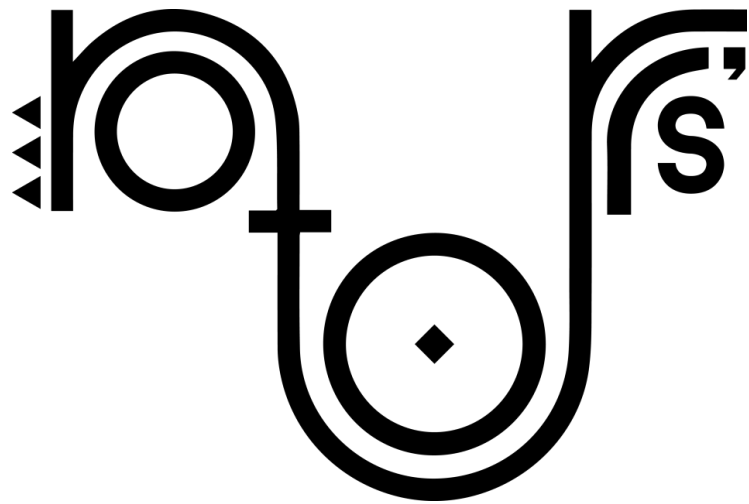


# More Than Music: Soul Searching and Community Building for Young People in The Netherlands.

A visual ethnography of a psychedelic trance event organization in Rotterdam, The Netherlands



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## **Abstract**

The music genre psychedelic trance is not very known to many. When heard of this scene, in general, prejudices dominate the view of this music style, which consist usually of listeners are seen as weird old ‘hippies’ that dance the night away and use a lot of drugs. The scene is however growing stronger in The Netherlands, just as there is a rise visible in the interest of green and neo-hippie movements in todays’ world. In the city of Rotterdam, I followed and stayed with a group called the Rotori’s; a psytrance event organization which tries to renew the old image through their experimental events that focus on psytrance culture. This thesis consists of two parts; a film and a multimodal text. The film centers on the build up to the psytrance party that was held in March 2018. This narrative is enriched with deeper insights of main organizers Pieter and Figo, through the use of small portraits. The multimodal text will be based on ethnographic data drawn from all research participants and tries to create an overall view of psytrance culture as practiced through the members of the organization, and tries to situate this movement in today’s world.

The importance of the psytrance community for its members can be explained through the use of experiences as a whole, feelings of unity and the comeback of shamanistic forms in a modern way. Where times are tough these days on youth; due to the many choices and pressure youth experiences in our individualistic globalized society, the search for identity is hard to do. With a focus on the Netherlands as the research site, the obtained knowledge intends to enrich the study of music-related youth cultures, which will be connected to current debates on the above, neo-shamanism, neo-tribalism and the neo-hippie movement.

**Keywords:** Psychedelic trance, music-related youth cultures, community, social healing, spirituality, New Age movement, neo hippie movement, neo-shamanism, neo-tribalism, green movements

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*De Rotori's give the partyscene a spin*

*Enter a world you've never been*

*These events live longer than just one night*

*Witness festivities in a new light*

(Facebook description of the Rotori organization)

## **I Introduction**

Throughout history, people tend to search for new forms of community. This is mostly the case for young people, who try to find their identity in life. Because of this, communities rise and groups are formed, nowadays often centred around a certain music style. Cultural capital plays an important role in subcultures, foremost the embodiment state of cultural capital. Bourdieu argues that “most of the properties of cultural capital can be deduced from the fact that, in its fundamental state, it is linked to the body and presupposes embodiment” (1986: 244). The individuals mind and body get shaped the habitus, which in mostly music subcultures puts itself in the rules and forms of how people express themselves in their specific subculture. Through learning from each other how to work in this subculture via cultural capital (knowledge, skills and education) capital and social capital (relations and networking), the interplay between individuals forms the habitus that will create structural forms which will influence the acts between individuals and society. The embodiment of culture is therefore also fluid and mobile, and changes through time. This is also enhanced because of globalization and the rise of the internet. Nowadays, creating an experience together seems to be an important factor for youth. In the Netherlands, a rise in music festivals is noticed during last years. Partying together and connecting to each other seems to be more urgent for young people than ever before.

The growing interest in experiencing music together is also visible within the psychedelic trance scene; a subculture that derives from the sixties hippie counterculture that transforms the critical thoughts from that era to our current one. Psychedelic trance is characterized by ‘complex layered melodies that are composed of a bass line, a four-four-time kick, synthesizers, spatial melodic sounds and a tempo generally typically ranging from 140 to 160 BPM’ (Gaia 2015: 2). It became popular in the 90’s all around the world, when originally coming from its early form Goa that was listened to and produced foremost on the beaches of Arjuna, India, by Western hippie travellers from the sixties that gathered there. Psytrance culture is a blending mix of different styles and ideologies (‘e.g., drugs, dance, textile fashion, piercings, hair styling, tattooing, alternative diets, etc.’ (St John 2010: 4). According to St John, to look at a psychedelic aesthetics like clothing, idealism and festival accessories is integral to the study of psytrance (2010). When concentrating on the micro level of popular music studies, ‘researchers may well arrive at new insights on how certain dimensions of a

musical phenomenon can actually contribute to its very construction on the international level, and how its meanings and practices differ in each context' (Cohen 1993; 123). Local meanings and practices related to a musical phenomenon and movement can feed the international practices and meanings, and the other way around. That is why I stayed on a local level with the Rotori's; a group of young creative individuals that organize psychedelic trance events in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. The group has a sociocratic way of organizing: all volunteers and psytrance enthusiasts that are part of the Rotori's have a voice in making decisions and can bring in ideas in one of their meetings, where they collectively choose the best ideas. They do everything themselves; from booking venues to decorations and making psytrance music. Their organization is there to create events that are open to everybody, to expand the knowledge of good vibes, relaxed people, spirituality and healthy lifestyle, which are connected to neo-shamanistic forms on how to live life. Therefore, I wanted to research what the features of the psytrance community lifestyle (for young people) are and why those specifically. And secondly if and in what form that translates into a specific critique of temporary society and of the psytrance scenes itself. My thesis, consisting of text and film, will outline this question through three main themes that I found in the organization: the use of 'experiences' as a whole, feelings of unity and the comeback of shamanistic forms in a modern way. The film will show the sensorial and visual context that complement the text. The film is structured around the build up to the Mira party in the process of organizing this event, which was the second psytrance event that the Rotori's organized. Because of the length of the ethnographic film (35 minutes), I chose to focus on main organizers Pieter and Figo, instead on all the members. However, in the thesis itself, I tried to compliment the film and vice versa, through the means of clips, interviews and vignettes of all members. My visual anthropological research will explore what kind of elements exist in psytrance practices for the Rotori's, and how the organization employs those elements in their events to achieve the state of mind/experience that is part of the psytrance scene.

Research on the music and the subculture surrounding psytrance is building, but slowly. In the Netherlands however, there is some research done on the psytrance scene in Amsterdam (van Straaten 2012), but most research that addresses psytrance is based on the dance scene as a whole, and not on psytrance itself, or an organization. Visually, there is also a lot to explore on this topic, because there are few films made on psytrance from the perspective of young organisers of psytrance parties, but none on psytrance in The Netherlands. Therefore, my audio-visual research will generate knowledge on the psychedelic aesthetic in the Netherlands, and give insights in the broader field of the diversity of a subculture that manifests itself all over the world. The phenomenon of subculture can be explained through a case study performed through ethnographic film-making. As I will argue, together with text, this theses will discuss how the Rotori organization can create a sense of social healing for its participants, as the events are more than just an experience, where events go further than just one night of partying.

## **II Theoretical framework: a different form of social/cultural critique.**

In an anthropology of music and lifestyle, an answer to how young people's identity are shaped can be found. Riley (2008), for example, discusses how concepts of identity, community and selfhood can be found in contemporary youth cultures. According to her, we live in a postmodern society where everything changes rapidly, especially for young people. She discusses that consumption, multiplicity, neo-liberalism and neo-tribalism are the factors that shape young people's identities in today's world. While I agree with Riley, I think there is more to it when researching the psytrance scene. The influence of social circumstances makes the scene as it is, where lifestyle and identity come forth from a history of doing it differently than the established order prescribes. Because in our modern-day society, stress levels are high due to a large range of choices, youth is spiritually lost and not connected anymore with each other due to our pragmatic individualistic society. This all is outed in a growing search of community forms for youth, and a growing interest in focusing on oneself in a pure form and finding a balance with nature (due to commercialization, robotization and individualism that drives us from nature) which is seen in psytrance culture all over. The individual transformation in a communal way towards a 'better future' align with the current green and neo-hippie movements that are rising that wish the same for the world. Together with concepts like the neo-hippie and neo-tribalism movements, other key concepts and themes will elaborate on this discussion, which are: Youth /Music based subcultures, Tribe, Fractured identity crisis, Spirituality, Commodities, (social) Aesthetics, Cultural appropriation, Social movements and the discussion on the psytrance scene as a cultural critique on society.

### *Music as a calling; music based subcultures*

Subcultures are studied already for a long time, and can be described as 'groups of people that are in some way represented as non-normative and/or marginal through their particular interests and practices, through what they are, what they do and where they do it' (Gelder 2005: 1). In the late 90s, post-cultural studies have grown in importance (Guerra 2015; Redhead, 1993, 1995, 1997; Redhead & O'Connor, 1997; McRobbie, 1994; Muggleton, 2002; Muggleton & Weinzierl, 2003). The heroic view of youth subcultures in the working class moves to the background, as 'the new complex and fluid youth cultural practices can no longer be analysed under a viewpoint that examines subcultures as homogeneous units resulting from a particular social class' (Muggleton & Weinzierl, 2003: 7 in Guerra 2015: 7).

One of the biggest elements that distinguish a youth subculture lies in the creative processes that revolve around subcultures. Mostly, music is a big factor influencing these creative processes. Nowadays, we see a rise in music based subcultures, due to new technologies and globalisation that makes listening, distributing and making music easier and reaches the whole world. Because of these

interactive features of Electronic Dance Music (EDM) and technical crossovers, a continuous push towards change exists. Media is an important feature of the dissemination and how widespread subcultures can become (Guerra 2015). According to Thornton (1996), various forms of promotive and evaluative media (flyers and music magazines), help in bringing the ‘diverse and diffused cultural fragments into cohesive and comprehensible (sub)cultures’ (Guerra 2015: 7; Muggleton & Weinzierl, 2003: 8).

