

## Chapter 55

# Psychedelic Trance on the Web: Exploring Digital Parties at Second Life

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter proposes an approach about Psychedelic Trance tribe behaviours and manifestations in digital environments, and cyber ritual dynamics beyond the virtual parties in Second Life. Many spatial communities are simultaneously digital communities, and both became complements and extensions of one another. Psychedelic Trance movements and manifestations have been happening through all kinds of physical spaces, now also extended to digital spaces. Psytrance neo-nomads are now techno-nomads, moving to, from, and through the web, redefining themselves, their practices and their gatherings. In this scenario, Psychedelic Trance branches emerges everywhere, especially in social networks and three-dimensional immersive environments like Second Life. This digital migration is not only making the tribe growing, is also enhancing boundaries and increasing the individual and collective consciousness of its members. Nevertheless, even if the Trancers became simultaneously physical and virtual natives, the digital parties do not seems to replace their outside experiences.*

### INTRODUCTION

New information and communication technologies, also named digital (or virtual) platforms, which are part of websites, blogs, forums, social networks, games, 3D environments, among others have been creating new patterns and new realities. The whole world of electronic dance music and more specifically Psychedelic Trance was absorbed also by the digital realm, in several ways, and the phenomena emphasizes itself while individuals share organic and virtual floors and combine its physical identity with virtual profiles through avatars.

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There are not only new territories and identities coming from this digital awakening, the psychedelic flight experiences are changing as well since both the organic and digital are converging it as equal parts of the sum. The virtual existence of these real and simulated identities, with real or fanciful proposes, have in most cases previous bottom lines in physical fields outside the digital networks. But even if the vast majority of relations and info-communicational dynamics happen on-line, in one way or other the Trancers always return to the ground.

The Psychedelic Trance scene breathes the essence of psychedelic culture and its fifth element is music, essentially the heady electronic sounds that draw this peculiar musical style. Psychedelic Trance is not just music, is a whole movement based on holistic and hedonistic philosophies and in individual and collective expansion of consciousness of the man and the world. These days, this whole psychedelic vibe is increasingly representative, mainly through the virtual scene (Bennett & Peterson, 2004).

Social networks and immersive worlds provide new forms of assimilating reality and for some, these new virtual homes are increasing unprecedented new experiences as real as reality itself. In Facebook, for example, unexpected virtual reunions started to incubate a new order of things, reawakening and redefining the entire Psychedelic Trance movement. In other territories like Second Life, people have been dancing Psytrance and similar sounds in virtual dance-floors, sharing and searching psychedelic experiences with their second self's. In this chapter we refer several times the expression *virtual Psy party* (or psychedelic party, festival, gathering, event) with the same meaning: Psychedelic Trance non-physical events.

It's a fact that this sort of music presupposes immersive tribal experiences as we can see in the psychedelic gatherings occurring all over the world. Are these experiences already gaining new dimensions when transposed to virtual immersive environments?

## **TRANCEMIGRATION: THROUGH NEW TERRITORIES**

The migration phenomenon is inherently connected to the existence of territories and to the several ways of mobility and experiences between and inside them. Referring to the EDMC's context, some of these movements initially originated urban tribes which later gave place to neo-tribal aggregations (Maffesoli, 2006). In this type of aggregations the concepts of *being* and *sharing* are always present and actually, they are almost inseparable from the cyberspace, turned into its own new alternative territory. By territory we can perceive an inhabited area later appropriated and valued by man in a symbolic and instrumental way, where he combines dimensions and does flow different kinds of contents (Gimenez, 1999). The actual *being in society* way comes today from this *flow spaces* (Castells, 2001) and essentially, from the need that individuals have to communicate amongst them and to keep informed about their most various interests. As a result of these requests, the cyberspace became a cultural space of information and knowledge in constant development through a collective intelligence, generating cyberculture (Lévy, 1999). The fluidity between different territories is one of the important dimensions of virtual reality and the on-line communities are what define the virtual places. The analysis of on-line communities presupposes permeable and fluid realities in a growing convergence between on-line and off-line inherent from this cyber-era we are constructing (Wilson & Atkinson, 2005).

Associated to the migration concept, the diasporas are normally associated to ethnical dispersion and communities that disperse globally. Diaspora differs from migration by not being linear or structured, consequently being more related with the Psychedelic Trance scene and its tribe which has fluid and non

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