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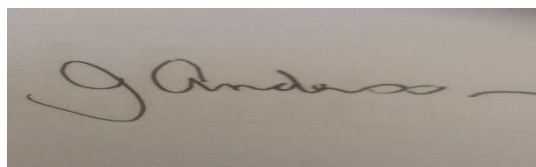
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**Dancing like Ancestors: An ethnographic investigation of trance practices and principles in contemporary UK psychedelic trance dance culture**

**by**

**Jacqueline Anderson**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the degree of  
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## Abstract

### Summary

This research investigated the claim that contemporary UK psychedelic trance culture (psyculture) is re-enacting ancestral trance practices by investigating psyculture practices and principles through an ethnography of a living culture particularly at outside gatherings.

### Background

Psychedelic trance music culture is a growing global culture that aligns itself with complex belief systems, customs, and practices that are associated with re-connecting with ancestral practices long forgotten but still believed in, the re-enactment of rituals and ceremonies that promote trance through dance, music, sound, and environment to initiate altered states of consciousness potentially leading to personal and group transformation and healing benefits. Psyculture demonstrates many small-scale societal principles and practices in terms of contribution, community and participation that brings benefits to members and the community as a whole.

### Current research

Current research indicates that there are similarities between past and contemporary trance dance and psyculture dance practices and principles. The literature reviews psyculture practices in terms of trance, dance, participation, contribution, community, participation, connectivity, the environment and nature, material culture, and music. There are gaps in the study of contemporary trance cultures in the UK, particularly psyculture, with few local, country specific investigations. The aim was to provide deeper insight in the practices and principles of trance dance principles and practices in UK psyculture.

### Methodology

The methodological approach taken was a relativist ontology with an emic, qualitative, interpretive epistemology because of a desire to gain an in-depth

understanding of participant's interpretations of psyculture. The methods were an online survey and interviews to ascertain the opinions of psyculture participants, and to find what ethnographic fieldwork reveals with use of data thematic analysis, ethnographic observation at specific gatherings, and an autoethnographic account.

### Findings

Findings have shown potential similarities of practices and principles of trance dance in many societies centred around dance, sound, music, embodiment and sensory experiences, landscape and journeys, and the benefits of participation and contribution from a dancer's perspective. In fact, community is the central cohering around which the desire to return to dance for long period in natural landscape pivots. The findings demonstrate the importance of belonging, community, contribution, and participation that are integrated outside in the liminal, temporary spaces.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, dance, trance, beliefs, spiritualities, purposes, the centrality of sound and music, the importance of place, and the benefits of participation as key factors in participants' involvement. What is revealing in terms of an original contribution is the dominance of dance and dancing for prolonged periods in groups preferably outside as the determining factors for participants to return to gatherings.

### Contribution

The original contribution comes from an in-depth study of psyculture as a living co-presence sociality providing a comprehensive understanding of the established practices and principles which may help establish a framework for future studies in different EDM genre and cultures and their unique practices and principles. The unique findings show how psyculture survives in an often hostile environment as a small-scale EDM based community that shapes participants' lives and identities as well as being the force that holds the culture together

sustaining its survival with a rich depth in practices and principles beyond shallow hedonism. Foregrounded is the importance of returning to the gatherings to dance together with rich communality, contribution, and participation evident.

Keywords:

psytrance, psyculture, trance, beliefs, dance, music, sound, liminality, community, belonging, culture, shamanism, persecution, contribution, participation, musical composition, journey, material culture, landscape, environment, nature, ancestors, memory, benefits

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## 1. Chapter 1 Introduction

This research investigated UK psychedelic trance culture through a close investigation of the living culture informed by insights from the study of other dance and trance cultures in a range of scholarly disciplines historically and cross-culturally and primary ethnographic research about trance dance based small-scale cultures' practices and principles.

### 1.1 Background and Context

This introductory section sets out the gaps, rationale, aims, main questions and sub-questions, proposed research methodology, issues, terminology, and thesis structure starting with an illustrative background and context overview. Psychedelic trance culture (psyculture) is a sub-category of electronic dance music (EDM) culture (EDMC) similar to other small-scale societies in contemporary culture has specific practices and principles that have similarities to historical and wider contemporary communities that can provide an opportunity to study a living culture. It is helpful to define the general meaning of practice in that it refers to an actual performance or application that may be a repeated custom or habit (Oxford Languages 2023). Principles tends to be defined as a truth or idea that underpins a belief system or behaviour, often morally correct behaviour, and attitude, but also beliefs, values and ideas behind individual, group and society practices and actions that affect behaviour (Collins 2023).

While there has been a focus in the resurgence of psychedelic-related scholarly enquiry, there remains opportunity to understand what practice and principles from a cultural perspective means to long-term subcultures in formulating and succeeding in creating small-scale egalitarian communities. Within psychedelic gatherings or entheogenic settings, it is reported that the experiences of such practices lean towards more liberal political views, egalitarianism, openness, concern for the environment and less authoritarianism at a cultural and personal level (Nour *et al* 2017, p.187).

Psyculture practices, within a review of psychedelic trance culture, encompass the actions, practicalities, and collaborative co-creation within the temporary outside gatherings in the UK which are seen to emulate small-scale communities. The principles aspect of the research covered the beliefs, values, community ethos, personal ethos, personal materiality, and tribe mentality that underpins practices in the UK psyculture community. In studying localised communities, it can develop understanding of how the community helps to stimulate creativity. Much research has been undertaken to observe practices and principles, for example, at Burning Man festival which encourages other like-minded collectivities and events around the world in the dissemination of its practices (St. John 2022, p.280). Many other festivals and specific genres of music have developed their own practices and principles that are shared with that community such as psytrance. Within the investigation of a culture and its guiding principles, it is important to consider the social angles of 'human-ness' where care must be taken to not standardise the similarities but accept the diversities as the culture exists between people not inside or outside them (McAleese & Hargie 2004, p.157). The research focusses on outside gatherings within the EDM community. EDM scholarship refers to such happenings as 'raves', and generally illegal raves. However, the psytrance community finds the terms 'rave' prejudicial and prefers the use of 'gatherings'. Psyculture practices and principles research may benefit from its consideration as a small-scale society similar to other EDM genres. Much can be learnt from the in-depth study of one EDM genre/community in understanding the practices and principles of other communities.

Electronic Dance Music is a genre that began in the 1980s based on house music that is characterised by a repetitive dance beat made electronically with multiple different genres having developed. EDM culture research encompasses cultural debates about its meaning and value, its religiosity, its sense of belonging, and the experience of dance (de Ledesma 2012, p.85). Psychedelic trance (psytrance) is a form of EDM that is distinct in its focus on producing a state of trance. It is characterised by its links with spirituality and its altruistic concerns. Like most types of electronic dance music culture (EDMC), psyculture has a global culture with its roots in the underground (de Ledesma, 2012, p.96). It is associated with prolonged dancing to highly repetitive rolling basslines that may initiate a trance state, something which is reportedly sought after (de Ledesma 2012, p.3).

Psychedelic trance music culture (psyculture) is a growing global culture that aligns with complex belief systems, customs, practices and principles that are often centred around re-connecting with 'ancestral practices'. These practices include the re-enactment of rituals and ceremonies that promote trance through dance, music, sound, and environment to initiate altered states of consciousness potentially leading to personal and group transformation and healing benefits. There have been extensive previous investigations about the background, histories, status, and developments within psyculture but generally many of the ideas emanate from Goa as the birthplace of psyculture, discussing how it has spread and reformed from global to local. St. John says that the development of psyculture has been marked by change and disagreement along the way (St. John 2012b, p.6) and that, due to the accelerated advancement of the culture and the pace of change, psyculture is situated within a context of both conflict and alliance; distinction and compromise (St. John 2012b, p.6).

Global psyculture events have increased in many countries over the past 25 years. Some of the main events are the European based Ozora, Boom, Transylvania Calling, Modem, Psy-fi and Hadra Festivals over the summer season from May to October. During the winter months there is still an active global scene in Goa and elsewhere such as Hilltop Festival, in India. In the winter months in the UK, local, indoor events return by September. There have been many UK events, festivals, crews, and tribes that have survived or died or reformulated themselves over the years. There are UK festivals that have psytrance areas such as Noisily Festival, Anthropos, Eden Festival, Solfest, Equinox, and the Glade Stage at Glastonbury. There are other annual, outside gatherings like Goa Cream, Tribe of Frog, Tribal Sphere, Summer Sunset, Butterfly Effect, This is Sparta, and Faeriepirates that keep within the licensing limits and that often occur on private or open land.

Psychedelic trance events are part of and shaped by a 'psychedelic continuum', with roots and patterns traced back to 1960s counterculture, particularly the aspect represented by West Coast psychedelia and transgressive escapades, such as those written about by author Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-aid Acid Test* (1999). Rietveld (Rietveld 2010, p.32) finds that late 1960s and early 1970s psychedelically

inspired German, US and British music, ranging from new age, jazz, rock and contemporary genres, is stylistically central to psychedelic trance aesthetics. Psytrance is rooted in the psychedelic rock full-moon parties held on Anjuna beach, Goa, India, in the 1970s, which were overrun by a seasonal DJ-led electronic trance dance culture developing in Goa in the 1980s. This dance music experience became formulated in the mid-1990s as Goatrance (St. John 2012a, p.5).

In summarising the history of UK psyculture, the London and southern psytrance scene is robust, adaptive, and flexible with a group of crews who work well together whether inside or outdoors. The Northern psyculture scenes have decreased since 2010 where crews and forums, including the Celtic Northern Psytrance Forum, Alien Resonance, Fatmoon and Psybase, have been replaced by other organisers such as Shanti, Elemental, and Satori most recently. The Midlands active scenes include Tribal Sphere and Psyology in Birmingham. Scotland has occasional nights such as Tripington's Ball, and Cosmos. Ireland has a comprehensive club and festival scene, including the annual Life Festival.

In describing the culture and themes within research, St. John sees psychedelic trance music culture in a supportive role to carry the participants to a different level of consciousness 'enabling departures from dominant codes of practice and arrivals at alternative modes of being' (St. John 2015, p.55). Tramacchi defines the scene as a way of social expression in an unconventional manner (Tramacchi 2004, p.136). He defines the inherent themes of diversity, a sense of liberation, and regeneration in a liminal expression of togetherness working towards 'becoming more human and more engaged while experimenting with unconventional ways of living' (Tramacchi 2004, p.136). A key theme within psyculture is possible reconnection with ancient practices being re-enacted in the present towards a universal consciousness (St. John 2014a, p.5; Larkin 2003, p.7).

There are relevant themes across multiple disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, psychology, sociology, neuroscience, dance, sound, music, and acoustics, environment, and health about the importance of trance, dance, music, and festival in the wider society that can present a deep and insightful picture of trance dance culture. This interdisciplinary consideration can extend across other

EDM genres to deepen a wider understanding of small-scale contemporary communities.

The title of the thesis is founded on prior discussions with participants who frequently referred to dancing with or like ancestors as an experience as if they are re-creating a timeless activity of universal importance to the human spirit. Understanding what constitutes an ancestor requires further expansion. Archaeological scholarship provides evidence of the importance of reflexivity, relationality and not preferencing one ancestor over another, reviewing types of ancestral connections and memory including the idea of non-human ancestors rarely considered within contemporary trance dance EDM cultures (Porr & Matthews 2019). Archaeological sites provide evidence of gatherings to honour ancestors with ritual performance which is relevant to contemporary EDM trance dance cultures as the link to the environment and nature in terms of social memory of ancestral connectivity (Parker Pearson and Ramilisonina 1998). Silenced memories beyond official memories are under explored in contemporary trance dance and archaeology shows how dance is a way of remembering in a re-assemblage of dance heritage that influences people returning to the same dance experience in contemporary culture (Connerton 2003, p.39; Erdelyi 2008; Royo 2007; Redhead 1990).

Beliefs and spiritualities are acknowledged to have an important place within contemporary trance dance based cultures but further illustration will help foreground the potential relevance of beliefs in EDM cultures. Anthropological and archaeological research into belief systems and rituals show them to have a purpose in assisting humans to understand life and identity, deal with changes and use of rituals for renewal and celebration (Fogelin 2007; Olsen 2010; Price 2011; Insoll 2004).

EDM communities are based upon a desire to dance to specific genres of music as the central organising principle. It is insightful to consider the functions of dance across other small-scale societies including for social, ritualistic, political, cultural, and personal reasons (Aamodt 2014, p.53). Dance is particularly important in identity presentation and the intersection of memory and movement, both personal and

collective, embodied within physical remembrance and social sharing (Hamilakis 1998, p.128).

The centrality of dance exists within a trilogy along with music and other people as the dominant pull of attending such gatherings particularly outside. The relationship between people and landscapes is important for knowledge, supernatural journeying, and sensoriality of monuments often experienced in a messy, polysemic manner especially amongst mobile peoples. Sound and acoustics played a part in past and present trance dance societies where intentional spaces were created with dance, music, in a variety of open and closed spaces on sites for ritual bonding though evidence is difficult to confirm (Ingold 2000). The acoustic experience of landscape is important to understanding memories particularly listening in the landscape (Bender 2020). Music and sociality are closely linked in terms of solidarity both inter and intra-culturally (Crooke *et al* 2023). Music is linked to emotional responses from dancing (Sloboda & Juslin 2001), as well as important in human evolution and challenging mainstream practices particularly engagement with rhythm and melody (Cross, Zubrow, & Cowan 2002).

Humans form societies that depend on acceptance, contribution and participation irrespective of size across history and culture that impact on status, identity and cohesion amongst many other benefits. Social structures within small-scale societies can provide valuable information about psyculture communities as they rely on contribution and participation to survive and often utilise trance dance practices to cohere and sustain their community (Migliano *et al* 2020; Wagner 2023). The similarities across all small-scale communities are that they practice egalitarian principles but within that, particularly in psyculture, other EDM communities and other small-group communities formed through music, dancing and drugs, is a necessary hierarchy that enables effective creation, production and evolution with assigned roles in this fast pace ever changing fluid environments. The role of the 'other' is highlighted in the production of small-group boundaries where they are separate from the larger society leading to a distinct communication, perpetuation and cohesion. Inside these specific groups tribes and crews (the insiders and organisers) form that are the hierarchies that manage the communities leading to practices and principles being formed at a micro level seen as separate and 'outside'



the mainstream community (Moore 2002; Florêncio 2023). These small-scale groups are marginalised by the mainstream society continuing persecution, prohibition, resistance, secrecy and prejudice (Moore 2022; Perrenet 2019). Inside these communities trying to survive and protect themselves from outside discrimination lies affective practices that may similarly have prejudices and power conflicts inherent within them continuing suspicion and a need for secrecy (Adeyemi 2022; Moore 2004; Chowdhury 2019; Motl 2018).

The history of EDM is fraught with conflicts with the authorities being negatively described as 'raves' whereas psytrancers prefer their events to be described as 'gatherings' to move away from discriminatory labels. Across the UK there have been legal restrictions since the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1995) to deter illegal EDM events. As Charles indicates this led to a decrease in outside events and an increase in legal indoor events (Charles 2019b, p.14). However, illegal 'raves' still continue to exist, and outside events are often not licenced due to legal and licensing conditions that are restrictive to organising a purely psytrance event (Anderson 2020). There is substantial insight potentially available from understanding how the context of such persecution helps share participants' experiences of themselves and their community that may extend greater knowledge of how EDM and other contemporary small-scale communities' practices and principles work in particular what draws participants to keep returning to the source of these experiences time and time again (Moore 2022). Another significant aspect of these EDM communities based around dancing is that most attendees of all EDM genre events are potentially seeking something spiritual that communal dancing (especially for long durations and in an outside environment for psychulture) is central in this 'return' that bears relevance to other contemporary small-scale cultures beyond rave scholarship.

The importance of dancing outside is paramount to psychulture participants along with the relationship and engagement with the environment and nature, human and non-human, the landscape (irrespective of whether it is sacred or not) and the wider cosmos with the resultant benefits and potential similarities to the universal human desire to return to dancing together outside in nature on a regularly basis. The acoustic experience of landscape is important to understanding memories where

sound and acoustics evidently play a major part in small-scale communities in the past and other contemporary societies that practice trance and dance communally (Bender 2020; Ingold 2000). The relationship between people and landscapes is important for knowledge, supernatural journeying, and sensoriality of monuments.

The relationship between the human mind, material culture and objects, the preparations made before, during and after attending gatherings and the journeys participants make, both literally and metaphorically, are well understood in archaeology research (Pearson 2021; Barona 2021; Malafouris 2023). There are potential healing benefits to participation particularly through dance connectivity in many cultures. Ethnographic research is demonstrating what Supernant *et al* advises should be a key area of research into the archaeology of the heart and emotions where the 'whole person' approach could help us to understand love and affective experiences that are sought by regular return (Supernant 2020; Dezechache, Sievers & Gruber 2022).

My background has been a festival organiser of Ravenshaman Gathering in Cumbria, by being involved in several Northern events, a volunteer for Psycare UK, provider of Jackus Dream and Dance Healing Workshops, the manager of Psynergiser Dance Foundation, the administrator of various social media groups such as Psyculture UK, Global Psyculture, and the Centre for Research in Psyculture and Psytrance, and noted as an elder of the scene since 2004 and a valuable pace dancer and participant.

## 1.2 Gaps (Appendix 6)

### Introduction

There has been a relative lack of studies of both psytrance and other EDM genres from a UK context that comprehensively covers practices and principles from an interdisciplinary lens. In terms of context, psychedelic trance culture has been under-investigated both at a transglobal and local level and would benefit from a taut, academic investigation of the ontological and epistemological nature of psychedelic trance culture (Rietveld 2010, p.32; St. John 2012b, p.4). These gaps occur at a global level and there is a need for examination of this world-wide movement at

country-specific level which has had comparatively little study (St. John 2010b, p.222). There are relevant themes across multiple disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, psychology, sociology, neuroscience, sociology and rave/club relating to beliefs, ancestors and memory, dance and trance, music and sound, community, contribution, participation, environment and nature, benefits, material objects, journeys and preparations in the wider society that can present a deep and insightful picture of trance dance cultures. This interdisciplinary consideration can extend across other EDM genres for a wider understanding of contemporary small-scale communities.

### Beliefs

Anthropological and archaeological research into belief systems and rituals shows a purpose in assisting humans to understand life and identity, deal with changes and use of rituals for renewal and celebration (Fogelin 2007; Olsen 2010). As beliefs and spiritualities are acknowledged as important to the practices and principles of psychculture participants, an in-depth investigation would illustrate potentially variations from non-belief towards full spiritual engagement by participants that potentially parallels the extent of beliefs and spiritualities within other trance dance and EDM cultures. Beyond traditional beliefs there may be secular and more-than-human beliefs and spiritualities encompassing vibrancy with matter, nature and non-human others.

### Ancestors and memory

There is little investigation about the nature of ancestral connectivity and memory in psychculture and EDM based communities though, it is felt that there are similarities with ancestral and other trance dance practices and principles. Archaeological scholarship provides evidence of the importance of reflexivity, relationality and not preferencing one ancestor over another, as well as reviewing types of ancestral connections and memory including the idea of non-human ancestors rarely considered within contemporary trance dance EDM cultures (Porr & Matthews 2019, p.7). Forgotten or silenced memories beyond official memories are under explored in contemporary trance dance similar to within marginalised communities (Connerton 2003, p.39; Erdelyi 2008, p.275). Furthermore, dance archaeology highlights how dance provides a way of remembering through the process of reconstruction or a re-

assemblage of fragments constituting a dance heritage that influence people returning to the same dance experience in contemporary culture (Royo 2007, p.83; Redhead 1990, p.118).

#### Dance and trance

There are many functions of dance across all societies including for social, ritualistic, political, cultural, and personal reasons (Aamodt 2014, p.53). The desire to 'return to the rave' is a recurring theme within EDM communities that may reflect the essence of an intention to dance together. The power of collective, prolonged dance particularly at outside gathering is often noted by participants who believe the practices that they return to perform are like those sought and performed by ancestors.

#### Music and sound

Parallel with the importance of dance based communities, music is a major reason for engagement within EDM and psytrance communities. The importance of the attributes of the music, their purposes and interpretations indicate the inter-relationship between participants and the external world are visibly important to participant but rarely explored academically. Similarly, music and sound having their own agency and influence is seldom addressed in psytrance. Though the body of research in music and sound is substantial, insufficient attention has been paid to the specific sounds and their acoustical properties when analysing music and sociality at EDM events (Middleton 1990, p.177). Music and sociality are closely linked in terms of solidarity both inter and intra-culturally (Crooke et al 2023; Sloboda & Juslin 2001) and challenging mainstream practices (Cross, Zubrow, & Cowan 2002). Moreover, there is a lack of scholarship in psyculture of the aesthetics of its music, 'and the religious and spiritual characteristics of this global movement' (St. John 2009, p.42).

#### Contribution, community and participation

Little research has been carried out the different layers of involvement, contribution, and participation at psyculture gatherings in terms of the holistic and continual sense of communality. Schneider addresses the evidence within indigenous dance practices as an important form of cultural expression, and a key aspect of group identity (Schneider 2021, p.51). Social structures within small-scale societies can

provide valuable information about psyculture communities as they are small, often mobile, and temporary that rely on contribution and participation to survive (Migliano et al 2020, p.1). There would also be a benefit to focus on the nature of contemporary trance dance practices that led to cultural changes as well as aspects that have not changed in human history particularly how small-scale societies are a spur to mainstream societal change (Wagner 2023, p.24). Along with many EDM genres, psychedelic culture in the UK has suffered persecution and prosecution from the 1960s onwards especially since 1988 with the drug use, criminality and hedonism associated with the rave scene seen as an 'existential threat' resulting in stigma (Moore 2022, p.43).

### Environment and nature

An ethnographic observation based on participants experiences with the environment and nature at outside EDM gatherings as a living society could present crucial information about intentions that would benefit many disciplines that investigate cultures based on trance dance particularly how they utilise landscapes, spaces and non-human interactions. Intentions to regain vitality through these connections is evident in psyculture but requires further investigation particularly the desire to be outside and engage with nature and the environment. Ideas from within anthropology are likely to be relevant here: beliefs in a primacy where everything is alive and connected, both human and non-human, and where the resultant benefits emerge from being grounded in nature. The acoustic experience of landscape is important to understanding memories particularly listening in the landscape in archaeology (Bender 2020; Ingold 2000). The relationship between people and landscapes is important for knowledge, supernatural journeying, and sensoriality of monuments. In psyculture, and increasingly across many EDM outside gatherings, there is a creation of an immersive environment that is a safe space for self-exploration and a collective experience of belonging. However, there is little research undertaken about why this is important.

### Preparations, journeys and objects

The memories and dominance of experience of journeys to outside spaces could be insightful in EDM rave and psyculture that is currently explored more in anthropological trance research. The under acknowledged importance of how a

temporary settlement is set up as well as possible, real and imagined journeys, and associated rituals is highly relevant. Material culture and objects, the preparations made before, during and after attending gatherings and the journeys participants make, both literally and metaphorically, are underdeveloped within EDM and psyculture research. Within psyculture objects, belongings, clothing, utensils, cooking equipment hold significance in terms of meaning and value at a gathering but have rarely been investigated to the extent they have been in archaeological and anthropological research. The detailed assemblage information about personal preparations, the types and roles of participants, their dress, and music and dance preferences would aid an understanding of contemporary and past trance dance practices (Pearson 2021; Barona 2021; Malafouris 2023).

### Benefits

There are potential healing benefits to participation particularly through dance connectivity in many cultures. Even though the healing benefits seem undoubted, there is little research undertaken about the physical and mental benefits of trance dance practices in psyculture and EDM. Ethnographic research about healing benefits experienced by psytrance participants could help us to understand affective experiences (Supernant 2020; Dezecache, Sievers & Gruber 2022). Similarly, much can be learnt from addressing the role of emotions in the dynamics of cultural evolution including what non-human elements can teach humans (Dezecache, Sievers & Gruber 2022). Furthermore, Moore indicates a need to counter the polarised, stigmatising narrative of addiction attached to clubbing and recreational drug use in EDM research, to rather acknowledge the fluidity of identity, and the potential for individuals to change by adopting new social practices to support and promote the obvious therapeutic benefits (Moore 2022, p.37).

Throughout the research from the initial emergence of gaps in the literature to the final formulation of conclusions and recommends, a tracking grid has been completed to indicate how the questions were developed from identified gaps and to keep track of developments available in Appendix 6.

### 1.3 Originality and Contribution

The original contribution comes from an in-depth study of contemporary psyculture in the field of ethnographic global dance music cultures in providing a comprehensive understanding of practices and principles of psyculture which may help establish a framework for future studies in different genre and cultures. This thesis provides an original contribution to both knowledge and practice in terms of a comprehensive coverage of archival and autoethnographic experiences of UK trance dance gatherings and added value from the breadth and depth in the detailed data from gathering participants. The contribution could provide expansive knowledge of the relevance of connectivity and memory, the importance of spiritualities, and the primacy of dance in community cohesion.

### Beliefs

A key contribution would be a greater understanding of psyculture participants' beliefs and spiritualities specifically in the UK related to practices and principles.

### Ancestors and memory

The importance of memory and ancestral connections to EDM and psyculture participants could be a valuable research pathway particularly in exploring similar practices and principles in ancestral and other cultures where trance dance is integral to identity and community cohesion.

### Community, contribution and participation

A detailed account of UK psyculture its principles and practices in terms of contribution and associated community, sociality, and crucially participation, presents a substantial contribution to rave scholarship, EDM culture and overall contemporary rave/club culture studies in understanding how participation shapes identities across the underground vs mainstream social structure. This research could make strides in seeking clarification about the feelings and experiences within underground EDM communities regarding persecution and hostility along with the considerable desire for participants to keep returning to dance communally together.

### Dance and trance

Paramount to participants' rationale for continuing to attend such contemporary psytrance gatherings is the pull of communal dancing that further investigation could provide unique contributions to understanding psyculture and other EDM cultures.

#### Music and sound

Psytrance music and collective dancing are cited as the main reasons for participants attending gatherings and this focus on participants experiences as dancers is foregrounded to give a voice to their practices and principles. Equally the importance of psytrance musical composition, journeying and the assemblage surrounding the agency of sound, and its technology would be a substantial step forward in understanding the relationship between music, dancers and technology.

#### Environment and nature

Landscape and environments are important in psyculture. A natural outdoor environment is preferred for a trance dance gathering as it enhances the experience of collective dancing and provides an immersive, sensory intersubjectivity between human, non-human, nature, and the wider cosmology. This potential impact on EDM contemporary small-scale communities could be sizable in establishing the centrality of spaces, journeys and how they are remembered.

#### Preparations, journeys and objects

The journey metaphor runs through every aspect of personal and group practices, experiences, and intentions, internally and externally, in the artwork and symbolism in psyculture and the final framework may provide a significant structure to plan future EDM investigations into specific preparations, journeys and material object taken from archaeology and anthropology. The impact of an in-depth knowledge of material culture, personal and social assemblages and preparations for, during and after attending gatherings may provide a highly illustrative platform for understanding other EDM cultures.

#### Benefits

The establishment of the physical and mental benefits from involvement in psyculture could be significant to understanding how trance, dance, small-scale community sociality, contribution and participation interact with environment and



nature in a music based culture could be profound and provide a mirror for other EDM cultures as well as society in general.

#### 1.4 Rationale and Aims

With the renaissance of psychedelic studies currently underway globally, there is a predominate focus on psychedelic drugs, their potential benefits, and treatments. However, there is a need for research into other areas within psychedelic culture such as the practices and principles that underpin emerging themes such beliefs, memory, ancestral connection, trance, dance, music, material culture in terms of objects, journeying to gatherings, community, contribution and participation, connection of dance to the environment and the associated healing and benefits of trance dance from a group perspective.

##### Interdisciplinary lens

This would include an investigation of the evolution of trance dance culture cross-culturally and practices and principles in other cultures. Within the psychedelic renaissance there are limitations due to the domination of cultural, political, and historical factors. The focus should foreground the history of marginalised people, ethnic and racial minorities, women, and other disenfranchised groups rarely identified in the current mainstream narrative (George *et al* 2020, p.11). The inclusion of archaeological, anthropological, ethnographic, and psychedelic trance culture research as well neuroscience, sound acoustics, archaeoacoustics and psychology was undertaken to extend the understanding of trance dance practices both past and present through an interdisciplinary lens both historical and contemporary. This included an investigation of the evolution of trance dance culture cross-culturally and practices and principles in other cultures. Within the psychedelic renaissance there are limitations due to the domination of cultural, political, and historical factors.

##### Detailed account of psychculture

The aim was to provide deeper insight into UK contemporary psychedelic trance culture practices and principles using the methods of comparing academic literature and research from secondary data about past and present trance dance, analysing

primary data from contemporary UK psychculture participant responses from surveys and interviews, and the autoethnographic participation at three UK psytrance events.

### 1.5 Research Questions (Appendix 4)

Dancing like Ancestors: An ethnographic investigation of trance dance practices and principles in contemporary UK psychedelic trance culture

RQ1. What are the practices and principles of contemporary UK psychedelic trance culture?

Sub questions

RQ1a. What does an investigation of UK contemporary psychculture trance dance practices and principles reveal? (Literature Review)

RQ1b. What contemporary practices and principles exist amongst psychedelic trance dance participants and practitioners in the UK? (Interviews and Surveys)

RQ1c. What does ethnographic fieldwork of contemporary psychedelic trance culture practices and principles in the UK bring to light? (Autoethnography).

Based on the gaps identified from preliminary searches and the literature review, the following sub-questions were formulated. However, further gaps and themes were identified after the data was analysed (see Appendix 4).

Theme	Gap identified	Question
<b>Ancestors and Memory</b> Types of ancestors Ancestral connectivity	✓	Q4a Do you feel you connect with ancestral spirits while at a psytrance gathering?

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Gap identified</b>	<b>Question</b>
Living not dead		
<b>Beliefs</b>	✓	Q8a Would you describe psytrance beliefs and/or spirituality (i.e. the beliefs or non-beliefs, spirituality, shamanistic, moral behaviours, purposes of attending, why do you attend?).
<b>Community</b> Participation Types of involvement		Q2b Do you feel contribution to the culture is important (i.e., dancing, contributing to the arts, music, helping out)?
<b>Community</b> Sense of belonging	✓	Q2b What do you feel about the community and belonging?
<b>Community</b> Participation and co-operation	✓	Q2a What does participation mean to you?
<b>Dance and trance</b> Dancer's perceptions, embodiment and movement	✓	Q1b What do you experience when you dance? Do you trance (change in consciousness, altered state, transformation, would you say it is spiritual, sacred, everyday)?
<b>Environment and Nature</b> Connections to nature	✓	Q5b Do you feel you have a connection to the environment, nature, and the animal world at psytrance gatherings?
<b>Healing and Benefits</b> Dance and embodiment	✓	Q1b What do you experience when you dance? Do you trance (change in consciousness, altered state, transformation, would you say it is spiritual, sacred, everyday)?
<b>Music</b> Composition	✓	Q3 What do you feel about the music and its effect on how you feel?

Theme	Gap identified	Question
Importance		
<b>Preparations and Journey</b> Landscapes	✓	Q5a What do you feel about the locations, décor, clothing, lighting, buildings, and environment and how it affects you?
<b>Preparations, and Journey</b> Journey	✓	Q7a What are your pre journey, during and after rituals of a gathering or event (what do you do to prepare before the journey and before the event)? Q7a Would you say you go on a journey (i.e., whether just to travel to an event, during the event and/or your personal journey, a pilgrimage)?
<b>Preparations Objects and Locations</b>	✓	Q6a What would you consider to be psytrance customs and habits (food, clothes, art, symbols, myths, places)? Q5a What do you feel about the locations, décor, clothing, lighting, buildings, and environment and how it affects you?

## 1.6 Research Methodology

The methodology had been chosen as the best fit for the research question and psychulture using a qualitative approach combining archival literature, ethnography and autoethnography.

The chosen primary research methods included surveys, interviews, ethnographic and autoethnographic accounts, and fieldwork. The approach taken was a relativist ontology with an emic, qualitative, interpretive epistemology. The approach was data driven though initially key thematic areas were established from the archival searches. Thus, some elements were deductive as I had existing prior knowledge of possible themes to emerge, authors to read, and avenues of enquiry to pursue within psychulture but within anthropological research, the area was relatively new to me

and therefore the data drove where I went. As I was interested in the manifest opinions of interviewees, there were some elements of verbatim reportage, but I was also interested in latent meaning that required some level of interpretation. Braun and Clarke advise that themes do not emerge but rather the researcher is an active filter deciding on the themes that are relevant (Braun & Clarke 2006, p.80).

Bradley indicates that social archaeology cannot be reduced to a series of limiting procedures at the expense of intuition and imagination in fieldwork in order to be more scientific. Fieldwork should embrace the multi-dimensional reality of human experiences by being open to the ecstatic aspect of fieldwork while retaining clear objectives but still learning local conventions experientially (Bradley 2003 p.164). This is only possible if anthropologists challenge the exclusion of the researcher from the ethnography by questioning assumptions concentrating on key moments of transformation (Bradley 2003, p.164). Peters advises a more subjectively involved 'complete participation' especially in the study of altered states of consciousness and religion (Peters 1981, p.2).

## 1.7 Issues

A contingency plan was formulated depending on the Covid 19 situation continuing in the future. This plan involved using only online interviews on Microsoft Teams for the duration of the research with no face-to-face interviews. Similarly, autoethnographic work at festivals was planned for the potential end of Covid lockdown during 2021 and 2022.

## 1.8 Terminology and Glossary (Appendix 2)

Within psychculture trance dance practices there are certain usages of words, phrases and concepts that require some explanation due to the unique or specific contexts beyond normal definition. See the Glossary, in Appendix 2, for a coverage of specific use of vocabulary within the context of the research as well as some issues with subjective use of terminology.

## 1.9 Thesis structure

The thesis is structured in five sections. Chapter 1 is the introduction that provides background, a summary of proposed gaps relevant to the topic area, and suggested points of originality and contribution in terms of impact. The justifications for the choice of title, reasons for undertaking the research, an introduction to the research questions, methodology, issues, terminology, and the overall thesis structure. Chapter 2 is the literature review which is the initial discussion of emerging themes based on the readings of archival and scholarly related secondary research organised by developing topics. Chapter 3 is methods and methodology detailing the theoretical approaches about the chosen qualitative research methods of surveys, interviews, fieldwork journal and autoethnographic interview and the underpinning rationale behind the methodological choices. The results of the data collection, data analysis, thematic analysis of the actual primary data is included along with a tracking grid that shows how the gaps link to the questions, the findings, the conclusions, and recommendations. Further considerations made in the planning stages show ethics, risk, participant choices, researcher welfare during fieldwork, data storage, and feedback choices. Chapter 4 is the findings and analysis section which summarised the key points from the primary data categorised by method type then by emerging themes. This is followed by researcher interpretation of results, and then analysis. Chapter 5 is the discussion section which compares and contrasts the primary and secondary data again by themes. Chapter 6 includes the thematically categorised conclusions, the contribution of originality to academic research along with recommendations of impactful research suggestions, the issues identified during the research with given solutions, and a concluding remark. The appendices included are given below.

The proposed thematic structure is shown in the contents above. It has provisionally been organised around the emerging literature review themes with the same structure being incorporated into the primary research data, findings, and conclusion.

- Beliefs
- Ancestors and Memory
- Dance and Trance

- Music and Sound
- Community, contribution and participation
- Environment and Nature
- Preparation, Objects and Journey
- Benefits

The overall thesis structure is as follows:

Abstract

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Appendices and key to abbreviations
Appendix 1 References
Appendix 2 Glossary
Appendix 3 Consent and approval forms
Appendix 4 Questions
Appendix 5 Participants table
Appendix 6 Gap tracking grid
Appendix 7 Interview data (I)
Appendix 8 Survey data (S)
Appendix 9 Autoethnographic Interview data (AI)
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ASC – altered state of consciousness

EDM – electronic dance music
Psyculture – psychedelic trance culture
Psytrance – psychedelic trance music

## 2. Literature Review RQ1a

The literature review provides a summary account and multidisciplinary analysis of the key scholarly areas of research and investigates the main concepts and concerns about the practices and principles of past and present trance dance and psyculture. The literature review provides a summary account and analysis of the key scholarly areas of research within the archaeological record, anthropological, ethnographic current research and investigates the main concepts and concerns about the practices and principles of past and present trance dance and psyculture. The topic areas of relevance to trance dance culture practices and principles cover beliefs, ancestors and memory, dance and trance, music and sound, contribution, community and participation, environment and nature, preparations and objects, and benefits identified so far.

### 2.1 Beliefs

When considering beliefs and spiritualities, it is worthwhile to briefly define beliefs, and shamanism, and the loss of spirituality in modern culture. Beliefs and spiritualities are acknowledged to have an important place within contemporary trance dance based culture. Anthropological and archaeological research into belief systems show them to have a purpose in assisting humans to understand life and identity, deal with changes, use of rituals for renewal and celebration (Fogelin 2007; Olsen 2010; Price 2011; Insoll 2004). Key themes include spirituality, shamanism, evolution, identity formation, and ritual whether doctrinal, mythological or earth based, ancestral connectivity, individual and group forms of practice (Price 2011, p.983; Insoll 2004, p.156; Rappaport 1999; Darvill 2010, p.343; Wright *et al* 2021, p.5).



Shamanism is a complex and contested area around its definition, relevance, and limitations of the term where some scholars discuss the practices and rituals of an actual shaman (Eliade 2020, p.507; Winkelman 2009, 2023, p.2; Watson 2001, p.187; Tilley 1994, p.47; Bradley 2000, p.133; Parker Pearson 2021, p.189; Richards & Thomas 1984; Balzer 2016, p.24). In archaeology, shamanism can be loosely defined as a set of techniques and actions with an important social purpose (Rock & Krippner 2008, p.215; Walsh 1989; Eliade 1989; Krippner 2002). Other topics centre around shamanic practices and principles having social and community purposes of bonding and shared communication that affect society and the individuals within it (Fogelin 2007, p.59; Insoll 2004, p.156; Winkelman 2023, p.2). Recent psychological research discuss biological universals which are seen as part of the human experience, practices that increase bonding and may contribute to evolution, societal cohesion and healing that may aid understanding of the mindset, use of substances, liminal spaces, effects on consciousness, bonding, and rituals (Winkelman 2015, p.10; Price 2001, p.3; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2011, p.24; Reynolds 2014, p.14; Hutson 2000; St. John 2004b, p.18; Tramacchi 2004, p.136); Jackson 2016); Singh 2018, p.48).

In psyculture research, there is felt that there are shamanic or similar codes and rituals including latent religiosity and playful ritual (Till 2011, p.4; Tramacchi 2001, p.279; de Ledesma 2010, p.75; Farrell 2019, p.149). It is suggested that a shaman figure and their role was clear in many human societies supporting the spiritual and practical aspects of the community. However, no such figures have been definitively identified in psyculture (Olsen 2010, p.45; Eliade 2004; Winkelman 2023; Tilley 1994; Parker Pearson 2005; Winkelman 2015, p.21; Watson 2001, p.198; Tilley 1994, p.47; Bradley 2000, p.133; Parker Pearson 2021, p.183).

Scholars suggest the loss of strong spirituality within society has led to the wish to regain sacred affirmation and mystical connections, the seeking of liberation from a toxic society, and restoration of expressive spirituality through collective dancing (Winkelman 2015, p.10; Tramacchi 2001, p.279; St. John 2004b, p.32; Till 2011, p.15; de Ledesma 2010, p.75; Farrell 2019, p.149; Heelas 2008, p.5; Larkin 2003, p.7; D'Andrea 2007, p.204). Others indicate that the desire to gather is not so much about spiritual or liminal experiences but to reconnect with positive emotions within

the present moment (Larkin 2008, p.5; Heelas 2000, p.237). Some related scholarship addresses the idea that there is less a thirst for self-expansion and more an opportunity to experience positive sociality based on living in the present moment and immediatism in trance based communities (de Ledesma 2012, p.72; Beck & Lynch 2009, p.349; McKay 2003, p.178).

Spirituality is often viewed as a mediated sensation embodied within practices and experiences helping discover truths and enhance consciousness with only traces of religiosity towards collective connectivity (St. John 2006, p.10; Tramacchi 2001, p.210; Tramacchi 2001, p.210). Other scholars focus on the importance of spirit, non-human, and human agency tied up in an intersubjectivity and embodiment of physical and spiritual energy (Johnston 2023, p.17; Olsen 2010, p.36). More recent researchers are gaining a better knowledge of how beliefs and values are embedded in everyday life and practices where these do not have religious connotations but are more akin to life and relationship skills (Tarlow 2015, p.8; Raja & Rüpke 2015, p.14; Foor 2017, p.86; Olsen 2010, p.360). These beliefs help individuals and groups make sense of their lives as a community where social interaction and habits sustain and regenerate (Schielk & Debevec 2012, p.8; Beck & Lynch 2009, p.349; de Ledesma 2012, p.85).

When considering definitions of what constitutes belief, it is the accepted viewpoints of a culture in terms of perceptions, structure and ideologies (Olsen 2010, p.23; Fogelin 2007, p.59). Archaeology provides comprehensive research about beliefs, spiritualities, rituals and practices that bear relevance to specific practices and principles of psyculture. For example, in beliefs and rituals have a role in understanding life, importance in establishing identity, changes, and cycles (Fogelin 2007, p.65). Integral to most belief systems is a cycle of gatherings, festivals or congregations often involving entertainment, feasts, and way to embed renewal, change, and stability along with revelry through dancing, singing, eating, and drinking (Olsen 2010, p.36). Anthropology defines belief systems as principles that incorporate accepted viewpoints of a culture about its world perceptions, the structure of its society, ideologies, problems of existence, dealing with the problems of life that unite a people and 'differentiate them from outsiders'. However, such

systems are rarely static being adaptative to cultural, political, and religious change and power (Olsen 2010, p.23; Fogelin 2007, p.59).

It is of benefit to deepening the picture of psyculture principles to understand shamanic practices and beliefs about the nature of the world and reality in order to challenge assumptions (Bloch 1989, p.21). Shamanic practices have biological universals aiding human capacity through singing, music, and dance giving adaptive advantages, better social integration, and cognitive evolution (Winkelman, 2015, p.6). In psyculture research, there are cross-cultural similarities to shamanic practices such as the consciousness changing use of chemicals, social relations that enhance communitas, and group bonding (Winkelman 2015, p.2; Hutson 2000, p.44; St. John 2004a, p.7; Tramacchi 2004, p.136). Within contemporary electronic dance music and psyculture practices, altered states of consciousness, healing practices, and spiritual concepts are deemed similar preoccupations (Winkelman 2009, p.459). Such cross-cultural research about the mindsets and thought patterns embedded in human cognitive evolution is pertinent to understanding usage and practice today (Winkelman 2023, p.2; Price 2001, p.3; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2011, p.24; Reynolds 2014, p.7).

Current archaeological interest in ritual occurs at a time when there is a resurgence of interest in spirituality and shamanism (Fogelin 2007, p.59). Contemporary shamanic rituals are often part of ceremonies involving the community in a mutual connection with spirit dimensions connecting shamanism, rituals, and spirituality to a social function, particularly the benefits of bonding and shared communication (Winkelman 2023, p.2). During a shamanic ritual, the ability to see spirits (often in animal form) and interact with the dead is often led by a shaman figure acting as a medium between the spirit world and reality (Olsen 2010, p.45; Eliade 2004; Winkelman 2023; Watson 2001; Tilley 1994; Bradley 2000; Parker Pearson 2005). Interestingly, Jackson suggests that shamanic powers can exist in those not deemed to be shaman though practitioners are wary of publicising their abilities (Jackson 2016, p.vii). Although within psyculture, individual practices are proposed as similar to shamanism, no nominated shaman figures are seen to exist unlike in more traditional shamanic practices (Winkelman 2015, p.21; Watson 2001, p.198; Tilley 1994, p.47; Bradley 2000, p.133; Parker Pearson 2021, p.183). There are some

issues about those who may claim to be shaman in terms their own self-serving agendas within EDM culture (Singh 2018, p.48).

In archaeological scholarship, there has been a move away from focussing on worship and liturgy towards how beliefs and rituals affect participants and how are embedded in everyday experiences (Tarlow 2015, p.8; Raja & Rüpke 2015, p.14). Rituals do not have to be religious and can be more akin to life and relationship skills though still honouring ancestral connections (Foor 2017, p.86). The concept of the everyday within religious practice has a specific usage referring to how individuals and groups make sense of the complexities of life, how they practice religion in secular aspects of living or the significance of beliefs and practices in specific settings (Schielk & Debevec 2012, p.8). The impact on the community is that spirituality and beliefs are interconnected with social interaction to sustain and regenerate (Schielk & Debevec 2012, p.8; Hunt 2014, p.378). Scholars suggest contemporary culture suffers from fragmentation and loss of connection due to a lack of strong beliefs with practitioners seeking to regain sacred affirmation, mystical experiences or spiritual transcendence, and enhanced community engagement (Winkelman 2015, p.10).

Contemporary research about trance spirituality veer towards how spirituality is embedded in practices, not particularly towards self-expansion but certainly, where the everyday is equal to achieving transformation through an enhanced sociality rather than achieving a religious, spiritual, or psychedelic experience (Beck & Lynch 2009, p.349; de Ledesma 2012, p.85). Beck and Lynch discuss how the spiritual is embedded in experiences of oneness, and 'immediatism', reflecting global practices in EDM culture (Beck & Lynch 2009, p.349). This is rather the seeking of a spirituality of connectedness not sacredness, reaching a gnostic, more secular amalgamation that suggests a rethink is needed beyond restrictive colonial thinking towards engaging with a multiplicity of ideologies (McKay 2003, p.178).

However, psyculture participants may not see their experiences as religious or ritualistic, but this only be implicit where types of religious practices and codes similar to a religion exist, and that the connectivity has religious aspects even if not acknowledged (Till 2011, p.4; Tramacchi 2001, p.279; de Ledesma 2010, p.75).

Whether the participants openly wish to have or acknowledge spiritual experiences or not, research suggests it happens inadvertently (Tramacchi 2001, p.279; St. John 2004b, p.32; Till 2011, p.15; de Ledesma 2010, p.75; Farrell 2019, p.149). Farrell states that there are differing opinions as to whether psytrance gatherings are spiritual or they just include such elements rather being just pleasurable perhaps even being a mix with a humorous critique of the ritualistic structures (Farrell 2019, p.149).

A recurring theme in psyculture research is that participants are seeking liberation from toxic society towards a more genuine, expressive spiritual experience (St. John 2004a, p.6, 2004b; Heelas 2000, p.237). Psyculture scholars see the dancefloor space as vital where journeying and expressive spirituality, which may have ancient origins, is a 'salve to the toxic mainstream world' (St. John 2006, p.11; Heelas 2008, p.5; Larkin 2003, p.7). St. John defines the growth of non-traditional desires for quasi-religious experience and a freedom from the 'postmodern quest' for personal freedoms as 'the rave imaginary' (a fantasy quest to merge with a traditional past via rave dancing) and 'expressive spirituality' with 'salvic trajectories', and gnosis references to ascensionist and re-enchantment motifs (St. John 2004a, p.18; St. John 2004b, p.18).

Furthermore, there is an indication that the dancefloor is a safe, sacred space where participants can be their true selves in order to journey transcendently. St. John calls this an expressive spirituality leading to a feeling of freedom, a deeper recognition and engagement with others perhaps towards a new gnosis (St. John 2004a, p.13; D'Andrea 2007, p.204). Heelas agrees that participants are expressing their spirituality to find an authentic experience free from the toxic effects of mainstream life whereas Larkin sees psyculture spirituality as a re-emergence of traditional tribal rituals where a gathering acts as a bridge between ancient and contemporary worldviews (Larkin 2008, p.5; Heelas 2000, p.237). Heelas adds that the change in atmosphere and environment at outside gatherings leads to a rebirth, a reconnection with love, and solidarity (Heelas 2008, p.5). Insightfully, St. John indicates this is based on future ideals and past nostalgias that do not necessarily add up to a whole culture but a mash up of beliefs, spiritualities, and possible outcomes within a form of expressive humanism where participants pick and mix

from a diversity of sacred and secular beliefs (St. John 2004b, p.18). Heelas affirms that psychculture participants expressing spirituality are seeking liberation from toxic, technology-obsessed, society towards a more genuine spiritual experience particularly with nature (Heelas 2000, p.237).

Moreover, Tramacchi locates Australian psychculture in the same matrix as religion with similar rituals, processes and structures that lead to a 'psychedelic communitas' presenting a collective experience for its spiritual seekers (Tramacchi 2001, p.210). Psychculture scholars emphasise social bonding as a major draw and intention amongst participants. Some scholars argue that dancing together produces a greater social bonding in a psychedelic communitas (Tramacchi 2000, p.211). Rave rituals can be seen as types of social machines which draw power in a spontaneous communitas entangling people in stimulating a deep individual and socially dynamic collective (Tramacchi 2000, p.211; Schmidt & Navon 2017, p.1140).

However, St. John indicates a 'mediated sensation' is sought in psychculture with only traces of traditional religiosity or ritual evident leading to the discovery of truths and enhancing consciousness (St. John 2006, p.10, 2012a). St. John refers to participants as seeking sacred variety of experiences in a religiosity of 'mediated sensations' within a seeker culture (St. John 2006, p.10). These seekers have a range of purposes for participation based on the importance of connection and a modern communitas as a place to achieve re-enchantment and collective connectivity. Thus, ritual and ceremonies may be tied in with a desire for community engagement rather than sacred affirmation. Similarly, within psychculture research, de Ledesma indicates that he could not locate any particular 'thirst either for self-expansion or self-destruction' within UK psychculture (de Ledesma 2012, p.72). He advises that everyday aspects in psychculture events are just as important as the seeking of spirituality and transformation (de Ledesma 2012, p.123).

Material culture opens new ways of considering spirituality particularly the human experience of energy (Tarlow 2015, p.8; Raja & Rupke 2015, p.14; Olsen 2010, p.36; Foor 2017, p.85). The embodiment of spirituality in trance dance shows how spirituality is experienced through the body, intersubjectivity, alterity and materiality through the agency of physical or spiritual energy (Johnston 2023, p.17). Johnston

proposes that the 'subtle body', defined as energy (spiritual or subtle matter), embodies human and other than human agencies in intersectionalities declaring a physical or spiritual agency (Johnston 2023, p.17). According to Native American beliefs, spirits usually appear as a collective group, are closer to the everyday, manifest through animals and stones or the earth and reside in the portals in the earth (Olsen 2010, p.36). Johnston asserts that inclusion of animate worlds where 'stones dance and plants speak' has equal validity in understanding how mute matter is infused with agency (Johnston 2023, p.17). Thus, it is productive to reflect on how on the subtle body, through alterity or loss, showing that consciousness has a vibrant materiality (Johnston 2023, p.17).

This overview of historical and cross cultural contemporary trance practising cultures illustrates a complexity that inhibits generalisations in terms of beliefs and a heady possible mix is evident that suggests an individualised approach to each trance practising culture is appropriate. Certainly, research indicates that, whether acknowledged as a religious, spiritual or shamanic practice or principles or not, there are some similarities, but an investigation of cultural participants should elucidate a more authentic foundation.

Within EDM culture, there are arguments that deep practices and principles are not ascribed in a rarefied culture of shallow hedonism and that statements of greater depth are a fantasy in drugged up minds. Starting with an overview of how trance based cultures perceive their practices and principles in terms of beliefs lays the foundation for a greater understanding of whether or not there is a formulated belief system in psyculture that is potentially beyond restrictive dogmatic criteria. Moreover, research indicates that a greater depth exists within EDM and psyculture regarding belief, practices and principles that mere hedonism. There is a clear suggestion that there is a thirst for self-expansion and the immediate experience associated with mediated, embodied sensations towards a collective connectivity rather than sacrality. The inclusion of spiritual connection and appreciation across human and non-human agency gives valuable insights into contemporary psyculture practices and principles. An integral part of beliefs and spiritualities is connection between the living and the dead, the spirit and the real world which is the focus of the research in investigating ancestral worship, memory and practices. Research suggests there is

significantly greater depth within EDM practices and principles beyond mere hedonism in terms of beliefs and subsequently experiences of ancestral connections and memories.

## 2.2 Ancestors and memory

Linked to beliefs and spiritualities are practices and principles related to ancestral connections, worship and memories, both near and far, and crucially about the role of ancestors and worship regarding embodiment and material culture. The title of the thesis is founded on prior discussions with participants who frequently referred to dancing with or like ancestors. This experience forms part of the desire to return to such gatherings re-creating what they believe is a timeless activity of universal importance to the human spirit. Scholarship that is relevant to this study encompasses what constitutes an ancestor, the importance of reflexivity, relationality and not preferencing one ancestor over another, reviewing types of ancestral connections including the idea of non-human ancestors rarely considered within contemporary trance dance EDM cultures (Porr & Matthews 2019, p.7; Clary-Lemon 2019, p.19). Beyond the established history of selected ancestors, it is advised to include multiple pasts to widen acceptance of an extended range of ancestors and forms of worship in a wider social history (Olivier 2004, p.204; Giese & Keightley 2022, p.12; Parfitt 2021, p.287). Academic research about ancestral worship and practices focusses on universals and specifics, and the domestic and the exotic differences of worship amongst different cultures and how the relationship between the living and the dead is complex (Steadman, Palmer & Tilley 1996, p.63; Büster 2022, p.23). Archaeological sites and ethnographic analogy have been used to argue that earlier gatherings took place with the purpose of honouring ancestors with ritual performances; for example, in the interpretation of Stonehenge usage (Pearson and Ramilisonina 1998, p.317); whereas in some cultures, the dead are viewed as sacred and bear influence on the living (Kim 2015, p.47; Long & Van 2020, p.375).

In terms of memories, archaeology provides much illumination about 'which memories' are remembered. Silenced memories beyond official accepted memories in history show how dance is a way of remembering that is highly relevant to psychoculture (Connerton 2003, p.39; Erdelyi 2008; Royo 2007; Redhead 1990). Social



memory has a vital role in community formation and continuation as well as foregrounding forgotten or silenced memories (Connerton 2003, p.39; Erdelyi 2008, p.275; Moshenska 2006, p.59). Social memory is influenced by non-reality, the vibrancy of things and non-human relationality with scholarship endeavouring to encompass these important relationships widening the variant sources of memory (Erdelyi 2008, p.60; Hodder 2018, p.18; Harris 2021, p.224; Marks 2019, p.316). Equally relevant is the concept that group memory is a connector for communities in collective remembering (Mixer 2017, p.290).

The multiple memories existing in material objects present a heterogeneous mix beyond linear time that illustrates a social form of doing that embed societal narratives (Olivier 2004, p.204; Giese & Keightley 2022, p.10; Malnig 2021, p.108). Dance provides a way of remembering through the process of reconstruction. Assemblages of fragments resembling a dance heritage influence people returning to the same dance experience to retain their heritage (Royo 2007, p.83; St. John 2010a, p.7; St. John 2014a, p.5; Redhead 1990, p.118). The resilience of ancestral memory through the maintenance of dance and trance traditions has had a vital place in sustaining heritage even if only a generalised non-kin memory of ancestors, traditions, and practices (Hicks 2010, p.64; Schneider 2021, p.51; Hauser-Schäublin 2017, p.253).

Ancestral worship is a key focus in anthropological and archaeological research with debates regarding specificity and universality, and focusses on the exotic and domestic (Steadman, Palmer & Tilley 1996, p.63). Some scholars argue the relationship between the living and the dead is complex contextually, and culturally specific (Büster 2022, p.23). However, ancestral worship is inherent within all world religions although in research there is a preoccupation with cultural difference suggesting anthropology should not focus solely on exotics and specifics where important subtleties can be missed (Steadman, Palmer & Tilley 1996, p.63; Insoll 2004, p.156). Ancestral-descendant interaction is becoming one of the most popular themes suggesting a move away from an anthropological preoccupation with cultural difference. This affects the study of ancestral worship by separating focus on those cultures that do or do not worship ancestors thus missing important information about the purpose and influence of ancestors (Steadman, Palmer & Tilley 1996,

p.63). There is little scholarship within EDM and psyculture about ancestor-descendent relationships beyond the anecdotal, and the complexity of global/local influences makes it difficult to define a country-specific culture.

Another insightful consideration is regarding multiple pasts not just the accepted versions related to material objects associated with ancestors and memory. This has consequences for archaeology's understanding and assignment of time to artefacts presenting a heterogeneous mix of past and present rather than a historicist series of dates and chronologies (Olivier 2004, p.204). Olivier argues this could potentially make unilinear history meaningless by unlinking material from successive events (Olivier 2004, p.204). Giese and Keightley describe embodied remembering as a 'social form of doing' that creates and negotiates shared pasts thus improving understanding of wider societal narratives of the lived experience (Giese & Keightley 2022, p.12). They researched folk dances that demonstrate how the fluid pasts, presents and futures are transformed by group dance memory (Giese & Keightley 2022, p.12). Parfitt suggests a shift from traditional knowledge of events to that of how people remember them, how generational memory alters them, and the effect of present traumas and experiences on reshaping subject versions of the past (Parfitt 2021, p.287).

In terms of the association of ancestors with dance and trance, people may not be able to remember the names of even their distant actual ancestors, but their rituals help them connect with ancestors whether established, factual, kin-based or a generalised memory (Hicks 2010, p.64). Schneider addresses evidence suggesting dance practices are a key aspect of group identity and resilience in sustaining practices, power and adaptation in colonized people in the Californian Hinterlands. These Othlone dances of resistance were sustained away from the missionary confines. Instead of looking at cultural destructions as evident in the Mission records it is pertinent to address the gap in dance practice resilience in a moving towards a greater attention to post-contact resilience (Schneider 2021, p.51). A similar desire in maintaining the old ways is evident in the making of masks for dancers in Papua New Guinea showing how the socio-cosmological connections of ancestors are evident in the use of the masks of courtship dances (Hauser-Schäublin 2017, p.253).

Memory has a vital role in the formation and continuation of communities underpinning how societies remember as memory is social, cultural, and individual (Connerton 2003, p.37). He states that our knowledge of the present depends on our knowledge of the past, entwined with historical reconstruction, whether factual or imaginary, and this affects history (Connerton 2003, p.37). Mixer similarly recommends looking closely at how memory helps to define and distinguish communities over time with group memory being a connector and a way to establish folk interpretations, irrespective of whether they are factual or not, within collective remembering to improve how events are interpreted (Mixer 2017, p.290). Memories may be inaccurate, but they form part of a 'mnemonic community' (homogenous beliefs about the past) as in a case study of the Actuncan site in Belize (Mixer 2017, p.290). The group ritual memories there were based on contemporary cultural beliefs more than an accurate interpretation of the past as people were often resistant to official narratives thus, they maintained alternative oral versions (Mixer 2017 p.261).

Interestingly, Connerton purports that remembering is honoured but forgetting is not (Connerton 2003, p.37). Versions of memories should include forgotten versions of the past including those memories silenced and repressed moving beyond a view of past based on the demands of those in power in the present (Erdelyi 2008, p.276). This includes a greater distinction between psychological and physiological realities and between individual and social memory to challenge the 'hegemony of officially sanctioned memory' developing a more inclusive coverage (Moshenska 2006, p.59). More recent research involves the consideration of indigeneity and the prolongation of ancestral contact as a means of resistance (Hicks 2010, p.xiii; Hauser-Schaublin 2017).

How social memory influences both the individual and the group, with manifold diversity amongst and within cultures, is a key area of study in archaeology assisting in improving understanding by embracing non-reality, the vibrancy of things and relationality. Scholars are advised to extend memory studies to all levels of living systems (Erdelyi 2008, p.60). Not only should all human memories of the past be taken into account but scholarship needs to fully 'embrace the vibrancy of matter', the role of the non-human, and to focus on relational process and history instead of blinkered interpretation; to not get bogged down with seeing the connections

between things that can itself blur the 'reality of things' to capture the radical nature of 'difference' (Hodder 2018, p.18; Harris 2021, p.224; Marks 2019, p.316). Marks further advises investigating the views of the people and their knowledge as it is passed down through generations or other social contact (Marks 2019, p.316).

In terms of social group memory, Malnig, following Connerton, indicates that it is through social group membership that individuals gain, contextualise, and recall memories not through a linear process but because they form an 'ensemble' of past and present collective thoughts (Malnig 2021, p.108; Connerton 2003, p.36). Evidence of potential, embodied agency is indicated at cave burial sites in Britain which have non-human agency providing evidence of a process of 'pattern recognition that is encoded evidence of performances' (Peterson 2013, p.274). He suggests that the interactions between bodies, places, and artefacts are 'encoded' evidence of performances where social memory is passed on creating feedback between actors and objects in cyclical repetition, and spatial re-occurrence (Peterson 2013, p.278). Social activities like dance bring together other dancers for a shared activity based on previous memories and forming new memories that do not have to be accurate but are altered to suit social needs and are culturally learnt (Malnig 2021, p.165).

When considering the memory of dance, Royo calls it a 'process of reconstruction' (an imaginative construction of knowledge in the present state) explored through embodiment (Royo 2007, p.2). The 'dance past' is based on 'reassemblages' of fragments embedded within dance heritage capturing an 'authentic essence' (Royo 2007, p.2). In psyculture, the 'glue of return' referred to by St. John are the shared dance memories that make people remember and return (St. John 2010a, p.229). He describes this multi-dimensionality as having an upwards spiralling trajectory in that events, outcomes, and rituality are indeterminate, but the bond or glue comes from the repeated predictability of returning to the same kind of event and experiences over time and place. This in turn increases the vibe, refining and deepening the tribal experience (St. John 2014b, p.174). Trance dance can lead to a sense of remembering that comes from a return to an earlier source consisting of 'a nod to the sacred that aligns past and present trance rituals' involving the space, the volume,

the dancing, the crowd intensity, and the intention (St. John 2014a, p156; Redhead 1990, p.118).

With the 'cultural turn', the landscape of everyday life and the 'tensions between structure and agency' became foregrounded again leading to interest in cultural memory that, along with 'scene theory', opened up new ways of considering both past and present spaces and how they are linked (Bennett & Rogers 2016, p.3). This led to a fuller understanding of scenes as 'cultural spaces of collective participation and belonging' in whatever shape or form connected by an 'affective sense of oneself as part of something that is alive' in a cultural space with a focus on individual memory within 'pools of collective experience' of common patterns of consumption (Bennett & Rogers 2016, p.39). Within a culture are notions of 'centre and periphery' from an unclear centre in music scenes that are a 'type of boundary work' within scene theory where boundaries are established in everyday interaction (p.163). In underground scenes, there is often an experience of a 'sense of encroachment by mainstream commercial concerns with resultant resistance based on perceptions of the past 'rooted in earlier spatializations of such creativity' (Bennett & Rogers 2016, p.164).

In summary, scholarship provides a clear understanding of the role and influence of ancestors and worship and the need for inclusion of a wider range of memories including silenced memories of marginalised peoples alongside demonstrating the importance of embodiment and material. Collective remembering and social memory are important factors in EDM and psyculture particularly through shared dance as a process of reconstruction and returning to the same dance experience.

### 2.3 Dance and trance

Dance is the most importance aspect within many trance communities historically and cross-culturally particularly as the attracting factor within EDM and psytrance cultures with trance being an often sought after effect. Though invariably linked dance and trance will be discussed separately in this section. Topics about dance and trance include the nature of its form, its association with ASC, the importance of dance in ritual, cult and ceremony, communication, evolution, and as a means of

cultural transmission (Aamodt 2014, p.53; Turčin 2018, p.6; Bourguignon 1973, p.215; Christensen *et al* 2017, p. 11; Butterworth 2011, p.12). There are many functions of dance across all societies including for social, ritualistic, political, cultural, and personal reasons (Aamodt 2014, p.53; Garfinkel 2010, p.207; Cotes *et al* 2023, p.10; Murphy 1998, p.32; Garfinkel 1998, p.207; Aamodt 2014, p.53; Dunbar 2022, p.89; Garfinkel 2010, p.206). p.206; Prevazi 2021, p.38; Hanna 1987, p.101). Dance is particularly important in identity presentation and the intersection of memory and movement, both personal and collective, embodied within physical remembrance and social sharing (Hamilakis 1998, p.128; Parfitt 2021, p.287; Giurchescu 2001, p.113;). Information is learnt via the bodily, affective responses transmitting socio-cultural information across generations and individual pathways (Vamanu & Terronez 2022, p.11; Richard, Glăveanu & Aubertin 2022, p.222; Buttingsrud 2021, p.7552; Parfitt 2021, p.287).

There are many functions of dance across small-scale societies including for social, ritualistic, political, cultural, and personal (Aamodt 2014, p.53). Dance is particularly important in identity presentation, the intersection of memory and movement, both personal and collective, embodied within physical remembrance and social sharing (Hamilakis 1998, p.128; Parfitt 2021; Sørensen & Rebay-Salisbury 2012). The embodied memory can affect societal change, and creative affordances of multi-modal ideation (Buttingsrud 2021; Vamanu & Terronez 2022; Richard, Glăveanu & Aubertin 2022). Scholarship is strengthening our understanding of the embodied agency of dance improves sensoriality and relationality with non-human and human flow where binaries disappear developing thinking with the body in collective energy creation and achieving greater somatic awareness (Ginslov 2022; Mann 2021; Weston & Bennett 2014; St. John 2012a; Castagner 2020; Reynolds 2012; Saldanha 2007; D'Andrea 2007). Furthermore, research about the power of collective dance energy of dance that is credited with extending consciousness, improving thinking and creativity, releasing feelings and cognitive knowing (St. John 2012a, p.6; Mann 2021, p.9; Till 2014, p.105; Ginslov 2022, p.3, p.12; Steinman 2011, p.70).

In psychology, Christensen and colleagues define dance as rhythmic motor entrainment resulting in body movement aligned to musical beats (Christensen *et al* 2017, p.11). As the human body is biomechanically constrained in terms of the

positions it can do, repetitive patterns of dance could be viewed as representational of the universality of dance movement across time (Christensen *et al* 2017, p.12). Dance is movement in time and space, it is one of the first levels of communication before speech, and it is a personal way of expression through body movement with a range of motives, expectations, and desires generally giving pleasure (Butterworth 2011, p.12). However, a true definition of dance is difficult across time due to its ambiguity, adaptations, and cross-cultural differences of behaviours, and intentions (Aamodt 2014, p.47).

Some of the earliest evidence of dance occurs in the dance motifs in art from the third millennium BC across the Levant, Mesopotamia, Iran, western Pakistan, Anatolia, the Balkans, Greece, the Danube basin of southeast Europe, and Egypt (Garfinkel 2003, p.12). Dance motifs occur in many forms from the ninth to the sixth millennium over a wide geographical area in the Near East where language, song and dance were important activities (Bloch 1989, p.21; Schachter 2014, p.17; Turčin 2018, p.2). However, evidence of dance, type, and purpose are speculative at best (Aamodt 2014; Garfinkel 2010a/b; Bloch 1989; Papadimitropoulos 2009, p.67; Redfield & Thouin-Savard 2017, p.59; Takahashi and Olaveson 2004, p.40). I

In historical and some contemporary trance dance practices, dances involved spinning to achieve a trance which involved rhythmic, rotational movement that affect the balance to initiate ASC and dance routines were created to assist with this group intention (Turčin 2018, p.6; Bourguignon 1973, p.215). Turčin cites rich female graves and Vučedol pottery in the Bronze Age period throughout the Pannonian plain showing that dance and trance was used to alter consciousness in a psychobiological capacity primarily in a sacred context. The historical, ethnographic, and artistic sources were taken from Neolithic Sopot and Chalcolithic Vučedol culture to formulate trance dance re-enactments in *The Forgotten Movement* project. (Turčin 2018, p.8). Through analysis of these folkloric communities, the general features of dances were re-enacted to experiment with what was involved in vocal and instrumental music, group formation dancing, and the presence of motifs and symbols often connected to the fertility of the land (Turčin 2018, p.3).

Other archaeological evidence has been found in the Aegean where dance was linked to cult performance, as a method of connecting to the divine, used in initiation rituals, death rites and secular celebrations (Aamodt 2014, p.53). Further evidence comes from vessels depicting human body movements such as the Hohle fels or the Swabian Jura cave flutes in scenes showing potential social functions in Neolithic and Chalcolithic communities (Garfinkel 2010, p.207). Murphy suggests there were life stages linked to death rites that incorporated dancers progressing from being individuals to being ancestors through a process of 'separation, transition, but mostly incorporation' with potential purposes of integration with the dead to re-establish lineage links, and to improve communal solidarity (Murphy 1998, p.32).

Dance is a powerful method of self-expression because of its effect on the senses and its ability to communicate social and political, and subliminal information (Aamodt 2014, p.47). Thus, dance is a social communication tool that affects human evolution, as a reflection of society, and deepens social bonding (Garfinkel 1998, p.207; Aamodt 2014, p.53). Dance functioned as a form of non-verbal communication, and a potential precursor of evolution, illustrating its relevance throughout human history where dance, not speech, held Palaeolithic groups together as a vital component in reconstructing knowledge (Dunbar 2022, p.89; Garfinkel 2010, p.206). p.206). Prevazi finds evidence in Albanian folk dances that dance was a major form of pre-verbal communication in human evolution where gesture and movement rather than vocals were dominant (Prevazi 2021, p.38). Hanna further sees how the physicality of dance reflects speech semiotics and ways of encoding meaning (Hanna 1987, p.101).

In earlier societies, dance and performance were functional in identity presentation in the physical display of beliefs and social structure in ecstatic dances and mimetic performances (Aamodt 2014, p.53). Dance ceremonies typically generated remembering and forgetting, a deepening of social identity, and an evocation of senses, emotions, and feelings (Hamilakis 1998, p.128). Dance may have had a central part in communicating complex social information and connections displaying hierarchical positionality (Aamodt 2014, p.53). Scholars have similarly focussed on the intersection of memory and performance in popular dance as a way of



remembering in an 'intimate entanglement' of personal and collective chronicling (Parfitt 2021, p.287).

This embodied knowledge converts to practice via the body affecting motor skills and moral behaviour (Sørensen & Rebay-Salisbury 2012, p.1). Giurchescu considers the power of dance in terms of social and political uses intertwined with individual factors acting as an instrument of change (Giurchescu 2001, p.113). Learning via the body passes on ambient, contextual information in internal, subjective, affective responses and external, objective components around the dancer. More experienced dancers exchange socio-cultural information to novices keeping processes and traditions alive (Vamanu & Terronez 2022, p.11). Interactions between participants, audiences, affordances, and actions ignite actors' desire to create with multiple ideation pathways (Richard, Glăveanu & Aubertin 2022, p.222). Buttingsrud refers to this as 'embodied reflection' encompassing sense-making and bodily thinking (Buttingsrud 2021, p.7552). Embodied dance memory has greatly reduced in recent times, but it is suggest to have the potential to overcome hegemonic pasts and imagine 'new collective futures' (Parfitt 2021, p.287).

Further study reveals that embodied materiality is inherent within dance, technology and bodily experience with relational human and non-human convergences leading to re-embodiment referred to as 'deep flow' (Ginslov 2022, p.12.). Flow is described as 'peak experiences' of bliss and its effects of peace, love, compassion, and harmony could have a positive effect on humanity in an intercultural 'sensorial gnostic cosmopsychism of vibrancy' (Bombaci 2023, p.68). This aligns with Merleau-Ponty's idea of 'chiasmus' that combines 'body-self-world' where binaries of inner and outer world disappear (Ginslov 2022, p.14). This boundary-free 'dance of agency' depends on embodied, sensory interactions allowing movement away from 'ocularcentric experiences towards a greater trust of all senses' (Ginslov 2022 p.14). In psyculture, participants are described as making meaning out of their lives by replacing the individual body with a fluid, communal self, leading to extended empathy, productivity, and creativity that can result from 'habitual affirmation and application of panpsychism and compassion' (Bombaci 2023, p.54). He cites these embodied rituals as a 'collective realisation' replacing 'intercultural alienation' in a 'human revolution' absorbing the 'timelessness of the flow' (Bombaci 2023, p.69).

In indigenous trance dance practices, this flow of energy through dance connectivity achieves a collective, extended consciousness allowing different ways of thinking, feeling, and being (Mann 2021, p.9). The achievement of collective dance energy is a predominant theme within the modern pagan movement affecting participants' sense of being in their earth-celebrating practice (Till 2014, p.105). The building up of energy in collective dance is a significant type of somatic awareness that demonstrates how cognitive knowing may not be the only way of understanding and responding to the world (Till 2014, p.115). The achievement of a 'state of flow' leads to a place where nothing else matters, bringing feelings of 'bliss in the flow making' where participants feel more alive and are 'thinking with the body' (Ginslov 2022, p.3, p.12). This dance energy is confirmed in EDM dance, where St. John describes it as part of a holistic experience of visuals, music, people, décor and, atmosphere - all ingredients adding to this energy flow or 'vibe' (St. John 2012a, p.6)

An interesting avenue is within kinaesthetic awareness of dance movement from an embodied understanding of the dancer's and the dancer observer's relationship in social spaces (Steinman 2011, p.70). Steinman used political and social theories to consider how empathy creates interconnectedness amongst social groups creating new meaning in a continual flow of discourse. The kinaesthetic experience of witnessing a dance event can trigger empathetic responses and an awareness of the self as a social citizen through bodily knowledge (Steinman 2011, p.60).

In summary, there are functions that are vital for communication, society, bonding, and evolution. Information is passed on through dance memory and learnt via bodily interaction transmitting socio-cultural information. Both collective and individual embodiment are important to understanding how these memories are passed on particularly through energy or experiential connectivity including altered states of consciousness and trance.

Within this section about trance, topics discussed include definitions, shamanic practices, and different types of trance and techniques to achieve them (Prince 1982, p.409; Boyer 2018, p.21; Prince 1982, p.411; Herbert 2011, p.217; Morris & Peatfield 2021, p.264; Lupack 2021, p.284; Panagiotidou 2021, p.296; Garfinkel 2010, p.210).

Some similarities exist in other trance dance practising cultures and psychoculture shamanic practices such as the consciousness changing use of chemicals, social relations that enhance *communitas* and group bonding, and a reconnection with ritual that appears to be vital to human nature (Hutson 2000, p.45; St. John 2004a, p.7; Tramacchi 2004, p.136). Trance had a purpose of social collectivity and personal transformation resetting egotism, and allowing connection to the divine (Garfinkel 2010, p.210; Karoblis 2007, p.367; Clinch 2021, p.327). Trance was particularly induced by intensive and prolonged concentration through dancing facilitated by percussive rhythm (Lewis-Williams 1992, p.58; Winkelman 1986, p.178; Campbell 2023, p.12; Gore 1997, p.55; St. John 2008, p.110). A core consciousness can result from trance that produces a personal and group psychospiritual experience bringing social, physical, and mental benefits (Becker 2004, p.135; Redfield & Thouin-Savard 2017, p.59; Solberg & Dibben 2019, p.371; Cole & Hannan 1998, p.118). Altered states are associated with acoustics and the importance of a sensory response is clear in many dance rituals and ceremonies (Parker Pearson 2000, p.270; Watson 2001, p.178, p.90; Parker Pearson 2000, p.271). A universal human intention initiating trance was to achieve supernatural experiences with associated physiological and evolutionary benefits (Winkelman 2019, p.127; Krippner 2022, p.7).

In terms of intentionality, archaeology scholars correlate shamanism with the traditional practice of trance as a platform for mediation between humans and the supernatural (Price 2001, p.4). The association of altered states with shamanism is extant across a diversity of cultures; a fact that is not a result of diffusion but because of human psychobiology, Winkelman argues, where humans are innately attracted to ASC (Winkelman 2021a, p.57). Evidence of rituals in archaeology show trance existed in many practising societies particularly in funerary rites, and acoustic spaces in the Northern hemisphere from the Upper Palaeolithic onwards (Price 2001, p.10).

There is a diversity of practices of altered states of consciousness often grouped together as shamanic. Hoffman defines trance as an experience of reduced or altered state of consciousness (ASC) with several different types of trance states achievable that are different from enhanced consciousness (Hoffman 1998, p.9;

Lewis 2003, p.21). Altered states include spontaneous (daydreams, hypnagogic states) or intentional psychological induction (sensory deprivation, relaxation, trance), and physiological stimulation, ecstasy, possession, and mediumship (Herbert 2011, p.217; Singh 2018, p.9).

Psychological anthropologists describe ritual trance as being similar to hypnotic trance with analgesia, euphoria, amnesia, and ASC being experienced through the release of endorphins (Prince 1982, p.409). Different neurophysiological effects produce different trance states according to which method is employed and individual personality (Boyer 2018, p.21). Trance produces effects such as disturbed cognition and temporality, changes in self-image, emotional expression, and self-control along with an enhanced sense of the world and hyper-suggestibility (Bourguignon 1973, p.338). Hunt and Schooler state trance initiates synchronisation, vibrations, and resonance deeply connected to consciousness where there is resonance patterns linked in all things living or non-living (2018, p.378). Prince is particularly interested in the effects of hypnotic suggestion initiated by shaman and enhanced by drum and dance induced trance (Prince 1982, p.411). However, there has been less focus on the higher arousal models of trance, probably due to previous societal suspicion and lack of academic interest in ASC, which has led to an imbalance of scholarship (Herbert 2011, p.217). The difficulty in precisely defining trance is due to a presumption of similarities of practice across cultures, for example, between concepts of trance and possession. Herbert suggests a better approach to generalising universals would be in considering the various states across a continuum of shifts of consciousness (Herbert 2011, p.217).

Archaeological evidence exists of ecstatic practices involving trance state throughout history. It is evident that the Minoan religion contained an important ecstatic practice where trance was a major part of the development of religious experiences in complex societies (Morris & Peatfield 2021, p.264). The excavation of the Atsipadhes peak sanctuary in the Rethymno area of western Crete in 1980 gave archaeologists an opportunity to test the role of such peak sanctuaries in Aegean Bronze Age ecstatic practices (Morris & Peatfield 2021, p.292). They explored the question of whether Mycenae's cult centre (ca. 1250 BCE) incorporated ecstatic ASC practices at the Neopalatial palaces especially Knossos (1700-1375 BEC)

suggesting a large part of the population had shamanic experiences (Morris & Peatfield 2021, p.264). Lupack confirms that open air shrines such as caves and mountain top cult sites hosted festivals involving the partaking of mind-altering substances that, along with the effort of getting there, the sacrifices, fires, music and dance, created a transformative experience. This is depicted in the iconography at the Cult Centre of Mycenae associated with Dionysos rites and practices (Lupack 2021, p.284). Similarly, the Asclepius Graceo-Roman cult encouraged participants to experience the supernatural during rituals where communication with the divine was referred to as an 'incubation' (Panagiotidou 2021, p.296).

In anthropology, the purpose of trance and ecstatic dance were seen as a ritualistic way to free people from egocentricity, social collectivity, and to connect to the divine, for example, the whirling dervishes, or shamanic dance had the purpose of inducing earth-based effects (Karoblis 2007, p.367). However, amongst Greek mystery cults, such as Demeter at Eleusis, though textual evidence exists, regarding the architecture and environment at the sanctuaries, there is little about the physical practices as they were kept secret (Clinch 2021, p.327).

Garfinkel indicates that participants often fell into a trance after repetitive group dancing to connect with the supernatural (Garfinkel 2010, p.210). In earlier historical periods, trance was induced by intense concentration, prolonged rhythmic dancing, audio driving and hyper-ventilation (Lewis-Williams 1992, p.58). Prolonged stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system through physical exertion including rhythmic movement leads to a shift to the parasympathetic nervous system linked to relaxation (Winkelman 1986, p.178). Anthropological research confirms in San trance dance that prolonged dancing can take several hours for a dancer to become overtaken by trance where they lose control over their bodies increasing endurance, focus, and knowledge potentially improving hunting success (Campbell 2023, p.12).

Alterations of consciousness are seen as sources of supernatural experiences as a universal feature of human nature. This is caused by the physiological effects of ritual on the autonomic nervous system evident in ancient brain structures and cognitive processes (Winkelman 2019, p.123). These experiences are responsible for increased knowledge capacities, intuitive conceptualisation, enlightenment, and

other experiences beyond the rational mind. These primordial cognitive capabilities extend horizons of awareness, transcendent perceptions, and experience of a super-consciousness that are expressions of the inner self externalised in supernatural representations (Winkelman 2019, p.144). Recently, humanistic psychology addressed rarely researched anomalous experiences, not previously considered academically useful, such as parapsychology, sleep paralysis, synaesthesia, and other experiences defined as non-ordinary states of awareness that would benefit from inclusion when considering psychculture ASC practices (Bouse *et al* 2021, p.3). They discuss flow, liminality and eudaimonia within pagan ritual practices where the process is emphasised instead of the outcome, where the secular is viewed just as powerful as the sacred, and where consciousness thresholds are crossed at twilight rituals that aid self-discovery (Bouse *et al* 2021, p.7).

In EDM culture, Becker considers trance states as 'core consciousness' and 'extended consciousness' that produce an intense affective experience (Becker 2004, p.135). This functions as personal and group psychospiritual exploration bringing psychological and physical benefits (Redfield & Thouin-Savard 2017, p.59). The experience of peak-pleasurable dynamic changes in EDM were monitored in an investigation about intense affective experiences that participants described as uplifting demonstrating an embodied, kinaesthetic response intersecting specific compositional effects and spatial embodiment (Solberg & Dibben 2019, p.371). Cole and Hannan indicate that the employment of repetitive tempo and brain physiology can bring about 'individual and collective consciousness shifts' through trance dance via a process of 'absorption' (Cole & Hannan 1998, p.118). In EDM trance dance practices, it is continuous dancing for prolonged periods of time that has energising physiological and affective responses (Gore 1997, p.55). In psytrance, a prolonged dance experience orchestrates a temporal awareness shift moving from 'social time' to 'organic time' facilitated by percussive rhythm which is sought after for this purpose alone (St. John 2008, p.11).

Investigating the association of acoustics on the affective, collective experience of collective ASC in archaeology, Parker Pearson indicates the importance of the senses in shamanic ceremonies suggest how participants would activate the theatrical, acoustically active part of rituals into silent monuments and landscapes

(Parker Pearson 2000, p.270). Watson indicates, that across the world, sound and rhythm are accepted as a universal instrument in ritual where the senses were a primary consideration for opening portals to other states of consciousness (Watson 2001, p.178, p.90; Parker Pearson 2000, p.271).

What animals experience with ease, humans seek through altered states of consciousness. These are basic traits common to all life that should not be deemed unworthy of academic study but important to human experience as they operate as signposts to the rewards of enhanced sensory perception rather than being labelling as odd or supernatural (Bombaci, 2023, p.69). There are similarities historically and culturally in the use of trance and dance as a powerful aid to self-discovery and re-discover of the animal self through embodied, ritualistic practice (Bouse et al 2021, p.7; Bombaci, 2023, p.69). In EDM, participants are seen as making meaning out of their lives by replacing the individual body with a fluid, communal self, leading to extended empathy, productivity, and creative achievements that can result from 'habitual affirmation and application of panpsychism and compassion' (Bombaci 2023, p.69). This shows how a 'spirituality without religion' can have profound effects through embodied practice of ritual that dissolves 'intercultural alienation' where dogmatism is replaced by a 'collective realisation' resulting in a 'human revolution' absorbing the 'timelessness of the flow' (Bombaci 2023, p.69). Flow is described as 'peak experiences' of bliss and its effects of peace, love, compassion, and harmony could have a positive effect on humanity in an interculture 'sensorial gnostic cosmopsychism of vibrancy' (Bombaci 2023, p.69).

There has been a focus in psychculture research on confirming trance and ASC as the main intentional experience at gatherings primarily to escape reality and enter the liminal. This is not necessarily the case as most activities involve everyday tasks rather than a continual ASC state. According to De Ledesma, there is a need for an updating of the concept of *communitas* to incorporate the everyday not just altered states (de Ledesma 2012, p.39). In a similar vein, Gauthier strongly argues that there is no possession trance at EDM techno events, unless it can be described as possession by 'nothing' removed from any explicit religious system, where participation is not for meaning or mysticism but the pure experience of dancing with others (Gauthier 2004, p.397). Similarly, in psychculture, there is an oscillation

between a performative re-enactment of fantasy personas and experiencing a form of dispossession as participants intend to escape from a difficult mainstream world (Gauthier, 2004, p.397). Therefore, altered states are not the primary intention of participants as the present moment of enhanced sensoriality is just as important as the desire to hallucinate with the achievement of nothingness equally prevalent as an intention (de Ledesma 2012, p.39; Gauthier 2004, p.397).

In summary, though there are differences in dance and trance principles and practices in past and present cultures, there are similarities regarding its impact and importance in communication, social connectivity, maintaining social robustness, spurring creativity, and potentially human evolution. The power from group dance energy has powerful social effects that potentially initiate change, connect memory through embodied movement and benefit individuals and groups. Historical and contemporary trance dance has many similar principles and practices to psychculture providing individual and collective psychospiritual experiences and potential benefits especially through collective dance to music. It is suggested that such gatherings are not primarily for the purpose of achieving a trance or altered state but that they have more social and domestic functions in intra-tribal gathering. EDM communities are based upon a desire to dance to specific genres of music as the central organising principle. Dance is primarily the foundation and reason for psychculture gatherings showing how dance has a primacy of place in human lives in contemporary EDM cultures. Trance and dance in psychculture are linked to music and sound forming a trinity between human, technology and music that is inseparable.

## 2.4 Music and sound

Parallel with the importance of dance based communities, music is a major reason for participant engagement within EDM and psytrance communities. In this section, there is a discussion about the importance of music and sound in understanding psytrance dance practices and principles. Related scholarship investigates how music and sociality are closely linked in terms of solidarity both inter and intra-culturally (Crooke et al 2023, p.16; Alaszewski 2015, p.224; Ehrenreich 2007, p.14); how music is linked to emotional responses (Sloboda & Juslin 2001, p.14), how music has potentially assisted in human evolution (Cross, Zubrow, & Cowan 2002,



p.6; Brown 2007, p.12; Dissanayake 2000, p.20; Fries 2015, p.220; Hoeschele & Fitch 2022, p.265; Cross & Morley 2010, p.62; Freeman 2000, p.411; Hanegraaff 2011, p.88). Music provides social cohesion, intercultural understanding, and exchange intertwining cultural traditions and attitudes across ethno-cultural divides (Crooke *et al* 2023, p.16; Alaszewski 2015, p.224). Other scholars considered the effect of music and dance on a group creating solidarity and sense of community from an ecstatic experience (Ehrenreich 2007, p.14). Another important area of scholarship is music and emotions which posits an explanation as to where, when, how, and why individuals experience emotional responses to music, and how, why, and where we experience music (Sloboda & Juslin 2001, p.14). Sound and acoustics were important in intentional, ancient spaces potentially created for ritual, dance, trance, music, and group congregation for ritual bonding (Till 2011, p.2; Ingold 2000, p.246; Freeman 2000, p.420; Alvarez-Morales *et al* 2023, p.313). Contemporary EDM musical intentions, instruments and behaviours are clearly evident in modern day usage (Alvarez-Morales *et al* 2023, p.313; Lieberman 1991, p.2; Frayer & Nicolay 2000, p.231; Both 2009, p.2; Nettl 2004, p.119).

Acoustic features at ancient sites affected embodiment, internal emotional responses and to the world outside where shared resonance and synchrony through sounds are a key to understanding consciousness (Lakoff & Johnson 1999, p.82; Hunt & Schooler 2019, p.378; Norton 2000, p.114). Modern-day achievement of altered states is similarly sought and achieved through collective entrainment, affected by the external environment, and the shared experience (Hunter 2015, p.6; Pladott 2002; Cross & Morley 2010, p.1; Dittrich 1998, p.81; Elliott 2010, p.36). In archaeology, understanding the use of sound and acoustical properties at ancient sites brings highly informative details about the importance of and about the honouring of ancestors with a consideration of the multi-functionality of tombs and stone monuments (Cummings 2021, p.5; Boivin *et al* 2007, p.290; Darvill 2015, p.147). Such spaces and places may have had a significant purpose linking sound and resonance to place, identity, and ritual (Boivin *et al* 2007, p.291; Boivin 2004, p.40). This research around ancient soundscapes, resonance and frequencies evidenced in artwork aids understanding of the uses, purposes, and practices of trance gatherings (Waller 2002, p.2284; Díaz-Andreu *et al* 2017, p.181; Devereux & Jahn 1996, p.666). A key part of psyiculture trance music composition involves

purposive techniques to elicit a musical journey (Vitos 2015, p.265; St. John 2014b, p.171; Kyriakopoulos 2021, p.229). This is achieved through specific planning of playlists supported by stimulating lighting and décor to construct a holistic sensory landscape (Takahashi and Olaveson 2004, p.21; Hutson 2000, p.40; Charles 2020, p.22; Lindop 2010, p.41; Ward 1997, p.64).

Experimental archaeologists suggest that, when looking at musical behaviours from an evolutionary basis, the dynamics of cognition and social interactions show how important music and musicians were in human evolution (Cross, Zubrow, & Cowan 2002, p.6; Brown 2007, p.12; Dissanayake 2000, p.20). Fries suggests that human adaptation has probably been closely connected with the ability of neuron networks to engage in rhythmic, synchronized activity (Fries 2015, p.220). Others suggest melodic evolution is parallel to cultural evolution (Hoeschele & Fitch 2022, p.265). Similarly, psychology has identified the links between music, language, sociality, perception, and evolution due to ancestral traces in descendent minds (Cross & Morley 2010, p.62). Furthermore, language and music diverged in human evolution, with language centring on communication and music sustaining the capacity for social interactions, with both enabling social and individual cognitive flexibility in a communication toolkit (Cross & Morley 2010, p.62).