The importance of mobility and fluidity can be detected in Maffesoli’s concept of tribe (1996), in which, as according to Guerra and Muggleton & Weinzierl, ‘the author seeks to describe new forms of socialization that can be understood as ‘post-tradition’’ (Guerra 2015: 7). That is to say, ‘group identities are no longer formed along traditional structural determinants (like class, gender or religion); rather, consumption patterns and practices enable individuals to create new forms of contemporary sociality – small-scale social configurations that operate beyond modernist class borders’ (Muggleton & Weinzierl, 2003: 12 in Guerra 2015: 7). The term tribe can be found already for a long time in research field of music. For example, in the disco and acid house era, tribalistic features of coming together and dancing the night away together was important to these scenes, as described by Collin (2010). Then, and in the current postmodern world, a fractured identity crisis is common because of these developments in individuality and in the loss of group identities. We organize our lives different than before, when structural organisations like the government and religions have fallen away. Because of structural changes in the way how we organise our lives, young people find it hard to find a place in society. The individual identity quest, in other words, the self-searching element searches for new ways of communities to find a way to belong. This can be found in music. According to Duany, ‘Music is a system of communication whose meaning ultimately lies in the context of social interaction’ (1984: 186). Interpersonal relations in society are patterned and mirrored through this process. As John Szwed argues, the performances and forms of songs are models of social behaviour that indicate ‘strategies of adaptation to human and natural environments’ (1970: 220). Songs or other forms of music are a mirror to important cultural values to the group that produces the music; the ethos of people is directed through music (Duany 1984). Therefore is the study of music important to understand certain movements in society.

### *Old vs New*

In many music subcultures, cultural values are outed and are directly visible in the embodiment of the place and people. In psychedelic trance music, the music is the first element of the scene that binds it all together, and where people come for. The obsession with music is therefore prominent in the scene; DJ’s are equivalents for Gods, new releases get send through the community and Facebook pages on DJ’s parties and releases are widely represented. Also, technology plays a big part in this scene as

well, as no bands but DJ's are the main producers of psytrance music. Another element of the subculture takes a prominent stance because of technology: the participatory nature of psytrance. Every person across the globe can start making their own psychedelic trance; as producing can be done from your own room and computer. The blending of cultural aspects becomes even important according to Kruse: the 'do-it-yourself' ethos of the alternative, college music environment that has been researched, contributes to the understanding that audience as well as performers are practically interchangeable (1993: 39).

For the psytrance scene, the way of life and non-commodity forms of cultural practices are very important if one wants to understand the subculture in its whole. Namely, the identity of the individuals in psytrance culture can help in finding ways for the other forms of social practice to be acknowledged. Identity can be viewed as 'not as a boundary to be maintained but as a nexus of relations and transactions actively engaging a subject' (Clifford 1988: 72). Ethnographically considered, identity is conjectural and relational. A sense of authenticity and distinctiveness is built on interaction between others. Essences exist only as 'a political, cultural invention, a local tactic' (Clifford 1988: 12 in Cohen 1993). Identity is always being influenced by other forces and in the 'process of being achieved, negotiated, invented, symbolised, of becoming, and is itself a source of social change' (see Strathern 1992; Clifford 1988: 289; Cohen 1993: 132).

Grenier and Gilbault, following on Martin Barbero (1988), wrote: 'The world political economy is not a force imposed from 'above' upon totally deprived individuals and groups. Rather, it is a complex set of institutions, social relationships, and economic practices that are socially and historically mediated, and that are the subject of multiple differentiated actualisations by individuals and groups within their respective environment' (Grenier & Gilbault 1990: 389 in Cohen 1993: 132). This argument lies in current discussions on the psytrance culture, as where cultural values are detected and articulated through the individuals that make these communities. Through the concept of cultural appropriation, this can be clarified within psytrance culture.

Some scholars indicate that cultural appropriation is present in this kind of subcultures, due to 'stealing' from indigenous cultures. As historically mediated, there is a shift visible in aesthetics on how psytrance contracts its cultural values. At first, psytrance, in its precursor Goa, was founded by sixties hippie descendants on the beaches of India. Nowadays, inspiration is getting subtracted more and more from a mix between old indigenous shamanistic practices, and placed in a European point of view. Neo-shamanism and neo-tribalism are therefore profoundly rooted in the scenes features and stylistics. The identification with tribalistic culture can be found throughout the entire scene, in organic cotton and leather clothing, stone jewellery, accessories with geometric mandala patterns, geometric and black light activated art forms, organic healthy food, herbal drinks and in the use of psychedelics to (if one wants) get enriched in a spiritual way.

Chambers argues that cultural and musical styles are getting ripped out of their context and stripped from origin, and they will circulate with 'nothing other than their own transitory presence' (1985: 199). Therefore, authenticity will not exist anymore in these forms, due to an end to the logic of origins. However, St John argues that in postmodern times psytrance culture and its transnational culture movement come in to being with the use of a 'wide and changing palette of sources of authenticity, transcendence and self-recreation', that results in the argument that 'practices of appropriation cannot be simply derogated as theft but must be considered in the light of the methods of digital reproduction, aesthetic syncretism, and conscientious use' (St. John 2013: 173). In psytrance culture in the western world, this is even a more complex situation. Van Straaten argues that nostalgic desires for parties in a cosmopolitan aesthetic can be understood as an 'ethical rhetoric that plays out a postcolonial subconscious'. This ethical rhetoric lets participants construct themselves as responsible subjects where feelings of guilt through the aftermath of colonial power relations is still visible (2012: 65). As is clear, many approaches can be derived from this discussion, as the line between theft and appreciation is thin.

### *Psychedelic acid culture*

In the western world shamanism and spirituality are not very common practices. Sometimes unconsciously, however, psytrance listeners get influenced through the trance like state that is generated through the beat that has its roots in shamanism. Through electronic dance music, like techno and psychedelic trance which became popular in the 90's, a same like 'altered state of consciousness' can be achieved, where ravers dance their problems away and clear their minds. However, the big difference with shamanistic modes of trance and through music is that individuals alter this state by themselves, maybe with the help of hallucinating (drugs), instead of using a shaman to alter this state. There are authors that see this differently. Hutson sees the DJ as a shaman, that guides dancers through this state, functioning as 'harmonic navigator' and through the combination with dance ravers can come into a 'psychedelic trance'. 'Technoshamanism' can alter and manage the dancer's mood and mind (Hutson, 2000). There is something to say for that the DJs, just as shamans, creates linkages between the patient's body, society, and the spirit world (Sidky 2009; Sagant 1988:29; Peters 1995:53, 60; Samuel 1995:256; Walsh 1996:101). However, as is said by Rouget, music is capable of having 'psychical impact' on listeners, and can modify the 'structure of consciousness' (1985: 120-123). In psytrance or other electronic dance genres this seems to be done by individuals themselves and can be linked to the search of acceptance for oneself, that is typical for the process youth needs to cross in becoming who they are in life.

## *Spirituality*

When speaking about spirituality, this is a process of the research of the search of the psyche of the self and the needs it has for young individuals are aspects that can be described as spiritual in a psytrance scene context. This way of thinking about spirituality also found its way in the New Age movement of the 80's. Which nowadays, is a major social movement in parts of Europa and North-America. According to Gavriluță (2012), New Age is a mixture of 'science, Christianity, Eastern spirituality, ancient mythology and relaxation/recovery practice' (65). Under the sign of Aquarius, which would be around the 80's, the rise of a new spiritual power would take place; the expected passage from 'homo sapiens to homo spiritualis' (66). Astrology would be important for this era, as well as the focus on the ecologist movement: 'members of the New Age movement have developed an advanced millenarism which aims to the returning of man to nature, thus being reintegrated into the ecosystem' as Gavriluță states (67). As seen, the New Age movement links closely to psychedelic trance in this sense. The psychedelic trance scene also links itself to spiritual way of living and a close bond with nature, and with a free take on life, as the 'greens' in the New Age parties also 'demanded protection of nature and sexual freedom, peace, but also the right to interruptions of pregnancy, anti-authority education and the legitimacy of freely expression of opinions' (67). An environmental and societal critique is often at the forefront of psytrance talks and workshops.

## *Psytrance as movement*

Subcultural studies are moving back and forth between two approaches: 'representing subcultures as distinct forms of sociality on the one hand, but pluralizing them and blurring their identities on the other; casting them as monocultures with a set of shared interests and beliefs that all its participants subscribe to, or emphasizing their heterogeneity, their porousness and variability, their transience' (Gelder 2005: 11). Gelder sees that subcultural distinctions were seen in terms of a 'refusal' of mass cultural forms and of social 'incorporation.' But not every subculture is transgressive or oppositional (ibid.). As for psytrance, refusal of mass cultural forms is present, but not in a clear visible form. People in this scene search for a place to belong, instead of wanting to change the world radically. In their psycho-social culture, they work more inwards, then outwards. 'Start by yourself' was often said during my field work. They are not against the system per se, but want to change the system for their own needs and for others that want the same. This is explained by Kruse (1993), who researched college students as a subculture. This generation tries to draw 'a boundary between themselves and the omnipresent baby boomers; to refuse definitions imposed on them and to reject the assumption that the twentysomethings, as a whole generation, must galvanise behind some 'cause' deemed acceptable by ex-members of the 'authentic' youth culture of the 1960s' (40). However, they control the material resources, and therefore the power in society. Members of the scene are floating between being critical and what label this holds; anarchistic or just being critical about society, just like everybody else? Or

is it in between, a reaction on the current situation? The influences of the structures of all different movements will make the scene as it is. Everything moves everything, whereas it started on the beaches of Goa, and before that already the summer of love, hippie culture, moves on to other electronic music life style forms like Acid house next to psytrance and a connection again with older spiritual life styles like shamanism, that results in neo-shamanism. It looks like we are just as spiritually lost as in those other days whereas if you cannot find it in the norm of society, you can look for it some place else. More on the relation towards the hippie counterculture of the 60's, the New Age movement and the new neo hippie movement will be further outlined in the findings.

### **III Methodological reflection**

My fieldwork was mostly performed in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, where I conducted two and a half months of research in January, February and March 2018. I stayed with the group Rotori's in these months, which organize events where psytrance music and community take a central position. I travelled through the Netherlands, to conduct interviews with Rotori members and make small portraits of active group members. The home of Figo, situated in Rotterdam, was the place where everybody came together for the meetings. As this location being my starting point, I conducted mostly participatory observations here, while the portraits and interviews were filmed mostly in the homes or familiar places of the Rotori's and other psytrance listeners, and (learner) shamans. Overall, an extended case study method was therefore used, as a small group working in psytrance community says something about the field of psytrance.

