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Transpositions of Aesthetics in Indonesian Electronic Music and Beyond

ABSTRACT This article explores the musical performances, aesthetics, and multi-situated reception of Indonesian electronic dance music in Europe and Indonesia, focusing on the duo Gabber Modus Operandi (GMO). Since their first international tour titled "Trance Against the Machine" in 2019, the duo has gained significant attention, especially in Europe, because they are seen as part of a seismic shift in the electronic dance continuum. The article critically analyzes this perceived shift in relation to GMO's music. It advocates for a mode of analysis that simultaneously traces the situated and the multi-situated nature of aesthetics in electronic music. This analysis is inspired by an ethnographic theory developed in collaboration with the artists we study. We propose the term "transposition" as a translation of the Indonesian term *alay*, used by the members of GMO to describe their aesthetic vision, in order to pay attention to what might be called aesthetic globalization as both situated and multi-situated. We do so as part of an aesthetic-anthropological approach that seeks to bring aesthetic analysis into anthropology and anthropology into aesthetic analysis. KEYWORDS Gabber Modus Operandi, transposition, decolonial aesthetics, *alay*, ethnographic theory, aesthetic-anthropological analysis, multi-situated aesthetics, critique of world music

INTRODUCTION

In 2019, Indonesian noise and electronic music hit the European electronic music scene with the force of a tsunami. Here is how *Boiler Room,* a prominent European online broadcasting platform for electronic music, described the performance of the Bali-based duo Gabber Modus Operandi (or GMO) at the international CTM festival in Berlin that year:

> On the night of February 1st, Gabber Modus Operandi took to the Berghain stage with a demented energy. Even in the context of CTM, Berlin's challenging experimental music festival, the performance by this Indonesian duo stood out. DJ Kasimyn ratcheted the beats up to 200 BPM, his tides of bass pressure occasionally parting to reveal sinuous melodies. In front of him, Ican Harem screamed, stripped and ricocheted across the stage like a man possessed. Just as the crowd were adjusting to the intensity, Harem vomited spectacularly.[1]

The concert by GMO, a duo consisting of Ican Harem and Aditya Surya Taruna (also known as Kasimyn), seemed to "outpunk" even the expectations of the most seasoned European club-goers at Berghain, the legendary Berlin club for techno music. GMO's concert marked an explosive finish to that year's 10-day CTM festival, a leading European electronic music festival and "platform for adventurous music and art."[2] GMO's concert

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FIGURE 1. Official press photo of Gabber Modus Operandi featuring Ican Harem (top) and Kasimyn (seated). With permission from the artists. Photo by Denny Novikar Nasution.

in Berlin seemed to be a palpable manifestation of what John Twells, himself a British electronic music artist, in a review of the 2019 festival called a "seismic shift in the global dance continuum."[3]

GMO is at the forefront of Indonesian experimental electronic music, a distinctive style that in recent years has captured the imagination of electronic dance audiences across Europe, Asia, and North America and helped shape a sense that a seismic aesthetic shift is underway. GMO's online presence is also one of the most influential on the Indonesian electronic music scene. They have over 27,000 followers on the social media platform Instagram, and "Sangkakala" (meaning Trumpet of Doom), their most popular song on the music streaming service Spotify, has been played over 300,000 times by the band's 11,350 monthly listeners (as of March 2023). On the video-sharing website YouTube, GMO's most popular music video, "Dosar Besar" (Mortal Sin), had 76,078 views as of February 2022.

Since their CTM performance, which followed the release of their first album, *Puxxximaxxxx*, in 2018 and a concert in Sydney titled "Trance Against the Machine," a play on the name of the legendary American rock band Rage Against the Machine, GMO has become a prominent name on the international experimental music scene. The duo has toured festivals and clubs all over the world, visiting six Chinese cities as well as Sydney, Taipei, Kampala, Malmö, Rotterdam, Brussels, Lisbon, and Krakow in 2019 alone, and plans to visit further tour destinations were only cut short by the Covid pandemic in early 2020. Just after the release of their second album, *Hoxxxya*, in 2019 through the Chinese label SVBKVLT, the Icelandic singer Björk picked up their vibe and played GMO's track "Hey Nafsu" (from *Puxxximaxxx* 2018), when she

appeared as a surprise DJ at the festival Le Guess Who? in Utrecht. This began an artistic collaboration that saw GMO member Kasimyn feature prominently on three tracks of Björk's 2022 album, *Fossora*. In 2023, GMO performed at Roskilde Festival, the largest rock festival in Northern Europe.

This article embeds the enthusiastic reception of GMO's music in Europe and the sense of a seismic shift that it seemed to promise within an aesthetic-anthropological analysis of their music based on conversations with Ican and Kasimyn as well as ethnographic descriptions of concerts and their political-aesthetic contexts in both Europe and Indonesia. Tracing the aesthetics of GMO's music between Berlin in Germany, the Swedish town of Malmö, the Javanese city of Yogyakarta, and GMO's hometown of Denpasar in Bali, we argue for an analysis of aesthetics as multiple, multi-situated, and potentially "otherwise." We highlight the multiple poetics and politics of aesthetic phenomena—such as trance, possession, and gabber dance music—that emerge out of and across GMO's performances. We use these concrete aesthetic transpositions of aesthetics to propose "transposition" as an analytical term for the multi-situated dynamics of what might rather poorly be called aesthetic globalization; that is, the ways in which aesthetic phenomena transform as they emerge in and across sites and situations in a digitally mediated world.

TRANSPOSITION, IN DIGITAL MUSIC AND BEYOND

In traditional music terminology, transposition means the "notation or performance of music at a pitch different from that in which it was originally conceived or notated, by raising or lowering all the notes in it by a given interval."[4] However, in digital and electronic music the term "transposition" covers much more. Here music is changed and transposed not merely by raising or lowering pitch but also by sampling, modulating, filtering, processing, or changing the speed. These transpositions are defined by the innumerable possibilities afforded when the music studio is squeezed into a digital audio workstation (DAW).[5]

Digital transpositions are not limited to form and matter. Rather, digital musical material is to be understood as an assemblage of samples embedded in mods or modules,[6] which filter and modulate sound sequences in almost infinite ways and output them to other on- and offline platforms. Digitally born music, we argue, explodes traditional notions of musical transposition. As Deleuze and Guattari noted some time ago, even the early synthesizer functioned as an assemblage that transposes more than sound itself:

> By assembling modules, source elements, and elements for treating sound (oscillators, generators, and transformers), by arranging microintervals, the synthesizer makes audible the sound process itself, the production of that process, and puts us in contact with still other elements beyond sound matter. It unites disparate elements in the material, and transposes the parameters from one formula to another.[7]

