Disco's Revenge: House Music's Nomadic Memory
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Abstract

This article addresses the role of house music as a nomadic archival institution, constituted by the musical history of disco, invigorating this dance genre by embracing new production technologies and keeping disco alive through a rhizomic assemblage of its affective memory in the third record of the DJ mix. This exploration will be illustrated through a close analysis of a specific DJ set by a Chicago house music producer, Larry Heard, in the setting of Rotterdam, 2007, in which American house music is recontextualised. Refining the analysis through close attention to one of the tracks played during that particular set, Grand High Priest’s 2006 “Mary Mary”, the analysis shows how DJ and music production practices intertwine to produce a plurality of unstable cultural and musical connections that are temporarily anchored within specific DJ sets. The conceptual framework draws on the work of Deleuze, Guattari and Foucault, as well as Baudrillard’s sense of seduction, with the aim to introduce a fluid notion of mediated nomadic cultural memory, a type of counter-memory, enabled by the third record and thereby to playfully re-imagine the dynamic function of a music archive.

Keywords: house music, DJ practices, third record, cultural memory, nomadology

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House Music; DJ Practices; Cultural Memory; Nomadology

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