For the research, qualitative approaches were used. I subdivided these approaches in participant observation, interviews with 19 actors that are connected somehow with the psytrance scene, 11 observations of structured meetings the group held every week, data analysis of psytrance websites/social media and audio-visual recordings of meetings, trips, interviews and portraits.

Bernard speaks of participant observation as a method that gives an understanding of what is going on in a culture and allows the researcher to substantiate the meaning of data (2006). To take this stance further, I think this is true for the combination of the methods I used for this research. The combination of participant observation with visual methods, like the photo/film-elicitation technique and short portraits of the party organizers Pieter and Figo, gives a clear, broad image of how psytrance manifests itself in a community. With the strength of combining participant observation, oral (interviewing) and visual methods, I generated different kinds of knowledge of the scene, that would be otherwise lost. Making a case study through film, viewers can engage with the subjects of the film, where I tried to make their world understandable for outsiders. This is why I also tried to share the gaze of the researcher and of participants, to get a reflective spectrum in play. These aspects will be further explained in the discussion on using audio-visual methods.

While there has been qualitative research done in the past on the psytrance scene, where researchers used interviewing and observation (St John 2009; Ryan 2010; De Ledesma 2012; Van Straaten 2012), the combination of participant observation and film is little used for studying music-scenes like the psytrance subculture. Using visual ethnographic methods allows me to show elements of which psytrance practices exist and therefore show the scene or state of mind that is part of the psytrance scene that is achieved through this. In this way, I can give a visual case study of underlying values and principles of the scene which otherwise remain abstract theories, and otherwise hard to grasp for people that know nothing of this scene. Therefore, I use a multimodal approach in my thesis, where the audience that is not familiar with the academic structures and concepts can gain knowledge of a specific music subculture as psytrance through the clips of the film or adjusted clips from footage, that complement the text. In this way, the audio-visual part shows a detailed case study which enriches the written down concepts and analysis gained in the field site for academic purposes and for a better understanding of used concepts for the reader. Doing research through participant observation was the perfect method to get the richest data and to clarify all elements in a sensorial oriented scene like psytrance, because of the mix between filming observations and regular observations. Participant observation is described by Jorgensen as a ‘unique method for investigating the enormously rich, complex, conflictual, problematic, and diverse experiences, thoughts, feelings, and activities of human beings and the meanings of their existence’ (1989: abstract). Through film, these elements will be possible to be seen for viewers as well, and come alive in that sense. In this thesis, analysis is based on spoken word as well on images that come from field situations when the camera was used or not used. Spoken word is mainly used because of my rich data of interviews and vignettes while spending a lot of time with the Rotori’s while talking, because without camera, the Rotori’s felt most open and at ease while talking to me. The film, clips and images will be used to complement on these spoken words to give deeper insights and a better understanding of situations and the life of the Rotori’s. For example, through these talks, I figured out that not all Rotori’s were having the same dedication and love for psytrance music as I would thought they all had, these were all in different range: I thought most would only listen to psytrance, but the musical taste for other genres was also important for most of the members.

### *Positionality*

My position in this research shifted between being an insider and outsider to the psytrance scene. With the use of participatory observational cinema as an approach, I could switch easily between these modes. Many authors make the remark that observational films show not only the participants being filmed, but also the act of observing itself (Carta 2015; Pink 2006; Nijland 2006b, 2006c). The play between insider/outsider mode is interesting for writing this thesis, because of how I was influenced already by knowing the scene and its features. This outed itself for example in my pre research that I

chose to stay close to myself and research a scene I was affiliated with in my own culture, in The Netherlands I did not need to get used to a new culture, so I could dive right in.

To be there all the time and have access to all of the Rotori's' life's, helped me a lot in structuring my questions and get access to them. Therefore, filming personal elements like stories and attributes, which I waited on for one and a half month, was relatively easy. However, I was not always led in on everything they did, and sometimes meeting with Rotori's went very difficult, as they were busy with their own life next to the Rotori's as well. These two sides of their life I had to deal with, determined my structure in fieldwork, especially for filming. The 'go with the flow' attitude the Rotori's mostly practiced, formed a structure that existed of meetings, trips for the Mira party, the Mandala Festival or for the Rotori's organization itself and individual meetings with the Rotori's for the portraits, which I planned in these two and half months. This made the design for the film become like a two-way structure; with the build up to the party as guideline, and with the portraits of Pieter and Figo in between, to create a deeper understanding of the people behind the Rotori organisation and Mira party. In reflection, the choice was therefore not always mine; in the focus on the flow of the Rotori's themselves they led me with their own input. In this way, I could maintain to hold on to their own style.

To take a distance from culture, one needs to take a distance from one's self as well. It is hard to objectify in practice, whereas taking distance from the field, the culture will lose its magic. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) address the notion of the space between that allows researchers to be in the position of both insider and outsider rather than insider or outsider. They argue that as 'our perspective is shaped by our position as researcher (which includes having read much literature on the research topic), we cannot fully occupy one or the other of those positions' (61). While qualitative research is more intimate, but the role of researcher is still applied, we cannot qualify as complete insiders as well as outsiders. 'We now occupy the space between, with the costs and benefits this status affords,' as summarized by Dwyer and Buckle (Ibid.). I therefore can best describe my case as a researcher as occupying the space *between* rather than being an insider or outsider. This position has influenced every aspect of my research. For example, I tried to think about how I would express my experiences with the group in montage, to show their experiences as being in the psytrance scene, and as being part as a Rotori in the group. As being between insider and outsider, I chose to include the interaction between myself and the individual members of the group more than I originally wanted to include, but I tried to keep it still in a subtle way to let the audience get a feeling of my feelings as being in between positions all the time during research. In text, this will be highlighted throughout the thesis as well.

### *Ethical considerations*

While researching in the complex fields of everyday life, conflicts and the challenge to make difficult choices will rise. While doing field work, ethical difficulties come into play in different ways. I do not wish to misinterpret meanings and actions, which is always a danger that lies in the practice of (participant) observation and interviewing. When using film, this concern becomes stronger because with visual representation subjects get a face and film can be less explicit in what we see on the screen. There is an important contradiction at work through this, as well. In text, I anonymize my subjects, but in film they are recognizable. The reason I anonymize subjects in text is because in depth outings can be explicit personal about drug use or other sensitive topics, which some members do not really like to share to others in this kind of medium. To be completely sure about anonymity and to respect the privacy of the subjects, I anonymized every quotation. Image wise, I made an agreement with every subject that I film them in all processes, in which they agreed on the use of the images for the purpose of the reproduction for the university. They knew the face would be visible in this sense. For further distribution, I made other agreements on images which are addressed later on.

As Bill Nichols (1991) has argued, since documentaries record situations and events with considerable fidelity, we often take this quality as a basis of belief and we believe that what we see represented is truth. Marion & Crowder (2013) address the same problem of representational authority. It was hard for me to grab the camera at times when members of the group were crying, or having a hard time. This resulted in me frequently asking the subjects if I could use these moments in the film and text, like discussed above. As a researcher, a mutual feeling of understanding in these situations is needed. The 'presentation of self,' is therefore very important to address (Bernard 2006: 226). Because with this film, I intend to give an introduction in the psytrance scene from the view of the Rotori's and how they incorporate this music and culture into their lives, and the other way around. Because I also want to reflect on my own position in making this film, I wanted to make my own person and actions visible or at least sensed to the public. This does not always mean that I show this in obvious ways, like talking and seeing myself on screen, but this can also be in more subtle ways, like in the movement of the camera.

Not only the researcher and subjects have an agency to make their own assumptions or interpretation of the edited film with regard to what is being shown, but also the audience itself. Other questions arise while including this last group: 'Should the people themselves get to decide, regardless of your research goals? Does an outside public (such as a research sponsor) have the right to choose which people and activities get recorded and which do not?' (Marion & Crowder 2013: 6). The power of deciding what to include or exclude from an ethnographic film is therefore something I was constantly aware of, while in the field: I tried to be very clear when explaining in what way the recorded video-material would be used.

This can be explained through the encounter with sensitive topics in the psytrance scene. During fieldwork, I faced the usage of different kinds of drugs in the field site. Party goers and the Rotori's did not really like being filmed under the influence of drugs, and asked me to not film them when they were, or did not really want to be filmed while talking about it. Some did not mind. But if I would distribute the film for other purposes like the university, more people would mind due to possible consequences with jobs or social and private reasons. So, this stays a sensitive topic, and therefore protection of subjects for visual and textual representation is always most important.

When doing observational cinema, the tension between subjectivity and objectivity is always present. Through intersubjectivity, this tension can become less, because the realities are constructed between people, so there is no objective truth. Intersubjectivity can provide an 'overall theoretical frame for thinking about the ways in which humans interpret, organize, and reproduce particular forms of social life and social cognition' (Duranti 2010: 14). In anthropology today, the general consensus is that in the researcher creates knowledge in interaction with the people while being in the field: 'not objectivity, nor pure subjectivity, but intersubjectivity is what an anthropologist should strive for', according to other anthropologists Knibbe & Versteeg (2008: 52). There are of course intentions and emotions that influence our judgement and selections. Reflexivity is therefore important, to discuss and reflect on these subjective choices with the audience: This is also underlined by other anthropologists. Pels argues that making asymmetrical reflexive breaks with everyday perceptions you face during research is necessary to avoid turning a representation of the epistemology of anthropological research into an "ethical fantasy of intersubjective harmony" (2014: 212). Participatory observation is intersubjective, together we come to a conclusion, despite the contrary is proven again.

### *Visual ethnography*

Critical points on using a camera during research arise. For my case study, I used a mix between observational cinema and participatory cinema. MacDougall (1995) acknowledges the criticism raised by scholars on observational cinema, for example if the style is too narrow as a view, too much structured on the gaze of the filmmaker (1995). MacDougall counters the idea of observational cinema generates 'objective' knowledge. The work of filmmakers in choice of subject matter and its dependence on the perspective of the individual filmmaker appears to be personal, where the observational method 'always implied the contingency and provisional status of its findings' (129). It is here that MacDougall questions the audiences and critics for reading the films in other ways than intended. To work within these meanings, a participatory observations style is used in combination with experimental cinema. The participant observation style is used as in a traditional manner foremost; I observed with the camera, but participating in asking questions, and in coming up with ideas and making conversation. The experimental side concludes this style by including a sensorial

layer to show the experimental way of how the Rotori's work themselves in their organization, and because of the music itself as something you have to feel and experience yourself as well. The music (and vibe) lay at the core of my research, together with the feeling of community.

