



POP MUSIC AND HIP ENNUI

A Sonic Fiction of Capitalist Realism

Macon Holt

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For Mark Fisher

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Preface

This is a book about the difficulties of living in a world in which the soundscape of popular music infuses so many moments of our lives with an intensive sense of possibility, only for it to be immediately disavowed. This is a world in the permanent aftermath of the financial crash and on the perpetual brink of ecological collapse, wherein the only potential for change seems to be the ever increasing sophistication of our streaming services and wireless ear buds. Yet we live in an atmosphere that reverberates with a potential that is so often drained from many of the activities necessary for the reproduction of life. A potential that is desired to such an extent that many structure their lives around its pursuit. This book is about how it can feel to be inescapably entangled in such an atmosphere, the circumstances upon which this atmosphere is predicated, and the implications that these circumstances present. This book is about the experience of the possibilities and desires popular music can provide while, at the same time, recognizing the involvement of this music in oppressive modes of cultural production and social organization.

The terms “popular” and “pop music” are used interchangeably in this book and taken to mean the broadest definition of contemporary vernacular musics; this intentionally verges on conceptual disintegration. Despite this, I cling on to the term because, as Deleuze and Guattari put it, “it’s nice to talk like everybody else” (2013, 1). Indeed more than nice, this usage allows for an interrogation of the differences that inhere in the same term as each iteration causes it to drift into different inflections. To that end, this is a book less about popular music and its interpretation, than it is about an attempt to come to some kind of understanding of what it is to live with popular music as it exists within the contingencies that brought it forth and the relations that these entail. Although this book is far from comprehensive, it attempts to draw lines between concentrations of power and potential, between sound and sensation, and between liberatory expression and disciplinary suppression, which I and others can perhaps use as a frame for further investigation into the affects of living in the soundscape of contemporary pop. Above all, however, this book should be considered as an experiment that attempts to address a slippery object of research without reducing it to something more tangible or declaring it as ineffably unknowable.

To attempt to grasp this slippery object—found in the space between the popular music of the culture industry, the production of subjectivity in (post) modern society, the aesthetics of pop and their ethical potentials, and the material conditions under which this takes place—this book is divided into two uneven sections. The first section provides a background to the conceptual and theoretical tools that will later be engaged with and developed in the second section. In that section an attempt is made to more precisely diagnose the maladies of popular music and the experience of it under capitalist realism before pointing to some tentative ways through the impasses with which we are faced.

The first section, “Pop Music and Hip Ennui,” serves as an introduction in which I explore, in detail, two works by two thinkers over two chapters: *More Brilliant than the Sun* (1999) by Kodwo Eshun and *Capitalist Realism* (2009) by Mark Fisher. These provide an examination of the main conceptual tools that are applied in this book, the methodology of Sonic Fiction, and the analytical perspective of capitalist realism. In the third chapter of this section, I attempt to situate these works in relation to myself as a reader of them and in regards to the problems contained in the experience of contemporary pop music. To do so, I bring in a third and very different resource in the form of David Foster Wallace’s novel *Infinite Jest* (2007) to provide a frame or disposition of “hip ennui.” This disposition is characterized by a combination of a paranoid drive to normatively correct behavior in the pursuit of cultural capital and a disappointed resignation to the immovability of the status quo. This is the backdrop upon which the tools of Fisher and Eshun can be engaged.

It should be made clear, however, that these engagements are not intended as critiques of these thinkers but rather an excavation of the conceptual tools that may be useful to the project at hand. Critiques of these works and thinkers are, of course, welcome and necessary. Especially in the years to come as the corpus of Fisher’s work becomes canonized and as *More Brilliant* is to be republished and thus soon to be rediscovered. Wallace too is increasingly deified online. It is not that my readings of these thinkers are uncritical, but that mine is not a thoroughgoing critical project. What is offered up here are instead readings as a means of expanding the ideas expressed by each of these thinkers, particularly Eshun and Fisher, into new contexts, periods, and in relation to different theoretical considerations. The question asked here is, what can be done with the ideas of these two thinkers in combination? The question of their limitations is to be asked by others at other times. If there is something that Part 1 of the

book can contribute to later critical work, it will be to provide a reading that may complexify our understanding of the work of these thinkers.

