly be the theme of "separation." The evolution of Earth

(Garden of Eden), somehow, demanded a period when part of itself would separate in order to experience the parameters of a subject-object relationship. Humankind (Adam and Eve) was that part. We were “kicked out of the garden” or rather we kicked ourselves out in the sense that we had rebelled like a reckless teenager against the rules that the Parents-God-Earth were founded on, like balance and interdependence. And like all teenagers, this separation creates the opportunity to realize what balance and interdependence are for themselves and how to adapt them to changing times. With a mass cultural understanding of this theme, the next stage of evolution, as in many mythological journeys, might be the return home/Earth (the “new way”) with new wisdom in hand.

Another theme I intended for my project was as an experience of “fulfillment” beyond entertainment. I believe entertainment in the modern era, like all other cultural pursuits under the modernistic worldview, has served our dualistic and escapist conditionings. Entertainment is seen as a vehicle for avoiding our toils (like the farming that God forced us into). I believe that under the psychological constraints of the modern mind we have cheated ourselves out of the potential for healing that entertainment can provide. The mere fact that we have the word “entertainment” suggests that we have specialized much of our joy out of our personal momentary experience and into a separate cultural frame of venues and entertainers that we must find and pay for it. One can begin to see how easy, then, entertainment can become “capitalized” on in our modern economic structure.

It is one of the natural repercussions of the “new way” to give more freedom to personal expressions of entertainment. It is also a repercussion to dismantle the limited

dualistic forms of entertainment and to bring in “fulfillment.” “Fulfillment” is an experience of interconnectedness and thus presence, and not escapism. By “fulfillment” I mean a much more conscious capability for healing, where social justice, ritual and medicine can be experienced with and as music, film, comedy, etc. “Fulfillment” is about encountering all of the regions of life, not just joy. It is also about creating community. We have become a culture of *pseudo*-communities where people can gather (like in Starbucks) but are not accountable to actually engage with one another. In the “new way,” we are more interconnected and are fully accountable to one another. “Fulfillment” broadens and extends our stories to overlap with the stories of others and to feel, deep in our hearts, a responsibility for them and the web of life that supports them.

“Fulfillment,” as I’ve stated it, is not new. Throughout history, the shaman was a master of mixing art and healing. Shamanism was very much a part of my thinking when I started this project. The DJ has often been referred to as a techno-shaman because the DJ like the shaman works with trance states. I disagree with this reference, though I appreciate the attempt to reclaim indigenous practices in a postmodern context. For one thing, in many cultures the shaman usually enters the trance and the other worlds, which is called, by anthropologists and ethnomusicologists, “communion trance.”⁷ A DJ cannot enter this trance. Certainly, it helps if the DJ is familiar with alternate states of consciousness in order to guide the audience, but the DJ must remain more lucid in order to take care of all of the technical responsibilities like mixing and music choice. I understand that there can be infinite degrees of lucidity, but if a DJ were to enter the same state that a shaman enters for healing, then in that moment that person could no longer be

⁷ Mickey Hart, *Drumming at the Edge of Magic: A Journey into the Spirit of Percussion* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), 163.

a DJ. Another very important difference is that shamans are usually called to their role (often through a life threatening experience) and may often endure difficult rites of passage from their cultural teachings in order to be initiated. Also, a teacher, through years of training, passes down the shamanic wisdom to them. There are no such culturally assigned rites or teachers for DJ's. Lastly, though there are many more differences, shamans like western doctors often work with individual patients and focus on specific problems. DJ's, at least every one that I know, always work with various sizes of groups, and rarely focus on anything outside of getting that group to shake their booties.

However, there are some similarities, which are important to note for my project. It should also be noted that, possibly, through consciously re-applying shamanic wisdom, the Dj could become a postmodern healer like the shaman. Another type of trance performed in shamanic cultures is very similar to the trance that is associated to the DJ. It is called "possession trance"⁸ and is created when a spirit or God enters the body of someone other than a drummer, usually the dancers. Another similarity is that the primary tool for both DJ and shaman is the sound of the drum. It is, usually, the constant beat of the drum that puts people into trance. There are many modern theories addressing the causes for this, but one of the most accepted is "sonic driving." This idea, first postulated by the psychologist Andrew Neher, suggests that because the drum beat transmits sound that encompasses many frequencies simultaneously along the lower range of the frequency band (which emits more energy than higher frequencies) the brain gets "overloaded" with input and in order to compensate enters a less active state, like the theta state, similar to the dream state.⁹

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 114.

The theta wave EEG frequency range is four to seven cycles per second (normal brain activity is in the alpha and beta states, from twelve to thirty cycles per second). It is believed a beat at the same tempo of the theta wave frequency, or between 240 and 420 beats per minute is, as the noted anthropologist, Michael Harner put it, “expected to be the most effective in the production of trance states.”¹⁰ This is probably why most electronic dance music produced today is usually between 120 and 150 beats per minute (a less popular form of electronic dance music is “Drum and Bass” which can be upwards of 180 beats per minute). Rhythm is algorithmic, which means that it can be divided by equal proportions. So, though fewer beats are heard, 240 bpm (beats per minute) is the same tempo as 120 bpm and 60 bpm and 30 bpm and so on. Most of the journey I created is about 133 bpm (part of the reason for choosing electronic dance music) hoping that it would induce a similar experience to the shaman playing a hand drum at 266 bpm.

While I intended for rhythm to be important in the listener’s personal sense of the journey, I also intended for it to enhance the listener’s sense of a collective journey, particularly as in reference to the “Gaia Consciousness.” It is my hope that with the conscious application of rhythm, people, on a social scale, can be sensitized to the greater rhythms and cycles that sustain the Earth’s and the universe’s existence. “Entrainment” happens when two or more objects moving/pulsating in the same field begin to “lock in” and perfectly synchronize; for example when your heart beat or the wave frequencies of your brain “lock in” with the beat coming out of the speakers. Through what I call “tuning” or the willful employment of “entrainment” one can feel interconnected to the power of rhythm on all scales; microcosmic: the dance of electrons around neutrons, mesocosmic: the pulse of the seasons, and macrocosmic: the cycle of our solar system

¹⁰ Michael Harner, *The Way of the Shaman* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1980), 52.

through the Galaxy. By interacting with the rhythms of the drum or of the synthesizer, we can metaphorically, mythically, and directly connect with the innumerable rhythms and vibrations of the cosmos. Through deliberate and consistent interaction with rhythm, “tuning” can set in as a permanent state, and we may be able to *FEEL*, as well as to just think about what it means for a chainsaw to, in 7 seconds, cut down a tree that took 300 years to grow.¹¹

An element or theme that I hope will result through journeying within these other themes is “Cognitive Dissonance.” It was a term created by the psychologist Leon Festinger to address the occurrence of psychological discordance in the presence of two opposing ideas. Spiritually, it represents the shattering of dualism that must occur for one to enter a mystical being, the Tao, the Buddha Nature, the Cosmic Christ Consciousness, etc. The dualism (opposing ideas) that I present in the project is “technology & nature (Earth),”