There has been growing interest in the role of sound at ancient sites particularly discovering how past societies perceived and interpreted sound in their cultural practices as well as the type of activities that could have happened. Though psychculture gatherings rarely occur on ancient sites, the evidence of similar past usage of spaces, sound, dancing, sociality and group gatherings is relevant. Archaeomusicology brings a fuller interpretation of intentional acoustic spaces that may have provided bonding in human culture along with dance, trance, and ritual in caves and spaces (Till 2011, p.2; Ingold 2000, p.246). Freeman documents that anthropologists and ethnopsychiatrists indicate preliterate tribes danced and sang to the point of collapse surrounding by musicians and totems that lasted for hours demonstrating the role of music in social bonding and evolution (Freeman 2000, p.420). He concludes it is the social action of dancing and singing that induces this behaviour due 'malleability created during the trance state' (Freeman 2000, p.411).

Unfortunately, intangible practices leave no trace about the use of space, but methods of analyses are progressing to include micromorphological ways to establish that sonic components played an important part in how people interacted with spaces of congregation (Alvarez-Morales *et al* 2023, p.313). However, musical behaviours equally leave no trace, being vocal, movement-based or experiential, thus there is little evidence beyond knowing that humans had the capacity to produce musical sounds (Lieberman 1991, p.2; Frayer & Nicolay 2000, p.231). In contemporary practice, there is ample physical evidence of musicians, instruments, and use of spaces available for academic study, though this field is not frequently covered in psychculture research.

Psychology scholarship is advancing understanding of how acoustic features can afford certain kinds of bodily movements and emotional experiences where the body correlates with the world outside and emotions inside (Lakoff & Johnson 1999, p.82). Recent psychological research has focussed on shared resonance achievable through synchrony from specific types of conjoined rhythms at higher beats. Hunt and Schooler indicate that shared resonance is the key to understanding consciousness (Hunt & Schooler 2019, p.378) while Freeman shows the role of resonance in consciousness evolution because of its usefulness in group bonding and social interaction abilities (Freeman 2000, p.420). Norton indicates that this sharing of consciousness is not just amongst dancers but between listeners and performers particularly to achieve spirit possession in trance (Norton 2000, p.114).

Looking further at compositional techniques, the achievement of contemporary altered states of consciousness in trance states in collective movement through entrainment can be especially associated with EDM and psytrance music production (Hunter 2015, p.6). Pladdott describes the somatic experience on a dancefloor where inner body states link to states of mind assigning complex layers of semiotic meaning through music imbued with 'extra-musical significance' (Pladdott 2002; Cross & Morley 2010, p.1). Even the temporal effect of listening to repetitive music initiates a trance state that can lead to ego disintegration and a state of mind occurs where the relationship between place, emotion and music develops into a 'structure of feeling' that is associated with dissolved mainstream domination (Dittrich 1998, p.81; Elliott 2010, p.36). Further, Hanegraaff indicates that dancing to music collectively

may be capable of dissolving the domination of mainstream society, restoring an original state of being, bringing a gnostic understanding of the true self of the individual, and enabling its separation from the dominant culture (Hanegraaff 2011, p.88).

Similar to Elliot's concept of 'structure of feeling', Garcia investigated the link between music and affect among EDM practitioners who employed 'metaphors of vibration and resonance to link affect to collective experience' to highlight the associations of such music to 'escape', 'autonomy', entanglement, and re-articulation into the cultural webs of collective life' incorporating sound as well as music to understand 'cultural boundedness' within 'sonic affect' and materiality (Garcia 2020, p.23). The EDM genre's 'sonic-spatial aesthetics' plus the solidarity of the often underprivileged audience 'revel in low-frequency sounds' as a coalescing force with actual sonic production of vibration to create this musical metaphor (Garcia 2020 p.26). This 'vibe' is accumulated by continual return to a liminal space to detox from mainstream affects producing better 'moods, collective feeling and personal disposition' at psyculture gatherings (Garcia 2020, p.27). Psychedelic counterculture promotes the linking of participants through sound as a way to overcome hierarchies and 'hegemonic culture' in the sixties and eighties with the 'vibe' being an active force of people, environment, technology and sound' blending human and non-human (Garcia 2020, p.28).

It is illustrative to understand how the composition and production methods of trance music are formulated to produce ASC. Some suggest this is due to the increasing temporal direction given as the music progressively becomes faster or, alternatively, that trance lies in the spatial pattern of amplitude modulation working on the auditory, somatic, visual, and olfactory centres (Freeman & Barrie 1994, p.13). Cole and Hannan indicate that the employment of repetitive tempo and brain physiology can bring about 'individual and collective consciousness shifts' through trance dance via 'absorption' called 'subjective rhythmization' (where human listeners tend to group sounds together) that leads to trance states (Cole & Hannan 1998, p.118; Van Noorden 1999, p.44) (Appendix 2 Glossary). Music therapy research provides further insight into the temporal qualities of music that initiates trance such as its pulse, tempo and patterns leading to entrainment and synchronization (Cameron *et al*

2009, p.1990). Cirelli and colleague's research with infants discovered that 'infants are more precise in perceiving diatonic melodies' as they naturally tap their feet to a beat showing movement to beats is natural to humans; it is this repetitive sound that automatically makes humans tap their feet to that elucidates trance (Cirelli *et al* 2018, p.68).

Trance states may be brought about by repetitive drumbeats and some low frequencies at specific ancient sites. This was clearly evident using infrasound in experiments at Maeshowe using high amplitudes in the interaction between propagated sound and structures especially when travelling from an open to a confined space (Watson 2001, p.190). Watson found that while undertaking contemporary experiments at an ancient site, amongst participants at Maeshowe, certain frequencies were reported that are known to be associated with the activation of physiological responses leading to unusual sensations such as dizziness, altered breathing patterns, and pulse changes (Watson 2001, p.190). It is worthwhile to consider a combination of musical properties and composition techniques when understanding the relevance of trance music to human experience.

The use of specific production techniques in EDM using build up and drops may be responsible for producing intensities in trance music that initiate trance (Elliott 2010, p.36; Solberg 2014, p.80). Trance music is composed of metronomic, arpeggiated monotonous moving up and down keeping the dancer hypnotised, adding potential spiritual encounters emphasising mid to high frequencies (Saldanha 2007, p.71). Psytrance music is associated with a set format of a four-beat rolling bassline that is reportedly a key component in activating trance with a vast range of synthesised sounds and effects to help augment an ASC (Lindop 2010, p.29). Psytrance has a systematic absence of rules musically to bring about the widest number of emotions where all gaps are filled with surprising, trippy sounds to provide a sensory overload (Vitos 2015, p.265). The effect on dancers is that they are at once individually inside their body and also outside of their body experience in a trans-personal and connected manner (Solberg 2014, p.62). These purposive compositional techniques are incorporated to affect a journey from ignorance to knowledge with the DJs and artists as 'psychical drivers' using their playlist as a vehicle for participants to journey (St. John 2014b, p.171).

Kyriakopoulos succinctly argues that the psychedelic rave can seduce participants with its 'utopian overtones within its spectacularized, carnivalesque extreme consumptions' blurring the lines between ancient mysticism, dystopian theories, and spiritual awakening about community and identity (Kyriakopoulos 2021, p.229). Yet he concluded that this journey is not habitus, experience, or representation but an 'event horizon' (based on fieldwork at Universal Tribal Gathering in Morocco in 2001 on a small island near El Mansour Lake in the Sahara Desert) (Kyriakopoulos 2021, p.229). This means a range of possibilities resulting from the convergence of cultural practices, technology, and substances for exploring inner and outer worlds through LSD, 'alienated' journeying, and risk-taking in an exotic otherness (Kyriakopoulos 2021, p.229). However, he feels this assignation of raves being liminal events is repeating the dominant rhetoric restricting a wider understanding of rave culture (Kyriakopoulos 2021, p.229). Perhaps the experience does not create a space for transformation, but rather re-institutes the ideals of 'travel, intimacy, self-discovery'. This is not necessarily for the purpose or the result of transformation as Kyriakopolous (2021, p.299) argues liminality itself is a Westernised imposition.

Intentionality to create a psychedelic journey and transformatory experience is inherent in the planning of the order of artists on an event playlist and an artist's individual playlist. Takahashi and Olaveson indicate it is the DJ who drives a process of auditory collective stimulation (Takahashi and Olaveson 2004, p.81; Hutson 2000, p.40). A rave is primarily a music event with the organisation of the line-up along with the quality of the equipment, the DJs, the sound system, and décor being more important than a liminal state. This expresses the knowledge and effort required to construct a visually and sonically immersive soundscape to have this 'spatialising effect' (Kyriakopoulos 2021, p.229). Within the genre assemblages of psytrance music, there are modular elements that link a created sonic journey that work as units that can be fitted together though light and dark (Charles 2020, p.22). The chronological planning of an event playlist according to the best time of day to play each style is a major consideration to ensure that a journey exists across all sets to create a seamless sonic journey through light and dark landscapes (Lindop 2010, p.41).

Further intentionality in the musical creation of psytrance is to develop a journey that extends beyond the light into the dark to encompass all aspects of the otherworldly producing an 'unstabling', insanity producing, state of dementia' that St. John and Vitos indicate enacts a psychotically twisted sonic landscape or 'demesne' seen as temporary psychosis (St. John 2012c, p.445; Vitos 2010, p.151). Vitos indicates simulation of rulenessness is built into the structure of a party enhanced by unpredictability and vagueness in the environment to maximise the otherworldly experience (Vitos 2009, p.140). Dark psytrance attempts to express the inexpressible in its dark, twisted vortex of a journey during the dark hours of a gathering where the meaning lies in the embodied experience gained from dancing; where the ritual context has no meaning, without any lyrics or ideologies present (Ward 1997, p.64). As Vitos states, psytrance music consists of complicated textures, and a 'baroque flooding' of trippy effects reproducing a sonic version of the 'unpredictability of an hallucination where the grotesque elements reproduce something that cannot be articulated' (Vitos 2017, p.549).

In summary, where the social aspects of music and its role in human evolution are clear, there is surprisingly few academic avenues covering the production, planning and compositional aspects of music or acoustics in psychculture. There has been growing interest in the role of sound at archaeological sites particularly discovering how past societies perceived and interpreted sound in their cultural practices as well as the type of activities that could have happened. What may be more important than liminality for participants is the quality of the musical assemblage in a soundscape. The combination of the community, the music and group dancing to provide a journey is a key motivation for participants to attend. The experience of contributing and participating as artists and dancers to psytrance music is the central focus around which the psychculture community pivots along with a plethora of tasks to create gatherings.

## 2.5 Contribution, community, and participation

Humans form societies that depend on acceptance, contribution and participation irrespective of size across history and culture that impact on status, identity and cohesion amongst many other benefits. Throughout history and cultural practices,

there are extant benefits for humans in social groupings that aid the individual and groups. This section will consider the social benefits particularly with small-scale societies related to contribution, participation and co-creation, how small-scale groupings are associated with egalitarian structures but may have hierarchical systems inherent within them where both can co-exist which potentially mirror social structures in EDM and psyculture where dance, music and togetherness are key aspects of social glue.

Many disciplines indicate that society can provide emotional and physical support, release, and expression, transforming the individual and the group where dance is an important societal tool not merely an artform (Garfinkel 1998, p.207; Bloch 1989, p.21; Gabbay 2003, p.104; Kaeppler 1978, p.46; Kealiinohomoku 1997, p.46). Dance and rituals are often universal in past and contemporary practice important in maintaining social bonding and evolving communities, especially through the embodiment of dance - effectively codifying social values (Kealiinohomoku 1997, p.70; Kaeppler 1978, p.46; Schechner 2002, p.613; Vedava 2015, p.170; St. John 2012b, p.6).

Festival co-creation illustrates potential ways of exchanging and sharing of practices and objects through co-creation and co-presence in temporary spaces that have been practised across many cultures (Äikäs *et al* 2016, p.78; van den Ende 2022, p.206; Brayshay & Mulville 2022, p.141; Frost 2016, p.570). Similarly, some researchers note that co-creation is beneficial for societal bonding, belonging, and survival inter and intra culturally (Poirier 2013, p.52). Likewise, shared goals interact to increase heightened prosociality, improving bonding, and social group fusion deepening collective identity and unity (Reddish *et al* 2013, p.3; Friesem & Lavi 2019, p.89; Launay, Tarr & Dunbar 2016, p.779; (Rauchbauer *et al* 2023, p.4072; Newson 2019, p.431, p.437; Nour *et al* 2016, p.269; Guerra 2015, p.13; D'Andrea 2010, p.151; St. John 2004b, p.18; Heelas 2000, p.23). There are benefits from socialising, and co-creation, contribution and participation, in the present moment, adapting to the spontaneous needs within a temporary gathering, which improves a sense of belonging, effectively using resources and manpower strengthening group cohesion and maintenance of the band in any culture's practices and principles of



trance dance (Friesem & Lavi 2019, p.88; Dunbar 2022, p.82; Hess & Hagen 2023, p.10; Reddish *et al* 2013, p.3; Donovan 2020, p.10; Newson *et al*, 2021, p.4303).

Analysis of similar social structures in small-scale societies, that rely on contribution and participation to survive, can help understand psyculture as a small-scale society (Migliano *et al* 2020, p.1; Hayden 2014, p.659). Within EDM and psyculture there is similar co-operation, flexibility, adaptability, and mutual care mirroring ultrasocial societies (Diouf & Nwankwo 2010, p.5; Cohen, Bendixsen & Hviding 2022, p.12; Guerra 2015, p.11). Though the practice of egalitarianism within small-scale societies is accepted, there are often hierarchical structures within them, though not necessarily detrimental to the desire to sustain a horizontal power structure; in fact, it can be of benefit to sustaining the principles of a small bounded community. There is often a complex mix of hierarchy within mainly egalitarian communities that help sustain values and practices within and across sub-cultures (Charles 2019a, p.57; D'Andrea 2007, p.178).

There are insights throughout history and across many disciplines about marginalised cultural practices. Dance is often associated with active resistance within marginalised groups whose values and relationship with nature are often challenged by mainstream society and, by maintaining dance and ritual, it can restore and retain marginalised cultural traditions and practices (Trigger 1990, p.129; Borck & Sanger 2017, p.9; Wilkinson 2021, p.102; Costello 2021, p.16; Cardeña 2021, p.26; Steinert 2021, p.386; Frieman & Lewis 2022, p.12; De Pina-Cabral 1997, p.47; Ehrenreich 2007, p.6; Avis-Ward 2022, p.40; Moore 2022, p.43).

Fascinating insights about marginalised groups in urban EDM club scenes in terms of supposedly inclusive environments paying lip service, from the need to discuss spirituality, transformative possibilities, belonging to a community and group dancing across other EDM scenes moving away from a focus on hedonism (Moore 2002; Florêncio 2023). Other EDM (rave and diy cultures) scenes suffer from continued persecution (perhaps more so than psyculture) that an extended investigation of such prohibition of raves, alienation, transgression and resistance reveals (Moore 2022; Perrenet 2019). The affective practices and role of the other within marginalised groups such as the black queer scenes demonstrate how club spaces

allow freedom to feel, contribute and participate in a more conducive community bringing a sense of stability for the 'others' that mainstream society does not cater for because of continuing suspicion and discrimination (Adeyemi 2022; Moore 2004; Chowdhury 2019; Motl 2018).

Though there is limited evidence in earlier small-scale societies about the existence of inequality, some hierarchical structure may have existed based on knowledge or physicality (Hayden 2014, p.659; Gowdy 2021, p.61). Further illustration of highly effective small-scale societies is discussed by Gowdy who refers to small-scale societies as 'ultrasocial', egalitarian and environmentally sustainable with complex sociality, abundant leisure times, artistic outputs, and valuable traits of variety, flexibility, adaptability, caring, and co-operation working for the benefit of the individual and the band (Gowdy 2021, p.61). Such societies helped minimise conflicts and restrict domination - practising 'risk reduction reciprocity' in a 'reverse dominance hierarchy' where society was shaped by members not circumstances (Gowdy 2021, p.61).

In the past, and some indigenous contemporary cultures, survival depended on spontaneous adaptation to the uncertainty of life (Friesem & Lavi 2019, p.88). Locations and composition of peoples were ever-changing requiring flexibility in order to sustain cohesion (Dunbar 2022, p.82). Cohesion may have been hindered by bands living in close proximity or how band size affected resources that needed close management to overcome fragmentation and dispersal of the bands (Dunbar 2022, p.82). Amongst the San, frictions can be resolved in trance dances to reboot the system and restore relationships (Dunbar 2022, p.92). Reputation, context, co-operation, gossip, competition for resources were important factors in ensuring successful communities (Hess & Hagen 2023, p.10) where dancing, music and song at gatherings help retain social bonding (Reddish *et al* 2013, p.3). Psyculture groups meet for socialising via gatherings where, inherent within the interaction, is fluid and adaptive planning to sustain the culture. The detailed investigations of psyculture regarding contribution, community, and participation may prove highly effective in understanding other EDM small-scale community's practices and principles.

Historically and cross-culturally, festivities, as a way of exchanging and sharing of practices and objects, were sought through co-creation and presence in temporary, liminal spaces of congregation (Äikäs *et al* 2016, p.78). In many contemporary festivals, participants expect to engage with co-creation, and sustainable living as sites are transformed by structures, assemblages, and artefacts that quickly disappear in a mutuality of commitment to working and creating together in building and dismantling infrastructure (Äikäs *et al* 2016, p.78; van den Ende 2022, p.206; Brayshay & Mulville 2022, p.141). Key findings from Brayshay and Mulville's research at Glastonbury Festival suggest the combined consideration of festival site materiality, its monumentality (both fixed and ephemeral), the landscape, as well as the connections and relationships to people and history are what draws people in (Brayshay & Mulville 2022, p.141). EDMC and psyculture events are similarly perceived as sites of progress within a temporary community that develop both individuals and group transition and growth; returning to repeat the same experience again gathering 'socio-sonic currency and improving social democracy' (St. John 2010b, p.4; O'Grady 2017, p.9).

In considering the importance of sharing and co-creation in small bounded bands, Poirier suggests exploring personal autonomy and reciprocity, of belonging, of sharing and exchange of a worldview due to the uncertainties of hunting and life (Poirier 2013, p.52). Co-creation, resulting from material engagement, shapes minds in a 'co-constituted and mutually influential manner' (Ihde & Malafouris 2019, p.209). Small-scale societies demonstrate important indicators about how co-operation and cultural capacity developed due to bands, who were either distantly related or not related, accumulated culture and developing social learning (Hill *et al* 2011, p.1286; Price & Brown 1985, p.4; Nolan 2023, p.5). Price and Brown explain this cultural complexity including resource availability, subsistence, labour organisation, craft specialisation, status differentiation, use of the environment, exchange, and technology (Price & Brown 1985, p.4). EDMC and psyculture small-scale communities thrive from such a co-creative and mutually influential nature of sharing and fluid adaptation.

Play was often a means of overcoming dominant tendencies to keep societal balance in small bounded communities (Gray 2009, p.480). Kaepler states that

cultural ideas vary as to whether dance is viewed as ceremony or pleasure (Kaeppler 1973, p.207). In indigenous communities, play and work were inclusive, but in Western societies they are disconnected with dance seen only as entertainment (Kaeppler 1973 p.29). Recent research in EDMC shows similar purposes of play and work are amongst the main intentions of participation. A developing area of research in psyculture is whether the intentions of participants are for play, work, performance, or spirituality. O'Grady places an underground event as a 'playful arena' providing a space for transformatory performance where 'mindfulness and creative expression could occur' (O'Grady 2012, p.87). The role of play in small-scale societies helps overcome dominance and dissolves conflict during collective dance (Kaeppler 1973, p.207; Gray 2009, p.480; Farrell 2015, p.274; O'Grady 2012, p.87). A redirection of focus by scholars would be to see the serious part play and dance have in sustaining functional communities when investigating small-scale EDM groups.

D'Andrea and others indicate in psyculture similar values and code of inter and intra culture influence and practice exist (D'Andrea 2007, p.178; Ihde & Malafouris 2019, p.209; Hill *et al* 2011, p.1286; Price & Brown 1985, p.4; Nolan 2023, p.5; Price & Brown 1985, p.4). The complex diversity aids empowerment amongst local citizens as they utilise global contact (Diouf & Nwankwo 2010, p.5). There is a complexity to this 'seeker culture' where there is rather an elasticity of shifting centres and peripheries (Cohen, Bendixsen & Hviding 2022, p.12). Psyculture is more complex than a 'black/white global/local dichotomy' can account for where Guerra suggests a wider lens to understand how the culture works (Guerra 2015, p.11). Kühn indicates that underground and mainstream binaries are unhelpful than such a divide suggests (Kühn 2011, p.1). Within the Berlin Techno scene, Kühn uses the term 'scene economy' to describe how the alternative, non-mainstream small-scale groups work with their 'niche' economics, markets and norms (Kühn 2011, p.1). As in many small bounded communities, on the surface appearing to be egalitarian, there can be hierarchical distinctions between the core crew and participants (Charles 2019a, p.57). Therefore, the mix of egalitarian and hierarchical is complex but still a highly fluid, cohering, effective system of principles and practices.

This cohering fluidity is described in psychology scholarship as synchrony which interacts with shared goals in co-operative, supportive interaction as cognitive processes increase heightened pro-sociality (Reddish *et al* 2013, p.3; Friesem & Lavi 2019, p.89). Similarly, Launay, Tarr and Dunbar argue that synchrony is part of the adaptive process that allows for large-scale social bonding through the release of neuro-hormones during synchronised activities such as dancing especially through mimicking (Launay, Tarr & Dunbar 2016, p.779; Rauchbauer *et al* 2023, p.4072). Identity bonding or 'fusion' is central to cohering social group particularly achieved in 'awe-inspiring, liminal experiences' that result in a deepening of collective identity, individual ego dissolution, and unity with the larger community and surroundings (Newson 2019, p.431, p.437; Tarr, Launay & Dunbar 2014, p.1096). This inspired awe is vital to bonding between humanity and nature driven by a feeling of connectivity (Tarr, Launay & Dunbar, p.433; Nour *et al* 2016, p.269). In psyculture, there are equivalent homogenising factors that relate to complexity, immediacy, social sharing, space adaptations, and band fluidity to overcome fragmentation that sustain the group through this ultra sociality synchronicity.

There are similar purposes assigned to dance and trance in terms of social interaction by archaeologists particularly emotional and sexual expression (Garfinkel 1998, p.207; Bloch 1989, p.21). In Mesopotamian traditions, the benefits of healing through cultic ritual performance and dissolving demonic influences are evident (Gabbay 2003, p.104). Anthropological scholars view dance as a reflection of society with an important integral role that maintain social bonds, develop individual and group transformation, and reduce entropy rather than viewing dance as only artform in a Westernised manner (Kaepler 1978, p.46; Kealiinohomoku 1997, p.46). Dance rituals are viewed as universals across all cultures with varying adaptations of myths and rituals. Dance rituals help to create and maintain social bonds empowering members to know their place within the community (Kealiinohomoku 1997, p.70).

In psychology, dance ritual purposes are described as performative with codified, repetitive actions functioning as entertainment, social solidarity, education, and healing (Schechner 2002, p.613). Throughout history, trance dance rituals create an encompassing synaesthetic environment and experience that help initiate movement and embodiment, release pent-up feelings, and initiate relaxation through memory

evocation with rock art imagery acting as a sensory bridge to the spirit world (Schechner 2002, p.4, p.19). In psychculture, Vedava effectively explains the experience of performance as 'technognosis' (that incorporates a spiritual dimension induced by alterations in consciousness) facilitating the 'adoption of participation as the next paradigm in human existence' (Vedava 2015, p.170). Participation and consciousness changing are reciprocally beneficial and potentially transformative suggests St. John where participation and contribution in the culture has the potential of transformation (St. John 2012b, p.6). Recent psychology scholarship provides evidence of increased social group bonding particularly at smaller events (Newson *et al*, 2021, p.4303). Psychculture festivals are potentially reproducing ancestral communal dances for purposes of sustaining the culture (Donovan 2020, p.10).

Within many marginalised, underground, alternative and EDM cultures in the UK, there are similar purposes that rely on ultrasociality, often egalitarian in principle, with dance and play at the heart of group practices. A focus on dance, movement and heightened social interaction is important in maintaining group cohesion with embodiment foregrounded as a key reason for participants to continue engagement with a particular scene. Zebracki discusses how the EDM scene could be a fruitful culture to investigate in order to understand how 'subcultural capital' is formed in terms of skills and values in a community, levels of 'citizenship', how roles are 'ascribed' or self-nominated. Moreover, the 'lived' sense of participation through the embodiment of such affective knowledge in terms of 'feeling' this cultural difference as the 'other' can potentially be a restorative experience (Zebracki 2016, p. 22). This is evident in the cohering of body, identity and community in the queer dance community of clubbers. Buckland argues that dance embodiment 'rehearses a powerful political imagination' where clubbers own their space internally and externally (Buckland 2022, p.65). Equally, this cohering of body, identity and community exists in techno music where there are reported positive changes in affective states amongst clubbers intensifying their sense of 'altogetherness' (Moore 2012, p. 89).

Though clubs for marginalised groups in urban EDM club scenes are touted as safe for participants, power is concealed even within spaces deemed safe with some

'others' hidden and silenced within a supposedly progressive queer scene. Thus, inclusion becomes normalised for commercial purposes recognising some but ignoring others especially amongst 'working class forms of difference' indicating that there are still issues of inequality within EDM queer scenes (Moore 2002, p.72). Within the queer techno scene, there is a focus on the predominance of drug-based experiences. This is to the detriment of the less discussed experience of dancing together as a group brings while immersed in a space flooded with sensory overload and the effect that has on clubbers that is described as a 'individual and collective reinvention' affecting sociality and life direction (Florêncio 2023, p.861). Yet this seeking of affective cohesion, irrespective of how different EDM scenes refer to it, is an important factor in why marginalised individuals seek refuge in underground EDM scenes. Gavanoas refers to this 'vibe' of freedom as a 'subversive and liberating potential" in EDM which is a reason why participants gather to experience 'spiritual communication through bodies, sound, visuals and technology' combining in a 'collective energy' in which 'dissolution of social categories, boundaries and hierarchies' occurs (Gavanoas 2010). It is acknowledged, however, that mainstream social 'boundaries' are merely reproduced in EDM, but the 'carnivalizing of everyday life' does allow temporary 'suspension' (Gavanoas 2010).

Considerable insight in other forms of EDM culture exists in academic literature focusing on participants who feel that clubbing is a form of 'emotional and alternative spiritual expression'. This demonstrates a level of deep commitment amongst participants, which are often minimised by scholars, while the motivation of drug taking is foregrounded against a background of increased criminality, commercialisation and repression (Moore 2016, p.89). These 'transformative possibilities', community, belonging, and self-expression', potentially inherent amongst participants in the EDM trance scene, would be enriched by a greater understanding of youth culture spirituality (Moore 2016, p.95). Whilst mainstream clubbing is sold as a hedonistic event rather than having any spiritual aspects, it is important to investigate the possible existence of these subcultural, alternative, countercultural, spiritual and emotional motivations of EDM clubbing along with experiences of a positive community and sense of belonging instead of denying such possibilities as marketing ploys (Moore 2016, p.90). Even though it is problematic, it is productive to tackle potential representations of 'others' within supposedly

inclusive EDM dance spaces (Moore 2016, p.94). The possibility of techno being a productive site for affective research incorporating the amalgamation of music, dance, space and people should be considered (Moore 2016, p.89).

Bennett indicates that often scenes are linked to local communities, especially in the punk genres, suggest that these represent “locally situated pockets of grassroots musical creativity reworking global mainstream musical styles” to represent a local uniqueness in terms of clothing, beliefs, dance style and drug choices (Bennett 2004, p.8). Yet despite the threat of fluidity within the scene in terms of membership, location, mainstream influences and level of contribution, the scene remains intact (Bennett 2004, p.251). Though psyculture is globalised, local specifics are paramount with Guerra suggesting temporary connections of emotion, sharing of spaces and experiences are important factors (Guerra 2015, p.13; D’Andrea 2010, p.151; St. John 2004b, p.18; Heelas 2000, p.237). The study of spirituality and transformative possibilities within trance dance based small bounded communities is becoming increasingly insightful and important. A deep investigation of active resistance and anarchy with EDM contemporary scenes by understanding other cultural representations equally provides interesting insights, for example in archaeology. Small bounded communities in the past and indigenous present are usually founded in human decency, a desire for freedom, and intolerance of domination (Trigger 1990, p.129). This sits well with anarchist theory which looks at social alienation, periods of cultural chaos, and societal disintegration at times of societal growth and freedom (Borck & Sanger 2017, p.9).

Borck and Sanger note that there has been an increasing interest in anarchism in archaeology particularly around ‘decentralized social relations’ where resistance to authority has a long history but within small scale societies there may have power relations within them including ‘sequential’ and ‘heterarchies’ or more hierarchical systems (Borck & Sanger 2017, p.11). They suggest that social alienation and questioning of authority can lead to societal growth and freedom and such ‘contestation of dominance of hierarchy’ related to decolonizing archaeologies indicates that ‘non-societies are not deviant’ but ‘adaptive’ and ‘progressive’ aiming to maintain equality within ‘active rejections of authority by past peoples’ dissolving the idea that progress goes from ‘simple to complex’ (Borck & Sanger 2017, p.13).



Interesting developments in geoglyph research in archaeology are encountering artefacts as a medium of potential anarchist ritual. This is viewed as a counterbalance in agricultural societies where centralisation was taking place amongst ancient peoples seeking to redistribute power and authority, for example amongst the Pampa in creating uncontrollable ritual spaces (Wilkinson 2021, p.102). Thus, a legacy of resistance to centralised cultures may be evident throughout history.

Certainly, in contemporary culture, Brayshay and Mulville acknowledge archaeology can help understand the relationship between festival culture, sites and festival participants while studying the Glastonbury Festival stone circle and what it means in terms of memory, monument, and mythology as an invented tradition (Brayshay and Mulville 2022, p.141). As the Glastonbury circle is a new structure, the framework is useful to explore how it links to revitalisation, creativity, self-esteem, and transgression. Festivals and gatherings are often labelled as sites of identity, art, sociality, cultural practices and change, and celebration providing an immersion of indigenous, migrant, and minority groups within mainstream community (Frost 2016, p.570). Festivals are associated with the common people linked to the restrictions of increasing private land ownership against capital with a history of resistance in a struggle against enclosures of time, space, knowledge, history and 'being in the world' (Woodman & Zaunseder 2022, p.124).

The historical desire for the congregation of the common peoples and the restrictions caused by mainstream society had particular repercussions in British history when the rave scene materialised in the late eighties. Raves are defined here as unlicensed all-night parties featuring electronically produced dance music, drug usage and a PLUR (peace, love, unity, respect) ethos (Anderson & Kavanaugh 2007). The 'PLUR ethos' of raves accredited them as countercultural (Reynolds 2013). The history of raves in the UK started around 1988 with an ensuing negative reaction from authorities and people worried about excessive drug use, hedonism and criminality focussed on an 'alternative space for youth to explore collectivism, hedonism and solidarity' (Avis-Ward 2022, p.39). As raves increased in popularity, they attracted other types of free party, traveller types that led to police conflict, such

as at Castlemorton, resulting in a negative attitude from authorities continuing to the present day (Avis-Ward 2022, p.40).

Since 1988, rave culture has changed from being demonised and legislated against as illegal events leading to the Criminal Justice Act of 1994 due to perceived mass drug use, criminality, and hedonism to the mainly commercialised EDM scene of today though pockets of illegal rave or free parties still thrive (Avis-Ward 2022, p.40). However, distinctions between illegal and commercial parties are not clear cut with a suggested greater fluidity the underground subculture difficult to define (Avis-Ward 2022, p.42). Regardless, a sense of solidarity, beliefs, values and practice, and being part of a community endure in most EDM scenes (Avis-Ward 2022, p.43). The particular attraction is a sense of unity from collective dance communicating via movement form of escapism and sense of freedom from contemporary society whereas nowadays the distinction between free and unfree is blurred (Avis-Ward 2022, p.44).

Contemporary persecution of EDM gatherings such as raves continues because they are associated with drug-taking or on illegal sites. The use of illegal drugs, even in the mainstream, is still considered an 'existential threat' where young people participate in risky drug-based activities in the night-time scene, with heavy security that often ensues, and the stigma that is attached to the leisure drug scene (Moore 2022, p.43). This continuation of prohibition to non-licensed outside events leads psychculture members to taking action to ensure their events are clandestine and a distinction is set up between their culture and mainstream culture (Rietveld 2010, p.76; Hanegraaff 2011, p.88; O'Grady 2017, p.10). Psychculture attitudes and artwork reflect the sense of alienation and transgression ( Dumit 2006, p.90; St. John 2012b, p.6; Olaveson 2001, p.89; Ullsoy & Firat 2018, p.39). People congregating for festivities, perhaps a memorisation of the ancestral common people practices, are often associated with marginalised groups and keeping traditions alive (Frost 2016, p.570).

The EDM 'underground scene' sought to 'break free' from mainstream policies to live in a 'new world filled with possibilities' particularly in locations literally away from everyday society in a hidden manner giving 'freedom through secrecy' relying on the

fluidity of a do it yourself ethics such as adaptability in the temporary creation of spaces (Perrenet 2019, p.38). Use of the terms: 'mainstream', 'everyday' and 'underground' remain problematic as definitions within the genre of EDM as the terms evolve and intermingle for commercial purposes and people are attracted to have an experience rather than alignment with 'underground' principles' (Perrenet 2019, p.57).

EDM culture's complex association with resistance submerged in ironic 'playfulness' around the use of the term and lack of political activity minimises its active 'fluid social processes' on which the label relies due to its actual lack of change or purpose (Conner & Katz 2020, p.461). Within this community of resistance and difference exists a hierarchy and external pressures from legal and societal issues against such EDM events that sink the subculture into the commercial festival and EDM industry where the 'values of authenticity' are now equally sought by all and due to its lack of activism, 'political dissidence' principles now only remain at an individual not a cultural level (Conner & Katz 2020, p.461). Van Dyck and colleagues suggest various paradigms of understanding the motivation for attendance at underground events aside from enjoyment and socialising including the push towards an ideal way of living (Van Dyck 2023, p.1821).

Further to reflecting on the importance of contribution within small-scale EDM communities, participation is linked interchangeably with contribution that not only reflects the intentions of members but also their experiences, and affective practices within marginalised groups. In the contemporary EDM world, the black queer scenes are viewed as places to be emotionally free and safe. In seeking 'collective joy, alternative ownership of space and community', Adeyemi relates how queer black women assert their affective rights to retain their place in the gentrified cities as their night-time presence reduces to continue 'feeling right' (Adeyemi 2022, p.95). She suggests that they 'deserve access to the sets of feelings that are associated with these spaces' where race, feeling and space interlink as part of identity beyond the constraints of being a black woman but wanting to respect such identity (Adeyemi 2022, p.18). Other genres of contemporary EDM culture include amongst black clubbers where hedonism and illegality are an ongoing scene of conflict with authorities in a misguided belief that such events have higher drug consumption.

This is distinctly racial in terms of policing attitudes and policies with incumbent resistance against repression evident in the black party scene in the UK (Chowdhury 2019, p.58).

Clubbing is not just about hedonism, but about the chance to socialise, to feel, to empathise with strangers and to view the world and our lives differently at a level of non-political resistance (Moore 2004, p.461). A subcultural movement that practises resistance to conservatism is protecting something important to the participants such as drugs and dancing that are deemed unacceptable by authorities (Moore 2004, p.461). Other aspects include providing a sense of belonging to a community, a temporary sense of stability in often 'chaotic' lives and a chance to be their authentic selves, make friends and develop a 'commitment to celebrating difference', progressing towards a life where they and their practices are tolerated instead of being viewed with 'heightened suspicion of the feared Other' (Moore 2004, p.465).

Focussing on the reasons people attend raves, escapism is a lead motivation especially in times of hardship (Van Dyck 2023, p.26). Participants seek the 'vibe' because of the minimal violence, the increase 'reconciliatory and utopian mood' within an idealistic desire to change the world in a positive way that influences the 'real world' though others indicate there are more 'conflictual dynamics' underneath this underground movement (Castagner 2020, p. 68). Castagner illustrates to the 'newcomer or observer on the margins', EDM culture appears to be 'peace realized' but being aware of potential conflict in trying to maintain this vibe, does not detract from the positive practices of psyculture (Castagner 2020, p. 68). Participants can openly spread nature's spiritual energy while being aware of power relations inside. The scene is not so different from the mainstream but with a focus on truth rather than peace in psyculture (Castagner 2020, p.70).

Dolbec provides interesting insight about the interactions between nice 'cultural markets', and 'mainstream' boundaries where the concept of 'selling out' or taking the underground overground is conceived as a 'negative endeavour' losing their 'cultural capital, integrity, authenticity, and creative freedom' to the market (Dolbec 2015, p.173). Further benefits of research about the challenges to the 'mainstream' in EDM music industries is suggested by van der Velden and Hitters because there

is 'assumed placelessness (i.e. not culturally bound)' with EDM meaning that the fluidity of barriers and digitalisation of spaces help understand markets in this 'globalising world' but 'uncertain industry' in the struggle between 'small-scale and mass production' markets either enabling or crushing creativity (van der Velden & Hitters 2016, p.66).

Focussing on the other and marginalisation within trance dance and psyculture EDM genres across disciplines, can illustrate a deeper appreciation of the nature of community, belonging and change where cross-fertilization is advised to consider the how, when, and why altered states occurred, how they relate to marginal groups, and their relevance to social coherence (Costello 2021, p.16; Cardeña 2021, p.26; Steinert 2021, p.386). Many past cult's practices of achieving ecstasy were kept secret, hidden, or destroyed for religious or political reasons. The ecstatic possibility does not go away despite centuries of repression. The competing pull of contemporary mainstream festivities, festivities of the common people, and the desire to collectively achieve joy continue even reclaiming sports events as they became carnivalised (Dunbar 2022, p.92).

Ehrenreich indicates past and present attitudes to trance, particularly allowing yourself to become possessed, represents a place outside of the human self, the heart of darkness brought on by wild rituals signifying otherness to the point of savagery possibly resulting from a 'defective', in opposition to a civilized, mind leading to repression of such practices and principles (Ehrenreich 2007, p.6). The altered state results in a child-like mental state vulnerable to autosuggestion and irrational influence highly susceptible to music and imagery (Ehrenreich 2007, p.6). When collective ecstasy entered the colonialist European mind, it was met with hostility, contempt, and fear as something experienced by the 'lower class, the others, the savages' (Ehrenreich 2007, p.9).

In anthropology, there is evidence of practices of connecting with ancestral remembrances via trance dance existing in the preparation of food for the dead amongst the Ati people of the Philippines; even though the suppression of the old ways continues amongst marginalised indigenous minorities in favour of the tourist-focussed dance performances (Gavino 2020 p.3). De Pina-Cabral redefines

marginality in terms of symbolic, hegemonic power in social structuring that give power to some and silencing others that could dissemble the existing power structure (De Pina-Cabral 1997, p.47). In EDM, there is a shared insider knowledge in subversive groups that develops resilience to the hegemonic mainstream that should be re-evaluated because they are a loci of complex creativity of hidden, marginalised groups (Frieman & Lewis 2022, p.12).

Rietveld suggests that trance music enables a 'modern version of a tantric-inspired dance ritual' that could enable participants to cope with mainstream life where a sensory and emotional shared engagement with 'universal, transcendent cosmos' is not available in the mainstream world (Rietveld 2010, p.76). Hanegraaff indicates that dance along with 'entheogenic sacraments' are supposedly capable of dissolving the domination of mainstream society and restoring participants to an original state of being (Hanegraaff 2011, p.88). There is still an essence of the earlier free party movement ethos evident within some EDMC and psyculture underground music gatherings with a DIY ethic that has the potential for the performance of political and personal freedom as an expression of democratic participation in the act of dancing outside, but it is rarely linked to direct political resistance in the UK (O'Grady 2017, p.10).

In psyculture, the symbolism of alienation and transgression abound in art, and in music production, illustrating the alienation from mainstream society (Dumit 2006, p.90). The origins of psyculture may have been from political or anarchic foundations but only retain a transgressive veil in present practice compared to earlier psychedelic music based groups (St. John 2012b, p.6). Olaveson notes the similarity between Durkheim's conceptive of collective effervescence and Turner's *communitas* in their ritual model that emphasises the alienating nature of society and the necessary tension between itself and collective effervescence in marginalised practices (Olaveson 2001, p.89). St. John sees participants as temporary exiles intersecting a feeling of liberation, a subversiveness replaced by an experience of *nowness* from an alien, mainstream world (St. John 2013, p.18). Moreover, Ulusoy and Firat indicate, when interpreting the motives that lure people to seek subcultural membership, attendance is due to participant's identity issues where they seek

solace and escape from a persecuting society rather desiring agency and collectivity (Ullsoy & Firat 2018, p.39).

Psyculture festivals and events are perceived as sites of progress towards greater and restored unity and community offering a place of *communitas*. Turner's concept of 'spontaneous *communitas*' is a state offering 'confrontation' of identities achieving the vibe of 'undifferentiated community' and potentially a collective, mutual understanding (Turner 1978, p.8). St. John rather sees intentions of participants as not for a particular result but to repeat the experience towards transition (St. John 2010b, p.4). He describes psyculture as a liminal movement with community rituals that effect this transition (St. John 2010b, p.7). He refers to this 'festivalisation' of dance culture as a 'socio-sonic experiential currency' that is highly valued amongst participants (St. John 2010a, p.7). Psyculture gatherings are best in a remote space promoting participation, agency, and connectivity where the marginalised can escape to occupy an idealised, liminal forest location showing the significance and impact of outdoor dance experiences for successful social functioning and democracy (O'Grady 2017, p.9).

In summary, within a non-mainstream community, the experience of being outsiders or 'othering' that lead to antagonisms, potential conflict and even persecution. However, the benefits of forming and maintaining an 'underground' community are viewed as substantial amongst participants who protect and sustain its principles and practices with ample examples in contemporary EDM dance cultures.

In summary, there are assertions that EDM and psychedelic trance cultures, like indigenous trance cultures, are experimenting with egalitarian small-scale community principles and practices based on dance and music. Studying past small-scale societies and indigenous cultures provides insight into contemporary EDMC and psyculture in understanding social complexity, human agency, and individual and societal influence. Psyculture is touted as a practising egalitarian community focussed on co-creation, contribution, and participation that relies on everyone taking part to survive but it also continues to suffer from legal and policing restrictions in terms of licensing and being able to practice outside. There are fascinating insights about the essences of counterculture or anti-dominant cultures where marginalised

groups survive, evolve, and co-create. Whatever the motivations for a transgressive tendency, the attraction of participants to keep returning to psyculture gatherings aligns with the experience of being alienated. The original contribution come from an in-depth study of psyculture in the field of ethnographic global dance music cultures in providing a comprehensive understand of practices and principles within one specific EDM culture which may help establish a framework for future contemporary club culture studies in different genre and cultures.

Alongside an illustrative consideration of community, contribution and participation in EDMC and psyculture, is the importance of the environment and nature where outside gatherings for psyculture participants for a variety of reasons that will benefit from an interdisciplinary investigation about sites, sensoriality, embodiment and the motifs infused with ancestral importance throughout time.

## 2.6 Environment and nature

In this section about environment and nature, topics frequently researched include the importance of outside locations serving as liminal spaces for transformatory purposes, and sensoriality of landscapes, places, and the permanent impermanency of temporary gatherings as well as the importance of dancing in such outside locations. Archaeology looks at how landscape and sacred, architectural structures served past communities in terms of meaning and purpose, social and cultural processes, and memory (Darvill 2010, p.343; Mills 2005, p.80). Contemporary gatherings in the UK are rarely held on sites deemed as sacred but any site can be made sacred through the act of human empowerment (Werbner 1996, p.321, p.5; St. John 2012b, p.5). Archaeological and anthropological perspectives about the power and agency of landscape include both cultural and natural dimensions that help to interpret human memories connecting the living and the dead (Tilley 2016, p.38; Bradley 2005, p.122; Holtorf 1997, p.45). Furthermore, the landscape, environs, material culture, and architecture are considered as cultural signifiers of human actuality ever changing, embedded in memory, and linked to ancestors, supernatural experiences with an academic focus on sensory experiences of local people linked to identity, lineage, and a wider cosmology (Hirsch 1995, p.1; 2017, p.262; Büster, Warmenbol & Mlekuž 2018, p.9).



Scholars suggest the landscape, nature and the environment are integral to ancestral connectivity particularly in considering a wider, multisensory, embodiment of the landscape to learn more about ancient peoples' experiences, and how it was key in communicating with the divine, especially open spaces (Tilley 1994, p.47; Hamilakis 2021, p.254; Claassen 1997, p.410). Current developments are moving away from a bias for the visual in understanding the full spectrum of sensorial experiences and embodiment in human rituals with a greater focus on acoustics, sound and music (Rodaway 2002, p.116; Claassen 1997, p.401; Pocock 2002, p.380; Boivin 2004, p.40; Boivin *et al* 2007, p.267). Scholarship suggests acoustic effects appear deliberately created at archaeological sites and monuments to elicit a liminal, transformatory journey using sound (evident in imagery, structural design, and placement of structures in landscapes) (Watson 2001, p.188, p.190; Bradley 1989, p.251; Dronfield 1996, p.37; Watson & Keating 1999, p.335; Díaz-Andreu *et al* 2017, p.181; Hamilakis and Theou 2013, p.213).

Additionally, fascinating developments focus on embodied cognition showing how humans perceive nature and the environment and the intersubjectivity between things and people (Hoaen 2019, p.174). Other scholars consider how a site is in a bodyworld assemblage conveying shared meaning (Robb & Harris 2013, p.215; Hamilakis, Pluciennik & Tarlow 2002, p.13; Robb & Harris 2013, p.217).). Similarly, wildness is often associated with moving from a leisure-based attitude to nature towards perceiving nature and human experiences as one where humans seek out becoming more in touch with their wild, natural side in a unifying of man, the spiritual, and the natural world (Weston & Bennett 2014, p.4; Till 2014, p.24; Van Horn 2017, p.2; Hoaen 2019, p.174). A relevant avenue of scholarship is the predominance of altars and other portable material objects that have spiritual value showing the importance, craftsmanship and use of ceremonial items situating beliefs on materials in temporary spaces (Jessen 2012, p.40; Sørensen & Rebay-Salisbury 2012, p.4)

The relationship of peoples to sacred sites, stones and their landscapes was important in terms of the context of performances, the sensuality of experiencing carvings, and their relevance to knowledge acquisition and supernatural journeying (Bender 2020, p.13). Bender states supernatural journeying was activated by this

sensorially-inseparable interaction of landscape, place, space, stones, and people (Bender 2020, p.13; Ingold 1993, p.152). She presented her thesis at the World Archaeological Congress in Cape Town in 1999 where she discussed the politics of landscape to aid understanding the lives of people in a turbulent world and how they create a sense of place and belonging pertinent to the South African diaspora in terms of movement, migration, and exile (Bender 2020, p.3). Bender further, in an exploration of Lesternick, Bodmin Moor, in Southwest England, indicates that it is evident Bronze Age people in the local Cornish landscape were communicating with the ancient stones or caves perhaps perceiving these as doorways to connect with ancestors or as places of transformation (Bender 2002, p.3; Büster, Warmenbol & Mlekuž 2018, p.9).

Her intention was to move away from the Western notion of landscape towards it being a place always in process, conflicted, messy, and uneasy because of personal human perception (Bender 2020, p.3). She advised that experiences of landscape are best viewed as being 'polysemic, contextual, and biographical' for those on the move (Bender 2020, p.10). Equally, landscape can be viewed as a cultural signifier of human actuality and potentiality, of change through fluidity, dispute, memories, and spatiality though messy and contradictory (Hirsch 1995, p.1; Cummings 2017, p.267; Bender 2002, p.3).

Some archaeologists suggest imagining a wider sensory embodiment beyond the two-dimensional view of a landscape (Tilley 1994, p.47). An archaeology of the senses can provide insights of how a multi-sensory impact was key in communicating with the divine during site exploration in central Greece at the Koutroulou Magoula open space with mnemonic traces of occupation evident from the Middle Neolithic (5800-5300 BC) to the present-day revealing sensorial, performance, and memory practices (Hamilakis 2011, p.218;). These excavations reveal evidence of music, communal dancing, cooking and consumption of food (Hamilakis 2011, p.191). Hamilakis indicates sensoriality is not just about reflection and diffraction of sensorial stimuli but about atmospheres that are physically and culturally specific where values are passed on through sensation and speech (Hamilakis 2021, p.254; Claasen 1997, p.410).

While ethnographers have long accepted the importance of the full spectrum of sensory experiences in human ritual, greater focus on the wider sensory experiences beyond a visual bias is receiving greater attention across other disciplines (Rodaway 2002, p.116; (Classen 1997, p.401). Western preoccupation with the visual has restricted knowledge of wider, past sensory possibilities at the expense of other senses such as sound (Pocock 2002, p.380; Rodaway 2002, p.15). The Neolithic landscape reveals opportunities to emphasise sound as a way of experiencing the past in the present (Boivin 2004, p.40; Boivin *et al* 2007, p.267). Boivin and colleagues in south India illustrate a sensual, material, and technological understanding of ancient soundscapes regarding shared materials, gestural, and acoustic properties (Boivin *et al* 2007, p.290).

This sensual embodiment of the landscape and its materials may benefit, as Ingold suggests, from foregrounding the indigenous approach of placing the listeners in the landscape to experience its features for themselves, not just visually but sonically. He advises an immersion in the stories told in order to investigate temporality from a 'dwelling perspective' of people's perception as nature, space, and land are inseparable (Ingold 1993, p.152). Ingold uses *The Harvesters* painting by Bruegel to show why he refers to 'taskscape' instead of landscape indicating the temporality of the landscape and its changing uses, and to dissolve the distinctions between them in order to uncover what a place means to people (Ingold 1993, p.156). Materiality, landscape, sensual embodiment, and nature are rarely investigated in current EDM and psyculture research.

#### Body and environment as site of ancestral knowledge

Moreover, how humans perceive organisms, and their ecological attitudes to environment in terms of embodied cognition in generating subjective exchange between people and materials is particularly important in attempting present reconstructions to ascertain experiences of ancestral connectivity (Lash 2019, p.130; Hoan 2019, p.174). In terms of the body as a site of knowledge of spaces, Robb and Harris suggest the body is a platform for learning, knowledge, intentionality, and establishment of meaning that traverse history (Robb & Harris 2013, p.215; Hamilakis, Pluciennik & Tarlow 2002. p.13). The body reveals much about society and history particularly through gesture and specific movement. This 'bodyworld' is

an assemblage of individual and intersubjective experiences that reveal substantial information about embodied, shared meaning (Robb & Harris 2013, p.215). There is speculation that past and present peoples experienced much more complex types of situational relatedness in terms of the multiplicity of bodyworlds embedded in ancestral knowledges that illuminate an understanding of bodily elasticity and diversity, and relationality to the environment (Robb & Harris 2013, p.217).

Further evidence of the importance of sound in ancient landscape exists within Rock art includes entoptic imagery that are similar to those experienced during altered states of consciousness with light and dark motifs (Bradley 1989, p.251). Spiral motifs, representative of acoustic properties, are seen to represent the experiences of tunnel vision signifying entry points into the supernatural (Dronfield 1996, p.37). Whether inside or outside, sound would have been experienced differently due to reflections or distortions within structures that may have increased liminality (Watson & Keating 1999, p.335). The volume and intensity of these sounds would have been otherworldly and unique to that structure presenting a new auditory experience providing new ways of understanding how communities uniquely used landscapes, and how cognitive and symbolic behaviour would have changed over time (Díaz-Andreu *et al* 2017, p.181; Hamilakis and Theou 2013, p.213). Diaz-Andreu and colleagues reveal the relationship between rock art landscapes and perception in terms of vision and hearing by measuring directionality at the Alicante mountains site in northeastern Spain during the Neolithic period (ca.5600 to 2800 cal bc) (Díaz-Andreu *et al* 2017, p.181). Art and artefacts within EDM psyculture bear striking similarities in terms of motifs and symbolism that would benefit from deeper consideration about their importance to practices, principles and connections to ancestry.

Interesting developments in academic approaches to dance performance consider that particular spaces and structures have been associated with dance as early as the Early Minoan period. In particular in open spaces where funerary intentions could not account for the large, paved areas outside tombs indicating a different interpretation of intention is possible such as ritual dancing clearly evidenced in the artwork and the acoustical properties (Aamodt 2014, p.53). Aamodt emphasises the significance of dance and specific sites in social, religious, secular, and political

expression and control evident in ancient Aegean frescos depicting ritual ceremonies, and rites during the Mycenaean period in the early Cycladic period but particularly during the Minoan period (Aamodt 2014, p.47). Similarly, Royo suggests the 9th century CE temple complex of Prambanan, in Central Java, indicates how the complex could be a representation of 'monumental choreography' evident in dance reliefs and how the acoustical effects may have led to consciousness transformation, irrespective of the original purpose of the structure (Royo 2005, p.43). Experiences of contemporary audiences confirm the extraordinary and impactful qualities of percussive sounds at Maeshowe and Camster Round suggest similar sound intentions and knowledges (Aamodt 2014, p.53; p.86; Debertois & Bisconti 2014, p.138). Whether intentional spaces or not, any landscapes, spaces and environment may have a profound effect on participants on an EDM or psytrance gathering that is as important to the overall experience as the people, the music and the dancing.

Though landscape, architecture, sacred spaces, monuments are important to human experience still, there is little academic investigation in psytrance. However, scholarship suggests the sacralization of any landscape is possible anywhere. Werbner is interested in how places become sacralised informed by the Zikr dances of the Sufi hijara journey where any hitherto profane space can be made sacred through the stamping of the feet on the earth; this is particularly earlier in Sufi history, being regarded as an act of human empowerment (Werbner 1996, p.321). Though specific sacred, ancient spaces are rarely used as sites for psytrance gatherings, temporary sanctuaries and rituals are created wherever a gathering occurs. Psytrance events specialise in creating spaces for the community to enjoy their shared experience, irrespective of the need for a landscape to be or become sacred, (St. John 2012b, p.5).

Similarly, when considering the meaning of wildness, it is often associated with wild places or states of mind indicating self-will, autonomy, and agency towards a unique 'expression of life' where humans can cultivate wildness in themselves, their communities, and in landscapes (Van Horn 2017, p.2). This assemblage of wildness connects human and non-human in a co-sharing relationality imbued with personal and cultural meaning (Van Horn 2017, p.5). Hoan advises caution gathering

evidence from earlier societies about wildness and nature due to the vast changes in environment and landscape, change of uses towards a more leisure-based attitude to nature from a practical one in the sensorium of the past, and outdated Eurocentric attitudes towards 'wildness' (Hoen 2019, p.174). The consideration of the importance of human engagement with their environment, nature and becoming part of a wild assemblage is lacking in EDM and psyculture research.

Though rarely investigated, the predominance of temporary altars and other material objects, that may be deemed religious or sacred, are evident at psyculture gatherings at the front of sound systems. Embodied knowledge is evident in the craftsmanship of past and present technological tools and materials such as in the creation of temporary altars for use in ceremonial spaces shows similar situating of beliefs onto materials (Jessen 2012, p.40; Sørensen & Rebay-Salisbury 2012, p.4). Jessen investigated how corporeal understandings affect cognitive operation that illuminate understanding of embodiment, material culture and religious knowledge (Jessen 2012, p.40). She analysed materiality of religious thinking, in particular portable altars carried by missionaries as they transmit religious concepts such as the Eucharist in the transition from heathendom to Christendom in southern Scandinavia—referring to the altar as an extra-somatic entity (Jessen 2012, p.40). Though portable altars at psyculture gathering may not be directly viewed as religious, they potentially hold a similar purpose. There is little research about altars and similar materials in psyculture at present.

In summary, human and non-human interaction with the outside environment are important reasons for participants attending particularly for the purpose of dancing together in nature in an often chaotic manner in an intersectionality of landscape, people, and nature. A wider investigation of other disciplines provides extensive illustration of how memories of the living and the dead are embedded in landscapes, structures and sites for gathering with meaning, purpose and places for repeated celebration with a greater contemporary focus on non-visual sensory experiences and potential purposes that connect to mass dancing. The use of temporary structures and particularly altars in a non-secular way that highlight the potential worship of sound and sound systems in the contemporary EDM scene is significant. The repeated reference by UK psyculture participants in preparatory discussions

indicated the dominance of material culture, objects, preparations and the journey to the outside gatherings are vital proponents of cultural and self-identity as different tribes gathering in one space on annual basis for what they believe is a similar ancestral purpose.

## 2.7 Preparation, Objects, and Journey

This materiality of the landscape connects to the importance of preparations, object, material and immateriality, mobility, journeying, travelling, and routes in participant's practices and principles. Material culture provides important insights about the lives of humans that emerge from an understanding of what objects mean to people, survival and habits and how objects impact social interaction, wellbeing, and identity (Miller 2010, p.3; Buchli 2004, p.241) where movement and cultural interaction played a part in shared culture (Cummings & Fowler 2015, p.4). Assemblage theory consolidates recent anthropological trends for investigating materiality with its concerns with affect, agency, and affordance in the decentring of the human in the anthropocentric claim of privilege over material that aids understanding assemblage value in past human communities (Latour 2005; Shanks 2007; Witmore 2007; Bird-David 1999; Dowson 2007; Bennett 2010; Normark 2009; Fowler 2013). The subject-object interactions are embedded with meaning inseparable as composite bodies advancing post-humanist concepts to understand production, exchange and linking of material to cultural memory (Stalpaert & Karreman 2021, p.4; Carroll *et al*, 2021, p.69; Tilley 2005, p.64) where assemblages had personal and societal importance and value (Robinson 2017, p.15). Current research helps to understand the link between the mind and material culture relating to the transactional externalisation of culture, nature, mind and matter through things (Barona 2021, p.138; Thomas 2007, p.2; Malafouris 2022, p.3); another topic is the corporeal interactions which are present in mnemonic artefacts representing lived embodied practices (Zubieta 2022, p.1) as humans and things interact in movement and flow (Jones & Cochrane 2019, p.98; Büster 2018, p.4; Garfinkel 2003, p.12; Schiermer 2021, p.92).

The creative entanglement of things and humans indicate that object agency is just as important as human agency in a fluid, mycelium-like sphere of influence (Ingold 2010, p.11) where interspecies connectivity and communication are beyond the

binary (Ingold & Palsson 2013, p.8) looking towards what the body can do rather than what it is (Gale 2021, p.466). Other scholars, however, indicate humans are still an important component in showing connections between things and humans (Crellin & Harris 2021, p.4690; Harris & Cipolla 2017, p.6; Jakubik 2011, p.374). Contemporary archaeology aids understanding of the cultural and social meaning of festival objects that encompass experiences of places, spaces, and ritual (Äikäs *et al* 2016, p.78; Buchli & Lucas 2001, p.146). The complex trans-cultural meanings of sites and objects provide illumination where materials may be temporary and impermanent, global or local, performative rather than fixed but still endowed with importance (Martínez-Sevilla *et al* 2021, p.828; Cooper *et al* 2022, p.197; Pollard 2001, p.320; St. John 2012a, p.29; Bowman 2008, p.281; Digance 2006, p.45; Jacob Skousen 2018, p.262).

In terms of co-creation and co-presence as a motive for pilgrimage and journeying to sites of festivities, these appear to be just as valid as seeking liminality. Co-creation and co-presence are important in helping humans evaluate their lives, benefit from contribution and participation and the sharing of mutual energy and knowledge (Bowman 2008, p.281; Digance, 2006 p.45; Eliade 1959; Bennett 2001; Gell 1992; Skousen 2018; O'Grady 2017, p.2). The importance of journeying, travel, mobility and the links to landscapes are significant to the human experience reflecting both personal, real or symbolic journeys (Cummings & Johnston 2007, p.6; Leary & Kador 2016, p.14). All aspects of journeying, either practical or psychological, are considered relevant to human life including the positive and negative outcomes regarding affective interactions in a vast assemblage of man and nature (Dowd 2019, p.206; Sims 2021, p.19; Castagner 2020, p.75; Takahashi 2005, p.256; St. John 2010a, p.4; Vitos 2010, p.156; Saldanha 2007, p.71; D'Andrea 2007, p.38).

Scholarship indicates material culture provides insight into the lives of humans where across history and cultures where similarities and differences are evident in the objects (and architecture) that have meaning and practical importance to humans in their daily survival, rituals, and usage (Miller 2010, p.3). These objects assist in confirming social interaction, can benefit psychological wellbeing, and provide links to identity (Buchli 2004, p.41). Symbolic culture includes the non-concrete beliefs, values and myths attached to objects (Buchli 2004, p.241)). Cummings and Fowler



indicate that there was considerable cultural interaction and movement between Ireland and Britain in the Neolithic period where it is demonstrated there were distinct local activity patterns and sociality (Cummings & Fowler 2015, p.4). For example, as identified in the Discovery Programme initiative at archaeological excavation sites in the Boyne Valley and other peoples of the Irish Sea, people continually appraised their practices and patterns of influence both from a wider geography and locally (Cummings & Fowler 2015, p.4). However, not all objects were indicative of a shared culture with variants found such as carinated bowls absent in neighbouring communities but evident at some sites (Cummings & Fowler 2015, p.4). Psyculture research would benefit from a consideration of how inter and intra tribal influences in terms of materiality and objects, exchanges, and identity fusions occur for example in terms of décor, clothing, and artwork.

Tilley and colleagues examine the way humans experience the material world through object embodiment including food, clothing, architecture, belongings, ornaments, art and how they relate to cultural memory (Tilley 2005, p.64). They look at how objects are produced and their exchange, their consumption and how changes occur as well as their meaning for identity, heritage, and traditions taking on the character of the creator (Tilley 2005, p.64). Similarly, post-humanism reveals interesting ideas about how material is inseparable from the semiotic in a community with an interconnected mesh of humans, inter-dependent objects, and technologies as composite bodies (questioning the subject-object divide and challenging oppositional thinking) (Stalpaert & Karreman 2021, p.4). Carroll and colleagues equally direct their interest away from indexicality of object intentions and the semiotic (which is more esoteric) towards more practical, exoteric object biographies within a more fluid temporality and personal intimacy between object and human (Carroll *et al*, 2021, p.69).

Further consideration of object-person interaction discusses capacity in assemblages. This is where value is placed (capacity) on objects giving them an importance in human history (Robinson 2017, p.15). Analysis of perishable and non-perishables objects can reveal societal values and relational capacities between them to aid analysis of heterogenous dynamics in complex societies (Robinson 2017, p.15). Robinson found new discoveries from Chumash societies in the Cache

Caves in California of cached baskets, bones, leather, and food showing that values themselves have their own capacity (Robinson 2017, p.5). This indicates that assemblages were individual within heterarchical dynamics rather than corporate storage (Robinson 2017, p.166).

Current research attempts to update the understanding between the mind and material culture with a social brain hypothesis in considering cognitive agency and material engagement (Barona 2021, p.138). Thomas argues that material culture results from Western thinking about the distinctions between culture and nature, mind and matter, and form and substance epitomizing where meaning has greater primacy and seen as a product of the mind separate from the externalisation of an object in the physical world (Thomas 2007, p.2). Malafouris argues that cognition results from the brain-body-environment described as 'thing-ing' where thinking and feeling occur with and through things in a 'transactional space formed from this combination' (Malafouris 2022, p.3). Cognitive processes therefore make a place a transactional where organism and environment engage thus decentring the individual as the centre of cognition (Malafouris 2022, p.3).

Moreover, Ingold's idea of creative entanglement with materials sees a fluidity of things and human relationality where objects have their own volition, persuasiveness, and influence (Ingold 2010, p.11). These influences have a non-linear, spiralling unfolding with a multiplicity of connections likened to a fungal mycelium blurring the body and environment boundaries (Ingold 2010, p.11). Ingold and Palsson suggest these reciprocal relations between plant and human show a multi-faceted connectivity and interspecies communication in a rhizomatic meshwork of interlinked threads beyond dualism (Ingold & Palsson 2013, p.8). A concentration on affective relationality and post-human practices of thinking and doing is needed - moving away from ontology to focus on the practical things about what a body can do rather than what it is; a complex multiplicity of molecular lines (Gale 2021, p.466). This relates to those engaged in dance between affecting and being affected with shifts of change and intensity towards 'becoming-animal' (Gale 2021, p.466). In psychoculture, there are anecdotal beliefs about the interspecies communication between plant and human that would benefit from further investigation even beyond living species.

Crellin and Harris indicate that post-humanism still has to be about humans and how they are part of wider relational assemblages and historic processes (Crellin & Harris 2021, p.4690). They argue the complexity of human and non-human relations should be a key focus of research to emphasise what connects things, people, and places (Harris & Cipolla 2017, p.6). Jakubik suggests a 'becoming to know' paradigm needs to incorporate negative as well as positive and negative impacts, and unintended results of human and non-human relations as well (Jakubik 2011, p.374; Harris & Cipolla 2011, p.374).

Contemporary archaeology aids understanding of the cultural and social meaning of objects that are part of the festival experience including leave no trace policies to respect nature and for participants to take objects with them (Äikäs *et al* 2016, p.78). A comparison of the policy of leave no trace at contemporary festivals may suggest similar practices nationally and globally (Buchli & Lucas 2001, p.81). Such a comparison may bring enhanced knowledge of the festival experience, landscape, sites, identities, engagement, enactment, and ritual (Buchli & Lucas 2001, p.146). They suggest looking at sites as crossings between memorialised and imaginary spaces revealing participant's embodied sense of place, co-ordination of large groups gatherings, the sophisticated levels of organisation and technical skills (Buchli & Lucas 2001, p.146). Archaeological research at Durrington Walls shows significant evidence of the social nature of ancient festivities, suggesting festivals were a way of exchanging information, socialising, forming relationships, reinforcing allegiances, trading, storytelling, learning new skills, passing on traditions, sharing values and purpose (Buchli & Lucas 2001, p.146).

The complex trans-cultural usage of objects shows transfer of rituals and practices with valued aesthetic and symbolic meaning giving insights into personal identity and relationships with things (Martínez-Sevilla *et al* 2021, p.828; Cooper *et al* 2022, p.197). The archaeology of aesthetics draws to the artistic value within depositional contexts evidence in the British Neolithic where there was deliberate burial of objects showing the effort and care given to arrangements and materials neither fixed nor open-ended but rather performative (Pollard 2001, p.320). Participants at ancient festivities probably danced, consumed inebriating substances, consumed food and

other activities as evident in the movement of feasting materials (Buchli & Lucas 2001, p.146). Objects that were important to travellers going to places of celebration and gathering were short term, temporary, and portable with multi-functional uses and multiple meanings for artistic and domestic usage (Äikäs *et al* 2016, p.78). Such sites or objects are notoriously difficult to evidence as objects disappear quickly or are removed as part of 'leave no trace' policies such as at Glastonbury festival (Äikäs *et al* 2016, p.78).

An alternative approach to citing materiality as relevant to the embodied experience is the archaeology of the immaterial. Bucli describes this as a rejection of the material, to transcend material circumstances and the 'social effects' of such 'dematerialisations' (Bucli 2010, p.241). Bucli indicates that some people 'disengage from the world' as a type of physical engagement that illustrates an understanding of personhood and materiality to address the experiences of social exclusion and anti-consumerism. Therefore, the making of the immaterial is perhaps just as significant as the making of the material (Bucli 2015, p.204).

In terms of the principle of immateriality, minimising materiality, impermanence and temporality at contemporary psychculture gatherings, participants focus on keeping materiality portable, and temporary within a trajectory of what St.John calls 'permanent impermanence' (St. John 2012a, p.29). Participants are seeking a liminal, illogical space of transition where its temporality incorporates organiser and participant co-presence to experience impermanence as the permanent experience (St. John 2012a, p.29). These aspects of proximity and co-presence involve more than experiencing liminality or sacredness but rather an intention to seek out 'energy' or experience of 'amazement' in close proximity with others both animate and inanimate in the present moment (Bowman 2008, p.281; Digance 2006, p.45; Jacob Skousen 2018, p.262). This seeking out of mobile ways of living, however temporary, may be a major intention. This is fascinating and opens up discussion about travelling, journeying and pilgrimage as a way of life in both past and present cultures though psychculture it has more a leisurely intention.

Scholarship regarding pilgrimage, travel and journeying may be more about proximity and co-presence in terms of mobility and travelling, for example in the

study of contemporary pilgrimages to Glastonbury, than seeking sacredness or the loss of spirituality (Bowman 2008, p.281). Applying different types of co-presence to pilgrimage, whether face-to-face, place and/or the moment, may illustrate why people travel (Bowman 2008, p.281). He states that we can move away from an overly idealistic view of serious *communitas* as the only experience sought at contemporary festivals. There are different intentionalities in journeying to Glastonbury; with many seeking out 'energy' not necessarily sacredness (Bowman 2008, p.281). There are interesting estimations of the interaction between pilgrim's goals in journeying at contested pilgrimage sites regarding difficulties of access at sites such as Stonehenge (Digance, 2006 p.45). Digance further indicates that such pilgrims often have a hierophany or sacred epiphany that is different from everyday experiences ending in a sense of amazement while interrelating with objects, places, things, and substances that would benefit from deeper study (Digance 2006, p.45; Eliade 1959; Bennett 2001; Gell 1992; Skousen 2018). By searching for new paths with new people in journeying to gatherings, it helps humans to rethink position, status, purpose, and the journey becomes polarised on finding the gathering, putting mainstream considerations aside and becoming different agents in a co-presence with a new aim (O'Grady 2017, p.2).

Archaeology of journeys and movement have predominantly identified the origins and endings of travel (Gerrard 2023, p.71). Gerrard argues for an experiential approach of social interactions in looking at how people, ideas, and things flow; how people and body movements in a mobile society engage with memories of paths, landscapes, and other ways of remembering which are often evident in brain and muscular memory (Gerrard 2023, p.71). In his paper for the Symposium on the Movement of People and Things on the Roman Periphery in 2020, he attempts to use analogies from other time periods to understand the practicalities and temporalities of movement in Roman Britain; highlighting what movement meant to people at the time explored through social status and human-horse interactions not just origin and end points (Gerrard 2023, p.72). However, Gerrard's static focus on origin and end points can be problematic in reducing studies of mobility to materiality, minimising and dehumanising the integral human experience (Gerrard 2023, p.71).

In psychculture, there are parallel literal and psychological journeys in the task of locating gatherings that may lead to a new relationship with a 'synaptic landscape' where drifting into new areas depends on spatial awareness and physical maps in the search of a place in the 'spatial imagination' (Harrison 2013; Giesecking *et al* 2014, p.405). St. John builds on this aspect where psytrancers extend this journey from local to global, arguing that participants are cultural exiles wishing to experience experimental, cosmopolitan, yet locally varied experiences. This includes multiple opportunities to encounter other aesthetics and styles leaving a memory residue as they become part of a travelling populace where they are bringing back their knowledges as part of this fluid becoming (St. John 2012a, p.4; McKay 1996, p.39).

Journeying is linked to a psychological and literal travelling through dark and light states illuminating how these elements were used potentially for sensory affect simulating past underworld journeying in lunar landscapes at sacred sites and structures (Dowd 2019, p.206; Sims 2021, p.19). This is informative in interpreting the journey evident in psychculture where there is much debate amongst participants seeking a complex experience towards primal interiority. They are surrounded by spiritual myths, symbols, imagery in a vast technical assemblage. This creates a womb-like experience as they join in some kind of 'cosmic harmony' with organisers and artists co-ordinating their work to reaching a mutual vibe with participants in an immersive dark environment (Castagner 2020, p.75).

On this embodied journey, there are dark and light experiences in party peaks and troughs where there may be problems that cause the vibe to be disrupted or individuals are unexpectedly sphered into another vibe with others (Castagner 2020, p.75). Not everyone is part of or wants to be part of the downward trajectory into dark madness as there is an array of different climaxes, vibes, and levels of participation including power relations that can destroy the vibe and harmony or lead to bad experiences (Takahashi 2005, p.256). St. John refers to a formlessness, a rulelessness in the journeying into a chaotic fluidity as a key motif within psychculture with multi-layered experiences, behaviours and unpredictability, the grotesque and carnivalesque that can have negative consequences through participation (St. John 2010a, p.4; Vitos 2010, p.156). There are often tensions and conflicts in psytrance spheres that need to be accepted, analysed, and included in discussing the

complexity of the experience (Castagner 2020, p.66; Saldanha 2007, p.71; D'Andrea 2007, p.38).

Material objects may serve as extensions of the body and the senses in body adornment, displaying the embodied subject's character and therefore adding to their sensory presence (Spyer 2013, p.126). Garfinkel states that past and contemporary trance dance events often involved specific clothing, accessories, and body decoration. For example, a complex assemblage of beads and jewellery found in caves indicates elaborate rituals and preparation amongst the 224 dancing figures found at Gönnerdorf (Garfinkel, 1974, p.208). In terms of ritual assemblage, more recent ethnographic research has identified how important very small items such as moth dancing rattles were for shamanic ritual performance in southern African hunter-gatherer practices (Kinahan 2018, p.40; Ranio *et al* 2021, p.640; Turčin 2018).

In contemporary trance festivals, the importance of preparations and objects in terms of their usage and value in the festival experiences may be similar to historical practices and experiences (Schiermer 2021, p.92). Festival objects have agentic properties that are part of the collective camp identity; with varying homogeneity and originality around the sharing of new patterns and ideas including clothing, drinks, flags, camping areas in the same unified patterns, images and ornamentation as totems or symbols (Schiermer 2021, p.92). Castagner indicates there are often rituals evident in preparations for gatherings from minimal to extensive including objects of survival and decoration (Castagner 2020, p.69).

Objects are 'highly ritualized' in psychculture materiality which embed the idea of an experience of 'truth' of the vibe which protects participants from the world by creating 'a world sphere space' through actions and belongings that reinforce their own vibe and togetherness as a 'vibe tribe' with their own rituals and 'encampments' (Castagner 2020, p.74). Organisers design their gatherings to enable these tribes of 'spherical intentions' to flourish not available in mainstream life (Castagner 2020, p.75). In psychculture's 'quest for the archaic harmony', there is an artistic creation of a 'cosmic wombliness' with mother nature and associated assemblages, both technical and symbolic, creating an event 'meta-vibe' mirrored at vibe tribe level

(Castagner 2020, p.75). Psycculture events 'specialise in the production of atmospheres of intensity, 'conscious bombardments' and a 'difference engine' in a space of 'relations of co-existence' where each tribe is 'affected differently by the whole' (2020, p.75).

Punk, do it yourself and rave culture were originators to EDM practices and principles with its the potential for musical freedom, 'freedom of creation' and social and political freedom from 'hegemonic' control, a better way of life, ethics and values away from conventional music scenes (Perrenet 2019, p.3). Within this 'subculture', such EDM cultures are not 'full' cultures or subordinate versions of actual cultures but a group of people with shared beliefs and actions based on musical preferences with freedom of expression and identity separate from conforming mainstream culture (Perrenet 2019, p.21). Ironically by dressing and behaving according to the norms inherent within an EDM culture, 'conformity' and 'uniformity' become adopted just as in mainstream society (Perrenet 2019, p.22).

In summary, the intersectionalities between objects, journeys, and embodiment are a recurring theme in social anthropology, archaeology and psytrance, along with sensory experiences, memory, time, social communication via movement, and primal experiences. Embedded within the material culture of this small scale community and its intentions to gather and dance, are multiple possible benefits both mental, physical and psychology at individual and group level.

## 2.8 Benefits

Shamanic and psychedelic beliefs, practices, and set and setting may have been influential in human evolution, as there are cross-cultural commonalities associated with healing practices linked to shamanism where trance dance gives an improved sense of self and community (Winkelman 2021b, p.2; Erickson 2021, p.2020). Other scholars assert benefits from trance in particular both personal and social (Winkelman 2009, p.470) with a restoration of energetic vibrancy in collective dance engagement (Stapf 2023, p.49). Research demonstrates improvements in long-term illness through reconnecting with the self via dance (Carapellotti *et al* 2023, p.15; Buttinggsrud 2021). Some assert that negative problems are neutralized through



trance (Wirawan & Fil 2020, p.2479) with transformatory practices via the body releasing negative energy (Keeney, Keeney & Boo 2015, p.137), and mediating community healing via altered states of consciousness (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012, p.704). The role of altered states of consciousness indicate it leads to greater wellbeing (Rooke 2014, p.7), and an improved sense of interconnectedness (Wahbeh *et al* 2022, p.89), showing altered states increase social integration (Peters 1981, p.2; Carhart-Harris *et al* 2016, p.1379). Social connectivity can cultivate learning and community processes that increase belonging, better relations, and dissolves divisions (Brown *et al* 2023, p.14). Research suggest that a shamanic paradigm existed throughout human history with cross-cultural rituals, and use of chemicals to initiate altered states similar to contemporary raves demonstrating a need to connect through dancing to music because of psychosocial human impulses (Winkelman 2014, p.23).

Music has been shown to positively benefit mental health (Agres *et al* 2017, p.1999), improve social skills due to empathy, compassion, and prosocial decision-making (McDonald, Böckler, & Kanske 2022, p.9), and that specific types of music are more conducive to achieving these benefits especially those producing altered states of consciousness (Kaelen *et al* 2018, p.505; Agres, Bigo & Herremans 2019, p.2).

Research indicates other benefits from engagement with the past (Supernant *et al* 2020, p.33) as archaeotherapy continues to improve interconnectedness with history, the land, and the past, as well as improving mental health from a knowledge of shared identity (Schaepe *et al* 2017, p.502; Wallen & Docherty-Hughes 2023, p.2; Everill & Burnell 2022, pp.1; Ryland 2022, p.2). Similar advances have been made in incorporating 'grounding' (direct contact with the ground) via greater connectivity with the earth in clinical practice (Menigoz *et al* 2020, p.153; Chevalier *et al* 2012, p.1) especially connected to sound. Improved legal and social acceptance of the potential benefits of psychedelic medicine is gaining a wider understanding of what benefits may happen to people particularly during trance dance (Underwood, Feilding & Nutt 2016, p.1379; Dupuis 2021, p.13).

In small-scale practices, Winkelman states that there are cross-cultural commonalities associated with healing practices linked to shaman trance dance.

These include community bonding, and communication within ASC that are linked to human adaptation, survival, and healing benefits (Winkelman 2009, p.455). He indicates that dance initiates the body's innate impulses which increases habitus, sociality, a sense of reality, and it dissolves boundaries that Winkelman refers to as 'neuro-gnostic' (Winkelman 2021b, p.18). Erickson argues that practices like authentic dance movement, that are both creative and expressive, give participants a lived sense of a sensorimotor loop that improves their sense of self (Erickson 2021, p.202).

Similarly, psychological scholars assert that there are healing benefits from participating in trance practices classed as biological universals that continue to be part of human experience and have possible healing benefits in the contemporary world (Winkelman 2009, p.470). However, the benefits of bonding, shared communication, the effects on consciousness, emotions, identity, and potential healing through collective trance and dance ritual engagement are acknowledged often to be lacking in contemporary society (Stapf 2023. p.46). Stapf indicates a need to restore 'vibrancy' in a society where individuals exist on autopilot imprisoned in a socially pressured sense of self, disconnected from a sense of peace, where people live an externally rather than internally based, soul-less life (Stapf 2023. p.46).

Anthropology provides much insight about the potential benefits of dance, trance, and collective energy. The neutralizing of negative problems through the meeting of positive and negative energies resulting from an experience of trance may help heal those with mental issues due to these transformatory practices, for example, in Calonarang dance performances in Bali (Wirawan & Fil 2020, p.2479). The same transformatory practices are reported amongst the Ju/'hoansi in the Kalahari where fired-up energy courses through the body releasing power providing examples of lived experience of healing potential (Keeney, Keeney & Boo 2016, p.137). Cave paintings and ethnographic studies have provided evidence that the San interacted with the otherworld through trance dances (Keeney, Keeney & Boo 2016, p.137). This particular type of kinetic/hypnotic healing through trance comes from the repetition of music and dance resulting in emotional intensity that utilises suggestion and entrainment to increase vibrations in the individual body which is then passed to

others (Keeney, Keeney & Boo 2016, p.137). The trance dancers mediate healing to the community as well as deliver important information that they receive in altered states with the otherworld further affirming the centrality of trance and dance in many cultures (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012, p.704).

Furthermore, psychological research shows that health, incorporating physical, emotional, and social wellbeing, and the absence of sickness are linked to dance because of how it increases communication and social connectivity, provides a way of coping, and is a positive spiritual practice (Rooke 2014, p.7). New research in integrative and complementary medicine in dance show that a sense of interconnectedness and wellbeing have a positive effect where participants expressed changes after attending dance workshops (Wahbeh *et al* 2022, p.89). Psychologists further show that altered states are associated with improved social integration and potential healing in an investigation of ecstasy and healing among Tamang shaman in Nepal (Peters 1981, p.2). Carhart-Harris and colleagues suggest that psychedelics can enhance mood, improves mental flexibility leading to a more relaxed state that may played an integral role along with trance and dance (Carhart-Harris 2016, p.1379).

Moreover, there are reported transformatory benefits from re-connecting with the self and others during dancing experienced by participants with Parkinsons or Multiple Sclerosis who were able to rediscover themselves in a non-judgemental way in an 'active, recursive process' where they rise above their illness and view of themselves through the lived experience of dancing (Carapellotti *et al* 2023, p.15; Buttinggsrud 2021). Furthermore, Brown and colleagues argue social choreography can cultivate intra and inter-generational learning thus deepening commonly held knowledge where group connections can develop body-place awareness and civic participation, the performance of relational complexity, and the sharing of experiences (Brown *et al* 2023, p.14). They advocate dance as a way to increase belonging opening up access to relations, community, places, and play to overcome bodily distancing and dissolving divisions between individuals and groups (Brown *et al* 2023, p.7).

It is widely accepted that music can positively benefit mental health particularly that different music affects our bodies in different ways (Agres *et al* 2017, p.1999). They

suggest that enjoyment of uplifting trance music generally follows the Wundt curve with familiarity and stylistic expectations increasing listeners' enjoyment (Agres *et al* 2017, p.1999). They argue that enjoyment and 'flow' in trance music reflect a dynamic interplay between repetition and complexity leading to altered listening states enhancing group cohesion (Agres *et al* 2017, p.1999). Music-based interventions are proving to be a useful tool to improve social skills where emotional music engages empathy, compassion, and prosocial decision-making (McDonald, Böckler, & Kanske 2022, p.9). Thus, music can influence our ability to understand and feel with others producing, strengthening and maintaining social cohesion in regularly occurring gatherings (McDonald, Böckler, & Kanske 2022, p.8). Their findings show that dance participants in rhythmic synchrony experience increased sociality and connectedness associated through music and dance (McDonald, Böckler, & Kanske 2022, p.8).

While it is accepted that music plays a part in both positive and negative ways in terms of psychological wellbeing, investigation to determine what kind of music is the best was undertaken by Kaelen and colleagues (Kaelen *et al* 2018, p.505). Results showed a significant reduction in depression after psilocybin trials with different types of music (Kaelen *et al* 2018, p.505). A growing body of psychological research is developing around the effect of musical structure on enjoyment through listening or dancing to trance music where an ASC is often reached across many forms of EDM. Findings indicate that harmonic repetition and complexity are the key factors in producing enjoyment in ASC (Agres, Bigo & Herremans 2019, p.2). Cannon and Greasley suggest that EDM culture benefits psychological wellbeing resulting from attending music festivals in terms of 'shared values' and experiences that are 'social, musical and emotional' irrespective of genre but with a repetitive 4/4 beat with artists selecting the beats per minutes playlist sequential order during the duration of a gathering (Cannon & Greasley 2021, p.2).

Winkelman asserts that the shamanic paradigm indicates ritual potentials cross-culturally in hominid and human evolution during the Upper/Middle Palaeolithic period as far back as 40,000 years ago, for example, in beliefs that shaman can harm magically, control the weather, and have immunity to fire (Winkelman 2015, p.4). Within the present-day Western society, where there is a reduction in the

opportunity for sustaining psychosocial human needs, the rave potentially provides that which is missing in family networks now provided via peer networks in rave communities (Winkelman 2015, p.21). Winkelman notes the lack of comparisons between raves and shamanic healing practices suggesting a core consciousness at rave experiences is brought to the surface with an immediacy that may have a transformatory effect on the self to widen personal somatic experiences, reduce egocentricity, increase self-expression, and deepen shared meaning and identity (Winkelman 2015, p.6).

In a similar vein, the development of the discipline of archaeology of the heart extends the understanding to the whole person in terms of intellect, emotion, spirit, and physical selves bringing the understanding of the past linked to love and connectivity (Supernant *et al* 2020, p.33). This includes focussing on practices, interactions between people, community and society with healing emerging as a key paradigm (Supernant *et al* 2020, p.29; Dezechache, Sievers & Gruber 2022, p.1754).

Another developing discipline is archaeotherapy which is providing further insights in how connections with the environment and nature may have a therapeutic role (Schaepe *et al* 2017, p.502). These include connections between people, places, objects, knowledges, ancestries, ecosystems, and worldviews that affirm identities, relationships, and orientations that can help alleviate cultural stress (Schaepe *et al* 2017, p.502). They see an opportunity to connect the past with the present in a non-linear manner on the principle of interconnectedness, and an understanding that knowledge resides in belonging (Schaepe *et al* 2017, p.516). They worked on connecting project workers and community members via both tangible (artefacts, belongings, heirlooms) and intangible elements (knowledge, traditions, histories) to show how this can promote wellbeing among the Coast Salish of southwestern British Columbia (Schaepe *et al* 2017, p 503).

Similarly, there are developments in the importance of heritage in improving wellbeing where visitors' experiences are enhanced by reconnection to the past in present-day engagement of the public with the heritage industry (Wallen & Docherty-Hughes 2023, p.2). There are many ways that archaeology and heritage can be harnessed to support mental health professionals to improve wellbeing via authentic

engagement with the historic environment and the effect of nostalgic emotion generated by local people and visitors at heritage sites (Everill & Burnell 2022, pp.1; Ryland 2022, p.2).

Research has advanced in understanding 'grounding', defined as contact with earth's electric charge, that has a profound effect even through simply walking barefoot outdoors or using cheap, indoors grounding systems that are recommended for use in clinical practice (Menigoz *et al* 2020, p.153). Bodily contact with the earth has a range of physiological benefits generating well-being using inexpensive grounding systems or sleeping outside noted in research across some 20 studies to date that demonstrate the potential of earthing systems (Menigoz *et al* 2020, p.153; Chevalier *et al* 2012, p.1).

The resurgence in scholarly research reinforcing the view that psychedelics can improve psychological wellbeing contribute to a wider understanding of what happens to people when inducing trance dance (Underwood, Feilding & Nutt 2016, p.1379; Dupuis 2021, p.13). Moore similarly indicates a need to counter the stigmatising narrative of addiction attached to clubbing and recreational drug use, advising adopting new social practices to support and promote the obvious therapeutic benefits (Moore 2022, p.37).

In summary, benefits occur from trance dance practices. The physical and mental benefits from involvement in psyculture may show how trance, dance, small-scale community sociality, contribution and participation interact with environment and nature in a music based culture providing a mirror for other EDM cultures as well as society in general. Within psyculture, there are a complex range of reasons why people attend gatherings that illustrate the multiplicity of possibilities with the overriding primary intention is to the dance together to music outside over a prolonged period benefitting from the time in nature, the group sociality and the exercise as well as practising the timeless cyclical celebrations that participants believe they are recreating, whether real or imagined, whether healing is sought intentionally or not.

In considering the relevance of the literature review to the research question, '*RQ1a. What does an investigation of psyculture trance dance practices and principles reveal?*', there are powerful and illustrative themes from other disciplines, both cross-culturally and historically, beyond current social anthropology and cultural studies alone currently encompass in terms of practices and principles within contemporary UK EDM and psyculture scholarship. These ancestors, memory, trance, dance, music, sound, community, social interactions, benefits, the environment and nature as well as preparations for attending outside gathering along with material culture and objects important to participants that are uniquely specific to UK psyculture. By undertaking ethnographic fieldwork and gaining insight from surveying participant's opinion of contemporary psyculture practices and principles, it is hoped that a comprehensive understanding can be gained especially with the original focus on outside gatherings within club culture. What is specifically intended is to find the reasons for why participants return to outside gatherings to dance together repeatedly where this spiritual element may be central to this return due to the desire for communal dancing that is the 'timeless' association that people are dancing like ancestors did.

### 3. Methods and Methodology

#### 3.1 Theoretical approaches

This section summarises the key theoretical approaches suitable to the relativist and interpretive philosophical approach. In terms of establishing the philosophical foundation of research, there are three aspects that need to be decided upon, such as 'the researcher's view of reality (ontology), how the researcher knows reality (epistemology), the value-stance taken by the inquirer (axiology), and the procedures used' (Cresswell 2013, p.13). A desk-based literature review determined the nature, extent, and significance of archival, bibliographic assets and records and their significance within the archaeological record and psyculture research formed the foundation and direction of this data driven, group up, participant focussed research of psytrance culture the UK. This was conducted in an iterative, multi-directional manner that was open to change to allow for data to emerge instead of themes being specified at the beginning (Tracy 2013, p.23).

A productive ethnographic method is to observe how living societies and their ceremonies utilize spaces and landscapes along with detailed information about ritual experiences, the participants, their dress, sound usage, and movements to aid an understanding of how traditional trance dance practices at monuments or sacred sites may have occurred (Parker Pearson 2021, p.101). Certain approaches to the study of contemporary EDM culture such as affective citizenship and situated materialism are fruitful in understanding sensory embodiment within dance based cultural experiences that reveal information about the principles and practice of these cultures. A study of affective citizenship in the techno EDM scene gives an insightful investigation examining an auto ethnographical experience with bodily participation showing the relevance of the approach to reconstructing the sensory experiences. The transformed affective citizens transfer their inclusive participation into their mainstream life. Research is advised in conceptualising the individual affective dimension of participation in a socio-sonic dance space (Zebracki 2016, p.119; Thomas 2003, p.78; Duffy *et al* 2011, p.20). Zebracki advises that this methodology may provide knowledge of belonging, alienation, self, community, inclusion, and exclusion dichotomies illuminating aspects of the everyday (Zebracki 2016, p.118). De Ledesma similarly posits a situated materialist approach that examines the actual experiences at specific events rather than sweeping conclusions about worldwide trends that relates more to the dominant reality (de Ledesma 2012, p.127). He indicates this may seem a dull ambition, but it will show the resilience and strength of these socially connected communities (de Ledesma 2012, p.127).