The synthesizer, as they put it, "molecularizes" sound. It operates through the molecular components of sound (captured in files or samples) and allows for their reassembly in

infinitely new forms and into new synthetic constellations that transcend sound itself: "its synthesis is of the molecular and the cosmic, material and force, not form and matter, *Grund* and territory."[8] In electronic music, the individual sound becomes the molecule that makes up the world. The synthesizer, Deleuze and Guattari suggested, is a thought machine that works like philosophy: an assemblage that enables cosmological thought to emerge in sound.[9]

Since Deleuze and Guattari wrote about the early synthesizers in the 1980s, the revolution in digital technologies has created a vast space in which sound emerges in novel ways as assemblages of the aesthetic molecular and of cosmological thought. We use the term "transposition" to refer to these movements of assemblages of aesthetics and cosmology across space and context. Transposition is helpful to analyze the globalization of aesthetics in a digital age because of its polyvalence. Even though transposition is most well-known from music analysis, it is not restricted to it. In biology, for instance, transposition refers to the horizontal transfer of genetic material that happens in bacterial worlds.[10] In chess, transposition refers to the alternative set of moves through which one can get to the same position.[11] And in magic, transposition refers to the sleight-of-hand through which a performer switches one object for another.[12] We want to infuse this bacterial-gaming-conjuring dimension into our analysis of aesthetic transpositions in electronic music.

Like Braidotti in her reflections on the nomadic ethics of the term "transposition,"[13] we are inspired by the similarity between transpositions in new biology and in music, in particular electronic music. Recently, new biological insight into the importance of DNA packages transposed directly and horizontally between organisms in both bacterial and eukaryotic worlds has shaken up the Darwinian paradigm and led to a new understanding of the symbiotic and reticulate nature of evolution.[14] In the same way, electronic music shakes up the very idea of music. In digitally born music, transposition is no longer just an aesthetic change restricted to pitch that is tied to the internal aesthetic grammar of music but also a global-aesthetic principle in which molecular samples of sound, each infinitely modulable or transposable, now traverse the globe in horizontal, if never symmetrical ways. This is also a conjuring act because along the way, new aesthetics appear unexpectedly out of hegemonic politics and multiple contexts. Transposition, as we shall see, allows new realities to be possible, because it also leaves some things hidden or unsaid.

Just like modules and samples can be pitched or tweaked to resemble almost any sound, we show that the aesthetic globalization of GMO's music entails a transposition also of notions of trance. "Trance Against the Machine," the label that GMO used to announce their worldwide concerts in 2019, plays on a double meaning of the term "trance" as both a global electronic music genre and a form of possession. This double meaning will lead our argument and analysis, because the possibility of trance (as in actual possession) is a key aesthetic source of inspiration for GMO's music. Transposition is in other words also potentially a "trance-position." The possibility of possession, as we shall see, is tied to GMO's fascination with the rural Javanese ritual tradition of horse possession known as *jathilan*. In *jathilan* rituals, possession will often spill over from the designated performers to the spectators, who will spontaneously writhe like the animal or demonic spirit that has possessed them.

Possession of this kind is a "body impolitic,"[15] in the sense of a body politics that is irresponsible, reckless, and impolite. *Jathilan* possession allows the refined body politics and self-control that characterize ordinary Javanese social life to be usurped by a reckless or "impolitic" spirit other. As we have learned by following GMO across multiple sites in Europe and Indonesia, this possibility of possession entails an ambition to hack and invert the global dance genre. It seeks to undermine what Dylan Robinson in his critique of encounters between Indigenous song and Western art music has called the "hungry listening" of Western music consumers who are "hungry for the felt confirmations of square pegs in square holes, for the satisfactory fit as sound knowledge slides into its appropriate place."[16] When GMO, in their musical performances, open the global music genre of trance up to the possibility of actual trance or spirit possession, not just of Indonesian *jathilan* dancers but also of European ravers, their trance music no longer "fits" into an acceptable notion of Western sound knowledge. GMO's performances essentially ask: Who is possessed in trance music and by what?

To explore this question and its limits, we are reminded that Robinson's definition of hungry listening resonates with what Aileen Moreton-Robinson calls "white possessive logics,"[17] a Western understanding of the ethnic or racial other that rests on legacies of possessive individualism,[18] property rights, and colonial dispossession. GMO's aesthetic experiment seeks to transpose this white possessive logic into the possibility of Javanese spirit possession. As we shall see, however, the politics of this aesthetic transposition is fraught with political ambivalence, because the attempted subversion of Western hungry listening rests on a lot being unsaid.

TRANSPOSITION, OR HOW TO STUDY AESTHETICS IN AND ACROSS SITES

Our use of the term "transposition" implies a general argument about aesthetic globalization in a digital world as simultaneously ontological and multi-situated, aesthetic and political. A little over 20 years ago, when the American anthropologist and ethnomusicologist Steven Feld critiqued the problems of the politically suspect and Orientalist label "world music," he took up the issue of aesthetic globalization. In particular, Feld was critical of the "familiar motional and transport metaphors of transnational flow,"[19] such as "routes," "circuits" and "traffic," which, so Feld argued, serve to naturalize the processes that "make all music worlds actually or potentially transportable and hearable in all others."[20] We propose the term "transposition" as an alternative to the metaphors of transport that continue to dominate the academic understanding of aesthetic globalization in comparative musicology. This has both analytical and methodological implications.

Analytically, we propose transposition as a term to capture how aesthetic assemblages change across contexts. While transport metaphors serve comparative musicology well to study the situated aesthetics of digital music,[21] transport metaphors imply that aesthetic phenomena travel as packages and are changed only by local context and interpretation. Aesthetics in this situated view is always local, never trans-local. Transposition affords an attention to the ways in which aesthetics is both situated and multi-situated.