Experimental/sensorial cinema is used for trying to capture the 'psytrance vibe,' and the music while in the field and during montage. It is a critical methodology that aims to reflect on how understanding, knowing and academic knowledge is produced (Pink, 2009). A 'psytrance' sensorial style aims to convey an emotional state through aesthetic and sensual visual representations (Nakamura, 2013). I will however, try to keep the sensorial subordinated to the observational cinema style while editing the film. In this way, keeping the audience in mind, the danger of images getting too 'psychedelic' will be reduced. Also, I wanted to keep the sensorial that are created to get a sense of these feelings and sounds across of the trance like music, subordinated to the observational cinema because of the core of the film and field work lies in an observation of the members when in the process of organising the event and the social interactions and introduction of main characters Pieter and Figo.

The film needs to keep the role as an introduction to the scene, because of the unknown status psytrance has. With a balanced mix of different styles, I tried to achieve a somewhat new view on how to look at psytrance as a community. The film *The Last Shaman* (2016) combines all these styles in a perfect way. The filmmaker Raz Degan follows a young man James, that got mentally depressed and wants to get better. He tries to get his life together away from his own society, when is no medicine to be found in his own world, according to him. He stays for ten months in South America where he tries to get healthy again through the help of different shamans and the ayahuasca medicine. What works in the film is the combination of slow pacing, which shows his loneliness and anxiety, with sometimes rapid 'freak out' editing mixed overlaid with disturbed and spacy layers to show the use of the drug or rituals performed by shamans. In this way, the filmmaker tried to show in a genuine way how feelings, rituals and events evolve for the depressed James. I was inspired by this style because I was struggling with how to show trance states and how to edit this properly. This film helped me to solve these struggles. Also, the topic of the subject that stands for the problems of depression the 'youth' of modern times encounters today, is something I discuss as well through movements like psytrance.

The impact of the camera on the behaviour of the people I recorded was always visible throughout my fieldwork. People react different when you get the camera out; you feel it. Once the Rotori's got to know the camera better and named it "the extension of my arm" the awkwardness became less. Following Pink (2006) and Clifford (1986), MacDougall argues that 'A concept of "deep" reflexivity requires us to reveal the position of the author in the very construction of the work, whatever the external explanations may be' (1998: 89). A mere explanation of the research is therefore not enough, according to Pink. She gives the alternative MacDougall argues: what is required is a recognition of the constantly shifting position of the fieldworker as the research proceeds and as she or he experiences 'differences in levels of understanding as well as the shifts of mood and rapport

characteristic of fieldwork'. The experience that is subtracted from this, can tell more 'about the researcher or filmmaker's (shifting) perspective(s) than can simple after-the-event reflection' (Pink 2006: 34; Macdougall 1998: 89). However, still, a lot of other researchers have accused visual anthropology as being unreflexive. Holliday, for example, argues that reflexivity in anthropological terms 'becomes a mere buzz word generated within a pseudo-positivist approach still concerned with gaining greater degrees of "truth" and objectivity' (2000: 507). Every researcher has a different take on how reflexivity can be achieved, I take the vision Pink and many other anthropologists use, in to argue that 'reflexivity should be integrated fully into processes of fieldwork and visual or written representation in ways that do not simply explain the researcher's approach but reveal the very processes by which the positionality of researcher and informant were constituted and through which knowledge was produced during the fieldwork' (35). In my own research, this led me to understanding more what psytrance music and lifestyle was about, because I completely let myself be open to any form of this music, the practices that came with that and the different approaches people had in practicing psytrance. This is visible in my film and text where I describe by using examples what the situations where like.

All these points above will and have influenced my film/research-process, because I cannot show the 'whole spectrum' of being part of the psytrance scene in an objective manner. The relations with and responsibilities toward the community comes first (Marion & Crowder 2013). To truly explore forms of reflexivity and advocacy of myself participating with the Rotori's, I try to reflect on my own position as often as possible in text and in film.

#### **IV Findings 1: Psytrance as cultural critique of the hippie scene? Features of neo-psytrance**

“After the meeting, we go outside for a nightly poi session. It is a clear but cold night, and I talk with one of the members about heritage and growing up in The Netherlands. The conversation evolves in an emotional talk about how unfair the world is; where we should be lucky growing up in a country as The Netherlands, where you can get opportunities to travel, study and live the good life. He gets really emotional when he tells me that we, as the future of the world, need to take responsibility for the chance we have been given to actually *do* something with our lives. We are being pressured to live our lives right, because a lot of people in this world cannot. He gets angry when he sees the other two practicing poi together, because they are having fun and not busy with doing anything for the world, where they could mean something. One member stops practicing poi and disagrees. He thinks you can only influence the world on a local level, just like they (the Rotori’s) try to do by bringing people from the neighborhood together. To be socially involved. The member next to me finds this nonsense, because they throw parties, he says, which do not help in changing the world for the better.” (January 1th, 2018)

This vignette clearly illustrates the discussion on the organizational goals of the group Rotor’s between the members, and how current structures in today’s world are intertwined in this discussion for how the organization should act upon it. Interfering with the larger structures in life and the critical talk that comes from it is rooted in music scenes already for a long time. Psychedelic trance as a music genre has always been there since the nineties, but never really in the mainstream. The roots of psytrance can be found in the hippie sixties counterculture (St John 2010), but also other genres influenced this scene tremendously. Like explained earlier, the party scene that was born in the eighties also formed the ‘acid culture,’ where psychological crises, the rise of new kinds of drugs (ecstasy, MDMA), youth culture and new forms of critique against society and escape came into view. Next to this scene, the “Goa state of mind” has had its impact on the current scene, where psytrance parties, festivals and participants share a hippie mindset, originating from that period. As described in the book *Goa*, the social movement that started back then went ‘right across the planet, going through every culture and social class as well as every spiritual, religious, political, sexual, musical, philosophical and economic orientation’ (Rom & Querner 2015: 14). When Goa psytrance ‘was gradually engulfed by capitalist economies and underwent a process of commodification and subdivision’ (Rom & Querner 2015: 14), the scene became the small subculture it is today. The relaxed vibe and hippie counterculture values of unity, freedom and creativity are there, but “stocked away” or seen as “weird” or “crazy” by people who are not familiar with this scene. The ‘old generation’ seems to run the scene, where the sixty counter culture is still practiced to a certain extent, mixed with influences of the underground rave scenes. The blending of this, however, can be in a certain amount be found as the New Age movement and the like, which shows a line a changing perspective; the scene has made a progression going from sixties hippie values, to anarchistic or

desperate punk and underground acid scenes and towards a green and spiritual mentality. This can be found mostly with young psytrance practisers and listeners in the scene, also this way of thinking can be found by some members the Rotori's. The Rotori's deal with this in another way. St John (2010) speaks of psytrance as a lifestyle choice, rather than an activity, which corresponds with these experiences I encountered in the field. Most of the Rotori's want to change the perception of psytrance as a weird, unknown driven by a hippy community inflicted with drugs, by changing the party scene to an open and different approach. In their opinion, the old residents are getting too comfortable in the way they host parties, and they see a lack of renewal in the established parties, also on societal levels. This view came forward in many of the conversations I had with them, mostly shown in the vision on what their organization should be about:

*"Yes, we try to.. get the psychedelic trance out in the open. We want to make it accessible to the outside world, because it is yes, just super fun music, nice people come there and it is, just the right time I think. Especially when you look, what is happening at such a party. The whole scene, the openness, the awareness, the food. It is quite something modern, but we still see very little. And when we see it, it is hidden. Or it is very massive or something. Or it's just the old generation. And not that that is bad or something. But we're trying to be there for everyone, you know. Not hidden, but public, accessible." (P1)*

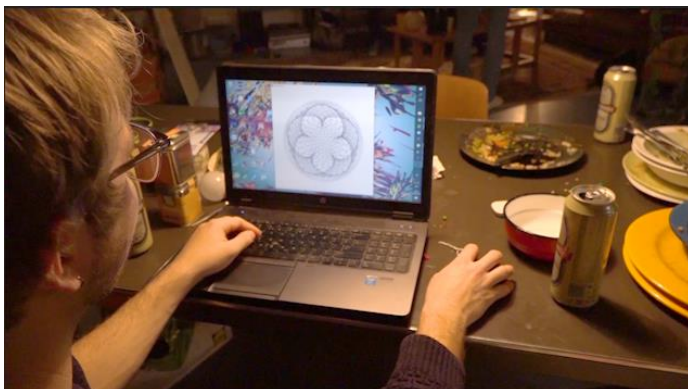
*"They wanted a party that was much more focused on a theme, on the decor, much more on the atmosphere ... and less on artists than what you now see a lot these days at parties." (P2 )*

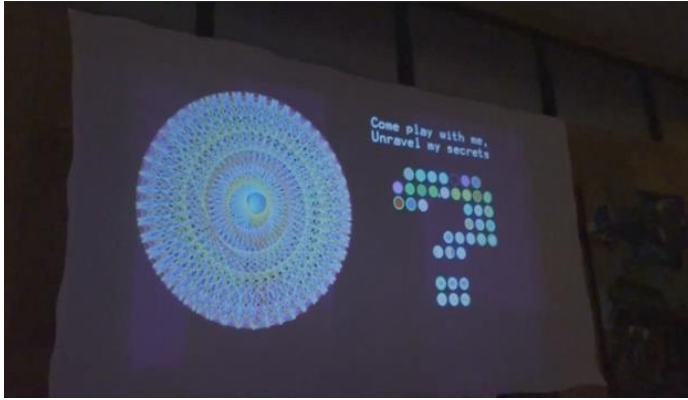
In reaction to this dominance of the old 'Goa-scene-hippies' the Rotori's want to take the Psychedelic trance community to a 'modern level', as they believe the scene can than in this way open up to a broader range of people, young and old, to experience another kind of psytrance. In this sense, the Rotori's try to be progressive and new in relation to the established psytrance music scene. However, in the field work I came to the conclusion that they are not trying to change the world per se, but just alter the world so it fits in their ideology. This ideology will be throughout examples be clear. The answer for them to achieve this, seems to lie in the creation of a different 'experience,'; as to say, an 'experience as a whole' during their events. While psytrance is known to create an experience, this is mainly happening at festivals, and at big parties and are always the same. For example, I visited during my fieldwork some of these established parties at Ruigoord by *Dutch Acid Family*, or *Psychedelic Rave*, and at multiple other locations. The concept drives the parties; they run big sound systems and have psychedelic black light art everywhere, a clothing or jewellery stand and some food. What is missing for the Rotori's is the 'whole experience', where not only dancing, but meeting others, workshops and learning about the theme through social media as well, are all present.