Autoethnography is a developing approach to studying EDM cultures. Knowledge is never value free and the context of its production must be kept in the forefront of analysis. In acquiring situated knowledge, the researcher is co-responsible for the knowledge produced (Hernandez 2015, p.15). Autoethnography minimises the chance of misinterpretation of experiences where I become a filter of others' experiences and perceptions with my own situated perception as a performing dancer (Hernandez 2015, p.15). A key focus on autoethnographic research within EDM and psyculture should be something the researcher has experienced with full body mediation at some point. As Spry wrote:



Coaxing the body from the shadows of academia and consciously integrating it into the process and production of knowledge requires that we view knowledge in the context of the body from which it is generated

Spry 2001, p.725

She further states that autoethnography is a 'felt-text' often outside academic boundaries that needs courage to 'to step out from behind the curtain and reveal the individual at the controls of academia' (Spry 2001, p.714). St. John confirms that the methodology for an accurate depiction of EDM needs a unique representational technique in an autoethnographic manner (St. John 2013, p.18).

### 3.2 Qualitative research

The research approach is a relativist ontology with a belief that reality depends on experience and our subjectivity cannot be separated from it (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, p.8). This informed an emic, interpretive epistemology because of a desire to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' interpretations of psyculture including my own experiences as a participant. This reflects the nature of psyculture in an 'iterative manner illustrating the relativism of meaning and the looseness of tentative explanations' (Tracy 2013, p.61).

Of the five traditions in qualitative research, ethnography, and phenomenology are relevant. Ethnography is a study of people and cultures whereas phenomenology is the study of subjective, lived experiences and perspectives of participants. Ethnography is the best methods when for gathering personal interpretations. Ethnographers focus on a wide range of cultural aspects, including language use, rituals, ceremonies, relationships, and artefacts (Tracy 2013, p.29). Tracy indicates that good qualitative research gives an understanding of the world the participants occupy and the more a researcher is immersed in a scene, the more they can make 'second order interpretations' (Tracy 2013 p.8).

The advantage of qualitative research is that the data is 'rich and holistic' and captures participants' 'local meaning' in order to represent their viewpoints and stories, which is vital to this research (Tracy 2013, p.22. Hammersley and Atkinson

state that qualitative methods are suitable when studying natural contexts, and when data collection is 'relatively unstructured' with a detailed concentration on a small number of cases to interpret meanings and practices that are 'implicated in the local, and perhaps wider contexts' (Hammersley & Atkinson 2019, p.212). This approach was key because of my long-term involvement as a member of the scene.

Interpretive qualitative research involves a set of activities rather than a single methodological practice placing the observer in the world thus making the world visible (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, p.8). I adhered to the eight markers in qualitative research (worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence) in an expansive but flexible manner as a useful model that allowed discussion, imagination, and creativity (Tracy 2010, p.839).

The difficulty of achieving certainty in qualitative research can be overcome by adopting an argumentative scheme seeking plausibility instead of facts (Cardano 2020, p.150). Cardano suggests a scheme of critical reasoning based on argumentation rather than certainty, so that creativity is not sacrificed in the quest for rigour. A process of saturation and a codified procedure for data analysis was utilised to aim for credibility rather than a quantifiable methodocentrism (Cardano 2020, p.154). I was influenced by Ellis's approach to working with others, known as compassionate research, collaborative witnessing, and relational ethics of care (Ellis 2016, p.438). These are relational approaches which emphasise the sharing of power and authority, listening empathically and respectfully to everyone, including oneself.

Hammersley and Atkinson (2019, p.213) contend that ethnography involves the researcher participating over an extended period, asking questions, collecting texts of evidence and relevant artefacts. The intention is to provide quality, rich data. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2019, p.213) indicate that within the layers of cultural knowledge, ethnography draws out variations in patterns and helps to understand social processes. Ethnography encompasses a process and a product: the process being the ongoing, formative, data collection and ways of collecting; the product being the summative, written account of the project. An ethnography is informed by a concept of culture even though any research will be 'partial, inferential and partisan'

(Agar 1986, p.13). Researchers should be reflective about the impact of their research in the wider field and the specific site. The research offers an account of a person's life with subjective perceptions, and it is accepted that it will be partial and selective to build a unique, cultural theory (Gay, Mills & Airasian 2016, p.395).

Ethnographic work should illuminate niche communities that will add to impact and suggest policy changes to reduce the conflict between cultural relativism and theory, and between specificity and generality without compromise. This research was aimed at a small cultural group around a musical genre and provided detailed contextualised cases pertinent to painting a comprehensive picture (Emerson *et al* 2001, p.167). The intention was to implicitly represent and critically interpret local cultural practices in the light of globally established themes.

Ethnographic methods are usually the chosen methods within EDM research because of the primacy of experience. Traditional approaches to research tend to use outmoded psychodynamic models linking dissociative processes to external factors whereas new models are suggested with more integrative tools that consider the impact of social context (Seligmann 2019, p.177).

This was a study of a culture based on music involving 'all the constructs, uses, and conceits of music', because the defining factor in psyculture is the music (Nettl 2005, p.13). There are problems within ethnography of drug cultures by the absence of willing participants, access, relations in the field, researcher identity (Ortner 2010, p.216). Ethical restrictions due to ethical protocols when researching drug related cultures rather than as Page and Singer's (2010, p.163) approach suggests that drug ethnography has a transformative effect on method as well as the understanding of drug use. Hunt and colleagues suggest that to become sensitive to the 'practices of risk and pleasure' in EDM, researchers have begun to seek a 'distribution of cross-methodological approaches to make sense of their fields of study' (Hunt, Moloney & Evans 2010, p.26). Moore similarly indicates a need to counter the stigmatising narrative of addiction attached to clubbing and recreational drug use, acknowledge the fluidity of identity, and the potential for individuals to change, adopting new social practices to support and promote the obvious therapeutic benefits (Moore 2022, p.37). Winkelman presents a model that links neurological structures with cross-

cultural perspectives and shamanic healing practices concurring that there needs to be an acceptance that these are not just medical problems (Winkelman 2009, p.439).

Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that combines autobiography and ethnography (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Autoethnography was chosen as a way of recording the researcher's interpretations because of its simplicity, accessibility, and unobtrusiveness due to the researcher's existent positionality to 'maximise opportunities and minimize limitations' (Tracy 2013, p.106). Tracy further advises that participation in a scene is in terms of a 'continuum of enmeshment' and a 'potpourri' of overlapping roles (Tracy 2013, p.106). This research utilised autoethnography to analyse personal experience to understand cultural experience (Tedlock 2011, p.333). In the fieldwork, I tried to stick to my usual activities to avert obtrusiveness where possible reflecting the research stance as a 'complete participant' where I was practising the values and ideologies of the group studied (Tracy 2013, p.107).

Autoethnographers argue that reflection on their own positionality as researcher inspires readers to reflect critically upon their own life experience, their constructions of self, and their interactions with others within socio-historical contexts (Otlipp 2008, p.703). It provides a framework in which the author's insider knowledge can be integrated into the community. Spry asserts that the autoethnographic text emerges from the researcher's standpoint as they should be continually recognizing and interpreting 'the residue traces of culture inscribed upon her from interacting with others in contexts' (Spry 2001, p.711; Otlipp 2008, p.697). In autoethnographic methods, 'the researcher is the epistemological and ontological nexus upon which the research process turns' (Spry 2001, p.711). Autoethnographic field notes were kept during fieldwork and updated at convenient times as it was recommended to note down 'experiences, ideas, fears, mistakes, confusions, breakthroughs, and problems that arise during fieldwork', which aids reflexivity by continually writing analytical reflections throughout (Tracy 2013, p.121).

Methods included reflective journal writing that not only noted the external perceptions but the 'inner growth of the researcher that details their experiences,

opinions, thoughts, and feelings' (Tracy 2013, p.121). Autoethnography can be described as a self-narrative that should repeatedly critique the position of the 'self with others in social contexts' (Spry 2001, p.710). Spry indicates autoethnography is the convergence of the 'autobiographic impulse and the ethnographic moment' (Spry, p.727). The benefits of keeping a research journal are that the ambiguities are made visible to the researcher which was important in this research because of long-term involvement where the accumulation of overlapping and changing reflections could be overwhelming (Spry, 2016, p.29).

There was a systematic reflection to deal with bias, subjectivities, and potential inconsistencies without concentrating too much on self-analysis and not enough on participants (Finlay 2002, p.212). One of the disadvantages was that I became involved in activities that required determination and diligence to resist (Geertz 2008, p.36). Stevens succinctly refers to autoethnographic methodology to allow for both analytical and evocative identities, positionalities, and voice of the researcher who is also the researched (Stevens 2021, p.12). The researcher is the conduit by which interpretation of the participants' viewpoints occurs so the participants varied responses can be given context. The participant data gathered was invariably a subjective reconstruction through the lens of the researcher and this must be kept in view reflexively throughout: 'what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to' (Geertz 2008, p.35).

### 3.3 Methodology

#### Surveys RQ1a

##### Sampling

The sampling universe is the criteria employed to select the culturally specific participant base sourcing participants from an appropriate demographic that fits with the study's aim as well as considering the ethical information that is important to those who decide to take part (Robinson 2014, p.36). The practicalities were thought out in detail before searching in order to reach the right participants underpinned by the level of anonymity and factors of consensus that enabled participants to make

the choice of taking part particularly when intimate self-disclosure is being asked for to elicit a more open and informative response (Robinson 2014, p.36). This type of cultural homogeneity is an important inclusion criteria where the specific attribute of being a psychculture member was vital for the recruitment of participants but equally the researcher. Both are living members of their society not external observers looking in on a different culture but embedded within it from the inside referred to as organic sampling (Robinson 2014, p.31). In the consent form, participants were asked if they were members of or had experience of the psytrance community before they could proceed in the survey. Specific psychculture groups and members were targeted to practice this organic sampling.

In terms of the sampling plan, 'purposeful' sampling was preferred because it complemented the research question, the context, and the participants (Tracy 2013, p.152). My background and involvement influenced the chosen cohort due to my embedded identity and the ability to gain access to suitable participants based on established trust and position (Tracy 2013, p.13). The sampling population was aimed at a UK psychculture groups engaged in a specific musical genre. The methodology therefore sought detailed, contextualised data from pre-existing psychculture members (Emerson *et al* 2001, p.167).

## Recruitment

Ways of recruiting participants rely on the sensitive but knowledgeable means of locating and engaging participants in the study. Using the internet is an increasingly popular method for recruiting participants because of its current usage and status amongst a wide range of people in terms of outreach and validity but there are disadvantages in that not all participants are technologically skilled or confident with its use (Robinson 2014, p.37). Ways of advertising to recruit participants to the research study were well thought out where print, face-to-face or online advertising were used to attract participants from online and in-person contacts. The process of recruitment is often influenced by the researcher's background, connections, status, visibility in the culture that on the one hand aids transparency, sensitivity to context, rigour, and coherence but would require a reflexive consideration of bias or conflict of interests (Robinson 2014, p.38). An advertisement was approved by the ethics

committee to recruit participants with an online link but an alternative means of participating offered if required for those without technological skills (Figure 1).



**Dancing with Ancestors: An ethnographic comparison of trance practices and principles in traditional societies and psychedelic trance culture**

**SEEKING INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS FOR THE ABOVE RESEARCH PROJECT**

We are researchers at UCLan (University of Central Lancashire) undertaking a short survey on Psychedelic Trance Culture.

We are investigating the ancient practices and principles of trance, dance with current psychedelic trance culture. If you are interested in participating or would like to know more about the study, please continue on to the secure study site. We anticipate that it will take you approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey. Your participation is **completely anonymous**.

If you would like to contribute to an anonymous online survey without participating in the interviews, please follow the link here. If you wish to become involved further with our study and would be willing to participate in an online interview, please follow the link at the end of the survey the online survey.

This research study is being conducted by researchers at UCLan (Investigator number; Principal Investigator: Rick Peterson, PhD and Secondary Investigator, David W. Robinson, PhD with Student Investigator, Jacqueline Anderson.). Detailed information about the study is provided in the survey and interview information sheet. If you need further information or questions, please email: JAnderson11@uclan.ac.uk

*Figure 1 Survey recruitment advertisement*

Several means of seeking participants were employed including face-to-face, print, and use of social media, forums, and presentations given in key events about the upcoming research. Another means of recruitment was the use of printed business cards containing a short description, clarity about anonymity, and a link to the online survey with a QR code that could be accessed with ease on a mobile phone (see Figure 2). This was attractive potentially to a technologically savvy population in attendance at events enabling them to participate immediately therefore overcoming issues of completing burdensome printed surveys or having to locate a computer at a later date while the opportunity was fresh and in the present moment.



[https://uclan.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9sOtwzIZkH3OqIB](https://uclan.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9sOtwzIZkH3OqIB)

*Figure 2 QR code and link for survey participants*

A link was generated once the Qualtrics survey was finalised that could be copied and shared via email, included on the recruitment card, and posted on social media sites. Social media sites were chosen because they had large psytrance culture specific participants who may be interested in participating and meet the criteria (Figure 3).

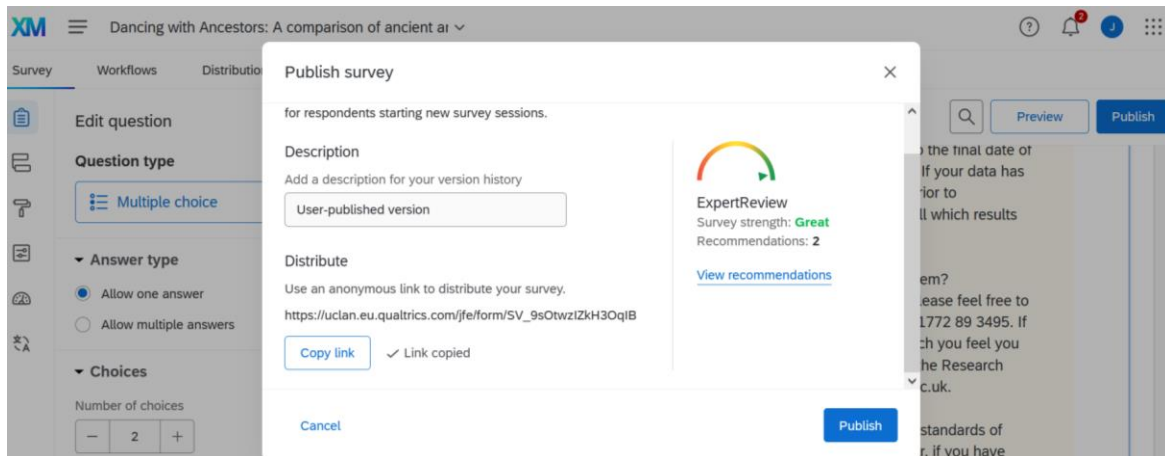


Figure 3 Qualtrics survey link for participant

Research participants were chosen where they met the following criteria:

- not vulnerable in terms of health, wellbeing, ability, or age.
- happy to consent to participation in the study.
- attended UK psytrance events.
- an active participant or had been in UK psychculture.

The sample size was dependent on the number of people wishing to participate with a total of 29 survey participants in the online survey who completed the survey to the end, if not all the questions. and 12 agreeing to participate in the face-to-face, Teams online interviews by following the link at the end of the survey.

Questions (Appendix 4)

The online questions covered a range of topic areas that were chosen to provide a comprehensive coverage of responses to understand the practices and principles of psytrance culture and to help extract experiences, feelings, beliefs, insights, and



associations with material objects as well as participant's attitude to dance, trance, music, healing, contribution, community and participation, environment, nature, and the journey. The questions allowed for participants to answer in as much detail as they wished by providing unlimited space for question responses (Figure 4).

Q1 How would you describe psychedelic trance culture?
Q2 Could you describe what you experience at a psytrance gathering and how they make you feel? What do you experience when you dance? Do you trance (change in consciousness, altered state, transformation, would you say it is spiritual, sacred, everyday)?
Q3 What does participation mean to you? What do you feel about the community and belonging? Do you feel contribution to the culture is important (i.e., dancing, contributing to the arts, music, helping out)?
Q4 What do you feel about the music and its effect on how you feel?
Q5 Do you feel you connect with ancestral spirits while at a psytrance gathering? Do you feel you are dancing with ancestors?
Q6 What do you feel about the locations, décor, clothing, lighting, buildings, and environment and how it affects you? Do you feel you have a connection to the environment, nature, and the animal world at psytrance gatherings?
Q7 What would you consider to be psytrance customs and habits (food, clothes, art, symbols, myths, places)? What items are important to you (i.e., lighter, food, drinks, clothing, decorations, tent equipment)?
Q8 What are your pre journey, during and after rituals of a gathering or event (what do you do to prepare before the journey and before the event)? Would you say you go on a journey (i.e., whether just to travel to an event, during the event and/or your personal journey, a pilgrimage)?
Q9 would you describe psytrance beliefs and/or spirituality (ie the beliefs or non-beliefs, spirituality, shamanistic, moral behaviours, purposes of attending, why do you attend?). What are your beliefs if any?
Q10 Do you feel there are healing and benefits to experiencing trance dancing?
Q11 If you would like to add further details or provide any advice on other areas to investigate, or any stories to share - please do so here.

*Figure 4 Survey questions*

Participants had to consent to the ethics conditions before proceeding with answering questions which was available at the beginning of the Qualtrics survey. Alternative means of taking part were offered if participants did not want to undertake the survey online. Once the survey was finished, the participant was offered an opportunity to take part in a face-to-face interview (Figure 5).

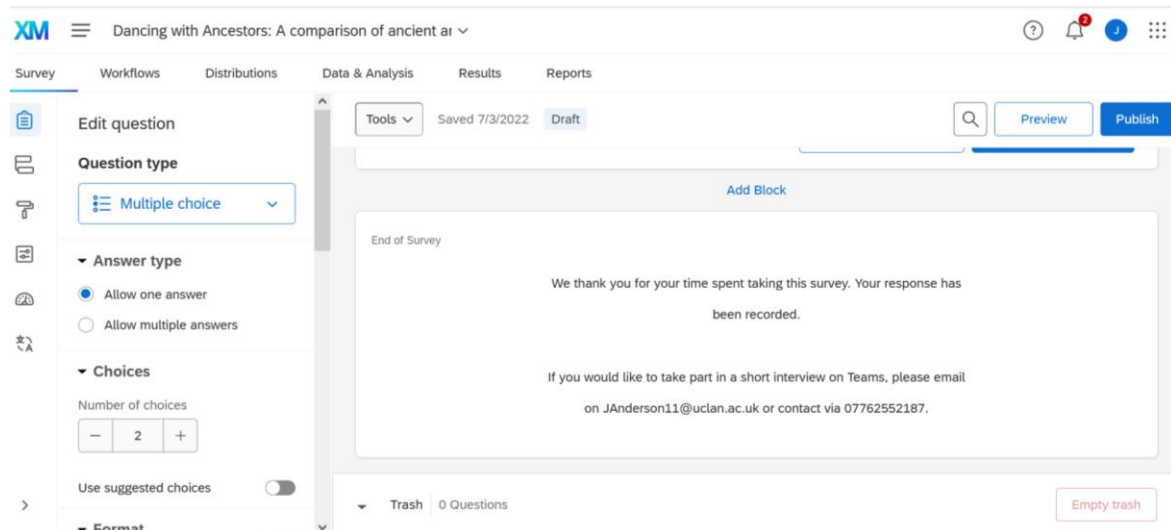


Figure 5 Qualtrics survey invite to interview

## Interviews (RQ1b)

Interviewing was chosen because it offers a flexible approach that befits the aim to elicit as accurate and natural a response as possible. A semi-structured interview was ideal as the advantages were that participants are likely to be more relaxed as they may more freely express what is important to them as well as to reveal emotions (Tracy 2013, p.158). The semi-structured interviews had an inductive strategy from the bottom up where the data led the direction not the interviewer but with some prompts that are partially deductive. Some interviewees have already participated in the survey before making the decision to proceed to the interview stage thus having a familiarity with the questions. However, all interviewees were sent the question prompts in advance, thus everyone has the opportunity to prepare responses and know the content of the interviews (Figure 6). The aim was to understand the subject matter through the data without prior conceptions but to some extent the themes directed the interviewees to topics they wish to choose.

					Forms signed?
1.	2.12.21	11.30-12.30	33 m 15 s	Interviewee 1	✓
2.	2.12.21	1.45-2.45	56 m 32 s	Interviewee 2	✓
3.	2.12.21	4.15-5.15	39 m 39 s	Interviewee 3	✓
4.	9.12.21	12.00-1.00	50 m 50 s	Interviewee 4	✓
5.	10.12.21	1.00-2.00	25 m 04 s	Interviewee 5	✓
6.	13.12.21	10.00-11.00	35 m 29 s	Interviewee 6	✓
7.	13.12.21	12.00-1.00	34 m 06 s	Interviewee 7	✓
8.	13.12.21	2.00-3.00	42 m 05 s	Interviewee 8	✓
9.	14.12.21	12.00-1.00	25 m 38 s	Interviewee 9	✓
10.	14.12.21	4.30	1 h 25 m	Interviewee 10	✓
11.	14.12.21	5.30	32 m 30 s	Interviewee 11	✓
12.	14.12.21	7.30	49 m 29 s	Interviewee 12	✓

*Figure 6 Interview participants*

Personal details of participants such as names, email and telephone addresses, location was removed and replaced with interviewee code numbers while retaining the date, time, and duration of the video transcripts undertaken on Microsoft Teams.

In terms of interview style, the development of rapport had to be taken into account while equally remaining neutral to some extent. Realistically the lucidity of responses may be dependent on the status of the researcher, their ability to demonstrate the ways of talking pertinent to the cultural expectations. This was by not having to listen intently in order to take written notes showing the advantages of using an online recording facility. However, some participants were not familiar with using using online software, the non-personal aspect of talking to a flat screen while seeing themselves talking, and the lack of cues due to the delay and occasional overlap of both researcher and interviewee talking at the same time. While these issues can arise face-to-face, they are a particular problem in online interactions.

The flexible nature of the interviewer/interviewee process meant that participant's personalities, knowledge bases and experiences could flow productively to the point that the researcher learned and was informed greatly by some of the topics brought up. This was acknowledged and reported back to the interviewees which helped level the distinction between being a supposedly more knowledgeable researcher and the less knowledgeable participant.

Research prompts in the semi-structured interviews were helpful as a platform for the participants to choose the direction they wished to proceed in which aided the collating of more naturally occurring data where they are followed rather than the

researcher leading. These included prompts based in the survey questions with additional prompts as below (Figure 7):

- What do you think?
- How do you feel?
- Can you describe?
- Can you tell me?
- How does?
- What examples come to mind?
- What is your involvement?
- How do you feel about being part of?
- What about your identity?
- How do others feel?
- What would you say are the....beliefs, etc, of others?

Q1 - DESCRIPTION How would you describe psychedelic trance culture? (is there a unique British psychedelic trance culture? Please give full details.
Q2 - EXPERIENCE Could you describe what you experience at a psytrance gathering and how they make you feel? Please give full details.
Q3 - PARTICIPATION, RITUAL AND CEREMONY What does participation mean to you? Does participation have any ritual, ancient, spiritual or religious aspects for you?
Q4 - MUSIC What do you feel about the music and its effect on how you feel? Please give full details.
Q5 - ANCESTRAL CONNECTIONS Do you feel you connect with ancestral spirits while at a psytrance gathering? Do you feel you are dancing with ancestors? Please give full details.
Q6 - ENVIRONMENT What do you feel about the locations, décor, clothing, lighting, buildings, and environment and how it affects you? Please give full details.
Q7 - CUSTOMS AND HABITS What would you consider to be psytrance customs and habits (food, clothes, art, symbols, myths, places)? Please give full details.
Q8 - PREPARATIONS What are your pre journey rituals (what do you do to prepare before the journey and before the event)? Please give full details.
Q9 - BELIEFS AND SPIRITUALITY How would you describe psytrance beliefs and/or spirituality (ie the beliefs or non-beliefs, spirituality, moral behaviours, purposes of attending, why do you attend?). What are your beliefs if any? Please give full details.
Q10 - HEALING Do you feel there are healing and benefits to experiencing trance dancing? Please give full details.
Q11 - OTHER If you would like to add further details or provide any advice on other areas to investigate, or any stories to share - please do so here.

*Figure 7 Interview prompts*

Interview took place on Teams via the UCLan server system under the protection of encrypted systems for ensuring the safety and protection under data protection laws and other ethical parameters. These were recorded for the purpose of transcription at a later date then destroyed. Some time was taken at the start of the interviews to ensure their equipment was working effectively, to explain the interview schedule and procedure to participants, and to share the question prompts in the chat facility as an aide memoire so they were visible at all times on the screen. The interview

schedule, procedure, question prompts, and consent documents had already been sent via email to all participants to reduce the amount of times the participants and researcher had to look at printed documents. This reduced distraction and disconnect in the process of interaction as well as familiarising and preparing the participant in the nature of the information being requested so there were no surprises or requests for information that may make them feel hesitant about taking part. The recordings were invaluable as this meant handwritten notes did not have to be kept but were written up from the audio transcriptions afterwards.

The cues to proceed in this manner were taken from verbal advice given from potential participants before the research took place. Members of the culture are highly suspicious about information deemed illegal being revealed or that information given could affect their job and home life. As some participants had already answered the survey questions, on which the interview prompts were based, they were informed at the start that the topics they wished to discuss was their choice either building on the survey answers or new topics as they wished. They were reassured that where possible they would not be identifiable from the transcripts. This included being aware that their prior relationship with the researcher whether personal or an awareness of their positionality in the culture was kept in mind to ensure that transcripts were as anonymised as possible with regular checks being undertaken of their own transcripts.

#### Fieldwork, journal and autoethnographic interview RQ1c

Immersion and concrete detail are necessary for researchers to ascertain tacit knowledge, considered to be the taken for granted, 'largely unarticulated, contextual understanding that is often manifested in nods, silences, humour, and naughty nuances' (Altheide & Johnson 1994, p.492). Learning a culture's basic vocabulary and grammar skills is one thing, and understanding its tacit jokes and idioms is an entirely more difficult feat. Hidden assumptions and meanings guide individuals' actions whether or not participants explicitly say so. However, the significant role of tacit knowledge transcends the immediate surface of speech, texts, or discursive materials. Autoethnographic field notes were kept during fieldwork and updated at convenient times as it is recommended to note down 'experiences, ideas, fears,

mistakes, confusions, breakthroughs, and problems that arise during fieldwork', which aided reflexivity by continually writing analytical reflections throughout (Tracy 2013, p.121).

I have been an integral member of the culture for many years and therefore was known within the UK community as an elder, an event organiser, a contributor in multiple ways including offering healing workshops at festivals and in the wider community, giving talks at specific cultural events, and had a wide friendship base and contact network across the country. Other contributions including multi-tasking at gatherings from infrastructure build, stewarding, organisation and planning, artist management, transportation, security, and welfare. I created and ran several social media groups with over 3,000 psyculture members since 2015 as a way of sharing important cultural information based on a knowledge of what the community would be interested in regarding events, new music and artists, discussion issues about philosophy, politics, the environment, and nature, healing, job opportunities, and importantly sharing of other culture members' posts and interests. These groups were a key part of the recruitment process. Over the years my social media presence has built up beyond the specific psyculture based groups built on a similar proactive and visible membership of older forums as a means of contact and networking.

Being a public figure with stated morals and principles that reflected those of the community may have had an effect on the trust and willingness to take part in the study by the participants. A similar investigation about psyculture was the aim of the previous master's research that laid the ground for future research. Face-to-face discussion over the years extended back to before the start of my academic undergraduate study. The decision to undertake research was partly influenced by culture members' encouragement to undertake a detailed study of the culture and my desire to chronicle the important practices and principles of culture members way of life.

Ethnographic research fieldwork within the psychedelic trance community consisted of participant observation at the chosen events. Attendance at these three events in July, August and September 2022 went ahead as Covid restrictions are lifted.

Fieldwork notes focussed on sensory stimuli, photographs, audio recordings and video recordings of the infrastructure, décor and artwork, site layout, playlists, maps, advertisements, event documentation and flyers, attendance at rituals and ceremonies, and participation in mainstream events including social media.

A written journal was kept of my own journey that included my development, impressions, thoughts, concerns, and interpretations, as well acting as a resource bank including photographs, flyers, social media data, training undertaken, and thesis progression. A reflexive journal exercise was undertaken including notes, and a journal from the position as an insider who is observing and recording aspects of the community life as a long-term member of the community. This includes fieldwork commentary in One Note area where notes from attending conferences, a daily record of activities, how I am feeling, new directions, and original ideas exist in a decisive audit trail (Figure 8).

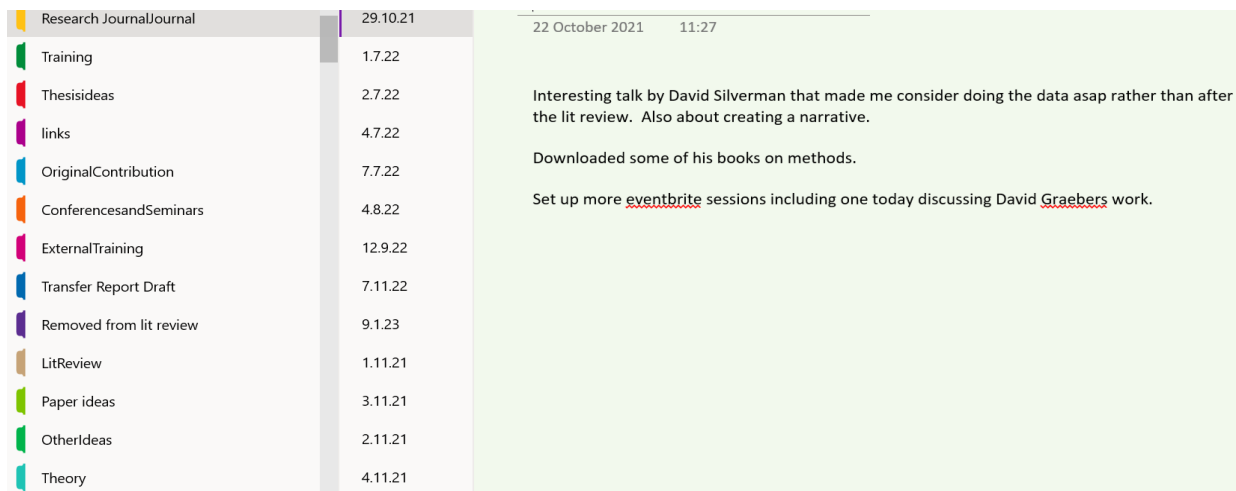


Figure 8 OneNote journal

The journal, fieldwork, and research interview transcripts were coded using the same system as the primary and secondary coding taken from Nvivo (Figure 9).

Prompts	Response
Q1 Description and culture	And so from all sides and abroad as well, you know, like a lot of the research that has been done so far is Goa Trance is dead, the scene is dead. The scene is as alive as it ever has been. Some may see psytrance as a cult because of their sense of superiority to the mainstream. There is a perceived sense of superiority it not about they are beneath us, it is for protection. But the world is also traveling at a pace the same as us. If you look at the progress in other electronic dance music within terms of sounds and samples and the way it's going, everything is progressing. It's interesting what you said before about. And I remember, being in 95 at the criminal justice demonstrations in London about them wanting to stop us going out and dancing for prolonged periods in the woods because they know it can have that effect on. Dancing and being immersed in music for five days going outside listens to music 24 hours a day for me. I don't believe in any system as my heart is as a dancer to dance outside is just incredible for me. It surprises me just how many people really are passionate about it too and really love being part of this scene because of this sensible belonging and love of dance and how the two go together. Someone said it is like having collective orgasm when the music and the collective dancing works on you. It's the energy thing and people are really blown away by it. The problems that we have in this country where it's restrictive. I have met so many good people and then we get to spend some time together and all. Bunch of characters mind and we've got so many over the years and so many new people. There are some great people and people that we might not know where there they have been there for years. The music can make people be absolutely transformed or they seem not ready, but some people really get it and then they never leave. Different types of people, but they're seen as recruitment grounds. Lots of the ways to invite people to more underground things like a journey in concentric rings from the outside to the inside. Obviously, you can journey into the inner core.

Prompts	Response
	to lose reality. When you're dancing together, you become more aware you're not necessarily in some mind hallucination. It brings on the senses. But people are there to dance and they feel that connection with dancing. It's just a joy. It's down to people to get rid of negative energy and they come away feeling a different kind of positive energy is. I said it's not just about the dancing. There is a lot more to it as well. You don't have to be dancing for you to feel the benefits of being there. So, that that not only bringing together the community. It's so sweet and it's such a beautiful place. How could you not enjoy that? Sometimes I find that I'm not very good at socialising. I don't know what it is that makes me feel more relaxed being at a psytrance event whether just through dancing or knowing you're there with other likeminded people, but I tend to socialise more. I'm autistic, so I find it difficult doing social interaction. Psytrance is autistic anyway. I'm interested in what happens on that dance floor because that's not really being put into words about what happens to us. When people enter the dancefloor, their energies are there. Negative energy is already gone, so they gift good energy. They gift energy to newcomer.  From one like my teammates when we go to the dance floor, you know, like women in their 50s and 60s, we will let so little parcels of energy each other. But we all start off by jokey dances. Some people think about what we do with the energy. When you go into a dance with people and give you a little bit of positive energy because they're already energized with positive energy, it helps you to change your energy and feel better. People talk about that dance floor energy thing and that is just invaluable. I have to have barriers up with hundreds of people around, I tend to be very much on the periphery as I have to really protect my energy. Once that energy is released, once the negative energies re gone, we can create this amazingly powerful positive energy that continues after the party. At first, I have me back to the wall because I don't want any negative energy to come into me until it's cleared out the way and then I'll

Figure 9 Journal entry with manual coding

The original formats before coding were converted from Word to PDF format (Nvivo does not allow anything other than PDF documents) so that the codings did not affect the software's word frequency searches.

### 3.4 Data Collection and Analysis Methods

#### Data collection and management

Nvivo data management software was used to code participant data to aid continuity, consistency, and reliability drawing thematic correlations (Gibbs 2002, p.84).

However, as King indicates, 'software can only aid in organizing and examining the data' and cannot make any kind of judgement though it helps 'facilitating depth and sophistication of analysis' (King 2004, p.286). King further discusses that template analysis is a group of techniques to identify themes, some *a priori*, that depend on researcher interpretation where 'concern with coding reliability is therefore irrelevant; issues such as the reflexivity of the researcher, the attempt to approach the topic from differing perspectives, and the richness of the description produced', are important requirements (King 2004, p.257). The aim was to gather the data that delivered the analysis by themes though this intention was led by the subject matter dictated by the participants. Each interview had the aim of eliciting information, but it was entirely dependent on what participants wanted to discuss. Though software



was of assistance, further human analysis is vital to glean latent, hidden, and nuanced meanings.

Initial searches were undertaken to establish relevant themes within current academic literature using a variety of search engines including the university library online facilities and other academic archival sources such as Google Scholar, Orcid, Scopus, and Web of Science, for example. These allow different searches that could be finetuned to search for highly specific peer-reviewed books, articles, journals, and conference materials. A literature search is a systematic way to approach a new subject area to gain a general understanding of the current scholarship available across multi-disciplinary databases of published material. These can facilitate in-person searches and where necessary to order hard copy books and publications with often in-built cite sources (See Figure 10).

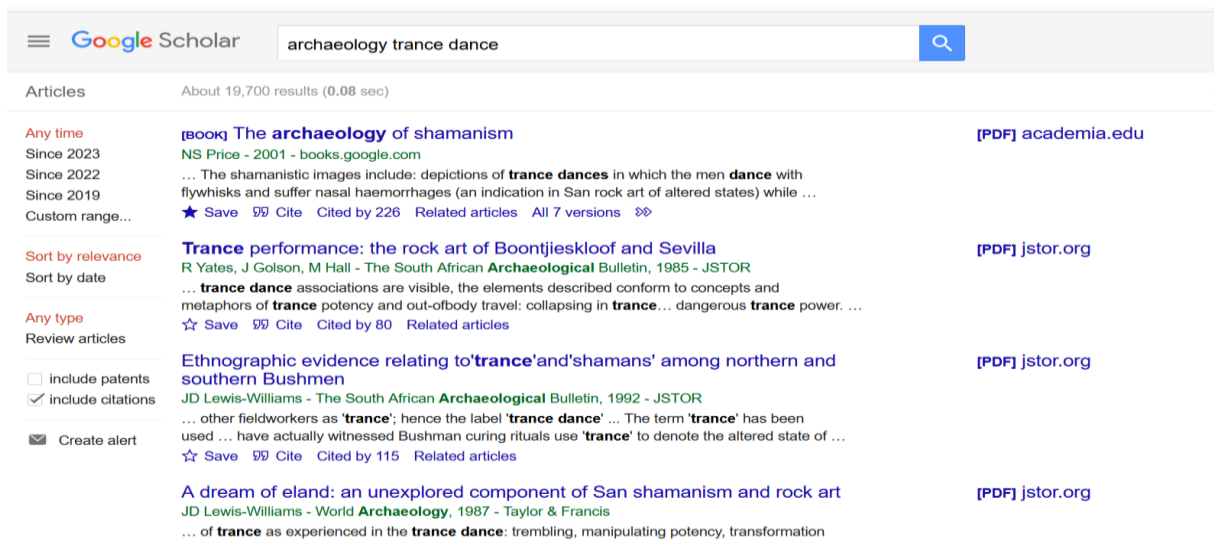


Figure 10 Google Scholar academic literature search

University library searches can be similarly utilised to drill down into specific disciplines to find academic literature, whether digital or hard copy, by date and to provide a citation showing an anthropology trance dance search, for example (Figure 11).

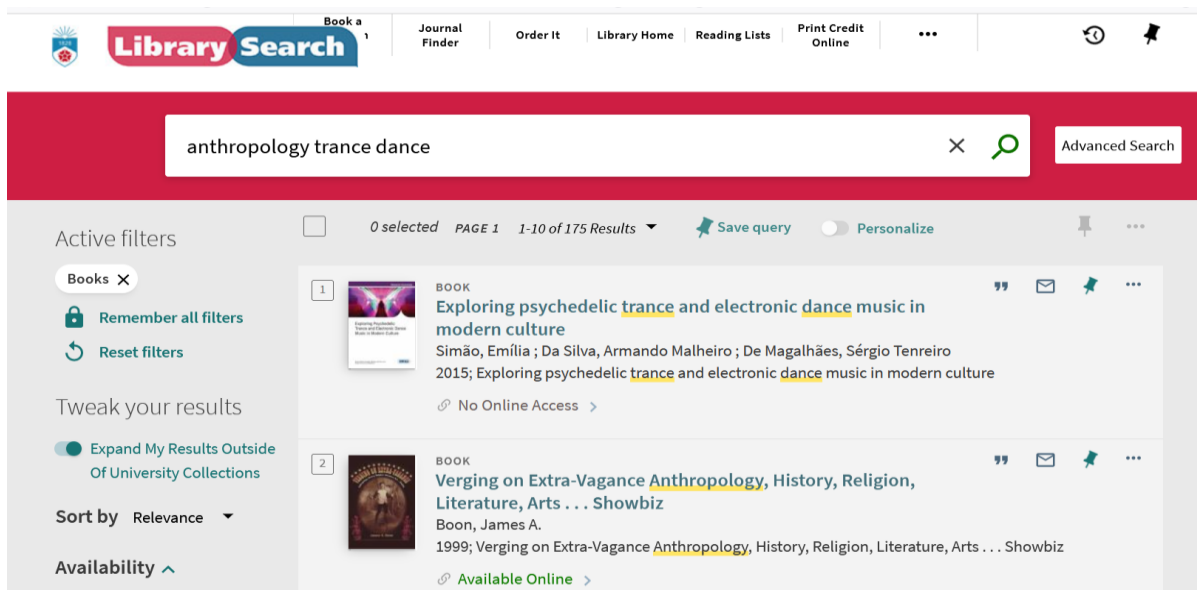


Figure 11 University library literature search

Academic research engines were set up for alerts according to the widest range of possible themes which eventually became narrowed down after the literature review. However, these search engines continued to be utilised until the final stages of the research in order to keep abreast of the most up-to-date research in the thematic areas.

A database of literature was created for ease of access of the relevant papers and books into a computer folder kept in alphabetically order for later uploading into Nvivo to undertake a search of relevant themes and for manual reading and coding (Figure 12). This database was uploaded to Google Drive for backup and availability to interested parties with the link.

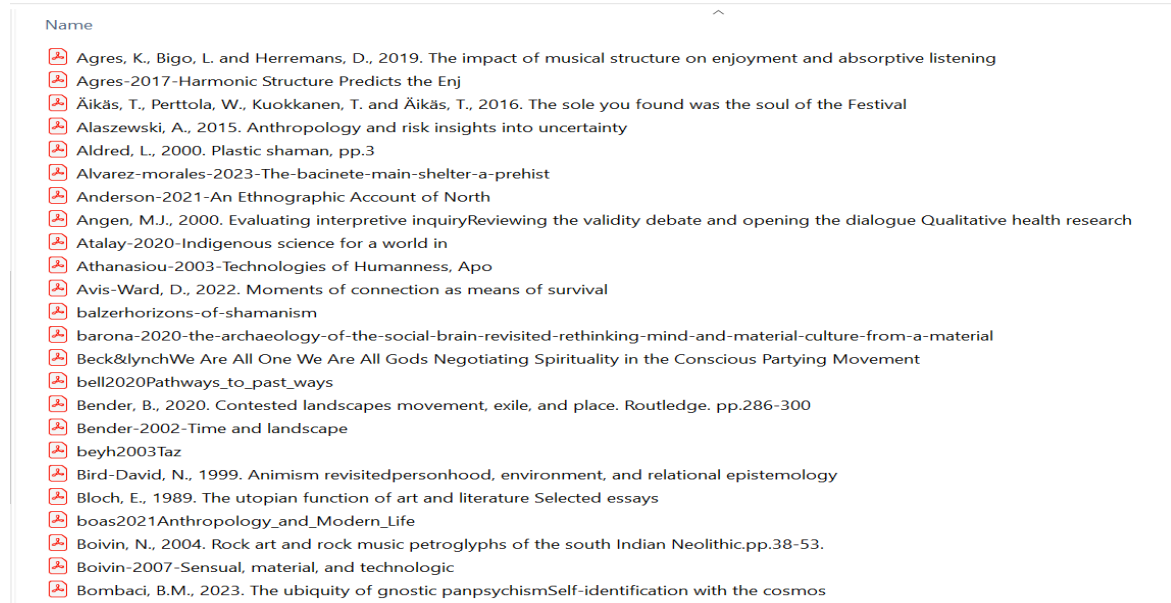


Figure 12 Electronic database of archival research

Endnote is a reference management tool where academic papers can be imported, arranged according to specific categories, and exported into data management software such as Nvivo. References can be captured by specific referencing systems such as Harvard for exportation into a range of documents. The categories created in Endnote paralleled those used in Nvivo data management software where both were regularly reviewed and adjusted according to emerging themes from the primary data (Figure 13).

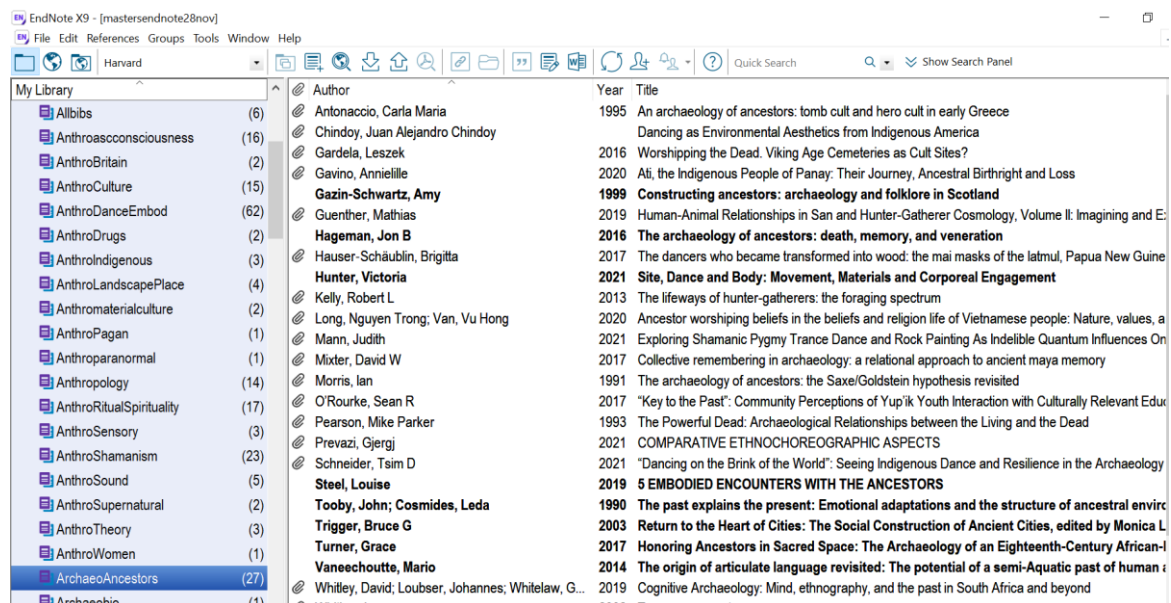


Figure 13 Endnote referencing tool



Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage	Similar Words
dance	5	408	1.20	dance, dance', danced, dances, dancing, dancing'
human	5	435	0.98	art', arts, homo, human, humane, humanised, humanity, humankind, humans, humans', humans', mans, world, world', worldly, worlds, 'worlds'
ritual	6	338	0.92	ceremonial, ceremonies, ceremonies', ceremony, rite, rites, ritual, ritual', ritualisation, ritualised, ritualised', ritualising, ritualization, ritualization', ritualized, rituals, rituals'
shamanism	9	294	0.86	shaman, shaman', shamanic, shamanic', shamanising, shamanism, 'shamanism', shamanism', shamanisms, shamanisms', shamans, shamans'
place	5	549	0.81	aimed, aims, commitment, commitments, direct, directed, direction, directions, directly, directs, home, home', homes, identifiable, identified, identify, identifying, invest, local, locales, localised, localized, locally, located, locates, location, localational, locations, office, offices, order, ordering, place, placed, places, placing, point, point', pointed, pointing, points, pose, posed, posing, positioned, positioned, positioning, positions, positive, positively, post, post', posting, postings, posts, properties, property, putting, range, ranged, ranging, rank, rate, send, sends, set, sets, setting, setting', settings, site, site', sites, situate, situated, situating, situations, situation, situational, situationally, situations, spaces, spaces, spots, target
cultural	8	311	0.81	acculturative, civilisations, civilised, civilization, civilizations, civilized, cultivate, cultivated, cultivates, cultivation, cultural, culturally, culture, 'culture', culture', cultures, cultures', ethnic, ethnicity, political, politically, politics
experience	10	370	0.73	experience, experience', experienced, experiences, experiencing, experiment, experimental, experimentation, feel, feeling, feeling', feelings, feels, gets, getting, know, know', knowing, live, lived, lively, lives, living, receive, received, receives, seeing
practices	9	368	0.68	applied, applies, apply, commitment, commitments, executive, exercise, exercised, exercising, feasible, good, goods, much, operate, operated, operating, operation, operational, operations, operative, operator, operators, pattern, patterned, patterning, patterns, practical, practicalities, practically, practice, practiced, practices, practised, practising, recitation, skill, skilled, skills, used, useful, usefully, uses, using, virtual, virtually
body	4	271	0.65	bodies, body, body', consist, consistency, consistent, consisting, consists, corporate, corporeal, embodied, embodies, embodiment, embody, embodying, incarnation, substance, substances
social	6	219	0.64	acculturative, enculturated, social, sociality, sociality', socialization, socialize, socialized, socially, societal
world	5	443	0.64	cosmos, creation, creation', domain, domains, earth, earthly, exist, existed, existence, existing, exists, global, globally, globe, planetary, public, publications, publicly, realities, realities', reality, reality', secular, secularized, temporal, temporality, temporally, universal, universal', universalism, universalities, universality, universally, universals, universals, universe, university, world, world', worldly, worlds, 'worlds', worldwide
community	9	205	0.53	communal, communicate, communication, communicational, communicative, communities, community, convey, conveyed, conveys, nation, national, nationalism, nationalisms, nationality, nations, pass, passed, passing, transmitted
individual	10	299	0.52	identical, identities, identity, individual, individual', individualisation, individualism, individuality, individually, individuals, individuals', individuate, mortality, person, personal, personalities, personality, personalized, personally, persons, private, separate, separated, separately, separates, separation, several, severely, single, someone, soul, soul', souls
understanding	13	283	0.47	agreement, apprehension, clear, cleared, clearly, comprehensible, comprehension, discern, empathizing, infer, inference, intelligences, interpret, interpretation, interpretations, interpretative, interpretative', interpreted, interpreting, interpretive, perceive, perceived, read, reading, realisation, realization, realize, reason, reasoning, reasons, seeing, sympathize, translated, translation, translation', understand, understandable, understanding, understandings

Figure 15 Nvivo secondary data word frequency table for all codes

Alongside this reading process, manual notes were taken from books not in electronic format which were processed into pdf documents where possible uploaded into Nvivo. As it was not always possible to upload books, physical notes were referred to alongside the Nvivo data or documents were converted into pdf so they could be integrated.

Qualtrics software is an online survey tool that allows for user friendly creation of surveys, capturing of primary data and a range of reporting tools and analysis abilities with behaviour analytics and real-time insights. The Qualtrics survey was used to provide consent and ethics information that participants had to consent to before proceeding with the questions (see Figure 16). Questions were qualitative allowing participants to answer in as much detail as they wished. At the end of the survey, participants could choose to make further contact in order to take part in an in-person interview on Teams.

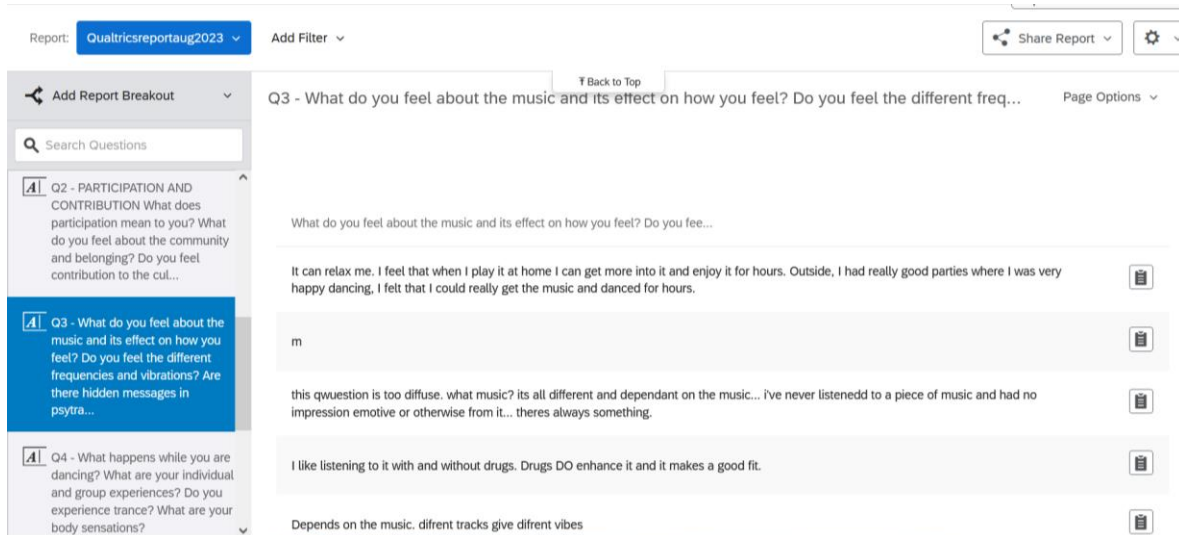


Figure 16 Qualtrics primary data survey by question

The data from Qualtrics was exported in Microsoft Word format categorised according to the question and then by participants which greatly eased the process of thematic analysis (Figure 17).

**Q4 - What do you feel about the music and its effect on how you feel? Please give full details.**

	What do you feel about the music and its effect on how you feel? Please give full details.
1.	It's a drug in itself and gets me there (to spirit) everytime. Feelings of euphoria, connection, releasing tension, addiction to the bass and it's hard to leave the floor once youre up. I never feel tired whilst on the floor, just energised but feel it when I do eventually stop!
2.	The music makes me feel free, happy and like all my worries are gone for that moment. It makes me want to dance and express myself.
3.	The music makes me feel happy and I have learnt to relax with it. This was not the case in the beginning as it took me a while to learn to trust the people who attends and could not relax and be myself. I feel that my brain stops the chatter... I can download a lot of bad energy when I dance.
4.	The music to me was everything. I loved hard techno, trance, and strong fast music. I always trusted the DJ and I knew that they had us in their care. I loved listening to the way it was layered and created, by skilled musicians. A friend and I used to ist for hours listening to an album and get excited about it as a work of art. It was a bug part of my world. I had have so much respect for the skill and musciality of the creators of the music. And the DJs. So on that level I was satisfied, and in the way it would let me just let go, into my body. Totally alive!
5.	It really depends on the style of psytrance. But if it is a style I like, then it makes me instantly happy, and want to dance. When I am free to just enjoy the music without distraction, then I go into my own world.
6.	Despite the fact that the music is very loud which is in clubs too. But it made me feel like connected to the music and i could feel the musics to my bone.
7.	It is the most exciting music to dance to. I love the intricacies of it and the relentless nature. I appreciate the creativity of the djs and how each set is unique and creates it own atmosphere
8.	The music is key. It produces physical sensations and you can actually feel it affecting your body. Depending on the rhythms can produce different effects, its profound. I can see peoples reactions as it changes which reflect my own. Body language is mirrored and fluid across the participants. The music is a craft, to be able to have such an affect on an audience is incredible
9.	Music definatly influences the way i feel but also i wont listen to certain types a music if i feel a certain way ... Music has been a form of entertainment and also a guide i guess in some ways for me .. its been a focus as i learn how to play different instruments and a influence in what i want to play .. if i hear somat i like and get a oppotunity to play it ill give most things a go. I love music .. Music is life .. My dad is deaf i dont know how he copes .. i guess he never had it took away from him as was deaf from birth but he wants to hear it when he sees us singing ,, dancing ,, playing instruments .. at least he can feel the vibrations i guess.. but music for me is life.
10.	I have been listening to psytrance since 2001 and I have not found another genre that makes feel the

Figure 17 Qualtrics raw survey data exported into Microsoft Word format

A phenomenological approach affords inclusion of various types of experiences such as perception, thoughts, memories, imagination, emotions, embodiment, social and linguistic. This was systematically, iteratively collated, analysed and discussed within the remit of the research question. The established thematic structure taken from the literature review was applied to the transcriptions in 6 stages by organising the data, coding, re-establishing categories, identifying common themes, making interpretations, and maintaining a reflective journal throughout to overcome positionality (Carrabre 2021, p.56).

I utilised the approach suggested by Braun and Clarke which are: becoming familiar with the data, starting to code, theme identification, and iterative reviews till themes become defined (Braun & Clarke 2006, p.80). The analytical approach involved writing up transcriptions, data organisation, coding, deducing categories, identifying themes, interpreting them along with maintaining a reflective journal (Frisby *et al* 2005, p.384). I adopted an interpretative phenomenological analysis approach because it allowed a concentration on a given person in a given context, it was inductive with few pre-formed themes so that the experiences and interpretations of the participants was predominant (Frisby *et al* 2005, p.384).

Coding is a way of categorising ideas within the dataset to help answer the research questions where a word can relay the meaning succinctly (Clarke & Braun 2013, p.207). Coding started with the literature review and the same codes acted as a foundation for the primary research (Clarke & Braun 2013, p.207). Codes helped to add structure to primary and secondary research methods whether the raw data was words, pictures, video, or fieldwork. These codes are where themes start to become clear through a process of return, reflect, and adjust. Each data set was analysed independently identifying emerging threads and then each was synthesised using Nvivo software before an integration of all three research methods occurred to establish emerging themes (Moran-Ellis *et al* 2006, p.16). This aided familiarisation with the major perspectives and concepts within disciplines to become known and understood. Once the word cloud search was completed, the data could then be specifically tailored to remove verbiage and random words that would skew the results before performing a data word frequency search. This was an experimental use of Nvivo in that it is primarily used to code and analyse primary data but an

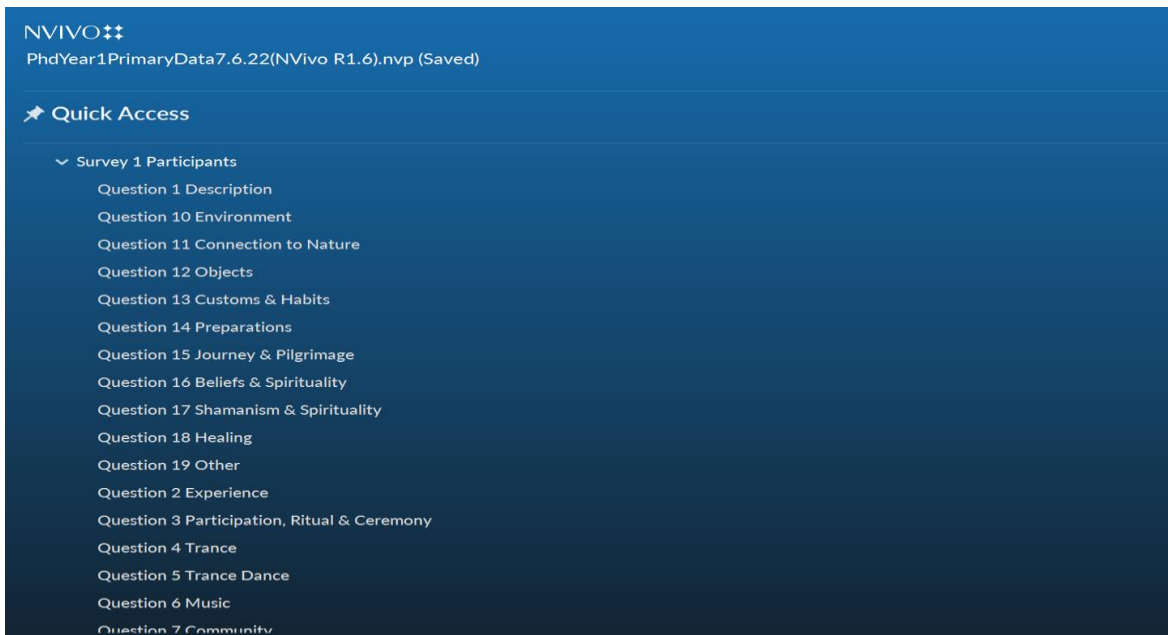
appropriate tool to ensure a less subjective choosing of themes during the literature data search. Categories were formulated and appropriate secondary data was added to relevant sections (see Figure 18).

Name	Codes	Refere	Modifi	Modifi
2018DancingGoddessesbookreview	0	0	05/05/	J
Anusia P2.V4 of MA Thesis Chaptersdancingancestors	0	0	05/05/	J
chindoydancingasenvironmental	0	0	05/05/	J
gavinoAti the Indigenous People of Panay Their Journey Ancestral Bir	1	1	07/08/	J
haiserschebaumMaimasksprintversionOceania2017	2	2	07/08/	J
Ian Morris 1991archaeologyofancestors	0	0	05/05/	J
longtriongANCESTOR WORSHIPING BELIEFS IN THE BELIEFS AND RELIGION LIFE OF VIETNAMESE	3	4	07/08/	J
mannjudith2021Exploring_Shamanic_Pygmy_Trance_Dance_and ancestors	8	19	07/08/	J
mixterCollective_Remembering_in_Archaeology_a_Relational	2	7	07/08/	J
Parker Pearson 1993betweenlivinganddeadancestors	0	0	08/05/	J
prevazidanceancestors	5	9	07/08/	J
Schneiderdancingontheedgeoftheworldcalifornia	1	7	07/08/	J
SeanORourkeRMAthesis2017keytothepastche	0	0	05/05/	J
StoutaCreating_Prehistory	2	4	08/05/	J
tilleyancestraluniversality	7	21	09/08/	J
Whitley-2002-Too-many-ancestors	1	5	09/08/	J
wirawangCALONARANG DANCE	1	6	07/08/	J
wrightarchaeology_of_the_waiat_mysteries_on_woeydhul_island_in_western_torres_strait	3	18	09/08/	J

Figure 18 Nvivo secondary data categories

The literature was then manually coded within Nvivo followed by a document-by-document manual coding that was invaluable because of the iteration resulting from continual reviewing of digital and manual coding. The same process was implemented for collation of primary data. Another Nvivo database was set up by method types uploading the edited primary data separated into categories according into fieldwork, surveys, journal, and interview transcripts (see Figure 19).





*Figure 19 Nvivo primary data structure by method type*

Using the same process of word cloud then word frequency searches as used with the secondary data in Nvivo, an initial whole data search was undertaken to gauge the themes from the primary data (Figure 20).



*Figure 20 Nvivo Primary data word cloud search*

As Nvivo software undertook single word searches, I made decisions as to the suitability based on reading whole phrases and sentences. Further regular searches and checks using Nvivo facilities were made to ensure that topics were retained authentically irrespective of the dominance of certain themes (Figure 21).



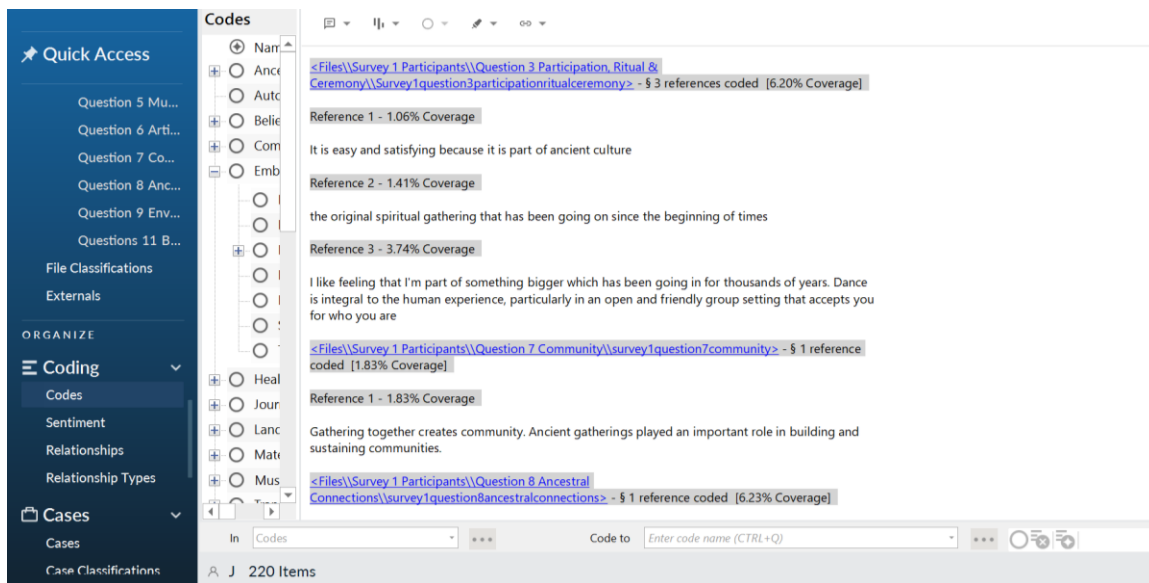


Figure 22 Nvivo capture of coded sentences

When the code topics were placed in the appropriate folders, I revisited the chosen documents regularly to gain knowledge of the similarities and differences between themes, to adjust nodes to improve best fit, for example spirituality, beliefs, religiosity, and intention were used as umbrella codes for other related subjects.

Once the primary data had undergone software coding, manual coding was undertaken using separate Word tables by the chosen topic areas such as beliefs, dance and trance, etc. A column was introduced to enable manual coding of the data that ensured a thorough capturing of all opinions, feelings, practices compiling majority opinions along with unique specific opinions and latent meanings gleaned from an in-depth reading of implied meanings. These coded tables underwent an alphabetical re-arrangement so that it was more conducive to visualising emerging themes. The primary data findings were separated according to fieldwork, journal, surveys, and interviews and kept in these categories during the electronic and manual combining of data. This aided the next stage of interpretation of the data which was analysed on a theme-by-theme basis (see Figure 23).

<p>ANCESTRAL NO x 3</p>	<p><b>Neither there are similarities between modern and traditional spiritual practices</b></p> <p>No. My ancestors are quite literally global, my grandparents are from different continents, one of which is immediately linked to cultures that are not all that dissimilar to my ancestors. No not at the time as I feel free and an absence of thought. After the event when I sit and think back, I can see the links between this modern gathering and those in traditional spiritual societies throughout human history. If that makes sense?</p> <p><b>Prefers present moment – choice related and nature connection than humans</b></p> <p>Generally, no. I'm not being dismissive, but I prefer to consciously stay in the present.</p> <p>Not really. I feel more connection with the land and place and time in space than with past living beings. This is not really something I had thought of to be honest.</p> <p><b>Presence of other beings and spiritual connection to others but not ancestors</b></p> <p>I felt a few times hearing and sensing other beings, but I never thought it could be the ancestral spirits. I never had such experience, but I felt spiritually connected to the people around me.</p> <p>Sometimes I meet mysterious entities, but I can't see them, I just feel their presence.</p>	<p>... footsteps of our forefathers when we gather and dance. We have been doing this since the beginnings of time... It is the sacred technology of the ancients.</p> <p>yes. It's a deep-rooted experience for <b>humans</b></p> <p><b>Presence of ancestors to obtain human form</b></p> <p>Yes absolutely, they are with us. An ancestor told me they have been converted to psychance because they understand that it helps to get our human form "there".</p> <p><b>Ancestor's support against still dominating ability</b></p> <p>Yes, I do feel like this sometimes. The most notable was once when I was aware of how the party was an act of defiance to the dominant society we live in, and I felt with me all my ancestors that had stood up to this dominating force in the past so that I could be there.</p>
<p>ANCESTRAL YES</p>	<p><b>Ancient Technology and gathering of transcendence for unity consciousness</b></p> <p>It is the ancient technique of transcendence using psychedelics. There's a feeling of oneness and the group all pulling together with the same goal. Feels healing and brings strangers together. I imagine this would've been the reason why groups gathered in the past. Yes, as there is that first feeling of the stripping away of self-awareness then the tantalising glimpses of achieving something more/higher on a consciousness level. Then there is just the sound and the body moves.</p> <p>Of course! It is the original spiritual gathering that has been going on since the beginning of times; look at it as an ancient technology</p>	<p><b>Tribal dancing is universal</b></p> <p>Tribal dancing is an integral part of the human experience. It goes deeper than dancing in a club etc. because you have the connection to the people with you, the earth, the music. In virtually every culture we come together to dance. In tribal communities it can be a sacred act. I do think there is a deep connection with trance dances and the psychance scene. I dance with ancestors past, present, in the future, above, below and from the 4 directions.</p> <p><b>Similar beat, vocals, and singing initiating trance and travelling to gather, dance and celebrate</b></p> <p>Perhaps they danced to a similar beat and the tribes from far and wide would travel to meet and celebrate.</p> <p>I believe that the underlying beat is the same that our ancestors experienced. We are now blessed to hear more layers in the music. I also feel that vocals and singing is the same as our ancestors would feel under their skin. I remember marching one day with a group of drummers from Extinction Rebellion and when they synchronized their drums, I experienced trance for a few moments.</p> <p><b>Ancient ritualistic dance also linked to ASG</b></p>

Figure 23 Manual primary data coding

The journal was kept on One Note where sections could be changed, combined and revisited through its search facility that encompassed researcher thoughts, ideas, suggestions, new articles, reminders, and emotions throughout the development of the research and the researcher. The journal and fieldwork underwent the same process through Nvivo and manual coding bringing opportunities to saturate the extraction of precise information and themes more productively. As I based the structure of the journal on the same questions and prompts that were employed in the interviews and surveys, it provided a consistent structure, and higher order interpretation in a deep reading meta-analysis even across abstract themes and linguistic nuances. The journal was then extracted into a word table so that it could be coded in the same manner as the rest of the methods.

### Data thematic analysis

In terms of thematic analysis, this was chosen as an efficient method of 'identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meanings' (Braun & Clarke 2006, p.80). This non-sequential, iterative 'build up' process of revisiting and reflecting on the data is key as 'analysis is typically a recursive process, with movement back and forth between different phases' (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield 2015, p.238). The focus of the research was to collect participants' interpretations as befits an ethnographic investigation following an inductive approach to extract patterns of shared meanings

(Braun & Clarke 2019, p.593). This is a similar approach adopted by de Ledesma in his research thesis, 'The psytrance party', who applied a mainly inductive technique to fieldwork data based on immersive autoethnographic tools (de Ledesma 2012, p.85). The data was used to derive the structure of analysis because identifying patterns in the data was the goal consistent in providing a good thematic analysis (Maguire & Delahunt 2017, p.3351). This was the final refinement of the themes to 'identify the essence of what each theme is about' with both manual and electronic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006, p.92).

Both semantic and latent analytical techniques were used where semiotic analysis occurred beyond individual words to include phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and implicit meanings in order 'to identify the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies' (Gibbs 2002, p.84). This led to a deep reading and highlighting of interesting statements, even abstract themes, where potential ideas were re-read, connected, and ordered in a metanalysis of higher order interpretation.

The themes that emerged from the literature search were used to derive the structure of analysis because identifying patterns from the literature review had been provisionally established from the initial reading of the literature (Figure 24). There was a need to be predictive of potential themes to trial interview questions beforehand, and I already had knowledge of themes from the secondary data. I revisited the manual and electronic themes correlating this with the data many times, improving and narrowing down nodes. While Nvivo can provide a relatively accurate coverage of surface themes, it is not able to capture the underlying and implicit perceptions, thoughts, memories, imagination, emotions, and linguistic nuances that a manual reading by a human can interpret therefore it was important to undertake both types of data analysis.

<b>BELIEF SHAMANIC</b>	<p><i>No shaman</i></p> <p>A Shaman is someone who has to go through hardships and training to achieve the 'title'... I think in western society the title of Shaman is given away very easily... So, no I don't think they are shamanic practices... People are reading too much into it! Few of us are shaman!</p> <p><i>Events are shamanic dharma/duty not romantic</i></p> <p>There <u>are</u> Shaman out there but I'd be very sceptic about coming across any at psy festivals. I would definitely say that they are shamanic. But interestingly I never thought there could be a shaman there on the dance floor. No not really at all. Most of my historic lineages have practices in shamanism (celts, native South American, East African especially) shamanism isn't what most people in these events portray it as. It isn't romantic, its dharma/ duty. Of course! it is shamanic technology in a contemporary setting. shamanism revealing itself more and more right now. I flow with it and brings a deeper understanding to all aspects. I sing to nature, the spirits and universe, do land blessings, water blessings, wind blessings and fire blessings. I sit in meditation, I journey with psilocybin and my drum, I work with reiki principles, I do rituals. Somethings cannot be put into words. Rituals and ceremonies</p> <p><i>Dancing and releasing makes it spiritual and tribal</i></p> <p>On a general level, yes, the whole dancing and releasing oneself with others can be spiritual and it is definitely tribal.</p>
<b>BELIEFS NONE AND NEGATIVITIES</b>	<p><i>No beliefs</i></p> <p>Don't make it so complicated, it is just about people gathering together and dancing. No response. I don't have any. I am a pragmatist/ empiricist. The significance of reality is enough for me. I don't need to decorate it with more to make it more. It is more than enough. No response. I can only say 'probably' because I don't follow any</p>

Figure 24 Manual thematic coding of primary data

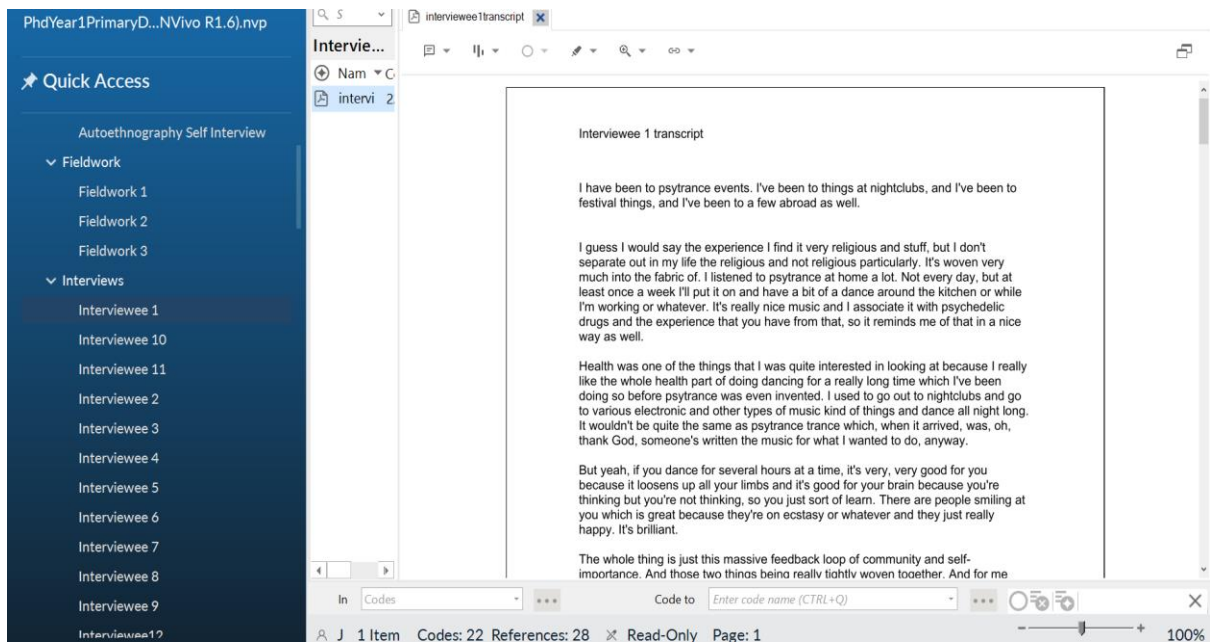
As the data from primary research was the driver for the establishment of the themes, there were some differences between the secondary literature themes and the themes from the data that led to a revisiting of the literature review after the interpretation of the findings. Illustrative samples were taken from the large data set to present as wide a range of responses as possible (Figure 25).

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created by	Modified on	Modified by
○ Ancestors	5	9	15/06/2022 11:06	J	15/06/2022 18:07	J
○ Connectivity	2	2	07/11/2022 17:28	J	08/11/2022 13:09	J
○ Dancing with Ancestors	10	37	17/06/2022 16:26	J	07/11/2022 17:28	J
○ In Nature	3	3	12/09/2022 16:07	J	08/11/2022 14:20	J
○ No	2	4	15/06/2022 13:12	J	18/06/2022 16:24	J
○ Non human animals	1	2	08/11/2022 14:21	J	08/11/2022 14:21	J
○ Not considered it	1	2	15/06/2022 13:17	J	15/06/2022 13:18	J
○ Preference for Present Moment	1	1	15/06/2022 13:34	J	20/06/2022 10:30	J
○ Primal	2	3	12/09/2022 16:06	J	08/11/2022 14:21	J
○ Sometimes	2	2	15/06/2022 13:14	J	18/06/2022 15:45	J
○ Spirits	1	5	08/11/2022 13:25	J	08/11/2022 14:19	J
○ Trance & Dance Effects	4	12	17/06/2022 16:30	J	12/09/2022 16:07	J
○ Underground	1	1	16/10/2022 15:42	J	16/10/2022 15:42	J
○ Yes	3	12	15/06/2022 13:13	J	08/11/2022 13:22	J
○ Autoethnography	1	1	14/06/2022 14:48	J	14/06/2022 14:48	J
⊕ Beliefs & Spirituality	4	5	14/06/2022 09:36	J	08/11/2022 14:27	J
⊕ Community	11	14	14/06/2022 08:41	J	16/10/2022 14:41	J
⊕ Embodiment & Experiences	7	8	14/06/2022 08:16	J	12/09/2022 13:06	J

Figure 25 Primary data Nvivo coding categories

The raw data of the interview transcription was shared with the participants to check for accuracy of data as a way to test validity before interpretation proceeded. This is the first part of the analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006, p.80). This adds to the precision

of capturing what participants intended to say, give a chance to correct errors, and potentially saturate a little more. Once the analysis was undertaken, there would not be an opportunity for participants to edit because further information may blur the original statements due to time, mood, and different agendas that may cause more issues than have advantages (Morse 1995, p.147). A good interpretation means no need to return to source materials.



*Figure 26 Primary data analysis of fieldwork and journal in Nvivo*

The same process of categorisation was used for the fieldwork and journal data and sections throughout the duration of the research as for the interview and survey data that correlated with the literature review themes, the questions and the categories to organise the findings data which then extended to the same headings for the analysis, discussion, and conclusion (Figure 26).

## SURVEYS

Participation in the community brings physical, psychological, and medical benefits as well as improving connectivity to people and being enabled to experience positive emotions, develop their own empathic and social skills beyond their individual perceptions. It is acknowledged that there are benefits from attending psytrance gatherings even if not dancing or entering a trance bringing anxiety and mainstream society relief. Other benefits include learning, developing, growing, feeling better, self-improvement, and belief, increased empathy, and awareness of how to treat others better. Improving connection with others, opportunities to discuss issues, release bad energy, connect with spirits, and sharing love although positive experiences are not guaranteed. Tapping into the memory and the residual energy occurs for some time after attendance.

## INTERVIEWS

Integration of the benefits into mainstream life is important as they enjoy their mainstream existence. It is advised that the word healing indicates being unhealthy and benefits should be used instead. Post pandemic loss of stamina from lack of dancing needs to be overcome.

## FIELDWORK 2

Opportunities for expanded sociality are evident amongst tribe members and newcomers with the values of caring and sharing continually displayed.

## FIELDWORK 3

As an introductory gathering as newcomers are introduced to psyculture this process of assimilation occurs through dancing, socialising, and connection making, with communication networks shared beyond the gathering.

## Analysis

### Benefits

### Participation

There are many benefits from participating and attending psyculture gatherings that extends beyond the event. There are clear benefits from participation, sociality, sharing of positive values amongst tribes within and external to a gathering. Some

*Figure 27 Manual triangulation of all primary data to extract findings and perform analysis*

When tackling the triangulation of the primary and secondary data, this included a diachronic and synchronic triangulation of contemporary, historical, and psychedelic trance practices theoretical triangulation to prevent any theory constricting the findings, data source triangulation to ensure greater consistency and complementary triangulation to identify the data that did not have similarities or differences. All told, this gave multiple ways to view the data (Figure 27).

Gaps tracking grid (Appendix 6)

A chart was maintained that showed the emerging findings from the initial questions taken from the gaps on which questions were formed, the conclusions linked to the questions, contributions were becoming evident, and suggestions and recommendations that provided a clear tracking process (see Figure 28).



Theme	Gap identified or not	Question	Conclusion	Contribution	Recommendation
Ancestors and Memories Types of ancestors	✓	Q4a Do you feel you connect with ancestral spirits while at a psytrance gathering?	Types of ancestors may have been different There are distinctions expressed about who constitutes an ancestor such as human, non-human, nature, animals, plants, personal, of the universe or greater cosmology or generalised.	There are a diverse range of assertions made about different types of ancestors and what is meant ancestral connectivity such as human, non-human, nature, animals, plants, personal, of the universe or greater cosmology or generalised with a greater focus on social connectivity than religiosity or actual ancestors.	A continued investigation about the importance, <b>relevance</b> and impact of memory on psychedelic trance culture. Further consideration about elements of resistance and counterculture in both traditional and modern trance dance cultures are recommended.
Ancestors and Memory Ancestral connectivity	✓	Q4a Do you feel you connect with ancestral spirits while at a psytrance gathering?	There is a wide range of opinions about if there is ancestral connection from none at all to directly experiencing ancestors at gatherings.	Providing clarity about what is meant by ancestral connectivity	Greater focus on ancestral connections and social connectivity rather than religiosity
Ancestors and Memory Counterculture		Q4b Do you feel you are dancing with ancestors?	There are distinctions about whether the dancing was with ancestors, like ancestors, in connection with ancestors Ancestors may have gathered together to congregate and dance away from mainstream life in order to facilitate the benefits of sociality.	The same purposes for gathering and dancing away from mainstream life to facilitate the benefits of sociality as ancestors.	
Ancestors and	✓	Q4a Do you feel you connect		Mnemonic group memories	There needs to be a

Figure 28 Gap tracking grid

### 3.5 Ethics (Appendix 3)

#### Risk Assessment

A risk assessment was undertaken for when attending fieldwork. A Travel Risk Assessment was completed for each event prior to attendance, liaisons with the Study Team were regular undertaken, and a Lone Working Risk form was submitted and signed for each event attended. Indemnity insurance was renewed to cover any eventuality at festivals and events. Covid-19 requirements such as testing to enable entry were adhered to. A Field Trip Information Form was completed for each proposed event. This Form gave details about the event, and confidential details about health and other information relevant to attendance. Strategies included a transparent discussion of potential risk and harm beforehand and regular reviewing and updating during the research period. This also applies to me as the researcher to consider their own potential risk and harm and to conduct regular updates on risk assessment.

#### Participants

Though strategies were in place to reduce harm reduction and risk, there may be unforeseen occurrences for the participants and researcher that benefit from prior consideration. All interviews were conducted at times when the festivals are not active, online, and during the normal week. Good quality and rigorous data management and its dissemination, high standards of consent, transparency, and regular revisiting of issues helped alleviate any concerns participants may have regarding their involvement.

#### Researcher

There may have been potential impact on me during interviews if participants discussed sensitive material during data collection and regular contact with the Study Team was maintained to discuss issues and situations. I took appropriate measures to ensure a timely reflection of their own thoughts and feelings in a journal, strategies in place to ensure the workload was not demanding, and to ensure there was suitable debriefing period afterwards.

#### Fieldwork

Fieldwork only occurred at events that has robust health and safety policies in place with security and staff appropriately trained to handle incidents that could occur such as zero tolerance on drug use. I ensured that immediate distancing from negative situations, withdrawal to a place of safety and removal from the environment if unexpected experiences occur during fieldwork at festivals and events by pre-empting what events could occur and avoided all risky experiences throughout each fieldwork exercise. As part of the information giving process, the participants were clearly informed that any information given that refers to illegal activities would not be included as it does not pertain to the project topic. The Information Sheet includes an indication that the study was not focused on illegal activity and a request from participants to refrain from discussing such matters. I had taken into account what circumstances may involve becoming implicated in the illegal activities and how to ensure this does not happen by extraction from such actions, events and incidents during fieldwork.

#### Storage and Protection of Data

Storage, protection, retention, and preservation of data was via UCLan data (UCLan's data repository) and CLOK. As the research was not funded, a request has been made to consider if the interview data could be stored beyond the usual time period to enable the data to be available in terms of Open Access as the data storage is not excessive. If not, a suitable external repository will be considered.

#### Support

A protocol has been considered for dealing with potential and/or unexpected distress that may result from participating in the interview process such as interview process would be stopped immediately, and support offered by myself. If participants feel able to continue with the interview, then it would be resumed. Whether they wish to continue or withdraw completely, support was offered at each stage either side of the interview and afterwards for the entirety of the project including a debriefing irrespective of whether the participant continues involvement or not.

#### Debriefing and Feedback

Debriefing occurred after the interview process, as the project progressed and afterwards whether in the form of written and/or face-to-face individual or group contact. The thesis and additional resources will be openly available and shared in line with Open Access policy. Feedback was and will continue to be ongoing and part of the regular review process before, during and after the research period about consent, confidentiality, risk, and progress. The information sheet, consent form, media release form, and debriefing sheet clearly stated the choice to withdraw from involvement and data information inclusion at any point during the study until within 3 months of the submission date of the thesis (23 January 2023).

#### 4. Findings and Analysis

The findings section summarises the findings from the surveys, interviews, fieldwork and other primary data in sections based on the interview questions. Each survey and ethnography section heading indicates which Appendix the data is located in. The data in the interview section uses coding to reference which interview is making the statement directly or inferred i.e. Interviewee 1 code is I1. This is followed by an overall primary data interpretation and then an analysis section by theme.

#### 4.1 Surveys (Appendix 8)

##### Beliefs (S, p.921)

There are a wide range of personal beliefs whether religious, spiritual, secular or none with a focus on personal progression or enjoyment during attendance. Similarly, there were a variety of opinions about whether beliefs, practices, and experiences were shamanic in nature. Some participants indicate there are traces of ancient shamanic practices incorporated into contemporary settings but often loosely applied with no specific shaman figures in attendance. The ritual of dancing is referred to as shamanic. There are personal practices and philosophies that are linked to shamanism and some indication that the nature of psyculture is founded on shamanism but not specific roles of individual shamans that are authentic. The focus is on the tribal, dance release individually and with others that is felt to be spiritual. The opposite view is that reality is the dominant experience of attending gathering not for a religious or spiritual purpose with psyculture having no beliefs attached to it though the music, dancing, and socialising have a positive spiritual effect on participants. Spiritual appropriation is acknowledged to exist in psyculture as much as in other cultures. There are no specific rituals in the majority of psyculture gatherings other than dancing.

##### Ancestors and memory (S, p.12)

There are several participants who feel that they have similar reasons to ancestral ways for attending gatherings in terms of transcendence, the groups pulling together with the same goal of creating a gathering, bringing people, and healing together: 'I imagine this would have been the reason why groups gathered in the past'. With the intention of stripping away of self-awareness and of gaining 'tantalising glimpses' of achieving a higher consciousness level. Others feel it is how the 'forefathers gathered and danced' since the 'beginnings of time' using the 'sacred technology of the ancients' that is a 'deep-rooted experience'. Some feel ancestors are 'with us' to the point that they 'converted' to psytrance because the music assists in helping to gain a 'human form'. Another participant indicates that sometimes they feel that ancestors support alive humans seeing the gatherings as an 'act of defiance' against a 'dominating force' to ensure their descendant's existence.

Dancing is the predominant association with ancestral purposes, experiences and practices with tribal dancing being seen as an 'integral part' especially when outside where the combination of people connection, the earth and the music happens even describe as becoming a sacred act. This is particularly evident in psychculture where they dance with ancestors 'past, present, in the future, above, below and from all 4 directions' even to a similar beat and vocals, and many tribes came from far and wide gathering to 'meet and celebrate'. They feel that the ancestors similarly 'used ritualistic dance to achieve an ASC' while others expect they are 'dancing with ancestors' for a 'sense of freedom, liberation and oneness'. Others strongly feel they are experiencing primal, ancestral feelings of connection with their ancestors, the universe, and the spirits past as they are dancing furiously particularly in a forest. Some have felt 'ancestors dancing in my body' praying 'via them for peace and abundance on earth'.

Some indicate the experience of dancing with or like ancestors is dependent on the location or venue which determines whether they feel part of an ancestral tribe dancing together round a fire. Someone only felt this connection when dancing at a sacred site where they were 'overwhelmed with the magic' believing man has gathered for 'many thousands of years...listened to rhythm'; they are doing the same as it 'feels right' and that psychculture is 'easy and satisfying because it is part of ancient culture'. Some participants feel the nature of the community and dance is integral to all human experience with desirable outcomes where people are open, friendly, accepting and that we 'need some sort of community' that ancient humans were 'living in since the beginning of time' where they dance all night as a practice 'necessary for our wellbeing'. Participants believe ancestral gatherings played an 'important role in building and sustaining community'. Some participants have a vague feeling of ancient connectivity but cannot describe it or understand how to integrate it into life. Some, however, feel it is figurative rather than a sensed experience.

Some responses show different impressions about whether ancestral, spiritual connection occurs from a definite statement that there are none to an interpretation that there is ancestral connectivity. Some report a definite lack of connections with

the past as they prefer to remain in the present moment. Another feels more of a connection with the land, place, and spatial time than with 'past living beings'. Yet another reports a connection to nature wherever they are but that the 'ancient thing' is 'dancing, meeting up with people...'; this being the only similarity to past trance dance practices. Similarly, one participants expressed that 'being amongst the trees and under the stars' enhances connection to nature and the elements like their ancestors would have done. One participant indicates that they sense other beings, but they never thought it could be 'ancestral spirits' feeling more connected to the 'alive people present' while others feel 'mysterious entities'.

#### Dance and trance (S, p.2)

Participants indicate their love of dancing leading to being 'in flow' over prolonged periods that are akin to meditation. Trance music is seen as apt for 'embodying the emotion of ecstasy, pure uninhibited joy and celebration'. Others indicate a feeling of being in the 'perfect moment', positive, euphoric, and where their body moves of its 'own accord' while they are not thinking about anything but the music and 'how good it feels to be dancing'. Prolonged dancing is mentioned again where time seems to dissolve. They report the experience brings physical and emotional release of negative energies while dancing where they 'fly and forget about the past and the future'.

Several participants become immersed in the music and align their dancing where they 'become the dance' and 'revel in sharing my joy and energy with those around me' irrespective of whether they are dancing or not. Others state the 'beat creates rhythm in me somehow' while others state they 'become one with the music and the dance is flowing out of me' where the music resonates within them bringing balance and a tribal feeling of togetherness as everyone is 'moving to the same rhythms and frequencies in the same way'. Another describes it as being 'part of a pulse of the earth'. One participant says the dancing rhythm 'helps focus' to keep concentration. Some relate experiencing total connection to the music and others whether friends or not experiencing shared joy. Some believe these positive emotions through dancing helps 'uplift the planet vibration' to 'create, co-create, and express themselves' through art. Most participants describe how dance initiates deep connectivity,

oneness, regeneration, and inspiration especially through prolonged dancing at a psytrance gathering.

