

**A SOCIOLEGAL MEDIATION OF RAVE SOUND SYSTEM  
TECHNOLOGIES**

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## ABSTRACT

### A Sociolegal Mediation of Rave Sound System Technologies

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The central scholarly contribution of this dissertation develops through bringing the theories of Michel Foucault to bear in a sociolegal study of rave culture's criminalization by the United Kingdom's 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act. My methodology develops rave as a cultural keyword. This keyword navigates through a quasi-materialist definition of rave as a cultural codification of sound system technologies. I theorize the way in which sociocultural discourse indexes aestheticized representations and the cultural mythologies that rave sound system's technical mediation generate. These ideas trace the facticity of the legal documentation of rave's criminalization. I inform this sociolegal history by situating Foucault's work on the genealogy of liberalism as a practical toolkit for associating the legal discourse on rave culture with the genealogy of festival. This opens up a dialogue with the work of Mikhail Bakhtin's theorizing of the festival's ambivalent political climate. Such ideas are useful in documenting rave as an enduring mimicry of the tension between State and civil society. Pieter Bruegel the Elder's 1559 painting, "The Fight Between Carnival and Lent", captures this tension beautifully. The aptness of reading rave's criminalization in relation to Bruegel's portrayal of landscape is accomplished by returning to Foucault, who defines liberalism's political technologies in relation to Judaeo-Christian precedents. I explore how these political technologies, pastoral power in particular, are helpful in tracing rave's genealogical relation to the festival's sociotechnical cartography.

Keyword: Foucault, Latour, Bakhtin, Festival, Carnival, Rave, Religion, Media Studies, Cultural Studies, Sociology, Liberalism, Materialism, Christianity, Pastoral

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## **Introduction**

In the late 1980s the proliferation of personal computers and new music technology contributed to a transformation in the sonic textures crafted by the musical genres of dub, reggae and disco. A nascent cultural formation emerges from this imaginary landscape, significantly impacting popular culture and continuing to inform the terrain of contemporary popular music to this day. By the early 1990s the diverse musical genres responsible for this process of acculturation are grouped under the sign rave. Raves are defined as music festivals featuring electronic dance music performed by a mixture of live acts and DJs. Raves are initially debated according to the authenticity of their function as a subversive form of counter-culture, however detailed sociological studies demonstrate a wide range of political ideologies that confound defining it according to one singular ethos or political ideology.<sup>1</sup> In general terms rave belongs to the genealogy of festivals, which are celebrations marked by an intense discharging of passion and energy. Festivals indicate a break in the daily routines of life and unfold in a playful pursuit of pleasure and leisure. Raves are festivals that are produced through the assembly of a sound system. Sound systems are sociotechnical associations that deploy audio/visual media technologies which augment local environments, organizing and projecting a distinctly recognizable festive space. Due to the fact that discrete communities organize raves, the political ethics of the festive event are largely dependent on the ideologies held by the organizing body and the way in which it is enforced upon the grounds of the festival itself.

In the years following electronic music's emergence in the public eye moral panic descends upon the western world regarding the meaning and consequence of the fledgling culture on youth population. Moral panics are nothing new. Like many other moral panics, the

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<sup>1</sup>. Steve Redhead, ed., *Rave Off: Politics and Deviance in Contemporary Youth Culture*, (Avebury: London, 1993)



spectre of rave's occult corruption is derived from an older generation's concern with the younger generation's behaviour.<sup>2</sup> In this case alarm is set squarely on the supposed immorality of actions deemed cultural hedonism. What is of acute interest and the subject of sustained inquiry by this dissertation is an exploration of the intensity of force deployed by State institutions in order to survey, examine and ultimately censor rave's cultural expression. To this end this dissertation examines sociotechnical and sociolegal dimensions of rave by developing the phenomenon as belonging to a genealogy of festival. This situates rave within broader and historic categories of what Bakhtin calls 'popular-festive forms'. In doing so the criminalization of rave is associated with the festival's traditional role as a Dionysian contrast to the Apollonian State model.

Chapter 1 schematizes the phenomenon of rave in terms of the transcendental concepts associated with liminality and the technical process of assembling a sound system. It traces the network of cables, speaker stacks and the humans who assemble and disassemble them to the way in which sites of sound system assembly develop a culture of spirituality and carnivalesque social relations. These concepts are explored in relation to various sites: rave's spirit of evasion instead of protest, the videography of 'boiler room' DJ sets, the DJs mimicking of the magician's techniques for professionalized cultural communication and a detailed examination of the tools critical to DJ performance techniques. These various sites of technical mediation are situated in relation to experience of liminal rites of passage that are structured by the various thresholds created in proximity to the site of the sound systems sonic affectivity. Thus, I ground the speculative theorizing of rave's blurring of lines between human beings and machines in its material infrastructure. The sound system informs the social sphere of rave. The intensity of the

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<sup>2</sup>. Baldwin, Julie Marie, Bryan Lee Miller, John Stogner, and Steve Hach. 2012. "The Night the Raving Died: The Social Construction of a Local Drug Panic." *Deviant Behavior* 33 (9): 676.

sound system's sonic force often correlates with the intensity of the festival's ability to affect the attending population.

Centring analysis on the process of sound system assembly contributes to an informed history of rave through locating critical sources of influence in the way in which sound systems generate culture. This history is located in the emergence of dub music sound systems in Jamaica that eventually migrate globally. Rave is therefore a product of transformative deviations from dub and disco music. The tools and technologies developed by dub sound systems are adopted by rave culture because of their efficacy at creating festivals. In this vein sound systems are infrastructural networks that generate culture and sustain community relations. In order to address the sociopolitical conditions of rave's history, attention is given equally to the importance of architecture as signifying both geography and ideology.