*An experience as a whole*

That is why the organisation aims for a theme for every party or event. This makes the party as a whole, as an experience, instead of 'just a party'. For the last party, called Mira, the theme was called *Mathemagic*. Everything revolves around that theme. It refers to a combination of math and psychedelic culture, which is always there but never acknowledged. The math outs in psychedelic or geometrical forms, and can be best described through the Do It Yourself (DIY) mentality of the Rotori's, and its examples. The Rotori's create everything by themselves. From concept to event, everything is made by a Rotori, or arranged by an Rotori. A member, for example, made a computer run program, coded all by himself that creates mandalas, which the user can him/herself adjust to a certain extent on a projection on the party. This mandala is created through calculations of the program he made, which makes beautiful mandala figures that work from a calculated psychedelic art base.

*Foto still of Rotori making the codes and the results of people watching their own made mandala on Mira.*





These geometric shaped forms are situated everywhere in the lives of all most all Rotori's, and are important to them: for example, one Rotori makes his way of living out of it. He describes how he makes his artworks in the next clip. The forms are situated in a form of perfect symmetry and mathematics, that are the core of every life form, he told me. Because nature (and new forms of the use of spirituality) is important for the Rotori's, this kind of art is being used at their parties, and you see the same art in other parties as well.

<https://youtu.be/ezEeTC5IUml>

Teles and Boyle elaborate on the idea that we live and evolve together with 'multimedia interactive digital technology' (2015: 146). We human beings, explore, when confronted with unfamiliar technological equipment. Teles and Boyle argue that in electronic music, psytrance in particular, 'once a minimal simple harmony was supported by a solid rhythm, the audience could interact and control many of the sound clusters available, solely with their body movement' (Ibid.). They suggest an approach for 'composing electronic music through the distinct and innovative behaviour of the participants, turning them into real performers, as well as transforming the role of the DJ/VJ by engaging them in a two-way dialogue with their audience' (Ibid). The audience and the Dj's, in this sense the Rotori's, work all together to create an atmosphere. DJ-ing itself becomes an interaction, just as VJ-ing and for example, the art installation. The creation one can make with the installation will create a feeling from actively experiencing the party, while having the power on deciding and creating something for the event you are visiting. You are no a visitor anymore; you become part of this event. This current development is in line with the vision of the Rotori's, as they want people to participate with them in their events, through for example, the art installation or other workshops like hula hooping.

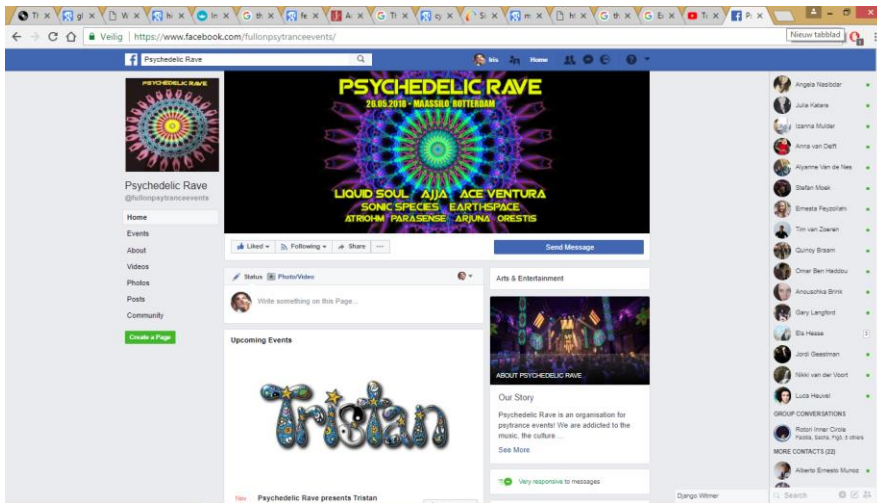
### *The digital era for an even better experience*

However, the digital modern era is also visible in another form. Rietveld is speaking of a machine aesthetic (2010), that psytrance culture features and places psytrance therefore in the digital era and a science fiction type of world. Rietveld argues that this originates out of the layout of 'the musical format of psytrance', that is an example of 'acute emotional response to an electronic and increasingly digital infosphere (Toffler 1981)' that works next to processes of globalization: 'enabling participants at a local level to make emotional connections between their cosmopolitan experiences of technological acceleration and the everyday' (2010: 81). As described by Rietveld, and found in answers of Rotori's, emotional responses on the experience as a whole can lie in a need of incorporating the new electronic age, with futuristic elements, that are also vital in the scene. The installation is an example of this as well. Where futuristic elements and technological interests are vital to the theme Mathemagic, the music itself also carries 'futuristic sonic palettes' (ibid.) in where the repetitive digital machine aesthetic is also found in the alien side of psytrance music, where sounds from the "universe" and technological sounds that a Rotori describes as "bliebjes en blobjes" (P1) are incorporated in the music.

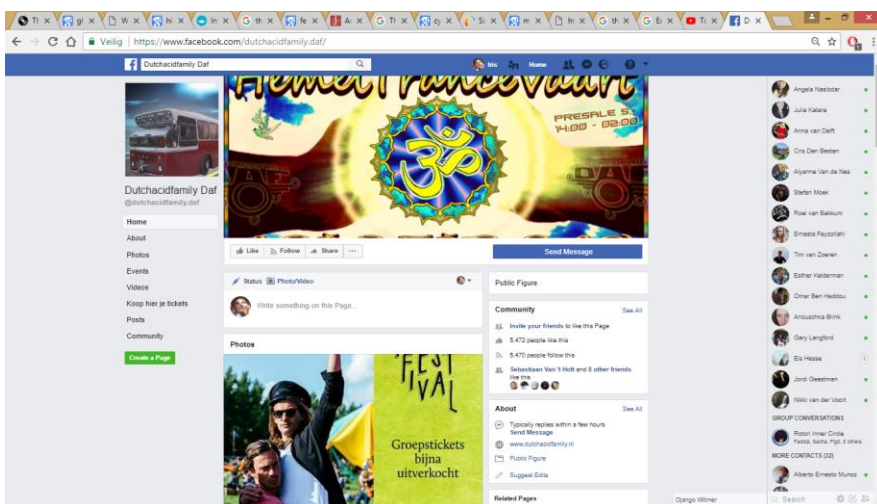
It is therefore clear that old psytrance elements like the psychedelic arts (the flower of life that is re-created in a mandala, as seen on the photo above) are re-used in a new interactive way and are therefore visible and work in a totality of senses at the event; having a shop, multiple sound systems, workshops, participatory arts and hula hoop workshops, painting workshops, performance art and fire artists. They can be understood as a diverse pattern where people can explore, learn, meet people and party at the same time, and through this, feel as they really experience the event.

This however, does not end in the real world, but also in the technological internet spheres. While internet is already seen as a major player in the psytrance scene (they both came up at the same time), social media is taking over. There is a change visible in lay out for Facebook websites, posters and the like, between the Rotori's and other established psytrance organisations in the Netherlands.

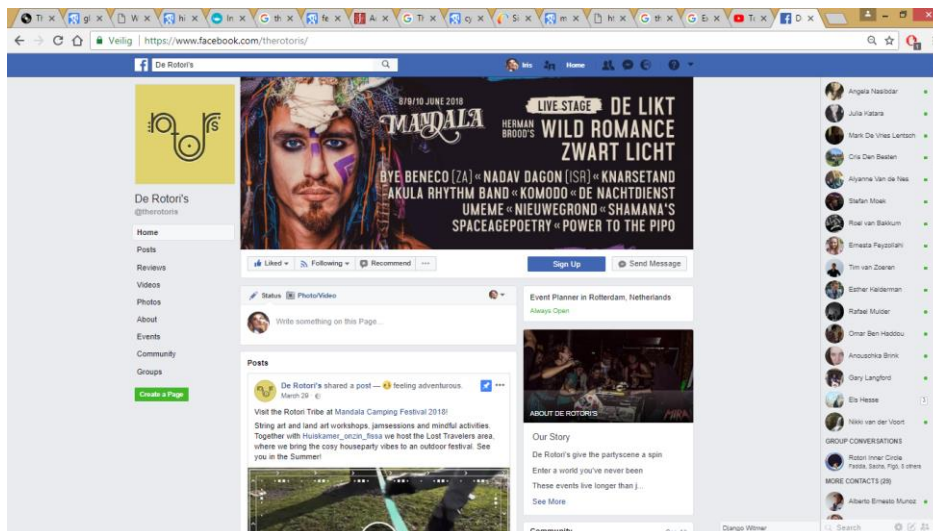
## Comparison of Facebook pages



Psychedelic rave, Rotterdam



Dutch Acid Family, Amsterdam



## Rotori's, Rotterdam

The Facebook page is in opposition to the other parties, with modern features like a banner and Dj's announcement in little self-edited clips. The same sense of aesthetics and ideas as their (young) audience, with the use of old (flyers) and new (social media) media creates a new dynamic for the Rotori's in the psytrance scene. As in our globalised world where change is going fast, the Rotori's try to re-create 'old ways' in to more modern ways for their own generation and other people that want to change too. In the next clip, this is outed more clearly. We see the two main organizers in the process of posting their event online. They talk about important features that they made, like the banner where the geometrically made logo is moving around, with a psychedelic tune in the background. Social media is very important to them, because this is the way they reach out towards other people, all around the world. This is the modern and most used way of posting events for parties, because of the great resourceful outreach they reach with this medium. The experience goes beyond the party, where it is also visible in the digital Facebook page, where every Monday also a fun psychedelic math fact is being posted, which on the party was being noticed by a visitor, who told me that she learned a lot from these facts on the Facebook page.