A participant states that ongoing spiritual transformation through dancing can lead to changed perception, emotional regulation, freedom from thoughts, being inspired, and experiences of 'pure love' where they reach a place of 'no thinking, just pure being, pure love'. Others indicate the experience of dancing to trance leads to feeling more 'empathic' to the self and others improving 'their self-confidence, openness, and friendliness in everyday life'. It is felt that the experience of dance is relative to the venue and the people present, who they go with which affects whether they achieve prolonged dancing. People describe their love of being in the flow of dancing to psytrance music as being like meditation, releasing pure uninhibited emotions collectively experienced as being 'bliss'. Others experience feeling that their body moves of its own accord freeing themselves of time constraints, negative energies, and emotions collectively.

One participant reveals they have the 'uncanny ability to predict the future 'when I'm dancing' as if they have a pre-cognitive ability to predict the music so they are dancing perfectly in time with the coming beat' at the exact right moment to 'flow into the dance'. Another indicates they feel 'forces moving me which can't be there'.

Music and sound (S, p.9)

Psytrance music is the key component in affecting people physically as they experience an energy change in themselves while witnessing it in others. This change to positive energy brings great benefits on the body, mind, and soul. The effect of the music can be to relieve traumas, positive emotions bringing out the best in people to the point where someone calls it an 'aesthetic orgasm', calming the mind with flowing on the dancefloor. Participants indicate this is because of the KBBB beat. Some do not feel this consciousness except when the music is live. The repetitive pattern is mantra-like, being described as shamanic in its beats, rhythm, and frequencies that draw the dancer into the music. It is felt that psytrance production and composition captures the dancer 'on the level of frequency'. The music is called a 'continuation of sound going into one' that you can dip in and out of whereas the dancers trance into their own journey allowing the energetics of the

music to move through the body, rather than controlled by the mind, to the point of dancing fully synchronised to the sounds without effort. Participants demonstrate their appreciation of the artists who create a musical journey for their healing benefits; they express how they leave their souls in the care of a skilled DJ letting the music take over. The light and dark aspects of a psytrance journey as described as necessary in balance.

Contribution, community, and participation (S, p.6)

There are many participants who discuss their personal values, experiences and practices and habits both as an individual, as a representative of the community and the general values of psyculture. Many positive emotions and experiences are reported with people feeling free enough to give and receive them in a wholesome place. Values pivot around being good and doing good with a range of PLUR and humanistic attitudes to each other where bad behaviour is not tolerated. A tribal feeling of being at home within this psytrance family and community and linking with others in larger family events is a key attraction of the psytrance community where people use the words home, family, and tribe freely. The majority of people love the connections between people and nature, unity and togetherness that they gain as the energy and sense of oneness is created and contributed to where inclusivity can be practising beyond mainstream restrictions. The general group experience is a sense of belonging and reciprocal acceptance not available in the mainstream world. The organiser's ethos is primarily about providing a place to dance together with the 'dance energy being the centre of the party' in order to 'share the freedom of the trance state that 'we are all capable of reaching on the dancefloor'. They describe to how as organisers they have had to adapt to difficult, recent circumstances hoping they will survive to continue the 'ride' which they hope 'we have enjoyed so far'.

People feel because they are accepted that they belong to the community leading to them to actively contribute. Without these contributions, participants stress that the events would not be possible. Contribution builds the community and the individuals within it allowing freedom of expression. Several participants note that just by being present, dancing, enjoying, and sharing energy is ample participation as a contribution to the culture. There can be an accumulation of ways people feel nourished by being accepted in this community unlike how alienated they feel in the



mainstream world. People take what they learn in psyculture with them into the mainstream life which is seen as further contributing to the improvement.

Participation by dancing is as important as any other form of contribution participants frequently note. The preparation, provision, management, and organisation by event organisers are viewed as a vital. Even at small gathering basics such as food, water, toilets, music equipment, shelters, stalls, staff for security, stewarding and catering are important especially if it is in a remote location. People describe how they have taken on multiple roles across many events with an all hands to the deck attitude to help sustain the lifestyle. Artists contribute their musical services generally for free.

Participants describe how being part of the culture helps as an antidote to the toxicity in mainstream society, its drudgery, its restrictions, and societal ills that could benefit from following the culture's life visions. Some indicate there are underlying political and countercultural beliefs or a mix of subcultures.

Environment and nature (S, p.14)

Participants express enjoyment and preference for being in an outside environment in nature, forests and woods to explore relationships between ecology, the universe and themselves believing psytrance was made with this in mind.

Preparations, objects, and journey (S, p.19)

There are a range of responses regarding pre-journey preparations such as packing important objects before travelling to a gathering whether practical or spiritual from participants or artists sometimes even a week beforehand. This includes making arrangements for their return or being in touch with friends. There are references to the journey whether literal, figurative, practical, or imaginary, with the journey motif running through many aspects of the music, philosophy, art, décor, clothing, and attitude within psyculture. The journey is seen as being a practical and a holistic one even if on the surface it is just to a party for a party. Some feel the journeying connects to each other, earth, nature, spirits, and psychologically where people report experiencing spiritual or symbolic journeying at most gatherings. The literal and mental journey is viewed as part of a regular pilgrimage where they are journeying to a tribal gathering contributing to each other's journeys. Participants stated the journey to the gathering is one of going home from the constraints of the mainstream world. However, some feel it is only a practical journey.

There are many objects and living arrangements that are important to participants prior, during, and after the event that will enhance their experience and the experience of others. Practical and decorative considerations as are dress and personal adornment that reflects the artwork of psyculture with some seeing it as an important object but others do not. People take personal space equipment for sleeping, eating, and making an encampment with others to make them comfortable along with sustenance for themselves and others. Music to play in their personal area is important on their personal journey. A range of other practical items for making heat, light, power, and consumption are noted. While some indicate a positive state of mind and intentions is important, some believe the point is to have nothing and take nothing. Most people found the effort taken to contribute to the immersive environment by wearing of psychedelic clothes, decorations and jewellery adds to the creativity of the environment enhancing the experience of belonging as even individuals are taking part.

#### Benefits (S, p.24)

There are psychological and physical benefits of prolonged, collective dancing to psytrance music from a neurochemical release enabling the turning off negative hormones and thus healing according to several participants. Participants report a release of trauma, bad energy and feelings leading to euphoria and collective bliss. The experience is described as a collective wave of energy from dancing together that potentially improves participants and tribes across inter-related, similar events.

#### 4.2 Interviews (Appendix 7)

##### Beliefs

I1 finds the dancing to psytrance music associated with a psychedelic experience which is pleasant and regularly listened to but does not separate the religious and non-religious in their life. I6 attests that everyone has the same thing in mind which is 'the dance'. This dance energy achieved in nature is what powers 'you up a bit. It's like being an electric car, you just get took to a charging place, you plug yourself in and recharge from mother nature' where you can feel the 'energy coming up from the ground, from the earth itself' leaving them charged and able to 'deal with people'.

This is especially easy when outside because if you are having to deal with negative people you 'touch a little bit of soil in your hand to charge yourself'. I6 says 'religion goes out of the window' at gatherings even though there are multiple belief systems represented. I11 has a developing relationship with religion and exploring alternative spiritual practices as a result of taking psychedelics at psyculture gatherings that suggest 'god is everything around us' which gave them the opportunity to 'really be in this free space in the here and now' that led to reconnection. However, there are some negative aspects, I11 has changed who they associate with because of 'spiritual bypassing' with people not doing the spiritual work they were claiming to practice.

#### Ancestors and memory

I4 is not sure about whether the ancestors are human and subscribes more to the idea of 'spirits of nature' or 'ancestral spirits' or a 'spirit of one'. They personally think the 'plants are running the show' and that humans are 'just crazy monkeys thinking we are in charge'. They try to connect with the plants who are the ambassadors of the kingdom that 'facilitate communication' that leads to personal insight through a holistic interconnection which is the ancestral spirit. They remember it felt like they were 'tapping into some ancient form of magic' that has been forgotten based on unstructured social dancing where 'everybody is doing whatever comes to their bodies'. They compare travelling in convoys especially abroad as part of a journey similar to ancestors and part of the whole experience. This was how they did things though 'we are very different' but maybe they had 'similar prohibitions' like having to do things underground too. I5 indicates they have been to events where people dress up because they are there to connect with the ancestral thing. I8 has a 'tribal feeling' when I connect that is ancestral. I8 loves the music that 'invokes me and I feel like I'm never alone in that moment' when I am 'surrounded by this energy that is so magical'. When this situation leads to helping others and educating each other, 'it is worth sharing'. There is a silliness and playfulness in being part of that energy that is 'magical' they state.

I9 thinks the 'act of dancing itself takes me out of my 9-5 headspace' and 'almost reminds me of what it is to be a human' which means to be 'embodied, to move and express myself creatively'. They believe their 'ancestors would have done the same'

- imagining music to have existed for as long as 'time has existed' and 'made with whatever it was they used to create it whether banging on sticks or singing songs'. Perhaps in 'past evolutionary lineage' you just want to 'check in with your pack or tribe' when you go to new areas together to support each other and keep each other safe against 'rival, predatory tribes'. I11 believes we are replicating 'what your ancestors had done; your body knows what's happening' stating that people know it is 'not a new movement' where the memory comes from intuition, 'our bodies know this and it's written in our DNA', its written 'in our history and our genes'. I11 states this is 'how we connected before this and it is how we connect now' via altered states of being with 'non-human life forms'.

### Dance and trance

I4 likes to dance because 'I know my body moves before the brain does' where the mind wants to make sense of the movement clearing a space on the floor and in their mind because the body is in charge. I4 does things where their mind and movement are 'at one' being very conscious of 'where I am sending that energy'; where they will share good energy but will try to send bad energy back to the 'earth or the sky' until it has gone. I4 will remain on the periphery until the bad energy is gone so as not to share it with others. I4 witnessed others doing this too. I4 sees 'humanity on the dancefloor' with us all in our 'different stages, our different equations and ways of understanding the world' with all this 'beauty' there on the dancefloor 'giving it' and 'being there' which is unavoidable and what participation is about. I4 believes 'energy is in our hands and they transmit energy', where you can 'change energy, you weave things' being very conscious of the power that 'emanates from my body' particularly affecting people dancing in front of me and what I do 'to their backs' not giving them negative energy.

I4 states that the 'dancefloor is where I transform something' as it shows you what you need to work through. People weave their energies together. I4 is aware of times such as a full moon where you can 'feel the energy of people around the world dancing' at the same time and they connect to that which has helped to lift them up during down times. I4 states that they have even felt this collectively as if they were 'dancing for peace' during the time of war feeling it helped stopped the war because of their intentionality in 'dancing all night like mad' to do so. I4 feels 'we are all

together as world representatives on those dancefloors' that was the 'beginning of something' leading to change.

I7 believes the 'energy and experience of the family connection is on the dancefloor' with no barriers, and you are 'totally free and able to express ourselves' where they have made the 'greatest friends' and 'those memories of that tribe' and that community 'will always be there' as 'we're still all there together'. The parties were 'sacred' and the best memories in 'some sort of cosmic collective'. This is not just at the party but you absorb that energy through years of being in it, 'you absorb that frequency'. Dancing for I7 is an 'expression of the soul' and when you are 'actively in that moment' and connected spiritually you can 'just dance your transmission of your energy' where 'It's just a smile. It's a moment you both know that you're there'. Sometimes with the right people, I7 feel a 'sort of energy and vibration' that is described as a 'dancefloor telepathy', a 'communication without talking' that is a 'vibrational thing' where you can feel people in their head communicating and connecting. This is especially 'where everyone is on that psychedelic energy where it is telepathic'.

I9 describes how in mainstream culture 'we are not embodied enough, where we are not in physical sense of being where it is important for a 'sense of self'. To gather as a community provides this need with the music and everything else such as the land to go beyond 'this conditional framework' and embrace the 'healing that comes from that which extends way beyond the drugs themselves'. I9 thinks the community energy is 'what alchemises the music from an audible experience' to make it into a 'force to make you want to move'. The collective, accumulated energy created together is what 'runs through us all'. For them, it feels like 'I'm tapping into the energy of everyone else' giving a 'new sense of energy so that I can dance for so long. This leads to a surpassing of the physical restraints and I am feeding off the vibrations of everyone else'. It feels like they are doing 'qigong', and they are playing 'with the energy of the music through my body as through an instrument'. Sometimes they play 'little energy ball games, throw it to someone else, and someone else catches it'. I9 associates the dance energy as similar to yoga where there are 'different layers of bodies like sheaths' and in the centre is the 'essence, the pure white light of consciousness that existed before time'. These experiences when

dancing in community with others 'awaken these energetic parts of the self, that go beneath the physicality and beneath the mental conditioning'. The 'recognition of the divine consciousness in us' and everything which are just 'different languages of the same thing'. I9 senses the feelings of love and compassion that emerge from within them surrounded by the conscious love of others that is unlike other genre's dancefloor experiences.

## Music and sound

I1 indicates that listening to psytrance and dancing at home brings back good memories from experiences with psychedelic drugs. I7 became interested in how psytrance music was made because they 'couldn't understand how they get those sounds?' to learn how to create it. I7 feels psytrance is 'very shamanic' in its beats, rhythm, and frequencies that 'are created to draw you into the music'. I7 feels psytrance has something 'just a bit more special in the production that really can capture you on the level of frequency'. As they go on their own journey, they 'enjoy closing their eyes and allowing the energetics of the music to move through me instead of consciously moving my body with my mind'. I7 was 'enthralled' upon first hearing psytrance and felt that they had 'found something that I was ultimately looking for' that was 'totally underground'. I9 describes the music as a 'continuation of sound going into one' without a start or end. This means you can 'tune in and tune out' at your own pace, on your own journey where you can move different parts of your body to different beats whether fast or slow or playing with 'the different intervals within the beats'. I11 sees psytrance music as a 'strange music' that does not make sense but gives the opportunity to 'feedback into our inner child', while 'hopping around and dancing and changing your ways'.

I2 follows advice in planning a set is dependent before the set but it is important to attend the event from the beginning in order to ascertain how the energies, felt both light and dark, which helps when energy building. Further advice is to create a set as a kind of 'crescendo' from light to dark but also building up and down bringing the crowd with you. I2 is concentrates more on sober listening to sets when out at events, seek advice from other artists and learning how other artists build their sets. They have moved towards seeing 'how it feels'. What is key is that the environment has to be right, and 'the people have to be right' to stop the set 'going south'. I7

reports listening for the 'same journey' when getting new tracks to fit in with a planned 'journey to the ascension'.

I7 feels it is important to plan the playlist to fit in with who plays before you in order to take the crowd on a journey either 'bringing it up or down or going full on' because its 'just nice introducing a new journey' because you know which tracks 'they felt and which ones they don't feel'. It is 'all about the energy on the dancefloor'. I7 says 'in a set for me, it's about light and shade. It's about dynamics. It's about bringing it up but also bringing it down'. It depends on whether you want to achieve 'full on dancing all the way throughout the set or to absorb different frequencies and sounds'. I7 loves to 'get a real joy bringing something very creative to the dancefloor and feel that energy back from the dancefloor'. I7 thinks about how 'being on the other side now, obviously being on the dancefloor as well but when you are mixing it is really about a connection of energy' that you are transmitting to that dancefloor and if no one is dancing that 'magical experience doesn't happen'.

In terms of the journey presented as an artist to the audience, I8 stresses it has to 'make people feel good' because you are 'in such control of how people are feeling' where the music should give them a good experience not anything too 'twisted or gundleworldly' where the music should be magical with 'fairy elements' to it with 'little creatures and cute sound' but that others sometimes 'take it into the dark underworld where there are orcs'. I10, in terms of being in attendance as an artist, would attend the event from the start to add to and immerse myself in the vibe before they played to 'feel the energy' and try to 'transfer that energy back out to them' when playing. When DJing, I10 says the journey the artist creates is about a whole experience. They create the journey by using different styles for different parts of the event so in the morning it would be uplifting psytrance to try to 'create a story'. I10 recounts in the days before mobiles how difficult the journey was in finding the location where you would be 'driving round in circles' to find it but the locations were beautiful. The musical journey purpose was 'creating something, you are taking them off somewhere'. They particularly liked playing as the sun rose in the morning. Post pandemic, I12 has been really struggling with stamina and inspiration because of not working a live dancefloor when missing. I12 thinks longer sets are important in creating a better journey for the audience.

### Contribution, community and participation

I4 sees the importance of participation but only because it was a service that needed to happen not for a vocational reason and as a community it would be of benefit to provide a harm reduction services. I12 remembers 'really feeling that belonging' when everyone was dancing 'right to the end' and recently when it felt 'sort of tribal'. They describe it as a tribal sense of belonging that is generated by prolonged dancing with others in a safe space to interact, discuss, learn, and grow in a welcoming environment. The community is the main attraction of the scene where they can contribute and be part of a community at the same time forming a feedback loop of self and community.

### Persecution

I3 states that the reason why 'clubs don't like psytrance' is because 'punters don't drink'. I3 indicates they can't 'find any land to put a party on and we daren't do a free party because we will get shot' as the authorities are 'strict here' so they 'wouldn't get away with it'. I8 relates experiences with the police negotiated finishing times but indicating 'there always will be persecution by the authorities' with the scene'. As organisers they were conscious about the environment where they 'never left a piece of garbage'. As an organiser, it was important that people especially women feel safe to dance. In terms of contribution as an organiser, I12 feels there is a duty of care sorting out bad behaviour especially at a psytrance party because you are creating 'lovely trippy décor' and a safe space for people to 'take lots of drugs' and do this 'really tribal, trippy stuff' but at the same time having a duty of care to stop bad behaviour.

### Environment and nature

I1 suggests dancing outside is different to dancing inside but both have benefits from frequencies. I1 loves the 'synergy' of the stimulating environment and people in costumes with the 'collective effort' they bring as well as being in nature, the trees and different landscapes. I1 suggests that even though you are doing lots of stuff with your body, your 'mind is in this quite peaceful kind of condition' where you can directly 'see the world around you in a way that is quite different' than if you were still and talking to somebody. I5 feels it is amazing to experience dancing outside in



nature. Outside events are preferred, says I6, because 'when you are outside you can breathe in the air from the forest rather than the stale air inside a building'. I6 feels they can be at one with nature where they can 'be my animal self rather than just a human being in society' I6 believes there are spirits of animals and other creatures in the forest for which it is a 'blessing to see them' but you have to be in that 'state of mind to be able to see them'. I9 says being in a forest is like going back into a 'deeper connection to my ancestors' to reflect on the importance of the land you are in. I9 indicates it feels like there is a 'primal part of me in the conditioned part of my brain' that becomes freed so you 'forget the rational conditions' of 9-5 because of the communal embodiment and its healing benefits. I11 feels there is a ritual and ceremony that is 'connecting with the earth around' us that leads to a new path. I4 believes locations are really important especially outside as it is more difficult to have the same experience inside clubs though some buildings and décor have been amazing.

#### Preparations, objects and journey

I4 feels specific psytrance clothing is not important and is country-specific where being comfortable is key and dress does not matter. I4 feels the connection between the people, the feeling of togetherness, and the power of their intentions at the beginning is just as important as location (which does not have to be sacred), décor, place, and clothing. I4 indicates preparations include things to make life easier at a gathering such as a shelter and access to food. In terms of preparations and objects, I6 takes a lighter, torch, waterproof coverings for a makeshift shelter to eat under if it's raining. In terms of clothing, I9 enjoys wearing attractive clothes for themselves as well as their hair and make up. The immersive experience is appreciated as people make such an effort with their costumes because everyone 'wants to contribute to make this experience amazing for everyone else'. I9 discusses that you prepare with your 'bubble people and make pre-connection with your close group before going 'into this wider people world'. Sometimes it is good to spend time on their own too. Generally, pre-journey preparations involve grounding, through meditation, washing and clearing the mind before the 'stimuli' begins.

I11 indicates clothing objects include a versatile scarf, clothes to keep cool, warm, and dry, strong boots, a selection of fur coats, fun hats, and jewellery. Encampment

objects include cooking equipment and food some pre-made, snacks, and coconut water with electrolytes to share. Other objects include a utility belt for key items such as a torch, lighter, drugs and money. Interviewee 11 states a hammock is taken instead of a tent. Some people make their encampment areas fun and extend the living room in their campsite. I12 says preparation includes the bringing or buying of drugs which they call sacraments. It is stated that this will be the important object that people take with them to aid attaining an altered state of consciousness. I12 was not able to remember objects that are taken other than a torch.

In terms of the journey for I4, it is the literal excitement and challenge of finding an outside gathering 'by ear', stopping the car engine to hear anything to find out where it is so finding a party is 'always a journey'. I6 mentions the literal journey which is a 'mission on its own' as well as the one while you are there. I11 says dancing together is the ritual 'dancing around the fire when you get into a trance' especially dancing all night 'until the sun comes up' where you dance through the night and the 'trance gets darker and darker' but as the sun comes up 'the trance changes and you see certain people' who have been dancing next to you the 'whole time' and you 'went through this whole thing together which is 'definitely a ritual or ceremony'. The journey comes from entering a chaotic liminal space separate from 'regular day-to-day life' where 'we are neither here nor there'. Unfortunately, I11 reports there is a lack of integration after these transformational experiences amongst participants who 'stay in the festival circuit in this hyper-liminal space'.

## Benefits

I1 argues there are indications that health benefits for dementia patients from flashing lights which they feel occur in psytrance nightclubs too. I1 is interested in the health aspects of prolonged dancing. Psytrance is the ideal music for prolonged dancing. By dancing in a prolonged manner, they were able to improve physical ailments because of the environment, music, and people. I1 felt much better after prolonged dancing at a festival to 'tremendous' music dancing throughout the 9 days. I4 has felt that they represented the world on the dancefloor that would collectively change things for the better. I4 advises care with using the word healing as it 'implies we are somehow ill' but at the time they were young and not in need of healing. I4 feels the lack of dancing has led to the loss of stamina due to the pandemic meaning

they need to dance to heal because of the effect on their body and getting tired which they find is 'scary'.

#### 4.3 Fieldwork, autoethnographic journal and interview (Appendix 9, 10 and 11)

##### Beliefs

They reflect on their atheist philosophy and how gatherings are secular only with a veneer of religious purpose more like taking the artefacts from different religions for a contemporary amalgamation than providing a dogmatic religious event. The event is to socialise, enjoyment and potentially heal not religious practice. The lived experience is to practice and congregate like this without the 'Western tinged colonial glasses' that all gatherings were inherently religious but rather to leave the pair of 'worn boots' of religious or spiritual assignments at the door to be in a space free from all that.

##### Ancestors and memory

The participant describes how behaviours on the dancefloor exude the values and practices that are at least to do with recent ancestors, people from living memory keeping the ways alive of the original focus of positive energy sharing through prolonged dancing. It is felt that some type of dancing that is linked to ancestors and ancestral techniques of dancing together in nature. Ancestral connections come from more recent ancestors not related. The participant sees how embedded within the artefacts, art and people parallels a rhizomatic underground acknowledging past and present trance dance practices and beliefs with inferences to ancient mushroom cultures hidden from overground cultures. The immersive environment 'replicates a dark world with sight losing dominance over sound and movement as it would in the mycelium'. Intuitively it is felt to be similar to earlier peoples, not creating a total re-enactment, a modern-day version that detoxes the self, bringing relief, and the 'dismantling of the mangled self' from the confusions of mainstream life. Ancestral connections are not personal or felt as much as desired with a vague memory of congregating in nature to dance and socialise with music as ancestors would have done.

##### Dance and trance

The participant expressed how the ritual is the dance and the gatherings add to the trance experience by playing continual 24/7 music which added to the drugs, the sleep deprivation, the liminality and being outside spreading the energy. They felt ritual involves entering the dancefloor in a sacred manner. The music parallels the movements and the minds of the dancers in an almost religious trinity with a precision that is understood by dancers and musical artists alike. The participant described the communal dance experience as 'birds 'mumming' together in collectivity of consciousness as individual edges become blurred and fluid into a seamless flow.

### Music and sound

The participant reported the consideration of the playlist was perfectly planned to enable a collective journey throughout the weekend in a small-scale venue with excellent soundsystem and expert musical performances. There were restrictions on the playing of music due to the proximity of the location to residences that led to a sense of disconnect along with some offensive contact from strangers making derogatory comments as they drove by. The music was exquisitely planned across the three days following the rhythms of the day providing for the expected journey. There were breaks in the music in the early hours that affected the sense of a journey at this event that had more mainstream restrictions on sound and other requirements for cleaning and restoring the site. However, the participant reported the intensive, immersive night-time environment created by music, sound, lights, forest environment, dancers and the created energy that was extremely effective in creating a journey.

### Contribution, community and participation

The participant demonstrated abiding by the values of the community in assisting someone feeling unstable. The joining of different tribes was observed to be hesitant at first but the process of assimilating quickly dissolved any anxiety as different tribe members danced together. As the event progressed, the sense of belonging was clear and people were observed working together as a community. The participant contributed to deepening connections, participating in the healing field, and meeting new people from other tribes throughout the weekend. The participant reflects on how they return because of the desire to dance, the deepening of a sense of

belonging, and honouring the value system. The participant felt that there are issues within this family as in any family. The participant felt a greater sense of safety and relaxation at a closed access gathering where everyone knew each other. The feeling of being an elder was shared by the participant and others who have known each other for a significant number of years. The participant and many others have travelled far to attend for this important celebration for a key contributor and member of the community. Memories were shared about previous gatherings, changes within the community structure, and tribe members that have been lost along the way. Memories and stories were shared with newer tribe members. The meeting area provided much opportunity for discussions with ample seating and protection from the elements. Hope was expressed by the participant and other elders that the opportunity to meet up for similar celebrations in the future would happen. There are unsaid but evident rules of behaviour on the dancefloor showing respect to others, the occasion, and the bringing of good energy.

The participant observed that this was more of a multi-genre mainstream festival attracting a mixed crowd of participants including psytrance tribe members that integrated with non-psy participants. It felt like it was an event that provided a taster session for potential new members as opposed to other events that were either semi or fully closed access. The participant invited newcomers to join them in the psytrance area to dance and socialise during the talk was that given as part of their contribution to the event. Further participation was experienced by dancing and sharing energy during the day and night. The sharing of energy was incredible and the demonstration to newcomers was observable as the pre-existing tribe members joined together in this communal celebration. The organiser's ethos and infrastructure were observed to have a gold standard attention to detail. The core values of the organisers are evident everywhere in every aspect of their infrastructure providing a fully inclusive environment. There were many different areas, types of music and activities beyond dancing. The pre-existing tribe demonstrated good moral behaviour and were participating by working in stewarding, catering, selling, providing healing workshops, security and dancing.

Environment and nature

The participant observed how the landscape had an ancient feeling with nature abounding around like buzzards and rabbits, an astonishingly clear star-filled sky at night and an expansive vista in the daytime that was a privilege to occupy. This landscape inspired wonder and is a major feature of the experience. The participant observed that the location had old trees throughout the field. However, the location was surrounded by large roads with continual traffic that distracted from the purpose of the event to enjoy nature without mainstream considerations. This event is held in beautiful, ancient woodlands on an estate in the countryside that required much walking to get to the main dancing area. The festival areas were sensitively reflective of a natural environment with forest themes emanating throughout the woods although there were many distractions, other sound systems and masses of people from different genres and interest groups.

#### Preparations, objects and journey

The participant described how they arrived at the known site, quickly established where their tribe members were encamped and returned during the course of the event to socialise and share resources. The participant observed how every detail was precisely organised in terms of infrastructure for this closed access event with a fully operational team of volunteers working for entry in shared shifts. The participant reported how the pre-arranged encampment members formed a circled group helping others set up their area within their space while introducing a new member to the group. This encampment linked with another encampment of other tribe members. Over the course of the event, resources were shared and contact made with other groupings nearby. Preparations for forming an encampment were made beforehand about time of arrival and upon arrival, mobile phone contact was sustained to find the encampment location. During the event near the main dance area, a tribe area was created with seating, food, drinks and resources from which members went to the dancefloor together, interacted with other group members and introduced new people, and returned to their encampment. Some networking was undertaken about research with updates requested by known tribe members discussing future possibilities, listening, advising, sharing, and progressing. The participant noted the gold standard planning for layout, infrastructure and staffing with many associates working there in a voluntarily capacity for the price of a ticket in a range of posts. Though camping separately from a specific tribe

encampment, meetups occurred naturally in the main psytrance areas sharing seating areas, resources, and socialising while introducing newcomers and deepening existing networks. The participant performed a talk about their research which introduced newcomers to the subject area, offers were made to join the larger group later on and the offer was taken up introducing new people to pre-existing intra-tribe members. Journeys were undertaken separately by the participant travelling in a car to each of the three fieldwork sites though contact was made with others upon arrival or beforehand. Two of the sites were known to the participant so there were no issues with finding the sites but the excitement at returning was palpable and the emotions had to be kept under control in order to drive.

### Benefits

The participant describes how the mainstream self gets 'burned up' by the collective dancing as you get 'dragged' into the 'abyss' by the others, the music, and the dancing. The repetitive rhythms of trance 'sync the brain' enabling inter-dimensional spirit access, lowering of stress, and improving psychological and spiritual healing. The process of synchronicity through prolonged, collective dancing may not be understood but feels as if it is healing along with the exercise in nature, good food and drink that overcomes trauma. Shared energy from an elder led to reciprocity of sharing positive energy in a playful and psychic way. Just being present allows the shared energy to 'seep in' where they feel 'relaxed and at home'. The lack of prolonged dancing in lockdown shows how beneficial the prolonged dancing was evidenced by the lack of 'stamina, solidarity, physicality, and community' resulting in an 'energy vacuum'. The music is a key component that, along with dance, resonates within them and others around them to 'power up the soul', becoming focussed on the beat, the rhythm and frequencies especially during prolonged dancing. The most healing occurs during prolonged playing of music and immersion in it from which there is no escape. It is felt that the music takes control of bodily movements as if it is taking the 'driver's seat' though some element of directional control is mentioned leading to an 'altered state of mind'.

## 4.4 Interpretation

### Beliefs

There are a wide range of personal beliefs both religious and spiritual, but none directly ascribed to psychculture. There are issues with spiritual bypassing and hypocrisy within psychculture. Gatherings are generally secular for socialising, enjoyment and healing not religious purposes with dancing to music as the only secular ritual. Participants indicate a need to remove Westernised view that gathering were religious. There are some practices and principles that are considered shamanic but no direct shamanic beliefs or specific shaman within psychculture. Participants advice to enter gatherings with an attitude of non-belief and broach the unknown state confidently to explore the free space in the present moment that will engender reconnection.

The opposite view is that reality is the dominant experience of attending gatherings having no beliefs attached to it though the music, dancing, and socialising have a positive spiritual effect on participants. There are no specific rituals in the majority of psychculture gatherings other than dancing. Reality and the secular are the majority experience not religious or spiritual. There are references to mushroom and nature cultures represented in the artefacts. The soundsystem assemblage is presented as a sonic altar to the agency of sound.

### Ancestors

There are distinctions about whether the dancing was with ancestors, like ancestors, in connection with ancestors, directly or indirect present, or past, present, and future. Distinctions are made between whether ancestors are human, animal, nature, or plant, personal or general. There are experiences of connections to spirits of nature, animals, and plants or generalised human spirits at gatherings rather than personal human ancestral spirits. Recent ancestors may be felt, but rarely personal ones where it is more about a desire to feel connection or practice how ancestors did. Some believe they may be human ancestral spirits present but it is more likely to be the spirits of nature, animals and plants through establishing a holistic interconnection with alive humans. However, some only feel vague presence sometimes brought on by prolonged group dancing while others say the effect of dancing makes them feel better which may have been the same as why ancestors danced together. These connections are made through movement, connections with each other, connections via ASC and one participant indicated, as the plants are in



charge, they are what connects all beings to a wider spirit. Alternately, some feel ancestral connections are only figurative or there are no felt connections at all. They would rather stay in the present moment without any spiritual or ancestral assumptions.

### Persecution

Mushroom and countercultural possibilities is felt to be a re-creation of potential ancestral trance dance practices and beliefs. It is stated that the ancestors support humans who are continuing to be defiant against mainstream society. Descendants gather like ancestors did against a continuing backdrop of persecution sometimes for mushroom practices that continue to remain hidden in the modern-day. Participants suggest ancestors may have gathered together to congregate and dance away from mainstream society too.

### Dance and trance

People indicate their love of being in the flow of particularly prolonged dancing to psytrance music releasing pure, uninhibited emotions. Others experience feeling that their body moves of its own accord freeing themselves of time constraints, negative energies, and emotions. It is generally acknowledged that before entering a shared dance area, bad energy needs to be removed so it does not affect others or being aware of the power of their energy, how it can affect others. Some people describe the immersion in the dance as becoming the dance itself sharing energy and joy with those around them. The music is seen to create this flow where everyone dances in unison bringing balance and a tribal feeling of togetherness. The rhythm sustains the concentration during this prolonged dancing. This transformation achieved through communal dancing changes perception, emotions, thinking processes, and empathy to others.

The overall priority for all at a psytrance gathering is 'the dance'. The dancefloor is where transformation occurs, where you witness what inner work you need to do together as a family connected in a supportive, continuing. It is known that energy can be absorbed from others. The absorption of these frequencies in the communal energy is what makes the body move as the accumulated, collective energy runs through everyone on the dancefloor. The body is viewed as an instrument

transmitting the vibrations. The experience of the dance energy leads to the feeling that the energy and vibration enacts a 'dancefloor telepathy'; a communication without words that is vibrational. An extended commentary indicates that when people first enter the dance area, they will just bounce at first and then some are taken over by spirit while others continue to share the energy that makes you 'jump and touch the earth' like an 'ancient form of connecting' where eventually everyone's psyches connect in a group trance.

Within psyculture, participants who aim to achieve a trance-like state feel they connect entirely to the music, feeling elated in sharing the dance experience in a detachment from the day-to-day world as they become consumed by the sounds. Participants reflect about the reason for becoming part of this community was to achieve ASC with use of drugs by dancing in a repetitive manner to remove worries and stress on the body and mind. However, participants often refer to a loss of being possessed by mainstream hindrances and feel connected to a wider cosmology.

#### Music and sound

It is believed that any soundsystem that can vibrate the cells by infrasound can potentially be healing as it makes you feel better by dancing around to it. The repetitive pattern is mantra-like, being described as shamanic in its beats, rhythm, and frequencies that draw the dancer into the music. It is felt that psytrance production and composition captures the dancer 'on the level of frequency'. The music is called a 'continuation of sound going into one' that you can dip in and out of whereas the dancers trance into their own journey. Audience members demonstrate their appreciation of the artists who create a musical journey for their healing benefits confidently leaving their souls in the care of a skilled DJ letting the music take over their mind and body. Psytrance music is the key component in affecting people physically as they experience the effect of energy change on themselves while witnessing it in others. This change to positive energy brings great benefits on the body, mind, and soul.

The journey caused by the music makers transmitting the energy connection to those on the dancefloor is ignited by the dancers is the main ritual of the culture. There is significant belief in the intention of the artist to lead the musical journey for

the dancers where that position of control is acknowledged. The journey can take the audience through light and dark music, but it should be enjoyable too. The journey is focussed on directing the dynamics of bringing the music up and down to affect the dancers at a range of tempos, styles and sounds as the artist's change, they should fit together on this planned 'journey to ascension'. A large number of participants who were musical artists, DJs, and producers, shared their perspective and rationale for providing this musical journey for their audience. The importance of creating a musical journey during their place on the playlist demonstrating their individuality, sustain the dancefloor mood for the sake of the community. The light and dark aspects of a psytrance journey are seen as both necessary.

#### Contribution, community and participation

Positive values are important to people where they feel free to share them in a wholesome manner with a humanistic foundation. There is an embodiment of community values at a personal level. There are dancefloor rules and values enacted towards the positive. People feel at home amongst the psytrance family who link up with other family groups at other events. There is a tribal sense of belonging generated by prolonged dancing and social interaction with others in a safe space where learning, discussion and growing individually and together can occur in a feedback loop of self and community. The overall group experience is one of a sense of belonging and reciprocal acceptance not available in the mainstream world. Community belonging extends beyond events to integrate community values, the sense of belonging and connectivity via regional tribes.

Gatherings reinforce and progress community connections that are deep and ancient amongst 'living ancestors' acknowledging shared wisdom, knowledge, and practices through elders. At secret parties, the practices are often strongly aligned with older cultural practices, behaviours, and beliefs passing on the rules on the dancefloor. Such private spaces allow for the unmasking of adult practices and a child-like expression is witnessed. Some events are public, and some are private, invite only, and the sense of ease, belonging, and family is stronger along this continuum.

As people feel accepted by the community, they feel activated to contribute which is a key value in psyculture. Personal contribution included giving talks, introducing

newcomers to the values, practices and principles and networking, making new tribe connections, collaborations, and sharing resources and friendships as well as actively demonstrating the values and practices including dance. By just being present, dancing, and participating in a gathering is a form of contribution. Contribution extends beyond the event as people take what they have learnt into their mainstream lives. There are a wealth of roles and ways to contribute in psyculture where crew report a sense of satisfaction and achievement. It is essential that people contribute for the gatherings to occur, and the role of crew and organisers is paramount out of necessity rather than status. It is important for organisers to consider the health, safety, behaviour, and duty of care towards participants. New adaptations of crew collaborations were observed. At all events, the most important element was the sound systems, its management and quality. Some events have formal opening ceremonies. Shelter, sustenance, and safety are paramount at UK events because of the terrain, the weather, and the remoteness.

Organisers describe how it is difficult to find a venue in the UK for psytrance events inside or outside, that psytrance events have been closing down or not running both before and after the pandemic. The authorities in some areas are very strict and would not tolerate an illegal party. Some organisers believe similar prohibitions may have occurred with mobile populations in the present day too. Experiences with the police and authorities by organisers indicate a regular presence, instilling of restrictions and persecution by the authorities even though some forces appear tolerant to an extent which has been the case as early as the nineties as people 'would not rent to us'. There are legal restrictions on psyculture events in the UK. Negative experiences of prejudice were experienced at one of the events. This affected the participants making them less relaxed or feeling safe from persecution. The psychedelic references were more subdued whereas at the private event the psychedelic and mushroom allusions and behaviours were freer because it was hidden from the public.

#### Environment and nature

Psyculture is concerned with the power of nature, and it was designed with nature in mind. More in-depth detail is shared about the experiences of a psytrance gathering outside such as there being a deeper connection with themselves, others, spirit, and

nature leading to greater togetherness, shared energy, shared vulnerabilities, and expansiveness where the dancing in nature is what unites everyone. The outside experience brings a greater feeling of being animal and in tune with nature returning to the source of primality even as 'primates who like to dance'. beyond rational conditioning. The combination of psychedelics and outdoors allows people to feel they are returning to the source or their animal roots, the dissolution of the us and them nature of mainstream society, and 'more natural'. Landscapes are often ancient with communion with skyscapes that is fully appreciated by participants and described as inspirational. Dealing with suffering in extreme conditions is seen as part of the process to help each other and grow together.

#### Preparation, objects, and journey

There are a range of responses regarding pre-journey preparations before travelling to a gathering. This includes making arrangements for their return or being in touch with friends. Practical and decorative considerations are important in terms of dress and personal adornment that reflects the artwork of psyculture while some have minimal preparations. Many found the effort taken to contribute to the immersive environment by wearing psychedelic clothes, decorations and jewellery adds to the creativity of the environment enhancing the experience of belonging. Some indicated a positive state of mind and intentions is important, whereas some believe the point is to have nothing and take nothing. Another important object to take is people or making arrangements to meet up with personal tribe members going together as a small group then to meet up with other groups 'in the wider world'. The journey is viewed as a process not a destination which continues in mainstream integration strengthening personal abilities to improve life 'infecting' holistically all life experiences. This journey often brings out the creative side both personally and together where personal growth is witnessed.

#### Benefits

There are psychological and physical benefits of prolonged dancing referred to as empowering movements. Inter and intra-group tribal interactions on the dancefloor are evident. The benefits of trance are stated as due to repetitive rhythms that affect stress levels, psychological and spiritual wellbeing and raised energy levels through sharing collective trance energy. The trance state is more enhanced awareness than

hallucinatory. Psytrance is seen as the ideal music for prolonged group dancing which has health benefits as it loosens the body and mind, by reducing thinking and making contact with others. The overall estimation is that prolonged group dancing outside has the most beneficial effects improving connectivity and self-knowledge.

The belief that collective dancing could change the world has arisen throughout the findings. Similarly, with the use of the word 'healing' that may not be the correct word to use; it may be beneficial to use the word 'benefits' instead to move away from the assumption that participants need healing or want it. The loss of many experiences due to the pandemic has led to a change in the benefits both psychological and physical. However, the combination of psytrance music, likeminded people, being in nature with health food and drink seems to leave participants with the belief that attendance and the composite lived experience has a positive effect. This may not be the case for all participants including those who are working at events who may not be able to afford to spend their time 'healing' because they are working.

There are a range of lived experiences beyond dance and trance that bring benefits to the emotions, to the physicality and the psychology of participants as well as social wellbeing and potential or growth. It is difficult to separate the specific aspects that lead to benefits from the overall experience of attending a gathering, but the belief is that specifically psytrance events lead to feeling better. Though there are few responses from participants that relate benefits to the use of psychedelics, this is often implicitly suggested in the holistic experience.

#### 4.5 Analysis

##### Beliefs (Q9)

Though participants may not subscribe to a specific belief system and may actively deny the practices and principles are everyday, secular, and not religious, there are distinct similarities in terms of having an accepted viewpoint within the culture, perceptions of the world, ideologies about existence and dealing with life problems, the desire to differentiate themselves from outside, and the benefits of belonging to a culture and practising dance rituals together to bring healing benefits. Though there is an assertion that there are no belief systems within psychculture, there are underlying assumptions that there are ancestral connections, that the culture

provides a way of understanding life, the dancing and congregating provide similar forms of annual celebrations based around renewal, change, and stability evidenced in the importance of community, belonging, participation and providing a non-familial kinship group that is important to participants.

The formation of the psyculture subculture is potentially influenced by societal problems due to the fragmentary nature of modern-day communities because of the reduction in spiritual practices and principles. Thus, gatherings are providing a secular desire for community engagement rather than a sacred affirmation based on a spiritual belief system. Participants are potentially seeking escape from the restrictions of mainstream culture where they feel they do not belong and an opportunity for affirmation within another cultural setting. Participants indicate that their desire to take drugs and feel open about it is available with psyculture, but it is not accepted in mainstream culture and that is the attraction. Yet within this gnostic amalgamation of spiritual and secular, it is a mixed bag of fragments that do not constitute an entire belief system.

Certainly, there are no specific shamanic ritual practices intended to bring good weather or a good harvest via a shaman. However, the desire for communal and individual consciousness changes, healing, and spiritual contact, the enhancing of social relations and group bonding, including night to daytime ceremonies, the potential healing via released emotions and sociality are similar to shamanic practices, even if this is implicit.

A spiritual or transformatory experience is not necessarily what is sought at psytrance gatherings where equally the experience is of the everyday, about the awake social interactions and networking and little desire to contact spiritual dimensions. A large percentage of participants indicated the maintenance of immediacy at gatherings with fieldwork confirming the habits of the everyday as regularly performed in the daytime where the night-time is for otherworldly experiences via trance dance and/drug taking. The immediacy relationality, oneness, and dissolution of the self-experienced from a mix of the everyday and inter-dimensional experiences may be illustrate a human desire for radical alterity and otherness. This desire to discard the restrictive controls of contemporary life and to

seek re engagement with the subtle body of energy and vibrancy with other beings, matter, and the non-human.

#### Ancestors and memory (Q4)

In the modern-day interpretation of ancestral connection that is beyond direct lineage, there are multiple ways people perceive ancestral connection particularly with the lack of religious belief, familial disconnection in mainstream society, the yearning for restoration of a linking to the nostalgic fantasy of a hacienda past that may be at the heart of some of the responses given. There does appear to be a generalised veneration of the dead but not in specific kinship lineage, rituals or ceremonies but rather an anonymised ancestors, and a mix of human and non-human, a blurring of the distinction between ancestors, spirits, and the wider cosmology but also of recent psyculture elders and following in their footsteps. In fact, a plethora of ancestral connection possibilities from direct contact to vague feelings of presence exist including where some insist on no connection at all preferring the experience of the present. What is evident is a diversity of ancestral roles and possibilities of connection. Whether imaginary or entirely based on nostalgic need in the anomie of contemporary society, these beliefs and supposed experiences play a vital role in providing a purpose and lead to genuine feelings of benefit from attending and dance for prolonged periods outside together.

Some of the interpretations have a valid rationality that even though the specifics cannot be known, that the modern-day participants are gathering and dancing for positive effects individually and communally that there is evidence of occurring in the past. They argue that even though an accurate version of history may be absent, the knowledge of what happened, why it happened, and where it happened is missing, the ancestral memory exists within the DNA and the dancing embodiment brings back what participants feel is the same purpose, practice, and principles for returning to dance together inter and intra group wise on a regular basis.

Memory of communal dance gatherings is evident, whether real or imaginary, within participants accounts that effect their impression of the history of what they are doing in in terms of social, cultural and individual knowledges, however forgotten, vague and unverifiable. It is timely to consider those histories that have been silenced or



repressed and include these marginalised versions as equally valid of the standard versions of history. Extension of the process of memory should encompass all living systems as well as making distinction between the psychological and physiological realities as well as alternative consciousnesses which all have equal claim to historical inclusion. Participants discuss a range of reasons for gatherings that include both physical and psychological experiences across an array of intersecting literal and other dimensional possibilities. As part of a group memory that includes the altered states of consciousness and the everyday experiences, participants clearly understand the relevance of both possible experience where diversity is accepted but that some may have spiritual ancestral connections but some wish only to experience the immediacy of the moment with an inclusionary gathering. This complex amalgamation may be entirely based on nothing concrete but it has a purpose and is sustained by the belief of the participants that the experience is of benefit to them which is the draw that ensures return.

The majority of participants cite dancing is the primary embodiment and re-enactment of ancestral memory where the action of dancing initiates remembering when undertaken in a group is crucial to its achievement in this shared activity even if the memory is only recent and not connected to ancestral trance experiences, the belief that it does is enough to make participants feel better.

There are some comments that suggest the present-day persecution and restrictions placed on the practice of psychculture within the UK were endemic throughout history. the seeking of a liminal space for transformatory purposes cannot be confirmed as relevant to their life experiences where transformatory practices were often embedded in the everyday rather than separate. There has been a long and continuing issue for travellers within the UK and with those seeking to take entheogenic substances that links many marginalised groups and subcultures.

#### Dance and trance (Q2)

Collective dance functioned to improve communal solidarity, deepening social and individual identity and communication, to remember and to forget, and to wake up the senses and emotions. Dance is a more effective form of non-verbal communication than spoken interactions in terms of social bonding through gesture

and movement. Participants report that the collective dance awakens the energetic self beyond physical and mental conditioning that prolongs dancing and is initiated by prolonged dancing itself. The resultant experience of flowing together like mummering birds in a trinity between music, dancing and dancers is a significant articulation of what is sought and returned for.

The majority experience of participants is regarding the energy produced through dancing especially collectively where the dancers build up energy increasing somatic awareness to equal cognitive awareness. The flow or energy that results leads to a state of nothingness and bliss where participants are thinking with the body. This relational flow between human and non-human converges into a deeper flow of re-embodiment where all senses become equal and binaries between inner and outer worlds dissolve. The purpose of participants about negative, chaotic energy is to change by the communal energy alchemised by the music. Whether these experiences are imaginary, or part of a trance-induced hallucination, they believe it improves interactive awareness of others on the dancefloor as people are not in an internalised, individual trance but seeking to share what they believe is positive energy to others as a significant factor in social bonding and communication through gesture and movement. However, this experience is not always the case as issues and negative effects may be experienced by those not fully immersed in the group.

Participants report that there are many layers of altered states of realities and unrealities where a blissful place is reached in a safe place where they are free from the body/mind dichotomy progressing towards oneness via dance to the repetitive beat. Trance can have a range of intentions as a method of mediation between the supernatural and humans through repetitive group dancing but within psychculture the overwhelming intention is to dance. However, this excludes possible trance induction by other means such as through chemical enhancement or by merely listening and being present at an immersive gathering as participants indicate. A distinction between enhanced reality and ASC is indispensable for a fuller understanding of the multiple possible experiences at such gatherings but the distinction in psychculture is about dancing that is not necessarily performed to achieve an expected hallucinatory trance state. Achievement of ASC was specifically for community effects often through ritual trance dancing.

#### Music and sound (Q4)

The influence of acoustical properties specific to landscape and space is rarely discussed by participants. However, the dancefloor as an agentic space is referred to frequently as the place where the 'magic', the dancing, connectivity, liminality, transformation, and sociality occurs and is therefore the most powerful and most referred to space. It is the purpose of the mobile people, their transformation of spaces and the intention to connect to the soundscape, the resonance, and frequencies that may be the ancestral thread within the universal practice of gathering to dance, sometime at what we now call sacred sites or anywhere. A dancefloor space becomes sacred by the human intention given to it.

As psyculture participants express that beliefs, values, and practices provide a blueprint for humanity's future survival, there are important factors in archaeological research of sound, music and acoustics that help to understand the benefits, intentions and practices in modern-day practices that may determine whether this hypothesis is feasible. Certainly, it is evident that these intentionally affective acoustic dance spaces increase bonding, showing the role of sound has an integral place in psyculture. The dance space is the predominant feature and attraction as well as group dancing. Equally sonic components are the dominant feature of psyculture gatherings as the culture is based around a worship of the music.

Participants provide a valuable explanation of attributes of the music, its purposes and its interpretations that indicate the inter-relationship of cognition and sociality showing how important psytrance music is to them and their personal and collective progress. This may not be due to their acquired culture but the physical, biological response to rhythmic, synchronised activity where the evolution in sound develops with cultural improvements away from physical or societal constraints as people dance themselves free from mainstream ontology. Participants describe how the compositional features of psytrance music are the most conducive to inducing affective responses as the bodies and sounds become intertwined through heightened spatiality that links the internal individual and external world in a relationality of mind, place, and emotions into a composite structure of feeling. Participants and musical artists, producers, and performers are equally aware of the

specifics of the musical composition that elicits the range of desired states from hyper-awareness to trance states via its frequencies, repetition, tones, modulations, temporality, melodies are associated with changes in physiological responses.

The use of production techniques to induce a musical journey showing the rise/fall is in the musical composition, across songs linked together and inter and intra playlists across a day/night, vertical/horizontal spiralling. There are expectations indicated by participants that tracks/sets will provide these reactions in a sonic aesthetic orgasm of affective intensity. Participants emphasise the expectation of a musical, sonic journey to be created across artists, playlists, times of day, styles, and genres formed in what they believe is the dominant expression of the impact, seriousness, and sophistication of psytrance music to create this experience. Not only is the artists and performers musical choices valued by the participants but also the quality of the playlists and the musical equipment generally a soundsystem presenting a powerful assemblage as important as the music itself.

#### Contribution, community and participation (Q2)

In this ultrasocial culture there are complex socialities, diversities, and swift adaptability even where the weather or urgent change of location at the last minute are dealt with. This survival aspect across non-kin in small groups could be because of the egalitarian, non-hierarchical reciprocity that minimises domination and aids social interaction and high turnover decision making. This elasticity extends across intra-groups in the UK and to global interactions where some organisers provide infrastructure or performance in other countries or participants group together to attend overseas events as an infrastructure group.

There is evidence of some inequality, but it is often acknowledged that as this is a microcosm of society where the same conflicts, inequalities, and issues exist as in any community. However, the issues of these small-scale groupings tend to be resolved at local level mainly because of the strong sense of belonging that nurtures resolution.

Within the tribal groups in the UK, there are many that combine, re-organise, and re-combine to work together. This leads to change and innovation as tribal groups

share resources between communities in a trans-egalitarian manner. The level of complex intra-group fluidity in contributing, participating, and co-operating across the UK is phenomenal particularly since the pandemic. Contribution is an essential part of the culture that is based on connections, participation and co-operation. The sense of belonging and acceptance nudges people to want to contribute to a process of co-creation away from consumerism. This contribution extends beyond the gatherings into mainstream life in a complex network of friendship, work networking, inter and intra-creation opportunities occur in a high turnover community that thrives and relies on change and adaptation.

This necessity for co-operation and contribution covers complex aspects in this cultural capital at a regional level due to proximity of labour, resources, transport, and travelling together with equipment. Crews meet up with other crews at national gatherings where resources are further shared. It is generally at larger gatherings that creativity and adaptation occur because of the sharing of new ideas, objects, and materials. Co-creation in psychculture relies on the shared goals and synchrony that parallel the cognitive processes from dancing together. This insinuates that his collective dance experience nurtures the practical collaborations away from the dancefloor as tribal groupings dance together then co-create together. Further participants develop their psychculture persona that fuse their identity with their tribes, nationally, and then represent as ambassadors at global gatherings.

This extended connectivity can help individuals integrate more with each other, the wider community. Participants indicate that participation and contribution to the culture is the element that potentiates transformation, changes thought processes and provides a template of participation for an improved paradigm. Fun and work are indistinguishable embedded with the values of contribution and participation, where participants find their place in the community by what they do and how they dance. There may be different agendas and contestation occurring in this fluid environment especially at the beginning of a gathering where it is chaotic but one of the principles is that it will all come together if they work together. Within this, the importance of immediacy in dealing with the creation of an event, during the event, and afterwards that requires intense co-operation and skill sharing as mainstream concerns are dropped in order to co-create in the present moment. Participation is creation and

calls upon the whole of being. It is based on investment and commitment on a more or less short-term basis but in a highly intense manner, as well as on excessive behaviours that make up rave experiences.

There are few activist sentiments, but the culture relies on hidden forms of communication to ensure that gatherings are hidden from the police and authorities as there are prohibitions and legal restrictions in force in what is still viewed as a hippy, drug-based psychedelic culture with evident discrimination and stigma from the public and family members. As a marginalised group in the UK, psyculture continues to suffer discrimination, prejudice, and prohibitions at an individual and group level for such as drug taking and prolonged dancing outside often in non-legal spaces that bring a cloak of secrecy to the gatherings. Psyculture participants often identify with other marginalised groups with a long history against authorities and the police and there has been an increase in direct police action at gatherings particularly since lockdown. Reports relate how this has fired up the bonding amongst groups that have creatively adapted to such prohibitions by changing groupings, locations, and means of communication. However, there are genuine concerns for illegal gatherings by the general public and the police at such unmonitored gatherings as crime and personal harm does occur and there are few security and welfare plans in place at the less organised gatherings or consideration of the effect on the local community in terms of traffic, rubbish, and damage to the local environment are key issues that are often tackled by the more principled organisers to protect nature and the participants.

#### Environment and nature (Q6)

The intersubjectivity of human, non-human, nature, cosmology, skyscapes, ancestry, landscapes, and memories of spaces and places in recent participant history provide a powerful experience as humans link beliefs and practices of their self and culture to the natural world around them that may make them feel connected to the past and the wider cosmology. The communal experience of dancing together in nature provides a much more intensive communion. The senses become heightened with an embodiment of nature and non-human when outside. The sensoriality of outside spaces and places hold memories of cultural processes and inspire wonder in ancient landscapes. Though psyculture gatherings are rarely held on sanctioned

sacred sites or monument spaces, there is a general attitude of awe and appreciation at any space as the human agency takes over and enacts a sacrality wherever they gather. The wider cosmology and power and agency of landscape, spaces and places outside might be within a nostalgic imaginary but are still powerful ways of remembering and instilling a sense of individual and group identity, communication with the past and inspiration for the future. The sensuality of being outside in nature extends beyond a visual bias towards touch, smell, and hearing. Of course, any activity in nature will elicit such a favourable response as nature tends to bring the human into the present moment and enjoy the beauty of the surroundings yet psyculture participants seek a desire of immersion.

The associations of psyculture participants with experiencing a more animal self may be based on their own knowledges and beliefs having a vague assignation to wildness and outdated attitudes towards some type of primal self. The intersubjectivity between a wild environment and a wild self is feasible with an affective fallacy initiated in that extreme landscapes can bring on extreme experiences in humans. The shared relationality between species and places within an assemblage of wildness as participants seek out this potential grounding of their mainstream self is an often cited intention for attending whether imaginary or not.

#### Preparations, objects, and journey (Q7 and Q8)

There are mixed responses from participants regarding whether objects and preparations are important to them whether for adornment, practicalities, or for sharing purposes. Participants have specific psytrance clothing that they wear or décor for their encampment areas that display their tribal emblems and personal identity showing a mix of homogeneity and heterogeneity. Yet there are few specific association with objects that relate to the past but more linked to the tribal symbology, practical usage, and personal identity though these are valued aesthetically. The personal and organiser décor often encompassing a range of current day influences that demonstrate their individual trans-cultural transfer as members bring back art, artefacts and ideas from other cultures that become merged in a high turnover transference of new symbols, patterns, and material assemblages such as the current use of stretch patterned materials imported from European festivals. This melting pot of cultural symbology can be criticised for being cultural

appropriation or it can be viewed as a celebration of diverse spiritual, cultural and practical past and present assemblages in a global amalgamation. The culture is arguably based on a global passion for a specific genre of music and is not static or specific to one country, culture, or belief systems leading to a continuum of enmeshment. The multiplicity of connections goes beyond linear or historical fixity rather existing like a rhizomatic entanglement of interspecies communication of interlinked threads.

Psyculture participants bring the objects and themselves to any site and make a connection with the space being used by a mix of their memorialised and imaginary intentions assisted by their use of objects to create a temporary place for their present-day experience. They subscribe to a leave no trace policy and embed this ecological intention into their use of things making sure to leave nothing behind with a great respect for the landscape rarely practised at mainstream festivals. Thus, materials for gatherings are often consumable or the rubbish is taken away with them. Intense effort is made by the organisers and individuals to encompass such an ethos. An entire village can be built up and packed down within a matter of days before moving onto the next festival. This demonstrated crews working together, removing infrastructure, décor, sound systems, and transporting the equipment to a new site within a matter of days. This week after week journey from festival to festival sees crews travelling during the season in the UK but often during the European season too where English crew will convoy together.

Journeys by participants are undertaken within the UK will involve a similar detailed preparation as locations are often remote, have few facilities and require the basic commodities to be gathered together such as living arrangements, food and water, shelter, and lighting. As there are specific legal restrictions in the UK, locations are remote with often extreme conditions that have to be catered for. The co-operation, sharing and inter-tribal assistance comes into its own at such gatherings where everyone helps each other. This includes a complex network of lift-sharing or planning to travel together not only to think about environment considerations but because there is rarely any public transport to such locations.



The intention for travelling is to meet with other tribal members and make new connections with other tribes which shows the social intention behind such journeying. This could suggest journeying as a key element in human experience where mobility and sociality are tied together. Similarly with desiring a psychological journey, people may seek attain altered states of consciousness together. Participants are not only seeking co-presence with their immediate tribes, but with strangers, nature, the non-human, and other beings. As psyculture participants are on a pilgrimage to dance and meet together in a mix of practical living, fun, the pursuit of otherness and positive energy renewal, this may suggest a similar reason for such pilgrimages in small bounded communities.

Participants comment about part of the literal journey is the challenging of being able to find the gathering location that can be a complex matter in remote circumstances where sat nav does not work and there is reliance on old-fashioned methods of map reading but that this is part of the excitement, fun and anticipation. Sometimes the lack of specific information can be chaotic but occasionally elder knowledge of previously used sites can alleviate some of the being lost issues. This being lost and found or finding the place almost initiates a pre-event mindset that readies participants for the altered states journey they anticipate at the gathering.

#### Benefits (Q10)

Trance and dance evidently improves self-awareness and a sense of reality, increased habitus, and dissolves boundaries, spurs creativity and embodies identity both within and outside friendship groups restoring a vitality and sense of peace when away from mainstream pressures. The neutralising of negative energy and problems through the experience of trance may help with mental health issues. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether it is dance, trance, or a group experience that may elicit such a positive experience. not all experiences are described as positive. Often these benefits are integrated into mainstream lives improving general sociality cultivating intra and inter-generational learning and connections but not always. Thus, a blanket conclusion that all participation in trance dance has a positive benefit is speculative.

The healing possibilities are linked to the musical composition of psytrance music through its repetitive rhythms that help synchronise the mind, body, and space. The immediacy of the experience of music could be the factor that transforms the consciousness to widen personal experience, reduce egocentricity, and deepen shared meaning missing in mainstream lives. The specific compositional techniques of psytrance influence connectedness and encourage synchronisation. Of course, most music can benefit mental health. However, the repetition and complexity of psytrance is specifically geared towards engaging empathy, compassion, and prosocial behaviours because of rhythmic synchrony. The embodiment of increased synchronicity, communication, relationships, respite from mainstream stresses, mental health balancing that can result from 'retreats' into non-ordinary spaces for the purpose of dancing to music is evidenced in the participant's claims.

Participants describe a primacy where everything is alive and connected both human and non-human where the resultant benefits emerge from being grounded in nature creating increased connectivity. Of course, set and setting that stimulate thought processes, expand awareness, and evolve intelligences are closely connected to the health impact of earth-bound practices. These embodiments of trance dance practices within nature, love of ecosystems, affirmations of relationships with the non-human and the wider cosmology have potential benefits on the individual and collective human experience. These imagined connectivities may be real or not but they have a purpose in making humans feel better in the present, more in touch with their ancestry and primal human self that may be a reason why so many participants feel benefits. However, this is possibly a minefield of supposed desires, nostalgic needs, and group falsities that create a tradition out of nothing. However, this does not matter as much as the benefits from the imagined heritage and ancestral connections within the communal experience.

Psychedelic substances are described as an ancient technology of transcendence that can produce profound change, bring relief from negative energy release, increase group bonding and the levelling of individual differences that are beneficial to participants. Hallucinogenics and trance dancing seen to have the ability to transform human mental states, alter mood, increase cognition, and leave participants in a relaxed manner. Yet it is difficult to separate whether it is the trance

dance, set or setting, substances or other factors that may lead to people feeling better along with the importance of heritage landscapes and interactions bringing benefits for humans can inform modern-day psychculture research too.

## 5. Discussion

In the discussion section, there is a presentation of the results, interpretation of these findings in primary and secondary to draw implications, identify patterns, relationships, explain what is expected and what is not expected, and contextualise previous research. The sections follow the same format in terms of themes. An abbreviations grid is given below as a guide to locating original data in appendices.

Key to Appendix abbreviations
Appendix 7 Interview data (I)
Appendix 8 Survey data (S)
Appendix 9 Autoethnographic Interview data (AI)
Appendix 10 Fieldwork data (FW)
Appendix 11 Autoethnographic journal (AJ)

### 5.1 Beliefs

Primary and secondary findings indicate that there may have been a range of possible beliefs, spiritualities and rituals in past, contemporary, EDM and psychculture trance practices from religious to no beliefs. Beliefs, spiritualities, and rituals may be personal or collective helping to understand existence, ways of tackling life problems, and specific to particular community (Insoll 2004, p.156; Fogelin 2007, p.62; Olsen 2010, p.52). Participants have many different religions and spiritual paths. and some have none but there is no defined religious belief system in psychculture (S1, p.21).

Scholars indicate participants are seeking salvific experiences of transcendence, awakening, renewal, rebirth, ascension, or re-enchantment (St. John 2004b, p.26). This variety of beliefs, principles and practices is reflected in some participant's

responses who feel their experience is spiritual but not specifically religious with an affective response to the music and being part of the community stated as more important; some are seeking mystical experiences, but religious practice is generally absent. 'Spiritual', 'religious' and 'shamanic' seem to be employed as an adjective for a mystical experience rather than an established belief system (I11, p.28). St. John refers to participants as seeking sacred variety of experiences in a religiosity of 'mediated sensations' within a seeker culture where only traces of religious elements remain (St. John 2006, p.2). He suggests these beliefs do not necessarily add up to a whole culture but a mash up of beliefs and spiritualities in a form of expressive humanism where participants pick and mix from a diversity of sacred and secular beliefs (St. John 2004b, p.18). Participants describe how life is inherently spiritual but that tends to be a personal thing and it is difficult to make assumptions about others (S5, p.21. Reflecting St. John's 'pick and mix' description of beliefs and spiritualities, a participant states 'I have a spirituality' in an adjectival sense not a belief system (S9, p.22).

St. John defines the modern-day growth of desires for quasi-religious freedom as a rave imaginary replacing the quest for personal freedom with an ancient collective freedom (St. John 2004a, p.7; 2004b, p.18). Participants suggest that the priority of seeking transcendence in a modern setting is replicating what may have been the 'original spiritual gathering' in the past (S5, p.126) to achieve a 'journey to ascension' (I7, p.17) and free the body from the mind (I9, p.23).

St. John refers to the dancefloor as a sacred space where participants can be themselves in order to journey transcendently (St. John 2004a, p.12; D'Andrea, 2007, p.151). Heelas agrees that participants are expressing their spirituality to find an authentic experience free from the toxic effects of mainstream life whereas Larkin sees psychculture spirituality as a re-emergence of ancient tribal ritual with a gathering acting as a bridge between the ancient past and the present (Larkin 2003, p.45; Heelas 2000, p.236). Participants may not see their experiences as religious, even if the spiritual affect is unaccepted or acknowledged, but it may be implicit where types of religious practices, codes and restoration of connectivity are similar (I11, p.26). Participants acknowledge seeking a tribal bonding (I8, p.21) gained from collective journeying together which is inherently a religious experience (I7, p.17; Till 2011, p.4;

Tramacchi 2001, p.279; de Ledesma 2010, p.75; Farrell 2019, p.149). Though what is sought predominantly by participants is the experience of release from dancing and being together (I8, p.21).

It has been stressed that there is a clear similarity across past, present, and psychculture shamanic practices that are an inherent part of the human experience resulting in increased bonding due to trance, dance, singing, and music (Winkelman 2015, p.6). He states that shamanic rituals strengthened community in a mutual connection with spirit dimensions, in its social function of bonding, and shared communication (Winkelman 2009, p.470). Some participants affirm similar intentions and results in psychculture especially as psytrance music is apt for achieving ecstasy, pure emotion, and celebration that has benefits on their consciousness and personal evolution (I9, p.22). In psychculture research, there are some similarities to past and present shamanic practices such as the consciousness changing use of chemicals, social relations that enhance *communitas*, group bonding, and a desire for reconnection (Hutson 2000, p.41; St. John 2004a, p.2; Tramacchi 2004, p.135).

There is a growing interest in scholarship about understanding the mindsets and thought patterns in human evolution to further understand usage and practice that ethnographic research in the modern-day can evidence (Winkelman 2023, p.2; Price 2001, p.3; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2011, p.24; Reynolds 2014, p.7). 2001, p.4; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2011, p.24; Reynolds 2014, p.7). The findings from participants provide valuable information about what happens during participation especially about relaxing the mind and focussing on bodily movement as a sought-after experience (I1, p.2; I9, p.21).

Psychculture rituals contain ancient ritualistic practices that lead to ASC and healing, and spiritual concepts that could be categorised as shamanic (I11, p.65; A1, p.6; Winkelman 2009, p.439). Some participants believe they are experiencing shamanic technology in a contemporary setting, some claim there is nothing shamanic about beliefs, and emphatically none claim the existence of actual shaman or that any of the practices are based on individual shamanic practitioners (S8, p.3).

Some participants indicate individual practices may have shamanic elements in psychculture gatherings whereas others indicate it is important to have an attitude of non-belief (I6, p.16; I7, p.17). Participants indicate they seek, practice, and belief in some type of vague shamanism or spirituality (I9, p.22). Some distinctly distance themselves assigning shamanic labels and I noted the absence of spirituality other than the desire to dance together to music (FW, p.24).

A shaman is a predominant figure within shamanic practices in the past as mediums between the spirit world and reality (Olsen 2010, p.36). However, a specialist shaman figure is distinctly absent in modern-day trance practices where the term vaguely refers to shamanic practices (Eliade 2020, p.507; Winkelman 2009, p.474; Jackson 2016, p.iv). Instead, psychculture practices are described as individualised or generalised as participants with no evidence of specific shaman (I6, p.15).

Participants suggest that individual practices are vaguely similar actions to shaman but there are few, if any, actual shaman figures. A clear argument by participants is that such labels or assigned figures claiming to be shaman are to be avoided and in fact challenged where healing is being falsely sold as spiritual awakening (S23, p.22) to desperate and disconnected Westernised seekers plugging a spiritual hole in empty mainstream lives (Singh 2018, p.38; Krippner 2002, p.975). This blanket denial of a shaman figure is interesting in that it may reflect the current negativity towards cultural and spiritual appropriation more than a true lack of individual shamanic figures.

Winkelman suggests that the problem inherent in secular modern-day societies reflect the loss of strong spiritual practices (Winkelman 2015, p.10). Participants confirm seeking ways to reconnect to spirit due to this sense of loss in modern society (S7, p.6). Tramacchi indicates psychculture experiences at gatherings lead to a 'psychedelic communitas' presenting a collective experience for its spiritual seekers (Tramacchi 2001, p.210). These seekers have a range of purposes for participation based on the importance of connection in a contemporary communitas as a place to achieve re-enchantment and collective connectivity (I9, p.22). Thus, ritual and ceremonies may be tied with a desire for community engagement rather than sacred affirmation (I1, p.1). Some participants indicate what is spiritually beneficial is that important things, which cannot be discussed or practised in the mainstream, such as

the power of dance, belief in mushrooms and practices, and the taking of drugs or other forbidden beliefs, can be discussed within this safe space in psyculture (S7, p.22).

Tarlow asserts that there should be a greater focus on how beliefs and practices are more akin to everyday life, expression, and interactions where higher transcendent communication, and intense ritual communication in alternative realities is only occasional at gatherings (Tarlow 2015, p.8; Raja & Rüpke 2015, p.3). The everyday does not necessarily have religious connotations being more akin to life and relationship skills or the seeking of immediatism (Foor 2017, p.88; Beck & Lynch 2009, p.339). De Ledesma indicates that he could not locate any particular 'thirst either for self-expansion or self-destruction' within UK psyculture advising that everyday practices and experiences at gatherings are just as prevalent, and rather sought, through contribution and participation in the creation of community (I6, p.13) as the seeking of spirituality and transformation (AI, p.2). The shared intent of sociality dominates as senses are enhanced rather than reduced (de Ledesma 2010, p.75; S8, p.3 (AI, p.8).

Trance dance research would benefit from being fine-tuned to take the focus away from assigning rigid assignments of beliefs and spiritualities trance dance practices and principles rather perceiving a gnostic amalgamation that is just as much everyday as it is sacred. McKay indicates that the bringing together of multiple ideologies in psyculture creates something greater than its parts calling it a spirituality of connectedness (McKay 2003, p.178). Participants suggest there is a dominance of the everyday, and the seeking of the present moment (S14, p.22) over nostalgia. This gnostic amalgamation is where participants are not subscribing to specific belief systems but a free space (AI, p.6) where new meanings and discoveries at individual and group level are sought instead (FW, p.14).

The range of spiritual or other-than spiritual experiences would benefit from being foregrounded as possible alternatives that the psychedelic community are seeking based on a sense of freedom, linked to nature celebration and personal growth particularly focussed on the dance experience of connectivity, energy release, and generation of positive emotions (S17, p.22; S24, p.25). 'Magic' is a term frequently

used by participants to describe the dance experience as much as spiritual denoting a special place or experience (I4, p.20').

However, the dancefloor is seen by participants as a sacred place and the soundsystem sits like an altar at the front that appears to have sacred connotations (FW, p.8). Figure 29 demonstrates such an altar at the front of the stage where the soundsystem and artist are located behind the complexity of patterns, images, floral and psychedelic décor, and immersive symbolism creating a hallucinatory effect where it is difficult to focus even in daylight but certainly a powerful, hypnotic, visual focus for participants.



*Figure 29 Psychedelic artwork and decor on the front of stage altar*

Olsen reports that spirit connections and nature are often embedded within everyday functions, manifest through animals, stone, earth (Olsen 2010, p.212). As current scholarship widens in understanding the intersubjectivities of spirit between the



body, objects, the non-human, and nature it brings validity in understanding how matter is infused with conscious agency (Johnston 2023, p.16). Participants frequently note vibrancy from matter and from themselves (I7, p.17) which is what many participants are seeking - this source of subtle energy (I6, p.16) between human and non-human (I11, p.27) in being part of energy of nature (I6, p.16).

## 5.2 Ancestors and Memory

Within psychulture, there are frequent statements about contact with ancestors being an integral part of the trance dance experience, but the findings suggest a greater complexity than the initial research question. The concept of an ancestor is complex and ancestral worship remains widespread across many cultures, it is not part of the psychulture experience in terms of direct kinship or familial association. Some forms of ancestral worship or gatherings are not linked to kinship but rather embedded in the ideas, symbols and narratives that impinge on community life which is noted in psychulture participants' responses (S21, p.7; Büster 2022, p.23; Kim 2015, p.47; Long & Van 2020, p.375). Participants' responses centre around having a vague idea that they are practising in a similar manner as ancestors but rarely directly in contact with ancestral kin due to modern-day societal disconnect (I4, p.10). A clear distinction exists between a dominant desire and practice of connection to actual kinship ancestors in the academic scholarship to the research participants who overall did not feel that there was direct contact with ancestral kin beyond a vague experience of connection with a more generalised ancestral spirit.

Ancestral worship, and in particular ancestral-descendant interaction, is inherent in many world religions though it is important to keep in mind complex, cultural differences. However, the universals and important subtleties in ancestral worship can be missed too if there is a culturally specific focus in understanding the purpose and influence of ancestors on the living (Steadman, Palmer & Tilley 1996, p.63; Insoll 2011, p.2). Ancestral connections and the practices of remembering ancestors by descendants continues to be a widespread practice in human culture though much depleted in the modern-day. This is reflected in psychulture where multiple associated ancestral beliefs and practice exist from direct kinship to no ancestral connection stated (S12, p.22). However, the disconnection of modern-day society,

often leads to a sense of anomie and a lack of belonging that may underpin the current trend in society to create or believe in ancestral connections to help overcome what is missing in modern society (AI, p.6). In fact, many participants advocate seeking the opposite to experience ancestral connections preferring to stay in the present moment without seeking spiritual experiences (S14, p.22).

However, techniques of achieving transcendence through trance and dancing similar to other trance dance practising cultures are acknowledged by some participants (S14, p.26). Participants are seeking oneness, healing, and networking for connection with human and non-human spirits, the land, cosmology, and the living staying consciously present with an absence of thought that they conjecture are linked to ancient practice (I4, p.10).

The material circumstances of the trance, dance, music, sound, and place, and purposes of a gatherings may differ cross-culturally, but participants indicate, similar to St. John, that they were seeking ego-death, re-awakening (S8, p.25), the intention of return to increase the vibe or make energies positive (St. John 2010a; S18, p.7). He identifies this remembering of a return to an earlier source inherent within the human condition that potentially parallels the reasons why humans continue to return to such gatherings (St. John 2010a, p.7; I1, p.10). Participants equally state ancestors were perhaps seeking a sense of freedom and oneness through dancing together and achieving ASC too (S14, p.26). St. John calls psytrance liminality a multi-dimensional, upwards spiralling trajectory not a linear journey where participants return to deepen this spiralling trajectory (St. John 2010a, p.229; FW, p.5). There is a vague nod to the sacred intentionality by participants (S12, p.7) as St. John confirms with indeterminate rituals, but the intention is to increase the energy (I10, p.25), refine membership and progress (St. John 2014b, p.174). Within modern-day culture, there are similar assertions that what is being practiced is either ancestral, dancing like or with ancestors (S5, p.27), continuing similar rituals and practices presumably ancient (S13, p.12). Though these are not tied to a specific actual culture or kinship ancestral lineage but rather by similar practices and principles of trance dance (S16, p.12).

These variations of ancestral connections across culture in anthropology apply to dance, trance, and rituals potentially remembering distant as well as ancient ancestors where there is a vague memory or a generalised observance of the dead (Hicks 2010, p.xiii). There are various responses from participants regarding ancestral-descendant interactions, but they generally feel they danced 'like' ancestors not with kinship based or specific ancestors but using the same sacred technology of the ancients to achieve the possibility of discovery. Some psyculture participants acknowledge a celebration of ancestors while some may not, even though they may be doing so inadvertently, in performing dance and trance rituals (S9, p.12). Some participants determinedly express only a desire to gather in the present moment for the lived experience and nothing else (S7, p.13).

Scholars argue that all memories of the past should be taken into account in a 'vibrancy of matter' including experiences of humans with non-human (I11, p.27) at gatherings to experience energy ((S15, p.4; Hodder 2018, p.18; Harris 2021, p.224; Marks 2019, p.297). The multiplicity of entangled past and present associations between the human and non-human, sites, and landscapes where embodied remembering is demonstrated, often through dance at gatherings, should encompass forgetting along with remembering, the silenced, the hidden (AJ, p.1), and the ordinary in an array of intersectionality (Olivier 2004, p.204; Giese & Keightley 2022, p.12; Parfitt 2021, p.287). Some do feel a presence of ancestral spirit whether animal, plant or human but few references are made specifically to worship or direct personal ancestry (S12, p.12).

There is, however, a feeling amongst participants that they are performing similar practices as people did in the past (S9, p.12). Participants evidently do not feel they are direct ancestors present and cite generalised ancestors, human and non-human, spirit, and animal (I11, p.27; I4, p.9), as part of psyculture and a connection with wider cosmology (I6, p.14). Participants often mention the connections between non and other-than human spirits such as animals, nature, plants, and mushrooms that scholars infrequently mention that would benefit from future elucidation (I4, p.10). Embodiment and human agency at sacred sites may be an encoding of performance in the past with an interaction of people, places and artefacts passed on via cyclical rituals illustrated in psyculture art that often reproduces ancient symbolism (I1, p.2;

FW, p.17). Psyculture events rarely occur at sacred sites for various reasons across different countries, so it is difficult to determine the experience of psyculture trance dancing at sacred sites (I4, p.10). However, participants believe they are making any site sacred at a gathering based on their ancestral memories of a timeless ceremony irrespective of whether it can be evidenced or is fact or fantasy; in itself participants feel it is helping modern-day people overcome a lack in their lives (S14, p.15).

In terms of group memory, Connerton states that the knowledge of the past is intertwined with our knowledge of the present affecting interpretations both historical and fictional, both real and imagined (Connerton 2008, p.63). As Marks indicates, collective remembering is how knowledge is passed down which sustains the culture within a mnemonic community to deepen its homogenous beliefs of the past (Marks 2019, p.317; S9, p.12; Erdelyi 2008, p.275; Moshenska 2006, p.59). Group memory is the foundation of continuing knowledge, skills, and community strength. Though preformed tribes exist within psyculture, there are often new formations made where the 'sequence of temporality' is re-formed into new social groups. These groups have experienced established loyalties, habits and expectations based on recollection showing how social formation of memory occurs (Connerton 2003, p.6, p.38; FW, p.3). These new combinations of tribes formed based on existing members' skills, knowledge, and memories of pre-existing groups. Group collective remembering is rarely researched in psyculture, but group differences and fluid formations are evident within specific regions in the UK that provide unity and diversity via this oral, mnemonic memory (I11, p.27). The subjective nature of any group's interpretation based on memory is difficult to evidence as accurate (FW, p.5).

Psyculture may be classified as a silenced or repressed existence, history and complexity of hidden, often orally shared, memories that potentially deserve acceptance, acknowledgement, and establishment of heritage along with mainstream histories. Participants indicate hyper-complex relationality of ancestral bodies including hidden ancestral memories and practices that participants frequently cite (I4, p.10|6, p.14; Porr & Matthews 2019, p.7; Clary-Lemon, 2019, p.24). Histories of the silenced or repressed help towards a deeper understanding of small-scale sociality (Marks 2019, p.316). Participants declare they feel ancestors

may have been holding similar gathering to psychculture as 'acts of defiance against a dominator society' (S24, p.13) potentially for practising the 'ancient techniques of dancing together' (FW, p.22). This group memory is cited as the connector, built from repeated returns to the same gatherings, that defines the community and events. Although the memories may be inaccurate or imaginary, it is how the marginalised psychculture tribes remember, through folk interpretations (S1, p.12), have maintained resistance to official narratives in their alternative oral versions of the past (Mixer 2017, p.290; S24, p.12).

Connerton investigates bodily practices of memory arguing 'recollected knowledge' of the past is continued through 'performative memory' which participants acknowledge as feelings or embodiment of memory (Connerton 2003, p.38; I7, p.17). When considering the memory of dance, Royo indicates there is an imaginative construction of knowledge through embodiment (Royo 2007, p.14). Participants imagine that they are potentially in the process of re-enacting knowledge of dance and embodiment similar to how their 'forefathers gathered and dance' (S13, p.12), following in their footsteps in a process of reconstruction which may not be exactly the same but an imaginative construction of that embodied knowledge (Royo 2007, p.2; S28, p.5). Participants further feel that they are part of an ancient tribe dancing round the fire in a similar way, with a desire to dance at night within a unified collective of dancers (FW, p.20) possibly for the purposes of improved wellbeing similar to past practices (I11, p.28; A1, p.8). Others indicate they dance with, or like, ancestral, whether real or imagined, communities have done since the 'beginning of time' potentially to similar beats and frequencies (S15, p.12). They state that the reason why it is enjoyable does not need to be known or understood (S15, p.12) or specifically what they did or sought. Yet the seeking and use of liminal spaces to make their energies positive or just to be in the present moment seem likely (S27, p.13). This reflects Royo's estimation that the 'dance past' is not a desire to perfectly recreate the past, but rather in a 'reassemblages' of fragments to capture the authentic essence of dance heritage (Royo 2007, p.2; I1, p.26).

Similarly, Malnig sees this ensemble of unilinear collective thoughts and memories through dance create a shared activity that will form new memories (Malnig 2021, p.108; FW, p.1). The embodied memory of culture through dancing together is

referred to as easy and satisfying by a participant (S13, p.7) because the complexity of linear thought is replaced by embodied memories (I1, p.1). Participants view ancient dance gatherings as the method by which communities were built, and made better - restoring the community (S22, p.7; FW, p.5). Participants emphasise dance as integral to humans and it 'feels right' to dance like this, like ancestors in a timeless unity (S9, p.27; I5, p.23). Along with dance, the music and sounds experienced were different but participants (S15, p.10) comment that ancient frequencies and beats were potentially similar (St. John 2014a, p.156; Redhead 1990, p.118).

### 5.3 Dance and trance

Dance and performance are important in identity presentation, divine connectivity, initiation rituals, cultic initiation of ASC and trance, death rites, secular and ecstatic mimetic performances, ancestral worship, improved community solidarity and exclusion of non-members in earlier societies (Garfinkel 2003, p.12; Aamodt 2014, p.53; Murphy 1998, p.32; Bourguignon 1973, p.337). Dance ceremonies were ways of remembering via an 'intimate entanglement', invocation of senses and emotions, communicating social information, and displaying hierarchical positionality (Hamilakis 1998, p.123; Aamodt 2014, p.53; Parfitt 2021, p.287). This embodied memory has greatly reduced in the modern-day but has the potential to overcome hegemonic pasts and imagine new collectives where individual and social interactions act as instruments of change (Sørensen & Rebay-Salisbury 2012, p.13; Giurchescu 2001, p.113). Participants interestingly suggest they 'see all of humanity on the dancefloor' in different stages, equations, understandings of the world, awakening the self beyond physical and mental conditioning, tapping into a wider collective energy engaging not only embodied memory but considerations for the present and future invocation of entanglements across a global collective envisaging future possibilities (I4, p.7-8). This suggests a knowledge of similarities that scholars identify in other trance dance practices, principles and intentions that parallel experience in psyculture.

In viewing dance as social communication, embodied knowledge is converted into movement which is passed on through observation, imitation, and adaptation (Sørensen and Rebay-Salisbury 2012, p.2; Richard, Glăveanu & Aubertin 2022,

p.222; Buttingsrud 2021, p.7552; Vamanu & Terronez 2022, p.11). This lived collective dance experience is evidenced in the unison people feel as they connect where the body is an instrument of social information via vibrational transmission (I7, p.17; I9, p.22). Participants felt an experience of bliss and euphoria surrounded by dancers in different layers of consciousness from hallucinatory to enhanced awake-consciousness caused by the sound and light immersion at psyculture gatherings which was akin to 'swimming in effervescent liquid' of collective movement and social bonding (FW, p.11. This deep, socially dynamic bonding is a major draw amongst participants in a psychedelic communitas (Tramacchi 2000, p.211; (Tramacchi 2000; Schmidt & Navon 2017, p.1140).

Zebracki suggests that an individual embodied, affective co-presence is sought by the immersion of self in group dancing to gain knowledge of this multi-sensorial of bodily co-presence in a motion of emotion (Zebracki 2016, p.118). This affective co-presence is evident in participants' descriptions of how gatherings are meant to 'drain participants through drugs, exhaustion, sleep deprivation, hunger, thirst, sensory deprivation, and sensory overload' (S22, p.22). They see this as part of the ritual in a kinaesthetic immersion after the important ritual of losing negative energy so it does not affect others (AI, p.8). Perhaps modern-day research in psyculture can demonstrate, via evidencing the immediacy of the lived experience, ways to paint a fuller picture about collective trance and dance experiences.

In past and present trance dance practices, there is a re-creation of energy through dance connectivity achieving a collective, extended consciousness allowing different ways of thinking, feeling, and being (Mann 2021, p.9). This aligns with EDM scholarship where dance energy results from dancing together. St. John describes this energy as part of a holistic experience of visuals, music, people, décor, and atmosphere as ingredients adding to an immersive energy flow (St. John 2012a, p.6). Participants cite the immersive dancing that sustains the flow and 'tribal' feeling of togetherness (S7, p.6) changing perception, emotions, cognition, and empathy through prolonged dancing in a 'cosmic collective' (I7, p.16). Dissolution of negative energy to be replaced with positive energy is important (I5, p.12). Negative energy is seen as not to exist in a fierce vibrational state resulting in overwhelming bliss and euphoria though some gatherings had a disconnect of flow (FW, p.5).

The link between music, dance and mimesis emanates from the human capacity for engaging with rhythm producing an affective semantics, and emotional modulations as synchronisation occurs (Winkelman 2023, p.2). Participants declare that dancing collectively in shared energy can bring transformational changes in a supportive community participants. It is reported that 'throwing' balls of energy to others on the dancefloor builds social and dance synchronicity (I8,p.22). People pass the energy among themselves weaving it with their hands before sharing it (I4, p.7).

The experience of prolonged dance communal energy is described by participants as reducing negativity; freeing them from the chains of life (I9, p.23). Prolonged dancing in a collective wave of energy where the mind disengages, and the body engages to control the movement to the music is a predominant experience amongst participants (I4, p.7). The absorption of frequencies, when immersed in the communal energy, is what 'alchemises the music' to make the body move in the accumulated, collective energy (I9, p.22).

This vibe or energy might be posited as an experience of peace by scholars but there are often tensions and conflicts in psytrance spheres that need to be accepted, analysed, and included in discussing the complexity of the experience (Castagner 2020, p.71; Saldanha 2007, p.71; D'Andrea 2007, p.204). Participants reported a range of experiences along a positive to negative (S16, p.4) continuum and at the fieldwork gatherings depending on feelings, and emotions based on memories of prior group interactions sometimes feeling like 'dirt on the skin' that would benefit from investigation (FW, p.7).

Research about personal preferences when attending gatherings demonstrating the variety of multiple vibes or different energies that are brought to the floor is illuminating. Some participants prefer dancing alone, with others, dancing in light with positive music after several days brings a smooth 'communal bounce' and many more preferences (FW, p.11). Daytime dancing often has a sporadic disconnect due to high turnover participants (FW, p.19). Night-time dancing is dark, experimental, disorienting, intensive, with closed groups of tribe members dancing near each other creating a different energy field (FW, p.19). In Figure 30, the participants wear UV



immersive clothing to become merged with the highly UV décor and patterning creating a liminal space that voids the individual in a night-time setting. Instead of a desire for ASC and liminality, some participants have a preference for a greater hold on reality that helps to handle waves of frequencies ‘gushing around you’ (FW, p.19).



*Figure 30 UV immersive artwork, decor, lighting, lasers, and clothing*

Participants confirm gatherings provide a ‘safe container’ for a flow of empathy and creativity achieved in an enhanced sensory state where they are free from body and mind to experience oneness and love where ‘all that matters is the dance’ (S29, p.5). Flow is described as ‘peak experiences’ of bliss and its effects of peace, love, compassion, and harmony that participants believe could have a positive effect on humanity in an interculture ‘sensorial gnostic cosmopsychism of vibrancy’ (Bombaci 2023, p.10). This shows how a ‘spirituality without religion’ can have profound religious-like effects through embodied practice of ritual that dissolves intercultural

alienation (Bombaci 2023, p.10). The achievement of an enhanced sensory state rather than an altered state of consciousness may be the experience of trance dance practices to achieve positive effects.

Human experiences and desires to achieve alterations of consciousness as sources of supernatural experiences is becoming more academically accepted as a universal feature of human nature where cognitive capabilities, extended horizons of awareness, transcendent perceptions, and experiences of super-consciousness are reported (Winkelman 2019, p.144). Experiences from parapsychology, defined as non-ordinary states of awareness, may account for participants' experience of 'flying above the dancefloor and talking to others in other dimensions' (Krippner 2022, p.183). This resonates with participants' experience of collective dance energy immersion they believe can lead to a dancefloor telepathy, precognition, and making contact with spirit (S28, p.5). Participants frequently mention how collective dance energy immersion can lead to a dancefloor telepathy (I7, p.17), precognition and contact with spirit beings often 'feeling forces moving them' that are not in this reality dimension (S28, p.5). The energy is seen in a seamless flow (AJ, p.3), like in a communal pool, where dancers assist each other to achieve a collective experience (FW, p.16). What animals experience with ease, humans seek from altered states of consciousness that should not be deemed unworthy of academic study but investigated as acknowledgement of the relevance of enhanced sensory perception and to widen the horizons of other than and more than human experiences (Bombaci 2023, p.42). Research would benefit taking into consideration these often-hidden trance dance experiences.