In the second section, “A Sonic Fiction of Capitalist Realism,” I work through the previously identified space between popular music and contemporary culture as subjectively experienced. This section should itself be regarded as an attempt to produce academic writing as a kind of Sonic Fiction by making use of Holger Schulze’s (2020) clarifying expansion of Eshun’s concept. Traces of this shift begin to surface in the last chapter of the first section, which attempts to contextualize my readings of Fisher and Eshun, and my experience of music. Drawing inspiration from Jacques Attali’s *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (2011), Part 2, “A Sonic Fiction of Capitalist Realism” is divided into five conceptual chapters that attempt to perform a diagnosis of what is at stake in the experience of contemporary popular music and to propose ways of addressing these problematics. These conceptual chapters chart a theoretical journey starting with the tension that exists between the critical perspective of the Frankfurt School and the anti-elitist stance of what could be called the Birmingham school of cultural studies. As this is worked through, a new position is developed that highlights the ambivalence of popular music in the contemporary world. And from this position new possibilities become apparent. This starts with a chapter on the contentious field of “Attention,” which was considered by the Frankfurt school to be the battleground of the culture industry, a concern that needed to be problematized but which also must remain a concern. From here, I move on to what was really at stake in controlling our attention: our “Complicity.” This chapter provides a critique of the notion that some kinds of music are essentially more complicit in the reproduction of capital than others, but also of the impulse to flatten such concerns into the field of cultural capital. After this, the underlying cause of this problematic field is exposed: our desire for “Catharsis.” In this chapter, the critique of cathartic desire is taken seriously, though ultimately found to be wanting. What it apparently wants is a different conception of the state to which catharsis returns us, a “Home” state if you will. With much of the difficult work of establishing this position of ambivalence done, this chapter starts to refocus the critique to more constructive ends. These ends are found in the final conceptual chapter “Conjunction,” which through a deep analysis of Beyoncé’s *Lemonade* lays out the implications for considering the experience of popular music under capitalist realism. All the while, it is pop music that gives this investigation its capacity for discovery. These chapters are framed by six vignettes of particular musical experiences that intensify, confound, confirm, and interrupt the project.

The conceptual chapters themselves also contain interruptions, as attempts to produce a piece of cultural theory of contemporary popular music are made all the more difficult by the unwieldy nature of the practice, of its experience, and the changing circumstances of the world/culture. Indeed, the writing and the arguments of the chapters themselves are constantly destabilized by the slippery nature of the object under consideration, and exposing some of the inadequacies of theory in addressing it also reveals possibilities in this tension. At other points, the tendencies of a theorist push the object out of earshot and become enraptured with the apparent clarity of semantic propositions. But echoes of the object haunt even these moments, destabilizing them and causing it to return even louder and more intrusively upon the cozy abstractions of such reductive thought than it was before.

The perspective presented in this book, by me, is, of course, particular. This writing comes from a tradition that claims both that cultural production is of import to the constitution of politics (and vice versa), and that the current hegemonic arrangement of neoliberal capitalism is insufficient to the realization of human emancipation. This perspective connects to another concern about what this book attempts to address. As a British-(anglophone) Canadian residing in Denmark in recent years, I have been living between languages, which has meant I have constantly been faced with the question of what is meant by terms such as “science” and “knowledge.” Within a Danish linguistic context, a book, such as this one, would be thought to contain “scientific” work, though not in the strict sense meant by the English use of the term. Nonetheless, it does seem to imply that such work must necessarily add to the sum of human knowledge in the world. Knowledge here is considered the output of *a* scientific method (rather than *the* scientific method) and is thus a cumulative phenomenon with an implicit teleology toward a completion that is perhaps only ever notional. But between this difficult-to-grasp object of analysis and the moves made in attempting to cope with its slippery qualities, this book would seem to be a bad fit with such an understanding of knowledge.