Methodologically, we propose the term "transposition" as an alternative to the tendency in musicology to develop its analytical terms apart from its interlocutors. In contrast, we have developed transposition as an analytical term in collaboration with Ican and Kasimyn. Transposition is our translation of the Indonesian slang term "post-*alay*," an extrapolation of the Indonesian youth culture known as *alay*, which GMO uses to describe their aesthetic approach. We take their term "post-*alay*" as an ethnographic theoretical ally of our term "transposition." Ethnographic theory is the conversion of "stranger-concepts" from the ethnographic field into the language of theory in such a way as to destabilize any firm sense of distinction between field and theory.[22]

We propose the ethnographic theory of *alay* and transposition as part of an ongoing research project called Java-Futurism: Experimental Music and Sonic Activism in Indonesia.[23] The project studies Indonesian noise and electronic music by combining Sanne's interest as a music historian in the aesthetics and performance of electronic music with Nils's anthropological interest in the relationship between politics and spirits in Indonesia.[24] This aesthetic-anthropological approach complements an attentive analysis of aesthetics with an anthropological contextualization that brings in both human politics and more-than-human worlds. Our ethnographic theory of *alay*/transposition entails an insistence that anthropology is not the study *of* people but *with* people,[25] but we also insist that the study of aesthetics, and what people say about it, needs to be politically and historically situated. We have combined aesthetic analysis and ethnographic methods in our fieldwork in Java and in Bali, at concerts in Europe, and across online platforms since early 2018. Here we have come to realize that the aesthetics of "Indonesian noise and electronic music" emerges as much *across* and *between* these sites as *in* them. Sounding out this multi-situated aesthetics entails developing modes of listening that are equivocal about what "trance," "noise" or "music" might be in the first place.[26] As we will show, such an attempt to listen aesthetic-anthropologically by studying-with also requires hearing what is left unsaid, unsung, and unplayed in and across contexts, and to explore the politics of these aesthetic silences.

BERLIN: A DECOLONIZING MOMENT IN EUROPEAN ELECTRONIC MUSIC?

The year 2019, when GMO played at the CTM festival in Berlin, was also the year the festival celebrated its 20th anniversary under the title "Persistence." The title highlighted CTM's curatorial commitment to recognizing "diversity, difference, and hybridity" on a European music and arts scene by bringing together "actors and initiatives across music, culture, and technology to imagine, discuss, and celebrate open and pluralistic structures."[27] How, CTM asked its audience, could experimental music "persist" in being experimental in a time of economic cutbacks, political polarization, and simplistic public rhetoric? Musical innovation, it seemed, could no longer rely merely on experiments with technology and genre. Musical innovation also had to rethink, restructure, and reconsider the curation of the musical program. This entailed the inclusion of artists from the Global South in the program. This was a strategy that CTM had begun to develop in its 2016 edition when Lebanese-born producer and DJ Rabih Beaini was appointed co-curator. In

2019, CTM doubled down on this strategy by inviting to the festival close to 400 artists from 41 countries. Of these, 20 performers were from Southeast Asia, including 13 from Indonesia.[28]

The Indonesian groups and art projects at the CTM represented one slice of a young generation of artists from Indonesia who at the time were noisily entering the experimental music and arts scene in Europe. Among these noisy new arrivals was the Jakarta-based collective ruangrupa, selected to act as the curators for *documenta fifteen,* the 2022 version of the esteemed contemporary art exhibition held in Kassel, Germany, every five years. This was the first time that the curators of the exhibition were from the Global South. In 2022, *ArtReview*, one of the world's leading contemporary art magazines, listed ruangrupa first on its annual ranking of the most influential people in art. Two years earlier, ruangrupa had listed second, only topped by the activist movement Black Lives Matter. The viral movement against sexual harassment, #MeToo, was listed fourth.[29] ruangrupa's decentralized curatorial style—with 67 invited co-curators, many of them arts collectives themselves from the Global South—gave *documenta fifteen* a distinctly decolonial vibe.[30] The 2019 CTM festival in Berlin shared, if not the same vibe, then at least the same ambition to decolonize the European art and music scene.

This was also noted by John Twells, who in his review of the festival noted that an ongoing queer, diasporic, and non-Western aesthetic revolution challenged the Western foundations of electronic dance music. For Twells, this challenge entailed hope:

> These sounds, themes and philosophies are giving us the chance to be better, to take notice and to be humble. We need to fucking listen and listen immediately, there's not much time left. Persistence is constant change and if we want to survive, it's imperative we evolve immediately.[31]

This aesthetic challenge from the Global South came at a complex historical moment when a diverse set of events, from Black Lives Matter to the rise of right-wing populism and increasingly apocalyptic environmental warmings, seemed to suggest the end of the cultural avant-garde hegemony of the West. This sense of an ending demanded concrete aesthetic answers, and it was in this context that the wild, seemingly possessed, performance of GMO at the CTM closing concert provided the injection of aesthetic excess that Western electronic dance music felt it needed.

When Twells asked the Berlin concert-goers "to fucking listen" and "to be better, to take notice and to be humble," he was effectively inviting them to move beyond Robinson's hungry listening; i.e., a style of consuming music "without awareness of how the consumption acts in relationship with those people, the lands, the waters who provide sustenance."[32] Instead Twells seemed to plead, like Robinson, for a decolonial form of listening that was attuned to "new temporalities of wonder disoriented from antirelational and nonsituated settler colonial positions of certainty."[33] However, as Robinson also emphasizes, the attempt to include non-Western musicians in a festival like CTM to attune to new temporalities of wonder "may just as easily take part in a representational politics that does not necessarily address the structural inequities that underpin inclusion."[34]

Indeed, the Berlin reception of GMO's performance carried its own load of exoticism. CTM, for instance, had asked GMO to accompany its performance with visual material that could help the audience understand the specifically Indonesian background of their music. GMO chose a rapidly shifting series of stills and videos from rural Java, including videos of village youths in everyday clothes who go into trance during possession rituals. The CTM ambition to create an awareness in the audience about the "temporalities of wonder" that informed GMO's aesthetics and performance was laudably decolonial. But the flashes of *jathilan* and other Indonesian images were far too rapid and complex to be captured by the club audience. What came across loudly instead was a sense of Eastern mystique and ritual excess. Kasimyn and Ican were acutely aware of and concerned about this curation of exoticism, but they still provided CTM with the images, and even continued to keep them in future performances as unexplained wonders.

In the following sections, we will follow where GMO seeks to go aesthetically with their music by tracing its aesthetic transpositions. We will show how GMO's musical performances seek to turn European exoticism of Indonesian trance music into an inverse exoticism of global trance by playing with the possibility of turning it into an exuberant, real trance. This inversion, however, is left unexplained. The audiences in Berlin and Malmö are never made aware of the social or cultural context of the performance aesthetics they are witnessing. GMO's transposition, in other words, resonates awkwardly with Robinson's characterization of colonial listening. What Robinson regards as a quintessential aspect of hungry listening—namely, a lack of awareness about the context behind the aesthetic expression—GMO turns into a deliberate aesthetic counter-strategy.