¹¹ Other noteworthy investigations into this thought were in, the environmentalist, Joanna Macy’s concept of “Deep Time” and the French philosopher, Henri Bergson’s concept of “Duration.”

which can also be translated as “unnatural & natural.” This discordance was another reason for the use of “Techno Music.” The term itself feels like an oxymoron. “Techno” or “Technology” is associated with the machine, lacking what is natural and lacking spirit. “Music,” on the other hand, is the voice of spirit. It is spirit incarnate, and is as natural as the bird’s song. Our minds want to separate these two and yet here they are, fully accepted as a single phrase in our language, “techno music”. More specifically, this is applied to the project through hearing a particular sound that surely is a recording of water, when in fact it is an electronic sound manipulated enough to create the mental association of water. Humankind, at the expense of all life, has worked so hard to create and sustain the illusion of this separation. It has become a festering wound in the sides of our collective psyche. It was one of my goals, through sound, to re-open the wound, expose the illusion, and to allow healing.

III. Experiencing the Journey

Sonic Bridges was created to be a journey. It is similar to the Hero's Quest written about by Joseph Campbell, but framed by the Four Vias (Ways) of Creation Spirituality: *Positiva, Negativa, Creativa, Transformativa*. First, we have birth and celebration of new life as the *Positiva*. Typically, in myth, birth is not part of the Hero's journey in the literal sense of beginning. It is more often associated with separation and initiation. Second, we have separation, in all its ramifications, as the *Negativa*. Third, we have self-awareness and exploration as the *Creativa*. Fourth, and finally, we have the return home as the *Transformativa*.

For technical reasons (it wouldn't fit on one CD) the journey was divided into two sessions. The first session (CD one) is the *Positiva / Negativa* journey. The second session (CD two) is the *Creativa / Transformativa* journey. In this way it is like the DJ mix on a grander scale. The two individual sessions are each their own experience and yet simultaneously exist as one greater experience mixed together. The creation of two sessions also works for anyone who feels the need for a short break once they've finished the first CD.

The journey can be, and should be, experienced on multiple layers of awareness separate and concurrent. It can be the journey of the individual, the journey of the community, the journey of the Earth, or the journey of the journey without particular distinction. Outside of this intention, it could just be an aesthetic encounter, pleasant or unpleasant. Ultimately, I just want the listener/dancer to feel something... anything. The modern world has numbed us. It has separated us from our senses and even our humanity. It is the responsibility of art to re-sensitize us to life.

Most of the music I created or played in the mix is considered Techno Music. This music is usually regarded to be electronic dance music. However, for my purposes it is, as I explained earlier, music to elicit a journey. If the more kinetic types desire to move to it, I would be honored to facilitate that communion of dance and sound. But my initial intention for this practice, at least for the first experience, was for a person to get centered, turn off the lights, and lay down for each 40-minute journey. Then, the person may want to do some type of processing afterwards, like journaling or drawing. Through experience I also believe the journey is most effective listened to alone and in a dark (at night), intimate setting. Headphones are probably a better medium for this than loudspeakers. Eventually, it is also my goal to bring this kind of intention and DJ technique to dance communities everywhere.

Happy Trails!

IV. Concessions

Before we enter the Walk-Through, I must make some concessions about my work. My primary intention for the project was as a journey utilizing sound and rhythm through mixing songs and samples together. However, a subordinate intention was to create, and mix into the journey, songs of my own creation. I wanted to challenge myself, not only as a musician, but also as a mediator of sound and mood. I created four songs (my first ever), one for each Via. Yet, to call my creations “songs” would not be entirely accurate. They were really a collection of “kits” that I had previously prepared to perform into songs. A “kit” is like a small section of a song that may only consist of 2 to 4 measures. For one of my songs I had created 10 kits that I could play, and manipulate using effects, in any sequence and frequency that I chose. I did this in order to have more ability to vary from moment to moment. I’m considering this a concession because although music mixing is not new to me, music production is, and this journey would have been more professionally mastered if I had replaced my “kit performances” with pre-recorded tracks. But you’ve got to start somewhere.

Both 40-minute mixes are live performances. There is no post-production. What you hear is exactly what I mixed all in one sitting. The difference between this project and what I would do while Djing, is that I planned out the sets in advance and practiced them many times before I got them where I could accept them as a complete recording (though due to kit changes in my songs no two mixes were ever the same). On many occasions I would be 39 minutes into a perfect set when something, a missed cue here, or a technical problem there, would compel me to scratch it and start all over again (I probably made over 30 attempts at my first mix). I put myself through this rigor to do two

things. One was to more holistically embody the postmodern theme of moving into “presence,” because I was creating the entire piece presently. I couldn’t just stop somewhere and come back to it later. The other, similarly, was to practice mixing with these multiple elements so that I may, some day, be able to incorporate them into a DJ mix for dance communities. Part of evolution is differentiation, which allows us the ability to have more options in order to create more exposure to the limitless bounds of life. The DJ today is, often, being called to differentiate her abilities and create beyond what two turntables can allow for (though I would never say that to a turntablist).

Another concession I must make is to the wise women of the world. All of the samples that I placed in the journey are from men. This was not intentional, though the male conditioning from a patriarchal culture can have intentions of its own. It is very important to me that we understand the “new way” as balance between the dynamic polarities of life: yin/yang, life/death, masculine/feminine, and male/female, etc. Balancing the super-masculine/male modern world with the power of the female/feminine wisdom (yin) is essential. Though feminine wisdom is not exclusive to females, it certainly is the first place you would go looking for it. Indirectly, feminine wisdom is what I referred to when I wrote on the importance of regaining our mythical consciousness. It is the feminine that brings the acceptance of mystery and myth. But for the sonic journey, though I looked, I did not discover recorded words spoken from a woman that fit my purposes.

Lastly I need to mention that the art is always more important than the explanation of it. I understand that this is a “Thesis” Project and that I am defending my work. Yet, I also realize that this is not “my work.” It is the work of the universe (more

accurately, the Earth) coursing through me and various electronic sounds to ears of listeners who hear not only in the moment alone, but also holistically with their stories, past, present and future. The best I can do with these words is to elaborate on my intentions for engaging with the project. I don't expect much of it or even any of it to be what people truly experience. Though at the same time, I realize this creation is a reflection on the collective being, therefore is what people experience. I am the people and the people are me.

V. Walk-Through

This is a step-by-step approach to looking into specific elements of the mix, such as song choices, samples, and even particular sounds, and how they relate to the themes of the project. I've taken the liberty of marking the elapsed time of each piece so that you could re-visit them on the CDs and listen to them with the description in hand.

Track 1 Positiva & Negativa

The *Positiva / Negativa* session is about birth, celebration, and then shattering and separation.