To flesh out what I mean by this, I began the project upon which this book is based as something of an Adornian, without fully grasping the implications of what holding that position would mean. I started from the assumption, like Adorno, that there was something inherently (within a particular historical position) different about the kind of music I believed to be infantilizing and that which I considered to be emancipatory. However, I quickly realized that this position was untenable. It didn’t with fit the music. It didn’t fit with how it was

produced. It didn't fit with how it was consumed. Most importantly, it didn't fit with the notion that cultural production could produce political change. If the revolution was to be predicated on everyone enjoying Schoenberg or Radiohead in the right ways and for the right reason, then the project seems a little silly. The poststructuralist approach of thinkers like Deleuze and Guattari seems to offer a better picture of how to understand this space I was actually interested in and which this book examines as an intersection of intensive flows of capital, desire, power, and sound. But such a perspective makes a clear articulation of a necessary political project more difficult. There's no simple way to reconcile these tensions. Yet because we can find moments when both of these perspectives, as well as many others, are audible through pop music, it might be possible to expose certain resonant potentialities of different configurations of the flows that brought it in to being. Potentialities that we may already on some level know to exist but that don't fit into existing categories.

All this is to say that when I approach popular music in the conditions of contemporary capitalist realism, I do not consider my contribution to this field as one that takes it in the direction of some kind of completion. Rather, through the practice and perspective of *Sonic Fiction* opened up by Eshun, this project is one of intensification. Intensification of problematics, intensification of sonic experience and, after Fisher, intensification of the desire for the world to be other than it is. The intention of this book is not to finally reveal the truth about pop music, but rather to make clear the impossibility of such a project from where we currently stand. The world in which we live cannot realize or fully contain the potential that inheres in pop, nor what it expresses and affects. The project of this book is to amplify the resonances of this potential to the extent that the sonic reflections of a world that could come to be are made audible.

Acknowledgments

Monographs such as this have the name of one person on the cover and they feature prominently on a single CV but, in truth, the creation of things like this are never the result of only one individual's efforts. So, first I would like to thank those who have helped this book come into the world in this form and helped to make it make sense to the extent that it does. I would like to thank my editor at Bloomsbury, Leah Babb-Rosenfeld and her assistant Amy Martin for guiding me through this process of transforming my manuscript into a book. And I would like to thank Joakim Drescher for creating the cover artwork, which has made this look exactly like the book I always wanted to write. I would also like to thank Holger Schulze, whose help and encouragement throughout this process may be the main reason why this artifact is before you now, rather than languishing within an unedited manuscript on my hard drive. I would also like to thank the reviewers of my proposal and manuscript, whoever they are, for their vital critical input.

This book was developed from my graduate school research at the Centre for Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London. The center no longer exists for reasons that are too convoluted to get into here, but it must be said that it was truly a privilege and an inspiration to study there. The intellectual rigor and the originality of the work produced by the scholars and students at the center has left an indelible mark on me and has expanded my idea of what is possible through academic work in ways that continue to thrill me. It has set a bar that I am constantly reaching for in my work, which seems perpetually to be outside of my grasp. In particular, I would like to thank the convener of the PhD program, Luciana Parisi, whose class, "Critical Theory of Interactive Media," changed the way I think about pretty much everything. To this day I'm not sure I have caught up to where her class has sent my thinking.

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and encouraging of my drive to try out odd things with it. To the extent that I am any sort of scholar today, it is Anamik's doing. Mark's theoretical work was such an inspiration to me that the title of his first book is in the subtitle of this one. In the months between the initial hand-in of my research and my viva, Mark took his own life. This tragedy was a great shock to me and literally thousands of others, one we are all still coming to terms with. The influence of Mark on my research had become somewhat invisible to me at the point of its handing in, though it was clear to my examiners, Mark's colleague, S. Ayesha Hameed and Holger Schulze. With their and Anamik's guidance, I was able to further develop this influence and thus produce the work before you today. I hope that this book can both honor Mark's legacy and contribute something to the projects he started.

A book like this can only come into being if one is surrounded by other forms of support in their daily life. So I would like to thank Ark Books of Copenhagen for giving me a welcoming place of camaraderie when writing alone in my own cave became an insurmountable task. In particular, I would like to thank Franek Korbanski for showing me exactly what dedication to something looks like, whenever I have needed a reminder, and Giovanna Alesandro for getting me into the store in the first place and bringing a drive and intensity into every project that we work on together. I also need to thank the reading group of which I have been a part for this last year of transforming my old ideas into a new book. Sheri Hellberg, Alexander Buk-Swienty, Niklas Birksted, and Neus Casanova Vico have all injected new energy into my thinking. They continue to make me to explain myself more clearly and to listen more carefully and have helped me to find the joy in what can be an exhausting way of working. I would like to thank my parents, Duncan Holt and Fiona Bannon, for their unceasing support and showing me, by example, that this kind of undertaking is something possible. They taught me how to think and showed me just how much there was out there to think about. A note of gratitude also needs to be extended to my brother Lewys, whose patience with me as I pontificated over the years is to be commended. And as both my audience and critic, he helped me grow my confidence to where I felt able to wax on for this many pages. That said, he is also quite the performative pontificator in his own right. Finally, I would like to thank Katrine Pram Nielsen, who has been there at almost every stage of this project since nearly the very beginning. It would not exist were it not for her immeasurable support and inspiration. Even though it is nowhere near enough, Tusind tak my dearest friend.

