



Climate in the Club:

Imagining future oceans through eco grime

Morgan Sleeper & Jessica Love-Nichols | 6.20.19

Music and Climate Change

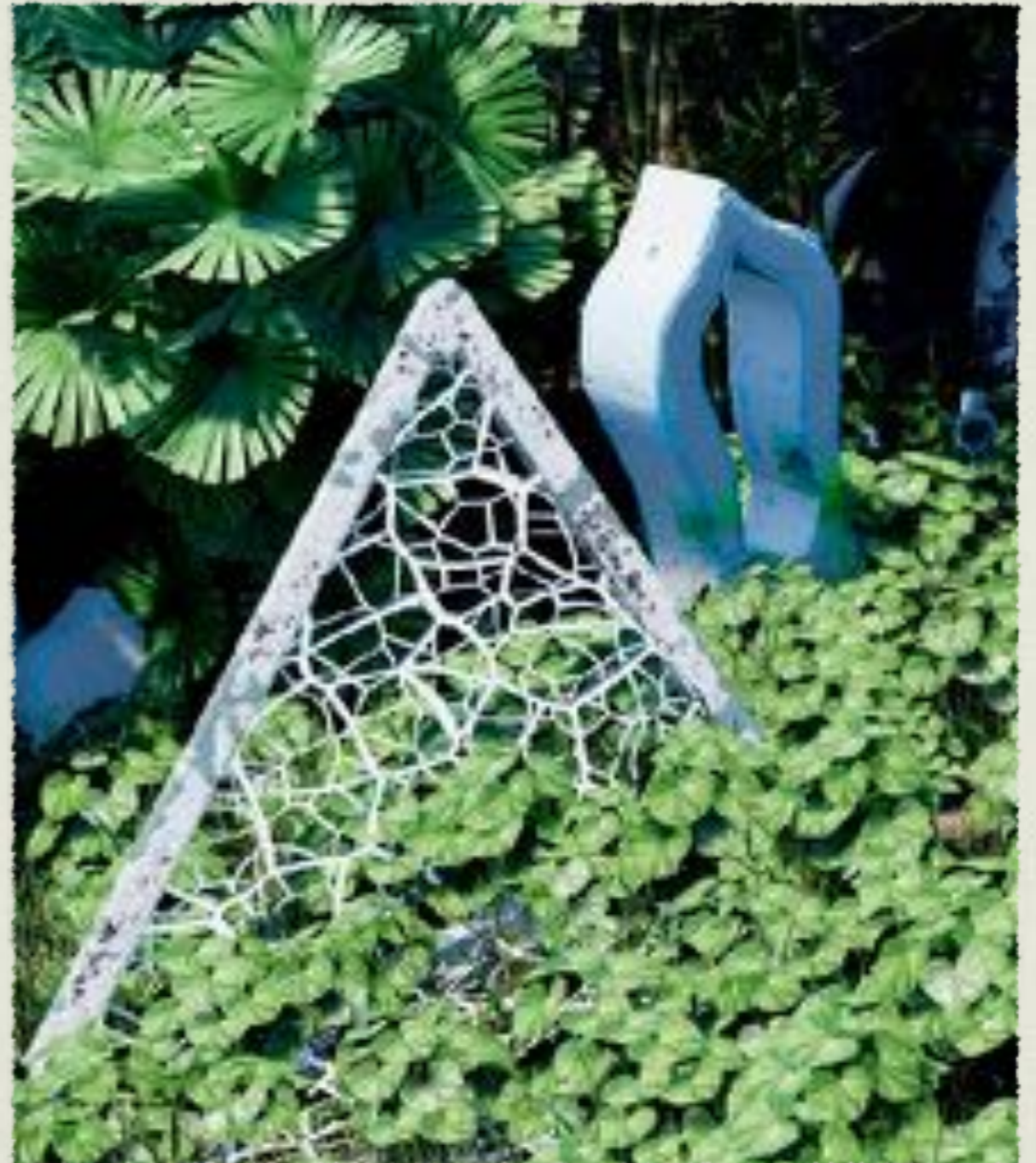
- ◆ Music important way people make sense of environmental concerns (Wodak 2018)
 - ◆ Folk (Ingram 2008)
 - ◆ Classical (Adams 2003)
 - ◆ Art/experimental (Ballora 2014, Philpott 2016, Polli 2005)

Music and Climate Change

- ◆ Music important way people make sense of environmental concerns (Wodak 2018)
 - ◆ Folk (Ingram 2008)
 - ◆ Classical (Adams 2003)
 - ◆ Art/experimental (Ballora 2014, Philpott 2016, Polli 2005)
 - ◆ Popular music of today?