MALMÖ: "TRANCE AGAINST THE MACHINE" IN SWEDEN

Ten months after the concert in Berlin, on a typical Swedish October evening—cold, dark, and rainy—we attended GMO's performance at the venue Inkonst in Malmö. GMO had been invited to Malmö as part of their greater European tour, evidence that the ambition to diversify was not restricted to prominent large-scale festivals and exhibitions but had affected concert programming across Europe.

We had learned about GMO's concert in Malmö through their prolific Instagram profile, which we had followed since our first encounter. A few months earlier, we had conducted an interview with GMO over beer and Balinese *arak* rice wine in Bali. So, when we met up with them again before the concert in Malmö, we were able to pick up our conversation from where we had left off in Bali. We chatted, taking turns to complain about the weather, until Kasimyn glanced at his phone, realizing it was time to start. He hurriedly threw on a cap and a black-and-white fraternity jacket with the head of a white bunny and the word "Playboy" emblazoned on the back and positioned himself behind his Pioneer CDJ 2000 controller and DJM 900 mixer. Ican also entered the stage wearing a yellow T-shirt, a white-haired wig, and a heavy padlock chain around his neck. Ican welcomed the audience:

> Hallo Sweden, we are Gabber Modus Operandi. This is our first time in Scandinavia, and our balls are shrinking from the cold. They are also shrinking because of the money [the poor exchange rate between the Indonesian rupiah and the Swedish kronor].

Scattered laughter from the audience greeted this double jab at climatic difference and global inequality, as the concert began, softly at first, with the sound of someone speaking Indonesian. The words were masked by filters to produce what sounded like a metallic, robotic voice. No further explanation of the voice appeared during the performance, but in a later conversation, Kasimyn told us, the original was a speech by a village security guard (*hansip*), the lowest level of authority in the Indonesian state apparatus, at the beginning of a *jathilan* ritual in West Java. The speech had gone viral on YouTube, with almost 12 million views from Indonesian netizens, because the guard mixed bits of official state jargon into unintended but hilarious forms, comically demonstrating how state discourse is often only partially understood in rural villages.[35] Without anyone in Malmö realizing it, GMO transposed the concert in Sweden into a Javanese context, where the Swedish audience was instructed in broken Indonesian by a Javanese security-guard-turned-robot to behave well in the upcoming dance session.

Toward the end of the speech, the speaking voice was transposed again, now in a more concrete auditory manner, into a higher pitch, before it faded out and was replaced by melodic phrases from what sounded like a *slompret*, a wind instrument used in gamelan music, accompanied by layers of electronic sounds, basses, and beats. At this stage, the concert became loud, energetic, and fast-paced, with feeds from the microphone and Ican's growling vocal dominating the sound. Ican kept the energy of the concert going, dancing wildly, initially around the table with the DJ controller but then suddenly jumping onto the table, making it shake precariously as he crouched like a lion and growled into the microphone, the lyrics drowned out by the beats.

FIGURE 2. Gabber Modus Operandi performing at Inkonst in Malmö, Sweden, October 4, 2019. Photo by Sanne Krogh Groth.

The dramatic intensity increased when Ican, after a quick offstage change, reappeared wearing the mask of a lion monster with rings and piercings dangling from it. From his fingers, green laser lights now shot out erratically across the room. The finger lights were reminiscent of a sci-fi movie, but were also an eerie reference to the long fingernails of the *pontianak*, an Indonesian monster that steals unborn fetuses from the wombs of pregnant women and that sometimes is said to also eviscerate the testicles of men.[36] Had the audience known, it might have been reminded of Ican's opening joke about shrinking testicles and global inequality in all its monstrous forms. But in Malmö, there was no time for such reflections: On a wall of the concert space, a slide show exploded into life.

It was a projection of a rapidly changing series of images and video clips in a loop of around 10 minutes, the same series that GMO had used in their concert at the CTM festival. The highlight of the loop was a succession of YouTube videos featuring mass possessions (*wuru massal*) by spectators at an *ébég* horse possession ritual in Central Java. *Ébég* is one of many possession rituals known by a variety of names across Java, including *jaranan*, *reyóg*, and *jathilan*.[37] At such events, members of the audience are sometimes also possessed, and videos of these "plain-clothed" possessions by village kids are widely circulated online today. It was examples of such videos, coarse-grained and shaky, that screened at the GMO concert followed by video clips from an out-of-control motorbike street race, a Javanese body-building session, and a performance of the martial art *pencak silat* in which the master threw a student high into the air with sheer spiritual force (*wahyu*). Interspersed with the clips were rapid flashes of images on a yellow background showing amulets with protective verses in Arabic or Javanese verse (*rajah*), a drawing of a ritual of invulnerability (*kekebalan*) in which three men stand on top of a prostrate man, as well as an image of the *wayang* figure of Semar.

The wider context of these images and videos, sourced from Javanese mysticism (*kejawen*) but harvested from online social media, was left unexplained to the audience. Instead, the audience had to rely on the almost hypnotic synchronicity between the hectic pace with shifting images and the 200 beats per minute of GMO's music.

The genre of GMO's music has been called many names but can overall be identified as up-tempo electronic dance music or EDM. A distinctive but also deceptive aspect of their music is its timbre and pitch. The timbre of many of the electronic samples sound like gamelan instruments such as gong, *gendang*, and *slompret*, but in fact none of these sounds stems directly from recordings of gamelan instruments. Kasimyn also modulates the pitch of individual sounds into the Javanese *slendro* or *pélog* tuning registers so that it sounds familiar to gamelan music played at *jathilan* rituals, but without being it. As Kasimyn explained to us:

> People sometimes ask me: "Why do you not sample gamelan directly? It is easier." Well, actually I have too much respect for gamelan to do that. For me it is also a point about appropriation. Instead of appropriating gamelan, I want to make a synthetic gamelan sound in the same way that our performances are also a synthetic *jathilan*, a genetically modified *jathilan*.[38]

Kas's reference of a "genetically modified *jathilan*" is an obvious allusion to "genetically modified organisms" on which the abbreviation of the name of the band GMO explicitly

plays. GMO "genetically modifies" traditional music out of respect for its aesthetic potential but also as a critique of the ways traditional arts for decades have been manipulated and domesticated politically in Indonesia.[39]

Distinctive of GMO's music is thus also the samples of voices uttering provocative and anti-authoritarian Indonesian words such *kon* (short for *kontol*, meaning cock in Indonesian) and *nafsu* (meaning lust or desire). Most titles on the album refer to specific Indonesian phenomena, such as "Genderuwo" (a hairy, red-skinned ghost) and "Sangkakala" (Doomsday Trumpet).