<https://youtu.be/me33EUNmWo>

## **V Findings 2: The new psytrance movement as socio-cultural ideology & practice: creating a feeling of unity**

“We are in a “anti-kraak building”, where a member of the Rotori’s lives. He is sick, already for a while, so we stop by to see how he is doing. He tells us about the new bass lines he added to a dark psytrance track he is making. He wants to give the listener the feeling of a basement like vibe, and we are all feeling it. I am impressed. We ask if his ears can take it, because he has tinnitus. He lowers the sound, he tells us he finds it very hard to deal with. The doctors can not help him and now he misses a lot of great psytrance parties, because of his ears. This does not help with the news of the logo that he made, is not chosen for the organization. He tells us he wants us to know that how he finds it hard how he was treated in the process: He regrets working so hard on the logo, and that they than go for another one from another member. The other two members try to defend their decision by telling him that is was hard discussing the logo because he is never present at the meetings. And that they felt like the other logo was the right one, when first continuing on the other logo. We tell him, that is aftermovie was really good, and that his strengths lie there. He agrees with that.” (February 2nd, 2018)

What can be subtracted from this vignette is a practical example of how the community of the Rotori’s work. One person is sick; some are visiting him. Also, a discussion on a organizational level is being raised, They talk about it, which is important for the members of the Rotori’s. Feeling welcomed and feeling like being a part of the community, is important for the Rotori that for example, shows his newest produced number. We all want to belong to some group. As Till points out, there have been many studies done about the difficulties that Western society faces in a ‘fractured world’ that finds it hard to resolve ‘issues of community, identity, belonging, hope and the loss of popular rituals that address such issues’ (2010: 96). In our current postmodern time structural connections like the church or political parties begin to disappear, other structures rise to take this place and takeover of the role of creating a sense of community and unity. The events of the Rotori’s can be seen as a place where a sense of community is being achieved. As it will be clear, a sense of community and connectedness that derives from cultural forms that are formed in these places contribute to a sense of unity and belonging. This will be outlined in this section through multiple themes: seeing unity as a social experience, the sociocratic nature of the Rotori’s, neo-tribalism and the role of Do It Yourself in the organization.

### *Unity as a social experience*

Unity can be found at a psytrance event or festival, in multiple forms. Coming to such a place, is described by some Rotori’s as a ‘warm bath’ of the feeling of ‘coming home’:

*"Yes, I often feel very much at home [at psyparties]. So as if I discover, eh, yes, a kind of home that I did not know in the past that I could have had it. Precisely because you are accepted and welcome.*

*And there is such a relaxed atmosphere. And there is a possibility to self-expression. Actually, when I step into the psytrance party location, I immediately feel relaxed. Like if you come home from a cold winter day and you sit in a warm bath, that kind of feeling, Haha " (P6)*

*“(R): yes super, really, just a warm welcome. Yes..*

*(I): and why?*

*(R): yes why .. all those people in the community are so loving and sharing and caring and.. Yes, that feels good. That is really nice.” (P7)*

*"Well you've been to Boom yourself, you know, you know what it is. You can hardly explain it. It is ... more like a feeling or something. I almost get goose bumps when I think about it because it is certainly not all one hundred percent positive and at the same time, it is .. if I should explain what Ozora [psytrance festival in Hungary] is, pfoeeewww. No idea." (P8)*

Warmth, safe and positive feelings like happiness are outed and connoted to the scene, when talked about such events. As O’Grady describes in her article: ‘this feeling of home can be outed through the feeling of known elements in psytrance’ (2015: 152). The elements of psytrance are, like described in the previous section, most of the time the same, in concept, but the form and outcome of this is always different and changes continuously.

How is a feeling of unity outed by the subjects even more? Turino discusses the notion of that music is a key resource ‘for realizing personal and collective identities which, in turn, are crucial for social, political, and economic participation’ (1999: 221). He uses the modelling system of Peirce, where the concept of sign is used in something fluent, something can stand for something else depending on the person: ‘thus allowing for many different types of signs outside propositional language (e.g. Peirce 1955:99)’ (222). Turino argues that for Peirce the concept of meaning can be simplified by defining it as the actual effect of a sign, that is: ‘the direct feeling, physical reaction, or language-based concept inspired in the perceiver by a musical sign’ (Peirce 1955:30-36; 1999: 224).

Feeling and experience are therefore the catalysts that can be expressed mostly when talking about music scenes. The way people dance and open up are mostly described by the Rotori’s as something what they especially like about the dancefloor. The music lures people in, but the social dancefloor is where unity finds its own implicit ways. Many people I interviewed talk about the dancefloor as an almost sacred place where one feels one and another. From interviews, Rotori’s mention the dancefloor as a place where one feels others, and feel connected with each other, mainly over the beat of the trance making music. This can be altered with psychedelics. The (social) aesthetics rhythmic lights, art, trance-inducing techniques like drugs and music work all to create a vibe together, which results in the following:

*"But if I'm on a dance floor, I just want to dance. To have that dance experience. And if there is someone you do not know, then ... you're only dancing with each other. And if you find someone you have that connection with .... That is something beautiful, because dancing is then .. when I look at people who are dancing .. everything that is the packaging of such a person is .. his name, what he does .. where he stands for. That all depends on that person. And when dancing you just only see their purest form ... and that is ... that is the energy of such a person. And you just have all the energy that is being sent out on that dance floor .. and some energy .. you understand. That is not always with other people. And if you find someone you do have that connection with, then you will find each other in the purest form there is. That's how it feels for me. And I think that's something beautiful."(P4)*

To understand this sense of feeling more that is created during such an event, one can view the included scenes from the Mira party in the end of the film. I ask you to project yourself in that situation to see the event and the sensory experiences for yourself.

#### *A Sociocratic way of managing*

Looking for new ways of communities, the imagined community (Anderson 1983) can be a term to explain the Rotori organisational modus in a broader perspective. The socially sociocratic constructed community that the Rotori's try to make is routed on beliefs of the people that see themselves as part of this group, and through their right in the model to speak about everything. Sometimes critique is given: "The organization has to think about who is more important, we [older Rotori members] or them [newer members]" (P9). Communication wise, mostly in the accepting nature and in giving everybody a voice was when march was approaching often a topic of talk at the meetings. These kinds of problems will help the change the organisational forms of the organisation and will be, according to Rotori ideology, changing for the better, till a form suitable for everyone, is found. Even though they are still searching for better ways to organise, the need for different form of community is proven through new members.

The structure of the group is also shown in this activity: the sociocratic way of organizing the Rotori's is visible through the whole organization and every event they organize as well.

In this photo series I will try to give sneak peek on how a 'gathering', or meeting was structured during the day. And how a sociocratic community sphere is outed through elements such as having dinner together, and the informal sphere.



Start of the meeting



Watching the after movie from Mira 1 together



What to do: writing it down on the 'scrum board'



Inspiration: watching psychedelic clips together



Essential: eating together

### *Neo-tribalism*

Whereas a feeling of unity can be created through the aesthetics and elements that make the party feel as a whole, the community itself strives for the same effect. A sense of belonging is also often mentioned when spoken about the community and psytrance in general

*"Hmm .. yes a sense of togetherness. It feels a bit like it is a kind of family I think. Everyone is very nice to each other at such festivals, and that is why it seems like you really belong there or something. Many of those festivals are also called tribal gatherings. So in principle it is a kind of tribe. That is what makes that vibe very strong." (P3)*

A theme that derives from this knowledge, is the tribe element. St John focuses on the transgressive dimensions of psytrance because the term tribe has anthropologically speaking, also another historical

discourse of colonialism. Psytrance tribalism can be seen as a member of a 'tribe apart,' where psytrance focuses on the 'outlaw figure', and how a psychedelic and 'freak identity' is created.

*Among the chief icons of performance, prestige and tribalism sampled within psytrance music and culture, the outlaw is adapted from popular cultural sources (especially cinema) and redeployed as a means of dissolving and performing difference. (2012: 437)*

As described by St John being an outcast is explicit for the psytrance scene. Being an outcast is not only how people feel like in the scene, but also in the streets of Rotterdam, this feeling is created. The concept of neo-tribalism can outline this stance further. Psytrance brings people of all ages, musical tastes and different backgrounds together. Their way of life at, let's say a psytrance party, is of neo-tribal nature: 'given that people were together in festivities over 24 hours long, living a physical and spiritual communion.' (Guerra 2015: 7) Guerra argues, that aesthetic aspects are also important in creation of *communitas*. Neo-tribes, show in their form that people 'resist and respond to postmodernism and its ethics institutionalized by means of a return to local ethics and empathic sociabilities' (McRobbie, 1994 in Guerra 2015: 9). Furthermore, this is described as if the 'homo aestheticus' is reborn, 'a sort of search for mutual aid, of proximity, and a rediscovery of the senses in specific places and with people with similar tastes, reviving individual identities' (ibid.). This can be fleeting, and temporarily, like going to a psytrance festival for a week. However, rather than wanting to belong to an existing subculture and being aware of why it is different from general culture, subculture has become a 'discursive construct, more akin to a palette of tastes that the individual can draw from' (9). So, postmodern subcultures are about your own identity and sense of belonging. These become more fractured, as people can feel like being part of more than one subculture. To keep this openness and connectedness is something that the Rotori's find important as well. To make the community substantial, they organize also days where one can meet new people, be arty and creative and connect: one of the Rotori's is through such a day a Rotori himself:

*" And then at a certain moment .. they organized Be a Rotori For a Day, to make decorations with them for a party. That is completely my thing, because I myself was already very busy decorating my own room. Then I went there and there was just instant connection. I felt right at home there, right away. And I was welcomed with open arms and they just saw my enthusiasm and yes .. I knew where I belonged.*

*(I): and why did it feel like coming home?*

*(R): because .. going from drum n' bass to psytrance was a very nice transition for me, I was looking for something in people that I did not found in the other scenes, like acceptance, and much more love and .. and this I just found with the Rotori's" (P4)*

The neo-tribal elements do not stop here. In this interview, we can detect neo-tribal elements like coming together, where “instant connections” are being made. The participant knows instantly where he “belongs”. This can of course also happen on a really big scale, like for example on a big psytrance festival. Also, on the internet, when viewing a psytrance song together with people all over the world, can enhance a feeling on unity as well.

### *Do It Yourself*

To create an open and accepting community, the Rotori’s belief that the feeling of unity can be achieved through the participatory nature of the parties and other events that the Rotori’s try to create. A feeling of unity can also be formed through the event of Be a Rotori For a Day, where all elements are present in which the values of openness of the scene, making the art by the Rotori’s themselves and including new people that like to help and introduce them in a fun way to the psytrance scene.

Neo-tribalism is therefore something that stands out in this art concept; the Rotori’s strive to encourage creativity and uniqueness but via traditional psytrance art outings (for example, string art that is created at the Be a Rotori For a Day event), to lift the party to higher experience. The art that is made that day is made through the ideology of making everything by their own: through Do It Yourself art (DIY). Through using DIY, the group invites also other interested guests in psytrance to join their events as an insider, not as an outsider. While making the string art on geometrical shapes, this works in a meditative way while people can relax and connect with each other. A lot of the people I spoke to thought it “would be fun” to participate in such an event. Some knew some of the members (the sister of one of the members was there) but some also not, and came alone “to meet new people” or because they “always wanted to try the string art some time.” After the day was over, a lot of the participants was very relaxed and said they all had a “really fun day, where a lot of new friends were made”.