Part 1

Pop Music and Hip Ennui

Kodwo Eshun: Sonic Fiction at Century's End

Sonic Fiction Is a Theory-Fiction

We could start with the book. In the opening pages of *More Brilliant than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction* (1998), Kodwo Eshun asserts that music is a means of thinking in itself and not merely something to be thought about. This doesn't mean it is something just to be "felt," as if it were in some kind of transcendental black box, alien to conceptualization and the world of signs, but something more connective and powerful than mere signification.

Respect due. Good music speaks for itself. No sleevenotes required. Just enjoy it. Cut the crap. Back to basics. What else is there to add?

All these troglodytic homilies are Great British cretinism masquerading as vectors into the Trad Sublime. Since the 80s, the mainstream British music press has turned to Black Music only as a rest and a refuge from the rigorous complexities of white guitar rock. Since in this laughable reversal a lyric always means more than a sound, while only guitars can embody the zeitgeist, the Rhythmachine is locked in a retarded innocence. You can theorize words or style, but analyzing the groove is believed to kill its bodily pleasure, to drain its essence.

[...]

In CultStud, TechnoTheory and CyberCulture, those painfully archaic regimes, theory always comes to Music's rescue. The organization of sound is interpreted historically, politically, socially. Like a headmaster, theory teaches today's music a thing or 2 about life. It subdues music's ambition, reins it in, restores it to its proper place, reconciles it to its naturally belated fate.

In *More Brilliant than the Sun* the opposite happens, for once: music is encouraged in its despotic drive to crumple chronology like an empty bag of crisps, to eclipse reality in its wilful exorbitance, to put out the sun. Here music's mystifying illogicality is not chastised but systematized and intensified – into MythSciences that burst the edge of improbability, incites a proliferating series of mixillogical mathemagics at once maddening and perplexing, alarming, alluring. (Eshun 1999, -007–-004)

In his book, Eshun dives into this sonic thinking and the corporeality that extends the body into the vibrant electronic networks of (post-)modernity as a space of invention and “desiring-production” (Deleuze and Guattari 2013a, 11), racing toward intensive intersections of posthuman potentiality and into Afrofutures through “futurhythmachines” (Eshun 1999, -005). These were concepts that other media had, up until then, seemed able only to glance at. Eshun claimed that these ideas could be better actualized through understanding music as the production of Sonic Fictions. By engaging with music and the experience of it as a means of producing new fictive worlds that he would then document through writing, Eshun could connect this sonic thinking to other kinds of thinking. Eshun's Sonic Fictions allowed us to explore the logics, systems, and narratives from which particular musics emerge and through which they flow without reducing them to the virtue morality of the sublime, the strictures of western harmony, or the narratives of black redemption under white hegemony.

We could also start with the concept, but it might be a little premature. Sonic Fiction may have been something that was implicit in all music making; indeed, as Holger Schulze notes, perhaps all experience of sound:

Sonic fiction is everywhere. Where one can find sounds one will also detect bits of fiction. As a consequence sonic fiction might then *mainly* be found in the tiny and ephemeral, often rapidly vanishing intersections and interferences *between* texts and lifestyles, between a given recording medium, its material properties, its design and processes of storing, retrieving and reproducing sound – as well as all its listeners appropriating all these qualities of the recording medium to play an intrinsic and radiating part in their lives. (Schulze 2020, in press)