The musical performance of Kasimyn in Malmö sounded close to the tracks on GMO's first album, *Puxxximaxxx* (slang for "fuck your mother," one of the rudest insults in the Indonesian language), while Ican's growling voice appeared more improvised. At times, however, both seemed to adjust the music to the loops of the video. The diversity in the tracks and the videos brought a dynamic energy to the concert, and the small dance floor of the Inkonst venue was filled to capacity by 50 or so concertgoers. Half of them (mostly men) danced vigorously during the whole show, while the rest were more reserved in their engagement, preferring to listen from the margins of the floor. At one point in the concert, some of the dancers explicitly noticed the possessed protagonists in the *ébég* horse possession ritual featured in the videos on the screen and began to imitate their contorted, ritual movements.

Here is how Ican described that moment in Malmö during an interview almost a year later:

> We are anti-exotic, in a way. We really try to resist the tendency in the West to fetishize us as performers from a mystical East. We try to do so by inverting it and fetishize white people. When I see the kids do trance in Malmö, it makes me so fucking happy because it looks like they are doing *jathilan*.[40]

FIGURE 3A–D. Concertgoers and videos featured at GMO's concert at Inkonst in Malmö, Sweden, October 4, 2019. Photos by Nils Bubandt and Sanne Krogh Groth.

For a moment in Malmö, Western aesthetic hegemony seemed to have been unsettled as GMO's aesthetic reception became multi-situated. White Swedish concert goers might be hungrily consuming an exotic new dance genre from the East. But in the eyes of GMO, they also seemed for a moment to become Javanese *jathilan* performers. In this brief temporality of wonder, Swedish concertgoers were perhaps even invited to ponder their own exoticness, the possibility of their own possession. And yet, hungry listening persisted, as Ican and Kasimyn themselves were well aware:

> People see the *jathilan* possessions on our concert videos and misinterpret them and think this is some authentic shit: "Oh, what you do is so shamanic" or "Oh, this must be really important" or some shit like that. We "mystify" that interpretation by showing what possession in Indonesia can also be like.[41]

Instead of giving in to Western exotic fetishism, GMO transposed it aesthetically into a fetishism of their own.

A note on silence: This fetishism is radically anti-essentialist. And yet it is also, and by design, radically under-communicated. GMO deliberately mask the voice of the *hansip* security guard, and they never name or explain the synthetic nature of the gamelan sounds in their music, the rapid video sequences from *jathilan* performances, the spiritual power of the *rajah* amulets, or the terrifying presence of the *pontianak* monster. Ironically, the effect of this under-communication is to invite a hungry consumption that remains unaware of the political, social-cultural and spiritual context. This silence might trouble some scholars of decolonialism. But for GMO it is a deliberate aesthetic strategy. By not-telling and allowing their synthetic *jathilan* to do its aesthetic work on stage, their performance opens up the possibility that it, for a brief moment, might transcend the legacies of colonialism and the global inequalities of music consumption.

YOGYAKARTA: TRANSPOSING RAGE, JAVANESE STYLE

"Trance Against the Machine," the name of GMO's first tour, originated in early 2019. The Soft Centre Festival in Sydney had booked GMO for a concert, and the Australian festival organizers had asked for a short narrative theme from each performing band. Ican gave them the title "Trance Against the Machine," an obvious play on the name of the American rock band Rage Against the Machine (RATM).

RATM is a band with critical political awareness, informed by the economic challenges and racial prejudice experienced by two of the founding members, Tom Morello and Zack de la Rocha, during their upbringing in suburban America. The band's 1992 hit "Killing in the Name" was an outcry against the murder of Rodney King and police brutality in the early 1990s, and the hit reached the youth of Indonesia, who—like the rest of the globe—sang along to the song's catchy percussive refrain: "Now you do what they told ya." The political motives and "rage" from RATM were expressed not only through their lyrics but also in their up-tempo mixture of hard rock, metal, and hip-hop.[42]

Assuming that RATM's music had to be explicitly political to Indonesians as well, we asked Ican whether he and his peers back in the mid-1990s associated a sense of political protest against New Order rule with the song and if this might explain its popularity. Trying politely not to call us out for our naivety, Ican responded:

> I'm not sure about that. Even, in my age, RATM was a big hit, and they were also used in popular media. People like me, who came from a village, did not know the meaning of the English words. Maybe some people in the city knew the meaning, if they knew English or had read an Indonesian translation of the lyrics. But people in the village, people like me, we would sing the song's key refrain ("Now you do what they told ya") as *dagadu daga jogja*. This is not English.[43]

Ican was right. It was not English. But it was nevertheless full of meaning. *Dagadu* is an Indonesian slang word that emerged in the 1990s around the same time as the RATM hit came out. It is a linguistic transposition in the so-called *prokem* slang style of the Indonesian *matamu* or "your eyes," a mild expletive that expresses surprise.[44] The English equivalent is perhaps "Oh, my God." The sentence "dagadu daga jogja"—a seemingly nonsensical transposition of the refrain "Now you do what they told ya"—in slang Indonesian means something like "Oh, my God, we're from Yogya."

This might seem like an aesthetic de-politization, but the young generation in Yogyakarta who sang this refrain during the 1990s also protested the New Order regime most loudly. As Ican recalls:

> We kept singing "dagadu daga jogja" . . . and we tried to relate with Rage Against the Machine in this way. We were not coming to this music from the text or the context. Rather, we liked the song because it was popular and seemed to speak to us students in Yogyakarta. That was our frame of reference.[45]

What Ican describes here is an *alay* reception of RATM's music in which the text and context of the music are transposed into something else entirely, aesthetically as well as politically. A language transposition like *dagadu daga jogja* can speak directly to politics—in this case to protest and identity politics by allowing student protesters in Yogya to discover in the refrain of an American rock song a name for themselves—without ever claiming to be political. Sometimes being popular, foreign, and without meaning is enough for something to become political. *Alay* is the Indonesian term for such transpositions of aesthetics, politics, and meaning.

RURAL INDONESIA AND THE CITY: *ALAY* AS AESTHETIC TRANSPOSITION

The Indonesian slang term *alay* is an elision of the term *anak layangan*, literally "kids who fly kites." The term emerged at the turn of the millennium when it was used as a disparaging reference to village kids with little education and the dark skin that came from playing with kites all day in the sun. It was these village youths who had been moving to the cities of Java by the millions, stoking the exploding urbanization of Indonesia from the 1980s. In the city, they began to adopt the fashion and style of the metropole to impress their peers but did so in ways that urbanites saw as tasteless and

uneducated. The term *alay* referred to this cheesy, tacky, excessive, and apparently tasteless aesthetics of fashion, music, and language.