The geometrical shapes and wire art are typical psychedelic trance features because of the sensorial pleasure it gives in black light, and the psychedelic forms that are constructed on geometrical forms, so that the guests that are invited can get used to these elements of the scene. In this way, the open atmosphere that the Rotori’s want to create on their events is enhanced because of making art. The experience is made together with people that come to the parties, where this art will be portrayed. This is a clip of how such a day is structured and how that looks like.

<https://youtu.be/JaNLKS46hzU>

This event results from the understanding that everything can be made out of yourself, and results in doing this together as a community which enhances the feeling of belonging. The events of the

Rotori's can be seen as a place where a sense of community is being achieved. Through different forms of experience (dancing, making art work or debate) together, a sense of community and connectedness that are formed in these places contribute to a sense of unity and belonging.

### **VI Findings 3: revisiting the old ways; neo-shamanism/neo-tribalism**

“His apartment is full of plants; that is the first thing that catches my eye. They almost take over the whole room, like his urban apartment in Rotterdam has suddenly become a jungle when you look to the right. He laughs about it. “I just really like plants. They are nature, we are nature. We need them.” We talk some more about plants, and I ask him about if there is a link between shamanism and psytrance, and what that would be, if there was. He tells me, “oh, everywhere you can see it. It is in the music at first. The beat “tadadum tadatum” comes from shamanistic drumming, so you get in a state of trance, you know. People also take psychedelic drugs of course, like ayahuasca, which the shamans uses themselves as well for ceremonies. So, yeah.. what else..” He tells me that he is a little nervous for his interview, so he wants to make some chai tea, to calm down. Now I know for sure: there is definitely a link between shamanism and psytrance that can be found.” (February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018)

As experienced in the vignette, shamanistic practices are closely bound to the psytrance scene. The Rotori's also incorporate shamanistic elements in their way of life, whereas the practice in daily life ranges from spirituality, trance and new neo shamanistic elements, that the youth uses to redefine these old ways. This section will discuss old and new practices of shamanism that can be found in the psytrance scene, and especially by the members of the Rotori's.

#### *Experience in a spiritual way*

Psytrance can be experienced without psychedelics, but a different and more spiritual experience can be achieved via the use of LSD, Truffles, MDMA or Ketamine (which are psychedelic drugs that are used the most at parties and festivals). Drugs play a big role in the ‘counterculture’ that is shaped by young individuals. A liminal space is created through use of drugs, where daily life can be paused. Moore and Miles argue that this is not an escape from real life, but a ‘counter balance to it’ (2004: 521). While drugs have a great impact in the way one experiences a night, an embodied experience is created through many factors. Also the volume of the bass, lights, decorations and choice of venue have impact in the way party goers understand the ‘body, self, sociality and life expectation’ (De Ledesma 2012: 35). The embodied experience at psytrance parties is a mix of this all, where people often feel as there is room for individual and collective transformation (Pini 2001). Furthermore, Van Wolputte mentions that ‘the body emerges as a changing relationship that, at the same time, unfolds as an ethical horizon—and challenge—for the (un)making of self, identity, and belonging’ (2004: 251). Our postmodern time teaches that one can form oneself. Moore and Miles argue that ‘much like other

forms of consumption, young people's use of drugs is less about exploring the unpredictability of risk, and more about them actively maintaining a sense of stability in their everyday lives' (2004: 506).

Also in the light of psytrance culture, which is often referring to freedom, peace and expressing yourself as an individual, the body can make oneself and actively search for belonging. At the parties as being the social hubs of the psytrance community, one can find peace, connect with others that feel the same way. However, this all relates to some critical voices in the Rotori organisation as well. Psytrance parties and festival vibes (including the Mira party) in general are also questioned by a Rotori, whereas he mentions that people are trying too hard to be 'spiritual', healthy and green. They seem fake to him. He thinks this has nothing to do with the psytrance scene anyway, people should take care of themselves and the planet out of their own knowledge, where a scene is not needed to create that consciousness.

*"(R): I do not know. Those people are of course very nice and very relaxed, It's just that hippie nonsense..*

*(I): and what is all that hippie nonsense?*

*(R): people are just way too nice and far too soft, very emotional about everything, everything must be felt, like 'your skin is super nice'. Very emotional people.. I was last to a, what is called something like a rainbow gathering, in Breda. And then three people started talking about what they felt about a tree in the garden and how much energy came from it.. I think it's fine, but I cannot do much with it myself. And that behaviour dominates a bit at psytrance parties.*

*(I): Do you think that's fake?*

*(R): Yes. Well. Fake, I mean. You create your own world right? You create your own perception, and that is the truth for you. So fake? No not necessarily. But it is, receding back to what we were just talking about, it is a bit of fleeing from reality. So .. what is real. And that's fine! I mean thinking outside of the box is very important. But you can also go too far. Yes." (P5)*

#### *A state of trance*

Scott Hutson found in his research that ravers have the feeling that they get spiritual experiences from being at a rave (1999). Based on testimonials of the rave experience, he analyzes rave as a form of healing: "references to shamanism and catch-phrases about self-empowerment and spiritual healing permeate raver discourse and invite an anthropological perspective similar to that applied to non-biomedical healing in small scale, nonwestern societies" (1999: 54). This world can be achieved again through altered states of consciousness, which brings spiritual ease to people facing difficulties in life and uncertain society. Robin Sylvan takes the above arguments further, stating that 'as a religious and cultural phenomenon, popular music has already precipitated the end of centuries of dominance of

the mind-body split' (2002:13). The loss of the mind-body split, is outed through the trance and dance practices that happens on the psytrance dancefloor:

*"For trance .. the music .. is the most important thing. Because look, for me, a party, and the environment are very important to me. What I am looking for is human contact and I am looking for the people who share the same experiences as me in that way. And for me, in that way I experience the best party feeling. But I think if you really, if you really want to reach those trance states .. then you really have to stay with yourself. And do not look at your surroundings. Because as soon as you focus on something, the effects become a hundred times stronger. But that does not matter."(P4)*

It is clear that a feeling of trance is strongly connected through electronic dance scenes, and I believe are best visual through the psytrance lifestyle. This is because neo-shamanism and neo-tribalism are strongly affiliated with psytrance as well. Neo-shamanism can be described as a 'set of notions and techniques that originated in the non-Western tribal societies and, within the framework of New Age spirituality, were adapted for the life of contemporary urban dwellers' (Lindquist 1997: abstract). Furthermore, neo-shamanic practices are built on consciousness-altering techniques, 'when the Self is perceived to leave the body, to journey in other realities and to interact with the spiritual beings, enlisting their help for social, psychological, and physical healing'. This combination of healing factors can follow in personal and communal empowerment, as Western people use these indigenous shamanistic practices (Wallis 2000). There are however some cultural complications that come along when one 'borrows culture' from others. On psytrance festivals or parties, also at Mira (Rotori event), people are dressed in tribal clothing, have paintings on their face that redirect to indigenous traditional face paintings, or wear 'accessories' like an Indian coronet. Through cultural appropriation, the danger lies in misappropriating shamanistic and therefore indigenous peoples culture, when it becomes decontextualized, homogenized, or romanticized (Wallis 2000; Blain and Wallis in press; Wallis 1999a). This discussion raises questions on this use of these techniques, experiences and views that are lend from pre-capitalistic social communities, and the thought of cultural appropriation and the distortion of old spiritual and social life forms. St John argues however that appropriations should not be subject to dismissal right away because

*(1) native millenarian discourses have been adopted and repurposed to the ends of Western countercultural movements seeking resolution to the crises of modernity (e.g., existential, ecological, and otherwise); (2) native plants and their analogues are known to initiate profound shifts in consciousness (Strassman, 2001; Strassman et al., 2008; and other entries on "entheogenic spirituality" such as Oroc, 2009), and; (3) native actors have become involved in manufacturing, selling, spending, and buying their own products' (2011: 214).*

The disembodied cultural forms that are imported from other times and places, get formed in local contexts to constitute locality, community and tradition (Lindquist 1997). The aspect of healing that is a prominent aspect for music and shamanism as well, can be also found in psytrance culture, where forms of ‘cultural appropriation’ are also visible in practice right away. A Dutch shaman in training tells about how the music of psytrance has healing abilities, and how shamanism plays a part in this.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oJP0sx6JF8>

### *New age phenomenon*

When the roots of the psytrance lies in practices of traditional native shamans, the practice can be understood as part in the new Age phenomenon, that is understood by St John as ‘blurring the line between spirituality and psychotherapy and perceiving the quest towards the divine as indistinguishable from that of self development’ (2011: 158). Where the self is central, as a reflection of the divine, soul retrieval can be used to achieve the goal of healing the self. (ibid.). This is articulated through certain practices in psytrance music, for example, where a Rotori is explaining how his self-built sound system gets the right tones out for psytrance music, to create the perfect sound for the dancefloor and the listener, to get the most harmonic sets of sound.

The technological aspect of psytrance culture, is important for the practice of new age shamanism. As Vedava argues, the performative process happening on the dancefloor/stage of a psytrance event can be explained as ‘technognosis’: a concept that combines media, arts, performance and technology within the notion of gnosis’ (2015: 170). He uses technognosis to theorize the ‘whole transpersonal range of the psytrance experience, including its spiritual dimension, enabled by the induction and facilitation of alterations in consciousness’ (Ibid.). According to Vedava, technognosis ‘affects participation and invites its multi-media and performance expression, triggering fundamental changes in ways of human thinking, imagining and operating: potentiating the adoption of participation as the next paradigm in human existence’ (Ibid.). As he agrees in seeing the psytrance phenomenon as a whole, he also mentions the spiritual side of psytrance with his theory. The alterations of consciousness and other forms of tribalism or the link with indigenous ways of culture are combined in a link between shamanism and psytrance culture. In particular, the healing of body and mind are often mentioned when dancing at a psytrance event, and can be performed through these new technologies by oneself, others or the shaman DJ.

New modern ways of looking at shamanism and psytrance can be found within the Rotori lifestyle in many places. Modern day shamanistic values are found in modern ‘sports’ and ‘arts’ that are used in psytrance culture, for example slacklining, juggling acts like poi and the magic ball, which are performed by a lot of Rotori members. The poi works in a way that the practitioner should always make perfect circles, where the flower of life fits in. The symmetric elements are in line with

shamanistic values about nature. Also, whereas a sense of unity and experience play a big part in these sports they do together, these sports derive from neo-shamanistic values, as where meditation techniques as for the balance of your body and mind are used. Meditation and yoga are commonly practiced by the members of the Rotori's, for mind, body and soul to align. In neo-tribal and neo-shamanistic practices, a direct link to nature is also very important and therefore also with your own being. Slacklining is a good example of all these aspects. In the clip, a Rotori tells about the core of the body, that is needed for this sport.