POSITIVA

Heart Beat 00:00 (elapsed time)

My first bodily experience of Indigenous tradition was when I was about 11 years old. My parents took me to Buffalo, New York, where there was a gathering of Elders from different tribes in the Americas. What struck me the most about the entire experience was this giant drum in the main hut. People took shifts to play the sound of a heartbeat throughout the entire weekend. It never stopped, and I spent most of my time allowing my senses to be filled by its power. An elder told me it was the beat of Mother Earth. This “beat of the Earth” has always stayed with me, and I thought it would be the perfect place to start from or to ground the journey. It is also the perfect departure for the element of “cognitive dissonance,” because here is the very sound of the earth, but created by a synthesizer.

The ear is the first organ to develop to its full size and to be fully functional, when the fetus is about four and a half months old. Thus, the first sound we probably encounter in our life is the sound of our Mother's heartbeat. I complement the sounds of the heartbeat with the sounds of the ocean to compare the sounds of water in Mother Earth to the sounds of water inside the womb. I wanted to create a sonic re-birth into the journey. In this way, I was invoking the wisdom of Alfred Tomatis. Tomatis is one of the greatest sound healers who ever lived. He was the first scientist to show that the fetus could actually hear in the womb. Much of his work was around healing autistic children, which involved creating a sonic atmosphere that simulated their mother's wombs.

Other sounds that enhance the oceanic atmosphere are seagulls and whales. I love the whale's call. It is one of the most wondrous and mysterious sounds to enter our consciousness. Coming into the heartbeat and the ocean, is also a chord looped continuously and filtered in and out. The chord, sampled from some classical piece, is an uplifting and hopeful sound. It gives me the feeling of being opened or ushered out from a closed space to a very expansive one. I was hoping this potential imagery could support the sonic birthing.

The heartbeat is also an obvious trigger for the body to entrain. When entrainment happens to the body the listener is more actively participating with the rhythms of the journey. The person's physiological systems, like respiratory, circulatory, and cranial sacral systems, can "lock in" to the journey and in essence can act as a catalyst to go deeper into the visions. Entrainment is probably one of the reasons that the shaman's choice of sound is most often the drum, because a constant and continuous rhythm is the easiest way to entrain and enter a trance state.

Worship 02:19

The heartbeat and ocean fade into a track by Steven Craig called “Worship.” It is a collection and mix of several religious songs or chants from people around the world. He seamlessly blends in synthesized tones that enhance the depth of these sacred moments. I placed this track here to offer them as sounds of praise and celebration to the creator for the birth. I wanted listeners to feel welcomed into a rite of passage by a community of people in ritual.

Bagger’s Break 05:27

Coming into “Worship” is the sound of a cymbal, which along with a few drumbeats that sound to me like drops of rain, morphs into a song. I call the song “Bagger’s Break” because it is a break beat rhythm and because its primary role is to frame a quote by Will Smith from the movie “Bagger Vance.” I could have chosen a more suitable song for the flow of this section, but out of the songs that I had created, this one felt the most *Positiva*. It felt fun and groovy, particularly with that beep sound (though I think it can become annoyingly repetitious after a while!). The bass line sounds like an organ, warm, supportive, non-invasive. It was the first song I ever made and with months of hindsight now, I think it shows. But at the time, it was the best I had, and I’m still proud of it.

Mozart 08:11

Though only the most insanely refined ear could tell, half way through “Bagger’s Break” is music from Mozart. It sounds like the quick oscillating of notes from a violin that fades in and out in a relatively short time. And in fact, the sound is quick oscillating notes from a violin. It is a very short sample taken from one of Mozart’s violin concertos (I have no way of knowing which one though I’ve tried to find it), which I loop repeatedly and filter. I don’t think it sounds great where it is, but I chose to offer it as homage to Mozart and the subsequent practitioners of sound healing that Mozart has inspired, Alfred Tomatis, and Don Campbell. Both Alfred Tomatis and Don Campbell used Mozart as the foundation for their work. In Campbell’s book “The Mozart Effect,” he introduced the world to the incredible healing properties of Mozart’s music. Campbell believed that the Violin Concertos were particularly powerful.

Quote A 10:56

“See the place where the tides and the seasons, and the turning of the Earth all come together, where everything that is becomes one. You’ve got to seek that place with your soul.”¹²

This quote is poetry relating to the “Gaia Consciousness” that “all are one,” including the human being despite its efforts, both physically, and psychically, to separate. The words like “tides” and “seasons” introduce rhythmic examples and images for “tuning.” I also see it as an invitation to the spiritual road reminding us that the journey ends with the return to the numinous, the return home.

¹² Robert Redford, director. *The Legend of Bagger Vance*. 2h 7m, Dreamworks, 2000, motion picture.

Quote B 12:44

“It’s mixing. Mixing is a very important word in our time. We’re doing it all the time, whether we like it or not. We’re rubbing shoulders with one another. And of course, with the Internet, and other forms of communication today, we are learning and interacting with one another. And mixing, of course, is one of the important ways to define what DJ’s do, what a lot of the music industry is about today: mixing different forms of music. Why wouldn’t we be asked to mix different forms of spiritual practice as well?”¹³

I thought it would be clever to be more consciously holistic about the placement of this quote. Hence, it is played while I am mixing two tracks together which caused a lot of extra difficulty. This might be a good example to use to explain some of the technical complexity I created for myself (see section “Technically Speaking,” p. 51).

To be fully holistic about the quote, you must also know its story. It may have been one of the main reasons that I came to UCS/Naropa and consequently did this project. I went to hear Matthew Fox speak in Ithaca, New York, in the summer of 99’ (where this sample was taken from). I had known about his work and had already been using the Four Vias as a structure for dance events I was holding in Florida with my friend and production partner, Jake. I had never before heard an elder let alone a well-respected theologian, say the word DJ. Not only did he say it, but he also continued to expound upon the importance of the DJ as a metaphor for postmodern values. I was hooked. Here was someone that Gen X’ers, like myself, should be listening to. I then heard about the Techno Cosmic Mass. It was an event, created by Matthew Fox, which claimed to ground the rave experience into a more healthy and spiritually supported

¹³ *Matthew Fox on Jesus and the Buddha for Our Times: Tapes of Lecture Sponsored by First Unitarian Church of Ithaca, New York* (Ithaca, New York, 1999), audio cassettes.

context. It was something I was thinking about for quite a while. I flew out to experience one for myself. One month later, I was moving to California to join UCS/Naropa and be close to the Techno Cosmic Mass.

Of course, the quote refers to the benefits of technology, i.e., bringing the world closer together. But it also addresses the important postmodern repercussion of creating new forms. With the mixing, new hybrids of the originals, whether songs or religions, get created. Often this just serves to water down the originals. At other times, however, these hybrids better serve a culture that has radically changed and needs to adapt so that the original depth can be rediscovered. And Jesus said, “Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, so that both are preserved.”¹⁴

In the Postmodern Age, spirit, like information, is becoming more and more accessible. Churches, like gurus, are less and less necessary. The link to the divine is an ever-growing experience of the relative. Thomas Berry postulated that the true effects of evolution are differentiation, subjectivity, and communion, all of which can and are being applied to our spirituality. I could even start a church for the sonic journeyers. Our religious practice would be to play in the studio for hours and then share our creations with a community of dancers. And of course, Chocolate will be the only sacrament.