By around 2010, the term *alay* was reappropriated, or transposed if you like, by the young people it originally sought to insult. Millennials in Indonesia began to use *alay* not as a derogatory term but as a positive self-referential label. Today, the term refers to that generation of recently urban and mediatized youths who know the world through online feeds and memes.[46] In 2019, the year of GMO's international breakthrough, the word *alay* was included in KKBI, the official dictionary of the Indonesian language.[47]

Alay was by then an identity marker, an aesthetics, and a language. As a language style, *bahasa alay* refers to the syncopated, abbreviated, and coded colloquialisms of Indonesian youths that have become common in WhatsApp chats and online blogs. In *alay* language, the order of letters in words are changed, or individual letters are substituted by other letters, symbols, capitals, or numbers. *Nanti*, the word for "(see you) later," may become *n4nt1*, while *aku*, the word for "I," may be rendered as *4I<!_!*.

In Indonesia, the internet began to have tranformative societal and political impact in the years of democratization that followed the end of authoritarian rule in 1998, when economic crisis and widespread student protests forced President Suharto to resign. *Alay* is therefore also an expression of a certain kind of politics for the young generation, embodied in the textual language of online worlds. *Alay* language is almost indecipherable to older generations, who for their part rail against *alay*'s seeming disregard for grammar and the civilized rhetoric so central to Indonesian public culture.

Kasimyn and Ican both identify as *alay*: Javanese village kids with cheesy taste who use their village background as an embodied basis for engaging in a mediatized world. But their relation to this village background is itself mediated. Both members of GMO were born in transmigrant Javanese villages outside of Java. The Indonesian transmigration program is the world's largest government-sponsored voluntary migration program, which the country adopted from its former Dutch colonizers after independence in 1945. Millions of people from Java, Bali, and Madura were resettled as transmigrants during Suharto's New Order rule from 1966 to 1998 to Indonesia's resource-rich but sparsely populated islands such as Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Papua.[48]

Kasimyn was born in 1983 as Aditya Surya Taruna, a name that reflected the high status of his Javanese ancestors, but he grew up in a transmigrant village in Riau in eastern Sumatra as part of a Javanese-Chinese family. At 24 he moved to Bali, where he began to play the clubs of Denpasar as a DJ and hang out with contemporary gamelan composers such as Dewa Alit, who had begun taking traditional Balinese gamelan into new and experimental directions. Inspired by Dewa Alit as well as by electronic musicians from the United States, Kasimyn began tuning ordinary sounds in the production software Ableton Live so that they sounded like the pentatonic *slendro* or the heptatonic *pélog* tuning scales used in traditional gamelan.

Ican Harem, the other member of GMO, was born in 1987 in a transmigrant village in Aceh in northern Sumatra, where his father from the Javanese town of Klaten worked in an oil palm plantation and married his mother, who was from Aceh. Both were orthodox Muslims, and Ican received a strictly orthodox upbringing. At the age of 13 he was sent to

a conservative Islamic boarding school. But at 16 he went to Yogyakarta and began playing black metal—blaspheming, as he put it, "metal and the gods at the same time."[49] In 2015, Ican went to Denpasar to apply for a working visa to become a manual laborer in Australia, but his application was rejected so he stayed on in Denpasar and began to play hardcore music and experiment with DIY fashion design. This is where Ican met Kasimyn in 2018.

Both Ican and Kasimyn have Javanese roots, but their transmigration upbringing outside of the island of Java combined with Kasimyn's Chinese heritage and Ican's Islamic background meant that Javanese mysticism was something they both felt they observed from the outside and from a distance rather than embodied directly. Trance is therefore also a reality that Ican and Kasimyn neither fully believe in nor claim to understand. In fact, both say they have never experienced possession. One might say that Ican and Kasimyn have developed an *alay* relation to the Javanese mystical tradition out of which *jathilan* grows, feeling intellectually and emotionally attached to and yet also bodily separated from it. GMO's electronic music is strongly inspired by this mediated *alay* relation to Javanese mysticism. They explore mysticism irreverently for its aesthetic potential, rather than carrying it like a cultural heritage. As Kasimyn put it in a recent interview: "We're romanticizing our stuff, in a way. But we also don't know what the fuck our stuff is. . . . It's kind of a blurred line."[50]

THE POST-*ALAY* AESTHETICS OF GMO

GMO's Instagram account includes a wide variety of videos featuring Javanese *alay* youths. Most of these videos are supplied by GMO's online followers. Between a photo of a giant Transformer statue and announcements of their latest release or tour, some videos show youths performing daredevil tricks on motorcycles, while others show young people going into involuntary possession in their school uniforms. One video shows a bare-chested village youth and an old lady in a banana grove. "When I am happy . . . ," the old lady says and looks up at the boy who is hunched in a tree. Jumping to the ground from his perch, the young boy finishes her sentence: "I always tell myself. . . . " At this point, both unexpectedly adopt a series of mock Javanese ritual dance poses with their middle fingers prominently raised, while they chant: "Fuck . . . fuck . . . fuck!" *Alay* is, if anything, amusing, surprising, and provocative. It is a transposition of meaning but also of the strangeness of the online world that became available at the turn of the millennium. As Ican put it to us:

> *Alay* is how young people in Indonesia understand the information that they are getting from the internet. You get the information really fast with the internet, but your body is still in the village or *kampung*. Your social rules of conduct are in the *kampung*, but your knowledge is already diverse. When you blend this *kampung* embodiment with the global information you get from the internet, that is for me, *alay*.[51]

GMO's musical performances explore the tensions between the actual world of village life in which possession is a real possibility and the virtual worlds of the internet that possess

us all. This also for GMO becomes an aesthetic reflection on global inequality and the possibility of "an otherwise" in aesthetics and global politics. Ican continues:

> In that sense, our music is post-*alay*. We try to imagine the future of *alay*, what the imaginary of the *alay* might be in the future. Post-*alay* sits between the sacred and the banal, the everyday and the possibility of something else that might come out of the encounter between home and the away.[52]

The name of the band, Gabber Modus Operandi, is for instance an irreverent post-*alay* play of words on the global electronic dance genre, gabber. Kasimyn and Ican insist that they do not play gabber and that the word "gabber" in their name does not really refer to the 1990s electronic music genre born in Holland, the country that colonized Indonesia for over 300 years. Instead, they take their name from Geber Modus Operandi, a group of multimedia performance artists from Yogyakarta established in 1998. *Geber* is an *alay* slang term, which means "to rev one's motorbike."