In considering trance and its connection with dance, experience leads to different effects such as disturbed cognition and temporality, changes in self-image, emotional expression, and self-control (Prince 1982, p.411; Boyer 2018, p.21; Bourguignon 1973, p.105). Participants reflect achieving ASC by dancing in a repetitive manner to remove worries and stress on the body and mind (I9, p.23). Hunt and Schooler discuss how trance initiates synchronisation, vibrations, and resonance that are deeply connected to consciousness changes where there are resonance patterns in all things aligning with participants' sense of being part of the pulse of the world (Hunt & Schooler 2019, p.378). Participants describe the sensory

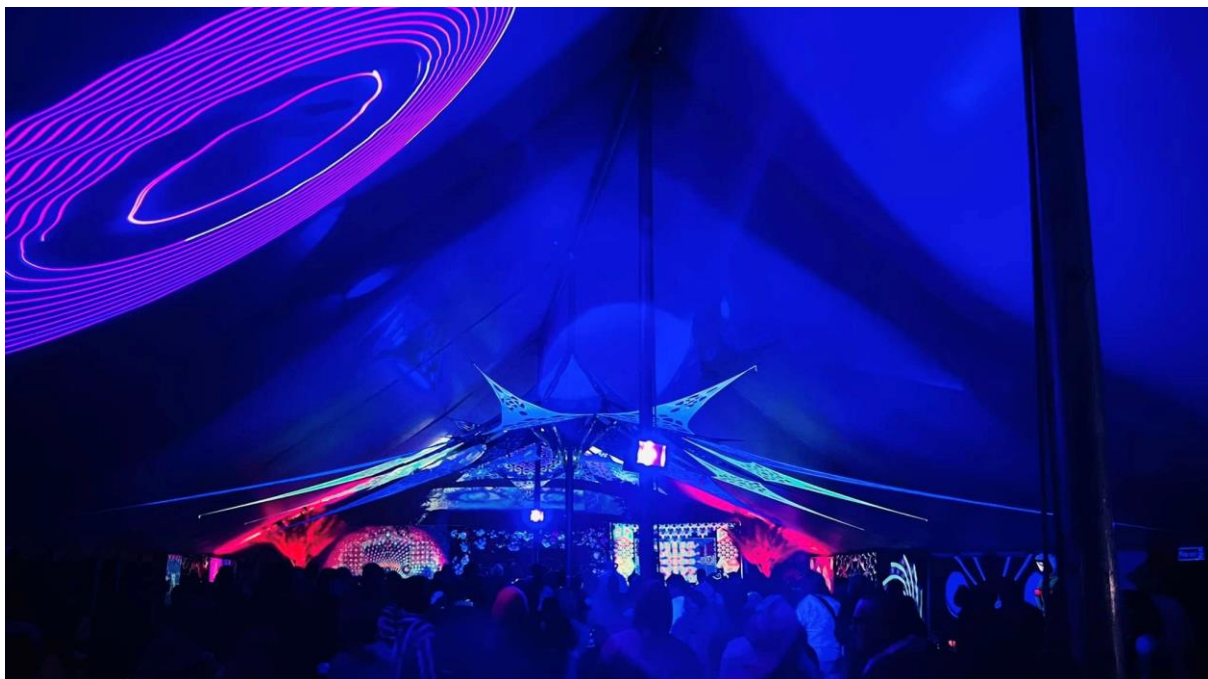
experience as a 'cosmic collective' absorption of frequencies that builds up over the years, not just a party.

Archaeology acknowledges the use of ASC to acquire specific experiences of the supernatural or communication with the divine that was evidently a major part of the development of religious experiences in complex societies (Morris & Peatfield 2021, p.264; Lupack 2021, p.290; Panagiotidou 2021, p.296; Clinch 2021, p.327). Within psyculture, participants who aim to achieve a trance-like state, feel this is because they connect entirely to the music, feeling elated in sharing the dance experience in a detachment from the day-to-day world as they become consumed by the sounds (S17, p.10).

In EDMC, Becker considers initiation of a trance states as a primary aim of participants to provide psycho-spiritual exploration and personal development to integrate in their lives (Becker 2004, p.138; Redfield & Thouin-Savard 2017, p.59). Research participants refer to trance dancing as achieving an ecstasy, 'by taking the shapes taken by untold many you become one with the wave of ecstasy where you give some of your energy to that wave' with an open heart and a gradual letting go of everything helping them drive 'toward the future we all want' (S26, p.25). Participants explain how they feel connected to a wider cosmology, with others dancing around the globe and the greater connectivity to all of humanity potentially adding positivity to the planetary vibration in this super-consciousness extension of horizons (I4, p.8). A fascinating assertion that group dancing in a trance state may expand to influence the wider, even global, community and beyond that is worthy of further investigation whether it is due to an imaginary, fantasy of connectivity and possible influence or not.

On the other hand, achieving trance and altered state of consciousness as the main, intended experience is not necessarily the case as gatherings involve predominantly everyday tasks, where participants are not seeking ASC, or certainly it is not the overall experience (de Ledesma 2012, p.127). In a similar vein, Gauthier strongly argues that there is no possession trance in psyculture events unless it can be described as possession by 'nothing' removed from any explicit religious system (Gauthier 2004, p.297). In techno trance, participants seek participation not for

meaning, aim, purpose or mysticism but the pure experience of dancing with others in itself. Whereas in psytrance there is an oscillation between a performative re-enactment of fantasy personas and experiencing a form of dispossession (Gauthier 2004, p.297). Participants often refer to experiencing a loss of mind, individuality, memory, and their mainstream lives, like the 'borg', as a loss of being possessed by mainstream hindrances being one of the primary experiences of collective dancing (AJ, p.3). An interesting avenue is within kinaesthetic awareness of dance movement and embodied understanding of the dancer's and the dancer observer's relationship to social spaces (Steinman 2011, p.70). The lighting and décor at night-time turns everything visual into the same UV nothingness reproducing a dissolution of a dancer's individuality as they become part of an anonymous dancing mass in the dance space as the collective is immersed in a fluidity of sound and other sensory stimuli (Figure 31).



*Figure 31 Night-time UV immersion*

#### 5.4 Music and sound

Archaeology is advancing in indicating the importance of acoustics in ancient times evident in sites, locations, landscapes through soundscapes, resonance, and frequencies (Cummins & Richards 2021, p.2; Darvill 2015, p.145; Boivin *et al* 2007, p.290; Boivin 2004, p.40). A fuller understanding of intentional acoustic spaces and

their intersectionality with trance, dance, and music will aid understanding not only of how small bounded community human bonding, sounds, and behaviours worked but how usage and gatherings focussed on sound (Till 2011, p.6; Nettl 2004, p.118). This relates to the participant's frequently cited importance of holding psyculture gatherings in nature, with participants seeking a deeper connection with the land, animals and earth spirits, and the wider cosmology. The setting is important to participants, artists, and organisers preferably outside (I9, p.25).

In the modern-day, any space can be temporarily nominated as sacred for a gathering, and, once established as a potential dancespace, organisers often take note of its acoustical properties creating a unique sound experience in every new space. Yet there has been little research in modern-day trance culture about the effects of acoustical properties specific to spaces and locations, soundscapes, and links to identity. What is key to participants is being outside to provide the optimal immersive, surreal environment where night and day can be experienced in a 'sound tunnel in the woods' that 'becomes sacred' (FW, p.22). There is developing archaeological research that places were sought that had specific acoustic properties and that music was played to initiate trance states. As Alvarez-Morales and colleagues note, this interaction with spaces of congregation can be viewed through a contemporary lens to explore similarities with other cultures' musical behaviour and spaces (Alvarez-Morales *et al* 2023, p.313; Lieberman 1991, p.2; Frayer & Nicolay 2000, p.231).

Elliot calls the 'relationality between mind, place, affect, and musical commodities' a 'structure of feeling' that highlights how music, and group trance dance can lead to ASC specifically through repetitive music initiating a trance (Elliott 2010, p.13; Dittrich 1998, p.81). Experiences described demonstrate an embodied, kinaesthetic response intersecting specific compositional effects and spatial embodiment from the use of repetitive tempo and absorption (Solberg & Dibben 2019; Cole & Hannan 1998, p.118). Participants' responses concur that this 'continuation of sound going into one' (I9, p.22), through repetition, initiates this structure of feeling that sends participants on a journey allowing the 'energetics of the music to move through them' instead of the mind moving the body so that the dancing becomes synchronised with the sounds effortlessly (I9, p.17, p.23; FW, p.18). The planning of the music journey

is undertaken by the artist and organisers before and during a gathering to enact this synchronicity where the musician's role is integral to the experience and inseparable from dancing (I7, p.18; S7, p.9).

Psychological approaches seek to explain how the element of music increases emotional responses, how the body perceives and embodies music cognition, and how this spatial orientation leads to a bodily correlation of the self with the emotions inside, and the world outside (Sloboda & Juslin 2001, p.10; Lakoff and Johnson 1999, p.82). Participants confirm that the musical elements of psytrance music are optimised to facilitate this trance dance experience, to elicit a wide range of emotion that link to embodiment and creating a personal fluidity that adds to the collective dance flow (I7, p.18), whether dancing or just listening, the effect is 'infecting' the participants (AJ, p.5; FW, p.8). Hunt and Schooler indicate the shared resonance from conjoined rhythm at higher speeds cause an information flow which is the key to understanding consciousness changes (Hunt & Schooler 2019, p.378).

Participants acknowledge that the rolling bassline (I7, p.18), rhythm and rapid beat (S1, p.24) achieves individual and group change (Norton 2000, p.114). Participants feel that the experience of shared resonance (FW, p.22) aligns with Freeman's assertions of the vital role of resonance on consciousness evolution, group bonding, and social interaction similar to a mycelium (Freeman 2000, p.420). Often participants make the assertion that the culture and the participant's experiences at gathering are like an integrated mycelium (I4, p.10; FW, p.5; S27, p.8) that is controlled by the plants that is certainly an original analogy for psyculture experience. Some participants indicate a greater understanding of human-plant interaction may potentially provide a better understanding ancient peoples' experience of growth, expansion, and evolution too (I9, p.23).

It is felt that production and composition capture the dancer 'on the level of frequency' (I2, p.18) where participants refer to the symbiotic composition of music that matches the vibe through the medium of the musicians (S27, p.8). Greater consideration of the production techniques in EDM psytrance research that lead to these effects may extend an understanding how trance music and sound were produced in the past and other cultures. Evidence from static art and artefacts can only be speculation at best (Díaz-Andreu *et al* 2017, p.181; Devereux & Jahn 1996,

p.666). Investigations into attributes, purposes, and interpretations in the modern-day trance culture may help elucidate how the dynamics of music, cognition and social interaction were the basis of human evolution while others indicate how human adaptation has probably been closely connected to neuron networks engaged in rhythmic, synchronised activity (Cross, Zubrow, & Cowan 2002, p.25; Brown 2007, p.12; Dissanayake 2000, p.20; Cross & Morley 2010, p.71; Fries 2015, p.220).

The effect of these compositional techniques on participants is profound as they report being on board a sonic 'psychedelic bus' (FW, p.4) as the psytrance musician, DJ or artist takes the crowd through a musical ride where a 'building of a crescendo brings the crowd' along with them on a journey (I2, p.4). The artists are seen as responsible for those intensities, along with orientation and expectancy techniques in falls and drops (I2, p.5) where participants feel they experience an 'aesthetic orgasm' (S23, p.5) similar to a sexual climax both inside their own body and trans-personally (Elliott 2010, p.13; Solberg 2014, p.62). The journey is focussed on directing the dynamics of bringing the music up and down to affect the dancers with a range of tempos, styles and sounds as the artist's change set after set, they should fit together on this planned 'journey to ascension' (I7, p.17). These specific techniques are mainly available in organic sound production and musical composition. Certainly, psytrance and archaeoacoustic scholarship will benefit from not just investigating beats but the whole plethora of compositional possibilities available then and now.

In psytrance, composition within a track, in a set, across playlists, and the musical planning choices across the entire duration of an event act to create a psychedelisation of the music in an intentional journey (Charles 2020, p.41; Lindop 2010, p.220). Participants are aware of the intentionality to create a psychedelic journey inherent in the production, composition, and performance of psytrance music (S26, p.11). They acknowledge the musical arrangements are deliberately composed to (I2, p.4) create the energy connection of artists and dancers ignited and reciprocated (S28, p.5). Participants refer to psytrance music as like an onion having many complex layers that unfold revealing hidden elements as it delves into the centre then back out again that affect the dancers (I2, p.4).

Participants note the musician's contribution in providing the foundation of this group dance experience in their choices of musical and planned structure (S6, p.9) in a continuation of varying sounds that incites emotional and physical responses to enact this collective energy (S26, p.11). The link between musician, dancer, and music is a trilogy of influence acknowledged by participants (S4, p.9; I12, p.30). This trinity of interaction between the DJ, music and dancers is the main ritual of the culture where the music moves from light to dark and to light again literally taking the crowd on a journey together where they 'see' each other as the sun rises after being unseen through the dark part of the journey (I11, p.28). Takahashi and Olaveson indicate it is the DJ who drives this process of auditory collective stimulation (Takahashi and Olaveson 2004, p.81; Hutson 2000, p.44). The chronological planning of an event playlist is to create a seamless sonic journey (Lindop 2010, p.41). There is significant belief in the intention of the artist to lead the musical, psychological, and literal journey by the dancers where that position of control is acknowledged with the purpose to make the audience feel good (S27, p.11).

The intention in musical planning of psytrance is to develop a light/dark journey to create the fullest experience of an altered state of consciousness (St. John 2012b, p.5; Vitos 2010, p.166). The light and dark aspects of a psytrance journey are seen as both necessary in balance though care has to be taken as the experience is not always positive (S4, p.26). Psytrance has a systematic absence of rules musically to bring about the widest number of emotions where all gaps are filled with surprising, trippy sound to provide a sensory overload (Vitos 2015, p.265). This purposive sonic journey from ignorance to knowledge has the DJs and artists as psychical drivers using their playlist as a vehicle for taking participants on a journey (St. John 2014a, 2013b).

In small bounded communities, music had a central role in social bonding and evolution where people gathered together to dance, make sound, and vocalise throughout the day and night with evidence from neurobiology (Freeman 2000, p.411). In psyculture gatherings, music, gathering collectively, and trance dance is a major source of social cohesion. Cultural intertwining across ethnocultural divides cohere social bonding as this 'collective effervescence' strengthened group solidarity



and community because of the trance experience (Crooke *et al* 2023, p.163; Alaszewski 2015, p.224).

Sound systems have substantial agency within psyculture. Any soundsystem that can vibrate the cells by infrasound can potentially be healing. However, the repetitive pattern within psytrance is mantra-like, being described as shamanic in its beats, rhythm, and frequencies that draw the dancer into the music. Participants indicate that 'we are primates who have figured out how to make sound systems and the rest of culture should go into the bin' indicating the importance of the equipment to psyculture. A rave is primarily a music event with the organisation of the line up being important along with the quality of the equipment, the DJS, the soundsystem, and the main stage area showing the knowledge and effort required to construct this sight and sound scape to have this spatialising effect on the psytrance participants (Kyriakopoulos 2021, p.229). What is important in achieving an altered state for participants is the quality of the assemblage (FW, p.8). Archaeological research attempts to constitute what is a musical artefact but it is difficult to evidence (Kunej & Turk 2001, p.249). Further work on the music components used by psytrance musicians may illuminate acoustics and musical assemblages might have been able to employ a similar complexity of techniques to gain the same consciousness change.

### 5.5 Contribution, community, and participation

A significant finding in the research is the value that participants place on sociality, contribution, community, and the importance of individual participation as a major draw to attend gatherings. Participants report important values and behaviours about belonging, how sociality is key to their membership within non-hierarchical groupings of people who they frequently interact with, though not related to each other but a family-like attitude to non-kinship I (I1, p.1). Archaeologists, in a similar vein, stress how an ultrasocial, egalitarian and sustainable value system was key to small-scale survival 'nurtured by co-operation' (Gowdy 2021, p.54). Participants state how they enjoy an 'inclusive' community (S21, p.4) where they feel safe, take care of others with a 'family feeling' (S3, p.1) providing a 'playground to meet and greet and network with people' (S4, p.1) that they believe comes naturally to humans and is

missing from mainstream life (S4, p.6). This equates to an ultrasocial network of mutual support, values, and non-hierarchical practices (AI, p.5).

Psyculture provides a societal experience where values and roles (FW, p.13) are potentially similar to small-scale societies with a fluidity to aid social interaction, development, and decision-making (FW, p.20). Anthropology similarly indicates co-creation, mutuality, reciprocity, and exchange in a precarious world fostered safety, security, and developmentally (Poirier 2013, p.152; Ihde & Malafouris 2019, p.209). Even so some positionality and hierarchy exist in small bounded communities, where the egalitarian/hierarchical mix is highly complex, but the code of belonging is shared, ultra fluid and not controlled (Charles 2019a, p.57; D'Andrea 2010, p.41). As participants observed, this uncertainty and fluidity in adapting to changing circumstance is the factor that enables continuation in psyculture communities evident in ever-fluid role alterity within crews, tribes, and intra-tribes (FW, p.12). Participants advise that the values, beliefs, and practices of the core organisers permeate the wider psyculture community including an immediacy of adaptation and acceptance of role change (AJ, p.4).

Archaeology shows how co-operation and cultural capacity factors sustained communities, more so in smaller groups, with intra-tribal contact a great aid to the memorisation process (Hill *et al* 2011, p.1286; Price & Brown 1985, p.4; Nolan 2023, p.5). This non-linear deepening of increasing knowledge, skills and methods were vital to maintaining societies which is equally applicable to modern-day societies in creating better present-day communities aside from the Westernised obsession with progress and evolution (FW, p.14). Participants value the co-creation aspect of psyculture for its group and self-development away from consumerism and the modern-day push for progression (S11, p.22). They indicate that taking what they learn back into their mainstream lives (S27, p.8) is part of cultural contribution as they spread this knowledge out to even larger societal groupings. Larger group networking provides a training ground (FW, p.12) for intra-tribal co-creation and exchange. In small-scale social life, sharing of resources was vital to group cohesion, aiding survival, and overcoming conflicts (Friesem & Lavi 2019, p.88). Psyculture participants acknowledge the importance of contribution to sustain group connections within the community indicating that without volunteering the community

would not survive (S23, p.7). In fact, acceptance and assimilation by the community is seen as the factor that leads to a desire to contribute (S28, p.8) which coheres individuals to the group identity and process (I1, p.1).

Contribution to sustaining the community through participation is a major area of archaeological research that overall demonstrates multi-level complexity of sociality affecting cumulative cultural evolution that provides insightful illustration of successful, small-scale societies. This social complexity encompasses a fluid social structure, varied family units, high turnover intra-band mobility, multilocality, and the resulting cultural transmission. This occurred in small populations, where Migliano and colleagues argue that 'cumulative cultural evolution' resulted at a society not an individual level (Migliano *et al* 2020, p.1). Hayden indicates change and innovations happened internally in small-scale societies as well as from external influences and possibly adaptation occurred through certain 'aggrandizing' individuals (Hayden 2014, p.659). Thus, within the psyculture community as people fluidly move in or out in terms of the organisational infrastructure, having a central role or perhaps accumulating more roles, some people or teams take on a higher up or management type role (AI, p.5). This generally does not detract from the horizontal nature of the majority of roles in organising a gathering where a multi-role adaptability is the norm. These roles are constantly changing within a tribe or across trans-tribal collaborations as crews swap working teams from gathering to gathering or individuals move within new tribal connections (FW, p.12). Participants have observed new groupings and collaborations occurring since lockdown that has helped overcome the dissolution of the culture by shoring up resources and abilities (AJ, p.4).

Within psyculture, due to the transnational diversity and homogeneity of cultural capital (S11, p.1), it is difficult to distinguish cultural specifics but there is a seeking of similar, egalitarian social structures (I4, p.7). Due to the intersectionality of global and local collaborations and multiple high turnover networking of crews and organisers at festivals and events, psyculture organisation is hyper-complex and surprisingly capable of sticking to trans-egalitarian values and practices (D'Andrea 2010, p.46; Guerra 2015, p.12; Charles 2019a, p.71; FW, p.12). There are conflicts, ambiguities, paradoxes, and limitations in the global and local inter relations in

psyculture as participants try to get away from the divisiveness and hierarchal nature of mainstream social processes. Though these negativities are often successfully overcome, probably due to the small-scale of the gatherings and the size of crews, where people are required to work with each other, drop their egos, and get on with it to survive (FW, p.12). This provides an informative picture of why small-scale societies worked well together overcoming inter and intra inequalities to sustain the community (Diouf & Nwankwo 2010, p.8). The constant elasticity with a shifting centre and everyone in an in-between position is probably the key to the culture's continuation (Cohen, Bendixsen & Hviding 2022, p.8).

In small-scale societies, play and fun were important factors in social calendars that aided their co-operative ways of living, individual autonomy, and consensual decision-making assisting in overcoming dominance tendencies (Gray 2009, p.516). Contemporary psychological and EDM research is developing its understanding of the importance of play and pleasure equal to work in intention, similar to indigenous societies, unlike in the mainstream world where play is separated as entertainment instead of having a primary role (Bloch 1989, p.21; Farrell 2015, p.274; O'Grady 2012, p.87; Vedava 2015, p.170). Participants frequently report how attendance at gatherings is about having fun (S6, p.19), how it is important and has 'spurred my creativity' (FW, p.1) innovatory thinking and ideas. They explain how this creativity emerges from this 'space of belonging and connectivity with evident new collaborations' (FW, p.13; 14).

Participants describe the experience of mutual dancing as 'flowing together like murmuring birds' (AJ, p.3) in synchronicity that reflect the societal values of exchange and reciprocity that 'flow throughout the gathering' (FW, p.13). Psychology scholars concur that synchrony interacts with shared goals in co-operative, supportive interactions that heighten prosociality, aiding adaptation through inter and intra 'identity fusion' (Reddish *et al* 2013, p.3; Launay, Tarr & Dunbar 2016, p.784; Rauchbeauer *et al* 2023). Participants similarly report sharing energy (AJ, p.3) and contact with others across the dancefloor, mimicking gestures and movements (I11, p.26) that increase social connectivity where collective dancing creates this flow (FW, p.6). Identity fusion is seen as a type of social bonding produced by *communitas* as dancers fuse because of the synchronous nature of dancing leading

to feeling more integrated with the wider community that can last long after a gathering (S12, p.12). This suggests 'psychedelic-inspired awe' may have a vital place in therapeutic work and improve bonding in mainstream society (S1, p.26; Newson *et al* 2021, p.436; Tarr, Launay & Dunbar 2014, p.1096; Nour *et al* 2016, p.269). This community identity fusion is reported by participants who feel intra-tribal groups bonding together through energy sharing on the dancefloor (I9, p.23).

Participants indicate there is something about dancing together in larger groups to rhythmic music that may be the factor that synchronises social bonding, increasing co-operation noted by Reddish and colleagues (Reddish *et al* 2013, p.3; S5, p.6). Guerra suggest that bonding factors within psyculture aid complexity, adaptability, sharing, and fluidity that overcomes fragmentation suggesting temporary connections of emotions, the transformatory journey process, and expressive spirituality are cohering factors (Guerra 2015, p.13; D'Andrea 2010, p.42; St. John 2004a, p.13; Heelas 2000, p.237). As an example, one organiser's ethos is primarily about providing a place to dance together with the 'dance energy being the centre of the party' (FW, p.24) in order to 'share the freedom of the trance state that we are all capable of reaching on the dancefloor' (FW, p.12). They describe to the participants in their publicity material about how they have had to adapt to difficult, recent circumstances hoping they will survive to continue the 'ride' (FW, p.12).

Participants believe Western life has led to the loss of communal and social bonding (S15, p.26) that scholars indicate is now provided in rave gatherings (Donovan 2020, p.8; Newson *et al* 2021, p.4303). Certainly, participants feel that contribution extends beyond the event (I11, p.23) as people take what they have learnt from dancing and the community into their mainstream lives (S26, p.23), maintaining social bonding through social media and regular meetups that helps with mainstream life isolation (S1, p.26), and loneliness (FW, p.13).

Communal dance, trance and associated rituals have important social benefits providing solidarity, entertainment, education, and healing creating a synaesthetic environment, reducing negative feeling, and increasing relaxation (Garfinkel 1998; Schechner 2002, p.613). Participants similarly indicate that the culture is predominantly based around the cohering glue of dancing together (FW, p.2), closely

followed by integrating newcomers into the values (FW, p.1), practices, and process of belonging, contribution, and participation (S1, p.6) extending to mainstream lives. Anthropology confirms the integral role of dance, myths, and rituals that maintain bonds and reduce entropy (Kaeppler 1978, p.46; Kealiinohomoku 1997, p.70; FW, p.24). Participants feel a 'timeless desire to meet, to dance, to socialise, to be with others' (FW, p.13) to overcome isolation and loneliness replacing this with safety and freedom where the shared wisdom through elders, memories and practices are passed down through living generations in psychculture. Participants refer to one organiser's ethos about gathering in the woods to 'dance, create, learn and connect' to celebrate the individual and the collective and primarily to have a party (FW, p.13).

There is evidence in ancient cultures of the clandestine nature of ecstasy in cults, such as Dionysus, in interstitial spaces amongst marginalised groups potentially leading to creativity or separate from mainstream social practices in the past (Hanegraaff 2019, p.145; Costello 2021, p.16; Cardeña 2021, p.26; Steinert 2021, p.386; Frieman & Lewis 2022, p.12). Some participants report that others may see psychculture is a cult because of its sense of superiority to mainstream practices but indicate that its exclusiveness may instead be a result of protection from discovery or persecution by mainstream society rather than elitism showing similar marginality and repression (S25, p.27). Participants suggest that taking the lessons learnt from their underground practices based around dance, play and improvisation in this marginalised group of psychculture into mainstream culture could benefit society by its re-introduction. Certainly, the growth in festival culture recently attests to this possibility already being underway (AJ, p.1).

In marginalised, indigenous minorities, the retaining of ancestral practices against traditional attitudes to non-mainstream culture, dance and trance, is often associated with irrationality, the demonic, the lower classes, and savagery and treated with hostility (Gavino 2020, p.3; Ehrenreich 2007, p.14). Actual experiences during fieldwork presented evidence of the continuing persecution and direct intimidation by the general public towards psychedelic trance culture as well as the difficulty in gaining licences or venues for such events to the point the secrecy and isolationism is viewed as necessary for the community to survive (FW, p.5; AJ, p.1). Ironically becoming their 'human self again - more of their animal self - is seen by participants

as a positive experience as part of the act of resistance to the persecuting nature of the mainstream world because of members' 'difference' where they hide their true selves (I6, p.14; FW, p.2). Dance is often associated with active resistance within marginalised groups whose values and relationship with nature are often challenged by mainstream society and, by maintaining dance and ritual, this can restore and retain marginalised cultural traditions and practices (Trigger 1990, p.129; Borck & Sanger 2017, p.9; Wilkinson 2021, p.102; Costello 2021, p.16; Cardeña 2021, p.26; Steinert 2021, p.386; Frieman & Lewis 2022, p.12; De Pina-Cabral 1997, p.47; Ehrenreich 2007, p.6; Avis-Ward 2022, p.40; Moore 2022, p.43).

Psychedelic culture has suffered persecution in the UK along with the rave scene viewed as an 'existential threat' resulting in stigma (Moore 2022, p.43). Other EDM (rave and diy cultures) scenes suffer from continued persecution (perhaps more so than psyculture) that an extended investigation of such prohibition of raves, alienation, transgression and resistance reveals (Moore 2022; Perrenet 2019). The continuation of gatherings brings a sense of stability for the 'others' that mainstream society does not cater for because of continuing suspicion and discrimination (Adeyemi 2022; Moore 2004; Chowdhury 2019; Motl 2018). Psyculture participants with their hidden identities, and the assumption by the general public that they are taking psychedelic drugs, suffer a particularly vitriolic type of discrimination (S25, p.5).

Participants confirm that persecution, exclusion, censorship, bullying and humiliation severely affects their mainstream self even by immediate family members and work colleagues, so they hide their psyculture membership (AJ, p.2). Participants express not so much a desire to be different but to be able to practice being human instead of a consumer (I9, p.23). They clearly state that their desire is to stand up for what is right rather than to rebel against authorities (S1, p.21). In the UK, participants generally state, especially organisers, that the reason they are secret is because their beliefs and actions are persecuted and legislated against (AJ, p.1). Participants further indicate that deliberate actions are taken to remain hidden from police intervention: 'Well, there were three turnings and if the police take the wrong turning, they would be 20 miles away'. (I10, p.25). Others confirm: 'I think there always will be persecution by authorities with that scene unfortunately' (I8, p.30).

At the centre of the complex layers of marginalisation in many EDM communities is the dominance of the 'other' describing how participants feel towards 'mainstream' and conversely how mainstream culture view the marginalised others with ensuing prejudice, discrimination and frequently persecution. The intolerance towards 'difference' in mainstream society, particularly those associated with EDM dance and drugs, leads to the often fierce protection of these small-scale communities with strict boundaries and cohesive tactics to sustain the interests of the group due to the unacceptability of mainstream practices. Psytrancers are underground only out of necessity not choice in many circumstances due to ongoing persecution by authorities and the mainstream public in the demonisation of that which is other, different and hippy within a fear of anything psychedelic.

Within many marginalised, underground, alternative and EDM cultures in the UK, there are similar purposes, functions, and sharing of groups that rely on ultrasocial practices, often egalitarian in principle, with dance and play at the heart of group practices. A focus on dance, movement and heightened social interaction is important to the maintaining of group cohesion with embodiment foregrounded as a key reason for participants to continue engagement with a particular scene. Zebracki discusses how the EDM scene is a fruitful culture to investigate in order to understand how 'subcultural capital' is formed in terms of skills and values in a community, levels of 'citizenship', how roles are 'ascribed' or self nominated (Zebracki 2016, p. 22). Similarly, in psyculture, there is an oscillation between a performative re-enactment of fantasy personas and experiencing a form of dispossession as participants intend to escape from a difficult mainstream world (Gauthier, 2004, p.397).

Within psyculture, there are often distinctions made between positive and negative participants that demonstrate the hostile environment that shapes this small-scale community creating a boundary between the mainstream and psytrancers. Psytrancers are often condemned as being superior to the mainstream 'others' by having negative labels for newcomers, people not deemed to fit in and 'mainstream others', ironically attending from more mainstream events that display the wrong practices and principles. This attitude to outsiders displays a code of behaviour and



expectation even though it is difficult to establish that there are defined practices and principles in psyculture. For example, regarding 'outsiders, randomers, wronguns' whose behaviour can be problematic at gatherings are ironically referred to as the outsider and can bring hostility and negativity to gatherings that regular participants try to protect themselves and their community from. For example, a participant reports that 'if you have just turned up and no one knows you, you are referred to as randomer' (AJ, p.70). Similarly, it is reported that such randomers though everyone is given a chance: 'may have a negative effect on the energy and protection is enabled by family members to offset this as it may be unintentional, and they may progress into becoming productive newcomers' (AJ, p.70). Thus, the unacceptability of outsider practices is evident with the instilling of psyculture small-group boundaries and community protection, perpetuation and continued cohesion. Therefore, the aspect of being an 'underground' culture acts as a protective force in itself to put off outsiders. A participant expressed that they 'feel attendance is an act of resistance to the persecuting nature of the mainstream world' in order 'to exist without judgement away from wronguns within a tight knit community (AJ, p.1).

Participants often state that escape to liminal, remote space in psyculture helps them to cope with mainstream 'bullshit and restrictions' (S21, p.22) offering a way of escaping to engage with others. The release of pent-up energy serves as a salve to retrieve the true self from the domination of the mainstream where psyculture acts as a vehicle for entry into another consciousness free of the restrictions of the mainstream world (Rietveld 2010, p.32 Hutson 2000, p.46; Hanegraaff 2011, p.88; S26, p.23; St. John 2012b, p.6). Participants acknowledge that being part of the underground movement allows more freedom of expression (I7, p.16), understanding of the individual and collective self, and new ways of relating to each other to develop themselves and potentially wider society for the better (I4, p.8). O'Grady states that the DIY ethic and the essence of the free party movement still has potential for the performance of political and personal freedoms with the act of dancing outdoors building a festival imaginary that has evolved from earlier protests (O'Grady 2017, p.3). However, there is debate amongst participants among the superficiality of the label of counterculture as a 'tenuous contrivance' (S20, p.18) and selective rather than authentic. Some report that there is a shallowness to the sense of belonging and supposed transcendence indicating the idealism is not always

matched by the reality in the culture (S25, p.27). Apart from this artificial outer coating of being part of a counterculture movement, there is paradoxically little political resistance (S20, p.18) in psyculture.

Festivals, both mainstream and underground, are a growing phenomenon in contemporary society helping participants in overcoming disconnect, providing empowerment through sociality, helping social change, and gaining creativity in the UK. Contemporary festivals appear to provide a way to revitalise participants through empowerment, resistance, and change showing a site does not need to be authentic or ancient as any provide a vital place of congregation (Brayshay & Mulvile 2022, p.141; Frost 2016, p.570; McKay 1996, p.42). Participants feel that, as the world improves for the better, psyculture (I11, p.29) is evolving as an exemplar of better ways of relating to each other that may benefit wider society (I8, p.21); that even imagined nostalgia or invented traditions have their place in improving individual and group experiences in society as such gatherings demonstrate (S26, p.23; FW, p.3).

A participant asks the questions of why people at such gatherings are so accepting of each other and why this cannot be achieved in everyday life which is a vital remark in understanding societal issues (S5, p.26). Festivals are associated with celebrations by the common people often in a struggle and resistance against enclosures of time, space, knowledge, or history potentially showing another way is possible (Woodman & Zaunseder 2022, p.124). These divides exist in the separation of human, non-human and the outside environment where a different world is not only pleasurable but desirable and sought after by psyculture participants. Tensions existed between mobile and sedentary communities throughout history and at the margins of social transition clear evident in the archaeological record. Ehrenreich confirms celebration was a regular practice in the past, but its usage had been destroyed or removed from religious practices in the intervening historical period; where the abandonment of collective festivities can be seen as a cause of societal depression depriving people of customs that sustained psychic and social balance (Ehrenreich 2007, p.14). Participants optimistically consider how a re-established healing collective joy could be envisaged in the future as evident society's greater acceptance and occurrence of such gatherings (S23, p.25).

## 5.6 Environment and Nature

The outside environment and the experience of nature played an important part in trance dance gatherings as landscape and structures had sacred meaning, purposes, and memories (Darvill 2010, p.18; Mills 2005, p.79). Humans take meaning from astrology, cosmology, astronomy, landscape, and the cosmos linking beliefs and practices to the natural world around them including the weather and that helps with an understanding of alive human responses and relationships (Campion 2004, p.207; Darvill 2015, p.141; Prendergast *et al* 2017, p.16). Participants confirm that outside spaces and landscapes are better all round because of the air quality, more space, and being in nature (S7, p.14). They describe being 'there with all the hills around' (I, p.13), climbing, sitting, and looking while it was 'amazing to be out in nature' (I5, p.13). Some state the importance of experiencing the extreme conditions of being outside for prolonged periods in difficult inclement weather specific to Britain which is part of the 'suffering that helps us grow together' helping each other through the difficulties the terrain and weather present (S22, p.22). Figure 32 illustrates the beautiful ancient landscape at sunset that brings participants together in feeling awe at nature and the environment.

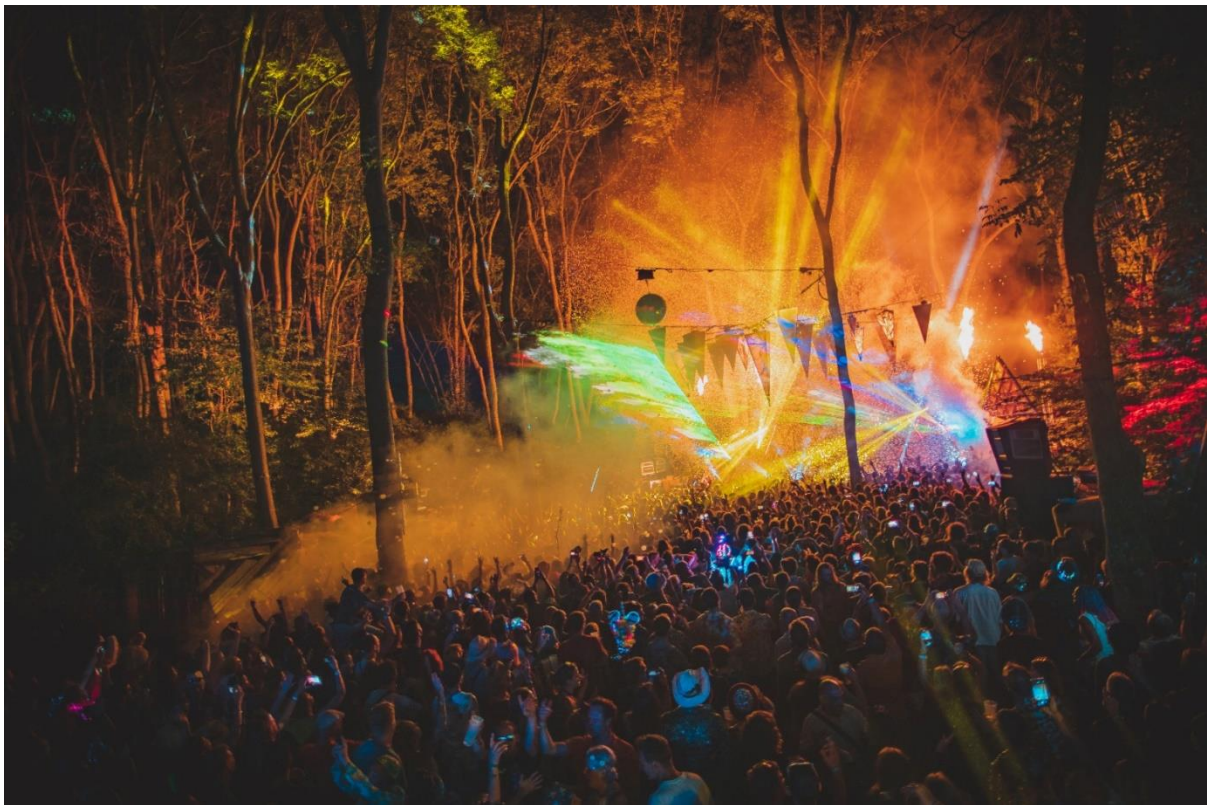


*Figure 32 Landscape, sunset and main marquee*

Archaeological sites stand as an important way of remembering with landscape as a key part of the rituals embodying the human experience and relationship with the surroundings (Bradley 2005, p.122; Holtorf 1997, p.45). Participants feel more connected at an outside gathering finding a deeper connection with each other when in a natural environment (AI, p.7), similar to earth-based beliefs where materiality and spirituality are unified with a 'ritualistic earth connection'. Ulrich states affective responses of humans to the natural environment is a key to understanding past and present engagement with nature including the use of music (Ulrich 1983, p.119; Weston & Bennett 2014, p.4; Till 2014, p.24). Figure 33 shows a hyper-immersive night-time wood environment that is mesmerising and liminal to participants where the individual is minimised to the power of the mass of dancers swirling in sound, light, and laser effects with the trees a major part of the experience.

The power and agency of landscape in human cultural evolution includes both cultural and natural dimensions to help interpret human experience (Tilley 2016,

p.38). Participants state the importance of the land where they feel the connection deeper in a natural landscape and being amongst trees as much deeper than being inside (S8, p.14). What is paramount is the connection with people being just as important as the location and the place does not need to be sacred (S14, p.15; I4, p.10). This intersection of the power and agency of people being together in a natural landscape is described as ‘really powerful’ particularly in smaller groups and affected by participant’s intentions (S9, p.12). This ‘embodied cognition’ shows how the inter and intra subjectivity between the group members, and their past subjectivities are important in understanding the human affective response to nature (Hoan 2019, p.174).



*Figure 33 Woodland night-time setting with immersive environment, lighting, effects and decor*

The importance of holding psyculture gatherings in outside places in nature is a dominant consideration, where the outside landscape provides a clearer acoustic experience, with participants seeking a deeper connection with the land, animals and earth spirits, and the wider cosmology. The setting is important to participants, artists, and organisers to provide optimal ‘headspace’ with the right people and the right

environment (I2, p.4). A fuller understanding of intentional acoustic spaces and their intersectionality with trance, dance, and music will aid understanding of human bonding, instruments, and behaviours but also the aesthetics and production techniques (Till 2011, p.6; Nettle 2004, p.119). The depth with which psyculture artists and performers go to ensure that the music creates such bonding through sensory immersion (S26, p.11) is revelatory.

Additional to the potential planning of sonic immersion, small bounded community research would benefit from taking account of the role of organisers' planning in choosing locations and the complex arrangements that they make with the acoustic properties, and the choice of open spaces in mind. This is evidenced in archaeological dance artwork of acoustic 'monumental choreography' at temple sites which reveal the intention for group dancing for transformatory purposes (Royo 2005, p.42; Aamodt 2014, p.53; Díaz-Andreu *et al* 2017, p.181; Werbner 1996, p.321). In psyculture, all sites, inside, or outside, offer an otherworldly experience of trance dance to music (I7, p.17). Inside marquees at night-time, the intention is often to replicate an outside liminal woodland setting with lights, installations, and trippy overall effects to disorientate and minimise the individual to becoming unified with a group mass of dancers where music dominates, and the individual is minimised (Figure 34).



*Figure 34 Immersive night-time setting with UV decor, lighting, and installations*

Ancient landscapes, stones, and monuments present evidence of potential, intentional, immersive soundscapes because of their acoustical properties and the sensorial experiences that could have affected consciousness, liminality, and otherworldliness (Boivin *et al* 2007, p.290; Boivin 2004, p.40; Watson 2001, p.187; Aamodt 2014, p.53; Debertois & Bisconti 2014, p.138; Watson & Keating 1999, p.335; Díaz-Andreu *et al* 2017, p.181; Hamilakis and Theou 2013, p.215).

Few investigations have occurred within modern-day psychculture to ascertain what the sensory affects are when experiencing group trance dance with psytrance music at sacred sites. However, when one gathering was inadvertently held on a sacred site, participants reported unusual spiritual encounters (I3, p.5).

Psytrance events are rarely held at sacred sites but the sites they do use become sacred by the enjoyment of the shared experience established (St. John 2012b, p.4). The lived experience of psychculture gatherings could illuminate past human intentions at archaeological sites. Psytrance organisers concentrate on finding spaces in nature, forests, and landscapes that will enhance liminality and make a collective effort to consider the acoustical properties of a chosen space to connect participants to nature leading dancers on a new path (S14, p.15 FW, p.18). In earlier times, the transformational connection between place, space, landscape, and living species

may have had greater actuality, potentiality, fluidity, dispute, spatiality, both messy and contradictory, where communication with spirits and other dimensional phenomena occurred (Hirsch 1995; Cummings 2017, p.265; Bender 2002, p.3; (Büster, Warmenbol & Mlekuž 2018, p.9).

The range and complexity of sensory symbolism indicates that sensory perception is a cultural as well as a physical act that passes on values through speech and sensation in human evolution (Claasen 1997, p.410). Ancient, cyclical rituals and performance, evident in symbolism, had a spiritual purpose to communicate with human or ethereal spirits (Wright *et al* 2021, p.5). Certainly, many participants indicate they have, and intend to seek, connections with spiritual forms in an outside environment which is similarly reflected in décor and other symbolism (S4, p.14; I6, p.14). Bender reiterates the supernatural journeying activated by this sensorially inseparable interaction of landscape, place, space, stones, and living things (Bender 2020, p.13; Ingold 1993, p.152). Ingold suggests the indigenous approach of placing the listeners in the landscape to experience its features themselves, and an immersion in the stories told. The temporality of the landscape can therefore be investigated from a 'dwelling perspective' of people's active perception of their world as the concepts of nature, space, and land are not separable (Ingold 1993, p.152). This immersive, outside environment is reported by participants to be the factor that 'opens realms' (S1, p.14) with 'nature in the woods with spirits' (FW, p.21) being present in everything which is 'why we are here, so you lose yourself' with motifs and symbology in the artwork and clothing (S29, p.16).





*Figure 35 Mushroom outside lighting in a natural environment at night-time*

Psyculture participants extend an understanding of the importance of being outside in the dark to enhance this losing-yourself effect immersed in the illusory mess of lights, fires, night-time noises (FW, p.14), and uncertainties in a 'place where you cannot be seen' (FW, p.22) where they are 'free to be expressive' (FW, p.22). In Figure 35, the mushroom lighting has a real and fantasy function in providing outside lighting but similarly the objects psychedelic and symbolic where participants understand the meaning and history behind the décor that may be replicating ancient ways.

Ancestral gatherings were linked to honouring of ancestors and, while modern-day trance rarely performs rituals connected to sacred monuments or to honour ancestors, the sacralization of any space is a feature of psyculture (Parker Pearson & Ramilisonina 1998, p.308). Intentionality to congregate in outside spaces in the past, may have been more multi-purpose than currently estimated including the desire to experience 'wildness' (Hoaen 2019, p.168). Seeking communion with nature to return to a primal, less-conditioned, wild, animal self beyond the mainstream human is clearly cited amongst participants (I6, p.16). The relations between people and places where the experience of becoming 'more animal' is

enacted, and sometimes deliberately sought, requires a deeper understanding in modern-day trance gatherings which have an intention of leisure and time out rather than potentially life-threatening experiences of environment and nature (I5, p.14).

Participants provide some insight into their own experiences at psytrance gatherings that are a primary reason for attending outside events. This ranges from believing it is an opportunity to be touch with nature like 'every other animal' (S29, p.16), be their 'animal self' and even 'going into a more primal part of me' (I5, p.15) away from their 'conditioned brain' (I9, p.24) where they 'desire to run in the forest' shedding the illusion that they are not animals (S29, p.16). Without a Westernised lens, future research could take much from these lived experiences, to understand that earlier people may have had a much wider intention than attending an established, set ritual with rather layers of different potentialities possible in a chaotic, and messy manner (Van Horn 2017, p.5).

Participants further illustrate their experience of connecting with animals and earth spirits, cosmology, and the night (FW, p.5). Outside environments provide communion with skylines that is fully appreciated by participants and described as inspirational where people appreciate the history, ancestry and regionality of locations. Cummings sees ancient architectural and material culture as closely linked to identity, and a wider cosmology in a fluid, ever-changing divergence of objects and practices (Cummings 2017, p.262). Participants note the regular return to outside spaces 'that inspires wonder and is a major feature of the experience' like they are in 'some ancient encampment' as the 'sun rises and sets in this timeless place' which during this fieldwork account though objects and spaces are ever-changing (FW, p.5).

In imagining how ancient peoples embodied the landscape, the multi-sensory approach to the human-place interaction is valuable allowing relationality and affectivity away from a visual bias toward the auditory and other senses (Hamilakis 2011, p.218, p.254; Hamilalkis 2021, p.254; Rodaway 2002, p.116; Classen 1997, p.401; Pocock 2002, p.380). In psyculture, the importance of a sensory immersive environment is key with sound and music as the predominant objects of worship and

consciousness-changing providing a 'safe container for a tranced state' (S8, p.3; S29, p.16).

In terms of embodiment and intersubjective meaning, the body assemblage or 'bodyworld' reveal substantial information about shared meaning regarding society and history, and moral and cultural meaning through movement and gesture that enables a superior comprehension of how objects and beliefs are entangled in a fluid elasticity (Hamilakis, Pluciennik & Tarlow 2001, p.13; Robb & Harris 2013, p.215). In terms of situational relatedness, earlier societies probably had more complex types of situational relatedness than humans today which trance in terms of understanding about multiple embodied elasticity. (Robb & Harris 2013, p.215). When applying this body elasticity to the embedding of knowledge and beliefs onto objects, the entoptic imagery of rock art may relate to altered states of consciousness signifying points of entry into the supernatural as spiral motifs are increasingly being understood as representing acoustic properties (Sørensen & Rebay-Salisbury 2012, p.3; Bradley 1989, p.251; Dronfield 1996, p.37). The replication of similar symbology abounds in psychculture often representing a spiralling journey or portal entry, and certainly visualisations of sonic embodiment (FW, p.16). Sensory embodiment within psychculture requires further investigation.



*Figure 36 Dancing at night-time in immersive woodlands location*

Participants reiterate that the dominant, preferred purpose of gatherings in nature is to dance in groups together (AI, p.6) where positive emotions and appreciation are resultant (FW, p.12) especially when in a natural setting (S8, p.3; S12, p.22). Figure 36 gives an example of a preference for outside settings for dancing in groups together and, while dancing inside a marquee occurs, this is secondary to dancing in woodlands. The ritual is the dance (I11, p.27), and the continual music which, added to the drugs, the sleep deprivation, the liminality, and being outside, spreads the energy according to participants (I4, p.8). An interesting avenue of research, relatively unexplored certainly within psychculture is kinaesthetic awareness of dance movement and embodied understanding of the dancer's and the dancer observer's relationship to social spaces (Steinman 2011, p.70). Figure 36 illustrates the hyper-liminal space in nature that meld technology, humans, and nature is a mind-boggling sensory embodiment where participants feel literally energised in electrifying visual, sound, and physical sensations. Participants indicate the dance energy achieved together in nature is like being an electric car where mother nature provides a

charging place where you 'plug yourself in and recharge' creating a 'Tesla of human energy' (S7, p.3; I6, p.15; FW, p.2). Heelas asserts that the change of atmosphere and environment at outside gatherings particularly leads to such a rebirth, a reconnection with love and solidarity (Heelas 2008, p.243).

The relationship between belief, body, and technology requires further exploration in how the physical and spiritual are connected and experienced, how norms are communicated, adaptations shared and enacted for example the use of portable altars to create a sacred space (Claasen 1997, p.410; Sørensen & Rebay-Salisbury 2002, p.2). All psyculture events have altars at the front of the DJ booths with the soundsystem and the artists representing what is worshipped with great dedication and effort made to make these portable altars of beauty and a focus for visualising during altered states (FW, p.16). Participants indicate the embodied experience of altars or decorated areas at the front of stages at psytrance gatherings that act as a portal entry often using spiral and other ancient symbology along with modern-day psychedelic, mushroom, and alien imagery to elicit altered consciousness aiming for full sensory immersion (S26, p.11; S24, p.15). At more clandestine gatherings, the hidden celebration of mushroom culture is evident in the décor (Figure 37). Psyculture research would benefit from deeper consideration of the objects and artefacts such as altars associated with the culture.



*Figure 37 Mushroom décor*

## 5.7 Preparations, objects, and journey

The study of objects and corporeal interactions in archaeology can inform the present-day where objects are mnemonic artefacts imbued with affective meaning that are difficult to evidence in the past but the modern-day gatherings can inform how important individual and group objects are (Büster 2018, p.19; Zubieta 2022, p.7; Garfinkel 2003, p.12; Jones & Cochrane 2018, p.98; Schiermer 2021, p.92). Castagner indicates there are often rituals evident in preparations for gatherings from minimal to extensive including objects of survival and decoration (Castagner 2020, p.69). Participants declared an array of objects both practical and decorative, that they took with them to gatherings that were often multi-purpose adding to the decoration of the gatherings, to individualise themselves, relate to their specific tribe and their mutual encampment area that often took considerable preparations including for sleeping, cooking, shelter, and overall subsistence both prior, during, and after the journey to the gathering (S21, p.20).

Material objects may serve as extensions of the body and the senses in body adornment (Spyer 2013, p.126). Garfinkel states that dance events in the past often involved specific clothing, accessories and body decoration indicating elaborate rituals and preparation (Garfinkel 2003, p.208; (Kinahan 2018, p.40; Rainio *et al* 2021, p.640; Turčin 2018, p.3). The complex trans-cultural usage of objects shows transfer of rituals and practices with valued aesthetic and symbolic in archaeological artefacts gives insights into personal identity and relationships with things (Martínez-Sevilla *et al* 2021, p.828; Cooper *et al* 2022, p.197). Figure 38 shows an Indian psychedelic representation of Ganesha using UV paints that shine brightly against the blacklight cloth adding to its sensory impact and one of many gnostic amalgamations within global psyculture Such décor in psyculture is greatly valued, often hand-made, and evidence of the aesthetic and symbolic meaning embedded in psyculture artwork.



*Figure 38 Blacklight UV symbolic decor*

Contemporary archaeology aids understanding of the cultural and social meaning of objects that are part of the festival experience including leave-no-trace policies to respect nature and for participants to take objects home with them (Äikäs *et al* 2016, p.78). This is confirmed by participants in that they value ecological care and consideration admiring organisers commitment to a green ethos that they adhere to individually (S1, p.21; FW, p.23).

However, some scholars deny the importance of objects with participants wishing to transcend materiality towards a dematerialisation (Buchli 2020, p.18). Some participants denied the over-preparation prior to attendance stating the minimal preparations and objects to survive was part of the journey of survival of extreme endurance in nature (I11, p.28). Participants frequently cite caution in assigning too much meaning to objects, the preoccupation with art, design, and visual stimulations where what is sought is a lack of over-assemblage (S17, p.20), seeking a minimalistic approach not only to art, decorations, sacred assignments, but also within the process of the experience itself and the nature of the literal and symbolic

journeying with advice to stay simple in the present moment (S25, p.16). Psyculture research involves a preoccupation with the overload of sensory immersion and importance of psytrance related objects where some participants merely want a direct connection between themselves, others while dancing, preferably in nature, with a good quality soundsystem (S14, p.22).

Hats, clothing, toys, gloves, shoes, makeup, bags often are painted in UV colours so that humans are contributing to the overall immersive environment that patently is important in psyculture (Figure 39). Psyculture research would benefit from a further understanding of the material objects at gatherings in order to understand their relationality, symbolism, and importance to participants.

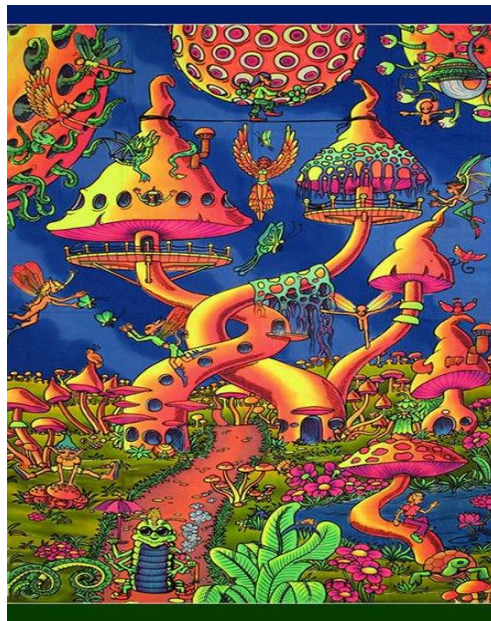


*Figure 39 Mushroom decor, immersive environment and clothing*

Ingold's idea of creative entanglement with materials sees a fluidity of things and human relationality where objects have their own volition, persuasiveness, and influence (Ingold 2010, p.11). These influences have a non-linear, spiralling unfolding with a multiplicity of connections likened to a fungal mycelium blurring the body and environment boundaries (Ingold 2010, p.11). Participants frequently refer to the analogy of mushrooms indicating their connectivity and a similarity to human entanglements of creativity inter and intra species with nature, plants and fungi often indicating that the plants are in charge of proceedings where humans are merely entangled in their mycelium, behave in a similar way, and provide insight to a more



natural understanding of how humans operate (I4, p.10; FW, p.5). In anthropology, Ingold and Palsson suggest these reciprocal relations between plant and human show a multi-faceted connectivity and interspecies communication in a rhizomatic meshwork of interlinked threads beyond dualism (Ingold & Palsson 2013, p.8). Mushroom décor dominates more clandestine psyculture gatherings and represents a hidden philosophy rarely expressed to outsiders about the belief in the rhizomatic nature of human existence and the inter species entanglements along with mushroom beliefs and practices (Figure 40).



*Figure 40 Mushroom decor*

Archaeology provides evidence of earlier festivities as a way of exchanging and sharing of practices and objects sought through co-creation and presence in temporary, liminal spaces of congregation (Äikäs *et al* 2016, p.78). Festival participants are expected to engage with co-creation, sustainable living as a site is transformed by structures, assemblages, and artefacts that quickly disappear in a mutuality of commitment to working and creating together in building and dismantling the infrastructure of gatherings (Äikäs *et al* 2016, p.78; van den Ende 2022, p.206; Brayshay & Mulville 2022, p.141). Similar intentions occur in psyculture gatherings with a focus on keeping materiality portable, and temporary within a trajectory of 'permanent impermanence' (St. John 2012a, p.29). Psytrance events subscribe in co-creating immersive spaces (FW, p.4) with participants seeking a liminal, illogical

space of transition where its temporality incorporates organiser and participant co-presence where impermanence is the permanent experience (St. John 2012a, p.29). Participants seek out gatherings that align with their own ethos regarding sustainability and understand the temporary nature of sites (S3, p.14). These aspects of proximity and co-presence involve more than experiencing liminality or sacredness but rather an intention to seeking out 'energy' or experience of 'amazement' in close proximity with others, both animate and inanimate, in the present moment away from the mainstream (Bowman 2008, p.281; Digance 2006, p.45; Jacob Skousen 2018, p.262).

Studies highlight the social interactions during journeying and pilgrimage including how people, ideas, and things flow in a mobile society where people engage with paths, landscapes, and ways of remembering often captured in brain and muscular memory in terms of identity formation and (Gerrard 2023, p.71; Cummings & Johnston 2007, p.6; Leary and Kador 2016, p.8, p.14; Lye 2021, p.345; Bell 2020, p.4). The concept of the journey has both literal and symbolic associations for psychculture participants that are integral to understanding the motivations for attending, participating, and the preparations for travel, with the knowledge of routes, logistics, and places embedded in memory. Participants note part of the journey is to find the gathering which adds to the excitement and the newness in the present moment where participants explain about stopping the car in order to listen at night-time to hear where the music is coming from using the senses to seek out the site or travelling across Europe in convoys working together in co-creation (I4, p.10). By searching for new paths with new people in modern-day EDM journeying to gatherings, it helps humans to rethink position, status, purpose, and the journey becomes polarised on finding the gathering, putting mainstream considerations aside and becoming different agents in a co-presence (O'Grady 2017, p.2).

In psychculture, there are parallel literal and psychological journeys in the task of locating gatherings that may lead to a new relationship with the 'synaptic landscape' where drifting into new areas depends on spatial awareness and maps in the search of a place in the 'spatial imagination' (Harrison 2013; Giesecking *et al* 2014, p.405). St. John builds on this journeying aspect where psytrancers extend this journey from local to global, arguing that participants are cultural exiles wishing to experience

experimental, cosmopolitan yet locally varied experiences with multiple opportunities to encounter other aesthetics and styles leaving a memory residue as they become part of a travelling populace where they are bringing back their knowledges as part of this fluid becoming (St. John 2012a, p.4; McKay 1996, p.39). Participants indicate that there will be a literal and real journey requiring the 'mindset of going on a pilgrimage' where you may 'discover something about yourself or about the world' that may or may not be positive but 'you're going there to finding something out. It might just be that it's the moment that you're in at that point and then you reconnect with that thing' even when travelling further afield (I1, p.2). This may align with the affects and experiences of intra tribal gatherings in the past where the journey may have been equally revelatory at a personal and group level.

Journeying, both past and present, is linked to a psychological and literal travelling through dark and light states illuminating how these elements were used potentially for sensory affect simulating underworld journeying in lunar landscapes (Dowd 2019, p.206; Sims 2021, p.19). This is informative in interpreting the journey evident in psychculture where there is much debate amongst participants seeking a complex experience towards primal interiority surrounded by spiritual myths, symbols, imagery in a vast technical assemblage. Sometime this is a womb-like experience as they join in some kind of 'cosmic harmony' with organisers and artists co-ordinating their work to reaching a mutual vibe (Castagner 2020, p.75). As in Figure 41, the womb-like visualisation is evident during a night-time journey outside where the feeling of being in a conjoined harmony on a journey together surrounded by this vastly complex and disorientating sensory assemblage. The journey is important to participants where they may encounter positive and negative experiences in the literal and psychological journey but there is an awareness that both light and dark experience deepen personal development (FW, p.1; S26, p.11) where the journey is described as one of 'mind settlement' (S9, p.19).



*Figure 41 Womb-like night-time immersive woodland environment*

On this embodied journey, there are dark and light experiences in party peaks and troughs where there may be problems that cause the vibe to be disrupted or individuals are sphered into another vibe with others (Castagner 2020, p.75) as participants indicate that 'nihilism is a part of the journey towards ultimate truth for many, but we should be careful they don't get stuck there forever' (S26, p.11). Not everyone is part of or wants to be part of the downward trajectory into dark madness as there is an array of different climaxes, vibes, and levels of participation including power relations that can destroy the vibe and harmony (Takahashi 2005, p.256). Participants indicate a realistic caution in that the journeys are not always resulting in a positive effect that can be integrated in their lives and that negative physical and psychological problems can occur as well as benefits. St. John refers to a formlessness, a 'rulelessness' in the journeying into a chaotic fluidity as a key motif within psyculture with multi-layered experiences, behaviours and unpredictability, the grotesque and carnivalesque that can have negative consequences through participation (St. John 2010a, p.4; Vitos 2010, p.156). A participant states their

'experience with psytrance culture was pleasant overall but it can take a toll too as 'it's a journey therefore people need to prepare themselves physically as well as psychologically to be set free' (S4, p.26). Archaeology would benefit from interpreting these complexity of positive and negative experiences of journeying that present in such modern-day ethnographic accounts.

## 5.8 Benefits

There are debates that inherent in trance dance cultures there are healing benefits. Winkelman indicates that there are universals evident in ancient shamanic trance practices where healing occurred aiding adaptation and survival, improving neuro-  
gnostic impulses that increase habitus, sociality, a sense of reality, and dissolved boundaries (Winkelman 2009, p.470; Rooke 2014, p.36; S21, p.18). Participants certainly express how the sense of euphoria, empowerment, loss of bad energy, and how 'refreshing and healing' (S6, p.24) trance dance is that confirms this physiological and neurological amalgamation of health benefits (S5, p.24). These experiences and feelings may be responsible for the species adapting and surviving participants suggest but it (S26, p.23) is difficult to ascertain as not all current participants desire to be healed and some resist the assertion (S4, p.12). Winkelman indicates shamanic healing is evident in raves and helps replace what is missing in terms of psychosocial human needs and loss of extended family networking replaced with peer networks instead (Winkelman 2015, p.10). Certainly, what the nominated shaman provided in terms of consciousness changes, entrainment, and heightened physiological experiences in the past is no longer practiced but the same techniques are performed at individual and group level in psychculture (S4, p.24).

What is clearly expressed by most participants is that repeated dance movement improves a sense of self, enhanced creativity, and self-expression (I8, p.22; I12, p.30) in what Erickson calls a 'lived sense of a sensorimotor loop' (Erickson 2021, p.202). Participants refer to the creation of positive energy caused by attendance, participation, contribution and specifically by the prolonged dancing together which Stapf indicates is from a need to 'restore vibrancy' and free themselves from the sense of disconnect from a socially pressured sense of self (Stapf 2023, p.46). Interestingly, psytrance participants appear aware of their own need to restore this

vibrant energy, how it affects them physiologically, and how it makes them feel which is why they return to gatherings (I8, p.22).

New psychological research confirms that the role of dance provides a way of coping (S21, p.22) because it increases communication and sociality (Rooke 2014, p.36; Wahbeh *et al* 2022, p.89). There are transformatory benefits from re-connecting with the self and others during dancing in an 'active, recursive process' where participants rise above their illness and view of themselves through the lived experience of dancing (Carapellotti *et al* 2023, p.15; Buttingsrud 2021). Participants clearly vocalise the individual effects on their wellbeing by participating in prolonged trance dancing to repetitive music that confirm these findings (S1, p.24). However, some participants indicate they feel better just by attending and socialising alone without dancing just by being present in community (I8, p.22). Indigenous shamanic trance dancing practices involving collective performance, ritual enactment of ASC, led to healing through 'mimetic capacity' of imitation via dance and music (Winkelman 2021b, p.9). Winkelman's insistence that the practices were shamanic may have been applicable in earlier societies (Winkelman 2021b, p.10), and they may be similar techniques used today, but psyculture participants rarely describe these trance dance practices as shamanic. The Western insistence on ascribing a belief system detracts from understanding the actions and intentions of participants.

Many psyculture participants refer to the role of energy that is released during trance dancing that is similar to contemporary indigenous tribes where negative problems are neutralized by group trance dance practices (I10, p.25) that improves mental health resulting from 'fired up energy' which runs through the dancing body. These trance dance practices are from ancestral memory (Wirawan & Fil 2020, p.2479), and still performed in contemporary cultures. There is little scholarship undertaken to investigate this 'energy' in psyculture practice; more in-depth investigation of the power of embodied energy will be beneficial (Keeney, Keeney & Boo 2016, p.137; Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2012, p.704; I6, p.14). What is absent from many studies is the effect of prolonged dancing to psychedelic trance music (I4, p.9).

Participants indicate that in a safe trance dance space, they feel relaxed enough to feel emotions of love whilst dancing to trance, it enables them overcome doubt and

'fear that I am good for nothing' (S6, p.24; S9, p.3, I5, p.13). Supernant and colleagues indicate the discipline of the archaeology of the heart brings a clearer awareness of the whole body regarding intellect, emotion, spirit, and the physical self that will help to understand the past in terms of love and connectivity (Supernant *et al* 2020, p.36). Ethnography of the lived experience can fill the gap in understanding what humans experienced about love in the past. Participants report a range of positive emotions and connections with others as a result of collective, prolonged trance dancing (S25, p.5). However, this is not the case for many who do not feel they belong in mainstream society finding their emotions are repressed or denied (S1, p.6; S25, p.2).

Supernant and colleagues suggest that through immersion in the emotional experience of gatherings may be able to establish the rhizomatic of emotions as a way of understanding the present and the past (Supernant *et al* 2020, p.34. This entanglement of emotions is confirmed by participants (S7, p.22;). Much can be learnt from addressing emotions and their role in the dynamics of cultural evolution that includes what non-human (S26, p.5) elements can teach us (Dezecache, Sievers & Gruber 2022, p.1754).

The ethnographic research indicates that participants are key to enable group transgression (I4, p.7) and improve health and a transfer to positive emotions (I8, p.20-22). Participants generally confirm what Winkelman suggests that participation can influence connectedness, improved emotional states and group synchronisation (Winkelman 2015, p.10). Participants indicate that participation improves sociality and communication with others, reducing stresses, improving mental health balance and personal approaches to life to the point of actually 'changing my life and my attitude to life for the better' (S19, p.24; A1, p.3).

In terms of the benefits of sound and music, it is stated that the synchrony between rhythm, harmony and percussion can lead to a trance state bringing enjoyment, increasing sociality, enhanced compassion and co-operation, and connectedness in music-based therapy settings (McDonald, Böckler, & Kanske 2022, p.9). Participants advocate that psytrance music is singularly the best music to experience a trance and in terms of achieving psychological wellbeing (S8, p.22). Kaelen and colleagues

advise music improves depression in the right set, setting, and group dynamics (Kaelen *et al* 2018, p.506).

EDM composition techniques affects dancers in a positive way, for example, uplifting trance music with its familiarity and expectations (Agres *et al* 2017, p.199).

Participants indicate enjoyment and flow in trance music reflects a 'dynamic interplay' between repetition and complexity leading to altered listening states' that potentially cohere the group (S21, p.22; S1, p.24). The participants indicate that it is the rhythmic synchrony that increases sociality and connectedness (S15, p.23).

Participants suggest the specifics of the composition of psytrance music relate to the beat, the rhythm, the frequencies, and the prolonged duration of sets, particularly in outside settings, can have a tremendous transformatory effect on participants: 'that it is the music that creates this effect' (S15, p.4).

Participants, similar to Winkelman, suggest that synchronisation occurs when they fully connect with the music over prolonged periods indicating it is the length of time dancing (FW, p.19) that leads to full connectedness and peak emotions sometimes to the point of becoming telepathic, 'feeling free', balanced and producing a 'energy/lifeforce' that 'powers up the soul' (S28, p.5; S1, p.24). Participants see the music which takes the 'driver's seat' controlling the participant's reaction as they allow it to 'guide or push my experience' forward sharing the experience with others (S22, p.10; S13, p.19).

Some suggest that the musical journey has positive benefits, but some suggest (S4, p.24) that not all participants experience benefits or are seeking health benefits. Care needs to be taken not to assume healing is the intention of all participants (14, p.11). Participants believe there is a journey through chaos to order that can release energy that is beneficial leading to ecstatic and transformatory experiences (S17, p.22). This leads to the opening up of creative abilities and (S25, p.2). A collaboration across EDM genres would be revelatory to identify why repetitive EDM music and dance can spur creativity. Further research should assess how and when emotional experiences occur and what aspect of the music is linked to stronger emotions where certain timbres are associated with certain effects (Yang *et al* 2023, p.15).



Some analysis of the musical content of psytrance music has been undertaken but very little has been done to locate where and how healing can be accredited to the compositional components of psytrance music. Evidence of the healing benefits of whatever music times is equally absent and both areas will benefit from compositional analysis of psytrance. Additionally, the performative role of the DJ needs to be assessed showing how they influence the audience and how gender, age, or ethnicity may be affected by the DJ, their musical choices, and the associated emotional responses which is often a neglected aspect of EDM research as well as their centrality in providing a healing journey.

Archaeotherapy provides insight about the healing benefits of connections between places, people, landscapes, and nature, and improving communal wellbeing which illustrates the growing interest in archaeological and heritage studies bringing great benefits (Schaepe (2017, p.517; Wallen & Docherty-Hughes 2023, p.2). Similarly, the health impact of 'earthing' leading to physiological changes is informing UK research and wellbeing provision, for example through simple techniques such as walking barefoot (Chevalier *et al* 2012, p.2; Menigoz *et al* 2020, p.153). Participants frequently note that the beauty of the locations set in nature provide health benefits that is 'grounding and helps you feel close to nature and grateful for it' such as being amongst the trees or walking barefoot (S8, p.14). Another participant agrees that in nature they 'feel a togetherness and unity with the people around me, a letting loose of all my bad energy and negativity in my life. I feel a oneness with nature (when outside) and a oneness with the energy we all contribute to and create' (S26, p.5).

The effect of 'nostalgic emotion' is increasingly proven to provide benefit through 'authentic engagement' in ancient landscapes improving mental health through shared identity engaging with the heritage of place (Everill & Burnell 2022, pp.1; Ryland 2022, p.9). A participant confirms they 'enjoy connecting with nature at these events as it feels like something my ancestors may have done'.(S7, p.6). Participants' love of being outside will benefit from scholarly confirmation of their experiences when in remote locations.

Participants have indicated that there are psychological benefits to using psychedelic drugs (17, p.20) similar to what Carhart-Harris and colleagues suggest that can enhance mood, improves mental flexibility leading to a more relaxed state, feeling a 'great sense of relief', and better group working (Carhart-Harris *et al* 2016, p.1379). Similarly, Dupuis indicates that the appropriate use of set, setting, suggestibility and enculturation can have a therapeutically positive effect but advises caution because of drug taking in intense environments (Dupuis 2021, p.1). Similarly, some participants give their viewpoints about the positive effects of psychedelics equally advising the possible negative effects where integration and support are needed (18, p.21; 19, p.23). Psychedelic culture has suffered persecution and prosecution from the sixties onwards especially since 1988 with the mass drug use, criminality, and hedonism associated with the rave scene seen as an 'existential threat' resulting in stigma (Moore 2022, p.43). Moore concludes that recognition of recovery in drug addiction should be seen as a process in broadening the narrative towards destigmatisation, countering the negative associations of labelling drug taking as abnormal, moving to an acknowledgement of the fluidity of identity and the potential role of alternative medicines which could have a positive impact on individuals and society (Moore 2015, p.47).

## 5.9 Discussion conclusion

Dancing, or participating in a clandestine psyculture event, is innately and subtly a political act as hidden as the practices and gatherings themselves. Another theme that dominates is the act of being alive in the present moment in terms of everyday actions not just dancing. The creation of altars at psyculture events and the communication of skills, norms and evolving adaptations is highly evident in the infrastructure builds of psyculture gatherings such as the creation of altars, sacred spaces for performance and ritual immersed in an assemblage of beliefs and dance practices in a gnostic amalgamation. The ability to observe and record bodily reactions in the present in psyculture gatherings on aspects such as gesture, movement choices, and reactions to acoustics could deepen the study of dance and trance. This is difficult to evidence the fleeting experience of trance dance leaves little trace but the emotional experiences of present day psyculture participants can

be sought providing a tool for reflection on how sensorial experiences of trance dance were.

## 6. Conclusions and Contributions

This section summarises the overall and individual thematic conclusions indicating which question they relate to. This is followed by an indication of the originality and contributions to research, and a reflection on issues that arose during the research.

### 6.1 Conclusions

Overall

RQ1. What are the practices and principles of contemporary UK trance dance psychedelic trance culture?

An overall conclusion is that many participants feel they are gathering in groups to dance outside together for a similar purpose to ancestral and contemporary practices. There are similar practices and principles in both past, contemporary, cross cultural, and psychculture intentions, values, and techniques to create positive energy through prolonged communal dancing. Archival and primary data findings broadened the range of contributions about practices and principles within UK psychedelic trance culture including beliefs, ancestors, memory, dance, trance, music, sound, contributions, community, participation, environment, nature, objects, journeys, benefits as detailed below.

Beliefs

The culture demonstrates along a continuum a scale from zero beliefs towards a gnostic amalgamation of beliefs.

Ancestors and memory

Participants suggest gatherings re-enact collective trance dance practice in nature that is an integral part of human experience underpinned by essences of memory.

Dance and trance

The importance, impact and benefits of shared dance energy is a predominant experience and intention to gather that is repeated and considered timeless particularly at prolonged outside gatherings.

#### Music and sound

Psytrance music is one of the most important reason for engagement in the community.

#### Contribution, community, and participation

Social interaction and prolonged dancing give an inter and intra-tribe sense of belonging creating a feedback loop of self and community for learning, growth, development, personal and community enrichment.

#### Environment and nature

A natural outdoor environment is preferred for a trance dance gathering as it enhances the experience of collective dancing and provides an immersive, sensory intersubjectivity between human, non-human, nature, and the wider cosmology.

#### Preparations, objects, and journey

The journey metaphor runs through every aspect of personal and group practices, experiences, and intentions, internally and externally, in the artwork and symbolism. Pre-gathering preparations and choosing of objects and equipment range from complex or minimal for the literal journey.

#### Benefits

There are benefits to attending outside psyculture gatherings that are positive physiologically and psychologically. The agreement that there are benefits from prolonged collective dancing is overwhelming indicating this occurs at an individual, group, societal and global level pushing forward cultural change.

## 6.2 Contributions

### Overall

The original contribution come from an in-depth study of psyculture as a living co-presence sociality providing a comprehensive understanding of the established practices and principles which may help establish a framework for future studies in different EDM genre and cultures and their unique practices and principles. In considering the primary research question: '*RQ1a. What does an investigation of psyculture trance dance practices and principles reveal?*', there are powerful and original contributions made by undertaking ethnographic fieldwork and gaining insight from surveying participant's opinions of contemporary psyculture practices and principles. A much greater insight has been established about why participants return to outside gatherings to dance together repeatedly where this spiritual element may be central to this return due to the desire for communal dancing that is the 'timeless' association that people are dancing like ancestors did. More specific thematic contributions have emerged from the themes below.

### Beliefs

A key contribution is a greater understanding of psyculture participants' beliefs and spiritualities specifically in the UK related to practices and principles. There is no overall belief system but rather a continuum from no spiritual beliefs to deep spiritual association including non-humans and nature equally valued. There is some clear 'worship' more like secular appreciation. In particular, the rarely expressed but visibly evident importance of the sound assemblage that is a significant step forward in understanding the wide range of alternative beliefs in material objects in EDM culture.

### Ancestors and memory

The wide variety of opinions about the importance of memory and ancestral connections to EDM and psyculture participants provides a valuable research pathway particularly in exploring similar practices and principles other EDM genres Where dance is integral to identity and community cohesion. Moreover, the complexity of types of ancestors and memory connections are vast reflexivity, relationality and not preferencing one ancestor over another, the idea of non-human ancestors that are rarely considered within contemporary trance dance EDM cultures. Forgotten or silenced memories, beyond official memories, are

foregrounded by exploring this marginalised psyculture establishing a dance heritage that draw participants to keep returning, participating and contributing.

Ancestors may have gathered together to congregate and dance away from mainstream life in order to facilitate the benefits of sociality. There are distinctions expressed about who constitutes an ancestor such as kin, generalised human, a mix of non-human, nature, animals, plants, personal, wider cosmology as well consideration of marginalised ancestors, associated memories and practices. There are distinctions about whether the dancing was with ancestors, like ancestors, in connection with ancestors. There is a wide range of opinions about if there is ancestral connection ranging from none at all to directly experiencing ancestors at gatherings. However, the inter and intra group connections are sought between alive and recently deceased peoples were felt to be as important as any connection to the past.

#### Dance and trance

Paramount to participants' rationale for continuing to attend contemporary psytrance gatherings is the pull of communal dancing that further investigation providing a unique contribution to understanding psyculture and potentially other EDM cultures. Dance is the most important sought after experience for its powerful experience of positive energy and communal benefit. Dancing in the present moment is the most sought after experience not necessarily prolonged trance and it is suggested that clear distinctions are made in future research to separate trance from dance experiences.

Another contribution that has emerged is that immersive collective dancing has beneficial changes both personal and social where positive energy is produced generally leading to consciousness enhancement or alteration. Immersive, prolonged collective dancing in nature brings beneficial consciousness enhancement or alteration. An exploration of the embodiment of this collective energy, the vibe and bodily movement at dancer level and what happens during prolonged dancing is a possible exciting avenue of future research. This focus on participant's experiences as dancers as a lived experience is foregrounded to give a voice to their unique practices and principles affirming the centrality of dance in human culture.

## Environment and Nature

A seldom considered aspect of EDM dance music research is the importance of specific environments and landscapes. This research contributes by starting to investigate the importance of the environment, particular outside in nature, in psyculture, which enhances the collective dancing through sensory intersubjectivity between human and non-human in a living co-presence sociality.

## Music and sound

Music and dancing are the main factors in participants attending gatherings. The composite experience of the musical, collective dance, and literal and symbolic journey brings cognitive and social benefits. Music is the main sought after experience due to the widest range of frequencies, vibrations and compositional techniques. Very specifically, it is psytrance music cited as the pivotal attraction for participants attending gatherings and the most important factors in attending gatherings. Most EDM cultures are centred around the specific genre. In psyculture, participants are deeply invested in understanding attributes and interpretations as well acknowledging the importance of the musical journey. Equally the importance of psytrance musical assemblage surrounding the agency of sound and its technology would be a substantial step forward in understanding the relationship between music, dancers and technology in other EDM cultures that include décor, lighting, environment and infrastructure.

harmonic repetition and complexity are the key

## Contribution, community, and participation

The detailed investigations of psyculture regarding contribution, community, and participation may prove highly effective in understanding other EDM small-scale community's practices and principles. This thesis helps to provide a detailed account of UK psyculture its principles and practices in terms of contribution and associated community, sociality, and crucially participation, presenting a substantial contribution to rave scholarship, EDM culture and overall contemporary rave/club culture studies in understanding how participation shapes identities across the underground vs mainstream social structure. This study adds rich detail to a fuller understanding of

different layers of involvement, contribution, and participation at psyculture gatherings in terms of the holistic and continual sense of communality. There are clear distinctions in roles from newcomers to those at the heart of the communities that sustain the community and instigate gatherings showing some practices are hierarchical out of necessity but within a framework on egalitarian principles.

The research makes strides in seeking clarification about the feelings and experiences within underground EDM communities regarding persecution and hostility along with the considerable desire for participants to keep returning to dance communally together that highlight the continuing discrimination and prejudice to marginalised groups within the UK that need to be addressed. There is a directional trajectory based on involvement and time regarding placement of people in the organisation of the culture. This feeling of belonging through participation and contribution creates a closed small-scale community that views itself as different, other and underground in response to the prejudicial outside, mainstream world and its restrictions. Dancing or participating in a clandestine psyculture event is innately and subtly a political act as hidden as the practices and gatherings themselves. The study shows there is much more to the supposed shallow hedonism associated within EDM communities and that rather than being a threat to mainstream society, small scale communities can be the place where experiment and creativity thrive that can lead to societal improvements and help individuals to develop their identities. The results contribute to deeper knowledge about the nature of contemporary trance dance practices that lead to cultural change particularly how small-scale societies are a spur to mainstream societal change. This research contributes to providing a future research framework for comparative work with other small-group EDM communities formed through music and dancing.

#### Environment and nature

This ethnographic observation based on participants' experiences with the environment and nature at outside EDM gatherings as a living society has presented crucial information about intentions that would benefit many disciplines that investigate cultures based on dance particularly how they utilise landscapes, spaces and non-human interactions. Intentions to regain vitality through repeated connections especially in an outside environment is evident in psyculture particularly



the desire to be outside and engage with nature and the environment such as beliefs in a primacy where everything is alive and connected, both human and non-human, and where the resultant benefits emerge from being grounded in nature. The natural outdoor setting of gatherings enhances the collective dancing through sensory intersubjectivity between human and non-human in a living co-presence sociality. In psyculture, and increasingly across many EDM outside gatherings, there is a creation of an immersive environment that is a safe space for self-exploration and a collective experience of belonging. Landscape and environments are important in psyculture. Moreover, the acoustic experience of landscape is important to memory. This potential impact of such findings on EDM contemporary small-scale communities research could be sizable in establishing the centrality of spaces, journeys and how they are remembered.

#### Preparations, objects, and journey

The journey metaphor runs through every aspect of personal and group practices, experiences, and intentions, in the artwork and symbolism in psyculture. The potential development of a composite framework may provide a significant structure to plan future EDM investigations into specific preparations, journeys and material objects. The memories and dominance of experience of journeys to outside spaces could be insightful in EDM and club culture. The under acknowledged importance of how a temporary settlement is set up as well as possible, real, psychological, imagined and sonic journeys, and associated rituals is highly relevant to dance culture.

Predominantly the research establishes the centrality of places, journeys and how they are remembered in past, present, and psytrance cultures in psyculture and furthermore other EDM genre-based cultural practices with underlying principles. The specifics of material culture and objects, the preparations made before, during and after attending gatherings and the journeys participants make, both literally and metaphorically within EDM and psyculture has deepened research strands. Within psyculture objects, belongings, clothing, utensils, cooking equipment hold significance in terms of meaning and value at a gathering. The detailed assemblage of information about personal preparations, the types and roles of participants, their

dress, and music and dance preferences widen the understanding of EDM cultural practices and principles.

### Benefits

The overall contributions regarding dance are there are potential benefits to participation particularly through dance connectivity in EDMC and psyculture that contribute to understand how dance practices work at an affective level taken from individual dancer's perspectives in this research about psyculture practices and principles. The emotional and physical experiences go beyond interactions between humans and include the non-human that is evident from the participants' experiences of collective dancing outside in natural environments. The findings provide a greater understanding of the connections between the living world and humans at gatherings. Imbuement of psychedelic substances increases group bonding and levelling of individual differences beyond shallow hedonism. The establishment of the physical and mental benefits from involvement in psyculture could be significant to understanding how trance, dance, small-scale community sociality, contribution and participation interact with environment and nature in a music based culture that are profound and provide a mirror for other EDM cultures as well as society in general in how this combination could significantly improve people's lives.

### 6.3 Limitations of the Study

#### Archival secondary research

There can be some issues arising from the process of archival secondary research and ethnographic primary data. These can include not being able to find the exact information, there may be biased and opinionated material in older scholarly works that represent outdated ontologies and epistemologies. Some of the information was from modern-day anthropology ethnographies that had different aims and objectives, or the communities being studied could not be correlated fully with the chosen Western modern-day trance culture.

#### Solution

Care was taken in choosing credible and verifiable academic sources and authors regularly returning the same data. Within ethnography, there can be issues of cultural bias that were accounted for within the methodological considerations before the start of the research in terms of bias, representation, authenticity, trust, and reliability. Prior detailed investigation beforehand aided issues regarding such comparison between interpreted and raw data where these differences between aims and outcomes could cause inconsistencies and my researcher's developing skills. This being prepared beforehand, and during with a vigilance throughout to achieve rigour, with continual assessment and reflection, assisted in the collection of secondary data. Similarly with raw data, it is advised that repetitive saturation and continual re-assessment by constantly returning to the data, may assist with rigour and reliability.

#### Missed perspectives

There may have been some other viable perspectives that were not at the start of the research due to researcher lack of knowledge and experience in sourcing archival materials and undertaking primary research in terms of identifying themes, theories, and perspectives that are applicable. As the research was data driven, some secondary research topics that became evident during the primary research had not been identified in the literature review. The saturation and triangulation from primary to secondary sources continually assisted in overcoming this lack of familiarity with source materials and themes. An openness to change, necessary in data driven research, proved effective as new themes emerged and the multi-directional manner was.

#### Research positionality

My positionality is dependent on their involvement and immersion with the culture being studied in the ethnography and my relationship with the subjects. As I was an established member of the culture for many years with a variety of roles, statuses and involvement, this possible bias had to be considered from the start. An open and honest approach has been backed up by a continual, iterative self-reflection on the subjectivity that could seep into the research process.

The greater the immersion, the greater the ability to provide an accurate account of this niche, unique culture but it was vital that researcher bias and cultural blindness

was addressed at every stage. This was overcome where possible by a systematic reflection to deal with bias, subjectivities, and potential inconsistencies in order to separate the personal perceptions and beliefs from the participant's perception and beliefs without compromise. This clear boundary setting between my positionality in the culture and my separate role as a researcher including different use of tones, language, and settings. This was to aid interview participants in switching from an informal language use to one addressing the themes in a formal register and use of specialised vocabulary to reflect critically upon their life experiences, construction of their own beliefs and their own subjectivity in the culture. Autoethnography was chosen as a way of recording my interpretations because of its simplicity, accessibility, and unobtrusiveness due to my existent positionality along a continuum of enmeshment.

### Bias

The small-scale of the research may have led to elements of bias and a homogenous sampling based on participant's self-selection. One of the issues that was evident in the self-selection of participants is that they bring their subjective motivations for participating such as their own positionality within the subculture, whether they are promoters, artists, or organisers or have a particular attitude that they wish to express that may affect their responses to the questions. During the interviews, some of the participants were more reticent than others. This may have been due to nervousness, lack of experience with participating in an interview, the use of an online platform, that the interview was being recorded, or lack of familiarity with the interviewer or interviewer process.

This was overcome as far as possible by the time taken before the interviews, and at the start of the interviews to reassure participants of the process, use an extended conversation with language that was familiar to participants, brief discussion of the themes, and style to relax the participants, and provide an easier forum that was as conducive to producing deep thick responses as possible.

### Fieldwork

Fieldwork was due to take place during the year that Covid occurred which led to constraints such as cancelled events that had to be moved forward to a later day and

there were restrictions put in place in terms of ethics and contact. As interviews were to take place using online meeting software, no interviews were intended to take place in person. However, the fieldwork caused some time constraints and delays in undertaking in person observation and participation. Some events were cancelled altogether and did not return even in the following season. Adjustments were made to the choice of events to attend. As costs to attend the events substantially increased including the cost of travel, funding was sought and gained to be able to afford attendance. The journal was supportive to my fieldwork in that the separation of the role of a researcher was put into place through the continuity of the notes which was important to be a 'complete participant' where I was a fully immersed practicing member of the community sharing their ideologies and values but now in a separate position of observing the culture. This task of writing notes and reflections enabled the process of data collection and analysis through continually writing analytical reflection.

#### Writing style

The challenge of developing a thinking and writing style with an autoethnographic purpose as of course knowledge is rarely value free but by keeping the context to the foreground it signalled a way through the complexity of situated experience and knowledge, but it was important not to use an artificial language either. The intention was not to make inaccessible academic writing accessible but that there was a heightened awareness that minimised misinterpretation of experiences while being a filter for the perceptions of others through me while being a performing dancer and participant myself thus being aware of these distinctions during fieldwork was highly effective. Extracting the self and the writing style from academic writing while retaining it is a challenging task but having the aim to produce a felt text from the start and the methodological research performed beforehand about how to retain the individual self, helped create a consistent and sustained representational technique.

#### 6.4 Concluding remark

The main question asks what are the practices and principles of contemporary psychedelic trance culture in the UK?

It was expected at the start that revelations about connectivity, memory, dance, and community would emerge from the primary data. What I feel has emerged is the complexity of life in many small bounded communities that mirror the multiplicity of practices and principles in psychculture dance trance practices both cross culturally and historically that lead to participants feeling they are dancing like ancestors did. The detailed investigations of psychculture regarding contribution, community, and participation may prove highly effective in understanding other EDM small-scale community practices and principles.

While there has been a focus in the resurgence of psychedelic-related scholarly enquiry, there remains opportunity to understand what practice and principles from a cultural perspective mean to long-term subcultures in formulating and succeeding in creating small-scale egalitarian communities. Within psychedelic gatherings or entheogenic settings, it is reported that the experiences of such practices lean towards more liberal political views, egalitarianism, openness, concern for the environment and less authoritarianism at a cultural and personal level.

Many small-scale communities exist within the UK whether based on beliefs, music preferences and a vast array of other interests such as pagans, new age travellers, ravers, off grid and communal living ventures or those wishing to practice living according to more egalitarian and less hierarchical principles that bring social, personal and health benefits that are deemed to be missing from mainstream, large scale communities. The localisation and de centring of politics, community management and sociality based on the success of such small-scale communities could act as a framework for improving inclusion, reducing exclusion and evolving the quality of life for people generally. The foundation of this lies in the tackling of prejudice and discrimination of all groups, belief systems and the difference of others that is at the heart of the values of the UK that could help overcome the current problems endemic in British society where conflict continues between the mainstream and marginalised. On a smaller scale, the understanding, acceptance and acknowledgement of how EDM culture practices and principles contribute to the quality of participants' lives beyond the prejudicial and persecutory treatment of supposedly shallow rave culture would be a first step to accepting the depth and richness instead. The framework provided within this study would hopefully

contribute to a way forward in studying other EDM and dance based small-scale communities.