Hale Bop 14:11

I love this track. It feels like an electronic fairytale to me. It is a great song for going deeper into the journey and the unconscious, because of its ambient sounds, length, lack of variation, and driving beat. It is a journey song and it provides a fitting

¹⁴ Matthew 9:17 NRSV

background for the Matrix quotes (see Quotes C & D), particularly the whimsical sound that quickly moves up and down the scale. It makes me feel like I am actually sliding down the rabbit hole with Alice (see Quote D p. 31).

Quote C 17:11

“Free your mind.”¹⁵

You may have not even picked up these words. I wanted them to almost skip over your ego ears and go directly to your unconscious ears. It’s simply an invitation to do just what is being said, “Free your mind.” Release the pressure and weight that the Enlightenment and other stimulus for the modern age has placed on the brain. Release the dualistic being into a more mystical reality where the mind is not simply in the head but surrounding the body as a semi-permeable membrane breathing in and out the subtle energetic experiences of the universe.

People may recognize the voice of Lawrence Fishborne from the movie “The Matrix.” Many, if not most, of the sampled quotes I used were from two movies “The Matrix” and “Contact.” I feel these are two of the best movies that delve into the relationship of humanity and technology. Movies have become our storytellers. They are the purveyor of our myths. Unfortunately, because of the importance of entertainment over ritual and community, the wisdom of these stories has often taken back seat to Hollywood fantasy. The Matrix, however, despite it’s glamorous cast, incredible special effects, and action, or maybe because of it, struck a chord in the cultural hearts of us all.

¹⁵ The Wachowski Brothers, directors. *The Matrix*. 2h 15m, Warner Bros., 1999, motion picture.

It, like many great stories before it (Frankenstein, Bladerunner, etc.), got us in touch with our fear. What would happen if we continued on this course of intensifying division between humankind and the Earth through technology?

Quote D 18:10

“I imagine that right now you’re feeling a bit like Alice...tumbling down the rabbit hole.”¹⁶

This is another sample from Lawrence Fishborne in “The Matrix.” Alice in Wonderland is one of the greatest and most overt examples of the inner journey. Much like the journey of the shaman in a “communion trance,” Alice enters a rabbit hole and descends into the “underworld” where she encounters all sorts of wonderful mythological beings and stories. This sample is yet another invitation to go deeper into the sonic journey. My hope is by this point people have decided to let the ride take them instead of them taking the ride or them just listening to interesting sounds. If they haven’t yet decided, then this might cue them to the possibility of something more.

NEGATIVA

Talkin 20:11

This track mixes very well into “Hale Bop.” It begins to bring in darker, edgier feelings and images. It’s certainly more minor key type stuff, and parts of it almost sound like wailing to me. It begins to invoke how the intentions and use of technology have

¹⁶ Ibid.

acted to separate us from nature, thus from our own home, and thus from our own divine creation.

One reason why I chose it over similar sounding tracks is because nearly half way through, a woman forcefully says, “Power...use it” and repeats it over a couple times. Power, as a nihilistic drive to control, is one of the reasons I believe we have taken technology so far into a destructive role. And as I mention earlier, what ultimately gets controlled or destroyed is nature.

Quote E 21:40

“In the next century we’ll be able to, not only, harness the theory of everything, but I think we’ll be able to have the power of a God. We’ll be able to manipulate and to understand, and unravel this blueprint we call life.”¹⁷

One of the main themes I try to investigate in this journey is where the desire for this power comes from. I think we too often stop the investigation of this question long before we get to the core of it. We take it, obviously, as far as a mind controlled in a modernistic paradigm can take it: to patriarchal thought. Where we invariably go is to the male philosophers of the Enlightenment like Bacon, Descartes, Augustine, and Newton who are no doubt instigators, though not the creators of our destructive paradigms. As I also touch on earlier, I believe the deeper roots are in our spirituality, in our religion, and in our myths. We have fallen into the sins of literalism and stagnation and not moved with the fluidity and constancy that evolution demands.

As the quote states, we long to have the answers to all of life. If this isn’t the cause of an over stimulated “Big” head, then I don’t know what is. In fact, I play with

¹⁷ Michael Apted, director. *Me and Isaac Newton*. 1h 50m, Clear Blue Sky, 2000, motion picture.

this a little by introducing the quote into the mix by filtering it through an effect that makes the words get increasingly higher pitched, like they are about to explode. It gives me an image of the man's head almost exploding from egoistic grandeur. Then I end the effect and just play the whole sample over the woman saying, "Power...use it" at the same time.

One point I must make in defense of Dr. Michio Kaku, the man from whom this quote was taken, is that his statement ends with "power of *a* God" and not just simply "God," which implies that his thought may not be directly influenced by the Judeo-Christian understanding of a divine being. However, since he is a practitioner of Western Thought and Western Science, I believe he, like all people within a cultural paradigm, is not immune to indirect influence. I must also mention that Kaku is a potent advocate for environmental and social justice consciousness and should not be, as everyone should not be, judged for his thought in a single moment of history. For instance, even though Descartes' thought can be credited for much of the development of mechanistic thinking, he was also known to diagnose emotional illness and to prescribe meditation and relaxation for healing; a very holistic and non- "Cartesian" thing to do.

Beautiful Suffering 24:39

I call this song "Beautiful Suffering" because it, especially its melody, evokes a sense of beauty for me. Yet, it is also eerie and tragic. It all reminds me that the Vias can exist simultaneously. Although this song is in the *Negativa* section, the beauty of it is also *Positiva*, and the effort I put into creating it is clearly *Creativa*, but also the desire to share this project with the world is certainly *Transformativa*.

I made up the song in just a few hours to simply create a good transition from “Talkin” and then to serve as a background (feedback sounds behind Chomsky’s quote) behind a sample I play from Noam Chomsky. Interestingly enough I think it is one of my better songs and performances with the kits. The rudimentary structure of a trance / techno dance song has to be one of the simplest designs in music. Nearly everyone can recreate it. However, everyone cannot create a trance / techno song that sounds pleasant to the ear and that has a groove that moves you emotionally or physically. In the same vein, nearly everyone can move a pencil on paper, but everyone cannot create drawings like M.C. Escher. I grew a deep respect for dance music producers during this project.

As this track mixes into the next, “Baba,” the sounds take me into a strong theme of the *Negativa*, which can be even stronger than the experience of separation from nature, and may be the ultimate experience of separation from nature. This theme is the separation from one self or the experience of being shattered. The mix feels quite violent and disturbing to me, and I hope it does for others as well. But, I also hope that they feel the space is being held for them to move through this and are not alienated because of it. I am fully aware that many people, particularly those older than the computer generations, find techno music too disturbing to listen to at all, let alone experience it as a journey for an extended period.