Sonic Fiction as a concept has, for Schulze, proven to be a vital conceptual frame for understanding the entwining of sonic experience with more readily communicable forms of knowledge and subject construction. This extends far beyond the experience of music and beyond the particularities of the theoretical concerns of Eshun's work. And while this makes sense, in order to give this

expansion of the concept the necessary moorings we need to reconstruct the kernel from which it started, because it was not until Eshun's book that *Sonic Fiction*, the concept, was given form. The book has become a point from which lines can be drawn backward into *Sonic Fiction*'s emerging origin myths that connect the theory-fictions of anglophone Deleuzians in the 1990s (Schulze 2020, in press) and through them to the already fictionalized milieu of Parisian intellectual life in the 1970s, which in turn clearly connects to the counterculture and the techno-utopianism of a Silicon Valley built from the jetsam, flotsam, and lagan of military contracts following World War Two. This produced a world of consumer electronics in the 1980s, which points to the turntables, turned to as the expense of traditional musical means became too great in the deindustrializing urban centers of the USA later that decade; this in a country whose existence is predicated on the middle passage—the disavowed source of human energy, hundreds of years before—that allowed it to become a global hegemon.

But Eshun's book also produced lines that emanate forward, pulling the reader into the future. A future in which so much of this history could be left behind as we build anew upon its wreckage. *Sonic Fiction* is Eshun's means of thinking all this through music.

But perhaps we are already ahead of ourselves. In Eshun's *Sonic Fiction*, there are so many concepts to excavate and deconstruct. It needs to be recognized, as Eshun does, that the world in which we now live—a world of cloud-dwelling archivists, isolated by the "ecstasy of communication" (Baudrillard 2012)—has been fermenting since before the fall of the wall. Before the turntable transformed reproduction into production. Before the televisual spectacle of mop tops from Liverpool on the Ed Sullivan show. Before record labels made profits by making paupers out of bluesmen. Before humanity cast upon itself the mushroom cloud shadow of its own potential end. And before the horrors of rationalized death and before the mechanized war. The infrastructure of this world, for Eshun, starts with the production of a fiction. The fiction of modernity, which leads the creature from another, slightly earlier, fiction, that of the cogito, to work from the delusory assumption that it can separate itself from both its flesh and the world (Eshun 1999, 38), and thus affectlessly appraise the both of them. For Eshun, we had already produced a reality built upon the innumerate fictions that stem from this. And the way in which we treat the sounds we are surrounded by is utterly entangled in these fictions also. Thus, we sought to be able to store and organize them rationally. This should not be considered as a simple opposition to *Sonic Fictional* experience, even though it can at times obscure our recognition

of it, because it was through this organizing, fictionalizing logic—which for music meant the development of recordability—that the tools needed to make Sonic Fictions recognizable were produced (160). It is through recording and repetition and recontextualization that Sonic Fictions can be understood and are shared. The novel required the printing press: Sonic Fiction required the wax cylinder. But the question remained of how to actualize this virtual capacity.

In the years leading up to the publication of *More Brilliant than the Sun*, Eshun's investigations into musical Afrofuturism were to collide with the invention, or perhaps rather articulation, of theory-fiction by the Cybernetic Cultures Research Unit (CCRU) based then, unofficially, at the University of Warwick (Hameed 2017, 257). While Eshun had been mining the intersections of black music technology for hints at the science fictions yet to come, CCRU had been incessantly reading Baudrillard and Ballard until the distinction between these texts seemed to evaporate. For CCRU, this was a moment in which the continued discursive impositions of categorical limitations upon the world/culture were becoming ever more exposed as fictions as they were rapidly deterritorialized by the flows of techno-capital. Nation states were dissolving into globalized trade networks facilitated by the accelerating entanglement of communications networks. In turn, this also allowed for the possibility that identity as we knew it could be shed or reinvented in new online environments (CCRU 2014, 317). All the while, political ideologies that had structured the struggles of the previous 150 years were disappearing and being replaced by technocracies whose power was tied to the free flow of capital. All of this meant that the notion of the subject was effectively crumbling, even if, discursively, it remained in play. The theory-fictions of the CCRU were part of an attempt to map the world from a perspective inside the disintegration of these certainties. As above with Sonic Fiction, theory-fiction engaged with the affects of a world in technological flux at the end of human history and the affects of the very theories that had tried to explain them. They saw this as a kind of knowledge that exceeds the limited notion of rationality upon which liberal democracy was founded (CCRU 2017).