The principles aspect of the research covered the beliefs, values, community ethos, personal ethos, personal materiality, and tribe mentality that underpins practices in the UK psychculture community. In studying localised communities, it can develop understanding of how the community helps to stimulate individual and group creativity as well as how integration of mainstream lives occurs. Finally, perhaps in the past like today, the variety of possible belief systems, practices and principles based not just on demographic or kin based structures but perhaps also on interests such as musical genre should be considered. The idea of dancing like ancestors, believing like ancestors, forming communities like ancestors, communing with nature and non-human entities like ancestors, preparing for attending, and honouring objects and landscapes like ancestors are all potentially just as important to other EDM genres. Subsequently reaping the benefits of such trance, dance, hyper sociality and journeying repeatedly to gather for such purposes like ancestors needs to be considered.

DATE: 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Jaqueline Anderson  
G20742517

**By email**

Dear Jacqueline

**PhD Examination**

Further to your oral examination held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024, the examiners have recommended that you should be awarded the degree of PhD subject to major revisions being made to the thesis to the satisfaction of both examiners (Professor Duncan Sayer & Dr Karenza Moore).

**Required revisions**

I attach a list of the required revisions from the examiners. If you have any queries in relation to your amendments you should seek advice from your supervisors or contact the office. You should not contact the examiners directly.

*Cautionary Note from the Research Degrees Board*

You are advised to check carefully that all the examiners' requirements have been completed before submitting your revised thesis. Once submitted, a thesis cannot be retracted nor will there be a further opportunity to amend the thesis. Even though major revisions constitutes a provisional pass it is subject to those revisions being completed satisfactorily. You should be note carefully that after major revisions the examiners can only make one of the following recommendations:

- a) that the candidate be awarded the degree;
- b) that the candidate be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments to the thesis to the satisfaction of the examiners (maximum period allowed is four weeks);
- c) that the candidate not be awarded the degree;

If the thesis still requires revisions which the examiners consider exceeds the category of minor amendments you should be aware that there is a risk you will fail the award.

**Use of Proof-readers**

Research Degree candidates may also use a proof-reader at this stage of the examination. Before doing so you should ensure you read the University's Policy on Proof-reading in the Research Student Assessment Policies and Procedures Handbook, Section 10, which can be found here: [https://www.uclan.ac.uk/study\\_here/student-contract-research-students.php](https://www.uclan.ac.uk/study_here/student-contract-research-students.php)

Your proof-reader must sign the Proof-readers statement and you need to complete the relevant section on the Student Declaration form.

**Submission requirements**

The following should be submitted electronically to [PGRAdmin@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:PGRAdmin@uclan.ac.uk)

- i) an electronic copy of your thesis in a single pdf file format, including the signed Student Declaration form after the title page
- ii) any new Proof-reader's Statement, if applicable

If you have any queries about submission requirements contact the office by email [PGRAdmin@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:PGRAdmin@uclan.ac.uk)



The thesis should be revised in accordance with the examiners' recommendations, a copy of which is enclosed. Please note that you should pay careful attention to the examiners' requirements and ensure that you adhere to these when preparing your revisions. Upon receipt of your revised thesis, the examiners may then recommend you for the award of PhD or the award subject to some minor corrections which should be completed within a timescale stipulated by the examiners. This period could be a minimum of one day to maximum of one month.

If you do have any queries regarding the revisions you should not approach the examiners direct but refer them in writing to the PGR Admin Team, Academic Registry for forward transmission to the examiners. I would also strongly advise you to contact your supervisors for advice and guidance.

The revised thesis must be submitted **no later than 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024** and we will forward to the examiners by email.

In the meantime if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

PGR Admin Team  
Academic Registry  
[PGRAdmin@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:PGRAdmin@uclan.ac.uk)

Copies:                   Duncan Sayer / Karenza Moore  
                              Richard Peterson  
                              Tim Owen  
                              Clive Tattum

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<p>1</p>	<p><b>Correction 1: Change the title</b> (currently <i>Dancing with Ancestors: A comparison of ancient and modern-day trance practices in psychedelic trance</i>) to remove the 'comparative' aspect. This change should also be reflected in the thesis ie. reword/rewrite claims of making a comparison between 'ancient' and/or 'pre-historic' trance practices and (contemporary) modern trance dance cultures.</p>	<p>Dancing like Ancestors: An ethnographic investigation of trance dance practices and principles in contemporary UK psychedelic trance culture</p> <p>COMPARISON            Comparison (1, 2, 4, 5, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 37, 40, 44, 50, 51, 58, 67, 68, 69, 72, 163, 172-178, 152, 161, 176, 180, 182, 194, 231, 238, 239)            Comparative (95, 215)            Compare (208)            Compared (17, 50)            Removed "The role of musicians and their sonic planning with other musicians cross-culturally is difficult to ascertain in earlier societies and would benefit from further consideration. (192)  <b>Removed</b> "However, by studying the corporeal interactions with the material world in the present-day, it may reveal some of the ontological and cosmological frameworks within which past cultures operated in terms of trance dance practices that alleviate this lack of scholarship (Büster 2018, p.4)" (81).</p> <p>Similar            In Western societies            aims</p>
<p>3</p>	<p><b>Correction 2: Clarify your use of 'ancient' 'prehistoric' and 'traditional' concepts</b>, and your use of them. As it stands there is slippage between the three. Crucially, remove any concepts which are no longer to be used in your corrected thesis (see other corrections).</p>	<p>TRADITIONAL</p> <p>Traditional is a contested term in many disciplines and I have used more specific terms as needed.</p> <p>Keep traditional (30)            Traditional removed (1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 41, 45, 46, 58, 59, 65, 68, 72, 85, 90, 93, 174, 184, 192, 198, 215, 219, 220, 233, 234, 235, 239)            Traditional and modern-day replaced with contemporary and psyculture (2, 95, 172)            Replaced trad with ancient (9, 12, 18, 29, 64, 83, 198, 233)            Replace traditional with ancestral (131, 132, 133)            Replace traditional with contemporary (231)            Replaced traditional with past and present (78,96)            Removed Deep past (50, 159, 173, 223)</p> <p>SMALL-SCALE            Traditional societies replaced with bounded communities (193, 195)            Replaced traditional with small group bounded communities (60, 61, 167, 189, 194)</p>

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	<p>Replace traditional with universal (228) Replaced traditional with other (20, 40) Removed traditional and modern (220, 225) Replaced traditional with indigenous (197, 220) Replaced traditional with everyday (197) Removed traditional or psyculture trance dance practices (187) Removed non-traditional (173)</p> <p><b>PREHISTORY</b> Replaced prehistoric with ancestral (207) Replaced prehistoric with in the past (207, 211) Traditional replaced with earlier (183, 207) Traditional trance replaced with contemporary, indigenous and psyculture trance dance (174) Replaced prehistoric with archaeological (59, 80, 205) Remove prehistory (11, 75, 85, 88, 174, 191, 192, 206) Removed prehistoric (14, 15, 17, 24, 25, 26, 32, 33, 37, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 45, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 63, 69, 70, 73, 72, 73, 75, 77, 78, 79, 83, 84, 85, 87, 90, 91, 158, 167, 177, 179, 180, 184, 193, 200, 202, 204, 208, 209, 211, 213, 215, 216, 218, 222, 224) Replaced prehistory with human evolution (174, 189) Replace prehistory with ancient (52, 53, 75, 76, 190, 191, 205) Replaced prehistory with earlier (58, 60, 62, 74) Removed Neolithic (233)</p> <p><b>TIME AND HISTORY</b> Added in the past (38) Replaced ancient with past and present (173) Added past and present (24) Replaced EDM with psyculture (42) Replaced ancient with archaeological sites (57, 75, 80, 202, 204, 205, 211, 222) Replaced ancient with sacred (17)</p> <p><b>MODERN-DAY</b> Removed modern day and replaced with modern-day (24, 90) Replaced modern day with contemporary (2, 12, 15, 16, 17, 22, 31, 67, 73, 74, 79, 83, 84, 174, 258) Replaced modern day with psyculture (215) Removed modern-day (31, 37, 41, 50, 51, 65) Replaced modern day with recent times (44)</p>
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		<p>Replaced modern with mainstream (258,) Removed everyday (29, 174, 178, 186, 205, 216, 217, 220, 228) Replaced everyday with mainstream (187, 198, 232) Replaced everyday with the present moment (227)</p> <p><b>COMMUNITIES</b></p> <p>Replaced small scale with small-scale (179) Replaced hunter gatherer with small-scale communities (10, 60, 61, 167) societies Added Small-scale societies (58)</p> <p>Ancestors Ancestral</p> <p>Hierarchical Counterculture Egailitarian Hidden, Marginalised</p> <p>Needs to be Further consideration Difficult to evidence Little Undertaken</p>
7	<p><b>Correction 3: Rework your thesis narrative to showcase your contribution to debates about contemporary cultures and small group 'bounded' communities.</b></p> <p>This correction involves gently reworking your thesis' overall narrative to showcase how it is a rich and detailed consideration of a specific EDM culture ie. psytrance (largely) in the present moment. This means reworking your thesis' narrative away from claims of a <i>comparison between</i> a contemporary small-group community with 'pre-historic' small group communities. Move it instead towards a</p>	<p>Introduction Gaps Originality (18)</p> <p>Comparing earlier psychedelic cultures to contemporary psytrance (66)</p>

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	<p><i>detailed account of an 'alternative' small group culture located with the UK's recent social and cultural landscape. This does not mean you should remove all references to work on for example 'ancestral links' as they are understood within psyculture and by psytrance communities, but it should be made clear that a direct historical comparison is not being made. This is essential.</i></p>	
2	<p><b>Correction 4: Rephrase your Research Questions throughout and check for consistency.</b></p>	<p>From RQ1. What are the practices and principles of trance dance compared to psychedelic trance culture? to RQ1. What are the practices and principles of trance dance psychedelic trance culture? (19,</p>
2a	<p>The thesis has reasonable RQs with a clear focus on exploring the topic using existing literature as a jumping off point. However, the concepts/terms in the main RQ (as below) mentions 'traditional societies' without a clear sense of what/when such societies exist and whether they are the same or different to the claims about 'prehistoric' and/or ancient societies. This needs clarification. Further, "...compared to psytrance culture" is written below, so that needs removing and a time period adding (ie. 'contemporary', modern?) for RQ1b. Please see the box below. RQ1. What are the practices and principles of trance in traditional societies compared to psychedelic trance culture?</p>	<p>Dancing like Ancestors: An ethnographic investigation of trance dance practices and principles in contemporary UK psychedelic trance culture</p> <p>RQ1. What are the practices and principles of UK trance dance psychedelic trance culture?</p>
2b	<p>Sub questions RQ1a*. What does an ethnographic, anthropological, and archaeological investigation reveal about traditional and modern trance, dance, and shamanic practices <b>compared to</b> psychedelic trance practices and principles? (Literature Review) <i>*This research question is confusing, and does not match the focus of the thesis. See earlier correction</i></p>	<p>RQ1a. What does an investigation of trance dance practices and principles reveal? (Literature Review)</p>
2c	<p>RQ1b. What practices and principles exist amongst <b>contemporary (KM added)</b></p>	<p>RQ1b. What contemporary practices and principles exist amongst psychedelic trance dance participants and practitioners in the UK? (Interviews and Surveys)</p>

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	psychedelic trance dance participants and practitioners? (Interviews and Surveys)	
2d	RQ1c. What does ethnographic fieldwork of psychedelic trance culture practices and principles bring to light? (Autoethnography).	RQ1c. What does ethnographic fieldwork of contemporary psychedelic trance culture practices and principles in the UK bring to light? (Autoethnography).
2e	Please also check your RQs as there is slippage between how they are laid out here (i.e. p.22) and how the emerge/are covered in the thesis.	As above
6a	<b>Correction 5: Strengthen the value of your work to the field by highlighting this is under-researched topic.</b>	the impact on rave scholarship emphasised.
6b	Relatedly, strengthen the value of your work to the field by highlighting that <i>contemporary</i> psytrance communities local to the UK are under-researched. As you highlight, psytrance has long been the focus of academic research (St John etc) with an emphasis on its links to the 1960s (white) hippie trail and (the appropriation of) Indian mysticism (from its roots in Goan cultures), and its highly mobile global aspects. Yet again as you noted in the viva, there are few highly specific and localised studies of 'bounded' psytrance scenes (and the complexities of tribes, crews and dancers for eg), and no in-depth extended studies of psytrancing in the North of England where much of the PhD research was undertaken, although studies of trance scenes that examine trancers' spiritualities in the North of England do exist (Moore 2012. 2016):	Discussion section p.145 information added about randomers, outsiders and persection.  Literature review section Community, contribution and participation rewritten pp.70-90.
6c	Moore, K. (2016). Exploring Symbolic, Emotional and Spiritual Expression amongst 'Crasher Clubbers'. In <i>Religion and Youth</i> (pp. 89-96), Routledge.	Considerable insight in other forms of EDM culture exists in academic literature focusses on participants who feel that clubbing is a form of 'emotional and alternative spiritual expression' showing a level of deep commitment which are often minimised while the motivation of drug taking is foregrounded against a background of increased criminality, commercialisation and repression. (Moore 2016, p.89). These 'transformative possibilities', community, belonging, and self-expression', potentially inherent amongst participants in the EDM trance scene, would be enriched by a greater understanding of youth culture spirituality (Moore 2016, p.95). Whilst mainstream clubbing is sold as a hedonistic event rather than having any spiritual aspects, it is important to investigate the possible existence of these subcultural, alternative, countercultural, spiritual and emotional motivations of EDM clubbing along with experiences of a positive

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		community and sense of belonging instead of denying such possibilities are marketing ploys (2016, p.90). However, it is problematic though productive to tackle to potential representations of an 'other' inclusive community in EDM dance spaces (Moore 2016, p.94). The possibility of techno being a productive site for affective research incorporating the amalgamation of music, dance, space and people should be considered (p.89).
6d	Moore, K. (2012). Digital affect, clubbing and club drug cultures: Reflection, anticipation, counter-reaction. In <i>Digital cultures and the politics of emotion: Feelings, affect and technological change</i> (pp. 109-126). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.	Equally within the idea of affect experienced in techno music where there are reported positive changes in affective states amongst clubbers and technology intensifying their sense of 'altogetherness' (p. 89). The possibility of techno being a productive site for affective research incorporating the amalgamation of music, dance, space and people should be considered (Moore 2012, p.89).
6e	Be more confident about your claims of the originality of your work by highlighting this throughout.	A greater threading and recurring reference to the originality has been embedded throughout.
4a	<b>Correction 6: Remove claims of psytrance 'exceptionalism' throughout.</b>	<b>Exceptionalism removed ongoing</b> <b>Remove claims about other scenes</b>
4b	Claims to exceptionalism are made through un-evidenced assumptions about other dance music genres and scenes (see p.204 for an example). As you say, the strength of your study is the focus on one local EDM culture which is embedded in a specific locale, so best not to make claims about other scenes without also performing a similarly thorough localised study.	Removed "unlike many electronic dance music cultures (EDMCs)" (12) Removed "Psytrance is often referred to as an entry to advancement of ourselves and the unifying power of dance as tapping into our mutual consciousness " (12). Removed "The in-depth study of psytrance may elicit a better understanding of EDM cultures to fill in some of the current gaps in contemporary trance dance" (14) Added "along with many EDM genres" (17) Added to gaps and contribution Removed "the importance of, as well as a relative lack of, studies on both psytrance and other EDM communities in the UK from a social anthropological or interdisciplinary lens" (18) Removed "they feel is not available in other EDM dance music scenes (173) Removed "Minimal research has been undertaken in EDM or psytrance research about personal preferences" (184) Removed "no possession trance in EDM" (187, Removed "There is very little in modern EDM dance cultures" (189, Remove "that makes it unique amongst EDM genres (192) Removed "neglected aspect of EDM research certainly in psytrance" (232) Removed EDM dance scenes (65)
4c	In sum, you don't need to make these hierarchical/comparative claims (ie "as compared to other dance music genres/scenes..." (p.204, and elsewhere), esp. as you note the importance of, as well as a relative lack of, studies on both psytrance	Remove hierarchical Removed "there is little research in contemporary EDM trance cultures" (87) Removed "apart from anecdotal conjecture" (87)

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	and other EDM communities in the UK from a social anthropological or interdisciplinary lens.	
4d	<b>Correction 7:</b> Remove references that are 20+ years old used to make claims about today's dance music scenes.	<p>Only remaining references to 1960s and 1970s are about history</p> <p>Any 1980s reference as about archaeology and not linked to EDM scene</p> <p>Retained Trigger 1990, p.129 about marginalized cultures (58)</p> <p>Retained Redhead 1990, p.118 about frequencies (182)</p> <p>removed</p> <p>Removed Peregrine 2001, p.15</p>
5a	<b>Correction 8:</b> Either remove or rework claims made about gaps in interdisciplinary literature.	<p><b>Gaps about interdisciplinary removed</b></p> <p>Removed “as well as embedding archaeological and anthropological research of trance dance culture” (14)</p> <p>Removed “Many themes that provide insight in other disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology and neuroscience are not fully covered in psyculture research especially regarding material culture, the importance of relics and objects, specifics about rituals and beliefs, and customs and habits within gatherings and the everyday that would benefit from further investigation” (14)</p> <p>Changed “The inclusion of archaeological, anthropological, ethnographic, and psychedelic trance culture research as well neuroscience, sound acoustics, and psychology was undertaken to contribute to future rigorous research and methodology innovation” (18)</p> <p>Removed “Disciplines included archaeology, anthropology, psychology, and musicology not limited to these areas but rather developing a wide-ranging inclusion.” (20)</p> <p>Removed “It is recommended that a multi-disciplinary approach would be beneficial to provide clarity in the archaeological record with a move from determinism and idealism (Price 2001, p.12)” (15)</p>
5b	These claims miss existing literatures on global dance music cultures, notably emergent performance ethnographic work from queer scholars which share many similarities with your work, esp. with your autoethnographic sections. This is a good thing! Related to this, and following on our viva discussions, make more of your in-depth study of a psytrance small group community as a unique contribution to the field, and crucially of relevance in relation to contemporary rave/club culture studies and notably queer performance studies ethnographies of dance music cultures:	<p>An extended section on contemporary clubbing and rave experiences to be added to look at repression, persecution, belonging, community, group dance affect.</p> <p>Reiterate the emphasis on the in-depth study of a small group psytrance community as it relates to the contemporary rave/club scene in ethnographies of dance music cultures.</p>



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5c	Adeyemi, K. (2022). <i>Feels Right: Black Queer Women and the Politics of Partying in Chicago</i> . Durham and London: Duke University Press.	In seeking collective joy, alternative ownership of space and community, Adeyemi relates how queer black women assert their affective rights to retain their place in the gentrified cities as their night-time presence reduces thus resisting to continue 'feeling right' (2022, p.95). She suggests that they 'deserve access to the sets of feelings that are associated with these spaces' where race, feeling and space interlink as part of identity beyond constraining of being a black woman but wanting to respect such identity (2022, p.18).
5d	Buckland, F. (2002). <i>Impossible Dance: Club Culture and queer world-making</i> . Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.	Further evidence about the body, identity and community in the queer dance community of clubbers, Buckland argues that dance embodiment "rehearses a powerful political imagination" where clubbers own their space internally and externally (2022, p. 65). However, power is concealed with some 'others' hidden and silenced within a supposedly progressive queer scene as inclusion becomes normalised for commercial and organisation purposes recognising some but ignoring others especially amongst 'working class forms of difference' (2002, p.72).
5e	Burchiellaro, O. (2021). 'There's nowhere wonky left to go': Gentrification, queerness and class politics of inclusion in (East) London. <i>Gender, Work &amp; Organization</i> , 28(1), 24-38.	Inherent within the gentrification, class politics of inclusion and the resistance to the undermining of the working class queer urban communities and the increasing redevelopment of areas including the clubbing scene, though posited as redevelopment rather than closure, is a working class, queer resistance to ensuring survival of the LBGT+ music scene (Burchiellaro 2021, p.25).
5f	Florêncio, J. (2023). Drugs, techno and the ecstasy of queer bodies. <i>The Sociological Review</i> , 71(4), 861-880.	Within the queer techno scene similarly there is a focus on the predominance of drug-based experiences to the detriment of the less discussed experience of dancing together as a group brings while immersed in a space flooded with sensory overload and the effect that has on clubbers that is described as a 'individual and collective reinvention' affecting sociality and life direction (Florêncio 2023, p. 861).
5g	Related to the above, decide if your study is interdisciplinary, OR bi-disciplinary (ie. anthropology and archaeology) and reword sections accordingly.	Interdisciplinary not multidisciplinary
5h	Correction X: Draw out how the context (ie. 'persecution') shapes psytrance participants' experiences and understandings of themselves and their community.	Literature review section Community, contribution and participation rewritten pp.70-90. Discussion section from p.145 edited to include more detail about experiences of persecution.
5i	The correction is to draw out in your thesis' narrative how your findings demonstrate that a 'hostile environment' shapes psytrance small-group communities in the UK. In the viva you spoke of the persecution felt and experienced by participants, and how this shaped shared their practices, such as boundary-making and maintaining; it even impacted on the fact you were able to undertake this research at all given participants' suspicion of outsider	Other genres of contemporary EDM culture include amongst black clubbers looking at the issues of policing where hedonism and illegality are an ongoing scene of conflict with authorities with a misguided belief that such events have higher drug consumption that are distinctly racial in terms of policing attitudes and policies with incumbent resistance against repression evident in the black party scene in the UK (Chowdhury 2019, p.58).  Edits made to include an expanded discussion about how a hostile environment shapes psytrance communities included in the abstract, introduction, gaps, literature review, discussion, and contributions.

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	<p>researchers. Where you can, explicitly highlight that psytrancers (in common with other EDM cultures) feel and experience 'persecution' by State authorities in the form of legal restrictions on parties. In addition, although drug use is in part contested within psytrance cultures, intoxication from psychedelics is understood to be integral to 'psyculture', and to psytrance small-group communities. Because of both party restrictions and drug laws, psytrance culture participants in the UK (and abroad) are criminalised, demonised and stigmatised. This real and felt persecution – often manifest in psytrancers' unwanted confrontations with state agents such as the police - shapes the small group rules, principles, boundaries, and (shared) memories, the study of which is one of the most original aspects of your research. Finally, (drug) policing in the UK is racist and racialised, which shapes the way <i>both</i> white and minoritised raves and festivals are dealt with, see for eg. Chowdhury, T. (2019). Policing the 'Black party': racialized drugs policing at festivals in the UK. In K. Koram (Ed.). <i>The War on Drugs and the Global Colour Line</i>. London: Pluto Press, pp. 48–65.</p>	
Xa	<p><b>PHASE 2 Correction X: 'Raves' need definition in current context to ensure your work is cited.</b></p>	<p><b>Defined raves in glossary and in discussion</b></p>
xb	<p>Licensed raves differ to illegal raves, the latter sometimes known as free or pay parties (depending on model of organisation). Your key findings centre around the reasons/drivers for a return to the rave to dance together. Your thesis presents comprehensive evidence that communal dancing with a spiritual element is central to the 'return to the rave' for regular participants in the contemporary era. Your data and subsequent findings are thoroughly analysed and presented in an engaging and enlightening manner, so it would be a real shame to lose the impact of your work on rave</p>	<p>Literature review section Community, contribution and participation rewritten pp.70-90.</p> <p>Rewritten Findings/discussion/conclusion</p>

Green – complete; yellow - underway

	scholarship, given that as we noted in the viva, your work is suitable for publication with corrections.	
xc	<b>Correction X: Further acknowledge the hierarchical nature of psytrance small-group communities.</b>	Literature review section Community, contribution and participation rewritten pp.70-90.
xd	The hierarchical nature of the UK psytrance community you investigate is apparent in your findings/discussion for example. Your close attention to the nature of the roles ascribed to those in psytrance cultures contribute to the thesis's overall argument that we are looking at a hierarchical small-group culture. You give a detailed account of the production of hierarchy within the culture, for example how roles such as 'elder' or 'pace dancer' are attained and maintained. You also capture the spatial and temporal aspects of these hierarchies, such as where and how people dance, as well as how longevity of contribution is appreciated and acknowledged ('elders'). Slightly rephrasing how you discuss these hierarchies will make clearer their relevance to other EDM cultures and communities, and increase the potential of your thesis' research framework for comparative work with other small-group communities formed through music, dancing and drugs.	Literature review section Community, contribution and participation rewritten pp.70-90. Role of the Other Extend the nature of psyculture in terms of hierarchy, status and roles  Rewrite Findings/discussion/conclusion
xe	<b>Correction X: further acknowledge the role of 'the Other' in producing small-group communities</b>	Literature review section Community, contribution and participation rewritten pp.70-90.
xf	Re-emphasise parts of your findings sections to highlight the role of 'the Other' - or what you refer to as 'outsiders', and in the viva 'randomers' - in the production of the small-group boundaries and community creation, perpetuation, and cohesion you are interested in. Tribes and crews are groups within these small-group communities, and also work to produce 'the other'. (eg. p.27)	Literature review section Community, contribution and participation rewritten pp.70-90.
	Relatedly, highlight how your data contributes to our understandings of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in	Discussion and contribution sections edited to include categories of insiders and outsiders.

Green – complete; yellow - underway

	<p>psyculture and psytrance communities, for example how 'outsiders' are produced through denigration of their aesthetics (eg. 'naff' clothing and décor), and how agreement in-group about the unacceptability of outsider practices is created. Your argument here works on the macro and micro level: as you already highlight: at a micro level 'randomers' and on a macro level 'the mainstream' act as 'Other' in the psytrance communities you studied. Psytrancers in your study position themselves as 'underground', which is linked to the persecution they feel and experience ie. being 'underground' by necessity, and to survive (ie. destruction wrought by police raids, and 'outsiders' physically damaging rigs etc).</p>	
xg	<p><b>Correction X: Reconsider your recommendations.</b></p>	<p><b>Edited during overall re-write</b></p>
xh	<p>In the final sections, the recommendations are not well thought out, and could be removed. The (REF-based?) understanding of impact is not well understood, and should be removed. This is not a policy-orientated PhD so recommendations jar somewhat.</p>	<p><b>REMOVED</b></p>
xi	<p><b><i>Presentationa</i></b>          In some sections, findings/points/ are listed in bullet points. Again, this is non-standard in a PhD, so they should be either deleted or written in prose. See the Recommendations section for examples.</p>	<p><b>Removed</b>  <b>Re written in prose</b></p>
xj	<p>Be clear with "quotation marks" and dates where your words and the words of others begins and ends. Just having page numbers with no "quotation marks" is non-standard.</p>	<p><b>A greater distinction and inclusion of quotation marks to indicate key phrases has been undertaken throughout.</b></p>
xk	<p>There are many small errors throughout the thesis ie. <i>though</i> instead of <i>through</i> which need attention. A careful read-through before (re)submission would help.</p>	<p><b>Checked use of tense</b>  <b>Checked for brackets, quote marks, and use of commas</b></p>
	<p><b>Rewritten and edited section (green = completed)</b></p>	<p><b>All sections and appendices have been edited</b></p>

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Word or concept	Definition
Ancestors	Schreiner advised there needs to be a distinction between the worship of ancestors from the treatment of the deceased where the first is about the transcendental aspects of the relationship between the living descendants and the dead and the second is specifically about the ritual arrangements for the just dead (Schreiner 2020, p.194). Further distinctions are to separate veneration of the deceased, the status of the ancestors who are worshipped, and whether they are kin, non-kin, or some generalised notion of remembering those who have died whether kinship is real or imagined (Schreiner 2020, p.194). Campbell, Hill, and Hageman agree with Whitley that there needs to be a more rigorous approach in defining ancestors that includes other hypotheses than looking at veneration or a biological ancestry (Campbell, Hill & Hageman 2016, p.81). Similarly with sites of burial or monuments having functions other than ancestrality with the discarding of the ahistorical and decontextualised uses of ancestors is advised (Campbell, Hill & Hageman 2016, p.81). However, this advice to further over-define ancestry is itself problematic as there are many trans-global connotations in the intersectionality of memory, kinship, identity, and power suggesting a 'soft ' definition to local contexts instead (Campbell, Hill & Hageman 2016, p. 82).
Ancestors and trance	There is a long association throughout history of making connections with ancestors and spiritual beings through ritual dance during a state of trance where guidance is sought often through shaman figures or for rituals and ceremonies (Izu & De Villiers 2023, p.65).
Ancient	The term 'ancient' as it relates to this research is specifically referring to 'of or from a long time ago, having lasted for a very long time' (Cambridge Dictionary 2019).
Ancient history	Ancient history is a relative term but within antiquity it generally refers to the time period from the start of written history of mankind (Goldewijk and colleagues 2010).
Animism	Animism as a term is complex but in the context of this study and participant's perspectives it is defined as being of the primitive, and 'more alive similar to non-human entities or objects' and a concept linked to paganism and similar spiritual practices (von Stuckrad 2023, p.616). The complicated history of the term and its popularity in modern-day usage makes it difficult to define and has different meanings but in psyculture it is generally referred to as seeking reconnection with the more primitive, animal self.
ASC, consciousness, and trance	Defining consciousness is hyper-complex but in short it is perception in real time in a realm of conscious agents whether true or not (Hoffman, Prakash & Prenter 2023, p.129). Consciousness is connected to brain activity related to different kinds of perception where consciousness is retained during different altered states of perception (Luppi et al 2023, p.117). In a non-ordinary state of consciousness, is there an intersubjectivity between the brain, body, and the environment that provides insights into human consciousness throughout history which is gaining ground in validating knowledge of the experiential repertoire available to humans in other realms (Timmermann <i>et al</i> 2022).



Word or concept	Definition
Being and becoming	St. John indicates there are subtle differences between scholarly interpretations of the meaning of becoming a generalised definition is that incorporates a subjective state sought and achieved in liminal, otherworldly places to achieve separation and difference 'becoming' alive in a heightened sense of being through connectivity creating an open-ended self (St. John 2008, p.4). St. John refers to how raves engineer difference influenced by spaces and participant motivation for explorations of new selves and social experience (St. John 2015, p.38).
Belief, religiosity, and spirituality	As many of the beliefs in the prehistoric period and the modern-day practices of trance and dance are linked to religious ideas and practices, these are an important consideration in understanding practices of trance and dance. Due to the vast range of religious and spiritual beliefs, practices, principles, and spiritual possibilities, to provide one definition is beyond the scope of this research and not necessary except to set a working, generalised understanding of what is being discussed. Earlier definitions of religiosity were restricted by the search for defining substance or functionality, identifying practices of worship and liturgy, a focus on the sacred rather than the everyday or profane, the dominance of the mainstream religion especially from a Western and colonialist viewpoint at the expense of other aspects. Anthropology defines belief systems as those that incorporate accepted viewpoints of a culture about its world perceptions, the structure of its society, ideologies, problems of existence, dealing with the problems of life that unite a people, and 'differentiate them from outsiders' though such systems are rarely static and are more adaptative to cultural, political, and religious change and power (Olsen 2010, p.23; Fogelin 2007, p.59). The specific usage of religiosity, spirituality, and shamanism in EDM studies revolves around ritual, embodiment, and ecstatic trance dance experiences though there is a suspicion around use of the terms in psyculture (St. John 2006, p.12). In archaeology, shamanism can be loosely defined as a set of techniques and actions that only a shaman can perform with a social purpose that was important to the community health involving altered states of consciousness and ecstatic journeying that was dependant on certain conditions (Rock & Krippner 2008, p. 215; Walsh 1989; Eliade 1989; Krippner 2002; Harner 1990). Others see the concept of shamanism as difficult to define being more of a shifting, subjective, academic term than a belief system in itself (Balzer 2016, p. 4).
Civilization	When societies began to settle, civilizations developed where inequalities increased with civilizations being 'civil society' with laws and governance, accumulation of wealth and property correlated with the development of language (Barnard 2021).
Communities	Communities are people living as a unit whether geographical, or through common interests or nationality (Cambridge Dictionary 2023).
Complex societies	Complex societies have a 'hierarchical decision-making structure unlike primitive societies' from which complex ones are deemed to develop due to the increase in populations (Judge & Langdon 2015).

Word or concept	Definition
Counterculture	Countercultures are different from mainstream cultures in terms of norms and values that are sometimes rejected (Hirsch and colleagues 2002).
Cultural practices	Culture or subculture practices are the 'traditional and customary practices' of an ethnic or 'other' cultural group and their rights (Moldova 2020).
Culture	Boggs distinguishes culture as a 'shared set of ideas, skills, and objects' and society as a 'social unit' adding up to the concept of culture in the modern day context as separate to the pre-modern 'other' in anthropology (Boggs 2004, p. 188).
Dance and energy	Dance is practised in many countries and in many forms as an intentional behaviour that has biological and psychological functions common to human experience and important to life defined as motion connected to embodiment (Kealiinohomoku 1976, p.42). Whether dance is spontaneous or deliberate, it provides an important knowing about the world (Vissicaro 2023). Dance, rituals, and myths are fluidly invented and reinvented reinforcing kin and community bonds encoding and decoding culture and change (Kealiinohomoku 1997, p.69). In Europe, the Christian church disenfranchised dance but even so dancers continued to expend energies in extraordinary ways castigated for being profane to the present day where the separation from the church means the attitude towards dance is 'trivialization, denigration, and secular specialisation' (Kealiinohomoku 1997, p.70).
EDM	In the late eighties and nineites the practice of 'raving' led to a renewed interest in clubbing. EDM clubbing started to become more mainstream across America and Europe though media generally remained hostile to it because of the usage of drugs by participants leading to heightened laws and restriction especially on raves (illegal parties in unlicensed premises or outside locations) due to 'drug-related incidents' (Smith 2015).
Ego and the self	The intention to dissolve the sense of self and ego is embedded in EDM culture that is an ignored but important, natural aspect of human experience that alters or refreshes individual and collective worldviews and beliefs (Lutkajtis & Evans 2023, p.211). The self has many facets and interpretations that are culturally and historically specific. Within the modern day understanding of the self and its associated dissolution in EDM scenes, there are distinctions made between a minimal self, that is the desired state to be achieved by taking psychedelics or achieving ASC, and the narrative self constructed for mainstream existence (Timmermann, <i>et al</i> 2022. p.61).
Essentialism	Essentialism is where a group sees itself as a unified entity with the individuals sharing characteristics, beliefs, and experiences (Campbell 1958, p.14).
Family and outsiders	The term family is regularly used to describe members of a particular group within psyculture and often interchanged with crew, members, and tribe but not of kin but an assigned role. An 'outsider' is someone on the outside of psyculture. Sometimes the terms mainstreamer, randomer, newcomer, or outlier, for example, are used to refer to those

Word or concept	Definition
	that are unwelcome, new or do not know the rules of behaviour in psyculture. The outlaw is often used interchangeably with outsider, outlier, or other. Outlaw has a definition in psyculture as a clandestine, nomadic, a rebel or an activist, however it is more of a conceit of pretence (St John, 2012b). Participants in Israel are referred to as trancistim and identify themselves as being different from 'unwanted attendees' who are 'not spiritually, socially, or culturally connected to the party crews' (Schmidt 2010, p.1131).
Heterotopia, communitas and liminal	Heterotopias are sites or places where there are various connotations of freedom attached to them whether financial or mentally in temporary utopias of liminal experiences and intentions exist associated with counterculture (St John 2012a). More UK specific terminology regarding the secrecy of event locations has led to short form terms such 'loose lips', being used based on the idea that loose lips sink ships from wartime usage. EDM and psyculture participants are described as seekers of liminal spaces in order to undergo some passage of transcendence in places away from normality via an altered state of consciousness (Tramacchi 2000, p.210) forming a connection to each other and the land they occupy. Communitas refers to the coming together of individuals to form an egalitarian community based on sharing in a synchronised manner often separate from normal society where every day socio-cultural categories are dissolved (St. John 2008, p.8).
Indigenous knowledge	'Indigenous knowledge or techniques' consist of knowledge and wisdom that has existed over considerable amount of time (Sharma & Bajwa 2021, p.e8).
Indigenous peoples	Indigenous peoples is loosely defined as those with 'cultural differences from others in a state, specifically linked to geographic areas and experiencing discrimination 'under a dominant cultural model' (2009, p.4).
Journey	Post-rave trance culture is associated with a journey that is more carnival than a rite where there is a performance of freedoms and experimentation in often intense and extreme expression (St. John, G., 2004b, p.31).
Mainstream	Mainstream, in the context of this research, can refer to that which is considered normal in society in terms of beliefs and accepted by the majority (Cambridge Dictionary 2020).
Mainstream society	Mainstream society consists of its members which abide by their conformist societal value and practices often viewed as judgemental against different groups that is the basis of exclusionary differentiation (UNESCO 2023).
Mobile hunter gatherers	Mobile hunter-gatherers are evidence from the early prehistoric period which were nomadic and valued kinship (History 2018).
More than human	'More than human' was established as a term by Abram to indicate the world around humans that affected them (2012).

Word or concept	Definition																																				
New age	Heelas defines new age people as those who do not subscribe to mainstream values appealing to mostly educate participants interested in changing the self and society (1996).																																				
New age travellers - British	One of the pivotal events that changed the attitude towards new age travellers in the UK (those wishing to create an alternative way of life' based around travelling) was the Criminal Justice Act 1994 (Worthington 2009) bringing greater restrictions and policing prohibitions to those who are mobile in the UK.																																				
Nomadic communities	Nomadic communities do not have a fixed or sedentary lifestyle often view as negative by mainstream civilizations (Lerner 2006).																																				
Pan psychism and cosmopsychism	In the modern day, the concepts of panpsychism and cosmopsychism refer to humans within a sphere of gnostic thoughts interacting with the cosmology identifying with all of creation where consciousness exists in all matter (Bombaci 2023).																																				
Prehistoric	<p>The prehistoric era covers from 2.5 million years to 600 BC approximately before there were written records. However, evidence comes from the materials that would have been used that can be categorised as Stone, Bronze or Iron Age. Human European prehistory started approximately 800,000 year ago up to approximately 12000 years ago covering the early stone age (Jarvis, 2020) detailed in Figure 1.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Period</th> <th>Approximate date</th> <th rowspan="11"></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Palaeolithic</td> <td>c.450,000 – 12,000 BC</td> <td rowspan="5">Prehistoric</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mesolithic</td> <td>c. 12,000 – 4000 BC</td> <td rowspan="5">Prehistoric</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neolithic</td> <td>c.4000 – 1800 BC</td> <td rowspan="5">Prehistoric</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bronze Age</td> <td>c.1800 – 600 BC</td> <td rowspan="5">Prehistoric</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Iron Age</td> <td>c.600 BC – AD 43</td> <td rowspan="5">Prehistoric</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Roman (Romano-British)</td> <td>AD 43 – c. AD 410</td> <td rowspan="6">Historic</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Early Medieval</td> <td>c. AD 410 – AD 1066</td> <td rowspan="6">Historic</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medieval</td> <td>1066 –1485</td> <td rowspan="6">Historic</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Post-Medieval Period</td> <td>1485 – 1760</td> <td rowspan="6">Historic</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Industrial Period</td> <td>1760 – 1901</td> <td rowspan="6">Historic</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Modern</td> <td>1901 – Present</td> <td rowspan="6">Historic</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Figure 1 Jarvis 2020 Digram of Human Prehistory in Europe</i></p>	Period	Approximate date		Palaeolithic	c.450,000 – 12,000 BC	Prehistoric	Mesolithic	c. 12,000 – 4000 BC	Prehistoric	Neolithic	c.4000 – 1800 BC	Prehistoric	Bronze Age	c.1800 – 600 BC	Prehistoric	Iron Age	c.600 BC – AD 43	Prehistoric	Roman (Romano-British)	AD 43 – c. AD 410	Historic	Early Medieval	c. AD 410 – AD 1066	Historic	Medieval	1066 –1485	Historic	Post-Medieval Period	1485 – 1760	Historic	Industrial Period	1760 – 1901	Historic	Modern	1901 – Present	Historic
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Industrial Period	1760 – 1901			Historic																																	
Modern	1901 – Present	Historic																																			
Prehistoric	Prehistoric refers to the period of history before human records began (Stevenson 2010).																																				
Principle	A principle indicates ideas based on a 'system of beliefs or behaviour or philosophy' (Algeo 2003).																																				
Psychedelic trance culture	The psytrance genre is credited with starting in Goa in the nineties as Goa trance though there are much earlier psychedelic scenes associated with psychedelic culture and music (Putnam 2012).																																				

Word or concept	Definition
Rave	The term rave has a latent ambiguity initially associated with Acid House in the late eighties meaning a mass dance events that was re-invented as a psychedelic rave with the intention to dance for prolonged periods seeking ecstasy in outside spaces often illegally (Kyriakopoulos 2021, p. 226).
Rave imaginary	The rave imaginary is a 'metanarrative of process' where neo-pagan revivalist sensibility in the rave imagination captures the trend of spiritual recovery in the modern-day blending elements of spiritual practices into a re-invented belief that through raving and bonding together in ecstatic rapture is a primal collective dance experience (St. John 2004, p. 38).
Scene	A scene refers to a subculture in EDM that has its own cultural uniqueness enough to distinguish it from other similar subcultures and often the concept of the scene refers to members, resources, habits, and attitudes with that specific subculture (Bennett & Peterson 2004).
Sedentism	Sedentism refers to the supposed natural evolution of societies from being nomadic to remaining in one place as opposed to nomadism (Thoughtcodotcom 2019).
Small-scale societies and nature	Nelson suggests that small-scale societies have a deeper relationship with nature that is limited by the intrusion of larger society causing alienation and conflict (2008).
Small-scale societies definition	Santos and colleagues indicate that the term small-scale societies can be used in different ways with earlier or primitive societies, or by population size compared to large-scale complex societies but also by political, economic and social system specifically based on co-operation and prosocial behaviour (Santos and colleagues 2016, p.31004709).
Social communities	Mackian suggests social communities refers to how a sense of belonging is foregrounded amongst participants between humans as well as non-humans (2012).
Subjective rhythmization	Subjective rhythmization is when humans block together pieces of sound into larger pieces synchronising music and dance flow which enables entrainment (Madison 2023, p.164). Cole and Hannan indicate that the employment of repetitive tempo and brain physiology can bring about 'individual and collective consciousness shifts' through trance dance via 'absorption' called 'subjective rhythmization' that leads to trance states (Cole & Hannan 1998, p.118; Van Noorden 1999, p.44).
The vibe	The vibe is the experience from participating in an EDM social dance event where the energy created by the participants dancing combined with the music, lighting, environment, and intention creates a flow or composite feeling of liberation and being alive in the moment among the dancers (St. John 2006, p.10).
Tradition	'Tradition' generally refers to cultural similarities across time (Shaw & Jameson 2008).
Traditional culture	A traditional culture is one which abides by past habits and customs (Cambridge Words 2023).
Traditional indigenous knowledge	Traditional indigenous knowledge is characterized as a composite body of past knowledge, values, practices and wisdom 'developed by peoples with extended histories of interaction with the natural

Word or concept	Definition
	environment'(ICSU study group on science and traditional knowledge, 2002)
Traditional society	Traditional society is one that is based on past customs and habits (Smelser & Baltes 2001).
Traditional society	Traditional society is sometimes used in contrast to industrial, modern society (Scott & Marshall 2009). It can often be seen as a judgemental terms implying less complex and primitive cultures but also a 'mythical golden age of close-kniw family values and community' (Scott & Marshall 2009).
Transcendence, spirits, and return to the source	Partly the attraction and partly the reason for repeatedly returning to psyculture events is the idea of returning to the source where there is a process of re-enchantment with past sources of sacred power akin to remembering a generalised heritage (St. John 2004, p.350. The sensation of being saved or released in inherent with EDM culture through the communal experience (Hutson 2000, p.40).
Tribe	Tribe as an anthropological concept refers to those groups outside of 'bureaucratic society' though there are current issues with usage of this term because of the negative connotations with 'primitive' societies (Sneath 2023).
Tribe and crew	EDM tribes refer to specific groups of participants where members align with a specific beliefs and practices such as in psyculture as distinct from other EDM genre based tribes. Within the tribes are 'crews' which refers to the management and infrastructure teams that work with event organisers to create an event who contribute to the success and continuation of a tribe. The communal or co-operative way of living is evident within rave or EDM cultures where participation is often voluntary, temporary, and part of a fluid networking culture of overlapping tribes and crews (Charles 2019a, p. 55). Tribal may refer to a culture, a philosophy, a use of language, clothing, music style, and event specific differences that affect the individuals and the group identity (St. John 2009, p.21). Crew refers to the people who have roles in organising events including the organisers, security, sound engineer, rig owners, lighting, décor, catering, stewards, first aid, scenery, visuals, and production management. In terms of the specific use of the term tribes, psyculture is characterised by neo-tribes, which fall outside everyday 9am-5pm work routine and societal structures and are based around leisure and enjoyment. Organiser is the term used to describe the individual and combined organisers, management and teams who create an event.
Underground	The term underground in EDM refers to music that is different and other to the mainstream (Fikentscher 2000).

Full Approval

University of Central Lancashire  
Preston PR1 2HE  
01772 201201  
uclan.ac.uk

12 August 2021

Rick Peterson / Jacqueline Anderson  
School of Natural Sciences  
University of Central Lancashire

Dear Rick / Jacqueline

Re: Science Ethics Review Panel Application

Unique Reference Number: SCIENCE 0119

The Science Ethics Review Panel has granted approval of your proposal application 'Dancing with Ancestors: An ethnographic comparison of trance practices and principles in traditional societies and psychedelic trance culture'.

Approval is granted up to the end of project date. \*

It is your responsibility to ensure that

- the project is carried out in line with the information provided in the forms you have submitted
- you regularly re-consider the ethical issues that may be raised in generating and analysing your data
- any proposed amendments/changes to the project are raised with, and approved by, the Ethics Review Panel
- you notify [EthicsInfo@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:EthicsInfo@uclan.ac.uk) if the end date changes or the project does not start
- serious adverse events that occur from the project are reported to the Ethics Review Panel
- a closure report is submitted to complete the ethics governance procedures (existing paperwork can be used for this purpose e.g. funder's end of grant report; abstract for student award or NRES final report. If none of these are available use the e-Ethics Closure Report pro forma).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Lewis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'M' and a clear 'Lewis'.

Michael Lewis

Deputy Vice-Chair

Science Ethics Review Panel

\* for research degree students this will be the final lapse date



Advertisement



**Dancing like Ancestors: An ethnographic investigation of trance practices and principles in contemporary UK psychedelic trance dance culture**

**SEEKING PARTICIPANTS FROM UK PSYLCULTURE EVENT ORGANISER FOR CASE STUDY AND INTERVIEW**

We are researchers at UCLan (University of Central Lancashire) undertaking research about Psychedelic Trance Culture practices and principles to compare to traditional trance cultures. We are contacting event organisers to ask if they would be interested in participating in a case study about your event and to take part in an online interview.

If you are interested in participating or would like to know more about the study, please continue to the secure study site. We anticipate that it will take you approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey. Your participation in the survey is **completely anonymous**.

If you wish to become involved further with our study and would be willing to participate in an online interview, please follow the link at the end of the survey. If you would just like to contribute to an anonymous online survey only without participating in the interviews, please follow the link here.

This research study is being conducted by researchers at UCLan (investigator number; Principal Investigator: Rick Peterson PhD, Secondary Investigator, David W. Robinson PhD, and Student Investigator, Jacqueline Anderson. Detailed information about the study is provided in the survey and interview information sheet. If you need further information or have questions, please email: JAnderson11@uclan.ac.uk.

Anonymised Participant Consent Form for Individual Participants

**Title of the Project: Dancing with Ancestors: An ethnographic comparison of trance practices and principles in traditional societies and psychedelic trance culture**

**Name of researcher: Jacqueline Anderson**

		Initial
1.	I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated 7.3.21 for the above study, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
2.	I understand that taking part in the study involves either an audio or video recorded interview.	
3.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to stop taking part and can withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without my rights being affected. In addition, I understand that I am free to decline to answer any question, or questions.	
4.	I understand that I can ask for access to the information I provide, and I can request the destruction of that information if I wish at any time prior to 23 January 2023. I understand that following this date I will no longer be able to request access to or withdrawal of the information I provide.	
5.	I understand that the information I provide will be held securely and in line with data protection requirements at the University of Central Lancashire.	
6.	I understand that signed consent forms, interview data and original audio and/or video recordings will be available to the Study team and retained in the university repository.	
7.	I understand that the research team will respect my confidentiality and I give permission for them to have access to my responses.	
8.	I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained, and it will not be possible to identify me in any reports, presentations or publications arising from the research by disguising my identity using coding of my name. Anonymity applies irrespective of whether I only complete the online survey and do not wish to proceed to the interview stage.	
9.	I understand that the information I provide will be held securely and in line with data protection requirements at the University of Central Lancashire until it is fully anonymised and then deposited in the university repository archive for sharing and use by other authorised researchers to support other research in the future.	
10.	I understand that other authorised researchers may use my words in publications, reports, webpages, and other research outputs, if their study has been approved by a research ethics committee, and they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	
11.	I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name or where I live, will not be shared beyond the study team.	
12.	I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained, and it will not be possible to identify me in any reports, presentations or publications arising from the research	
13.	I understand and agree that my participation will be audio recorded, video recorded and recorded via Microsoft Teams and I am aware of and consent to use of these recordings for the purpose of providing a transcription of the interview proceedings solely for the use of the research team.	

Participant name	Signature	Date
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**Principal Investigator**

Dr. Richard Peterson  
Forensic & Applied Sciences (Archaeology)  
UCLan  
Preston  
Lancashire  
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(0)1772 893495  
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**Student Investigator**

Jacqueline Anderson  
Forensic & Applied Sciences (Archaeology)  
UCLan  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR1 2HE  
(0)1772 893495  
[JAnderson11@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:JAnderson11@uclan.ac.uk)

Debriefing statement

**Title of the Project: Dancing with Ancestors: An ethnographic comparison of trance practices and principles in traditional societies and psychedelic trance culture**

**Name of researcher: Jacqueline Anderson**

Can I thank you very much for taking part in the research. I have provided opportunities to give feedback along the way and now that the research is coming to end, I once again thank you for your participation, ask for your feedback and to let you know that I will make the research available to you as soon as I can.

If you would like further information about the study or would like to know about what my findings are when all the data have been collected and analysed, then please contact me on [JAnderson11@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:JAnderson11@uclan.ac.uk) or please provide contact details. I cannot however provide you with your individual results.

If taking part in this study has raised any specific concerns, I have provided a support contact sheet with suggestions of where to seek support. Feel free to discuss any issues with me too.

Participant Information Sheet

## Participant Information Sheet

### 1. Title of Study

Dancing with Ancestors: An ethnographic comparison of trance practices and principles in traditional societies and psychedelic trance culture by Jacqueline Anderson at UCLan.

### 2. Version Number and Date

Version 1 7.3.21

### 3. Invitation Paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Please note you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to. May I take this opportunity to thank you for taking time to read this.

### 4. What is the purpose of the study?

The aim is to provide in-depth research about psychedelic trance culture, the practices and principles of trance within and across cultures and time periods. This will be taking an ethnographic approach along with archaeological and anthropological research to compare trance, dance and shamanism to help towards understanding human culture.

The primary data collection methods will involve ethnographic field work at psychedelic trance events by the researcher and interviews with participants and organisers of events after a short online survey. The research will use interviews primarily of 10-15 UK participants, organisers, artists and producers, participant observation at a range of UK events and relevant documentation from events along with interviews for the event case studies. Fieldwork notes will focus on sensory stimuli, photographs, audio recordings and video recordings of the infrastructure, décor and artwork, site layout, playlists, advertisements, event documentation, and flyers, attendance at rituals and ceremonies, and participation in everyday events. A contingency plan will be formulated depending on the Covid 19 situation continuing in the future.

### 5. Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been asked to participate because of your attendance and/or involvement at the psychedelic trance gatherings.

### 6. Do I have to take part?

Participation on this study is entirely voluntary, so please do not feel obliged to take part. Refusal will involve no penalty whatsoever and you may withdraw from the study at any stage without giving an explanation to the researcher prior to 23 January 2023.

### 7. What will happen if I take part?

After a short online survey and if you are interested, you will be invited to take part in an online interview by myself based on questions that you will receive beforehand although answering the questions is optional. This should take no more than 30 minutes to 1 hour of your time sometime in 2021-23. The meeting will be recorded electronically. If you do not have access to the internet or appropriate equipment but still wish to take part, alternative means will be sought.

### 8. How will my data be used?

I understand that my personal information will be processed only for the purposes of this research. I understand that such information will be treated as confidential, except where legal obligations require information to be shared with relevant personnel, and handled in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and UK Data Protection Act 2018.

The University processes personal data as part of its research and teaching activities in accordance with the lawful basis of ‘public task’, and in accordance with the University’s purpose of “advancing education, learning and research for the public benefit”.

Under UK data protection legislation, the University acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the University’s research. The University privacy notice for research participants can be found on the attached link [https://www.uclan.ac.uk/data\\_protection/privacy-notice-research-participants.php](https://www.uclan.ac.uk/data_protection/privacy-notice-research-participants.php)

How will my data be collected?	The data will be collected, analysed and evaluated for academic purposes. I understand that my participation will be audio recorded for accuracy. I understand that any audio recordings will be transcribed by the researcher.
How will my data be stored?	My data will be kept on record at the University in a confidential and secure manner in an electronic format. This data being stored will contain personal and/or anonymised details. Access to encrypted computer files will be available by password only on a UCLan secure server. My data will remain stored on the university server irrespective of whether the researcher is no longer with the university.
How long will my data be stored for?	My data will be stored for a period of five years.
What measures are in place to protect the security and confidentiality of my data?	In compliance with the Data Protection Act, ethical research guidelines and principles, electronic data will be stored only on password secured computer equipment and storage devices. Digital cameras and dictaphone with audio recordings will be transported in a lockable case and encrypted during fieldwork. Recordings of interviews via Teams will be stored and backed up using the University secure Drive.
Will my data be anonymised?	My personal data will be anonymised and kept confidential as far as possible unless I consent otherwise.
How will my data be used?	The information I provide will be collected through interviews and survey to contribute towards the research as a valuable data asset. It will be used to write reports and may be seen publicly but at no point will I be personally identified in these reports unless I consent. However, there is no guarantee that the information from interview transcripts may inadvertently identify me.
Who will have access to my data?	I consent to the research and study team having access to any results derived from this study for any subsequent analyses or publications in the future. I understand that any identifying information would be kept confidential (except where legal obligations require information to be shared with relevant personnel), and access limited strictly to the original study team and database team.
Will my data be archived for use in other research projects in the future?	The Data Management Plan includes how the data is created, managed, stored, and shared including descriptive metadata via UCLanData and CLOK to provide secure archiving, preservation, and long-term storage of completed digital research data and open access research publications, including journal articles and conference papers.
How will my data be destroyed?	I understand that the information I provide will be retained under the Open Access policy although my personal data will be destroyed after five years. Storage, protection, retention, and preservation of data will be via UCLanData (UCLan’s data

	repository) and CLOK (UCLan's Institutional Repository) that conforms to Open Access policy in a secure digital environment.
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**9. Are there any risks in taking part?**

If you experience any mental, emotional, or physical or disadvantage as part of the research, that this should be made known to me immediately. If this occurs during the interview, it will stop immediately and only continue if you feel okay. There are support measures in place and I can advise you of these as needed.

There may be research-related risks include potential breaches of confidentiality, which can lead to others becoming aware of your responses, which includes information about illegal behaviour. The study is not focussed on illegal activity and a request from participants to refrain from discussing such matters. To reduce research related risks, you can choose to have your information anonymised. In any circumstances, the only identifiable information that will be asked of you is an email address unless you consent to share your information. This email is used to send you anonymised links to the follow-up survey, as well as provide you with results upon completion of the research.

All participants are strongly encouraged not to take the survey in any place where someone else owns the machines, data or network. While the survey software is secure, you are encouraged not to take the survey with other programs or apps open such as Facebook, as such sites monitor user activity. Survey responses will be stored on a secure university server accessible only to the principal investigators. Your email address will be stored separately from your survey responses.

You are free to refrain from responding to any questions and to withdraw from the study without penalty at any time.

**10. Are there any benefits from taking part?**

There are no expected direct benefits to participants and there is no financial or other compensation for your time. The results from this study may be beneficial to future psychedelic users and psychedelic researchers by providing insight into factors that may influence psychedelic effects.

**11. Expenses and / or payments**

There will be no payment, expenses or incentive arrangements made.

**12. What will happen to the results of the study?**

The results of this research will be written up by Jacqueline Anderson. The results are likely to be published in academic journals and books or referred to during conferences. You will not be identifiable from the results unless you have consented. If you would like a copy, please contact me.

**13. What will happen if I want to stop taking part?**

Consent, participation, and personal details can be withdrawn at any time without any questions asked up to the final date of 23 June 2023 by making contact with me. If your data has been anonymised, it can only be destroyed prior to anonymisation as it may not be possible to tell which results belong to which person after that time.

**14. What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?**

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by contacting Rick Peterson on 01772 89 3495. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with, then please contact the Research Governance Unit at [OfficerForEthics@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:OfficerForEthics@uclan.ac.uk).

The University strives to maintain the highest standards of rigour in the processing of your data. However, if you have any concerns about the way in which the University processes your personal data, it is important that you are aware of your right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office by calling 0303 123 1113.

**15. Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

**Please contact Jacqueline Anderson on 01772 89 3495 or [JAnderson11@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:JAnderson11@uclan.ac.uk) if you wish to ask questions or discuss any points you wish to raise.**



## Support Agencies and charities

### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

A free self-help group. Its "12 step" programme involves getting sober with the help of regular face-to-face and online support groups.

Phone: 0800 917 7650 (24-hour helpline)

Website: [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

### **Anxiety UK**

Charity providing support if you have been diagnosed with an anxiety condition.

Phone: 03444 775 774 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5.30pm)

Website: [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

### **CALM**

CALM is the Campaign Against Living Miserably. A charity providing a mental health helpline and webchat.

Phone: 0800 58 58 58 (daily, 5pm to midnight)

Website: [www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net)

### **FRANK**

Free, confidential information and advice about drugs, their effects and the law.

FRANK's live chat service runs daily from 2pm to 6pm.

Phone: 0300 1236600 (24-hour helpline)

Text a question to: 82111

Website: <https://www.talktofrank.com/>

### **INSPIRE**

**Inspire** (Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health) provides local services to support the mental health and wellbeing of people across Northern Ireland.

Phone: 028 9032 8474

**[Visit the Inspire website](#)**

### **Mind**

Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems.

Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)

Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### **Samaritans**

Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

Phone: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline)

Website: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

### **SAMHA**

SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health) can provide general mental health information and signpost you to your local services.

Phone: 0141 530 1000

(Mon-Fri 9 – 5)

**[Visit the SAMH website](#)**

Emotional support, information and guidance for people affected by mental illness, their families and carers.

Textcare: comfort and care via text message, sent when the person needs it most: [www.sane.org.uk/textcare](http://www.sane.org.uk/textcare)

Peer support forum: [www.sane.org.uk/supportforum](http://www.sane.org.uk/supportforum)

Website: [www.sane.org.uk/support](http://www.sane.org.uk/support)

**The Loop**

provides drug safety testing, welfare and harm reduction services at nightclubs, festivals and other leisure events.

<https://wearetheloop.org/>

**YoungMinds**

Information on child and adolescent mental health. Services for parents and professionals.

Phone: Parents' helpline 0808 802 5544 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4pm)

Website: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Survey Questions

Q1 Description and culture	Q1 How would you describe psychedelic trance culture?
Q2 Dance and trance and experiences	Q2 Could you describe what you experience at a psytrance gathering and how they make you feel? What do you experience when you dance? Do you trance (change in consciousness, altered state, transformation, would you say it is spiritual, sacred, everyday)?
Q3 Participation, contribution, and community	Q3 What does participation mean to you? What do you feel about the community and belonging? Do you feel contribution to the culture is important (i.e., dancing, contributing to the arts, music, helping out)?
Q4 Music	Q4 What do you feel about the music and its effect on how you feel?
Q5 Ancestors	Q5 Do you feel you connect with ancestral spirits while at a psytrance gathering? Do you feel you are dancing with ancestors?
Q6 Environment and nature	Q6 What do you feel about the locations, décor, clothing, lighting, buildings, and environment and how it affects you? Do you feel you have a connection to the environment, nature, and the animal world at psytrance gatherings?
Q7 Customs and habits	Q7 What would you consider to be psytrance customs and habits (food, clothes, art, symbols, myths, places)? What items are important to you (i.e., lighter, food, drinks, clothing, decorations, tent equipment)?
Q8 Journey and preparations	Q8 What are your pre journey, during and after rituals of a gathering or event (what do you do to prepare before the journey and before the event)? Would you say you go on a journey (i.e., whether just to travel to an event, during the event and/or your personal journey, a pilgrimage)?
Q9 Beliefs and spirituality	Q9 would you describe psytrance beliefs and/or spirituality (ie the beliefs or non-beliefs, spirituality, shamanistic, moral behaviours, purposes of attending, why do you attend?). What are your beliefs if any?
Q10 Healing and benefits	Q10 Do you feel there are healing and benefits to experiencing trance dancing?
Q11 Other	Q11 If you would like to add further details or provide any advice on other areas to investigate, or any stories to share - please do so here.

## Interview prompts

### Culture

Q1 How would you describe psychedelic trance culture?

### Experiences

Q2 Could you describe what you experience at a psytrance gathering and how they make you feel? What do you experience when you dance? Do you trance (change in consciousness, altered state, transformation, would you say it is spiritual, sacred, everyday)?

### Participation, community and contribution

Q3 What does participation mean to you? What do you feel about the community and belonging? Do you feel contribution to the culture is important (i.e., dancing, contributing to the arts, music, helping out)?

### Music

Q4 What do you feel about the music and its effect on how you feel?

### Ancestors and Memories

Q5 Do you feel you connect with ancestral spirits while at a psytrance gathering? Do you feel you are dancing with ancestors?

### Environment and Nature

Q6 What do you feel about the locations, décor, clothing, lighting, buildings, and environment and how it affects you? Do you feel you have a connection to the environment, nature, and the animal world at psytrance gatherings?

### Preparations and Journey

Q7 What would you consider to be psytrance customs and habits (food, clothes, art, symbols, myths, places)? What items are important to you (i.e., lighter, food, drinks, clothing, decorations, tent equipment)?

Q8 What are your pre journey, during and after rituals of a gathering or event (what do you do to prepare before the journey and before the event)? Would you say you go on a journey (i.e., whether just to travel to an event, during the event and/or your personal journey, a pilgrimage)?

### Beliefs and Spirituality

Q9 would you describe psytrance beliefs and/or spirituality (ie the beliefs or non-beliefs, spirituality, shamanistic, moral behaviours, purposes of attending, why do you attend?). What are your beliefs if any?

### Healing and Benefits

Q10 Do you feel there are healing and benefits to experiencing trance dancing?

Q11 If you would like to add further details or provide any advice on other areas to investigate, or any stories to share - please do so here.

Interviewee Code No.	Date of interview	Time	Duration	Code	Forms signed?
1.	2.12.21	11.30-12.30	33 m 15 s	Interviewee 1	✓
2.	2.12.21	1.45-2.45	56 m 32 s	Interviewee 2	✓
3.	2.12.21	4.15-5.15	39 m 39 s	Interviewee 3	✓
4.	9.12.21	12.00-1.00	50 m 50 s	Interviewee 4	✓
5.	10.12.21	1.00-2.00	25 m 04 s	Interviewee 5	✓
6.	13.12.21	10.00-11.00	35 m 29 s	Interviewee 6	✓
7.	13.12.21	12.00-1.00	34 m 06 s	Interviewee 7	✓
8.	13.12.21	2.00-3.00	42 m 05 s	Interviewee 8	✓
9.	14.12.21	12.00-1.00	25 m 38 s	Interviewee 9	✓
10.	14.12.21	4.30	1 h 25 m	Interviewee 10	✓
11.	14.12.21	5.30	32 m 30 s	Interviewee 11	✓
12.	14.12.21	7.30	49 m 29 s	Interviewee 12	✓

Appendix 6 Gaps tracking grid from gaps to contributions  
UCLan

Jacqueline Anderson

Theme	Gap	Gap identified before research	Question	Conclusion	Contribution
Ancestors and memory - Ancient dance practices and purposes		Whether there are similarities to ancient practices of trance dance	Q4b Do you feel you are dancing with ancestors?	There are distinctions about whether the dancing was with ancestors, like ancestors, in connection with ancestors. Ancestors may have gathered together to congregate and dance away from mainstream life in order to facilitate sociality. These gatherings re-enact an ancient dance practice that is an integral part of human experience.	There is a re-enactment of a primal ancient dance practice that is described as an integral human experience. The same purposes for gathering and dancing away from mainstream life to facilitate the benefits of sociality as ancestors.
Ancestors and memory - Group memories	✓	Whether participants feel they are dancing with or like ancestors	Q4a Do you feel you connect with ancestral spirits while at a psytrance gathering?	The reasons people gathered are similar, whether ancient or modern, primarily to dance communal and social networking.	Mnemonic group memories can unify or divide and whether true or not can seal bonding and links to the past.
Ancestors and memory - Types of ancestors - Living not dead connection	✓	To understand what is meant by an ancestor living or dead	Q4a Do you feel you connect with ancestral spirits while at a psytrance gathering?	Types of ancestors may have been different. The inter and intra group connections are sought between alive people were felt to be as important as any connection to the past. No ancestral contact felt.	There are a diverse range of assertions made about different types of ancestors and what is meant ancestral connectivity. Inter and intra group connections are sought more between alive people than any connections with the dead.
Beliefs Traditional Non-traditional	✓	To understand the beliefs within the culture	Q8a would you describe psytrance beliefs and/or spirituality? Q8b What are your beliefs if any?	The culture demonstrates along a continuum a scale from zero beliefs towards a gnostic amalgamation of beliefs. There are no specific shamanic practices and principles or shaman figure within psychculture but some inclusion of general shamanic concepts.	There is no specific belief system or spirituality though there is an amalgamation in spiritual associations and essences with the everyday, immediacy, otherness, vibrancy with matter, non-humans and nature as valued as a belief system.
Beliefs – Music			Q8b are your beliefs if any?	There is some unexpressed but visibly evident worship however of the sound system.	There is an indicative worship of sound and dance.
Benefits - Physical and mental benefits		Whether there are physical and mental benefits of trance	Q5b Do you feel you have a connection to the environment, nature, and the animal world at psytrance gatherings?	The conclusion was there are benefits to attending not just dancing that are positive physiologically and psychologically.	
Benefits - Dance and embodiment	✓	Whether dance brings benefits	Q1b What do you experience when you dance? Do you trance? Q9 Do you feel there are healing and benefits to experiencing trance dancing?	The majority agreement of the healing benefits from prolonged collective dancing is overwhelming with some respondents indicating this occurs at an individual, group, societal and global level potentially.	There are evident healing benefits from prolonged collective dancing and attendance at individual, group, societal and potentially global level.
Benefits - Music			Q1b What do you experience when you dance? Do you trance? Q9 Do you feel there are healing and benefits to experiencing trance dancing?	The healing possibilities are linked to the musical composition of psytrance music through its repetitive rhythms that help synchronise the mind, body, and space.	The healing possibilities are linked to psytrance music through its repetitive rhythms that help synchronise the mind, body, and space.
Benefits - Environment and nature	✓	To determine the connection to the environment and nature	Q5b Do you feel you have a connection to the environment, nature, and the animal world at psytrance gatherings? Q9 Do you feel there are healing and benefits to experiencing trance dancing?	There is a primacy where everything is alive and connected both human and non-human where the resultant benefits emerge from being grounded in nature creating increased connectivity.	The findings provide a greater understanding of the connections between the living world and humans at gatherings.

Appendix 6 Gaps tracking grid from gaps to contributions  
UCLan

Jacqueline Anderson

Theme	Gap	Gap identified before research	Question	Conclusion	Contribution
Benefits - Psychedelics			Q9 Do you feel there are healing and benefits to experiencing trance dancing?	Psychedelic substances are viewed as an ancient technology of transcendence that may produce profound change, bring relief from negative energy release, increase group bonding and the levelling of individual differences.	Imbuement of psychedelic substances increases group bonding and levelling of individual differences.
Contribution, community, and participation - Involvement	✓	Little research has been carried out the different types of involvement, contribution, and participation	Q2b Do you feel contribution to the culture is important?	Gatherings reinforce, evolve and progress intra-group connections sharing knowledge, wisdom, skills, practices, and principles passing on cultural memory.	Different layers of contribution, participation, and involvement and community benefit the individual and the community.
Contribution, community, and participation - Belonging	✓	Sparse research about the nature of belonging to a small scale EDM society	Q2b What do you feel about the community and belonging?	Social interaction and prolonged dancing give an intra-tribe sense of belonging creating a feedback loop of self and community for learning, growth, discussion, personal and community enrichment.	Gatherings reinforce, evolve and progress inter and intra-group connections sharing knowledge, wisdom, skills, practices, and principles passing on cultural memory through social interaction and dance.
Contribution, community, and participation - Co-operation			Q2a What does participation mean to you?	The experience at a gathering makes people feel better and they are able to integrate this into their everyday lives. There is a directional trajectory based on involvement and time regarding placement of people in the organisation of the culture.	Co-operation at a small-scale gatherings make people feel better and they are able to integrate this into their everyday lives.
Dance and trance - Centrality of dance and return like ancestors	✓	Gap in understanding the desire to return to dance.	Q1a Could you describe what you experience at a psytrance gathering and how they make you feel?	It is through collective prolonged dance to psytrance music preferably in an outside environment where the most powerful experience of communal flow and positive energy is experienced.	Dance is the most important sought after experience for its powerful experience of positive energy and communal benefit.
Dance and trance - Collective dance	✓	Little research about the pull of communal dancing	Q1b What do you experience when you dance? Do you trance?	Immersive collective dancing has beneficial changes both personal and social where positive energy is produced generally through prolonged collective dancing leading to consciousness enhancement or alteration.	Immersive, prolonged collective dancing in nature brings beneficial consciousness enhancement or alteration.
Dance and trance - Prolonged dance and energy	✓	The power of collective, prolonged dance outside has little research done.	Q1b What do you experience when you dance? Do you trance?	The importance, impact and benefits of shared dance energy is a predominant experience and intention to gather.	An exploration of the embodiment of energy, the vibe and bodily movement What happens during prolonged dancing.
Environment and nature - Living societies and connections to nature	✓	Gap in understanding participants experiences with the environment and nature as a living society.	Q5b Do you feel you have a connection to the environment, nature, and the animal world at psytrance gatherings?	A natural outdoor environment is preferred for a trance dance gathering as it enhances the experience of collective dancing and provides an immersive, sensory intersubjectivity between human, non-human, nature and the wider cosmology.	The natural outdoor setting of gatherings enhances the collective dancing through sensory intersubjectivity between human and non-human in a living co presence sociality.
Healing and Benefits - To descendants	✓	Little research undertaken about the benefits of trance dance practices in psychculture.	Q9 Do you feel there are healing and benefits to experiencing trance dancing?	The microcosm of this experimental egalitarian psychedelic culture is described as a blueprint for improving mainstream humanity's existence known as taking the underground overground.	The creation of an experimental egalitarian gathering provides a blueprint for better living.



Appendix 6 Gaps tracking grid from gaps to contributions  
UCLan

Jacqueline Anderson

Theme	Gap	Gap identified before research	Question	Conclusion	Contribution
Music and sound - Acoustic and musical properties - Sound & agency	✓	Rare research about agency of sound and the assemblage.	Q3 What do you feel about the music and its effect on how you feel?	The composition of a rolling bassline with the widest range of frequencies and vibrations, and compositional techniques is the aim of psytrance music production and may have been the musical intentions in the deep past.	Music is the main sought after experience because of its benefits due to the widest range of frequencies, vibrations and compositional techniques aimed at increasing a range of benefits.
Music and sound - Musical journey - Sociality	✓	Research would benefit from understanding the journey.	Q3 What do you feel about the music and its effect on how you feel?	The importance of the attributes of the music, their purposes and interpretations that indicate the inter relationality between participants and the external world in a literal and symbolic journey.	The composite experience of the musical, collective dance, literal and symbolic journey brings cognitive and social benefits.
Music and sound - Importance	✓	Greater focus needed on the importance of psytrance music to dancers.	Q3 What do you feel about the music and its effect on how you feel?	Music is the most important reason for engagement with this trance community.	The music is the most important aspect that initiates the healing through dancing
Preparations, objects, and Journey - Landscapes	✓	More info about the link between landscapes and collective dancing would be beneficial.	Q5a What do you feel about the locations, décor, clothing, lighting, buildings, and environment and how it affects you?	Outside locations become important as gathering and dancing occurs.	Landscape and environments are important in both prehistory and psculture.
Preparations, objects, and journey - Preparations and Objects	✓	To understand the impact of material culture insightful and preparations.	Q6a What would you consider to be psytrance customs and habits? Q5a What do you feel about the locations, décor, clothing, lighting, buildings, and environment and how it affects you?	Pre gathering preparations and choosing of objects and equipment are often complex or minimal for the literal journey.	The greater details about material culture can act as a platform for much needed research in this area as objects and preparations are important.
Preparations, objects, and journey- Journey	✓	The centrality of the literal and imaginary journey.	Q7a What are your pre journey, during and after rituals of a gathering or event? Q7a Would you say you go on a journey?	The journey metaphor runs through every aspect of personal and group practices, experiences, and intentions internally and externally in the artwork	Establishing the centrality of spaces, journeys and how they are remembered.

Interviewee 1

Interviewee 1	
Question Prompts	Transcript
Q2 Dance, trance and experiences	<p>Health was one of the things that I was quite interested in looking at because I really like the whole health part of doing dancing for a really long time which I've been doing before psytrance was even invented. I used to go out to nightclubs and go to various electronic and other types of music kind of things and dance all night long. It wouldn't be quite the same as psytrance trance which, when it arrived, was, oh, thank God, someone's written the music for what I wanted to do, anyway.</p> <p>I was reading the blurb for Graham St. John's book. Is it <i>Global Psytrance</i>? I think it came out a few years ago. And he talks in the blurb there about this eternal sort of moment of peace and rest from being on the dancefloor and waving your arms, and you just find this feeling in the moment, and that it's the coming out and going back into that moment what the psytrance movement is about. And I thought that was a very, very lovely, poetic way of explaining the drive that makes you come back again and makes you willing to contribute not just as a punter but also as someone that does far more than that.</p> <p>But yeah, if you dance for several hours at a time, it's very, very good for you because it loosens up all your limbs and it's good for your brain because you're thinking but you're not thinking, so you just sort of learn. There are people smiling at you which is great because they are just really happy. It's brilliant. I have been to psytrance events. I've been to things at nightclubs, and I've been to festival things, and I've been to a few abroad as well.</p>
Q3 Contribution, community, and participation	<p>I've been involved in nights where I've gone to help to do the set dressing and I've also done talks at Ozora and various other places as well. I like to go along and contribute. That's a really important thing and although Breaking Convention isn't a psytrance event, it has a same similar sort of cultural vibe to it. That is one of the reasons that I volunteer and contribute so much of my life to that kind of endeavour because I want to. I want to feed, to feed the beast because I really like it and I like being part of it. There may be times in people's lives when they just want to take it all in and that is what they need to do. And there's nothing wrong with that. But for me, I really want to contribute as well. It's such a valuable thing for me. When I went to Boom, which is a few years ago, I was suffering quite badly from arthritis in the knees at the time, and I was like, well, I don't know if I'll be able to dance well. Then, of course, as soon as I got there, it was lovely and warm and it was on sand, so it was just beautiful, and it was outside. The music was tremendous, so I just danced basically the whole 9 days on and off. And I felt so much healthier and better when I came home again after nine days of being at a psytrance festival which I wasn't expecting at all.</p> <p>The whole thing is just this massive feedback loop of community and self-importance. And those two things being really tightly woven together. And for me that's something that's really important – the way that those things meet up with each other and just the sound as well. The loudness of it. I used to go</p>

Interviewee 1	
Question Prompts	Transcript
	to nights, and I still do occasionally where the sound system has very, very loud dub and you know how the base just goes out and you could just feel your nose wobbling and all of that.
Q4 Music	<p>Any kind of good sound system which has that vibrational thing I think does something to your cells. I think there has been a little bit of research on it, but I think that that there will be more of it like this. I know a friend of mine he is very into the 111 hertz resonance chamber that's very healing for you. There does seem to be some scientific stuff that is starting to back up this slightly crazy idea. But the idea is there is this really low sound which I would only just be capable of hearing but it's well within the average male vocal range and has this 'weer' feel to it. It does something to your body and makes it jiggle it around and be better on all sorts of levels.</p> <p>I listened to psytrance at home a lot. Not every day, but at least once a week I'll put it on and have a bit of a dance around the kitchen or while I'm working or whatever. It's really nice music and I associate it with psychedelic drugs and the experience that you have from that, so it reminds me of that in a nice way as well.</p>
Q6 Environment and nature	<p>Dancing outside is different to dancing inside. I really like going to nightclubs because you've got all the lights and things.</p> <p>I love all of that kind of stuff, but I really like being outside with all the flags fluttering and people, and their lovely costumes because people dress up, but they dress up in a way that's really practical. Obviously, you have to if you're gonna be dancing. It can't just be like you know, sort of prim and proper. It has to be practical. I love the functionality and I love the combination of extravagance and practicality. I love synergy as you can probably tell. I like looking around at people and seeing what they've done and the amazing thought that they've brought to it. The collective effort and just decorating themselves and all of the other stuff. I think that's great, and I've loved being able to look out at trees and different landscape things and it just lets you think about stuff in a different way. You appreciate it in a much more engaged way. Does that make sense? When you're dancing, you're very in the moment, aren't you? So even though you're doing lots of stuff with your body, your mind is in this quite peaceful kind of condition, and you can really directly see the world around you in a way that is quite different to if you're just chatting to somebody.</p>
Q8 Journey and preparations	<p>Like you're saying about the pre journey rituals and the mindset of going on a pilgrimage. And that's very much how I approach going to these kind of things; that you're going there on this journey, and it might be you discover something about yourself or about the world around you or whatever it might be. So, we might just have a really nice time, but you're going there to find something out. It might just be that it's the moment that you're in at that point and then you reconnect with that thing.</p>
Q9 Beliefs	<p>I guess I would say the experience I find it very religious and stuff, but I don't separate out in my life the religious and not religious particularly. It's woven very much into the fabric of.</p> <p>Yeah, I think that we can definitely talk about those sorts of things in purely phenomenological kind of terms. Like you saw a thing move because you did - what the objective reality that may or may not have been is completely</p>

Interviewee 1	
Question Prompts	Transcript
	<p>irrelevant to the lived experience of the person. That's you going through it, so it's important. All that I'm experiencing, meaning that it creates for the person and the group as well, and that's worthy of study. Like, regardless of what else is actually going on there. And the way that that sort of thing is a bit nebulous, and no one is quite sure about it. I think this makes it even more powerful because it adds to that space which allows you, it's free belief, isn't it? So, you've got this space in which you can project or find meaning that is hopefully useful and valuable to you. I think that's the important thing to take into the experiences; to have that attitude of, not positive because it makes it sound a bit to sort of wishy washy, but to have that keen seeking out kind of thing.</p>
Q10 Healing and benefits	<p>Oh, that's another thing about the health thing we were talking about earlier on. There's lots of research at the moment to do with dementia patients and how a certain frequency of flashing light is very good for your brain. I'll try and find a link if you know about that research, but that when I read about that I was thinking about like psytrance and nightclubs.</p> <p>Sometimes the things that psytrance teaches you aren't necessarily pleasurable. That wasn't a nice moment. I just felt like really slightly sore, like a giant floppy thing, with no strength and no resilience inside myself at all. And to actually feel that so intently made me do something to change it. Because I was like, no, I don't like this. I did something and I felt a lot better after it. I was having a lovely time. But then there was a point where I felt not very well at all. And I limped out of the ladies, and I had recovered myself by this point in. My friend was helping me across to sit as she's incredibly buff like really, really fit and I was leaning on her, and she felt incredibly hard and strong and stable, and I just felt like this little pasty kind of floppy nothing at all. And I was like I really need to do something about this. You know how you get those moments of a reality check thing? And it was a real moment in my life when I was unfit, but I wasn't actively doing enough at that point, so I started to do yoga on a much more frequent basis and get much more actually doing exercise on a more consistent basis, which I had done previously but I just let it go.</p>

Interviewee 2

Interviewee 2	
Question Prompts	Transcript
Q1 Description and culture	I have been involved in psytrance for quite a long time more about going to the parties initially. I have noticed how my perception of the parties has changed and the turning point for me was going to Ozora. I started going in 2000 in northern events mainly. I used to go with friends that have now all got babies and don't go out anymore because they're too old, they are all into family. People who are doing the whole producer, I only play my own tracks thing, so much that it's funny and I just personally think it's very egocentric to be that way. Egocentricity really upsets me and so I step away from people when they're a bit like that. I think you have to take your head out from your own **** and see what else is going on. because there's a world of amazing things. Because actually what I've realized is the people that you used to go out with, they just used to go and get trashed. They didn't go for the music, whereas I've always been about the music for me. Music has been a big thing in my life and certainly it started with the classical stuff, playing instruments. And funnily enough, in my teens I was a bit biased about dance music that it was boring. But then as you get older you do different things you realize that it's all awesome.
Q3 Participation, contribution, and community	That sense of belonging if it's not there which was part of my headspace that went wrong. I became very preoccupied with that sense of belonging as I didn't feel I belonged. That's why I went home. I felt there was a level of you are not welcome in my tribe because you are not part of this tribe. I just broke myself unfortunately. I've only really noticed it recently because I wasn't in the right headspace. I noticed about the tribes. How everyone had come in tribes. I had never felt that quite so strongly anywhere else in the same way but then, I felt the tribe vibe but in a much friendlier and nicer way than in Europe. In Europe they were very much don't come into our tribe you are not welcome. I went with the wrong people. I want to go with the right people and have the right headspace. I've learnt recently to make the magic happen. The music was amazing, and the festival love is beautiful.
Q4 Music	That is the beauty of psytrance. It's like an onion. There is layer upon layer. I used to be into hard house but I've gone off it because I find it boring because it doesn't do much musically or sonically. I started with psytrance though and its funny because I've gone full circle and I've migrated back to where I wanted to be which was psytrance. I love techno and all other sorts of genres as well. But to be honest my heart is with psytrance without a doubt.
Q8 Journey and preparations	I definitely want to create a journey when I put mixes together, and interestingly, I've reapproached the way I put my psytrance mixes together compared to what I did a year or so ago. I was originally in my head I was always doing a progressive techno mix, so I'd always start at about 130 and ended at about 150, so you'd kind of gradually build it up in a big crescendo. But my technique for psytrance, I was very much just playing at 149. BPM, and it was just the kind of really banging, tuneful kind of South African, Israeli stuff, and that particular sound. I still love that sound and I think some dancefloors probably could maybe take a full set of that, but I had a really

Interviewee 2	
Question Prompts	Transcript
	<p>good chat with a DJ about putting sets together. She's been dancing there at an event and partied all night and she said, what she does is that she likes to build energy on the dancefloor. I've always noticed those on the dancefloor who felt it, but more recently in the last couple of parties I've been very aware of it and been much more conscious of how energies felt and light energy and dark energy. She says she creates her set as a kind of crescendo like from the light into the dark and I thought that really resonates with me and that's how I am creating the psytrance sets now. You are kind of building up not just into a crescendo like in techno but building up and coming right back down, although it depends on the length of your set. You can bring the crowd with you. It does really interest me how DJs build their sets and how they approach things. I think that people should be at the party from the beginning. There are some DJs that do that. For me it is about being at the party, to dance, and spend some time with people. That is the way to do it. You have a starting track and prep your set. But sometimes if you haven't played for a while you do need to prep a set. I have a track list at the moment and do everything in order. I am hoping I get on more dancefloors where there is a crowd dancing to respond to and can be flexible and fluid. What I am starting to do now is see how it feels. The important ingredient is your headspace has to be right, the environment has to be right, and the people have to be right. If you haven't got these right, then it will go south. It's hard finding the people with white light and sticking with them, and I am aware of it. I am much more aware of it now and its brilliant.</p>

Interviewee 3

Interviewee 3	
Question Prompts	Transcript
Q2 Dance, trance and experiences	Trance has happened to me. There have been certain venues when it definitely has happened to me. One of them we went to was inside a thick dense woodlands. We didn't know it was a burial chamber, but I knew very quickly there was something there. Quite quickly we were dancing, and I said there is something going on here with bad energy. Quite a lot of strange things did happen to some of our friends there. Certain people acted unlike they had ever acted before. You don't know it's a sacred site until you get there.
Q3 Participation, contribution, and community	Psytrance parties are small so there is overlap of events. Even where we are, there is nothing on. There is nowhere to play even where we are putting them on it is still 45 minutes away. We can't find any land to put a party on and we aren't do a free party because we will get shot. They are strict here. We wouldn't get away with it. If we want to go out, we have to travel and that's why we are putting on parties. Lots of parties have gone. So, we had to do something. We are gonna stick at it and just see if we can pull the numbers in because there's people out there that want to party. The events have all gone. We've got a long enough night to justify travelling. Most places they shut it like half one in the morning. We just want to see if we can get enough in there to make it worthwhile long-term by offering that service. We want to make people dance. Just a place to dance and a little chill out. It's a dance event. One of the things we find is clubs don't like psytrance because punters don't drink. The hardest thing for us was finding a venue. It took us two years to find a venue. We're still trying to find alternatives now so we can do another one. We were dealing with the license trying to get it through and then found out another venue.