Quote F 28:08

“Modern industrial civilization has developed within a certain system of convenient myths. The driving force of modern industrial civilization has been individual material gain, which is accepted as legitimate, even praiseworthy, on the grounds that private vices yield public benefits (in the classic formulation).”

Now, it's long been understood, very well, that a society that is based on this principle will destroy itself in time. It can only persist, with whatever suffering and injustice it entails, as long as it's possible to pretend that the destructive forces that humans create are limited, that the world is an infinite resource, and that the world is an infinite garbage can.

At this stage in history, either one of two things is possible. Either the general population will take control of its own destiny, and will concern itself with community interests guided by values of solidarity, and sympathy, and concern for others, or alternatively, there will be no destiny for anyone to control.”¹⁸

This quote pretty much says it all, and probably because it's almost a minute and a half long, far longer than all of the other quotes. I had sampled this quote long before I ever started this project. I was just waiting for the right context. In fact, it wouldn't be far off to say that the entire *Negativa* section was created to present these words in an impactful way.

¹⁸ Mark Achbard and Peter Wintonick, directors. *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media*. Pt. I, 1h 34m, Zeitgeist Films, 1994, motion picture.

If people walk away from experiencing this project with just hearing this wisdom, then I will be happy.

Worth noting is that I tried to place the quote between and over noises and sounds that seemed industrial and discomfoting, like feedback and lasers and metal in order to magnify the intensity of the message.

Baba 32:27

This track has a strong movement to its sound. By the way it grows to climax it feels as though we are marching into impending doom. At the climax is a powerful deep voice that says, “Fire” I thought this was the ideal place to play a sample of Truman talking about the A –Bomb along with the actual sound of the bomb exploding. (see Quote H).

Quote G 34:20

“Every mammal on this planet instinctively develops a natural equilibrium with the surrounding environment, but you humans do not. You move to an area and you multiply and multiply until every natural resource is consumed and the only way you can survive is to spread to another area.”¹⁹

People may also recognize this quote from the Matrix. The quote speaks to what has happened since we have removed ourselves from the natural cycles of the Earth. We do not live in “a natural equilibrium with the surrounding environment,” because we have created a distorted sense of time. In the book, “World as Lover, World as Self” Joanna Macy gives an adept definition of this time:

¹⁹ Wachowski Brothers.

We members of post-industrial societies in the closing years of the twentieth century have an idiosyncratic and probably unprecedented experience of time. It can be likened to the ever-shrinking box, in which we race on a treadmill at increasingly frenetic speeds. Cutting us off from other rhythms of life, this box cuts us off from the past and the future as well. It blocks our perceptual field of time while allowing only the briefest experience of time.²⁰

It is this time that I believe we can re-sensitize ourselves to through sound, and specifically rhythm. Though first, we must realize that we have been working hard to remove ourselves from it before we can encounter it again.

Another aspect of the quote I want to point out is the use of the word “consumed.” These words, along with Chomsky’s words, inspire a reflection on how our economic system has separated us from the earth by pinning us up against it as its “consumers.” Our technology just helps us to consume at ever-growing rates.

Quote H 35:00

“Having found the Atomic Bomb we have used it. We shall continue to use it until we completely destroy Japan’s power to make war. Only a Japanese surrender will stop us.

It is an awful responsibility, which has come to us. We thank God that it has come to us instead of to our enemies and we pray that he will guide us to use it, in his ways, and for his purposes.”²¹

This quote from the “venerable” Harry Truman had to be the climax to the *Negativa*. It is the single most powerful example of the destructive capabilities of our technology to date: Nuclear Weapons. Our neurotic experience and manipulation of time has brought us to the point where an unparalleled amount of destruction can be created in a moment. Mass destruction of life is accessible (with the right “clearance”) to a single

²⁰ Joanna Macy, *World as Lover, World as Self* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1991), 206.

²¹ Jon Else, director. *The Day After Trinity*. 1h 28m, Image Entertainment, 1980, motion picture.

person and at any time. Only three weeks after Truman uttered these words, nearly two hundred thousand people were dead in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Another two hundred thousand were injured and thousands more have suffered illnesses and death from radiation poisoning in the years that followed.

The quote is an excellent example of the force of theology and patriarchy in supporting the destruction of technology. In the quote Truman makes many references to God and always refers to God as “him.” It’s as if this male deity would not only allow, but also sponsor, such atrocity. Why else, Truman seems to ask, would we have the capability in the first place if it weren’t for a God that would grant it to us? Hearing this quote sampled and played repeatedly was what caused me to look at how a warped sense of spirituality might be at the root of our violence.

The quote ends, and synchronized to the climax and to the word “Fire” in the track, “Baba,” is the sound of the Trinity Test A-bomb explosion held near Los Alamos, New Mexico on July, 16 1945.

Bells 38:03

“Baba” ends as the sound of a bell absorbs its last hard beat. The bells are a track created for a slow motion scene of a Buddhist monk ringing a bell during a walking meditation in the movie “Baraka.” I felt it necessary to clean the air, so to speak, with a healing sound. The bell is also used in many cultures for awareness, so it can also be heard as a cue to come back from the journey and to wake up. My father experienced this sound very differently. He felt as if his shattered self was being dissipated out into the

vast void of the Universe; indeed, another effective experience. Since he expressed this, I've experienced it the same way a few times myself.

Playing behind the bell, and actually playing behind the end of the “Baba” track as well, is the heartbeat re-visited. So, unless your shattered pieces are floating off, this can be a welcoming back from the journey of separation by the heart of the Mother, the Earth.

The journey is ending and has come full circle, or spiral, to nearly the place we started. We aren't the same though. We have brought back something with us and this thing may be with us forever. Then again, we may drop it on the way out or sell it for some good chocolate!! Nevertheless, we are coming back. The tempo of the heartbeat slows from 132 beats per minute to around 85 beats per minute (close to the average heart beat). The bells end and the heart fades away.

Track 2: Creativa & Transformativa

The *Creativa / Transformativa* session is about the search for self and the return home. What I had in mind for this mix was: children. You'll notice throughout, that there are various samples and tracks, which have children singing from many different cultures. This was in keeping with the Vias in the sense of the creativity that emerges from childlike play (*Creativa*) and the sense of responsibility one has for the children and the 7th Generation (*Transformativa*). The *Creativa / Transformativa* session is also about the relationship between self and community. I use the word “community” lightly because I believe it can be as defined or abstract as anyone would “hear” it, depending on their personal journey.

This mix was certainly simpler. I learned a great deal from the challenges of the first and tried to tighten up the technical elements like the actual mixing.