<https://youtu.be/Omq8oRk0tNk>

A healthy lifestyle is also recommended. A lot of members are vegan or vegetarian. They often had long conversations during meetings about food, health and what was good for the world, and what not. Some Rotori's do not really mind about all these conscious or spiritual thinking. They just like the trance state they achieve at psytrance parties, but do not go further than that. Another important aspect of psytrance culture that derives from neo-shamanistic culture is the clothing. For the Rotori's, the main selection criteria is 'loose, relaxed clothing' where you can move freely in, and feel comfortable. Features of nature and tribalistic elements can be found in these loose clothing. Geometric prints or black light activated clothing is also popular, to intensify the experience of the event even more. In the next clip the favorite psytrance clothes of the Rotori's are portrayed with these features.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cc8LxcYVwMw>

Loose clothes, a healthy life style, caring for nature, etcetera, are elements that are perceived as contributing to the healing of body and mind. When looking for a place of belonging, which is one of the reasons of the origin of subcultures, one must ask what kind of people search for the elements that the psytrance scene provides. Aspects of life, that are not vividly present for everybody in the norm of society. Lindquist argues that part of our soul leaves when we try to be something we are not, which in shamanic thinking would classify as abandoning our authentic selves (2004). As he goes on, the soul will leave when one accept the social roles that are assigned to you in life. The fear of being left out and a desire of acceptance can lead to resentful patterns of behavior. However, a transformation can form through a 'healing sequence,' in where eventually a state of well-being can be found. Through communicating with the soul part about its 'reasons for departure and its conditions for returning', 'the patient has to live 'according to the instructions given by the newly found soul part' to accept oneself again (Lindquist 2004: 164). Some of the Rotori's tell similar tales of how the scene saved them, or helped them in life:

*"And that is why you do so, because you remove yourself from your everyday thoughts and activities so that you can create space in your head, yes, in fact what you are doing there, you let deeper layers of your subconscious come up. And so you get certain self-explanatory insights. And in this way it is really a kind of therapy. I notice that very much to myself when I'm on the dance floor. I can really*

*enjoy the music, but I can also at the same time try self-therapy. Can I let certain emotions come up and process them. You can accept everything that comes into your mind much better and you can process much better, because you are already in a good energy with many people around you who are all in the same energy. That is why it is a kind of safe environment to do self-reflection.*

*(I): Do you also see it as a kind of healing?*

*(R): Yes, certainly, yes. Yes, if I, every time I go to a psytrance festival, than I leave a little stronger. I always learn from myself, that is because of the things that I experience, the people I have met. people I meet also act as an mirror on which you realize things about you, But also on the dance floor where I can actually be my own therapist for that and there I have the time and the freedom to just dive into myself."(P6)*

*"Psytrance is .. life for me. It is a way for me ... to bring my own character and my vision in to the world by making it myself. But it is also a way of .. the feasts and festivals .. dancing ... working with music and with other people that is .. an experience. It is so much more than a form of entertainment alone. It heals you."(P4)*

#### *Practices of neotrance*

Spiritual intellectuals are looking for identity and healing from everyday life, which can be possible through this community. The cultural critique lies therefore in the psycho-social aspect, which in practice, can be linked to the practices of the Rotori's shown above: this can be linked to the practice of self-shamanizing (2006: 29) as Tramacchi found in modern subjects that become 'their own clients and their own healers,' as St John describes as for seeking remedies for 'alienation and "soul loss" compatible with desired liberation from dependence on biomedical solutions' (2018: 62). When loosening the control over the mind is necessary in the process of healing, which is integral to shamanistic traditional forms of healing, in our culture, losing control to another is troublesome because independence and self-responsibility are highly valued norms in our culture (St John 2018). Within neo-shamanism, one can get skilled at letting go from our pressured daily life, whereas a oneself can heal through community. Therefore, a sense of social healing can be derived from a local psytrance community.

New forms of neo-shamanism work through our society, in which young people try to find their own happiness and belonging. St John calls for the phenomenon of neotrance (2011), that can describe our current period of psytrance culture, in where gatherings are the context for neotrance, which 'indexes the complexity of altered personal, social, and political states contextualized by psychedelic festivals' (215). I think this does not end with the festival grounds, but is rooted through all psytrance community. This gives way for participants from diverse backgrounds to give expression to difference, but also at the same time experience a feeling of singularity. In this 'carnavalesque'

behavior, we have seen that the term tribe is adopted to show a certain aesthetic, technique and practice or language by which one can distinguish from other groups, and/or 'designate the dissolution of such differences' (St John, 2009b in St John 2011: 215). It seems clear now that the hybrid psytrance forms seem to offer an alternative for the existing, individualistic, large-scale society, in which a consciousness on alternative forms of healing can be achieved by being part of a community like the Rotori's, where the 'experience' never seems to stop.

## **VII Conclusion**

While the psytrance scene has its roots in the sixties and is influenced by other music styles, the scene characteristics have not changed a lot since then. The clothes, hairstyles, art decorations and way of living are slightly different, but not in its overall form. Scenes are however always changeable and fluent, which is through the analysis of the Rotori organization and their vision to change the scene. For this research the following research question was explored: what are the features of the psytrance community lifestyle (for young people) and why those specifically, and how does that translates into a specific critique of temporary society and of the psytrance scenes itself? While staying with the young organization, subtle changes were found in their view on psytrance and the meaning of the music and lifestyle in their lives, versus the bigger existing scene. The overall features of the psytrance scene are professional, big festivals that are being held in wide open places, where big sound systems blast, artworks are set up, famous DJs play, and where eccentric persons walk around in organic and colourful clothing. Parties are a somewhat 'budget' version of these festivals; the big sound systems, art works and eccentric people are still there, but healthy foods, shops and workshops are not to be found on most psyparties. The Rotori's are in this sense different than the established organizations in The Netherlands or other organizations you see around the world, that are famous and busily visited in the scene. The members want to create a cosy atmosphere instead of creating big busy gatherings, to keep the entrance to the scene easily accessible, instead of closed off like big parties often (not on purpose) create through keeping the scene as it is.

Also, a combination of all these features does not make the organization stop to expand on this features even more; a diverse range of workshops and activities are ideal while the 'Do It Yourself' ethos oversees this all. Although every Rotori has different motives for being in the scene and in the organization, the ambitions or trends I found overall in the three months I stayed there, could be roughly be divided into: 1. the Rotori's try to create 'experiences' as a whole, 2. feelings of unity and acceptance are tried to be achieved with their events and 3. The events are based on neo-shamanistic forms and beliefs, which can result in a form of social healing for individuals, struggling with the 'crisis of the self' in modern (capitalistic) culture (Gaia 2015:3). While the Rotori's are relatively unknown, their agency and influence to develop and change the scene is not yet visible. However, an overall tension is being created between the old and new in the music scene and its development.

because the members interpret the scene with its flaws (to them) and want to make the current scene better for themselves (and others that feel the same way). Therefore, a trend that is visible in the vision of the Rotori members is about seeing today's capitalistic world not as an enemy, but just as something you can live in by your own rules (and not necessarily wanting to change the current system). They use psytrance as a means of belonging; they fit in the group because they like the ideals that are presented in psytrance culture, but are not necessarily busy with implying statements with the material culture, like what you see happening in other music scenes, like punk.

Concluding on above points, current developments in society through themes as uncertainty let stress levels rise in the life of youth. In our individualistic society, the pressure to succeed and the 'always need to do something' mentality is often too heavy for a lot of young people, and result in health problems and illnesses like a burn-out. The search for identity and self in a society full of choices and pressure to be successful, is most visible in youth scenes. Implications of the research on microlevel can therefore be found in practice through young individuals who find their identity/sense of belonging through a way of social healing in which they can cope with the current societal structures and those of the current psytrance scene, and try to move away from and are in search of an alternative to a unchangeable and drug related scene. The individual transformation in a communal way that the members show towards a 'better future' align with the current green, neo-hippie movements and the New Age movement that wish similar things for the world. In the light of the emerging green consciousness, we could also see the vision of young people in a sense of a consumer way of change: changing the system by changing your consumer behaviour, like purchasing organic foods and vintage or organic clothing.

In the rise of the new paradigm, it is clear that a development towards a stronger community and a less commercial and profit driven community is something that can be noticed at a local organization like the Rotori's as well. In this world, where creating an experience is important, it becomes clear that the Rotori's fit in this image, as individuals who want to not give 'just a party' but an interactive experience where everything is coming together and builds on the former, and again beyond that. Local movements like this are therefore important to study, because they tell something about the current societal situation in The Netherlands. Also, seen in larger structures, it becomes clear that this study fits into larger paradigms that are current in today's world. This research will therefore help noting these structures and movements as existing on a local level, linking it to larger structures as well. On macrolevel, global green, neo-hippie movements and neo-shamanistic practices can be found in and complemented with psytrance culture, where a new paradigm of collaboration can grow. Theoretically speaking, insights on a growing subculture in The Netherlands (and the world) can give a better view on current changes and movements in society. As we have seen, local youth is creating their own future by mixing these different movements to their own needs in a scene that is fluent and can change. This research can therefore enhance the field in music through analysis on how local

youth deal with subcultures and societies that are built way before them, and how they try to find new ways in a big (semi) commercial psytrance scene/movement that is scattered around the world. As mentioned, interesting insights are found with an organization like the Rotori's, as they can function as a community where the total experience can reach beyond the event, which can be transformed into a form of social healing for its members. Further research can build on these conclusions, when researching identity, belonging, ideology and new structures of organizing and living life. This can be researched on both macro and micro level, when researcher look at the bigger, worldly phenomenon of the psytrance scene, or compare local scenes with each other, and further discuss the influence that societal structures, communities and individuals have on each other. Thus, as a closing note, the phenomenon of the psytrance community as a social healing environment can improve the lives of young people that try to find their way in this society. We will never know for sure in which direction the world will go, but some psytrance enthusiasts envisioned the 'power of the Goa spirit' as 'ultimately affecting all humankind' (Schmidt 2015: 131).

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### **Audiovisual Resources**

*The Last Shaman*, 2016. [film] Directed by Raz Degan. United States of America: Sumatra Films.