Interviewee 4

Interviewee 4	
Question Prompts	Transcript
Q1 Description and culture	<p>What I found amazing in Goa was that it was multicultural. I really did like the fact that the music was incorporating sounds from all over the world. That for me was really, really important because I was coming from a different culture. In Goa at the time, we used to joke that it was one representative from each part of the world. It was a lot of British, Americans, Europeans but there was at least one representative from Uruguay, one person from Argentina, one person from China, one person from Saudi Arabia.</p>
Q2 Dance, trance and experiences	<p>One thing that is common to all African dances is that you connect with the spirit. No matter for what it is, for a specific purpose, this connection happens. You have the dancers and the drummers.</p> <p>I go wherever. Music doesn't confine me. I prefer to try everything. I like to go into the dancefloor, put my body there and let my body move with whatever they throw at me to see what happens. I remember the first time I danced to hi-tech. At first, I thought this is really fast but then on the dancefloor I just let my body there, let my body feel it and let my body move. I remember laughing my head off because it was so fast. I like what it does, I like because I know the body moves before the brain does. The body will do something, and the brain will catch up a fraction of a second later. I'm clearing a space. I'm doing this so I'm just cutting through. Or the mind just wants to make sense of the movement, but the body knows what the body does, and whatever you need to do. I do things where my mind and my movement are at one.</p> <p>I am very conscious of where I am sending that energy. If it is good energy, then yes, I will share it. If I am in a bad state, if I feel that I am full of shit, I very consciously send it back to the earth or the sky. I do not bounce it to people. So, when I'm not feeling good, I will dance on the periphery where I have less chance of throwing my shit to people. There are a lot of people who are doing this, and it is very beautiful. I see humanity on the dancefloor. I see us all in our different stages, our different equations, different ways of understanding the world, and the beauty is we are all there on the dancefloor, giving it, being there, and that for me is the participation and it is unavoidable. Participation for me is on the dancefloor and perhaps all those things I experienced in Goa in the trance scene, it was my birthing and a transition for me. I do believe energy is in our hands and they transmit energy. You do things, you change energy, you weave things. I am very conscious of that, and my own power that emanates from my body. So, I will not do things, say they are dancing in front of me, their backs, I am already conscious of what I do to their backs. I'm not going to give them all my shit, to someone who is not aware. I send it back to the earth or the sky.</p> <p>I do a lot of movements of turning in, in and out obviously, but movements to clear out. Participation is one with this. For me it is on the dancefloor. I pick up from who is there. Lots of people are unconscious and they don't know, they haven't stopped to think about this dancefloor magic. There are many people who are conscious who work together, we work together, we know what we are doing, we are very conscious of the energy that goes round and how you move it. The dancefloor is where I transform something. It shows you</p>



Interviewee 4	
Question Prompts	Transcript
	<p>whatever I need to go through whether I am sad or if something really bad happens or anything good or bad. That is the place where I am going into the dancefloor, and I weave my energies through the other people's energies. I let my body do whatever it needs to do. I have a memory of a long time ago when I was mentally sad and I was at a festival, and everyone is dancing really happily, and I don't want to bring my sadness onto the dancefloor, so I dance on the periphery.</p> <p>I always like new year or things like that. You know different situations so full moon is kind of a big one. But yeah, for many years. Things like that. I always feel like, OK, you know I can feel the energy of people around the world dancing. To connect to that. I started to be conscious about the full moon because I know that there are full moon parties around the world. I remember in terms of my life when I was in a pretty bad state with depression and things going wrong in my life and then when it was a full moon, I would look at the sky and think there is a lot of people dancing tonight, some in India, some in Argentina, some in Africa and all over the world today is the full moon for everybody in the world. And it's a lot of people dancing. And that alone will lift me up and know that, even if I couldn't dance tonight, other people were doing it. Other people were doing it and that was all that I needed to know.</p> <p>It was tacit, nobody was saying it, but we were dancing for peace, it was obvious. By the end of the season, the war was finished, and we hugged each other, and we said we did it. I remember that strongly on the morning of the party after we found out about the ceasefire, we hugged each other and said we did it, we stopped the war. We were convinced we were dancing all night like mad, convinced it was our doing we stopped the war. We were having this amazing opportunity that we were doing it, kicking the floor all in the same rhythm. We had the sensation that we were doing something that was affecting the world, that nobody else knew. That we were on that secret beach that no one knew about. But we were working on the subconscious side of the collective psyche of the world and that doing it at night-time was also part of it when others are sleeping. So, we had that on the dancefloor. It was kind of a feeling that it was the whole world dancing together and for me that was the beginning of something. You know the feeling that we were all together as world representatives on those dancefloors. Something that we were doing was going to change something. That was right from the beginning. As a culture, I felt that it was multicultural and accepting incorporating parts from all over the world. It is not in that sense that we had to do something because the world was bad. It was just a knowledge that out there, outside of Goa, people were suffering, wars, all kinds of things, when I was there it was the time of the Gulf war. I do remember very much people were dancing from many places, from Israel, all the countries that were at war at the time, and we were dancing together.</p> <p>I have studied a lot as a dancer and I had incredible teachers. They said it was amazing that a European person had to come to Africa to save all those dances that were getting lost, because of civilisation and religions, suddenly weren't allowed to dance. Different dances for marriage, birth, death, and other reasons.</p>

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Question Prompts	Transcript
	<p>For me the way I overcome that experience of hearing the same music, I had that realisation that the music was like a mantra. Yes, it will repeat itself and yes it will carry on the same again and again. Because it is like a mantra and then I can dance it again and again even if it repeats the same pattern. This is when we could affect other's psyches when they were dreaming, go in their dreams and make them have better dreams. If you can call that healing. The dancers at first, they just bounce at first. Now and then they are taken by the spirit and they just dance. All the others carry on sharing, participation, perhaps 3 or 4 that the spirit takes, while the others just bounce. While you are not feeling that spirit, just bouncing until the spirit takes you, maybe just for a few minutes or for hours. Then you just jump and touch the earth. And that is beautiful. And that happens to people at different moments. The rest of the time we are all together just bouncing. Like some African ancient forms of connecting, following the rhythm until something in your psyche connects, and we are all together with it. That for me is participation. And we can't avoid it. Trance dancing is for me a mantra, that's the only way I can describe it, so I can go through in a trance. Now I feel I need to dance to heal recently! I really feel my joints and the last two years before that I used to dance at least twice a month. I'm not the kind of person that will dance a couple of times a week. But I will dance for 8-9 hours twice a month. For two years now of not dancing I really feel it on my body, I really feel, before I could do anything, I dance for ten minutes now, and I am tired. And that is scary.</p> <p>You have to remember I'm a dancer. I was a dancer before I even met psychedelic trance. But psychedelic trance was a great opportunity to liberate myself and dance and dance and dance as I love dancing.</p> <p>I mean the participation that I do is important. The only reason I did that is because I felt it needed to happen. Not because I felt I have a vocation into doing that.</p> <p>It changed also in different places. I will say I don't think it's just one thing. I think it's quite, quite changing, you know? I mean, as much as I would like it to be one thing. I think there are people coming in and out all the time. But in general, people are changing. Yeah, I think the culture changed. I think it depends on where you are. Let's say I go to another country, and I go to a psychedelic trance party, it is completely different to what you will find here. I don't see it as a one thing. And between those groups, there are people who have been there nearly from the beginning.</p>
Q4 Music	<p>I feel very much that the music has become a really wide thing and gradually stopped incorporating other culture's music and other ways of being. I think it should change. So, the genre will carry on and the music should evolve inside the genre. Sometimes there is very little evolution. If I go to a party and many times, I feel like I have heard the music before not because I have heard the specific music but that it is the same old music. I've been here it for so long. I am longing for any other culture's music except electronic music. I am disappointed that all that is left is the electronic side. This is the part that does not have a soul. The soul was in all the other bits that were weaved into the</p>

Interviewee 4	
Question Prompts	Transcript
	music. The first time I hear psytrance, I thought it was monotonous and I couldn't be at one with it until I heard that they were weaving sounds from around the world, some African drumming, some carnival from South America, some Arabic singers. I was used to natural instruments not too electronic. I felt the electronic side was too electronic. When it was mixed with other culture's music then I felt that I was one with it.
Q5 Ancestors	<p>I don't know about ancestral spirits. If I call spirits of nature, ancestral spirits yes perhaps. I don't think I am talking about specific people. The spirit of the forest, the spirit of nature, the spirit of one. For me personally I think the plants are running the show. We are just crazy monkeys thinking we are running the show but it's actually the plants. So, for me the spirit I normally tried to connect with is the plants. They are some ambassadors of that vegetable kingdom that facilitate communication. My bigger insight is always when I connect with some plant, or a tree, it doesn't matter if it is grass or a flower, that is when I get my insights. Obviously, we are all interconnected. That is the ancestral spirit, the whole one.</p> <p>In Goa, with people from all over the world dancing, we felt we were doing something that was affecting the rest of the world, that we were tapping into some ancient form of magic. As if we were using some technology when we confined our dance into a social thing, unlike court 17<sup>th</sup> c set dancing. Suddenly being on a dancefloor where no one is watching their steps, and everybody is doing whatever comes to their bodies. I felt that we were somehow tapping into an ancient technology that we have forgotten.</p> <p>Sometimes we go to the festivals abroad, to save money in vans with other people, but it is just the fact that you are going with lots of people in a van makes it part of the whole experience. It is not just arriving there and just going to a dancefloor. I'm not sure, it probably has similarities with our ancestors and how they did things, we are very different but maybe have similar prohibitions and we have to do things underground maybe.</p>
Q6 Environment and nature	Location can be really important. I have been in all kinds of locations. It's more difficult in clubs. But then I have been in buildings that are amazing, in relic buildings, but also in open locations. Décor is good too.
Q7 Customs and habits	Clothing is well meh. Unless it is comfortable to dance, the rest is just personal. I believe that if you go to a trance party, people are just wearing jeans and a t-shirt, nothing psychedelic. Nothing specific so dress doesn't really matter. People don't care. I am not bothered how people dress. The connection between people is just as important as location and the location doesn't have to be sacred. We need togetherness. If it is something in situations with smaller groups they put an intention at the beginning, it is really powerful. It is much more than décor, or place, or people wearing amazing clothing, or how they look and no intention. It's that simple for me. It looks nice. It doesn't go anywhere more than that, or how we dress. But if there is an intention from the dancers, this helps.
Q8 Journey and preparations	Yes, about journeys. We would go around with the cars, we would have to stop the engine and listen, and then find it by ear. Or the last party I went to you leave your car on the car park and then you have to walk through the forest to the place in the night, and I had no idea where I was, I was

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Question Prompts	Transcript
	<p>completely surrounded by forest, about 3 in the morning, very little chance of anyone walking, walking blindly in any direction, and then I stopped and tried to hear, all alone, everything was pitched dark, and I heard someone talking. To find a party and find where it is, is always a journey.</p> <p>What I think is important to me I take anything that will make life easy while I am there. A nice shelter, access to food, things like that.</p>
Q10 Healing and benefits	Thinking about healing, even as a word I find it quite difficult as it implies that we are somehow ill. I really believe that when I first started, I was young and very healthy and didn't feel I needed healing.

Interviewee 5

Interviewee 5	
Question Prompts	Transcript
Q2 Dance, trance, and experiences	<p>Not only for dancing. I think you feel free. I think every time I've been to psytrance and when we're coming back, the only thing we talked about is like how light we feel like you throw all your negative energy on the dancefloor.</p>
Q3 Contribution, community, and participation	<p>I have so much respect for this family, despite all the differences as they accept everyone with open arms. It doesn't matter who you are, what you are from, where you are, what your colour, gender, whatever.</p> <p>It's like you are part of something and contributing at the same time. It's a gathered contribution by all. My friends would call me Red Cross because I would always carry a backpack. In my backpack there will be everything from fast food and drinks so whenever people need, they would point to me. My friends say they're more comfortable going anywhere when I'm with them because they know that I am the packer.</p> <p>We need someone to dance as well. There needs to be people who can keep the dancefloor for other people to feel comfortable because if the dance floor is empty, a lot of people don't feel comfortable to go there and dance. If someone is there and dancing, it helps others. I think it's like a small universe of the art itself, people from different cultures, different beliefs, different understanding. Yet in harmony you see.</p> <p>Oh well, I think you know that we should always follow change because if we do not make space for younger people, for other people to experience it, then it gets crowded. I don't know, this is just my way of thinking about it. We should experience everything, and I have experienced it for quite a long time, so I know that is how it feels. I would like to do it sometimes, but I also think the people should make space for other people to experience the dancing as well. We do not want to make it crowded. The music changes over time. Now when I listen to the music, I feel that there are differences from when I began.</p> <p>If that's one thing about that culture, I have met so many people. I have met people where my English and their English is not good, but we communicate when the verbal language is not enough. We communicate through gesture and pointing out things.</p> <p>I think the most important thing about this culture is, I don't know how it is now, but my experience was very connecting. Pure Connection. I love to dance, and I can dance anywhere. I've been normal clubbing and I don't like when a guy comes and touches me for no reason. Psytrance I would feel like I'm really connected. Even though in a psytrance club the music is as loud as mainstream clubbing, you can still talk to people like you where you go further to connect with people and talk about their interests. I think I have seen many people there who have gone there to practice this. I called them my family like they're my sister, like sister from another Mr.</p>

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Question Prompts	Transcript
Q5 Ancestors	I've been to events where people dress up because they are there to connect with the ancestral thing. That is one amazing thing that you experience.
Q6 Environment and nature	I do not have the chance to go to many festivals. Psytrance is an amazing event. I was there with all the hills around. We were climbing there and then sitting and looking at the stars at night. It was amazing out in nature.
Q10 Healing and benefits	It has made me more empathic. It has helped me to understand how to connect to people and spread joy and love. Only the positive things. We need people from every side. You know someone has to be active, but someone has to be introvert to listen to them. Need to balance it. I always wanted to experience something better than me.

Interviewee 6

Interviewee 6	
Question Prompts	Transcript
Q2 Dance, trance and experiences	<p>It felt good dancing. I had a few people that enjoyed me being on that dancefloor. A friend asked me to join him dancing to have a little dance with him as for years he has seen me not dance and when I did finally dance, he said I enjoyed it as you have good energy. He said you should share it more, but the problem is if I do share my energy people get nasty to me. I took myself off into the forest for some reason I got a bit overwhelmed with people's energies. I took myself off into the dark a bit, into the forest, so I wasn't able to be seen but I wasn't too far away so that I could get back. And I did feel myself go into a bit of a trance and I was sat under this tree for about an hour in this trance and when I came back everyone was saying where have you been, and I said I've just been here and they said they were looking for me.</p>
Q3 Contribution, community, and participation	<p>I have helped set up, building the stage, I'm not much of a dancer so I don't contribute that way, but I do contribute to setting up. Keeping an eye on nuisance people. I've helped on the gate, and I get to recognise people's vehicles and oh such and such is here so I can find their name on the list. I can recognise vans before they have even got to us, and they are here because I've been on the gate so many times. When they first come to the gate you first greet them, and I think that is quite important to be able to greet these people as they turn up. Then afterwards you do the chatting but at first it's alright how you doing, telling them where to park up. This year I spent a week sanding down poles, taking the bark off. We made them all from scratch. I mean, I learned a lot building this stage this year and setting up from the start, you know, I mean, a week before we even got on site. The preparation and the work that went into it like painting up the signs or making the signs for the café, checking that all the recycling things are ready. You get a sense of satisfaction from it. Then you look back and think I built that. It's a sense of achievement. We got it all done and when we set it all up it was quite an achievement. Getting everything ready for people turning up. We all pull together to make a makeshift shelter and I think that is what people did in the past. Make a shelter to protect them from the elements and then its game on.</p> <p>Well, when I first went into the psytrance, I sat back and watched, and I realized that even though people have come from up and down the country to get to this place everybody knows each other. Which I was quite blown away by that everybody knew each other, and I felt like an outsider at first. The more I got to know people, the more I didn't feel so much of an outsider.</p>
Q5 Ancestors	<p>I do believe that we are dancing with ancestors, maybe not our own, but with other people's ancestors. At the stone circle burial ground, I felt that the people in the mist were our ancestors but not personal ancestors, but they were there. They were there because a lot of people were dancing on top of that burial mound it, it would have disturbed a lot of spirits. I do feel that there were certain spirits that were trying to interact with people that could see them. But it got to the point where I thought to myself are these people</p>

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Question Prompts	Transcript
	<p>real or not? I personally have seen animals that no longer live in this country like bears, wolves. I've seen loads in the mist, and I know for a fact they are not wild in this country anymore. That is an ancestral thing from the past. I do feel the music can bring this experience on. I do feel that being in the forest listening to the music I do start to see people and see animals. I see other spirits I don't even mention about because people will just laugh at me. I see sprites flying around in the trees looking down at me or giants walking through. These are the things I don't mention to people, but I've seen them. I do believe there are spirits that roam the forest that people don't normally come across.</p>
Q6 Environment and nature	<p>I thought the recent event that we have been to before there were so many different dance type groups there that were merging in with the psytrancers. There was a lot of people being abrupt, barging into you. You are having to stay calm and not engage with those people, but you have to avoid these people, but it was impossible as there were so many there you were crowded in like sardines really. The music was great in the psytrance area but when you are going through to other places there was a sensory overload with so many different soundsystems going off at the same time especially if you were walking through certain parts, you were hearing all sorts of soundsystems.</p> <p>The outside events are better as you've got more space to move and can breathe a lot better. You're not in a hot, crowded sweaty room. When you're outside say in the forest you can breathe in the air from the forest rather than the stale air inside the building. I prefer to be outside than inside. Yes, I feel I can be at one with nature because I can get the chance to be myself rather than just a human being in society. I can be my animal self so if I felt like it, I could go for a run in the forest. I wonder if the music affects the animals like the deer, the badgers, the foxes. Does the music affect them as well as the domestic animals that get brought to the parties and gatherings like the dogs and cats? I know they have been around a long time, but I wonder if the music affects them the same way it affects the humans. Growing up we stopped off at a lot of different forests where I could just be myself and run through the forest, I came across a lots of animals - all sorts of creatures. Some I don't even talk about. I know these creatures do exist in a spiritual form. If you are lucky enough to see them, to me, it is a blessing to see them. Because I know that people say it is just fantasy - no it does exist, but you have to be in that state of mind to be able to see them. If I go into a forest, I know if a certain animal has been past.</p>
Q8 Journey and preparations	<p>The journey to get there that's a mission on its own, and then there is one while you are there. I always take my lighter, torches, you need torches. I always take an extra waterproof covering although I take a tent so I can make a makeshift shelter. Which I have done in the past, I make a shelter so we can have something to eat in case it is raining and we want something to eat.</p>
Q9 Beliefs and spirituality	<p>And we all have one thing in mind and a lot of it is the dance. It does power you up a bit. It's like being an electric car, you just get took to a charging</p>



Interviewee 6	
Question Prompts	Transcript
	<p>place, you just plug yourself in and just recharge from mother nature. You can feel the energy coming up from the ground, from the earth itself. I then feel charged, and I can deal with people then. If it's not in the forest, like last weekend in a building, I have to go outside to recharge myself. Even though you have all those people outside, you can feel their energies, even just to touch a little bit of soil in your hand to charge yourself to deal with all the negativities when people barge into you. I have my personal beliefs. I do believe there are a lot of different paths that people walk. I do believe there are a few beliefs out in the nature like the druids would have been. I do realize that there's people from many different walks of life. So he would have been Muslim, you know. Then you got Christians. You got pagans, and they're all gathered together. Religion goes out of the window a bit.</p>

Interviewee 7

Interviewee 7	
Question Prompts	Transcript
Q2 Dance, trance and experiences	<p>The energy and the experience of the family connection on the dance floor. There are absolutely no barriers, totally free and able to just express yourself on the dancefloor. From that time to now, I've made the greatest friends. And those memories of that tribe and you know that community will always be there. And we're still all there together. We might not be trancing so much now. Obviously, we have different responsibilities in life too. Those parties, we were doing them every weekend were sacred and they're the best memories. I think we really did have it for three to four days every week. Some sort of cosmic collective. It's not just at the party, it's over years of you being in that energy, you absorb it. You absorb that frequency, it puts you there. I'm firm believer of that. We've all been there where we've had some sort of disruption on it. You're there and you're enjoying it and then suddenly you've got your train of thoughts coming through that are negative. That's why I meditated. I grounded myself through meditation. You can centre yourself. I think really for me, it's about an expression of the soul. You know, dancing is an expression of the soul, and I think when you're actively in that moment when you're really feeling high on the music and you're connecting spiritually, you know when you can just dance your transmission of your energy, your connection with someone else in the dancefloor. It's just a smile. It's a moment you just know that you're there. And I think that's really what it's about for me. You know when you've got a dancefloor full of people absolutely feeling everything, you're expressing with the music that connection is: there's no words to describe it. That's the ultimate moment.</p> <p>We love that sort of energy and vibration. You need to obviously have your own boundaries there but on the dancefloor there is telepathy. I mean the communication without talking. You know you can feel people; you can communicate. A vibrational thing and we're very much connected like this. But on the dance floor when it's at that absolute moment where everyone's on that psychedelic energy that then it's definitely telepathy. You can get to that point.</p>
Q3 Contribution, community, and participation	<p>Its community that's what it is about. That's what I love about the scene in the culture.</p>
Q4 Music	<p>I like to support artists and I think about the style of music and how that is going to fit in with my set. Even when I'm listening for that same journey in that track as well, and that makes me buy it. If it's got that, if I can hear that journey to the ascension. It should be pretty full on, really banging. I love greedy baselines, but if there's something really interesting happening at the beginning of the track or it has a lovely breakdown, then that's got my ears.</p>

Interviewee 7	
Question Prompts	Transcript
	<p>And then, of course, the music. I got very interested in how the music was produced because I couldn't understand how do they get those sounds? How did they get the kick and bass sounding so fat on a soundsystem? I got more engrossed on the dance floor listening to the music and trancing to the music to start thinking how did they create it? Not only was I part of the culture and part of the scene and the family, I wanted to start spinning the decks as well and start making this music. I've been part of the scene for nearly twenty years. When I first discovered psytrance, I was absolutely enthralled by this music. I'd never heard it before. I just felt like I'd found something that I was ultimately looking for. Something I've never heard before. It's totally underground. It is this feeling about the music. Psytrance originates from Goa. It's very shamanic. You know the beats, the rhythm is very shamanic, and the frequencies are created to really draw you into the music. I love all music genres. I fully respect and enjoy good quality music from other genres as well. But psytrance just has something for me a little bit more, just a little bit more special in the production that just really can capture you on the level of frequency.</p>
Q7 Customs and habits	<p>I guess the rituals in a sense is the party. As you obviously go to more parties, you gain more experience, so you know what to do, what to be prepared for and what not to do. I don't take a handbag. Make sure you've got tissues and some hand wipes, some gum, whatever it is. And of course, for Djing, your CDs and your headphones.</p>
Q8 Journey and preparations	<p>In a set for me it's about light and shade. It's about having dynamics. It's about bringing it up but also bringing it down. Do you want to have everyone just quickly full on dancing all the way throughout the set without having time to just stand back for a minute and absorb different frequencies and sounds. You know, just taking the different sort of tangent. And then bringing it back to full on. You know I love that. I just get a real great joy bringing something very creative to the dancefloor like that and I feel that energy back from the dancefloor. I think I found a blend best. It's really important to plan the playlist, especially if someone has just done a really banging setting and you're coming on after. What are you going to do about that? What am I gonna do with the crowd now? Am I going to bring it down a little bit, bring it up again? Am I gonna go full on. Most times I want to bring it down a bit and bring it up again because it's just nice introducing a new journey. I always think about that, and you can see it. Maybe you spin an track where the crowd maybe not be giving as much as they did on the other track. You know which ones they felt and which ones they don't feel. I think it's really about that. But at the beginning, I used to have a set list when I started Djing. I needed to be meticulous with this, but then you let go of that and realize it is about the energy on the dancefloor. 100%. Being on the other side now, obviously being on the dancefloor as well, but when you're mixing and DJing music it is really a connection of energy. It's the energy you are transmitting to that dancefloor. If you've got no one on the dance floor that doesn't happen, that experience isn't magical.</p>

Interviewee 7	
Question Prompts	Transcript
Q9 Beliefs and spirituality	I'm very holistic. I'm into holistic remedies, acupuncture and I've built up a natural immunity that's just me personally, from a health perspective. When I was at Stonehenge many years ago, it was just a huge congregation. You had pagans, Buddhists, you had trancers in there. There was no electronic music but there were a lot of drumming and people were singing and chanting. I sang with the Buddhist monks. I somehow managed to congregate with them. It's very spiritual and it was really magical. We're all just really watching the sunset just really high on that experience. It was beautiful.
Q10 Healing and benefits	I'm very much into healing and a lot of my friends on the psyscene do as well. I love healings, anything linked to healing.

Interviewee 8

Interviewee 8	
Question Prompts	Transcript
Q1 Description and culture	I used to be so cool going out all night but now I like my sleep. I get tired now. It's funny. I was so sober at that gig. It was such a different perspective. It is fun to let go. But conversations can be boring if you are straight. It gets a bit heavy at times. That's been normal for a while.
Q10 Healing and benefits	We got some mushrooms from my friends as a gift. And I swear to God that switched me back on and gave me back my life. I just thought my whole existence was completely pointless. So for me mushrooms and the experience with psychedelics changed my life. I had my love and zest for life back. It was incredible. I get goosebumps talking about it now because it changed my life. It really woke me up and everything that died within me, I think it came back and I've taken many years to become me as well, been able to have done that, and now we've got an experience that is a complete life changer to me because. It has made me who I am today.
Q3 Contribution, community, and participation	Yeah, I always feel that posting my positive shit is a good thing. Another thing that this scene has given me is so much more compassion and understanding as well as patience. I am now understanding so much more that's bigger than myself than I did I when I started. We've had such incredible times. All the experiences I've had. It was hard work. A lot of favours, a lot of faith from the people running it, weeks of work trying to put on parties, so we don't get bothered by the police. Plenty of events, sometimes horrible places, but you get the fire going. I think there always will be persecution by authorities with that scene unfortunately, and it doesn't matter how picky you are and how conscious you are about the environment when you put on the parties. We never left a piece of garbage, we had bin bags everywhere and respect all round but its just the bad press you get from people. It's about having a party to give people the freedom to dance. There are some good people around. Good folk. I know when I realised it was good people at the table. Then the energy and it all kicked in. And the conversation just kicked in and there's not many people when you can get that. All the people that I've met along the way including my partner. We have been to so many events together. It was lovely to have met someone who was just like me. My partner is my best friend. Our energy is just so alike, an incredible energy that make you stronger. We laughed so much.
Q4 Music	It's got to make people feel good because you are in such control of how people are feeling. It's really important to be aware about how they trip to the music. It should reflect that and give them a really good experience, so I don't like to play anything twisted or grundleworldy because it's too much. I like to keep it nice and bubbly. If it's good music, then music is good. I prefer a little less hectic stuff, but it is always good sounds that makes you feel good. It's important. It's funny though because it has taken such a diverse turn. You've got all

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Question Prompts	Transcript
	these different like genres coming up not just psytrance anymore. You've got night-time, you've got forest. I like a bit of forest, but it needs to be magical and have that fairy element to it with the little creatures and cute sounds, but they take it into the dark underworld where there are orcs.
Q5 Ancestors	It's such a tribal feeling. I connect with the ancestral connection that there is something within me. Loving music just invokes me, and I feel like I'm never alone. In that moment. I feel like I'm surrounded by this energy that is so magical, you know. When people's experiences become valuable to helping others and educate each other. It's worth sharing. That's it for me that tribal feeling where I can connect. I feel like I'm part of that energy and its magical. You can't touch it, but you feel it. It was amazing. It was just so silly and to have that conversation just laughed and silly words.

Interviewee 9

Interviewee 9	
Question Prompts	Transcript
Q2 Dance, trance and experiences	<p>As a culture we are not embodied enough, where we are not in a physical sense of being, so there is a cultural aspect about this, that getting into our sense of self is important. For example, for trauma patients who experience disassociation based on traumatic events that have caused them to lose this connection with their body it is really important. It is so important to be in the body and we are not in our bodies enough. To dance is really important. Even going beyond psychedelics, is the importance of gathering in community, being out of your head, not necessarily by drugs, by becoming one with the community, the music and everything that is beyond. Or with the land and more that is beyond this conditional framework and the healing that comes from that which extends way beyond the drugs themselves. But I think that the community energy is partly, well not partly, it is what alchemises the music from an audible experience to make something into a force to make you want to move. It is everyone's accumulated energy together which creates that which runs through us all. For me, I feel like I'm just tapping into the energy of everyone else. I have this new sense of energy so that I can dance for so long. And it's like the physical restraints are surpassed and I am feeding off the vibrations of everyone else. Sometimes it almost feels like I am doing qigong and that I am playing with the energy of the music through my body as through an instrument. Sometimes I play little energy ball games, do something with the energy, throw it to someone else, and someone else catches it and do their own thing with it.</p> <p>It is something that I do relate to although I am not specifically just on the path of tantric yoga. But there is this system of having different layers of bodies like sheaths that are on the surface; you have your physical body, you have your endomysia and beneath that is your breath body and you have these deeper levels of self. And right at the centre, like the essence, the pure white light of consciousness that existed before time. These experiences when you are dancing in community with people definitely awaken these energetic parts of the self, that go beneath the physicality and beneath the mental conditioning. This pure consciousness, if it is God, then it brings you closer to God. In yoga in the inner being (the atman) and the outer being (the brahman): it is the same thing - the recognition of divine pure white light consciousness in us. It is the same consciousness that is in everything and pervades everything. It is all just different languages of the same thing. When I am at gatherings there's definitely lots of feelings of love and compassion that emerge from within me by being surrounded by a place where that love seems to be more prevalent than other dancefloors which I have been in in the past. It seems to be a love that is more conscious where for example in other music styles like DnB, it seems to be rowdier. It is a love from deep within. It might be just my own personal bias because I have lots of friends in the psytrance community.</p>

Interviewee 9	
Question Prompts	Transcript
Q3 Participation, contribution, and community	There is a lack of peer support and community at some types of events, where there is more of a hedonistic drug use, without support to secure the safety of one another. When people are in places where they are going into ASC, I think the community is really important especially the community of support to help look after one another. This is because sometimes in those spaces things come up and you are not in a therapeutic container, so I think if there is no support and community there, there needs to be more of it. I think it is important to have spaces for people to be warm if it is going to be cold. At some events, the only space to chill out and accumulate with people or to get warm is outside and cold. It is important to have designated safe spaces. Having the lighting and the immersive experience is a wonderful thing but it can take away from the deeper part of the experience, which is just to be human, be one with the music and with each other. But where the setting is that immersive, then you need to have a place where people can be at one with their own thoughts and be able to go back to. This is because even if you are not taking drugs, just to be involved in the heavy dancing with other people in an immersive place is an altered state in itself. It is important for people to have safe spaces where people can just clear their head where there is not a lot of stimuli going on. And if it is cold outside there should a designated area.
Q4 Music	I think with psytrance it is interesting because there never seems to be a start and an end. It is just a continuation of sound going into one. It's quite good to tune in and tune out and you can do this at your own free will because you don't have to wait for the start or wait for the drop. So, you can move in and move out of and it's quite nice to move into a full trance. And then for me I quite like working on the different beats like dunga dugga dung and you can take each single beat and do really fast movements or you can go a bit slower. I like playing with the different intervals within the beats. I feel within the music I can definitely go into my own journey. I really enjoy closing my eyes and allowing the energetics of the music to move through me instead of consciously moving my body with my mind.
Q5 Ancestors	I think the act of dancing itself takes me out of my 9-5 headspace and almost reminds me of what it is to be a human: that is to be embodied and to move and express myself creatively. I can imagine that our ancestors would have done the same. I can imagine music existed for as long as time has existed and made with whatever it was they used to create it whether it was just banging on sticks or singing songs. Maybe in hunter gatherer evolutionary lineage you just want to check in with your pack or your tribe. Then you all have the support of each other to be safe in case you go to a new area and are actually amongst the rival tribe with all the predators.
Q6 Environment and nature	The experience depends on the type of psytrance gathering. At indoors gatherings, it does feel less like I am going back into a deeper connection to my ancestors rather than in a forest and having a psytrance party there. I think that it reiterates the importance of the land



Interviewee 9	
Question Prompts	Transcript
	<p>you are in. It feels a lot deeper being amongst trees and natural landscape rather than being inside a club. I do feel like there is a primal part of me in the conditioned part of my brain where I'm worrying about what kind of lunch I'm having tomorrow to take to work with me. That's kind of because you are in community, and you are embodied in a group of people, so you forget about rational conditions in the nine to five life. In a way I do feel I am going into a more primal part of myself. My preference is to be out in a natural setting because it always has more of that healing effect.</p>
Q8 Journey and preparations	<p>I like to wear clothes to look nice. I don't think that's because I want to impress anyone there. But I do it for myself; I never go with the intention to impress anyone. It is for myself, it is a special occasion, and, in that sense, I want to dress myself specially. So, it's like doing my hair and makeup beforehand and making a good effort. I think sometimes at psytrance gatherings, it is a really immersive experience. There is a real beauty in the fact that people make such an effort with their costumes because everyone wants to contribute to making this an experience for everyone else that is a really amazing thing to bear witness to. And there's always this normally when you go to an event, you go with other people, and you have that little bit of social time in your little bubble before you go then you will go into this wider people world. There is a pre-connection that you have with your close group around you. Checking in with the immediate community you will be spending the evening with. I think it's also nice when I am going to big events, it is good to really chill out and be on my own and do some grounding things like a shower or some yoga in my room and clear my mind before I go into a place where there is a lot of stimuli going on.</p>

Interviewee 10

Interviewee 10	
Question Prompts	Transcript
Q3 Contribution, community, and participation	<p>People especially women would come up to us saying we love your nights because we feel safe. People come to dance and feel the experience.</p>
Q4 Music	<p>I always was a big believer before I would play, I would walk round the audience and take in the feeling and the vibe of the audience, feel the energy, and then go on and play and try to transfer that energy back out to them again. I always try to get there at the start and stay till the end. It's old school. You don't just turn up and do your thing and go. Sometimes I don't have choice, but I would normally turn up Fri morning and stay till Tues afternoon. You don't have to dance, you can sit there and be social and chatting. Having a cup of tea. It was wonderful seeing everyone dancing. To see the tent completely full and it warmed our hearts so much. I brought a friend who had never been to a psytrance party before.</p> <p>When I was DJing it was about creating a whole experience. So, whereas when you go to parties now it's just bang bang bang all night. We never did it like that ever. You had the start music, main music, nighttime music, morning music So you went through a whole complete journey through the evening. So, in the morning we would play uplifting psytrance. I go to parties now its 148-149 bang, bang bang. You played music with the sun in it. A good DJ will take you there, then take you off there, and then come back here, then take you here to create a whole story. When we write tracks, we try to create a story.</p> <p>There were mad directions. One said go off this road and take the second turn. If you take the third turning you will be ten miles away from the party. Well, there were three turnings and if the police take the wrong turning, they would be 20 miles away. And they would be driving around in circles trying to find it. Then you would walk down a path to the dancefloor, and the water at the side would be running 10 foot from the dancefloor. So, you would be dancing in the trees on the side of the water. When the sun came up it was beautiful. I was used to getting to play at 6 in the morning. It's not my favourite time to play. I like to play as the sun is coming up. You are creating something, you are taking them off somewhere. You are creating something from someone else's music.</p>

Interviewee 11

Interviewee 11	
Question Prompts	Transcript
Q1 Description and culture	<p>I found people were extremely narcissistic especially going down these holes of using a lot of drugs and getting into this existential dread and thinking that there are these enigmas especially performers. Lots of performers doing burlesque and dance. Very narcissistic and being like I'm the show. I am the thing that everybody is looking at and I saw a lot of that, and I got really turned off. Although a friend of mine threw a festival recently. He did psytrance on the Sunday and there were like a few people who really enjoyed it. I was happy but people just didn't understand, and they were like really fighting the experience. They said it was a lot on the body and I said if you don't move with it and get into a trance like then it's going to just be uncomfortable. I had to explain that because they were bringing in folks who didn't understand psytrance. You know to look at how there's this language that comes through with participants.</p>
Q2 Dance, trance and experiences	<p>But there is something so fun about dancing and about catching eyes with someone you haven't met before and having this same energy, like a wave. Then having this fun, silly time, dancing together or even contact dancing. It is more the experience of what happens on the dancefloor and what happens internally for me. This freedom of playfulness. Playfulness is a big component. There's something that happens with dancing in particular, especially in these spaces where there is this freedom to express yourself in whatever way suits you. When I'm dancing at these festivals with this freedom and seeing people who are doing ecstatic dance. Ecstatic dance might be separate, but people might go to both. As a result, you'll find, on the dancefloor, people being very ecstatic with their dance.</p>
Q3 Contribution, community, and participation	<p>There are so many things that are contributing, even the conversations on the sidelines that are happening and that are educational for sure. Even the people who are just standing there and not moving that are just receiving the music. You look at the person and seeing what they are experiencing and that adds to your experience too. I don't really go to psytrance festivals much anymore. It was a little occasional anyway. And I do go through phases and when I enjoy partying in general. I moved about a year ago and I don't have a very strong psytrance community. I basically stopped going to a lot of these things. I moved and I got thrown into the hippie culture again. But then I felt I'm tired of these hippies. I can't do this anymore. And then I actually found that these hippies were a little different than others, and there are all these different subcultures of hippiness. It's on a spectrum and I found the people who I do identify with. But I still see the narcissism which is still definitely prevalent. You know people still going down benders. I just like to tap, dip my toe in once every quarter. I really go more for fun to let loose every now and then. It's fun to see all my family and my friends.</p>

Interviewee 11	
Question Prompts	Transcript
Q4 Music	It gives us an opportunity to be able feedback into our inner child. Like hopping around and dancing and changing your ways. It doesn't need to make sense what you're doing. Psytrance is such a strange music, it's not going to make sense. There's no way it could make sense.
Q5 Ancestors	I think the pounding you know of our feet into the ground is an ancestral connection. When you replicate what your ancestors had done, your body knows what's happening. Everybody knows this is not a new movement. And we can even attribute it to intuition. Moving and stomping the body to this similar repetitive beat is absolutely in our balance. It doesn't need to be anything evident. Our bodies know this, and it's written in our DNA. It's written in our history and our genes. That this is how we move, this is how we connected before this, this is how we connected with each other, this is how we connected with altered states of being, this is how we connected with non-human life forms.
Q6 Environment and nature	A lot of people talking about ritual and ceremony connecting with the earth around us. It definitely opened up a new door for me.
Q7 Customs and habits	<p>The encouragement to feel as sexy as you want to, when traditionally out in the regular world I wouldn't have dressed in the way that I dressed at a festival. I have this freedom to dress sexy. And no one's gonna say anything like she's asking for it. There are parasites of the festival culture as well that will prey on vulnerable women and that's important to know. There is a lot more respect for each other and respect and honour for the naked body. The naked body in festival culture is a little less sexualized than it is in modern day society and much more OK. This is our natural body and all these clothes we put on top of it are just extra. As a result, being free to adorn myself in costume and clothes that if I were in the regular world I wouldn't do. Though more and more I find myself wearing whatever I want in the regular world. If I want to dress like a boy at a festival or on the street, then I will. Being able to dress in certain ways allows me to really tap into this sensuality in my body.</p> <p>Often, I bring a long, big scarf so that it could drape it around me. It's good for keeping warm, but also during the day when it's hot if you get it wet, it cools you down. That's a super like versatile item. I really enjoy having lots of jewellery and face jewels, fun hats. A proper pair of boots. Fur coats, a lot of fur coats I used in my community here and Colorado. Costumes.</p> <p>Around the campsite: food, cooking stove. Some people take pre-made food which is really helpful. Snacks and coconut water. I feel like everybody drinks coconut water to get those electrolytes.</p> <p>A utility belt of some sort is usually one of the key items that's brought so that you can keep all your items in there and whatever things you need such as a torch or lighter. Drugs or maybe money to purchase something.</p>

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Question Prompts	Transcript
	<p>I'm not one of those people with a tent maybe a hammock. I know that in Ozora in the children's area there are a series of hammocks where everyone puts their hammocks literally stacks of like 3 hammocks on top of each other. It's really funny. All kinds of things like some people get super extra, it depends where you are, but making living rooms and fun areas around their campsite. Sacraments would be a good friend. You find the guy in the festival who brought nothing but the clothes on his back, I bet you he brought substances to do. You know it's the wrong thing. If somebody doesn't bring anything at all, they're still bringing their sacraments. Whatever substances that they're using, we could call them sacraments, to me I see all drugs as sacraments. It would be substances brought in order to attain altered states of consciousness.</p>
Q8 Journey and preparations	<p>I mean dancing together is certainly a ritual, and you connect it to dancing around the fire when you get into a trance. It's the same thing especially dancing all night until the sun comes up. I have this beautiful memory from an interview, an excerpt from an interview that I took about this woman talking about how you'll start tonight, you know at the mainstage, and you see a lot of people there. Then throughout the night the trance gets darker and darker and darker and people start leaving. But then while the sun starts coming up, the trance kind of changes and you see certain people that had been there the whole time and we went through this whole thing together. So that's definitely a ritual or ceremony. I also saw a lot of people doing gong baths, sound baths in general with the balls or yoga, meditation. I've never been the one to stay all night mainly because I don't love psytrance the most. I could do psytrance for an hour or two. I'm much more interested in something with melody and live music. I like outside psytrance festivals and typically you'll find me at the chill out stage that has psybient styles of music.</p> <p>I did my undergraduate thesis on the ritual structure of psytrance. It was so interesting. I studied Victor Turner's ritual structure about separation from their regular day-to-day life and then a space of liminality where it's chaos and we're neither here nor there. Then re-integration and what I found is that people don't end up getting these transformative experiences if they don't take the time to re-integrate them. And they stay in the festival circuit then people stay in this like hyper-liminal space.</p>
Q9 Beliefs and spirituality	<p>I have this strange relationship with religion, but definitely being able to explore alternative approaches and understandings of religion. I know spirituality started when I was taking psychedelics. I was 18 years old going to these festivals. Yes, I have spiritual kind of practices as a result of being part of psychculture. To me going to psytrance festivals when I was 18 was a reconnecting with my spiritual upbringing, I was raised religious Jewish and I had rebelled against it. I didn't see a place for my understanding of God, you know growing up. Being part of festival culture, people started talking about how God is everything around us. I guess this was just my own</p>

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Question Prompts	Transcript
	<p>experience, but being at a psytrance festival, being on psychedelics gave me the opportunity to really be in this free space and explore psychedelics without having to worry about what tomorrow will bring and really just be in the here and the now, which allowed me to really re-connect with my version of God. I understand God in a different way and feel OK. I could still be spiritual and there were people in my research talking about being spiritual but not religious. That was a thing that definitely came upon me. At the time when I was exploring psytrance festivals. I would consider myself a religious person mainly because OK, I'm religious. I'm not subscribing to an institutional religion, but like I do really enjoy my connection with my heritage and with the religion that I was raised with, and with spirituality and many of practices that come through it, such as blessing my food and being thankful for all the food that's on my plate and the moments that are in front of me. And these are not really practices that an institutionalized religion would say, is religion. I think when we say is it religious, it means do you go to church or a mosque and it's not really about that. But even in my community where I started getting into this. I just stopped associating with the people that were going. I found that there was spiritual bypassing that was happening. People talking about being spiritual and then not really doing any of the work that is needed in order to practice what you're preaching. There is a lot of preaching about being spiritual.</p>
Q10 Healing and benefits	<p>But then I really do want to go back to my regular life. What I've done is I have re-integrated a lot of the lessons that I've learned from festival culture into my daily experience. So, the difference between the two is not crazily stuck.</p>

### Interviewee 12

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Question Prompts	Transcript
Q3 Participation, contribution, and community	<p>Being able to go to some of the psychedelic events and the trance events that were a bit more psychedelic and really feeling that belonging, because the music was just so amazing, and everyone is dancing right to the end and that it was just lovely. I haven't really been out recently to any big nights properly. I went to a couple over Christmas and then of course got Covid after being in the house for the best part of two years. But I really did feel going back to my first big psytrance squat party in two years over Christmas. What I thought was some sort of tribal. It was so good to be back. But then there were loads of friends there that I hadn't seen since before the pandemic as well which was a big part of it. I am really excited about going out to some other parties soon. As a club promoter you've got a duty of care to people, but I actually feel that even more strongly with psytrance because you know you're creating all this</p>

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Question Prompts	Transcript
	<p>lovely trippy decor and creating a safe space for people to do this really tribal, trippy stuff. What really converted me is because people are just so lovely and so respectful, and the decor is just absolutely amazing. There was quite an epiphany for me, because I've always been supporting my friends and supporting other DJ's and booking them. And you know, part of the reason we put on events was to really prop up the same people. You know, there's that wonderful psychedelic art image by Venosa. I don't know if you know it, but it's everyone layered on top of each other. It was the vision of what we were trying to achieve supporting our mates and giving them a platform. You've always got to remember putting on an event that's why most people, who are the ones paying, are there to have a good time. There's something I've always just being so conscious of that. A friend of mine actually did a party in a field. It was lovely. We came away so inspired by the psytrance. It made me be wanting to do events again, really get people coming back together and getting that connection to help heal people after the pandemic. And then of course, after a week, a week back at work, both of us were so knackered, so instead we can go into other people's events and do this.</p>
Q8 Journey and preparations	I can't even remember what mine was now. Torch maybe. I can't remember.
Q6 Environment and nature	That's the thing with the multi-rooms. It has to be done so carefully because, otherwise it just splits up the crowd and it splits up the vibe. It's difficult to do it well.
Q8 Journey and preparations	To learn to dance again. And that's going to inspire me to start putting my set together because I really struggle with that lack of inspiration from the dancefloor. I'm one of these people who gets really inspired from a night on the dancefloor. So not having that has made it quite hard to actually mix by myself in my lounge with my cats, it's not quite the same. I think the one hour sets and then you know you don't get that chance, you don't get that journey, you don't get any other good stuff but it's just Bang Bang, Bosh, Bang Bang, Bosh. So, discovering the psytrance scene and getting really excited and going on a journey through it and doing lots of different things and then sometimes coming out the other side. So I wonder how my responses would differ after actually going out to three really good parties because I've only been to a couple in the last two years. It is still there and it still is travelling all over the country to see our friends and to see the psytrance community. So the vibe definitely still there.

Q1 – Description and Culture

How would you describe psychedelic trance culture? (is there a unique British psychedelic trance culture?)

Survey Participant	Response
1.	No response
2.	Having only attended one European festival, I'm not totally sure of the difference but I feel the British scene is more down-to-earth and inclusive of all ages not just the young and beautiful.
3.	Seems to be an all-inclusive experience where anyone, no matter how they look or identify is included and can take part without judgement. There is a family feeling about it which is not seen or experienced in other areas of society. Drugs are not frowned upon, and people look out for each other, even strangers.
4.	Exciting. Friendly. It's something that brings people together. It can be the one thing people who like this scene have in common if nothing else at all and provides a playground to meet and greet and network with people who are probably like-minded or at least as I say you have music in common. Unique British??? No, although I've not done any psygatherings abroad, I've met some people from other countries, and seen enough videos online, heard and read enough stories. seen enough pictures to know, or at least believe, it's a worldwide universal thing. The style of psytrance may be a bit different here and there but the attitude, thoughts, and reasoning are the same. The people are all very similar as a crowd but obviously very different as individual people sometimes :)
5.	It is a counterculture. Defined by a driving four beat that sends you into a hypnotic state of psychedelia. Very friendly and inclusive from my experience.
6.	Yeah. The origin of trance is here. Now everywhere there are happenings.
7.	No response
8.	I am not British, and I did not experience the original roots. I only got to 'taste' the British psychedelic trance culture about 6 years ago. First by attending a few indoor night events in London. Some DJs did not play anything special, but some sets were incredible. I love techno as well and so I can compare the crowd and the atmosphere between the two. At the psytrance events, it was always very welcoming and non-judging. At the techno there could be a hint of techno snobbery sometimes. However, my 'breakthrough' was the first time I experienced something that I can confidently say was a unique British psy trance culture. Never seen anything like this. And each year was the same authenticity, just pure raw uniqueness.
9.	It is more about people fulfilling the desire to dance all night in a beautiful place than the music. The desire to dance all night comes from the realisation that this is an ancient practice that is necessary for our wellbeing.
10.	No response
11.	There is, as with most global cultures, it's hierarchical, you have a global culture which gets more specific to each culture/area. Normally this can be seen by the contrast of



	small local events and large scale globally frequented festivals. It's a bit hard to isolate the differences that aren't generally applicable to all cultures - the style of dress, the specifics of the sub-genre preference, the seasonality, etc.
12.	No response
13.	No response
14.	Neo tribal spiritual gathering.
15.	I feel that it is one of freedom and anonymity. It's about letting go and not about 'look at me'. With or without chemicals, the repetitive nature of the music, those 16ths on the hi hat for instance, and the aforementioned freedom from observation, induces an ecstatic state. As for the uniqueness of the British trance culture, I wouldn't say that it exists beyond the national differences between nationalities. There was one difference back in the 90s though, the UK scene was more tolerant of experimentation where the European scene conformed to a more stereotypical psytrance 'sound'. So that what you played had to fit into what was accepted as the psytrance style. In the UK this wasn't the case as it was about the feeling of the music rather than the style.
16.	No response
17.	Friendly, enthusiastic, energetic; not competitive, not drunken, or overtly sexual. From what I have observed and from the huge number of foreign people I have met, I don't think this is unique to the British psychedelic trance culture.
18.	No response
19.	I love the British eccentricity in amongst it :)
20.	No response
21.	No response
22.	Wholesome, inviting, tribal, unique.
23.	No response
24.	No response
25.	It has always been a vibrant scene for me. A place where people take time to talk to each other. There is less judgement than everyday life. It feels like a place where I can express my spangly, creative self. Personally, I have found these things at psytrance wherever they are in the world. The people always seem the same. More friendly, less judgemental. There is a lot of freedom for creative expression. It's a place to go to escape the misery and drudgery of everyday life.
26.	No response
27.	No response
28.	No response
29.	No response

Q2 – Dance, and trance

Could you describe what you experience at a psytrance gathering and how they make you feel? What do you experience when you dance? Do you trance (change in consciousness, altered state, transformation, would you say it is: spiritual, sacred, everyday)? What do you experience when you dance? Do you enter a trance?

Survey Participant	Response
1.	Happiness, freedom, home, love...
2.	Psytrance gatherings make me feel happy! For the duration of the event, all worries disappear, and you just enter a happy state. When the music is right, and I am really into it without distraction, then I can easily enter a trance state. And yes, at that point it is very spiritual. If it is a style I don't like, this does not happen. Instead, it just gets annoying to even try.
3.	Oneness with everything and everyone. A connection with the universe and all things. Joy, laughter, fun. Care and consideration for others.
4.	My indigenous culture is very linked to music and dance in connection with the earth and spirits. I love to dance for healing. I find the psytrance scene very welcoming.
5.	My experience with trance was amazing and I think it has helped me to be more empathetic as well as has helped me to connect to myself and hear my calls. I love to dance but clubbing made me feel like a product as men would approach with some intention. With trance, I felt free to dance like nobody watching.
6.	It really depends on which event. Some are very close knit and homely. I think that has a lot to do with the ratio of familiarity to spontaneity/novelty, but the festival circuit is littered with the same faces which I guess is the glue that holds it all together.
7.	If it is a certain gatherings, I feel I am in heaven. I feel I found my home and my tribe. I feel like I found my mothership that feeds me. When we dance together, it is almost like we are plugging into the Source. I don't feel my body, I rise above my mind, and I reach a space where we are all one. I feel immense love.
8.	I used to go to a lot of dances in various settings. I have been to trance and techno dances in various places, like underground bunkers, barns, on a farm, under railways and on a beach. I always went with friends, people I knew well who I knew I would be safe with. When there I spent a great deal of time dancing. This was so important to me. As was the connecting to friends, lots of love and laughter, but lots and lots of dancing. It was without a doubt spiritual for me. I felt utterly connected to my body, to the music, to the DJ. I knew I had slipped into a space that was utterly aligned. The beat, the tempo, the rich layering of the music and us as a group. It was always very special. Yes, I would say that it induced a trance state of being in another consciousness. Since I haven't been in this state for a long time other than through meditation, I can definitely say that those first experiences were akin to another consciousness. But because they were temporary and often quite self-indulgent, I can't say that they were shamanic, or deliberately in order to gain deeper wisdom, knowledge or healing. So, in a way, yes it was trance, but not in a shamanic way. I always felt euphoric for at least part of the dancing time. Partly this was the drugs, and then the skill of the DJ. The setting, friends, music, drugs, all combined to give a powerful safe container for a tranced state.

9.	I really love music and since I have discovered psytrance I only go dancing to psytrance music. Every time I go, it is a different experience, it depends who I go with, mostly, if I am with people who are really into it I tend to just dance till I drop. I like to have people I know around me although I can just say hi to everyone. When I really connect with the music, I feel really happy, really connected to the music and everything around me, I can say that this music has helped me to heal some deep traumas and self-doubts, etc. It took me even a longtime to relax in parties when I first attended because of my traumas, but I feel more and more relaxed.
10.	I often achieve entering a meditative state. Usually try to socialise but listening to the music is my main aim at gatherings.
11.	I feel liberated with a great sense of freedom and oneness with other psytrancers. I feel as if I am part of a very happy, empathetic, and honest family. In summary, I feel fantastic when I am amongst my fellow psytrancers.
12.	I can relax. I can express myself creatively and enjoy other people's expressions too. There's something really deep about the way psytrance music makes me feel. It takes me to another place. A place where I feel better, much more at home.
13.	Freedom and relief.
14.	Free. Part of a whole. Happy. Safe. Worry free. In tune with my body and with others.
15.	First off there is the landing phase when you first arrive on the scene. There are energetic adjustments to allow to filter through, this can come up as an excited or anxious feeling for me. Depends also if you are part of the scene regularly or not, depends on how easy the adjustment is. Also helps to dance through this phase. Once anchored in, the fun begins. The music ripples through every cell in my body, I allow it to move how it wants to, feeling completely free. With this feeling comes the connection to spirit. I hear spirit talking through the music and directly in my mind, it has helped me with internal healings, and understandings. Sometimes I hear others' thoughts, the gateways are open, and I can feel others' energy which leads me to a place of safety, sometimes the energy can feel icky when others are releasing or not on a similar vibration. Often, I feel like I connect to my ancient self and naturally start playing with energy balls. Absolute change in consciousness, to an altered state of mind. I also find I can't talk very well but communication moves more into the mind, so I often turn into a mute. It's certainly a spiritual practice for me. I try to dance every day in the kitchen but event wise, I've taken to celebrating the seasons so go to them four times a year.
16.	Energetic ... Happy ... Accepted ... For me it's also a time where I can shed negative energy and fill up with positive vibes ... When I'm hyping and dancing about... I often feel the tensions in me melting as the music smashes right through me. Love the people I meet at the gatherings: old faces and new. Nice to be in a fairly safe social setting (there can be dickheads anywhere even a psygathering lol).
17.	Definitely an altered state. A happiness, a safety net. A belonging.
18.	All experience at psytrance gathering is like a family and given a new experience and new life
19.	A sense of being at a tribal gathering with a feeling of belonging not felt outside of this. Excitement to hear the music and connect with everyone.

20.	A feeling of acceptance and care. Physically I feel a euphoria. The music resonates within and feels quite tribal and joined up as everyone is moving to the same rhythms and frequencies in the same way.
21.	It's an essential part of my life. It's where I get the most sense of belonging to a community. Radical inclusiveness is great. The smaller the event, the more we feel like we have a parallel society.
22.	It will depend on the nature of the gathering and my role at it. When I am running the door of a big club event in London, I have to keep my operational head on to ensure we get people into the venue as quickly as possible while still being smiley/friendly to welcome people to the event. I believe that is really important as a bad experience on the door can ruin someone's night. When I am DJing I usually feel quite nervous and edgy until I've finished my set, as I am naturally quite a shy person so being the centre of attention does not come naturally to me. But playing to a group of like-minded friends at a gathering can be the best feeling in the world when things go well! As a dancer, I love feeling connected with my friends/other party goers on the dancefloor. You can't beat that feeling when a DJ drops the bass, and the dancefloor goes nuts!
23.	I have fallen in love with Psy music and culture when I was 16. The music made me fly. The sound is the most deep, deeper than any other electronic music style ever. Psychedelic art and handmade have given me a feeling of aesthetic orgasm.
24.	It depends on the people around me.
25.	I felt for the first time that there were lots of other people like me. I did not have a community before where I could play this music or be open about using drugs. It might sound silly but being able to use drugs in front of people helped me deal with shame I had about smoking weed before, and the fear that usually goes with smoking in public or near family. I feel incredibly safe, even if one person is in trouble, because I feel like the vast majority are always looking out for each other. I have made many friends at gatherings. The people there are somehow the most beautiful I have ever seen. No other music scene has a philosophy, crowd and sound which resonates with me more. I feel incredibly grateful that I am part of this.
26.	I feel a togetherness and unity with the people around me, a letting loose of all my bad energy and negativity in my life. I feel a oneness with nature (when outside) and a oneness with the energy we all contribute to and create.
27.	I recently attended my first gathering since the start of the pandemic and after dancing to psytrance with my friends for a few hours, came home feeling completely regenerated and inspired.
28.	I have always loved dancing, and I love to get in flow. I seriously throw shapes man, no holding back, often I'm first and the last one dancing. When sober, I get into a meditative state, I feel absorbed into the music. When I take psychedelics, I get more interesting things happening, including visions, perceiving the immediate future, telepathy, etc. The dancing rhythm helps focus me on a rhythm to keep concentration. I have the uncanny ability to predict the future when I'm dancing. For example, during a breakdown, my body intuitively takes different poses and stretches which then at the exact right moment flow into dance when the beat comes back, and the momentum of the stretch gives me a unique dance move which I had not planned but fits the music perfectly. A few times I could say this is because the music is easily predictable and I am a musician, but it happens so many times now that I believe I am in a trance state where my concentration

	allows me to surrender to the flow of the moment and that I am guided by intuition 'external' from 'myself' in these moments. Sometimes I feel forces moving me which can't be there, once I did a breakdance which I have no idea how to do. I'm not surprised by any of this now; it's so common for me I'm surprised when it doesn't happen. Trance music allows for dances which a lot of other music is not so apt for, namely fast past ecstasy. By doing this dancing you are embodying the emotion of ecstasy, pure uninhibited joy, and celebration.
29.	Many different feelings, mostly good occasionally difficult. When I truly let loose and dance, I have a deep connection with the music/set that is coming out of the speakers, it puts me in a trance like state where all that matters is the dance is the trance.

Q3 – Contribution, community, and participation

What does participation mean to you? Does participation have any ritual, ancient, spiritual or religious aspects for you? What do you contribute to the event (artists, music, dj, infrastructure, management, advertising). What is your intention behind your contribution? Please give full details. What do you feel about the community and belonging? Do you feel contribution to the culture is important (i.e., dancing, contributing to the arts, music, helping out)? Do you think contribution is important to psychedelic trance culture?

Survey Participant	Response
1.	Participation to me means taking action to join others for a cause. The community feels like a family of wonderful misfits. Belonging to the community depends on the acceptance of the community which can make me feel judged/unsafe or very welcome. No difference to other communities really. When it's a no, it's a no and when it's a yes, it's a yes. I'm a lone wolf, no parents, no sense of belonging except to the universe! If I am accepted and it's reciprocated, then let the love flow. If not, then no worries, move on. Contribution is important, to build connections, to allow oneself to be truly witnessed and accepted, to allow creative freedom and expression. To be part of a movement that pushes truth and love. Dancing helps uplift the planet vibration, we are here to create, co-create and express through the arts. Helping out is equally important so that it's a real community effort and non-dictatorial.
2.	Contribution is important in any type of community. The sense of acceptance and belonging that I get from the psyculture makes me want to contribute.
3.	I tend to keep myself to myself, but my contribution is to be nice to everyone and to put my rubbish and any rubbish in my way in the right places, and if I see that someone is not feeling well, I always ask what is wrong and if they need anything. I do not tend to talk much, preferring to concentrate on the music. I always thank the DJs too.
4.	Yes, very much so it was important. But not in the wider 'community'. I was happy with my constant small group of friends, with others who came and went into our group. We all got on really well and were happy to be with others. I used to contribute to a few friends' DJ gigs, by handing out fliers and things like that. It was such an important part of the culture, and I was really happy to be part of it. I didn't hide my involvement, but I didn't sing it from the rooftops either! I loved to dance and occasionally get dressed up. But I was more of just a presence than a performer.
5.	I think that everyone who attends a psytrance event is contributing in their own way. Without the producers/DJs, artists, event organisers, and crew, the parties would not happen. Likewise, without the crowds coming and dancing, the parties would not happen.
6.	To me participation means accumulation of interests. I feel that this serves a good cause for the people who have gone or are going through some trauma or hard time. People who feel being the odd ones out in our societal set up; they feel accepted there. Also, it inspires people to nourish their skills i.e., arts, music, etc.
7.	I enjoy connecting with nature at these events as it feels like something my ancestors may have done. Moving to a tribal beat with likeminded people gives me a sense of belonging and community I don't often feel outside of this.
8.	Participation feels somewhat spiritual, almost like an awakening. I have begun to explore different religious beliefs since attending.

9.	Participation can be just being there at a gathering... just listening at home... for me I get in the gig and like to dance a lot... I do that at home too hahaha but my participation is quite ritualistic sometimes (at home and at the gatherings) I believe that man has gathered at the gathering or party or festival for many thousands of years... listened to rhythm and yes most likely how I behave has been going for many years... no one taught me this I do it cause it feels right...gatherings... psychedelics and music... yes of course this is ancient. Yes, I believe it's spiritual in some way like but that would be so hard for me to explain... psy is kinda a religion ... I guess it's my religion in so many ways ... But not everyone goes to a psytrance gathering and thinks of this stuff ... like some people go to church but maybe there just to make friends or attend a club ... They may not believe in God; they just like being there ... You get this at raves and gatherings too ... Some people are not into the whole spiritual side of things but love the friendly atmosphere to just be able to meet up and have fun in.
10.	Being part of an underground movement allows more freedom of expression.
11.	In every participation there are new things, and new experiences based in psytrance.
12.	Participation in dancing and sitting around the fire means for me a connection to something sacred. I am not sure what this sacred feeling is, but it is very deep knowing.
13.	It is easy and satisfying because it is part of ancient culture.
14.	Not particularly.
15.	Of course! it is the original spiritual gathering that has been going on since the beginning of time.
16.	It depends on the music being played. When it's a live musician(s) playing I feel that there can be a raising of consciousness and a melting together. Not always but on a good gig. Never really felt it with an exclusively DJ set, only with live bands especially System 7.
17.	No response.
18.	No specific ritual, ancient, spiritual, or religious aspects for me. My participation is simply to enjoy (and return) the love, happiness, and positive energy I experience at psytrance gatherings, with my psytrance friends and online forums.
19.	No response
20.	I dance for healing of all.
21.	I like feeling that I'm part of something bigger which has been going on for thousands of years. Dance is integral to the human experience, particularly in an open and friendly group setting that accepts you for who you are
22.	It makes me think about communities. We all need some sort of community and have been living in communities since the beginning of time.
23.	Live and DJ acts, sometimes organisation. It's an essential part. If you bring one paper sign with a message that resonates with you and you hold that paper and show your message to the people there, then you have already contributed and it's important both for self-expression and self-development as well as to the group's culture. It's an

	essential part of the culture, especially the underground smaller events. Without volunteering, the scene is impossible.
24.	I started writing music reviews, running music websites and magazines, flyer for events, promoting and running the door. I started events with friends to promote their music and provide a platform for the music we love. DJing is my passion and hobby. The community is only as important as the people within it. People who come to dance and hang out with their mates are just as important in creating the vibe and culture. I believe the dancers are just as important to the vibe of an event/festival as the DJs and promoters. Everyone contributes in their own way to the culture, and without people buying tickets for events/festivals, they couldn't happen.
25.	It makes it easier if everyone is contributing. I think it's very important because now it has lost its authenticity. There are some things that could be done to develop the culture and make it better for artists and audience.
26.	I help with the builds as I don't dance as much. The dancefloor needs people on it at all times. The most important thing though is everyone contributes by being friendly and welcoming. Yes, everyone should do their bit even if it's picking up rubbish.
27.	I believe that everyone has a unique perspective which is reflected in the musical performance they give. By sharing my music and selections and new sounds created when mixing existing music in new ways, I'm giving the crowd a unique experience, which will be hopefully fresh and enjoyable. Playing the right music at the right time is science, art, and magic, we need people to master this for the sake of everyone, we would always be having a super musical experience. As a collective of musicians, we are all evolving and as we develop ourselves, the music follows symbiotically. I truly believe that this culture is based on connections and contributions. Everybody contributes whether they see it or not. All parts of our parties are just as important as each other, soundsystem, venue, music, lights, decor, dancing, DJs, even bar staff, litter pickers, promoters, etc. I think contribution is important, but I would argue that participation itself is a contribution. For many, their contribution is not evidenced at the party, but it is how they act in the world outside the party, because of the party.
28.	I have contributed to many different areas in my 18 years of working in the psytrance scene. My main contribution is and always will be music production and DJing. The psytrance culture and scene is built around support and contribution to each other and our endeavours. The whole culture is built on peace, love and for me the most important is unity. I've had many people help aka contribute to my journey in life and I have helped and contributed to a lot of other peoples. Helping each other is the best way.
29.	No response



Q4 – Music

What do you feel about the music and its effect on how you feel? What do you feel about the music and its effect on how you feel? If you make or perform music, what intentions do you have about a creating your playlist?

Survey Participant	Response
1.	It's a drug in itself and gets me there (to spirit) every time. Feelings of euphoria, connection, releasing tension, addiction to the bass and it's hard to leave the floor once you're up. I never feel tired whilst on the floor, just energised but feel it when I do eventually stop!
2.	The music makes me feel free, happy and like all my worries are gone for that moment. It makes me want to dance and express myself.
3.	The music makes me feel happy and I have learnt to relax with it. This was not the case in the beginning as it took me a while to learn to trust the people who attend and could not relax and be myself. I feel that my brain stops the chatter... I can download a lot of bad energy when I dance.
4.	The music to me was everything. I loved hard techno, trance, and strong fast music. I always trusted the DJ and I knew that they had us in their care. I loved listening to the way it was layered and created, by skilled musicians. A friend and I used to sit for hours listening to an album and get excited about it as a work of art. It was a big part of my world. I have so much respect for the skill and musicality of the creators of the music. And the DJs. So, on that level I was satisfied, and in the way it would let me just let go, into my body. Totally alive!
5.	Despite the fact that the music is very loud which it is in clubs too. But it made me feel like I was connected to the music and I could feel the music to my bone.
6.	It is the most exciting music to dance to. I love the intricacies of it and the relentless nature. I appreciate the creativity of the DJs and how each set is unique and creates its own atmosphere.
7.	The music is key. It produces physical sensations, and you can actually feel it affecting your body. Depending on the rhythms, it can produce different effects, it is profound. I can see people's reactions as it changes which reflect my own. Body language is mirrored and fluid across the participants. The music is a craft, to be able to have such an effect on an audience is incredible.
8.	Music definitely influences the way I feel but also I won't listen to certain types of music if I feel a certain way ... Music has been a form of entertainment and also a guide I guess in some ways for me ... it's been a focus as I learn how to play different instruments and an influence in what I want to play ... if I hear something I like and get an opportunity to play it, I'll give most things a go. I love music ... singing, dancing, playing instruments. I guess the music for me is life.
9.	I have been listening to psytrance since 2001 and I have not found another genre that makes feel the same way... Whenever I arrive at a gathering and hear that distant KBBB, I get an instant smile and a sensation of instant relaxation. As if I've just arrived home. 15 years later and I started producing it. No other genre makes me feel this happy
10.	I like music but I mostly prefer trance coz trance gives a full on energy. Only trance.

11.	I have the upmost respect for people who create the music because it nourishes my soul, makes me grow, makes me evolve and gives me the opportunity to reach places deep inside me that I did not know existed.
12.	It does not need to be psytrance. It can be any music with a 4/4 beat. Psytrance is however designed to optimise the experience.
13.	Music is my life, being a musician since the age of 3. I can't really imagine what life would be like without it. It's the second most important thing in my life and would be the first if I wasn't a realist.
14.	No response
15.	Transcendence... not music you listen to every day, it is the sacred drums of the gods, music of the higher dimensions.
16.	It makes me happy; I have what I would describe as mild synesthesia. I can feel textures of sound in my mouth and on my skin. Good psytrance triggers the effect. I have purposely limited my use of LSD and mushrooms and never taken MDMA because I noticed that the synesthesia had reduced after each psychedelic experiment.
17.	I connect entirely to the music and feel elated while I am psytrance dancing. I find myself listening to every beat, to every note of the music and adapt my dance accordingly. I become the dance, and I revel in sharing my joy and energy with those around me, whether they are dancing or not. It makes me feel free, open, and honest without fear of being judged.
18.	It makes me happy 😊
19.	No response
20.	It has had a hugely positive effect on me, increased my optimism for life and a feeling that I belong.
21.	It calms my mind listening to it at home. It creates some sort of fluidity within and helps me feel in a flow on the dancefloor.
22.	Sometimes the music feels like it takes the 'driver seat on my brain'. For moments, I let it control my mind and body. I DJ and share new music, play the music I like most, influence people to sub-genres I feel interesting. Authorial: self-expression... art presentation.
23.	I have loved music for my entire life and have fallen for a few styles over the years. I can still remember the first psytrance gatherings I attended and their impact on me. For a few years, I was completely addicted to going to psytrance gatherings every weekend, and study got in the way for a few years, where it's not so easy to check out for the weekend. Another difficult question! It's always a balance putting together a playlist that will keep people dancing and keep the organiser/promoter happy while sneaking in some of my favourite tracks. I often play in alternative/chill out rooms, so need the tunes to be just as uplifting and accessible to people who are having a bit of a sit down or might be having a bad trip. Some of my favourite sets have been where I've known the first couple of tracks I'm going to play, then I put the set together on the fly to meet the vibe of the party and the mood of the dancefloor. Over lockdown I've put some sets together for online events which has taken a bit of forward planning as

	I'd always rather have some visuals put over the top than have the focus on me in my lounge, as I'm not that kind of performer.
24.	Makes me feel happy to be there. Not sure.
25.	No response
26.	That depends on the music... I'm very sensitive and there is huge variation even in psytrance. I find the steady repetitive beats solidify in the experience that time is constantly passing that this sets the stage of everything else which happens. Over the backdrop of this, stories are told which all in some way reflect a part of reality. I love the sound of loud bass from a powerful soundsystem. Nothing makes me happier than being in an outdoor location with a huge rig, and some funky music. In my opinion, psytrance's main theme or concern is the nature of power. It explores our relationship to nature, the universe, and the power that we have in that ecology. You can hear which music is made by optimists and that which is made by nihilists. I think both play an important role in the community as nihilism is a part of the journey towards ultimate truth for many but we should be careful they don't get stuck there forever. I take into consideration the time and place I will be playing; these are huge factors. My goals are to help people let go, heal, and gain strength, wisdom, and empowerment. It's of course also very important that I demonstrate my abilities as a highly proficient act for the sake of my social mobility and ego. With all this in mind, ask, what can I offer to this party that will be missing otherwise. I like to push genre boundaries, to keep the party fresh and to introduce the crowd to potentially new sounds. I have a background in dubstep, so I have a range of influences beyond what a lot of those on the scene do in the downtempo side of things. I say this with love but most psydub producers are stumbling around through the process without even realising how much they could benefit from the wisdom of the dubstep scene. I think we need to be more conscious of what the music is saying and how to best use it. Sorry for the rant but downtempo glitch hop is not an appropriate genre for a chill out area, most of it is all saying the same thing, the aggressive never-ending plodding syncopation is the opposite of relaxing, it's constantly grabbing your attention. Like I get it, it gives a feeling of growing and a kind of sense of pseudo-discovery, and it is a nice way for the artists to recount what it felt like to them to discover something, but isn't relaxing, it's constantly moving like a glittery slug.
27.	I like it, music is an emotional release. For a psytrance producer it's an extension of you and your character and personality. I make my sets with a journey, parts with full power high energy, and parts with less. You create a journey through feelings and emotions. Your past experiences will influence your future ones.
28.	No response
29.	No response

Q5 - Ancestors

Do you feel you connect with ancestral spirits while at a psytrance gathering? Do you feel you are dancing with ancestors? Do you feel you connect with ancestral spirits while at a psytrance gathering? Do you feel you are dancing with ancestors?

Survey Participant	Response
1.	Yes absolutely, they are with us. An ancestor told me they have been converted to psytrance because they understand that it helps to get their human form 'there'.
2.	Yes, certain gatherings more than others but I feel a connection to Shiva and the ancestors that danced before us.
3.	Sometimes, I imagine that I am part of an ancient tribe and that maybe ancient people used to dance like this around the fire, etc. I feel it especially when I see others dancing around me who are really connected to the music.
4.	Yes, but only once. I was at a beach party in West Ireland. As the dawn began to spread it was behind this ancient and powerful sacred site and I was surrounded by others who felt the power and significance of the site. We were all really quite overwhelmed with the magic. Yes, I felt the ancestors that night/morning. Although I usually work with ancestors as my day job and I know that feeling well, at the time, this wasn't a regular occurrence. Except that one time.
5.	This depends on the venue. I never really get this feeling in a club, but have felt this numerous times outside, and in old buildings. At certain parties I know I was dancing with ancestors!
6.	I never had such experience, but I felt spiritually connected to the people around me.
7.	This is not really something I had thought of to be honest.
8.	Yes, I have done. I find it confusing though as I don't understand the feelings I'm having, and I don't know how to explore this in everyday life.
9.	No ... Although I do feel a connection to nature and wherever I am and the people and I think this being an ancient thing i.e., dancing, meeting up with people that would be the only connection I feel like that ... like what I'm doing has been done for many years by our ancestors ... just we got banging speakers and superb synths, etc, more fancy lights, UV, décor, etc.
10.	I don't feel like I connect with ancestors but being amongst the trees and under the stars definitely makes me feel more connected to nature and the elements.
11.	Sometimes.
12.	This is such an interesting question. I felt a few times hearing and sensing other beings, but I never thought it could be the ancestral spirits.
13.	We are all following in the footsteps of our forefathers when we gather and dance.
14.	No. My ancestors are quite literally global, my grandparents are from different continents, one of which is immediately linked to cultures that are not all that dissimilar to my ancestors.

15.	We have been doing this since the beginnings of time... it is the sacred technology of the ancients.
16.	No, not at the time as I feel free and an absence of thought. After the event when I sit and think back, I can see the links between this modern gathering and those in traditional spiritual societies throughout human history. If that makes sense?
17.	Generally, no. I'm not being dismissive, but I prefer to consciously stay in the present.
18.	Yes, mentioned above, also reflected in my clothing and prayer whilst dancing.
19.	More figuratively speaking than literally, yes. It's a deep-rooted experience for humans.
20.	Yes, I have had that experience before. I have felt ancestors dancing in my body. It felt like they were praying for peace and abundance on earth. It was so beautiful.
21.	Not really. I feel more connection with the land and place and time in space than with past living beings.
22.	No response
23.	I feel connected with the forest.
24.	Yes, I do feel like this sometimes. The most notable was once when I was aware of how the party was an act of defiance to the dominator society we live in, and I felt with me all my ancestors that had stood up to this dominating force in the past so that I could be there.
25.	Yes, I do. I have started looking into my Celtic and Viking heritage, my paganism past and I feel like I have a connection to all my ancestors and the spirits past.
26.	No response
27.	It is certainly a very primal feeling when you're dancing your arse off at a good psy trance gathering. I do feel a sense of connection and oneness with the universe.
28.	No response
29.	No response

Q6 – Environment and nature

What do you feel about the locations, décor, clothing, lighting, buildings, and environment and how it affects you? What do you feel about the locations, décor, clothing, lighting, buildings, and environment and how it affects you? Please give full details Do you feel you have a connection to the environment, nature, and the animal world at psytrance gatherings?

Survey Participant	Response
1.	The environment itself helps to bridge the gap between the spirit realm and 3d realm. It looks like the place I land whilst using psilocybin which brings overall childlike joy, exploration, fun, and an inquisitive nature.
2.	Incredible. I love the style; the environment and the decor are incredible and second to none. It's a magical world like no other. I love that animals are often included in these gatherings.
3.	I really like the warehouse and forest parties. Since going to these places, I have seldom or nearly ever gone to a club again. I prefer when the security is minimum and really polite. The decoration is always really nice, but I don't take much notice, I am much more interested in who is playing and the music. I love nature and animals and I enjoy when dogs are around. I feel sorry for animals in forest parties because I think we disrupt their environment, although I feel that overall, the organisers respect the place.
4.	Yes. I have been to these events in a variety of places, and I think that the magic is very different. For me, I feel really, really special connections to the world, to spirits, to one another, and to the expansiveness of my own being when outdoors. The events on farms, and on the beach, and when I have done impromptu open-air madness, these have been the times when magic happens for me. But that may be because the outdoors is so massively important to me as an individual. I do like people dressing up. I love to see lots of creativity and magic, but it's not enormously important. I actually find the use of glitter to be really annoying. I couldn't fathom how people who thought they were having a spiritual experience would use plastic litter so freely and think it was ok! It used to annoy me, that I wasn't necessarily aligned with people's worldview, even when we were aligned with the music and event. This was many years ago, but I know things have changed. I hope they have!
5.	Being in a club, is ok, but it is really just a place to socialise and dance. Escape the clubs though, and psytrance parties generally happen in places of beauty surrounded by nature. It's hard not to feel connection to the environment and nature in those venues.
6.	The place and specially decor is the most important part as being outdoor or indoor gives a whole different experience.
7.	I prefer outdoor gatherings as I enjoy being connected with nature. I enjoy these more as there are less time constraints than at a club event and the party has a natural rhythm. The rig,, decor and lighting provide an exciting space for me to have my own unique experience.
8.	The locations are beautiful and set in nature which is grounding and helps you feel close to nature and grateful for it. The clothing, decorations, buildings are creative and unusual and look 'crafted' which is really appealing and inspires creativity. People are congratulated for their creative skills which is really lovely.

9.	Outdoors always seems better and more natural than in some dingy club ... decor is always superb though... I love what people wear all the quirky clothes I just feel accepted and like I belong... almost like a bit of the decor sometimes due to my own quirky clothes.
10.	A lot of work is put into them. I definitely prefer the outdoors... I think psytrance was made with the outdoors in mind.
11.	No response
12.	It will affect me more. I like different experiences, so I feel good to different things.
13.	It has incredible power. I now make an effort to dress in colour and arty trippy clothes for other people to see and nourish their soul. It is like a loving gift to others. I really appreciate it when others do the same. Nature is the best to dance in but it is very rare to be able to do it. Dancing inside a building can be nice if there are visuals or recently a lot of venues have a kind of projections on the walls or play some sort of funky movie. That is really great.
14.	Any place can be made into a gathering place. If you are in a city, then a club will do. Lights and decor add to the experience, but I have had great times in abandoned supermarkets.
15.	I, like most people, am extremely sensitive to context so yes it definitely affects me. I think for me if the decor is considered (Boom are very good at this), there is an excitement that quickly subsides to an overwhelming calm.
16.	Being outdoors in nature is essential.
17.	Loose clothing, dark ambient lighting in the space, maybe a light show from the stage area. Outdoors is best, in or close to a forest where the presence of the trees can be seen and felt. A clear plain between those trees where the sun can be seen rising and setting.
18.	Generally - fantastic, the organisers do such a good job within their means. I get an immediate lift on entering any such gathering. It's good that safety has improved over the years.
19.	No response
20.	I love the decor, it lights and inspires, the location is normally beautiful and humble.
21.	Outdoor events are always the best because you connect with nature throughout the event. Decor is always nice when involving mandalas or other ancient patterns like the seed of life and so on, sacred geometry is lovely. Clothing is less important as its only superficial, but seeing people dress in a way that brings them joy is beautiful.
22.	I love the artist aspects of the psytrance scene. I feel they expand my mind and remind me of dream-like states.
23.	Everything mentioned has a great influence on the whole experience - especially to create a separation from the 'real world'. To create a sense of parallel reality of the culture.
24.	One of the reasons I started running events with friends was because we wanted to create a safe and scintillating environment for our friends to party in and a platform for DJs and artists to share their work. At almost all of our events, the decor and lighting were one of the biggest parts of the budget, as we wanted to create the most beautiful

	and psychedelic environment possible. My favourite gatherings have been when all those elements come together to create a great party.
25.	I'm very sensitive to my environment. I prefer to be outdoors; it feels more natural. I love when everyone looks so fabulous, it makes me really appreciate the individuality of everyone at the party and gives me a sense of how we are all playing a part in creating it. I have mixed feelings about decor. To be honest I'd always rather be dancing in front of a rig than a painting, and I think the rig itself should be adequate decoration. Often too much art is distracting from the task at hand, which is you and the soundsystem and hopefully the natural setting you are in.
26.	Yes absolutely, especially at outdoor events and festivals. There are a couple of gatherings set in nature such as forests and woodland that I will always return to when I can.
27.	No response
28.	A lot of effort goes into setting up. Yes, makes me feel more natural.
29.	At a party everything is there to give you a sense of why we are there. It's meant to be immersive, so you lose yourself. The synergy between music, venue, decor, lights, even people is very important. Yes, I do, I believe actually that the human race wasn't meant to originally advance this far, we as a human race are still animals, mammals to be precise, we have a connection to nature like every other animal.



Q7 – Customs and Habits

What would you consider to be psytrance customs and habits (food, clothes, art, symbols, myths, places)?

Survey Participant	Response
1.	Psytrance customs and habits; leave no trace, responsibility to nature, plant-based nutrition, nutrition is viewed as really important to look after the body, dreads everywhere, quirky clothing but usually either fluorescent or earth colours, hareems, waistcoats, boots, psychedelics art, mandalas, Om, shiva/shakti. Important items: water, toilet, tent, warm hoodies and socks, pretty lights, a fire, somewhere to keep dry, stove for wake-up coffee, coffee, paraphernalia.
2.	Psy is spiritual. There is always an element of prayer. The decor is important to assist the vibe. I adore the clothing and I feel it's in keeping with the vibe.
3.	No response
4.	For me food and drinks are important especially if I do not take drugs. I take a flask of hot tea/coffee with me to drink at the end of the party. I usually have some chocolate and some fruit. I don't care much for clothing. I never took a tent because I do not like to sleep at a party.
5.	I think that I cannot really answer this, in all honesty, as my experiences were so long ago, things have probably changed, fashions and customs may have changed. But I think that I was very grateful for food and definitely drink (non-alcoholic), places to be warm and dry, a created sense of wellness and safety. However, I don't think there needs to be much staging. If the place is right and the music is right, not much is needed at all.
6.	No response
7.	Well, there aren't like 10 commandments or anything, but being kind to others, being yourself, and having no ego seem to be the obvious ones. People are free to wear whatever they like, believe whatever they like.
8.	I consider that a psytrance custom is sharing. We can go to one without anything, yet we would find everything one way or the other.
9.	No response
10.	Lots of hugging. Food is not a top priority usually! Unlike other scenes the use of psychedelics is commonplace and seen as a positive thing. I notice a lot of Indian spiritual art and artefacts. Also a lot of UV that helps light the dancefloor.
11.	I don't know enough to answer this yet.
12.	No response
13.	Psy scene tends to gather a lot a vegetarians and vegans regarding food but that isn't a requirement to attend hahaha. Art symbols ... yeah look at my poncho and the stuff I wear - these symbols represent me, my experiences and beliefs I guess.
14.	Not sure.
15.	Places, art, clothes, symbols.

16.	No response
17.	No response
18.	Art exhibitions, dancefloor decorations, vegetarian food, clean eco sustainable environment with no rubbish laying around, trippy clothes, nature.
19.	People seem to think they have to dress in a certain way to belong. Guys have to wear 3 quarter length trousers with a lot of pockets and a bright t shirt. That is not important but if it makes people more comfortable then why not.
20.	It's pan-global, new to old. Its selective and tries to wear the badge of counterculture.
21.	Everything that comes from psychedelic awakening... it changes your life, provides an alternative to consumerism.
22.	No response
23.	Loose comfortable clothing, smiles, vegetarian/vegan food, psychedelic, Asiatic (including India), Indigenous American/South American and pagan influenced art and clothing. Om symbols, mandala's, Sanskrit, Celtic and druid symbols.
24.	For me, the most inspiring customary provisions by both organisers and participants involve colour, lights, and psytrance-orientated clothing. I also love the accessories such as 'jewellery' that many psytrancers wear.
25.	I am not sure really. I only have my own thoughts and beliefs but have found some of the nicest people at these events. The customs seem to be welcoming.
26.	Yoga, healing ceremonies, a fire that invites instruments and singing.
27.	I see people looking out for each other at these events. Being kinder to each other. If someone has had too much substance or booze, people take care of them a bit.
28.	No response
29.	No response

Q8 – Preparations, objects, and journey

What are your pre journey rituals (what do you do to prepare before the journey and before the event)? Would you say you go on a journey (i.e., whether just to travel to an event, during the event and/or your personal journey, a pilgrimage)?

Survey Participant	Response
1.	Pre-journey: request for connection, love, and protection for all. Landing/adjusting to vibes/ opening chakras. Full on trance dance journeying connecting to others and spirit. Come down: blessings, grounding, close down chakras.
2.	No response
3.	I connect with myself and experience a journey at most gatherings. I feel that it's a safe place for me to do this.
4.	Never thought about it as a journey although sometimes it feels like one when the venue is particularly far. I tend to wear comfortable shoes and clothing and take a lot of layers and a blanket in case it gets cold. I like to feel comfortable and to be able to share things hence I might take extra food/drinks. Before the event, I tend to try to have a lot of rest so that I can last longer.
5.	No response
6.	I didn't have rituals per se, other than gleefully getting on a train or onto a bus! It was all lots of fun, lots of smiles, making sure we had food and drink, enough money, warm clothes, and a tent if necessary. A sense of safety was important, knowing how to get home. Looking after one another. So, our ritual concentrated around care of each other.
7.	No response
8.	No response
9.	I would say it's a journey of mind settlement.
10.	I make sure I get plenty of rest and healthy food before an event as I like to feel I have some energy to dance. I like to make sure I have everything with me for the duration of the party. I often make a cake or bring some food to share.
11.	No response.
12.	I make a list of what I'm taking to make the stay as comfortable as possible for me and my friends
13.	Well. I always seem to wear my psy clothing when tripping and in recent years acquired a certain hat which I seems to like wearing ... rituals would be making sure I got food, drink in a safe space like my caravan if I want to get away from the gathering and just sit in chill for a bit relax and or get my head together ...lol ... I make sure I have good chill out music ... somewhere comfy to be ... really when I take a journey music is very important to me it's hard to explain as I will trip in silence; I just find music helps guide or push my experience the way I require or want.
14.	Stock up on drinks and snacks. Extra clothing... Full tank of petrol. A few go to sets to listen to enroute.

15.	Clothes and tents.
16.	Hmm now I meditate and sometimes set an intention. After the event, hmm I have not yet thought about what would be good to close the experience. Great question.
17.	Nothing, just go.
18.	I don't have any really, just make sure everything is planned, tickets, routes, backup plans, contact details, supplies etc.
19.	Good vibes and intentions.
20.	No response.
21.	I try to be properly rested physically and to have just the right amount of clothing, not too much or too little. Check that my tent and sleeping bag are in order. Leave as many valuables as possible at home and make sure that I have secure pockets so as not to lose things when dancing. Check my route and travel arrangements. Contact friends that are going. If I'm on the guest list check out the steps that have to be taken to pick up my pass. If I'm playing, then it's a whole next level of prep. Then I put my 'professional' cap on. Have to check out that all the gear is working, my set is rehearsed and that everything is packed away securely. I have to recheck soundcheck and playing times plus a secure location for storing my gear during the event when not playing. Check out the line-ups so that once my set is done, I can go and dance with everyone else.
22.	No response
23.	I spend a week slowly preparing and packing the things I want at a festival (tent, clothes, food, drinks, mobile charger, etc., etc.). I make sure my domestics are all well organised before I leave so that nothing will be demanding my attention when I return. I feed myself well before travelling. I also contact various psytrance friends in advance to see if they will be attending.
24.	Smudge for sure.
25.	I like to drink, play trance while I get dressed up.
26.	No response
27.	No response
28.	No response
29.	No response

Q9 – Beliefs

How would you describe psytrance beliefs and/or spirituality?. What are your beliefs, if any? How would you describe psytrance beliefs and/or spirituality (ie beliefs or non-beliefs, spirituality, moral behaviours, purposes of attending, why do you attend?).

Survey Participant	Response
1.	Psytrance belief; Om, one-love, unity, and peace. Attracts many sub-cultures including paganism, Wicca, shamanism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, spiritual connection, and enlightenment. Leave no trace, respect nature, altars for Shiva, be kind, look after one another, rebel against authorities to stand for what is right, anti-establishment. My belief: is always growing as I continue to learn. It is a mix up of the sub-cultures listed above with shamanism revealing itself more and more right now. I flow with it and it brings a deeper understanding to all aspects. I sing to nature, the spirits and universe, do land blessings, water blessings, wind blessings and fire blessings. I sit in meditation, I journey with psilocybin and my drum, I work with reiki principles, I do rituals. Somethings cannot be put into words. Purpose of attending: can't stay away. Psytrance sucked me in 16 years ago and hasn't let go. It's so energising, beautiful and gives me hope for our future.
2.	I attend because I feel among family. I feel safe and accepted always. The culture is kind and loving. We respect the earth and nature. It's beautiful to be part of the experience and to be accepted.
3.	I believe in being good, in doing good and being respectful. I also believe in good energy. I believe in justice for everyone and the protection of the vulnerable in our society including all animals. I believe in the world as a whole. I am against nationalism and everything that entails.
4.	This was varied in many ways, in my own experience. My own spirituality was deeply earth connected, magical, druidic, but I know that not everyone had the same belief set in some ways. We often would share our love of place, music, and magic, but then would have different political ideas, morals, and habits. I think generally we all took care of one another, believed in the transcendental nature of our experiences but then our worldly lives would be perhaps quite different.
5.	Psytrance itself is not spiritual and has no beliefs attached to it as such. However, many producers do add spiritual elements to their tunes, and many parties do have spiritual décor up, and many festivals have spiritual healing areas. We know people from many different religions and spiritual paths who love psytrance, and we know many people who are not spiritual/religious who also love psytrance. The one thing that does seem to be a universal belief though is being kind to other people (and mostly animals as well). Everyone just gets on, and never any problems. When someone in the scene does not respect other people, they soon stand out. Why do I come to psytrance events?... Honestly, I can't imagine not coming to them. For me it is an escape from work and all worries, and time to have fun surrounded by the nicest people you could ever meet. It is my belief that we should all be free to believe and do what we want without judgement from other people, on the condition that you are not purposefully harming anyone else. Religious/spiritual views mean nothing to me (as long as you don't preach). But, if I had to put a label on my beliefs, I would say I was a secular traditional witch.

6.	To me psytrance event was a place of getting rid of negativity and getting full with positivity. Such as I made a family there and I still consider them as my brothers and sisters who has helped me in this process.
7.	Love and generosity permeate these events. I see many people who may struggle with issues finding a safe space to express themselves free from judgement. On the whole, most people are responsible for their behaviour and the effect it may have on others and if somebody is out of order they aren't invited back. I encounter many spiritual people at these events who are often in the process of self-improvement, and I like the openness this engenders.
8.	I love the connected feeling I get and being able to have profound and happy conversations with those there.
9.	I have a spirituality but it's not really conforming to any one religion ... Be good, do good ... I attend because I love it.
10.	Not sure about the rest but PLUR is one of the foundations I carry into everyday life and at festivals.
11.	At first, I thought that everyone will be spiritual but soon I discovered that it is not the case. However, many people are. Most people are eco-warriors and love nature. Lots of people do not subscribe to the consumerism culture. I attend because I feel I reached HOME.
12.	Don't make it so complicated, it is just about people gathering together, and dancing.
13.	No response.
14.	I don't have any. I am a pragmatist/empiricist. The significance of reality is enough for me. I don't need to decorate it with more to make it more. It is more than enough.
15.	It is the continuation of the psychedelic revolution of the sixties.
16.	No response.
17.	I believe that humans can share a consciousness briefly through a shared experience. I don't know what I believe really. If I have to pin it down then, do no harm to others or the planet, be honest and helpful. Be creative and positive. Try to improve at all things and help others to improve. To be happy at the happiness of others.
18.	Connection, courtesy, care, and trust are what I always bring and what I experience from others.
19.	No response
20.	I have my tribes' Indigenous beliefs. I am not sure about the others.
21.	It is spiritual for me. Something about the music, the sense of community and how it makes me feel. It helps me cope with everyday bullshit, and restrictions.
22.	For many years (and still to date in some sense), I've considered the long festivals (5+ days) a spiritual retreat as opposed to 'partying 24/7' kind of mentality. Looking inside. Feeling the good-spirited people in harmony, all (or the absolutely majority) showing the best they have at heart. Usually conditions are extreme (long hours, extreme heat, lack of sleep, etc.) ... in suffering we help each other and grow together.
23.	Another complex question! I would consider myself a pagan with Buddhist leanings, but those beliefs were with me before I discovered psy trance culture. I don't believe 'psy trance beliefs' are particularly moral, as there are a lot of selfish people around

	who identify with being psytrance hippies - which I consider at best embarrassing for the culture as a whole.
24.	Many have different beliefs, but we all accept and respect others and different backgrounds.
25.	No response
26.	I believe in a kind of monist panpsychism. My beliefs seem to have a lot in common with Hinduism, European paganism, and Taoism. I believe that we are all part of the same conscious organism/process and that we all have an important and divine role to play in the drama of life. For many, the psytrance community offers an antidote to mainstream society. I believe that as the world changes for the better, there will be huge demand for a new way of relating to each other and that the psytrance scene is evolving to fulfill a large chunk of that demand and show the way for other scenes. Psytrance is slowly maturing to the point where it will understand itself fully and this tipping point will come at the time it is needed most. I see the trajectory of spiritual awakening in society and the trajectory perfection of psytrance are synchronised, and when they converge it might just change the world.
27.	I attend these gatherings because I feel it is where I belong best. I would describe beliefs and spirituality in my way. Everybody has a different connection and reason to be a part of the scene. I am a part of it as the peace, love, unity, respect resonates with me. I bring all my beliefs to my everyday life. I treat everyone I meet as I want to be treated myself. I believe there is an energy, a life force rather like the chi from Japanese culture. There's a balance to be needed, like the yang and yin. We need balance in life, if you tip one way too much or the other your life is out of balance.
28.	No response
29.	No response

Q10 – Healing and Benefits

Do you feel there are healing and benefits to experiencing trance dancing?