CREATIVA

Electronic Drop 00:00 (elapsed time)

The journey starts with the drop of water. At least I hope it sounds like a drop of water. The sound is not a sample but an electronic simulation. Like the heart beat in track one, I wanted to instigate a little “cognitive dissonance” (I love this phrase). The dissonance for me sets in once the drop starts mutating into different elongated sounds. Though it retains its original being, it has been “electronified” somewhat. I also use the sound to give a sense of continuation from the first session that also starts with the sound of water.

Quote I 00:30

“We can’t help being thirsty
Moving toward the voice of water
Milk drinkers draw close to the mother
Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Shamans
Everyone hears the intelligent sound
And moves with thirst to meet it
Clean your ears
Don’t listen for something you’ve heard before.”²²

The other reason for the drop was to support this quote. If I were to use the sounds of the ocean again, your thirsts may have felt quenched, not too mention it would have been repetitious. With just the drop, the thirst may feel amplified. Of course, this thirst is

²² David Grubin, director and producer. “Love’s Confusing Joy, An interview with Coleman Barks by Bill Moyers,” program 2, *The Language of Life*, 60m, PBS Video, 2001, videocassette.

metaphorical for the thirst of the mother, the divine, the “Rumi-esque” experience of creative lusciousness that is born into us every single moment. As the quote begins, I toss in a sound that I feel is a bit like an electronic wave, so I guess I do a little quenching after all.

In correlation to a journey for self-awareness the sample introduces selectivity: “Clean your ears. Don’t listen for something you’ve heard before.” Selectivity is active hearing, when someone is able to choose which frequencies / sounds they wish to filter out and which they choose to receive. Using selectivity, a listener can engage themselves more fully with their environment. They become more present and more self-aware.

Ultimately Rumi’s words prepare as well as arouse our ear/body for the sound journey that is beginning.

Crickets 01:28

The Rumi quote ends, the water ends, and another sound enters the space. To me it sounds relatively similar to the sound of crickets. Then a lower sound begins to grow in volume. Depending on your selectivity, you may notice the higher frequencies before the lower. If you do, you might recognize the sound as actual crickets. The lower frequency, however, is something very different. It sounds like a beautiful choir of angels. Well...in fact, you are listening to exactly the same thing. Both frequencies, the lower and the higher, are crickets. This is some of the most fascinating and captivating music I’ve ever heard and to think that it isn’t “Carmina Burana” or some intense Phillip Glass composition. It’s a sound millions of us experience every single night, the sound of little

green insects rubbing their legs together. If this doesn't mystify and expand one's sense of awe and wonder for this universe, then there is something wrong.

This experience is made possible to us because of technology. The crickets are played on two tracks simultaneously. One is played at regular speed, and the other is slowed down to the equivalent of the human life span, roughly seventy times.

Technology can be used to enhance our experience of the sacred of this world. Imagine if we could hear all of the infinite tones of nature. Everything that exists emits frequency, only many things aren't in the limited range of human hearing. Everything is singing, the rocks, the trees, the sun, and even our computers (even if it is an annoying hum).

Thirst 03:39

The crickets start to fade out, the water drop comes back, then a bass line, and a song begins to emerge. I think this song nicely continues the theme of thirst. It seems to build anticipation even more while moving further into the journey. It is also the more creative of my songs, at least in the sense of complexity. Even though it may not seem like it, it had a lot of things going on simultaneously and my fingers were moving at all times.

Islamic Brotherhood 05:40

I threw in the lovely voices of these gentlemen singing verses of the Quran over "Thirst" simply because I thought it worked. I learned that when something works you don't need to fight it or even question it. It's a great lesson of the *Creativa*: trust. I was creating "Thirst" when I realized that I had left one of my CDs playing. I let "Thirst" play

while I brought up the volume of the CD to hear what it was. It was the sound of men chanting some foreign verse. To my surprise, they fit well and the Men even seemed to be singing in a similar tempo to my song. The voices also bring in a more grounded, cultural, and organic vibe to the song.

Ivory Coast Kids 08:02

When the Brotherhood ends, I bring in the sound of a child's voice. This sample and the one following are from songs of children in a tribe on the Ivory Coast of Africa. One sample is from a song they sing to the sunrise, and the other is from a song they sing to the sunset. The samples introduce the theme of children that runs throughout the journey.

Waking the Spirits 10:08

It's just a great track with exotic Middle Eastern rhythms and sounds. One of the instruments, maybe a bell, sounds, also, like water droplets. Indeed there are no instruments in the song. Holroyd is a master electronic producer making computerized music that I can only dream to emulate. Though I don't know the language, I love the fluid mix of singing from a man, a woman, and a group of children. It sounds like a family. The sense of this family may provoke in people further investigation into self-differentiation. They may revisit their teenage years or a time when self-awareness depended on a break from the family. They may also identify with one of the trinity, the mother, father, or child; and depending on how they feel or where they are in life, this part of the journey may mean feeling the parameters of this role.

Quote J 12:20

“We have learned to time ourselves by clocks of our own making and to forget the beat of the Earth.”²³

Three quarters of the way into the track is a quote. It sounds like it may have been sampled from some old high school educational video, which is not far from the truth. I snatched it from a Nova special on hearing and the reptilian brain. The reptilian brain is the oldest part of human brain. It consists of the brain stem and the cerebellum, and along with

²³ Diane Ackerman, producer. “Hearing,” program 1, *Mystery of the Senses*, 60m, Nova Video, 1995, videocassette.

our primal behavior and emotions, it controls muscles, balance and our “body time,” our autonomic functions such as breathing and heartbeat. A profound quote, it extends the theme of rhythm sensitivity, or “Tuning.” Technology, in the forms we have created, has taken us into rhythms that are different than the rhythms of the earth (and increasingly faster). Someone should do a study to determine if our autonomic functions have also increased in speed over the generations. Because of these discordant rhythms, we have lost touch with the earth’s natural cycles. We have tipped the scales so much toward the power of death that there could never be enough life to bring back balance. Unless....

Unless, as I’ve said before, we can re-sensitize to Earth and actually recognize that there is no “other.” We must move into the postmodern and holistic consciousness that embraces an interdependent being. This being understands a richer story than simply man creating a sense of time that is out of harmony with Earth. This new story understands man *as Earth* with an extended consciousness. Earth as self-reflectivity. Earth with a choice to know itself and love itself. This is an experience that, I would hope, this journey could touch on: that the sense of self, “I in this skin,” becomes diffused into a greater sense of unity with being as nature, “I as Gaia”. It’s the wonder of paradox that technologies so well associated with a separation from Earth (computers and electricity) could actually create relationship with it.

But we have become Earth unconscious of herself. Why? Maybe, as I mention earlier, all of human kind is the part of the Earth that is like the rebellious youth who has an inherent drive to rebel from their parents to go on a journey of finding self. This is the Earths journey and how wonderful it is that the Earth can have over 6 billion ways of experiencing it. Maybe our sense of rhythm is still too small to grasp the immensity of

this consciousness. Maybe there is a greater rhythm of separating and then reconnecting that can only emerge with perspective millions of years into the future.