Eco grime

- ◆ Emerging genre of club-oriented electronic music
- ◆ Eco Futurism Corporation (2015)
- ◆ Netlabel from Sydney, Australia



Eco grime

- ◆ Grime
 - ◆ 2000s electronic dance music from U.K.
 - ◆ Dizzee Rascal
 - ◆ Roll Deep
 - ◆ The Streets



Eco grime

- ◆ Eco grime distinguished by: (Brown 2018)
 - ◆ Environmental sound samples
 - ◆ Water, ambient sounds, animal calls
 - ◆ Overt ecological themes
 - ◆ Concern for ongoing environmental destruction & climate change

Eco grime

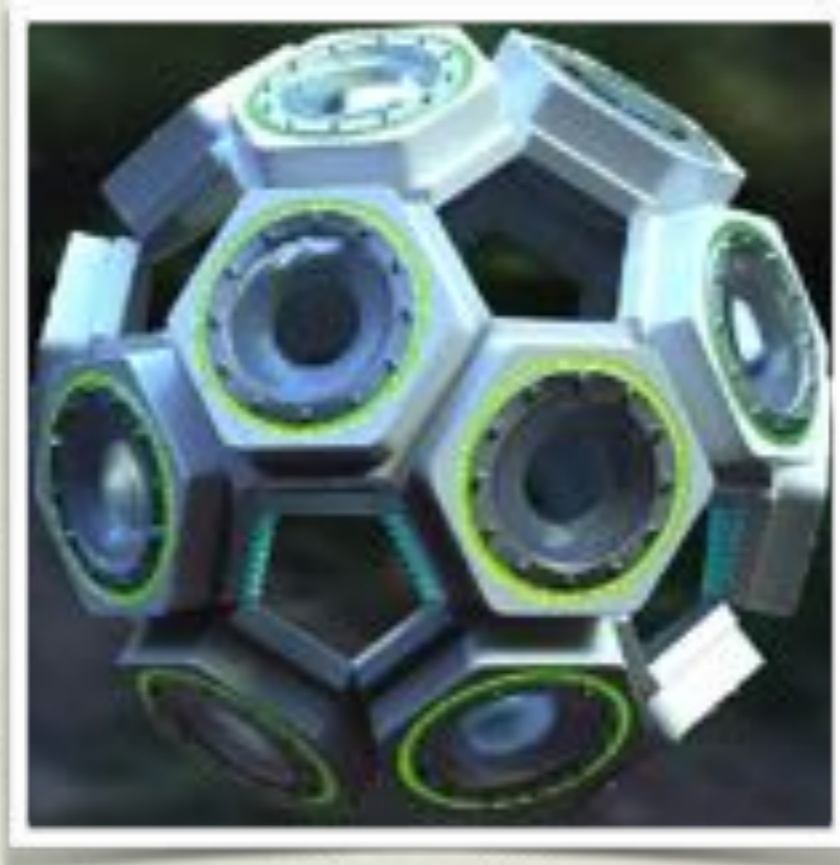
- ◆ Thematic elements of genre communicated through both musical and linguistic elements
- ◆ Musicolinguistic approach to analysis (Marett & Barwick 2007; Tuttle 2012; Sleeper 2018)
- ◆ Language and music as an integral whole

Today

- ◆ Analysis of two popular eco grime artists
 - ◆ tropical interface
 - ◆ Forces
- ◆ Both artists use music and language to communicate climate concerns and imagine different ecological futures through eco grime

tropical interface

- ◆ Russian producer
- ◆ Imagines post-human utopia of natural harmony



tropical interface: eco world

- ◆ 2016 track on Eco Futurism Corp.'s 'Ecomodern' compilation
- ◆ 9 minute sound collage
- ◆ A "mission statement" for EFC and eco grime as a genre (Brown 2018)



tropical interface: eco world

1. Human present
2. Reclamation
3. Post-human utopia



tropical interface: eco world

1. Human present (0:00-0:25)

- ◆ piano
- ◆ heavy machinery
- ◆ indistinct speech



tropical interface: eco world

2. Reclamation (1:15-1:45)

- ◆ looping trickling water
- ◆ “Welcome to the new world. The world of ecological future. High technological artificial intelligence had to exterminate humanity to save nature. Because nature has higher priority than humanity.”