There are more than 125 million motorbikes in the streets of Indonesia, and the motorbike is an important icon and status symbol of *alay* youth culture. Working the throttle to make noise is also a pervasive feature in political campaign parades and demonstrations as well as a popular practice among *alay* village youths before impromptu street races like the ones shown in GMO's performance videos. GMO's music is not a copy of Dutch gabber but a "cheesy," "irreverent," *alay* kind of *geber* dance music, transposed from a European register into an Indonesian one.

Kasimyn deliberately repitches the synthetic gamelan sounds to 200 beats per minute so that it came to sound like gabber, but with a twist. Here is Kasimyn again:

> It is like fantasizing that if there was a gabber in Indonesia, it would sound like this. . . . It is an imaginary rave that happened in our heads in *pélog* and *slendro* scales. It is as if some kids in, I don't know, Yogyakarta were doing gabber but in a tonal way that is familiar to them.[53]

The "imaginary rave" in Malmö became a moment of aesthetic and political rupture in which a European dance genre was transposed into the register of an imaginary Javanese *alay* aesthetics. This transposition was an upending of a global genre but also of a global hierarchy of aesthetics and epistemology. Ican described this transpositional upending when he relayed how he felt after the concert in Malmö in October 2019. In Malmö, he had glimpsed another future for electronic dance music when it, for a moment, seemed as if *jathilan* had been aesthetically and geographically transposed to a small club in Sweden:

> *Jathil* is the only word kids in the villages on Java have for "crazy dance," so for me it looks like the Swedish kids that freak out to our music are doing *jathilan*. At the same time, it all looks so exotic to me. This is post-*alay*. It is the possibility of a different kind of future.[54]

At this point, transposition becomes "trance-position," the possibility of real trance in Sweden. That possibility, too, is contained in yet another *alay* transposition of the band's name. Wok the Rock, the former booker and manager of GMO, told us that the slang word *geber*, to rev one's motor, in Javanese ears also sounds like *bébér*, a form of shadow

puppet play (*wayang*) that uses picture scrolls. The grammatical transposition of the dance genre gabber, first to the *alay* practice of revving one's motorbike (*geber*) and then onto a type of shadow play (*bébér*), illustrates that transposition, as Deleuze and Guattari suggested, is not just a repitching of sound but of cosmological thought itself.

JAVA: TRANCE AND SOCIAL (OUT)RAGE

Ican was inspired to name their tour Trance Against the Machine by Wok the Rock. Wok is the founder and producer of the Yogyakarta-based label Yes/No Wave that had released GMO's first album. He had also booked GMO's world tour in 2019. Wok, himself a former punk musician and student protester against the New Order regime, had sent an online link to Ican. The link contained a series of news stories about a mass possession among female factory workers in West Java. The possessions had spread so quickly that the factory management had been forced to cease production and send all workers home. It is this relation between possession and labor politics that captured the imagination of GMO. Here is Ican again:

> These women have very low wages, but they have no way to protest this. They are afraid to strike or protest for fear of getting fired, so what can they do? A mass possession does something interesting. It confuses management and means all workers are dismissed for the day to prevent the possessions from spreading to everybody.[55]

Spontaneous mass possession, in which dozens of workers are possessed in an epidemic manner, is a regular occurrence among female workers in the global garment industry in the western parts of Java. In the 10 years leading up to 2019 at least 49 mass possessions had been reported in the media in this region alone.[56] West Java is in this regard part of a general pattern across Southeast Asia where spontaneous mass possessions for decades have been a way for female factory workers to resist and protest the disciplinary regimes and dispossession of capitalist production.[57]

During the 1980s, Java had become a hotspot for the infamous sweatshops of the global garment and footwear industry that had risen to be one of the most important production sectors in Indonesia.[58] While global outrage over working conditions in the sweatshops have led to a gradual improvement in official regulations over the last two decades, factories across Java have also been making massive cuts to the labor force as foreign investment in the industry shifted to other low-wage countries in Southeast Asia. The surplus of workers has encouraged a weakening of factory compliance with official minimum wages and work standards. Today, the two million people, predominantly women, who are employed in the garment and footwear industry in West Java contend with systemic overwork and underpayment enabled by poor regulatory oversight.[59] It is these conditions of labor insecurity that have given rise to what one might call "worker noncompliance" in the shape of spontaneous mass possessions.

For Kasimyn and Ican, these factory possessions are interesting because they gesture toward the same kind of "mystification" that their own use of trance in their performances evokes. Here is Ican again:

> For us these possessions are really interesting. I mean: what the fuck, are they really possessed? And if so, it is obvious they are using possession as a labor tool. This is what we see as mystification: Using possession as a tool does not mean the possession is not real. It is mass possession and mass tricking at the same time, you know? So, we called our tour "Trance Against the Machine."[60]

Mystification is, of course, a well-worn term that in traditional Marxist theory is associated with false consciousness and "the beautiful lies that mystify and conceal the exploitative nature of the real conditions in which people live."[61] For Marx mystification was a key part of his secular critique of the political mystical function of religion and bourgeois ideology alike. GMO's aesthetics of mystification is different, even opposed to this secular view and the abyssal thinking that bans phenomena like possession from the realm of the real.[62] From the point of view of conventional Western secularism, the "real" cause of factory mass possessions can only be found in cultural explanations about superstition, psychological explanations about the power of mass suggestion, or sociological explanations about oppressive working conditions. Spirits, meanwhile, are sent into the abyss of the unreal with a shrug or a smile. Kasimyn and Ican are more agnostic. They do not have to fully believe in possession for its political and aesthetic power to be real. Possession, for them, can be simultaneously ruse and reality.

This is also how anthropologists have increasingly come to understand possession.[63] Real and political at the same time, possession is a kind of "body impolitic,"[64] a surrender to a spirit other that allows the kind of shameless or impolitic behavior in possession that has the political power to shut down factories and the aesthetic power to give rise to crazy *jathil* dance in Sweden. It is the political and aesthetic power of trance impolitic, a rude, cheesy, over-the-top and out-of-place possession, that interests GMO.