The point of convergence between theory- and Sonic Fiction is science fiction. A genre that, while rife with its own blind spots, could at least articulate some of the problematics listed above that were often so happily ignored by the more “refined” forms of literary fiction as defined by the status quo. Chief among these problematics was the paranoiac attachment to the status quo. Against this frame, science fiction offered resources that revealed that the claims that music

needed either the limitation of some explanatory theory coherent only in terms of a historically limited notion of rationality or the *cretinous* (Eshun 1999: -007) assertion that it was beyond theoretical engagement, could clearly be seen as a nonsense. If we take Jungle, a favorite musical subgenre of CCRU (CCRU 2014, 329) and Eshun (1999, 076) that captured the energy and aesthetics found in cyberpunk—a form of music with a rigidity so rapid that it takes on the auditory appearance of flows darkly libidinal in character—the conventional tools for the theoretical judgment of music, which fixate on semantic decoding toward a final analysis, reveal nothing of this sound world *qua* the experience of it in context. Jungle is fast, Jungle is repetitive, Jungle is dissonant. But these are crass observations. Jungle envelops the listener/dancer to such an extent that the fiction of *an analysis from nowhere* is even more laughable than usual. At the same time, to seal this material of such clear cultural relevance, which is to say on the material condition in which it emerged, in a black box of the ineffable subjective experience simply reproduces the banality of ideology. These modes of dismissal and mystification are the inevitable outcome of the normalization of the impulse, championed by capitalism, to leave enjoyment unexamined in service of the perpetuation of the reduction of humans to rational economic actors (Gilbert and Pearson 1999, 42). But the way in which Jungle exceeds this is also complex, as even as a Sonic Fiction, it rejects the reduction to symbolic narratives while building fictive worlds as networks of sonic and sensual complexity, all while remaining aesthetically entangled with digital technology. “The Jungle Is a Futurhythmachine,” asserted Eshun (1999, 076). Eshun gave form to this intuition of critical insufficiency and tied Jungle to other musics of the computer/human conjuncture. But more importantly, as he did this, he built a new operating system to explore the theory-fiction of music.

But we are already ahead of ourselves. To even ask: What is Sonic Fiction? We must first, of course, ask: What is theory-fiction? But also, simultaneously, what is Afrofuturism? And, to some extent, what is science fiction?

Afrofuturist Science Sonic Theory-Fiction

We should start with science fiction; the genre that catalyzed this fictive approach to inquiry. It is from science fiction that Eshun and others found the imaginative resources to uncover and invent whole fictive words from sound, owing to this

genre's particular relationship to reality. In his 1971 essay "Fictions of All Kinds," the science fiction author J.G. Ballard argued the case for this speculative mode of writing, which has so often been dismissed as merely pulpy entertainment. He claimed that the focus of mainstream cultural discourse on so-called "serious fiction" is leading to a failure of imagination. A failure that, with the increasing rate of technological development, we can no longer afford to indulge. Ballard claimed that we were (and perhaps we still are) in desperate need of a science fiction that rides these currents of development if we are to even begin to understand what is happening to us and the world under the condition of ever accelerating modernity. He writes:

In essence, science fiction is a response to science and technology as perceived by the inhabitants of the consumer goods society, and recognizes that the role of the writer today has totally changed. [...] To survive, he must become far more analytic, approaching his subject matter like a scientist or engineer. If he is to produce fiction at all, he must out-imagine everyone else [...] (Ballard 2014, 238)

Ballard claims that we no longer have the option of considering technology and human life as barely overlapping magisteria; as if we are the ones who simply "use" the tools. Instead we have to realize, as numerous philosophers have, that these tools are our world and thus also they are parts of us. The writers of science fiction need to be able to practice some kind of scientific distancing to rid us of the notion that the human condition is something timeless and of universal importance. Instead, these writers need to consider our existential condition under the contingencies of our changing situation. Though an imperfect way of addressing this situation, it is through this that we can perhaps place our pervasive humanism into the context of a variable. By doing so we may be able to imagine what is to come for the world that we have built while we have been so enraptured and distracted by more immediate goals.

We find hints of Eshun taking up this cause on his bio page in *More Brilliant than the Sun*: "He is not a cultural critic or cultural commentator so much as a concept engineer, an imagineer at the millennium's end writing on electronic music, science fiction, technoculture, gameculture, drug culture, post war movies and post war art" (1999, -017). When Eshun writes about music he does so outside of the accepted frames of music criticism. He doesn't contribute to a corpus of cultural production but engineers the production of a new culture. But, more to the point, Eshun accelerates the central claim of Ballard's essay. If