Survey Participant	Response
1.	Yep. On an individual level, there's acceptance and love available from the community that some may never have experienced before. That sense of belonging is really important for many. They no longer feel like an outcast of society. When individuals feel safe and tap into the trance, deeper healing can take place. A lot of trauma and tensions can be released through movement. The repetitive rhythms help sync the brain into theta mode which enables access to spirit. The music/trance provides energy/life force to power up the soul and helps all physiological aspects through exercise. The euphoric feelings help to stabilise the nervous system, releasing all the happy hormones which in effect allows the body to heal and turning that solar plexus off fight or flight. Then there is the ripple effect, where one friend hears your experience and wants to give it a go, so they go, get converted, and it keeps on spreading. The other aspect of the ripple effect is that with all the healing to everyone at the event, collectively we are helping to raise and shift all human vibration.
2.	Yes absolutely. Being able to express yourself without judgement and preconceptions is so exhilarating.
3.	Definitely, I have experienced the death of people I love, and trance dancing has helping to release some of the trauma which has affected my mind and body. I feel that without trance dancing I might have fallen sick.
4.	Yes, I do. I have felt very healed by some of the more magical of my experiences. But I don't think that it's guaranteed that the trance experience will automatically BE healing. It's not like that. I don't think it was ever a deliberate healing medicine, but I think that I went there occasionally, and received something healing.
5.	Dancing to psytrance is obviously good exercise, so clearly has health benefits. It makes people happy, so has to have mental health benefits. Anyone who goes into a true trance or meditative state, will definitely benefit from it.
6.	Trance dancing to me was so refreshing and healing that it helped me to overcome the fear that I am good for nothing. Now I believe that I am good for anything.
7.	Absolutely! I can arrive at a party feeling a bit stressed and with the usual aches and pains and leave feeling happy and energetic and like I've had a full workout. Feel transformed.
8.	Yes. It fixes my brain. Centres me and gives me relief from the people who I normally have to deal with on a daily basis.
9.	Yes, if nowt else it's a good work out for your body ey.
10.	For sure... It's almost like mindfulness... Focusing on breathing and the same repetitive beats would help with relaxation and low levels of stress.
11.	Yeah.
12.	Oh, my goodness, 1000%. After the event I tap into the memory, and I feel I can use the energy for many months.
13.	Yes, very much so. Exercise for the body. Clearing of the mind. Communication is better and easier with people afterwards.



14.	Yeah, exercise is incredibly important. All that oxytocin and adrenaline is definitely a nice feeling too.
15.	No response
16.	it is transformational experience; it changes people's outlook on life.
17.	No response
18.	Yes, I do. I find that the release has beneficial effects for stress relief and anxiety.
19.	Definitely yes providing people attend with an open and non-judgemental courteous attitude. I was relatively shy when I started going to Goa and then psytrancing but soon realised what a beautiful atmosphere is created at these events, and I gradually learned how easy and uplifting it is to be open and friendly in such a space with such like-minded people of all ages. I am less judgemental, more forgiving and I feel healed and liberated compared to my previous times. I feel as if I have found the real me because of my experience with Goa and psytrance, it has substantially changed my life and my attitude to life for the better and it still does. For me it is a continually increasing appreciation.
20.	No response
21.	Yes, this is a long tradition in my culture but would take a book to describe.
22.	Absolutely. I've had loads of visions of being healed and connecting to beings that are full of love whilst dancing to trance. Many experiences.
23.	Absolutely... if you feel the world is not a place where everything matters is money and showing off and status, etc., then go to a place (festival) where no one knows who you are, what you have, which brands of cloth you use..... you are there to survive and you do with very, very little, sleeping on the ground, eating the same food as everyone else, exposed to the same issues and simple pleasures.
24.	Yes absolutely, both psychologically and physically. Other than the obvious endorphins dancing for hours gives us, that feeling of connection on the dancefloor is also very healing and uplifting. Also, many gatherings have specific areas designated for healing, where people can get treatments like reiki or massage.
25.	I find it helps to relieve stress.
26.	Duuuuudee, yes. Just yes. It's super important that we have these empowering movements in our physical vocabulary. And that we can learn to explore these movements, because in doing so you have to move without shame. The movements can literally open up your body in ways that release trauma you didn't know you had in the body. Not only that but by taking the shapes taken by untold many you become one with the wave of ecstasy that drives toward the future we all want, and you give some of your energy to that wave.
27.	I believe there is a feeling of benefits, at trance parties, you connect with your friends, and your loved ones, you release bad energy and bad worked up energy. You connect and speak to other people to get help. Your friends and loved ones will always be there for you to chat and speak and discuss what's on your mind.
28.	No response

29.	No response
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Q11 – Other Info

If you would like to add further details or provide any advice on other areas to investigate, or any stories to share

Survey Participant	Response
1.	I work with addiction and homelessness, some of the people I work with, I believe, would benefit to be part of the trance world/community/music. I feel that we all need a community, and this is a good one. Sometimes I wonder what would happen if I invited a person I meet at work to these parties. I feel their life/vision is so restricted and their isolation is one of the main reasons of why they use. As I said, I took a long time to trust the environment, but I am now much more relaxed and able to connect. I feel much better because of it. Thanks.
2.	No response
3.	I'm glad to have contributed. I'm grateful you have helped me re-live some of my memories!
4.	My experience with psytrance culture was pleasant overall but it can take a toll too. As It's a journey therefore people need to prepare themselves physically as well as psychologically to be set free.
5.	I'd like to know why all the people are so accepting at these places and why we can't achieve this in daily life.
6.	No
7.	No
8.	Thank you so much for doing this work. We feel grateful that there is research being done. Best of luck and bless you.
9.	No response
10.	I ran a psytrance event for 6 years that travelled the world. People acting the same everywhere we went. It is something that comes naturally to us all. What we did was make an environment where people felt comfortable and encouraged them to come. They did the rest.
11.	No response
12.	No response
13.	Not really, good luck in your research.
14.	Look at it as an ancient technology for transcendence in a modern setting... it is the science to blow your mind and achieve unity consciousness
15.	Nowadays I prefer smaller events up to say 1,000 people because I think they attract people who more carefully select the kind of event that they want. They are generally more 'intimate'. It is tempting to ask participants about the differences they experience between medium vs really large events.
16.	No response
17.	No response

18.	No response
19.	No response
20.	No response
21.	No response
22.	No response
23.	No response
24.	I wouldn't know where to start! There really are so many facets to psytrance events, psytrance culture and the people around them. I don't know whether you're considering the impact of the pandemic at all, but it really has caused a huge split in the culture in my eyes. I know so many of us are missing that feeling of connection on the dancefloor, and the glow that follows you for days after a good party. I feel bad for the artists, producers, DJs and promoters who are struggling to create without the energy from the dancefloor to keep them going, as well as the obvious lack of income in these difficult times. I'm more than happy to answer any further questions you have or have a think about any areas you'd like more detail on :)
25.	I think one of the biggest problems with psytrance currently is how small it is, because this can lead to cliques which make local scenes sometimes unappealing. I look forward to the future when every town has multiple crews, and the social groups are less stagnant and problematic. The scene is far from perfect right now, but it's all going in the right direction. I'm as optimistic as possible. Bring it on!
26.	I believe in the balance of psychology and spiritual healing. If you are struggling mentally, you should first try psychological science but if that doesn't work go down the spiritual science which is in conjunction with such spiritual healing drugs like kambo and ayahuasca. These can really help heal the body, soul, and mind.
27.	No response
28.	No response
29.	No response

Prompts	Response
<p>Q1 Description and culture</p>	<p>And so from all sides and abroad as well, you know, like a lot of the research that has been done so far is saying Goa trance is dead, the scene is dead. The scene is as alive as it ever has been. Some may see psyculture as a cult because of their sense of superiority to the mainstream. There is a perceived sense of superiority, but it is not about outsiders are beneath, it is for protection of the culture. But the world is also travelling at a pace the same as psyculture. If you look at the progress in other electronic dance music within terms of sounds and samples and the way it's going, everything is progressing.</p> <p>I remember, being in 95 at the criminal justice demonstrations in London about them wanting to stop us going out and dancing for prolonged periods in the woods because they know it can have an effect on us. Dancing and being immersed in music for five days going outside listening to music 24 hours a day is it for me. I don't believe in any system as my heart is as a dancer to dance outside is just incredible for me. It surprises me just how many people really are passionate about it too and really love being part of this scene because of this sense of belonging and love of dance and how the two go together. Someone said it is like having a collective orgasm when the music and the collective dancing works on you. It's the energy thing and people are really blown away by it. The problems that we have in this country is that dancing outside it's restricted. I have met so many good people and then we get to spend some time together and all. Bunch of characters mind and we've met so many over the years and so many new people. There are some great people and people that we might not know that have been there for years. The music can make people be absolutely transformed or they seem not ready, but some people really get it and then they never leave. Different types of people, but they are seen as ways to attract new people. Obviously, you can journey into the inner core.</p>
<p>Q2 Dance, trance and experiences</p>	<p>I don't believe in any anything at all, a religion wise or anything like that. I know that what happens to us when dancing has a healing effect; dancing that has a great seriousness to what we're doing. My mantra is if I can't dance, I'll die. Usually, I'm next to the left speaker and there's a picture of me where I'm fed up because somebody is dancing in front of the left speaker. There are associations of dancing for religious reasons at set places like Stonehenge or in a sacred place. As long as we're together dancing somewhere, it doesn't really matter whether it's a club or anywhere. The event is wherever we are set up that becomes a sacred space. It's what we bring to it because we don't have any choice. Plenty of psytrance events are hounded by the police not to put things on. If I don't dance, then I just fall apart so I've really missed it. My brain functions much better, but I need to keep that bodily thing going on. It's based on how to get the most out of psytrance dance without it being structured.</p> <p>It's like we're polishing a stone of importance of the future. This whole psychedelic renaissance. That people aren't getting off their head enough to lose reality. When you're dancing together, you become more aware</p>

Prompts	Response
	<p>you're not necessarily in some mind hallucination. It brings on the senses. But people are there to dance and they feel that connection with dancing. It's just a joy. It's down to people to get rid of negative energy and they come away feeling a different kind of positive energy. I said it's not just about the dancing. There is a lot more to it as well. You don't have to be dancing for you to feel the benefits of being there, So, that is not only bringing together the community. It's so sweet and it's such a beautiful place. How could you not enjoy that? Sometimes I find that I'm not very good at socialising. I don't know what it is that makes me feel more relaxed being at a psytrance event whether just through dancing or knowing you're there with other like-minded people, but I tend to socialise more. I'm interested in what happens on that dancefloor because that's not really been put into words about what happens to us. When people enter the dancefloor, their energies are there. Negative energy is already gone, so they gift good energy. They gift energy to newcomers.</p> <p>When me and my mates go to the dancefloor, you know, like women in their 50s and 60s, we will let go little parcels of energy to each other. But we all start off by jokey dances. Some of us think about what we do with the energy. When you go into a dance with people and they give you a little bit of positive energy because they're already energized with positive energy, it helps you to change your energy and feel better. People talk about that dancefloor energy thing and that is just invaluable. I have to have barriers up with hundreds of people around, I tend to be very much on the periphery as I have to really protect my energy. Once that energy is released, once the negative energies are gone, we can create this amazingly powerful positive energy that continues after the party. At first. I have my back to the wall because I don't want any negative energy to come into me until it's cleared out the way and then I'll start pushing my positive energy at the floor. That's like a dancer's perspective thing really. Because you know, it's there. It's real and you can feel it. People are taking drugs opening up portals left, right and centre. It's chaos and it needs to be settled down before we can dance together. I'm a dancer and even though I might not tell people that very often, but it's just to help clear those dancefloors of negative energy. We don't scientifically know what we're doing, but we have to keep a handle on it. You know because it is difficult sometimes to work out what happens when you're dancing and why, why you feel connected. Because I just love dancing that this is it. I'm writing this research from the perspective of being a dancer rather than anything else.</p> <p>My brain disengages and my body takes over dancing in time to the beat, but how am I doing that? because my brain switched off, but your body takes over and that's amazing. I am a dancer first off. It makes me enjoy being alive. It's dancing to a point where you get that shared energy together. It is amazing and I never want to leave.</p> <p>Sometimes dancers feel short-changed like their welfare isnt considered or the lights are too much flashing all over the place. This makes it difficult to get into a trance because you will end up dancing to the lights as well as the sounds.</p>

Prompts	Response
<p>Q3 Contribution, community, and participation</p>	<p>But I mean, some people are really, really into believing in this scene and it's got so many benefits like belonging and how you contribute. We are forming relationships and friendships with people of like-mindedness, relaxing together, being yourself is one of the joys of it. Psyculture provides my sense of belonging. The psytrance family provides the same roles and functions for me as family. It spreads, and it's fascinating like a global belief system. My sense of belonging is big over this, even though sometimes I've felt as if I've been pushed out. But then, that's part of a family. The more you get immersed and involve you realise just how hard some of the arrangements are underneath and that is at every level from whether you're an artist or you are part of the organisers.</p> <p>I'm looking to dance together anywhere but best in a forest for prolonged periods of time. It's dancing to the point where you get that shared energy. Some people reckon this has healing benefits. Not only are we healing ourselves, but we are healing ourselves together and what we are finding out is of benefit to greater society. You know, there's all different opinions from people as to why they are there but whatever they think by dancing together it will have a healing effect on them. They will come away feeling better. Synchronicity through dancing together for sustained periods has a healing benefit all of its own way beyond what we really understand. We don't need to understand it to benefit from it. Just exercising outside, in nature, drinking plenty of water and dancing and eating good food itself will have a benefit to health.</p> <p>I think dancing outside to psytrance music is what brings on your ability to go into altered states of consciousness. That means that if you are having those experiences like flying above the dancefloor and talking to others in other dimensions. It doesn't mean it is created by taking drugs, or even the dancing. It is probably just the music because even people sat around feel the effects too.</p> <p>My brain disengages and my body takes over dancing in time to the beat, but how am I doing that? It's easier if people see that there's other people dancing already. They'll then enter the dance. People don't like going up and being the only people dancing used to be around the campfires keeping the dance space going.</p>
<p>Q3 Contribution, Participation and Community</p>	<p>There is a tribal connection, that connectivity is big. There's lots of people into connectivity in house scenes. But in psyculture they do take things quite seriously, and they come up with big statements, like the culture should be as an example to humanity on how to improve the way they live and how to get back that sense of belonging. There are others who just want to get off their heads, away from their lives temporarily and then return to normal life refreshed. For me, the psyculture tends to be about connecting with people, which is a delight because you meet so many different people from different cultures and different countries. That is one of the joys of it. It's transformed people's experiences. That's how I think creativity and things expand and progress, and I see people's creativity initiated. They go on to do things that's not only a benefit to themselves but for others in the community and beyond.</p>

Prompts	Response
	<p>Healing isn't the word to use, the word to use should be benefits really, so that benefits to the community or benefits to yourself. It is about participation and being part of the group together. I am optimistic about the benefits of psytrance and the outside gatherings because they have spurred my creativity to do things I wouldn't have done before because the mainstream world does not respond well to innovative thinking and ideas. This comes from a sense of belonging and connectivity, having others praise and take seriously any artistic newness you have.</p> <p>You get to meet so many people. People introduce themselves to you. A lad came up to me on Saturday who no longer seems as young as he was when he was 16 so I didn't recognise him as it has been a long time but he remembered me. He thanked me for putting on an event and for it being such a lovely gathering. It was lovely to be thanked all these years later.</p> <p>I haven't got a big belief system. I have no religion or anything like that, but I do know it's a great group of people and have some great positive effects. And I know that there's lots of negativity, like any part of society. But I think it's worth writing about. And that's why I'm doing this. You should contribute your energy really.</p> <p>I'm lucky enough to be studying psychedelic trance music and it's taken me awhile because I went back to university to study music to understand how the music is made because I decided I was going to contribute by writing about this culture. What I think should happen is each country has somebody from that country to write about their unique psytrance culture. Because they're all different. I've danced for eight days next to a couple from Nepal and they couldn't speak English and so we only communicated through gesture, dance and sharing provisions.</p> <p>There are layers in a concentric way how you start in the outer layers and can move towards the centre depending on how and what you contribute, how you participate, what you bring, or do, or your attitude. There is a fascination amongst newcomers with becoming part of the inner core, the inner circle, the crew. It's a journey from being a newcomer to becoming a regular and important member of the community. All the negativities of status, cliques, oneupmanship are all there and generally those who are part of the core community have transcended beyond these early ego problems.</p> <p>Just this involvement is belonging. Contribution involves lots of things to keep everything going. One of the things about the scene is, it depends a lot on contribution, we all contribute bits whether you're playing music or looking at the organization of an outside party, it still takes quite a lot of organization. It makes you feel better as you contribute bits and even just going along to dance. It is participation and contribution, you don't have to be an organizer or putting on some other service.</p> <p>If you're putting on events, you've gotta have something in place for dealing with people. Many parties take welfare and security seriously because sometimes people need to be evicted and dealt with although on the whole parties are pretty much self-policing. Although for those working, those crew members doing welfare and security and gate work it</p>



Prompts	Response
	<p>is graft. Bad behaviour has to be dealt with. Someone's gotta be straight. Someone has to be available to sort out issues and problems.</p>
<p>Q4 Music</p>	<p>The DJ's and producers are creating a journey with playlists and all things are linked to a journey. It's that big journey metaphor is what people do have that in mind. Any good psytrance track should have that within it like the acid trip because you're going up and down. That's why there's so many up sounds and down sounds. And then you're coming back down, so it's spiralling like a snake pushed up and down the sword. That that's right there, within the track and right there within the set. That why people are responding to the brilliance of the journey chosen by the artist. And it's what people have to respond to as you can't have it always going up because your dancefloor needs to rest. I think my head was waiting for some greater complexity in the music because I was bored with normal dance music. I started with acid house nights, and hard house.</p> <p>You see all that complexity in the music. Whether you are a dancer or an artist, you tend to be technically into the way the music is made and the sequence of the journey. It's the level of preparation in creating that musical journey that is important. I remember somebody saying to me, it's repetitive. I said that's because it's trance music. It's supposed to be repetitive. They need to get the categories consistently named because one minute you are playing full on, but it could also be forest, but what if its twilight or even progressive dark psy twilight? The art of DJing is putting it all together, getting your preferences right. Understandably the music will get dark and twisted after midnight. But then I'm usually asleep after midnight as I keep normal hours.</p>
<p>Q5 Ancestors</p>	<p>I just think I'm staying in the moment. I am not going off tripping into some transcendent universe somewhere and meeting up with me Auntie Ethel. That's not how it is for me. Whatever happens in the dancing, you start to feel better. I come away feeling better. It's as simple as that for me and I think I think that's what we're doing now.. Though I don't necessarily agree, the title of dancing with ancestors is to investigate the suggestion that many psytrance participants believe we're doing what they did in the past. Many people feel as if they are connecting with something from the past. I don't really feel that myself.</p> <p>What I'm finding out is out in the city, especially in this country, as long as we're together dancing somewhere, it doesn't really matter outside in nature or whether it's a club or ever.</p> <p>But we can pretty much work out that the things that we do are probably similar things to what they did back in the day because we're humans too. Like the way we dance.</p> <p>I don't know whether it is a related shamanic thing in that whatever we're doing, we're doing something that I feel is something what they did back in the day, but a believe they were travelling to specific places maybe not even sacred just to be away from the everyday. They were going together to meet up with others perhaps from other areas to meet up with music and sound and food and things and they were going on a journey like pilgrimage up for the same purpose as us, but it was just for that alone, not sacred, not shamanic, not religious. Getting into a bit of a trance,</p>

Prompts	Response
	<p>coming away healed by that, dancing together and that's what it's all about.</p> <p>But we're also connecting with ancestors like they did in the past, and dancing and trancing in the past was seen as a way of social communication. We think it's a new thing, but they were dancing and trancing thousands of years ago and a lot of cultures still do. There are a lot of ceremonies and rituals are there to connect with ancestors which is something in Western culture that's quite lost.</p> <p>At one stage they didn't have the same kind of dominant staticness, so their lives are always going in and out and obviously their attitude to journey was different in the past. Psytrance has appeared to become a little static, but somebody had somebody told me this occurs every few years where the waves that the culture goes through. Like the psytrance music that is going up and down and it's got its own a journey. It's alive. That you know this, this journey that you're going on because you remember being nomadic.</p> <p>Some people saw spirits in the woods in the morning in the mist. It was believed that negative feeling from the spirits had made some negative things happen there. They see spirits as if the dancing and the music brings out the spirits of draws them in.</p>
Q6 Environment and nature	<p>The connectivity between the landscape where we are at the festival or the gathering that leads us to understand how everything is alive together. I do feel as if we bring on some spiritual connection with the music playing, the connection with the woods and sleep deprivation. People go to the forest so that they can take off their cloak of being human, and become the animal human that they have to hide in the mainstream world and just be at one with nature.</p>
Q8 Journey and preparations	<p>The journey motifs run through the people, the place, and very importantly the music and the playlists. A motivation appears to be that this all makes you feel better and that might be the only purpose. The benefits of having a little time away from home, from everyday life is potentially a universal and timeless desire of humans that helps us to carry on past difficulties, complexities and to progress individually and together hopefully in a positive way but not always. Just like in normal life but in a more intense shortened way that helps us to reflect, see ourselves clearer and return to mainstream lives better integrated and ready for the next part of our personal journeys. People think that everything combines together to create an immersive environment. And then you've got the mental journey, you can go to the dancefloor and you still you gotta do your rituals just to get rid of your negative energy so you're not passing it on to others. Make sure we had enough food and a map. A lot of the time your sat NAV isn't going to take you to a post code because there isn't one.</p>
Q9 Beliefs and spirituality	<p>And that's what people believe in underneath. This is people's lives and some people who are absolutely obsessed with the psytrance. Where they can't even listen to any other kind of music anymore. It's been a big part of my life and it's been such a big part of the peoples.</p>
Q10 Healing and benefits	<p>There are all different opinions from people, whether they think that's true or they're just there to get wasted. I always come away feeling better. Attendance does seem to instil a sense of empowerment.</p>

Prompts	Response
	If it's fascinating, it's a microcosm and all that, but absolutely benefits people. There are benefits not only from dancing together, but from being part of the community, socializing more, communicating more, and just physical exercise. Lots of EDM will have benefits the same but what is unique for me is the amount of time spent dancing together and the range of frequencies in psytrance music.

Fieldwork 1 data	
Prompts	Data
Q2 Dance, trance and experiences	<p>The dancefloor was never empty even in the early hours as the music kept playing. One of the key purposes is to dance for artists who are friends and keep a presence while they play as nothing is worse than an empty dancefloor. This dancefloor is a sacred place and there are expected behaviours that newcomers watch and learn. Eye contact is made with those who are evidently in the here and now which helps people to relax in a sea of smiling faces. Some are deeper within a trance state and left to their own personal journey. An eye is kept out to ensure people are okay though it is a value to ensure you look after yourself and do not become the responsibility of others. There are other rules not enforced but expected such as not bumping into each other, not bringing negative energy, not talking when upfront as you have a purpose to send energy and pace to the DJ to spur their creativity and performance, not spilling drinks, not taking drugs, and not not dancing. It is a place of worship for many and must be looked after. Dancing was already underway when I arrived at the dance area. It took some time before I entered the dancefloor as there was so many people there, some of whom I hadn't seen for a decade or more, and hugs, chats, catchups, and pure joy at re-making connections that was extraordinary. Once introductions settled down and I touched base with key people, I settled in hanging out with a long-term friend. We bantered wildly exchanging humour, laughter, giggles, hugs and entertaining each other with memories and observations of what was going on around us, what people were wearing, who was there and general excitement at meeting up. I lost my coat of anxiety temporarily and we proceeded procession like together to the dance area.</p> <p>Though I was looking forward to celebrating my long-term friend's birthday, I was anxious because some people were attending with whom I have had some fractious experiences in the past that were unresolved. However, unexpectedly during the course of the event, discussions were had with both parties and positive resolutions were made so it served as a chance to realign our personal journeys and agree on a plan of action for the future. There were other elements in my personal life that led to me feeling unrelaxed during my time there and I left before it got dark on the Sunday. It was important that I attended to respect my friendship and share my dance energy with the tribe, but I wasn't on top form spending much time talking rather than dancing. This disappointed me because I was undertaking fieldwork, but you have to go with the flow of the journey and learn from it as much as I could. Dancers face forward towards the stage and the stage is deliberately at the same level as the dancers. All artists participate in the dancing as it is seen as an important respectful action to share your energy before and after playing. The music rushes through you like water made of frequencies that wipe out your thoughts and feelings, clearing the decks like a wave pounding over the ship deck of you. Wham - everything is cleared out in a few seconds. The longer</p>

Fieldwork 1 data	
	<p>you stay there the better it gets but a few minutes with this level of precision, organisation purpose, and music choice quality is enough to benefit you physically and mentally.</p>
<p>Q3 Participation, contribution, and community</p>	<p>This event is as close as anyone is going to get the how it is on the inside, at the heart of the underground darkness that you have journeyed on to get here. This means you have evolved, gone past your ego enough, entered on a personal path, learnt correct behaviours, and contributed to the continuation of the ways often passed on through oral means, and going back through generations. There are ages here up to 80 years old and their stories of the elders are passed on to authentic newcomers as the knowledge, the legacy, and the beliefs are gifted to each other.</p> <p>When I first entered the culture, I was not aware of the extent of the oral history of mushrooms and their cultivation and picking, or the mushroom parties of the sixties or the land that has been especially purchased to ensure the survival of the spores. I look forward to hearing about these hidden histories that the mainstream would persecute, restrict, deny, humiliate, and destroy. I too believe in the need to keep it all underground for now at least. Hence not naming any of the people or the events or showing the pictures.</p> <p>I am here witnessing in my 19<sup>th</sup> year how lovely it is to be alive like this, true to myself, allowing others to be true to themselves, sharing the creativity that soars from people visually, aurally, through movement.</p> <p>I stayed awake for a few hours after 2 am, having a car chat with two old friends and a brew. I then sat in the bell tent with other friends which was about 50 yards away while my partner prepared the car for sleeping in joining me later on. I met a couple of new people in the tent who are now partners of long-term friends even though they are still young, I have known some of them since they were teenagers. Drinks, tunes, blow up chairs, blankets and décor were available as normal. It was family no doubt about it. Effort was made to ensure the new partner felt very welcome, some ways of acting were explained, and she was very interested in my long history with the culture and my beliefs in dancing. That knowledge of how dancing together brings energy like a Tesla of human energy. Not sure I know what to do with it yet but then I don't think I'm in the inner sanctum yet!</p> <p>This is a private event where everyone knows each other or knows of each other via the organiser's friendship and family base. It is as close to a real family event as you are going to get. All the participants and organisers are there because of their close relationship with them. Tickets are much sought-after and some disappointment comes to those who don't get invited. There is a sense of having arrived in the inner circle to be invited. It's one of those events. It is also one of the best types of gathering for psytrancers because there are no randomers, there are no newcomers, no disturbances from the public, no need to put on your mainstream face or behaviour, you can dress and act how you wish</p>

Fieldwork 1 data
<p>without judgement (to point). If you have been invited, a certain expectation of decent behaviour is expected. Some people have been part of the psychedelic world for the past 70 years both globally and locally. Their wisdom and philosophy are shared as the culture evolves through this knowledge, these memories, and practices within living generations. People have travelled from all over the UK to participate, contribute and experience this important celebration with a key member of the culture. There are new people here but with an assurance from who they are with that they are suitable and refereed by existing family. I have so many good memories from being here. I had much time to reflect and remember these as I wandered around the environment remembering sunsets, laughter, good times, and incredible dancing to incredible music. We talked about the last party 10 years ago and how things have changed. There are new people who don't know us and people have gone. It was as if as we age, so does the nature of the events - making adaptations for our needs but also changing as the people change. There were people here that were not at the 50th birthday. But essentially the skeleton structure, people and values are repeated with return being important because it is for some their only family. We discussed meeting up in the future for a friend's 80th birthday gathering as we did for her 50th, 60th and 70th optimistic that we will all make it.</p> <p>Namings can be unique to the person or with a surname linked to a demographic tribe such as Wayne Psybase, Jason Frog, Lorraine Psilocybe identifying the soundsystem and area they generally originate from or live in. First names adapt according to if they are original names and there are more than one person with the same name that curiously spread across the country such as Lorraine, Lolly, Loz. Typical naming systems are for small groups but with some additional second part that identifies their tribe, their job, their linked ascribed artists name such as Buttons who provides mushroom décor. Though names changed with a quickness and fluidity as crews and artists come and go. Recent people would know buttons by another name. Some older names indicate a Goan past such as shantigeoffbaba. People who have been influenced, lived, worked, or regularly visit Goa generally have the word Goa in their name such as Goa Jonas who is a festival organiser and music artist having begun djing in Goa at a young age. My name is Jackus Dream as I started doing dream healing workshops as Jackus which was an avatar used on an early UK psychculture forum before social media.</p> <p>There are specific words, sayings, phrases used to this culture that have additional meaning that have shared meanings often obscure that memory prompts and keep deepening and growing amongst tribe members sometimes catching on with other tribes. Part timers and full timers, faffing, slacking, and keep it weird are a few. As the terms faffing and slacking are specially linked to a new northern tribe related to behaviours not allowed meaning not doing anything or not focussing with jibes about being a part timer because you didn't last the pace.</p>

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	<p>Planning was beautifully executed from well beforehand with a contribution towards running costs set up so participants could contribute. It was a private birthday party by invite only but costs are still to be incurred and the family are more than happy to pay. Upon arrival, it was clear that an organised crew were on hand with set shifts for the door, parking, catering, décor and lighting crew, arrangements made for artists travel and play times organised with their requirements and availability in mind. The venue is a licensed pre-existing business that caters for small festivals, healing, and family events as well as a range of musical styles. Many psytrance events have been held at this venue over the last 15 years. The owner and on-site staff are all part of the psytrance family following the values and ethos of the owner. The site is a working farm and camping site with several homes being in the area. There were children living on site as well as dogs and farm animals which was taken into consideration by the participants and respect was shown. Participants did not bring their own dogs or children. The camping area was about a 5-minute walk into the pubic area located on a very steep hill that is known for being windy! I slept in my car as I have prior experience of the weather and environs.</p> <p>Two catering stalls were outside: one selling vegetarian food and the other selling non-alcoholic drinks, smoothies, and other health-based drinks available throughout the day. Portaloos were hired outside the chill marquee. Immediately outside the barn entrance was a paved area that had been covered by a large stretch marquee that provided much needed protection from the elements so that settees, tables, and a small dance area could exist without being rained on.</p> <p>There were more than one birthday cakes some personalised and others brought along to add to the sugary delights. There was a short ceremony wishing the birthday girl well with some speeches, delightful smiles, and banter. I stood with a long-term friend during the ceremony making jokes, being naughty and being fed icing from a spoon as she didn't want to eat the icing. I was all sticky round the chops, laughing about how I am too ocd to deal with the sticky.</p>
Q4 Music	<p>The music was the best you could ever get because it was her birthday and it is her life, her passion, she is a psytrance geek, obsessed with the music, the lifestyle, and demanding precision when planning sets, the event, and every small detail. The music was all psytrance throughout the three days though downtime was had on Saturday morning to sleep and rest for the crew. The music was expertly planned to follow the journey rhythms of day and night, light and dark to re-enact the dance journey on this physical and psychological travelling together we will participate in. As it becomes night, the dancefloor fills up for the main ritual of dancing together with the DJs at the helm and the dancers firing up the energy to get us to that enhanced consciousness together.</p> <p>The atmosphere is electric on the Saturday night and the dark imagery and immersive environment parallel the darkness of the music as it</p>

Fieldwork 1 data	
	<p>transcends into a surreal and often unnerving sonic valley of death. Even without drugs, this music will take you to where everyone else is going and you can't get away from it, you can't stop the experience if you are in this collective space, once you are on the psychedelic bus, there is no getting off. Until the sun comes up and the music becomes sunny. People go outside to feel the rays of the sunlight emerging from a profound and transformatory inner sanctum feeling that they made it through again, together, psychedelically. The real drug is the music, the artificial drugs are a way to prolong the experience, to get you quickly to that place as it is hard to dismantle the mainstream cage you are in. The sound literally blasts the mind free from its everyday shackles. Hay bales are used to deal with sound abatement problems. The crew are keen believers in looking after nature and follow their own green policy that is strictly abided by most participants. There is a flexibility that sometimes people may be not pick up after themselves so a little flexibility is shown though gentle jibes will be made.</p>
Q5 Ancestors	<p>The majority of the designs are mushrooms based and it reminds me of an article I recently read about liberty cap hats given to freed slaves and ponder on the significance of this. This is a hidden acknowledgement of the past, are enactment of something unsaid, unsayable, persecuted but passionately believed in. To continue a history of dance, mushrooms and trance without the overground knowing, keeping the knowledge, wisdom, rituals and gatherings hidden in the underground, like the mushrooms. The UV replicates a dark world with sight loses dominance over sound and movement as it would be in the mycelium. For me ancestral connections come from more recent ancestors not related, people who have been doing the same gatherings for whatever reason away from mainstream society for the past 60-70 years from mobile, off grid, travellers, free thinkers, outsiders, people not accepted like myself. Before me I see and congregate with people from a range of backgrounds, beliefs, practices many of whom believe we are doing something timeless though the specifics are vague and the memories are intuitive with little to go on from a lack of written history, snippets of oral knowledge, not even aware of our pasts and heritage due to the disconnect we all have experienced. Newcomers round the fire relate their stories about how they have arrived here and most involve traumatic, societal rejection or having to hide who they are.</p> <p>I have felt over many years of dancing and once again here I return to a dance space like people in the past did. I have nothing else to go on, there is little history about who people like us were, what they did, where they went. I don't think people are trying to reproduce what happened in the past but base present practices on what makes us feel good now. A place like this exudes with centuries of human usage and without even knowing its background, the 500 trees and the conservation of its original landscape can be felt. I feel relief and freedom today and can dismantle my mangled self from the contusions and toxicity of my home life.</p>
Q6 Environment and nature	<p>The landscape is stunning with views across the valley, the fields and a wonderful view of the sky, stars, the moon, sunrises, and sunsets along</p>



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	<p>with ancient trees throughout the site. There are barns, outbuilding and static caravans that are occupied by various, generally eco businesses that rent the buildings along with permanent staff accommodation, storage units, toilet, and shower buildings for workers. As it was the end of the season, these were out of bounds. The site was only open for this private party. The main dance area was an old stone barn with a wooden roof in a long rectangular shape about 100 x 100 feet long with a door at the back, the DJ booth at the far end from the door and a small room at the back which acted as a bar.</p> <p>There were sightings of osprey and buzzards on site. The trees are as ancient as the farm which is part of a royal estate and the walk to and from the camp area is a delight as ever. Seeing the sunrise rise from the back of the car tilted at an angle so I watched it under the blanket with the boot open while lying down drinking tea on the Saturday morning with golden rays and shining mist. In front of me was a selection of bell tents, tepees, tents, camper vans and a portalo. There was a wood burner chugging away in the tepee backed up by laughter from the occupants as the early morning banter continued as it had done throughout the night since the music stopped.</p>
Q7 Customs and habits	<p>It was stunning inside the barn, completely disorienting because of the décor and the UV. The décor was mushroom based as expected. There were specially made felt 3d mushrooms hanging around the walls that picked the lighting beautifully even in the daytime as the main barn was dark creating a continuous UV immersive environment. The décor crew are part of the family and made an original effort for this special person's birthday celebrations. The mushroom décor was extant across the site with wooden poles and netted mushroom shapes at the top of the hill with mushroom lights used as festoon lighting. Yellow and green UV cloth strips from another crew adorn the entrance to the catering area.</p> <p>The circle of life is reproduced three times overlapping as the décor under the stage area. Above the stage is a UV ohm symbols, to the left and right are blue kites with suns with speakers coming out of them and psychedelic patterns along with sunflowers with smiling faces. There is a green caterpillar at the front on the shelf of the stage with spiral stretch lit up temples at either side. The alien motifs and use of ancient symbology have a purpose that may not be initially evident to newcomers or outsiders. The alien motifs are not about aliens from another planet but a sign that culture members feel like aliens on their own planet. This motif runs through the philosophies, ideas, décor, artwork and particularly in the music. Music was played that gently but ironically refers to aliens with a slightly scary surface aspect that could put off newcomers like the tripping, hallucinatory and LSD references within the music are a safety barrier to exclude those who are not ready to understand it is only fun. There is a song by Hallucinogen that is played that uses movie samples such as 'and they took me to a hotel room and gave me lsd' with a scared tone from the young female. When the song is played there are knowing smiles going round, not because people are experienced and able to hallucinate but because you know the culture is not like that really. It is a</p>

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	<p>front, a cover, a disguise to put mainstreamers off from the real purpose of the insiders. The decor on the stage looks like a portal with layers of material enacting a 3d vision of UV and blue immersion with the DJs body fitting in the middle as if they are driving a machine at the entrance to the other dimensions.</p>
Q8 Journey and preparations	<p>The literal journey was horrendous with torrential rain. I had been at a family funeral the day before and was already tired from emotions and travelling. The dog had to be dropped off at a new kennels beforehand and by the time I hit the motorway it was rush hour which prolonged the journey. I was so tired I got lost and ended up adding miles to the journey. I knew where I was going as I had been there many times before, but it required some sat navving and manually working out where it was nearer the location as it was pitch black. I wasn't in the best of places before arriving and tried to calm down once I had arrived. I had intended to be there before dark to set up near friends but decided to just park up where I could and sleep in the car. Unfortunately, I parked on the steep hill next to the entrance onto the field and some cars skidded towards my car, fortunately not hitting my car and one of the vans ended up in the hedge. They left it there until the morning when we could help pull it out.</p> <p>It was a dark and revealing journey for me. I expected some negative feelings, but I left with a release of built-up anger, years of waiting for resolution had stagnated within me, never expecting it to be released and for over five years I had held deep inside me this negative energy that often destroyed my positive experience on the dancefloor. I would often remove myself from the collective dance to avoid affecting others. This had positive and negative effects. I am pleased the resolution has happened and my journey within this community could now proceed in a favourable direction but aware of the possibly permanent damage it has done to my sense of belonging and ability to perform dance energy in the future. This lasted some time after the event, and I felt it best to remain on the periphery for the time being. The negative energy is like dirt on your skin that will take some time to wash off.</p> <p>It is incredible how creative people speak, dance, move, interact after the first day with incredible ideas spurting, connections being made, relationships deepened and made anew. I left with ideas I had never had before for projects and future possibilities, and I contributed to others' paths by listening, advising, sharing and progressing. Humans together can do this for each other. I listened to a friend discuss his progress in terms of his occupation, reminding me of past conversations, what he has taught me in the past, allowing us both to reflect on where we were then and how we are now, faces deeper engrained with maturity, minds able to understand more clearly, and wordless acknowledgement of each other's journeys, strength, and desire to continue on our paths whatever happens. I expressed hope to see him again in the future. We were talking in depth for several hours, wrapped in each other's sharing, learning, remembering and delight at still being able to meet, belong, and be alive together however temporary the future is. A wide range of</p>

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	<p>practical objects are brought in various bags such as blankets, changes of clothes, drinks and food, alcohol, and other supplies. Enough is brought to share such as the shots glasses, about 5 different bottles of novelty shots, gin, and god knows what. It is hilarious to watch people try to outdo each other by making awful combinations of cocktails and challenge each other to drink it. I sometimes have a rucksack with me with emergency munch, water, orange juice, sweets, spare toilet paper, plasters and tablets in case people need them. Encampments had music and we visited a friend's bell tent that had heating, drinks and blow-up seating, décor, blankets, and music.</p> <p>A fine selection of mushroom, alien and psychedelic patterned clothing was worn by many of the participants. Head dresses included psychedelic colours, lighting, greenery, mushrooms, and quirky original ornaments attached. Prior notice meant I knew it was partially indoors, so a selection of inside outfits was brought, regularly changes were made especially by the female dressing participants. Coats were brought from the encampment for the chill of the evening and generally dance boots were worn that were comfy, practical, and ready for potential rain and mud when outside. Flared trousers seem fashionable this year or catsuits, but the priority is to add to the immersive environment by dressing in psychedelic colours and patterns. Some are just practical wearing woollen jumpers, combat pants and clothes to sweat in. I wear combat leggings, usually tree-based colours and chunky boots with a big fur coat and a woolly hat with gloves as I don't like being cold. Male identifiers often participate in dressing up with UV coats, hats, shoelaces, and face paint.</p>
<p>Q9 Beliefs and spirituality</p>	<p>Keeping the religion of mushrooms and dance in nature alive in the here and now. Floating from the ceiling are 3 foot tall, felted mushrooms in bright colours in a fly agaric shape. The walls are covered with 5 x 5 foot artwork all UV, all bright, with a vast range of different content from spacey mushrooms, aliens, Shivas, ganga, patterns, ancient spirals and rock art reproductions, dancing stick rune like stick figures. There are also hanging from the walls smaller felt mushrooms beautifully detailed and hand-made. There is stretch material across the bottom of the beams on the wooden ceiling off which the lasers bounce. There is greenery, butterflies, unicorns and moving dots of light on the floor and flicking across the dancers so everyone is doused in the UV light. UV clothing stands out such as t-shirts, hats in mushroom shapes, with long tassels, leggings, coats, head dresses. On the altar is the soundsystem bathed in UV light with the priest like DJs staring at us and the decks ensuring precision in performing this journey-based playlist for us. The genuine emotions and eye contacts between performer and audience is electric as the DJ delights in watching the audience react to the next track and sharing its brilliance with us. The two females DJs playing back-to-back have worked together for many years and is the highlight of any playlist with the audience admiring their dedication like they are nuns to psytrance. The musical equipment and speakers are top of the range specially the speakers are made to custom for specific purposes whether indoors, outdoors, on peat, in a forest, on a moor, large and small venues,</p>

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	<p>handcrafted by one of the family. The quality of sound is very important in psytrance, and people have invested in buying the best. There are crew representatives here from the other gatherings whether here as crew or as participants, but a wealth of knowledge and skills shared across different tribes. The beliefs and values of the organiser are built on long-time involvement with similar underground music styles, festivals, mobile living and working, and being an outsider to mainstream culture. She has travelled through over 40 years of different subcultures, genres, work, and connections that are admirable, honoured in her commitment to the culture, and a role model that sets a high standard for us all. I remember when she gave me a tour of her car layout which she lives in pointing out where to keep food, water, torches, carpets, integral lighting, and the fullest glove compartment ever witnessed with all kinds of first aid, emergency provisions and precisely thought out uses such as the carpet not only acted as comfort and warmth but as a door stop so the boot didn't fully shut.</p>

Fieldwork 2 Data

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Prompts	Data
Q1 Description and culture	<p>Upon arriving, it was clear that the festival was being held in a very public place just off a three-way roundabout within walking distance to the town. There was a main road visible from the camping area and passing cars could clearly see the event as there was only a low-level hedge. Another road passed on the other side of the field. There was bright streetlights on throughout the night and the noise of the cars could be heard continually throughout the day. I was alerted to this as soon as I arrived by encampment members who expressed disappointment about the environment. This experience was added to everyday and by many participants because car drivers would often shout derogatory comments such as get a wash you effing hippy. This felt threatening and there was a lack of sense of safety from the prejudicial mainstream society as the fence could easily be mounted. It was clear that during the night-time some local randomers had entered the area as they stood out like a sore thumb. I think this added to the feeling of disconnection unfortunately.</p> <p>I see an ideal microcosm of how an egalitarian clan could but sceptical and savagely critical about not taking ourselves too seriously or seeing the danger in making such all-encompassing statements, my mind reminds me to be careful with such thinking. I have adapted to the acceptance and sometimes sadness that what we experience here is shortlived, not allowed in mainstream society and even though it would be beneficial to change mainstream ways to align with psyculture, it isn't going to happen in my lifetime and we have to enjoy what we have in small snippets. At least we have this space here together and it is better than nothing in a society that restricts types of people, personalities, and practices. I want to be here to dance near the trees with others. I wandered around on the Sunday stopping at the healing encampment under some magnificent oaks and chatted about the future, the joy of being able to do this that is worth the journey, the expense, and the problems that come with it that I am aware of. It isn't always fluffy unicorns and happy happy. This is people and they have issues and act them out, they take drugs and behave badly. Gossip kicks in and results in feuds like in any culture. I can see how elders' express sadness about how people, gatherings, beliefs, attitudes have changed but I also see the joy that despite all that, we are still meeting up and dancing. A wide mix of people from different areas, countries, tribes, crews, beliefs, backgrounds, intentions are there but a positive energy giving focus was evident in the main area all weekend. A vast range of ages were on the dancefloor with many long-term Goa elders upfront and leading the way.</p>
Q2 Dance, trance and experiences	<p>Normally my best time for trancing is at sunset where there is a feeling of in-betweenness between day and night. The music at this time was as expected typically fast enough but suitably engaging with a range of challenging sounds, rhythms, and newness. After having an early tea, I headed to the dancefloor and danced at the back as the volume started</p>

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	<p>to rise. I am not keen on too much volume generally as I dance at the front, but I am flexible and danced at the back of the main area. Dancing was often interrupted by much welcome conversation with friends old and new. Sometimes sitting down for a rest or getting a cup of tea. On the first night I was there about 3 hours, but the tea van stopped serving so I returned to my encampment area where we had cooking equipment. Our encampment were there frequently as we returned to our area where we could sit, have time off, chat, laugh and enjoy being out in nature at night-time together catching up and general banter. Later on when it was nearer midnight I went back to dance for an hour and catch the feeling and energy at the back area. The front was a bit full on like the music. Along with some of my tribe members, I did not feel totally at ease on the first night certainly not in a position to accept the energy and try to achieve a trance state. I am used to travelling to different locations and dancing amongst different tribes, so I was surprised that the connection was not fully engaging. I didn't trance at all all weekend but enjoyed random spurts of dancing with others. Often, I trance when alone with my eyes shut and even though I tried this on several occasions, I couldn't achieve any form of trance experience.</p> <p>There are many layers of consciousness around me from some in altered realities and others in an unreality but most are experiencing different types of reality not unreality or hallucinating. Some fully look as if they are not there but can quickly regain reality and go for a drink or a wee. It is a managed state of being. Very few are excessively out of control. One of the key values I am experiencing is that of self-control, out of respect for others, but also as not to affect the collective energies. If you do, you temporarily withdraw until you are balanced again. One woman dancing near me was from another musical genre. I could tell by her dancing style that she was techno based. I felt she was a little uncertain on her feet and going for it a bit much, not observing around her or having a responsible enough spatial awareness of other's closeness or movements. I danced behind her for a few seconds, aligned her energies. She slowed down and looked behind her at me, trying to focus her vision. I offered her a drink of water which she took along with some deep breaths. She asked if I had a lighter for a cig which I gave her, and she gave me a cig. We bantered a bit as she regained speech while having a little light-hearted jig. Her friend came over and then started dancing again. I sat down where I was before against the marquee side. I stayed there for a bit and several times she turned around and smiled, much more in control and with a better understanding of the rhythm with smoother footwork.</p> <p>As the dance collective gels together by the time we get to Sunday the dancing is fluid, with a communal easy bounce amongst dancers during the daytime dancing. People are easy and relaxed when looking at each other, aligning moves, turning around, and sharing warm looks, and their appreciation along with the now effervescent positive energy they are swimming in. On the night-time as the music gets darker, the dancing</p>

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	<p>becomes more intense, the distorted vision of the participants and the play of light and lasers on their faces adds to the darker environment as the dancer's movements became faster, more full on and experimental. The music is experimental with metallic and organic unique sounds challenging the dancers to keep up and expanding their consciousness with its sonic entanglements.</p>
<p>Q3 Participation, contribution, and community</p>	<p>The values of the organisers include sharing experiences with 'beautiful, lovely, fluffy, open minded crowd of people' according to the writeup essentially with the aim to dance. There was gratitude, respect, love, and appreciation to the participants from the organisers for keeping the place clean indicating that the site was cleaner than it was before they got there making sure it is immaculate with no rubbish left. This is important as well as sending thanks afterwards to everyone for making the event happen. The organisers acknowledge that they have had to adapt and change perspectives in order to still survive in a post-pandemic world but that they did it and we did it together. The organisers explained transparently the issues with avoiding clashes with other gatherings having to change date which didn't please some since they had had to hold onto their tickets for so long. They gave their apologies but had no choice in order to avoid clashes and retain the core crew and artists.</p> <p>The organiser shared his delight that 'no one was looking at the DJ' but we 'were all lost in trance and dancing together' where the 'dancefloor energy was the centre of the party, it was never a stage'. He explained the origins in that it was a small group of amazing friends and volunteers who started it up.</p> <p>The organisers say how with little money, venue cancellations, and some personal losses, they have survived. A value is not to run before you can walk, that it is not about making money, but to 'share the freedom of the trance state that we are all capable of reaching on the dancefloor'. He gives thanks for the blessings and words of encouragement he has received. He hopes everyone has 'enjoyed the ride so far' and that it is not over yet. He did not want to go illegal but within the remits of the laws of the lands because it is not about profit even though it is 'apparent that some people, even in our tribe, are only interested in themselves and profit and not the welfare of us all'. He knows there is an appreciation of the respect for measures put in place post-pandemic and they take full responsibility for ensuring safety and enjoyment. The organiser doesn't want to have to deal with the 'selfish minority' and wants to progress towards a clearer 'vision of how we can best look after each other'. My contribution at this event was to present my research in a talk in the healing area to pass on my findings. While giving the talk it was discussed that such areas at psytrance events are 'training grounds' for a better phrase where we share such information, co-creating, co-working, connecting towards greater understanding like a psychculture school.</p>

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	<p>There were many opportunities for me to meet up with people I haven't seen for a very long time with many conversations to be had exchanging information, knowledge about events, people's personal journey progresses such as studying, jobs, following their own creative desires such as my studying with plenty of people including those who had participated in my research. I was blown away with positive emotions after the event having talked to hundreds of new and known people about the research including meeting other researchers where we undertook a spontaneous panel discussion because of the similarity of our research areas and potential collaboration opportunities in the future. There were people there who were the reason I have undertaken this research that bolstered my confidence, congratulated me on my progress and provided much needed support and guidance to last me to the end. I reciprocated by expressing pleasure at seeing new collaborations between crews post-pandemic that brought a strength to the psychulture community to ensure it survived. These intentional connections have ensured that crews have grown stronger by more community involvement and contact. I listened to other networking opportunities happening amongst artist, décor providers and healers during the event showing the continuation of robust interactions after the event including myself sharing my number or social media links with others to continue connection.</p> <p>It was interesting observing people I know being at a gathering where there were people and tribes they didn't know. Going further south or north is not only a trek, it means congregating with others who you may not know. It can be unsettling at first even for an elder like me. But I have been travelling widely and over the years got to know at least by sight many people, As a dancer I have danced next to people and never spoken but event after event we are next to each other dancing or nodding at each across the camp area, chatting anew in the toilet queue or at the food stalls, sitting and sparking up conversation with people who quickly stop being strangers. The acknowledged usp for a psytrance event is everyone comes armed with that knowledge of belonging and, if not, they will soon feel it. This culture is based on dancing and that is the glue that persuades me to return. I am here with others who believe in dancing, and I feel that is a timeless desire: to meet to dance, to socialise, to be with others in a difficult world where loneliness and isolation dominate. I don't feel it here. I feel safe and free. Even initially hesitant newcomers or those feeling uncertain because they don't know many people, will eventually feel this belonging, community, and connection like I am now. On the Saturday morning, I sparked up the cooker for a brew as others were up doing the same thing, nodding across the tents at each, dogs skipping around on the crispy ground, feeling alive and together. I felt comfortable making early morning banter with the people at the camp opposite. Our encampment was rustling into awakesness, rubbing eyes, taking a seat as I offer a brew and a seat to my crew. The music has been on very low in one of our tents all night and we look forward to when the music in the marquee</p>



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	<p>comes back on soon patiently expecting that delight. The same on the Sunday morning, the same habits, waking up together, in our separate tents but together. I had someone with us who came alone and felt initially nervous but has returned in the early hours after being with new friends at their encampment. As I wandered to the toilet, I say hello to the chap whose birthday it is who I sold a spare ticket to so he could come ,and the affection shines in our eyes about helping each other out. I didn't know him when I sold him the ticket but I do now. He made a determined effort to find me in person to hug and say thanks as the event was sold out. This is an event under 500 people, so it does not have the same licensing restrictions, police, and council involvement as larger festivals. However small an event, the same planning, management and infrastructure has to be hired, negotiations with artists and travel arrangements put into place. There was 100 foot x 30 foot long marquee, a geodome for artist's work and chilling and a quality soundsystem. In the main marquee there is a stage area built to about two foot high and surrounded in mdf cut design with a small window for the DJ booth. In the DJ booth are the decks, mixers, and monitor speakers along with lighting for the nighttime. In the main marquee are speakers positioned along its length and diagonally at the front at stands. This 'rig' is a soundsystem which is a particularly sought after by a known specialist in creating soundsystems to play psytrance music on. This particular soundsystem is the focus of the event being appreciated by organisers and the audience alike. In a way having the audience facing the soundsystem is more about some kind of worship of that rather than a religious altar or décor in front. I watched the interactions between several different crews who had collaborated to provide the rig, stage, and sound system infrastructure along with the sound engineers and stage management of the main area. They had an encampment area behind the marquee providing instant access for the engineers, an artist's welcome area and security throughout even when the marquee was shut during the early hours. There was a large bus area for socialising with various tents, vans and campervans strategically placed around the marquee entrance restricting access. Someone was always awake during the night-time. In fact, the bus was pretty much a party area providing artists with pre and post-performance celebration opportunities.</p> <p>A majority of men where UV t-shirts ranging from ohm and Indian symbols to aliens with spacey and psychedelic backgrounds. Inside the main marquee there were palm trees, quirky psychedelic androids, a stunning selection of visual hangings around the outside walls displaying mainly trippy and psychedelic scenes, often Eastern with very bright colours. The main stage décor was mind blowingly UV at night-time with a third eye and spiralling fractals emanating from a central source. The third eye was inside a spaceship. At night the whole marquee was awash in blue UV lighting with moving spirals similar to prehistoric symbols around the top of the marquee. At the front was a stretch material area with moving colours across the spectrum. The UV lighting</p>

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	<p>saturated everything and everyone in blue light. It was difficult to initially orient yourself upon entering. Some of the décor referenced Indian symbology but in very bright colours with ohm symbols, flowers and abstract patterns including Shiva. Looking upwards at the main stage there were faces evident in the patterning and what looked like a stretching alien hand spiralling up the marquee pole. The main stage décor in front of the decks were very bright and original. I hadn't seen this décor before at previous events by this organiser. Looking from the front to the back of the marquee, there was a flurry of UV clothing on participants, UV face painting that merged them in with the immersive environment. The stretch décor created a multi-coloured tunnel effect mixing purple and green colours. One alien-based décor background was of an alien in UV with what appeared to be circuit boards or a mix of runic symbols that could also be chemical formula such as for LSD.</p> <p>The organisers provided a range of food outlets, drinks outlets and a bar within the marquee as well as toilets, water taps and festoon lighting at night-time to see where you were going. The toilets were cleaned daily and were ample without much queueing. A fire was kept going with some wooden logs as seating. I sat round the fire on several occasions a couple of times just to take time out and stare at the fire. Another time I was there admiring two children as I knew their parents before they were born and have watched them grow up embedded within the culture knowing how they are incredible in terms of intellectual development, cognitive and emotional intelligence, and hands-on skills such as keeping the fire going.</p> <p>A makeup artist went around during the daytime painting third eye symbols which represent the gathering on people's foreheads that connects people. The paint was UV so it glowed during the night-time.</p>
Q4 Music	<p>Incredible music throughout, playlists are exquisitely planned and us audience members are fully appreciative. At events so close to civilisation there are restrictions on playing music continuously throughout the three days whereas at an unlicensed and remote event the music plays 24/7. This disconnect can have an effect on the intensity of the experience, but it is accepted that licensing laws, landowner preferences and family friendly events will have a downtime on the music. Music was played quietly at individual encampment areas throughout the downtime to overcome this sense of disconnect. Another element that led to disconnect was the switch to a silent disco after midnight. There were a limited number of headphones so not everyone could participate. It is accepted that noise abatement issues may lead to organisers having to do this. It meant people stopped dancing at the peak of the playlist journey returning to their encampment and socialising instead of dancing. The music went off in the early hours until late morning.</p>
Q5 Ancestors	<p>I felt the delight of dancing with people I haven't danced with for four years. I felt an energy surge threw me very quickly when I entered the dancefloor. As in showing respect at a new gathering being from another</p>

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	<p>tribe, I did not go to the front at first but showed my worth, made eye contact with strangers and exuded due respect. The music gave instant anxiety relief and within minutes I was dancing in unison with people around, exchanging smiles and became part of the flow of energy showing thanks around me by giving back positive energy. I felt the appreciation and tentatively moved forward to join the front dancers. When there I recognised people I knew and sent imaginary connecting threads to them with my hands to join up with my tribe members further spreading our collective energy amongst this other tribe. This took about 15 minutes for the energy to activate and for me to become included in the collective energy.</p> <p>Some elders were dancing with the original focus. It is acknowledged that those in the middle and the front are intent on dancing without being disturbed or talking to ferment a stronger energy. Some people saw me and came for long overdue hugs and chitter chatter, so I moved away from the centre. It would be rude to not accept the interaction and show the affection we have for each other. There is little discussion defining this possibly ancient sensation I have experienced but it is felt, acknowledged, and remains undefined which is probably the safest thing to do in the present political climate.</p>
Q6 Environment and nature	<p>The long narrow nature of the dance tent added to the disconnect because if you were at the back, you could not see the stage or the beautiful altar like décor at the front as well as the amazing lighting system.</p>
Q7 Customs and habits	<p>There were a selection of seating objects brought and arranged in convenient spots in encampments outside the marquee including folding chairs, tables, blankets, rugs, drinking equipment, food bags, portable trolleys with provisions in them, rubbish bags, coats, scarves, sunglasses and personal décor items generally UV. I brought cooking equipment, table and chairs, lighting equipment, spare mugs, a selection of munch food, fruit, emergency pork pies, haribos, chocolate, biscuits, plenty of drinks like cordial, no alcohol as I don't drink, toilet paper, bags for rubbish and dog poo bags, torches, festoon lighting for inside and outside the tent, blankets and pillows for comfort inside the living area of the tent, tent beds, sleeping bags, minimal clothes because I knew I had to carry it quite far from the car park. However, someone in our encampment had a trolley we could have used. Preparations included contact with our tribe beforehand about who was getting there first and then when I arrived, I knew where they were so we can make a beeline for their space. They helped us set up as they were already there, and another person joined us setting up her tepee and chatting happily as we personalised our space. Other northern crew camped just at the back of us.</p>
Q8 Journey and preparations	<p>The personal journey to get to the gathering was fraught with difficulties from being refused by the kennels to take my dog so I had to bring her with me. I was worried this would affect my participant observation, but it ensured I sat down more than I would normally and allowed me an extended time in observing what participants were doing.</p>

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	<p>The organisers put major effort into ensuring the journey was accompanied by an immersive environment with the beautiful garden like altar at the front of the marquee which was a wonderful liminal delight especially at night-time as the UV came to life with the lighting and lasers bounced off the UV décor, clothing and other artistic features throughout the marquee and outside where the UV lit objects added a non-reality focus to the event. When the marquee was full at night, it was difficult to enjoy the delightful altar unless you are at the front. The organisers extended the liminal immersive environment outside the main marquee through the lighting and décor. The altar at the front had many UV based plastic flowers that was initially difficult to see in the night-time. This was mixed with a range of religious and spiritual objects from shivas to furry animals.</p> <p>The artists are as enthusiastic in their dancing as the audience bouncing around while making direct eye contact that takes away any sense of superiority from artists as they have a role in providing this musical journey but a thrill from watching the effect it has on the dancers. There is no status here with the artists being temporarily employees of the audience and they freely come and dance with us on the dancefloor. The music infects us all. Wherever you, you can hear the beat. It infects us and continues to infect us. It takes over our consciousness temporarily. It is what we came here for. To be washed in it, by it, with it.</p>
Q9 Beliefs and spirituality	<p>There are signs of religious symbology and spiritual behaviours, following rituals, displaying important objects in people's tents, their clothing, the artwork they bring with them. I have no religious faith being brought up and remaining an atheist because my mum told me not to believe those fairy tales. For me gatherings may be effused with acknowledged or unacknowledged religiosity whether people believe it or not and it does look pretty and feel like it is a special gathering that has a powerful effect on you. But I believe religions put a varnish or a veneer over the reality of lives and the things people enjoyed for their control purposes. An outsider looking in at this gathering may get that impression. I feel relaxed and free to express my personal non-beliefs at these gatherings because religious is left at the door like a pair of worn boots.</p> <p>People perform yoga in the morning and go to workshops. They are doing it for the exercise. People have shivas and ohms in their encampment décor, but they are not Buddhist, but it looks good. If there is anything religious, it is about important things that cannot be discussed or practised in the mainstream such as the power of belief in dance, mushroom beliefs, and cultural practices, and taking drugs to enhance vision and self-understanding as well as the vital experience of being outside, hopefully in nature, away from what stops us being ourselves. I can commune and celebrate with what I love here like when I was five and nipping off to the woods to sit and be with the trees. I have kept that hidden in my normal life being humiliated and laughed at for being a tree hugger. But I kept hugging and being with trees as my</p>

Fieldwork 2 data	
	<p>salve, my salvation, my key relationship. At this gathering the trees are old and my heart flutters with delight that the organiser also saw the trees the first time they visited the sites and although the site is not perfect, the trees are. I was able to ceremonially walk towards them, touch them, say hello, and have a non-word conversation with them, in front of like-minded other people without fear of ridicule. Because I believe in trees and am sleeping under them for a few days and that alone makes me feel better.</p>
Q10 Healing and benefits	<p>Even though full prolonged dancing was not undertaken, I benefited from being surrounded by tribe members. It is as if their energy seeps in even without being on the dancefloor. I was dancing on the Sunday in the sunshine just half in and half out of the marquee listening to exquisite music and surging out positive energy effortlessly because I felt so good, so relaxed and starting to feel at home. I turned around to see a long-time friend and believer in the power of dance to the point of it being religious and clocked her beaming face. I smiled back with pure energy and delight. Without speaking or moving, as we were mid-dance and energy sharing, I realised where that surge of energy was coming from, and it was her. So I reciprocated. Later when we talked we acknowledged sending cheeky energy to communicate to each other. There was no particular trancing, prolonged dancing, trance induced by chemicals between us. Just an elder's knowledge and ability to share energy and make a psychic connection. The dancing enhanced the intensity of the reality rather than producing a hypnotic or hallucinatory state.</p>

Fieldwork 3 Data

Fieldwork data gathering 3	
Q2 Dance, trance and experiences	<p>At such high turnover dance areas, the flow of dancing is often constantly interrupted because of different people joining, and leaving, different energies that may be negative that restrict a full group immersion in dance energy. At the front especially at night where it is difficult to enter because of the dark, the lights, the chemical technologies and the quite often intimate nature of friends dancing together at the front, may put off newcomers but gel family members into a group trance state. This was observed at the front when it was dark but in the daytime, there was a frequent change of dancer tourists visiting at the front, people foot tapping but talking, taking pictures, saying hello, and with the acceleration of the heat, side-stepping individually seemed to be the norm. When it was dark, I went up the dark hill to the right of the stage where people were mainly sitting and staked a dancespace at the top where the view of everyone below was magnificent like my own personal show. It was on a steep slope that required careful dancing. Sometimes I entered a trance quickly by closing my eyes, but it was a bit risky to dance on such an incline in the dark with my eyes closed. It can kick in really quick, the trance state. The is not a full on hallucinatory, otherworldly experience but a mild euphoria that comes from letting go of the mind being in control and letting the body take over the movements which then seem to be seamless aligning with the sounds in the music.</p> <p>It was scorching hot and remained so throughout the festival. At night-time, the liminality and other dimensionality is extreme because of the excessive UV, pitch blackness on the dancefloor and some of the walkways including the often-treacherous steps up to the camping areas, the potentially dangerous dark areas in the woods and even the toilet area is a little hairy to navigate. The crowds of people walk fast towards you and I can't see them, I feel disorientated, unsteady on my feet and having to take care as I move around preferring to walk on the side rather than the path as I can't keep up with the pace</p> <p>On the Saturday night, we stay at stage 2 often up the hill. We are surrounded by known people here. In fact, unless you know it is there, the hill bit can't be seen from down below. I feel like a hobbit hiding inside the mountain and sneakily looking out from a safe place at the chaos below. The hill is extremely steep and pitch black. I am dancing on my tip toes and could easily fall forward but I don't for some reason. The view below is incredible with the sound rushing around you and you seem to dance with ease and comfort drowned in the healing frequencies. After a few hours we seek the pleasure of dancing in the crowd below and adding our now positive energy with others. I have been suffering from negative energy I can't remove for some time and wanted to free myself from it. It was mind and body altering to be amongst the mass of dancers. I had regular breaks as I am no longer used to prolonged dancing and it was a very extreme experience. Lockdown took my stamina and endurance</p>

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	<p>away and we discussed with others how we had to take regular breaks from it hoping it would one day return. At night-time, tribes enter the dancefloor generally together form a bond bringing up their energy and share it with others. As they fit together with this invisible energy, it replicates the lit-up octagon shapes above them.</p>
Q3 Participation, contribution, and community	<p>I see many people I have interacted with, talked with, danced with from tribes from all over the country in the psytrance area and beyond with many stops when walking around to talk to people. I met two people who are relatively new to the scene who attended my talk. When they made their way to the psytrance area, I beckoned them over to where I was sitting as they looked at little lost. They were grateful for the acknowledgement, we danced, shared drinks and stories. People have done this for me over the years taking time out to include me and making me feel wanted and welcome. The core values of the organisers are evident everywhere with the attention to detail in every aspect of their infrastructure providing a fully inclusive environment. There is a gold standard at this gathering where all the infrastructure, welfare, security, food, and drink provision, living areas and places for support are catered for. There are other dance areas, so it is not a pure psytrance event, and it is clear that not everyone as yet subscribes to the psychulture values, but the existing tribe members demonstrate good moral behaviour and beliefs in the way they behave. Many roles are voluntary in lieu of a ticket but people are happy to have limited free time in exchange for work. This enables you to deepen contacts and increase networking for further work opportunities. I see friends of mine stewarding, building artwork, working at catering and jewellery stalls.</p> <p>It is important time for me at this festival because I am sharing my results so far with the audience who have been anticipating my research, or participating, or even not knowing anything about the research or psychulture. Contribution is important here because I couldn't attend if I didn't contribute. Elsewhere people are contributing here whether as an artist, infrastructure, stall holders, catering units, build staff, etc, will be reliant on working and contributing in order to attend. They may have reduced access to the festival during their shifts but think the sacrifice is worth it.</p> <p>There is a formal opening ceremony that is a medley of pagan, witch and other cultural rituals, ornaments and displays with a calling of the corners of the earth, the elements, and the ancestors at its heart. Some participants, especially at the front lead the way holding palms up to the sky and joining in with the chants and speeches. Some watch learning the ways. The procession starts up top on the hill from the healing area in the woods and is led by the performers singing and playing instruments until they arrive at stage 1 to perform the ceremony before the formal opening of the festival. This happens at the psytrance stage.</p> <p>This festival is hard work, and you have to keep your wits about you looking after your property, not bumping into others, being able to</p>

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	<p>understand if someone starts talking to you. It is full of constantly moving people, so walking anywhere is a challenge. Staying still or sitting down can also be a challenge if you on a general walkway or people walk past while you are sitting down. Some people identify as animals, or I suppose it is an animal familiar or a journey animal you align with.</p> <p>The shared personal values are evident in the sharing, being friendly, welcoming, introducing new people to ease their integration into an area where most people know each other. There is a definite tribal feel with intra group interactions and acknowledgments similar to inter-connecting chemical formula parts linking up like the décor above us.</p> <p>The entire environment in the woods and up top is spectacular creating an immersive playful environment day or night with plenty of places to explore in this ancient land on a landed estate. It was such a delight looking upon the incredibly entertaining scene below with the lights and light effects dazzling across the crowd and firing repeatedly round the horizontal lights formed in the shape of the formula in a thin red line.</p> <p>The clumps of elaborate patterned hexahedron shapes pulsing through various colours themselves positioned at the side front and back of the dance area. Round the stage were the same red and gold pulsing visuals. There are two main dance areas in the woods at opposite ends in cul de sacs both with their unique design features. One stage is an opening to the left of the main walkway with a dancefloor surrounded by trees and the dance area in a small dip that you walk down into. A large triangle structure with the event logo adorned the entrance. This triangular theme is continued in the upside triangle lighting hanging about 30 foot above the dancefloor. The main stage is also in a triangular shape.</p> <p>There is very little religion or spiritual related symbols or artwork. Designs are more to do with abstract patterns or geometry, inherently referencing sacred or chemical formulae patterns. Yet the belief here is in worshipping nature in the woods with spirit being present in everything. Nature is the dominant artwork and décor enhanced by some materials and structures with patterning, colouring, some live artwork but on the whole the experience is of being in the ancient woods.</p> <p>Clothing has a much more integral part to play in the embodiment of psychedelia. This is especially evident in clothing, ornamentation, makeup, accessories and toys, and hair. Much more flesh is on show and a desire to be different and daring leading to a mind-boggling area of walking artwork which are the humans. Tattoos, face painting and outrageous outfits are the norm. There is a gender fluidity played out amongst the participants with males equally displaying personal attire originality including someone with a paper mâché alien on his shoulders. Colours and materials are mixed is a dizzying array. Head-dresses with feathers, pagan themes, greenery, flowers, and jewellery feature widely.</p>



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	Capes, gowns, robes, military uniforms, and nakedness are everywhere. Musical instruments, poi toys and hand altered accessories abound.
Q4 Music	The two main area soundsystems are exquisite in terms of sound quality that resonate without reflecting down the long walkway through the woods. This makes the sound feel natural and organic embedding the participants in a sound tunnel that is immersive even without the effects of the lighting and décor. The playlist from start to finish is expertly planned with some of the finest artists flying in from overseas to play this event although post-lockdown the playlist is decidedly home grown which is respected because it reduces carbon footprint. The light/dark dichotomy is followed with the light and fluffy psy being played when light and darker and faster psy when it is dark. There were breaks in the music which were welcome because of the intensity of it all but it didn't suit some of the psytrance obsessives.
Q5 Ancestors	<p>I talked to a selection of participants during the talk and throughout the gathering about definitions and linking of experiences to ancestral players. There was a mixed response in that some felt we were literally dancing with the spirits of ancestors who come to join in spirit form both those by lineage or generic others. Others stated that ancient techniques of dancing together in nature were celebrating and renewing connections to nature and that belief in ancestral roots.</p> <p>I felt a vague sense that other human and spirits whether ancient or newcomers join us. But I can't see anything when it is light. At night with the lights and lasers flicking, I see other things: structures and building not there, seats, other items. This was only briefly while the lasers were in full swing at night. Most of the time the dancing occurs in an ultra-awake group when it is light. Reporting of spirit contact generally occurs during the night-time.</p>
Q6 Environment and nature	<p>There are many gathering, chilling, and eating areas. At Stage 1 there is a steep hill with vegetation on either side where people make their encampments with their tribes but respect and participate with others sharing drinks, blanket spaces and other items. Shoes are often removed as the area is grassed. It was warm and sunny and dry this year, so people stayed in this communal area for longer.</p> <p>As well as the healing areas there is a circus area, gathering structures made of bamboo, a communal tepee and fire area. There are tightropes amongst the trees where experts demonstrate and the public can have a go which proves entertaining for friends to challenge each other, laugh, and generally enjoy themselves. At night-time the lighting effuses through smoke and purple and yellow. The light show throws triangular shapes in blue with lasers creating a confusing liminal space. It becomes difficult to see and care is needed to enter the space. It is nearly impossible at night to take photos as it is pitch black which creates a place where you cannot be seen and are free to be expressive. The stage area is about 10 foot above the audience and embedded within the same design features along with the speakers.</p>

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	<p>I watch people tentatively walk up towards the stage area as I am sat on the hill. Some don't last long perhaps because the music is too difficult for them and others perhaps nervous about seeing the spectacle of the people, the way they dance and the music for the first time in the psytrance area. It can be daunting. What is not always clear the first time you enter a psytrance dance area in this country, is that the majority of the people there know each other and can quickly identify non-family members. This is not a negative thing as often psyculture members will make contact with the new incoming people and ease them into the experience if they seem to have the right energy. That is witnessed by how they dance.</p> <p>There are substantial policies about single use or non-biodegradable products, paraben free specifying in fine detail what the crew expectations including use of washing and cleaning products. The waste is used as compost with a litter bond for traders and compostable service ware. Car share schemes operate, crew ride sharing, and a carbon tax for cars and excellent recycling polices are enacted.</p>
<p>Q8 Journey and preparations</p>	<p>I was talking to someone about how this gathering was the first psytrance event they attended, how they were blown away by it and that they found the psytrance stage, the music and the people and never looked back. They were quickly accepted by the family, given information on who to contact, where to go and how to be. They are now key members and contributors DJing, providing harm care services and most importantly contributing to the dancing.</p> <p>The literal journey was short, I knew the location as I have been here before. It was a lovely summer day, and the weather was warm. It can sometimes rain torrentially here but not this weekend. However, I prepared for any weather eventuality by bringing waterproofs in case but mainly wore light clothing. When you are on site, you are regularly walking, and walking with others with a vast track of constant movement from one end of the wood to another. I often sat on the hill just to watch people walking by with all sorts of clothing on, novel items, workers, stewards, all going somewhere. This journeying within the festival whether walking up and down steps to other areas, climbing hills, or just walking the woods walkway expends a lot of energy. It is as if it is a little journey exercise of its own. By the end of it, you have done shed loads of exercise when you add on the dancing. It's a trek from the main campsite and even further from the campervan fields that people moan about.</p> <p>My psytrance journey was more reflective and less linear than normal because I was not undertaking prolonged dancing. I have lost my stamina and endurance so was sensible. However, I had time to reflect to myself while dancing about everything that had happened, how it was now and rethinking actions in the future. This had quite a clearing effect on me, and I left the festival a jolt calmer. Sometimes attending a more mainstream festival where you know less people can be beneficial because you really do enact the codes by meeting new people and</p>

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	<p>having new experiences instead of being inside your inner circle clique which at times can be stagnant and gossipy. This time I spent much time dancing out of the way to restore lost energy without involvement with others or when dancing in the main area, doing it with strangers rather than the tribe. In a way having time off from the intensity of psyfamily internal politics.</p>
Q9 Beliefs and spirituality	<p>There are beliefs about the power of music, dance, and socialising in nature which is what this event represents. There are rituals associated with an opening ceremony that covers a range of earth-based practices such as calling in of the elements. There is a spirituality linked to attending and some trace of shamanic journeying. I witness the ritual of dancing together as a loosely shamanic practice with plenty of tribes dancing together and achieving spiritual release. The organiser's ethos is to gather in the woods to 'Dance. Create. Learn. Connect' guided by the environment and 'grounded in nature' to 'celebrate the individual and cultivate understanding in the collect' but also to have no doubt that this is a proper f*cking party'. The gathering is from an underground electronic music background and is a 'family forged' event. Further aims are to find ways to 'change our lifestyles' to help the environment where they have hope and humility.</p> <p>This is more of a mainstream and open festival that attracts people from non-psy backgrounds as a taster in many ways. It is sometimes clear that just by looking at people's dress or dance style that they are not psychulture family. Sometimes the negative behaviours are witnessed but the security is strict and deals with this rapidly such as a woman flashing her breasts at punters in the daytime is quickly. In order to get a license, the organisers have to negotiate more restrictive rules and conditions. They are a much larger festival and have to have council and police involvement. Getting a license in the UK for a pure psytrance event is still very difficult and multi-genre stages are often included to meet legal requirements.</p>
Q10 Healing and benefits	<p>Opportunities in a friendly and welcoming crowd allow people to increase their sociality in a small cul de sac space where you sit next to strangers who then include you by sharing, offering water, talking to you freely. I see some people hesitant to sit down up the hill but then, if they do, they are welcomed in warmly and included in conversation. I started and continued a conversation with one of my tribe members who was today with a stewarding crew but within earshot to hear my banter. I started explaining a funny story that she already knew, and it got the attention of those she was sat with as well as others around leading to a good laugh being had by all. Inside the story was a little message about waste management.</p> <p>Some people came to my talk, I invited them to join us dancing at the psytrance area, they joined us, and I soon lost them to conversations with others around them who were interested in what they do. I occasionally turned around to smile at them and they smiled back because the sociality I discussed in the talk, they were now experiencing.</p>

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	<p>In the daytime it was bliss to watch the different tribes dancing together on the dancefloor, joining up with others they know, other tribes dancing near them and some for prolonged periods even in the heat. They continually re-connect by making eye contact with each other, mimicking dance movements automatically to re-engage with their group. Dancing at night can be a different matter altogether and is more intense and more psyfamily only. I wouldn't want to try to get inside that dark moving mass in the pitch black disorienting collective energy moving when you are finding it difficult to see. I saw people looking then withdrawing into the mainstream part of the festival. Yet the ultimate benefit is to immerse yourself in this dancing mass. I did for short bursts a couple of times but mainly danced at the back for longer durations or up the hill for a full on trance experience. I did feel better after being at the gathering. I didn't expect to.</p>

Prompt	Response
<p>Q1 Description and culture</p>	<p>A description of the culture is that is very messy and rarely achieved in anything other than a chaotic way and a temporary experience of the possibilities that this freedom brings is all that is desired to someone wanting to return again. It is best to risk this than continue in the moss-covered hell of normality. Discussion is often about the death of the scene and how it changes but elders advise away from being concerned about the change due to the culture's acid like ascent and descent nature pretty much like within a Psytrance track. There is a philosophy that the scene changes so frequently and is so fluid as to resist definition. In UK psytrance not only are there cultural style variations used in varying degrees as design and definition indicators, but there are local influences depending on the region. There is seen to be a clear distinction between Northern and Southern psytrance that mirrors the divide in the country generally as well as distinctions between Welsh and Scottish psytrance. There are shared values, however undefined, it is based on behaviour, beliefs, actions, participation, morals that are seen as superior to mainstream values because they are based on a state of being human instead of being a consumer. UK psytrance is characterised as having a cosmopolitan nature due to being post-Goa where cultural styles have led to global elements permeating the local scene.</p> <p>The need to be underground is referred to as adding excitement, status, coolness, hipness to the scene. In the UK, participants generally state, especially organisers, that the reason they are secret is because their beliefs and actions are persecuted and legalised against.</p> <p>I don't think the lack of activist engagement is due to apathetic reasons but what needs to be considered that there are legal and other reasons why people do not participate. There are often topics discussed about activism, environmentalism, politics, revolution but just as much about spirituality, self-expression, practical skills such as building a shelter, starting a fire, and surviving in nature. I feel attendance is an act of resistance to the persecuting nature of the mainstream world, to exist in the feral inner self without judgement away from 'wronguns', detoxing against the toxic world within a tight knit community is a consensual intention.</p> <p>In a way the culture has to rely on elements of secrecy and isolationism to survive and practice but this leaves the culture open to potential abuse. It has sometimes been viewed as a cult. There are manipulative members who have tried to control for money making purposes the same as in mainstream society.</p> <p>Psytrance crews and tribes have flourished and become more skilled in hiding their events, keeping a loose lips policy to ensure they remain underground to avoid persecution, prosecution, sabotage and attracting wronguns. There has been codewords for keeping quiet about locations, dates, event information to ensure that information is not passed on to those who may sabotage the party, to those of the</p>

wrong attitude, the avoidance of legal shutdowns, etc, based on the idea that loose lips sink ships. These is a need for stealth as experience shows that any lessening of strict rules on information sharing can lead to negative effects.

Participant's mainstream family and friends often persecute, punish, exclude, censor, bully and humiliate often to the point of blackmail over seeing children, losing homes and family. Some choose to keep their membership hidden from the mainstream world based on seeing how others are treated or the way they are treated themselves.

This weekend was supposed to be my last participation observation and experience of dancing in the woods where I was going to fully immerse myself in my sensations, reactions, and outcomes. It is 3 weeks into the lockdown across the globe due to the Corona virus Pandemic. The effect on psytrance gathering is practically none have gone ahead. By then some of us were isolating and had decided not to attend in a sweaty, airless dirty mill even though the sacrifice was no contact with community for even longer, no relief from dancing together as no gatherings had happened since New Year for many of us. Nearly every psytrance event, indoors or outdoors, has been cancelled up to July apart from some private parties that are awaiting the outcomes of the end of the lockdown. Others such as Triplicity, Faeriepirates Beltane, Anthropos, Goa Cream and Glastonbury have been cancelled as well as Boom festival. There is a sense of emptiness that we can't go and worship at our retreat. The online discussions have been unanimous in following protocol and not undertaking non-essential travel. Today the news reports warn that there will be roadblocks in North Wales to stop people visiting. The effect of the lockdown on psytrance is phenomenal. This is the start of the outdoor season and gatherings as it gets warmer and the movement from clubs to outside is the most looked forward to time in the calendar. Psytrancers have been restricted inside for many months and the sense of imprisonment is entrenched and without the gatherings, there is a sense of a vacuum. Some members are suffering psychologically and there is much support given to those who vocalise their distress online.

There is an idea of taking the underground overground for the benefit of greater good taking forth what they have learnt back home with them as influencers in their mainstream lives.

I have like others tried to the real self and take on the consequences of being like that in society and will always talk like they do when at a gathering and no longer hide. You get to a point where you can't hide to please society anymore. It is not always about having a positive time and emerging 'like a unicorn with butterflies and twinkle dust' around you.

Part timers are participants who do not fully engage with the weirding, the madness, the immersion in the full journey including taken drugs or not. It is complex because it is often an amiable joking banter but can sometime belittle those deemed not to be 'full timers'.

	<p>If you have just turned up and no one knows you, you are referred to as randomers. Generally, someone will chat to them to suss them out and if they are ok, they will be included in proceedings. Randomers may have a negative effect on the energy and protection is enabled by family members to offset this as it may be unintentional, and they may progress into becoming productive newcomers. Tentative introductions are made by family members to establish their worth. Though some see UK psytrance to be a local offshoot and appropriator of Goa trance, while this has had some effect on the local scenes, is not the only influence. There are some vocal insisters that psyculture's roots and peoples come from other sources such as the Northern Soul scene, Techno crews, travellers and anarchists.</p>
<p>Q2 Dance, trance and experiences</p>	<p>Some dancers are so committed to dancing and take it very seriously. This has been hidden since many of us realised this is taboo and perhaps risky to admit to during the days of acid house. The scene had to go underground, dancers have to hide to avoid persecution, ridicule and potentially loss of mainstream survival through exposure by mainstreamers. We were talking about how their religion is dance and it is their reason for being alive. These people are dancers whose lives revolve around dancing, whose lives cannot exist without it and the vital energy release it brings on to keep them mentally and physically fit, socialising with the right types of people and improving their lives and self-knowledge. These dancers when activated emit pure light literally soaring out of them, infecting others with it and ideally eventually the whole group of dancers will become illuminated with the light emanation and literally bathe in it. This is what is shared, and it is a physical thing not really spiritual. Us dancers often throw energy to each other like a ball, stream up behind each other in a line to share energy, sometimes achieve synchronised movement or enjoy dancing with a couple's energy circle when they are willing to invite you into to it to share their unique couple energy. It is like the Borg having a dance party where everyone can be connected even when wide awake. People are always aware when the cameras are on and will often hide this synchronicity. The safe time is when it is dark and in order to enhance the effects of the UV, psytrance dance spaces are often that pitch black that it is rare for clear photos or videos to be taken. This is when psytrance dancing comes into its own where within the safety of the dark the dancer can truly let go their mainstream personas. They were flowing together like murmuring birds and were not deliberately ensuring this lack of banging into each other. The dancing seemed to merge everyone together as a working whole, a seamless flow where arms and legs moved in unison. When I entered the room, I didn't disrupt the flow because they had seen me coming and were all smiles. It felt unusual as if others were overlapping into my body like you imagine a ghost would. There was a queasy feeling that I was not that keen on as I felt a bit invaded but then I was still in the ego prison and not able to freely let go but they put up with me.</p>

	<p>The gatherings are meant to drain participants through drugs, exhaustion, sleep deprivation, hunger, thirst, sensory deprivation, and overload which is part of the ritual. There is a ritual joining of the dancefloor where one enters, contributes, and spreads energy. There is ritual attached to the planning of playlists with a precision that is understood by the dancers which is the sonic journey. The trance itself is the primary ritual and we share our tranced up energy on the dancefloor or at encampments during the gathering. Rituals are not fully serious, being ironic and playful. The ritual is the dance, and the gatherings add to the trance experience by continual 247 music. The ritual involves entering the dancefloor in a sacred manner. The music parallels the movements and the souls of the dancers in an almost religious trinity.</p>
<p>Q3 Participation, contribution, and community</p>	<p>I had found people who were like me, who liked me, and I liked them and the only thing we had in common was needing to be away from the mainstream due to some self-awakening trauma in our lives where we had lost the ability to live in normal society once the veil had fallen. I was going to call my autobiography, My Life in Cars because it's all about the travelling, never static where everyone and everything literally is moving, we are going towards something not known fully but idealistically hoped for.</p> <p>It feels like time goes missing and the normal requirements and chores are suspended so that room in the mind and body of a participant is freed up for experiencing childlikeness and time off from adult tasks. People are taking drugs to stay awake longer so they can socialise for longer, gain more communal memories, continue the excitement and the feeling of ecstasy. There is often a dread about going back into the mainstream.</p> <p>The sense of communality extends after the event because of the virtual communities. Due to the nowhereness of the events, it is often not evidenced as it didn't exist, it was hidden and cannot be proven to have happened.</p> <p>There is a tribalism within the UK by the psytrance crew that a member is associated with. This tribalism may be soft, but it is real and intentional and interconnected nationally and internationally. The different levels of involvement and contribution by psypeople to the culture from initial novice experience to an established elder (denoted not by age but length of time on the scene, extent of contribution and involvement and respected for their opinion, beliefs and contribution to learning and development of the culture). There is generally an initial, altruistic, and idealistic delight in becoming a member of the community that leads to a desire to become involved and help out.</p> <p>There has been catering provided at the longer outside events. The first one was just a chill out café but since then there has generally been food provided by caterers across all three events often backed up by an all-night café.</p>
<p>Q4 Music</p>	<p>In well-made psytrance, there are layers of codes with distorted voices, biurnal in-betweens that interact with each other that have</p>



	<p>messages and hidden references with clever manipulation of intonations amongst the layered sounds in a psytrance track. Once the trance state is reached, these messages become evident. Even without drugs, a trance state or an ability to decipher the codes, it is acknowledged that these messages are 'infecting' or affecting the listener. The ironic glimpses amongst the participants and the artists to the funny references to aliens acts as a barrier to mainstream understanding similar to blurred Hip Hop lyrics or Patois so that the authorities cannot understand what is really happening or being sung. The irony is that the wordless psytrance track is filled with words that are disguised as sounds. Shocking references to drug taking and being aliens is done in a humorous way to put off the right types. The additional irony is the wordless psytrance music is packed with words. Psytrance is loaded with codes to draw in those seeking a different way with an often tongue in cheek reference to aliens. These make you think there is a possibility of another way of life, of being, with a new set of people who are 'alien' to the mainstream. The alien references may not be you are seeking commune with aliens or that they believe in aliens but that there are literally the aliens themselves whether stuck on this planet or just being so different where others think they are alien. This tactic I believe is a way to attract those ready to 'hear' who are seeking an alternative way of life to show there is a possibility of another way for those feeling alien in the mainstream. The mainstream world is what is alien.</p>
<p>Q8 Journey and preparations</p>	<p>This disassociation from the mainstream generally is overcome as integration replaces it where journeying continues during the normal week away from the weekend society. It is a more comprehensive lifestyle choice that infects all aspects of a participant's life once the awakening process has begun. The experience is lots of different transformations and the sense of journeying that is being reproduced not the end product of arriving even though actual arrival happens by turning up at an event. The music played at the private, underground events continually 24 hours a day across the 3-7 day period. There is no escape from the transforming which takes away everything. There is a journey metaphor running through each of the sensory inputs, the practical journey and travelling and the psychological journey before, during and after. Some will crash along the way, or their transport will fail or fall through so they cannot literally get there, others may not be included in the journey through their own or other's actions, journeys may be stopped by a negative experience or a bad vibe. What is working on creating transgression of the self is the music, the dancing and the other participants dragging you along with them into the abyss to burn up the mainstream persona.</p>
<p>Q9 Beliefs and spirituality</p>	<p>I feel ambivalent towards the value of this spiritual experience or whether it exists, or whether it is just a fantasy. For me it is a complex experience.</p>