A note on silence: GMO's *alay* transpositions rely on a lot left unsaid and a lot left unexplained here, not only about sociopolitical context but also about gender. The female workers become the absent signifiers for GMO's aesthetic experiment in ways that might trouble a feminist reading. This absence appears all the starker when one considers the many signifiers of masculine sexuality and anxiety in GMO's music and performances: the Playboy jacket that Kasimyn wore in Malmö, Ican's embodiment at the concert of the female genital-eating *pontianak* monster, the video flashes of bodybuilders and male street racers as well as the title "Cock" (*Kontol*) of one of GMO's hits on their first album *Mother-Fucker* (*Puxxximaxxx*). Like the punk, hip-hop and heavy metal scenes in Indonesia,[65] experimental electronic music is male-gendered. But the Playboy jacket and the offensive titles of GMO's music are not expressions of a male white possessive. Rather, they are a cheesy, even queer, *alay* play with Indonesian gender stereotypes. Indeed, Kasimyn once suggested that the "G" in GMO should be pronounced "gay." G[ay]MO is interested in the possession of female factory workers exactly because the brazen body politics of possession allows the workers to oppose conventional expectations for Indonesian women to be modest and obedient. This transgression allows the women to partake in the crazy *jathil*-like possession normally reserved for men.

THEORY AFTER WORLD MUSIC, CONCLUDING REMARKS

In his critique of the term "world music," Steven Feld argued that the term—far from offering the promise of aesthetic renewal in the West or the hope of a globally diverse sonic aesthetics—had long ago fallen victim to the forces of capitalist globalization and Western consumptive ethnocentrism.[66] Feld argued that the term "world music" not merely banalized and fetishized cultural difference, turning "otherness" into a commodity, but that it also naturalized the processes of globalization and thereby ignored the aesthetic hegemony of the Western music industry.

In the 20 years since Feld's effective cancellation of "world music" and his problematization of "globalization" as an analytical category, a diverse aesthetic globalization, as one might call it still, has continued to explode across all musical genres. One such global explosion has been that of electronic music across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, including the music of GMO that this article has described. However, as Cedrik Fermont and Dimitri della Faille put it in the title of their pioneering catalog of noise and electronic music in Southeast Asia, this aesthetic explosion is definitely *Not Your World Music*.[67] Fermont and della Faille's book presents the "acts of producing, circulating, and enjoying music" in their Southeast Asian settings outside of the usual capitalist channels.[68] It is an attempt to decenter music history by mapping the many underground music scenes in Southeast Asia as embedded social practices. As our analysis of GMO has shown, however, these acts of production, circulation, and enjoyment no longer stay in Southeast Asia.

Our notion of transposition seeks to trace—without resorting to metaphors of transport—how aesthetics emerges in a multi-situated fashion across and within the Global South and the Global North. Our project aligns with that of ethnomusicological and musicological scholars who seek to move theoretically beyond the terms "world music" and "music globalization."[69] In the recent anthology *Music and Digital Media: A Planetary Anthropology*, Georgina Born suggests Gayatri Spivak's term "planetarity" as an alternative notion.[70] Highlighting with Spivak that "the planet is in the species of alterity,"[71] Born argues that the notion of planetarity allows for a comparative musicology that rejects "the abstract equivalence wrought by notions of the global and globalization"[72] and instead allows for an attention to the importance of the digitization of music combined with an ethnographic focus on situated ontology and aesthetics. It is a path of comparison that is aware of its own limitations: insisting on embedded alterity while also resisting technological determinism.

We are sympathetic with these goals of an anthropologically inspired comparative musicology attentive to planetarity. At the same time, we have proposed the term "transposition" to highlight something that this approach misses. In the comparative musicology suggested by Born and collaborators, situated aesthetics is tied to one place, cultural context, technology, or ontology. This means that the analysis is less attentive to how aesthetics emerges not merely within but also across sites.

We have proposed the term "transposition" to denote the multi-situated assemblages of aesthetics, technology, epistemology, and politics that come together in shifting

constellations as they emerge across space and time. Tracing the musical philosophy and performances of GMO in both Indonesia and Europe, we have shown how they assume new aesthetic forms in each setting and argued that these forms are not merely determined by the local aesthetic reflexivity in each of these settings but are also effects across sites of the transposed *alay* aesthetic playfulness built into GMO's musical production and performance.

We have highlighted that "transposition" is an analytical rendering of GMO's own term "post-*alay*," suggesting the need for musicology to be more attuned to ethnographic theory; i.e., the ways in which artists from the Global South conceptualize their aesthetic practices in their own theoretical terms. Ethnographic theory, we propose, is critical if contemporary musicology wants to move beyond Eurocentric historiography and aesthetic theorizing toward a "global music history" after world music.[73] Transposition seeks to give weight to the dynamics—technological, semantic, political, creative, and ontological—through which aesthetics assumes new and multi-situated forms. Tracing the transposition of these forms across time and space allows for an analysis of aesthetic planetarity that complements the analysis of the global mobility of musical instruments, genres, technologies, practices, and techniques on which global comparative musicology tends to focus.

Snape and Born have suggested the term "aesthetic situatedness" to capture the ways in which mobile technologies are localized.[74] We have similarly highlighted the aesthetic situatedness of GMO's music. But our attempt to situate GMO's aesthetics tries to move beyond Snape and Born's focus on how composers/programmers play with the parameters of software in two ways. Firstly, we moved from a focus on the aesthetics of music production to a broader aesthetic-anthropological approach that also focuses on musical performance and its variegated reception. Secondly, we have focused on aesthetics as both situated and multi-situated. Aesthetic-anthropological fieldwork involves for us a listening—in deep and in situated ways[75]—to the musical performances of GMO in Europe and Indonesia. It entails an attempt to situate these performances in their sociocultural and political-aesthetic contexts that allows us to analyze in the reception of these performances the sense of a "seismic shift in the global dance continuum" that GMO created in 2019. However, our aesthetic-anthropological approach insists that aesthetics is not merely situated. We have highlighted that *alay* and post-*alay* aesthetics are highly multi-situated. *Alay* refers, after all, to the aesthetic transposition of language, taste, and sensibilities between rural villages and urban settings. Our dialogue with GMO made us realize the politics of this aesthetic multi-situatedness. We discovered how GMO re-deploys this post-*alay* multi-situatedness in their performances in Germany and Sweden as an aesthetic counter to Western exoticism. But we also showed how the imaginary of post-*alay* serves other creative functions in Indonesia that GMO brought with them to Europe as an aesthetic potential.

GMO's post-*alay* aesthetics points to transposition as a complement to the study of planetarity, one that seeks to trace aesthetic alterity as both situated and multi-situated. In 2019, GMO's performances in Berlin and in Malmö constituted a global trance music transposed, *alay*-style. It seemed that electronic dance music for a moment looked and

sounded nothing like itself. It was a trance music otherwise that was silent about many aspects of its aesthetic origin. Such silences are usually taken to be hallmarks of the colonial legacies of musical production and consumption. Here, the silences were deliberate. And more than that, they were key to GMO's aesthetic renewal and anticolonial transpositions. ■

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