Ajuna 15:55

This track is much like “Hale Bop” in the *Positiva* Section. It’s an excellent journey song with all the right elements to drop one deeper into a mythical state, a collective state, and a theta state. Though, admittedly, if your not going in to an alternate state it can seem drag on a bit.

Quote K 18:00

“Humanity,” he says, “will perish, not from lack of information, but from lack of appreciation.”²⁴

This is a great quote for creativity because creativity and appreciation have a symbiotic relationship. They can exist without each other, but to exist together is to enhance each other.

One point I think the quote is trying to make is that we have tried to replace appreciation with information. It’s as if there is an unconscious consensus that we will feel fulfilled as humans as long as we have access to or know a lot of stuff, which has certainly fueled the Internet boom and created the term “information age” along with it. It’s simply a non-material extension of the drive for consumption. It’s not enough for us to own lots of stuff, we must also know a lot of stuff. Only people are starting to realize that even though they own or know lots of stuff, they still feel empty. Our spirit is neglected and it is the first way “humanity perishes.”

²⁴ *Matthew Fox.*

With appreciation also comes a sense of responsibility. There is a desire to save, and maintain, that which is appreciated. As our sense of appreciation expands, so does our sense of compassion, our longing to care and protect: from the song of a loon, to the loon itself, to its habitat, to the habitat's environment, to the Earth. This, I think is the key point of Heschel's quote, that without appreciation and the effects it fosters, compassion, and responsible action, enough of the Earth's environment will be destroyed to no longer sustain human life, and so humanity will "perish" for the second and last time.

TRANSFORMATIVA

Future 23:11

I wanted to use this track to extend the feeling of responsibility by projecting our consciousness into the future, into the place of the 7th Generation. The 7th Generation is a concept that many Native American cultures use when making important decisions. When they deliberate on something important they must consider the impact of their decisions on the 7th Generation in the future.

Towards the end of the track these incredible words are uttered in a deep synthesized voice, "We are making an enemy of our own Future." They are very sobering and true. Not only are our rhythms of consumerism speeding up, but they are doing so completely unaware of long term effects. Our destruction comes at the service of nihilistic, anthropocentric, short-term thinking. When we started chopping down the rainforests, we were not thinking of the world's need to breathe. When we made everyone believe that they had to own a car to survive, we were not thinking of the Polar Ice Caps melting. The list is endless, as we all know, or should know. Today, we're not even

thinking about our own children let alone the children to come in 300 years. We need a new kind of attention, which, like 7th Generation, is, actually, an old wise way of discerning.

The song itself is quite interesting. I love its energy. The rhythm is a groovy tribal beat, infused with fascinating sounds of electrical pulses and surges. It's a terrific complement to my project with its organic/electronic vibe.

Quote L 24:33

“I’m not against technology, doctor. I’m against the men who deify it at the expense of human truth.”²⁵

Here’s the first quote from the other movie I sampled from, “Contact.” Out of all these enlightening quotes, this is my favorite. It most succinctly sums up my intentions for the journey. As I said earlier, “Contact”, along with the “Matrix,” are two contemporary movies that very effectively display the story of technology and humanity. Where the “Matrix” addresses the plight of our future if we continue on this track of destructive technology, “Contact” addresses a more current dialectic between science and religion. That dialectic is exactly what Matthew McConehey speaks to in this quote, and he speaks for me as well. Again, It is one of the main themes in my project. Technology is not to blame for the state of the world, men are, and particularly men with a warped sense of theology that only serves to amplify their warped sense of cosmology, or place in the world.

In the film, McConehey’s character goes on to say that the pursuit of science is

²⁵ Robert Zemeckis, director. *Contact*. 2h 30m, Warner Bros., 1997, motion picture.

supposed to be the pursuit of truth. Truth is a powerful, sacred, and divine quality. It is a metaphor for God. But, technology has become the pursuit of science at the “expense” of the search for truth. Technology is in fact taking the place of truth. It like truth is being elevated to a divine quality, which is very dangerous. In fact, it often seems like truth is inconsequential next to the drive to create artificial intelligence or to bioengineer the perfect human being.

There was no particular reason for its placement outside of sounding good with the song “Future.”

Bulgarian 29:50

It’s another wonderful mix of tribal and electronic sounds. This is one of my favorite songs, and I was just anticipating the moment when I could throw it in. It sonically portrays *Transformativa* energy to me better than I’ve ever heard it spoken. The synthesized singing sounds like the voices of children, which continues my thematic intention. With this song, the energy for the journey builds considerably. I had to build the energy enough to adequately frame the powerful presence of Dr. Martin Luther King (see Quote M).

Quote M 30:20

“All of God’s children, black men, and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro Spiritual, “Free at last. Free at last. Thank God almighty, we are free at last.”²⁶

²⁶ *Martin Luther King Jr., In Search of Freedom: Excerpts from His Most Memorable Speeches* (New York: Polygram,1995), compact disc.

Obviously, this quote has specific historical significance, and it is the climax to one of the greatest speeches ever made. It provides a force that serves to actually amplify the climax of the journey. It also reinforces the communal experience of the *Transformativa*. The use of the phrase “all of God’s children” also gives a more literal and substantial

presentation of the journey's focus on children and interconnectedness. By this time, it is my hope that the listener begins to feel charged with great amounts of energy, which, through the guiding of the journey could turn into feelings of gratitude and love for life. The energy might feel so intense as to elicit some form of release, for instance acting to help the earth or one's community.

Sum 33:18

This song, another one of my creations, was created for, mainly, two purposes. One was to produce a flowing segue from "Bularian." The other was to create a magnificent and expansive sound for the conclusion. I wanted to create an experience that I'm sure the cathedral builders of the 12th century were trying to create. The experience is one of awe and surrender to the complete infinite mystery of the universe (a bit ambitious maybe).

Technically, it is unfortunate that the volume of the song comes in so low. It seems to deplete a lot of the energy instead of gradually transforming it. However, my partner, Amy, didn't sense it as unfortunate. She said that the muffling and lower volume made her feel like she had been placed underwater, "like in a baptism," which would certainly fit with the *Transformativa*. The reason for the low volume is that I, eventually, turn up an echo feature all the way to actually make it sound as though it is in a grand cathedral, where music is entirely filling your senses. When this happens, a drone occurs that increases the volume tremendously, though it is hard to detect because it is more like an undercurrent, like white noise.

I then play all of the samples that have been played throughout the entire journey. It forms a sense of completion for the journey. Things are coming to a finality, and this is an opportunity to look back and take stock in where we have come and what we have learned in order to take what insight or new being we may have acquired into our communities.

I call the song “sum” because it serves to sum up much of the experience.