tropical interface: eco world

3. Post-human ecological utopia (5:45-6:05)

- ◆ Nature sounds (water, birds, insects, wind)
- ◆ Balafon melodies
- ◆ Djembe percussion
- ◆ Animal horn
- ◆ No speech



tropical interface: eco world

◆ Shifting instrumentation

◆ Machinery → natural sounds

◆ water, birds

◆ Industrial → pre-industrial

African instruments

◆ balafon, djembe, horn

◆ Shifting language

◆ Synthesised speech →

Distorted speech →

Absence of speech

tropical interface: Eco Club Afterlife



- ◆ 2016 album on Eco Futurism Corp.
- ◆ “Sounds about utopian ideas of ecological future”
- ◆ Continues natural instrumentation and themes of ‘eco world’

tropical interface: Eco Club Afterlife



- ◆ No human language
- ◆ Programmatic track titles depict post-human 'afterlife'
 - ◆ 'Eco Bot'
 - ◆ 'Plant Recovery'
 - ◆ 'Seed Replicator'
 - ◆ 'Jungle Software Test'

tropical interface: Eco Club Afterlife



- ◆ Natural instrumentation
- ◆ 'Plant Recovery'
- ◆ mechanised soil-turning
- ◆ 'Seed Replicator'
- ◆ watering
- ◆ 'Jungle Software Test'
- ◆ ambient jungle, bird calls

tropical interface

- ◆ Imagines a utopian, post-human ecological future via the eradication of humanity by technology
- ◆ Music
 - ◆ Machinery -> Nature
- ◆ Language
 - ◆ (Synthesised) spoken word, track titles

Forces

- ◆ Finnish producer
- ◆ Imagines an ecological future of self-healing oceans



Forces: Plastisphere

- ◆ 2018 tape release
- ◆ Theorises microorganisms that feed on plastic polluting the world's oceans



Forces: Plastisphere

- ◆ Language
 - ◆ Programmatic track titles
 - ◆ 'Symbionts'
 - ◆ 'Alga'
 - ◆ 'Great Pacific'
 - ◆ Samples of vocal music



Forces: Plastisphere

- ◆ Music
 - ◆ Written using SuperCollider
 - ◆ ‘Fed’ samples of EDM and trance music
 - ◆ Procedurally generates glitchy, disquieting tracks
 - ◆ Musically mimics recycling of ‘plastic’ by theorised microorganisms



Forces: Plastisphere

- ◆ “As Long As Skies Are Blue”
- ◆ Repurposes “Summer” by Calvin Harris (2014)



Forces: Plastisphere



Forces: Plastisphere

- ◆ “As Long As Skies Are Blue”
- ◆ Repurposes “Summer” by Calvin Harris (2014)



Forces: Plastisphere

- ◆ Breaking down / recycling intensifies as album progresses
- ◆ Samples become more granular, less recognisable



Forces: Plastisphere

1. Pattern Definitions
2. Symbionts
3. As Long As Skies Are Blue
4. Ghost Nets
5. Great Pacific
6. Imminent
7. Alga
8. Pit Formers
9. Shards and Pellets



Forces: Plastisphere

1. Pattern Definitions
2. Symbionts
3. As Long As Skies Are Blue
4. Ghost Nets
5. **Great Pacific**
6. Imminent
7. Alga
8. Pit Formers
9. Shards and Pellets



Forces: Plastisphere

1. Pattern Definitions
2. Symbionts
3. As Long As Skies Are Blue
4. Ghost Nets
5. Great Pacific
6. Imminent
7. **Alga**
8. Pit Formers
9. Shards and Pellets



Forces: Plastisphere

1. Pattern Definitions
2. Symbionts
3. As Long As Skies Are Blue
4. Ghost Nets
5. Great Pacific
6. Imminent
7. Alga
8. **Pit Formers**
9. Shards and Pellets



Forces

- ◆ Imagines future of self-healing oceans
 - ◆ Nature saving itself via emergency evolution
 - ◆ Humans marginal (provide raw material), but not explicitly eradicated
- ◆ Music (SuperCollider) and language (vocal samples, track titles)

Climate in the Club

- ◆ Eco grime reimagines 'the club' as a space of sonic environmental activism
- ◆ Uses unique musicolinguistic resources of electronic music to communicate concern for world's oceans and changing climate
- ◆ Sound collages, sampling, varied instrumentation, synthesised speech, SuperCollider
- ◆ Uses the musical vocabulary of modern EDM to bring these concerns to the dancefloor

Climate in the Club

- ◆ tropical interface:
 - ◆ “[The] club is like a gallery... [a] place to introduce new things and fresh concepts” (Eco Club Afterlife)

Conclusions

- ◆ Eco grime:
 - ◆ Reimagines 'the club' as a space of sonic environmental activism
 - ◆ Imagines different environmental futures:
 - ◆ post-human utopia and self-healing oceans
 - ◆ Challenges perception that climate communication only happens through 'folk' (conscious / roots) or 'high' (classical / art) music, and not popular music
 - ◆ Shows importance of both music and language in communicating environmental concerns

Thank you!



References: tinyurl.com/EcoGrimeRefs

Eco grime playlist: tinyurl.com/EcoGrimePlaylist

msleeper@macalester.edu | jlovenichols@ucsb.edu