Quote N 40:47

“You’re an interesting species, an interesting mix. You’re capable of such beautiful dreams and such horrible nightmares. You feel so lost, so cut-off, so alone, only you’re not. See...in all of our searching the only thing we found that makes the emptiness bearable...is each other.”²⁷

This is another quote from the movie “Contact.” It is from the climactic scene where Nelly, the main character, makes a journey into deep space to contact another race of sentient life. The being that makes contact comes to Nelly in the form of her dead father, with whom she was very close. The myth in this scene is very telling to me. Throughout history, many indigenous people have associated the sky with a masculine form, often, “grandfather” or “father.” These associations are loving and wise. They are representative of the compassionate side of masculinity that has been all but usurped in the Modern Western World.

In the film, all of the best scientists and engineers in the world come together to create the technology, from the blueprints of the aliens, which would send Nelly to deep space. What I believe the movie is connecting to, with all of this, is the longing that

²⁷ Robert Zemeckis.

human beings (probably more women than men because of the abuse they have suffered) have to connect with the creative and nurturing side of masculinity. It is this side that could bring balance to our use of power and technology for destruction. It is this side that can cause our

consciousness to be self reflective and humbled. It is this side that may help us to regain a healthy cosmology, and hence a sense of responsibility for our communities, (on every scale, microcosmic and macrocosmic) and our home: Earth.

The final point I want to make about the quote and the journey, as a whole, is its attention to “relationship.” Relationship is the best metaphor I have encountered to describe the creative elements of this emerging “new way.” It is the ultimate summation to Quantum Mechanics, to deep ecumenism, and to the DJ mix. As the Lakota people say, “Mitakuye Oyas’in” or “All my relations.” They understood that to be related to all of creation is to honor and live in harmony with it, and in turn to guarantee your place for the future, for the 7th Generation. Our guarantee has run out and so may we, all because of our lack of relationship.

The quote revisits my original question, “**Why, with so much creativity and capability, is their so much destruction?**” and brings the journey full spiral to completion. The end of the quote, the solution to the question, “is each other,” is looped and faded out over some deep bass tones. I hope this ending serves to drive home the importance of relationship... Then there is silence.

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Track Listing – (In sequential order)

CD 1:

Craig, Steven. *Worship*. Compact disc.

Astro. *Bagger's Break*, Not for distribution. Sequencer kit collection.

Kruger, Andreas (Der Dritte Raum). *Hale Bopp (Album Version)*, Ultra Records. Vinyl recording.

Jimpy. *Talkin (Tarantella vs. Redanka Remix)*, Star 69. Vinyl recording.

Astro. *Beautiful Suffering*, Not for distribution. Sequencer kit collection.

POB and Taylor. "Baba," Seismic Records, Vinyl recording. In *United Djs of America, Taylor – Los Angeles*. Volume 10, Mixer. Compact disc.

Sterns, Michael. "Monk with Bell," *In Music from the Motion Picture Soundtrack: Baraka*. Milan, Compact disc.

CD 2:

Astro. *Thirst*, Not for distribution. Sequencer kit collection.

Islamic Religious Brotherhood Members. *Recitation of the Verses of the Qu'ran*, Tangient Records. Compact disc.

Holroyd, Bob. *Waking the Spirits (Loop Guru Extended Strawberry Mix)*, Six Degrees. Compact disc.

Dj Gogo. "Ajuna," Cyber Records, Vinyl recording. In *Global Underground Amsterdam, Nick Warren*. Volume 18, Global Underground. Compact disc.

Varga, Halo. *Future (Original Version)*, Hooj Choons. Vinyl recording.

Gutbier, Laurent (Travel). "Bulgarian," Tidy Trax, Vinyl recording. In *Global Underground San Francisco, Sasha*. Volume 3, Thrive Records, Compact disc.

Astro. *Sum*, Not for distribution. Sequencer kit collection.

Appendix

A. Technically Speaking (complexity of the mix)

(Continued from page 28)

Actually, I wasn't mixing two tracks to begin with. I was mixing the song "Hale Bop" into the last kit in the song I created in my synthesizer, "Bagger's Break." "Hale Bop" is on vinyl and being mixed from one of the first Technique record players that had pitch control. (If I had the money, this whole thing would have been a lot easier. Though part of the beauty was making the best of what I had and in fact taking it beyond my expectations). So to start, matching the beat from my synthesizer with this old record player is quite a task (no midi was used in this work). Then as I attempt to make a smooth transition utilizing all the gizmos on my mixer, ie, fader, EQ knobs, into "Hale Bop" I also try to gradually end the kit by turning off instrument by instrument on my synthesizer until we are just left with the beep sound. I have to know by memory which instrument is associated with which pad (there are eight pads for eight instruments to each kit, the bass is found by hitting the "bass" button thus turning the eight pads into notes for the bass) The tempo on the record invariably changes so while I'm working the synthesizer I am massaging the record to try to keep the beats synchronized. In the midst of all this I turn to my sampler, find, adjust to tempo, and then play Matt Fox's quote. One also has to understand that I cannot use monitors (speakers) because of the thin walls of my apartment, so I must make sense of the sounds coming from all three sources, at the same time, into my headphones, and know which one needs to be faded, or sped up, or changed. Fox's first words "it's mixing" are first played by hand (pressing and releasing the pad associated with the sample with my finger) and brought in to the mix by

turning up the volume on the synthesizer. I then find the tempo, again, adjust the quote to loop repeatedly and play it until I feel its time to end the loop feature and continue playing of whole quote one time. My hope is that I will be able to make these changes along with ending each of the instruments or bass line in time with the 4/4 structures of the songs. This means that changes should occur at every 16th beat (every 8th beat is sufficient at times). If it doesn't, something will feel off. The sample ends and all of the instruments are off other than the beep. I then turn up an effect on the synthesizer that makes the beep seem to repeat itself in time like an echo in order to taper when turned off instead of ending abruptly. This is most of what I did; what was remembered months later. And all of it was done in a minute and a half.

B. Glossary of Technical Definitions

Breakbeat: Breakbeat is symbolized by the use of sped-up hip-hop beat samples. Very often reggae samples and influence are brought in as well. (definition taken from online source: <http://hyperreal.org/raves/altraveFAQ.html>)

Eq (equalizer) Knobs: On a Dj's mixer these knobs can cut out or increase low, mid, and high range frequencies to add different effects to the sounds being played.

Echo Feature: This is an electronic tool on a synthesizer, which gives the ability to create different degrees and variations of echoes for an audio signal.

Fader: Or more accurately "cross-fader," is a tool a Dj uses to seamlessly blend one sound or song over or into another.

Filter: A device for eliminating selected frequencies from the sound spectrum of a signal and perhaps (in the case of a resonant filter) increasing the level of other frequencies. In the case of a sampler, it can create varying degrees of muffling or clarity in a sample.

Loop: When a sample can be repeated indefinitely or as long as desired.

Midi: (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) A communications standard for relaying information about a sound from an application or digital musical instrument to another electronic music device.

Mixer: A device that adds two or more audio signals together.

Sample: A section of audio material recorded from a larger recording; usually to be manipulated in some manner through a Sampler, such as looping.