This environment is produced by a systematized process that requires both human participants and the effective deployment of a sound system in order to distribute a sonic atmosphere narrating the temporal (length of the event) and spatial (the dance floor) dimensions of rave. This reflects a critique of philosophical traditions reliant on the ontology of modernist dualism. Deconstructing hierarchical distinctions of subjects from objects opens up space to encounter the sound system as a quasi-object, a mixture of human and non-human technical mediation with social dynamics that problematize questions of intentionality. This question of intent finds purchase in relation to the fact that rave is criminalized by way of a confused and haphazard legal definition. Rave is treated more as an affective electronic 'body music' and sanctioned because of a perception that it makes people mentally ill, negatively affecting consciousness and rational decision making. It is simultaneously denied the legitimacy of artistic practice assigned to more 'mindful' and contemplative forms of art.

Chapter two examines the discursive residue of rave's architecture by turning to its appearance within the letters of the law. I work through the power relations that exist between festive events and the State within which they occur. This method produces a description of rave as an ambivalent celebration of performing 'madness'. These festive events are defined as illogical deviance by the State and consequently censored. This theme is explored through reviewing the decision-making process through which rave is criminalized. Beginning with a discourse analysis of debates on the topic by politicians and lawmakers. This debate gives way to the passing of an aptly paradoxical law criminalizing the spectacle and functioning as this dissertation's point of entry into the topic. In banning raves, the United Kingdom passes legislation that legal scholars demonstrate to be plagued by the sorites paradox. This paradox is examined playfully because it resonates with the irrationality synonymous to the word rave itself. Rave, like the sorites paradox is dependent on a vague definition. The United Kingdom provides such a definition when it describes the music played at raves to be, "... sounds wholly or predominantly characterized by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats."<sup>3</sup> I then move on to analyze several important historic events surrounding music festivals that provoke legislative action. This is done in order to construct a history of antagonism between music festivals and the State that provides possible explanatory factors which stoke moral panic and trigger a government sputtering out a paradoxical and vaguely worded law. This history moves through several sites of conflict whereby the nomadism of segments of the United Kingdom is surveyed and studied before being deemed an unhealthy and undesirable lifestyle for the population to embody. Strategies to reform this deviance are deployed and, on several occasions, result in conflict.

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<sup>3</sup>. United Kingdom Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994)

The combination of a rapidly mobile population and the spread of caravan style accommodations along the outskirts of urban city-centres alarmed State paternalism. When this lifestyle began to quickly assemble large festivals a critical threshold surpassed resulting in the passing of legislation banning raves. This event is frequently referenced as the Castlemorton Common Free Festival, a large rave lasting for several days that demonstrated the ability of sound systems to assemble massive crowds at a rapid speed and outside of the State's ability to adequately survey and prevent the practice. This history is then informed by Foucault's work on the State. In the context of Foucault, the policing of rave is defined according to the paternalistic, reforming and compassionate strategies of liberalism's biopolitical framework. In this context rave is defined as a sign of sickness and irrationality and subject to corrective strategies justified on medical grounds. This theoretical approach is brought into conversation with accounts of rave that attend to the more direct aspect of political economy that is proper to the way in which Marxian critiques of political economy inform the disciplinary foundations of Cultural Studies. Such a framework describes how the sanitization of rave culture occurs through its commodification that consecrates the spectacle and absorbs aspects of initially fringe artistic practice into the popular music industry. Critically, however, this process is not simply a one-way movement towards legitimacy as a spectacle is placed under sovereign control. As Sarah Thornton acutely demonstrates the mediation of culture is an active process of discourse formation based upon the distribution of capital in society.<sup>4</sup> Thus although rave becomes enclosed and pacified within the economic productivity of the nightclub, I argue that through Bakhtin's theories it is clear that festive forms exist within a turbulent spatiotemporal dimension that are never fully under sovereign control. This is not to say rave, or festivals more generally

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<sup>4</sup>. Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures*, (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1996)

are essentially revolutionary, idyllic or utopian. Although a significant body of sociocultural anthropology explores this idea comes to mourn the tragic disintegration of a revolutionary spark. What I take away from such a discourse is that the assembly of a crowd approaches thresholds for actualizing a potentiality to play with codes of social relations based upon the sound system's generation and sustaining of a carnivalesque environment. However, we should be sceptical of intentionality here. What is significant is the turbulence and dynamism of crowds: social upheaval begins with the vertiginous swirling of bodies that become dislocated and stray afield. It is through this 'straying afield' that concepts of the festival's political function as a space of ambivalent laughter begins to resonate.

In chapter three I develop the relationship of the festival to the society it exists within through Foucault's theory of pastoral power. The specificity of pastoral power is articulated in order to deploy it as means of describing the spiritual "counter-conduct" that festivals pose to the society existing outside of carnivalesque space. Pastoral power provides an interesting framework for viewing the history of the United Kingdom's attempts to ban the spectacle. Foucault describes pastoral power as the foundational ethics of the paternalist, compassionate forces of liberal government which justify regulation on the basis of bearing responsibility for the 'best interests' in ensuring that the governed population remains healthy and productive. The pastoral concept is then taken a bit further, arguing that because power is always met with resistance, the specificity of resistance to pastoral power is particularly fitting for the context of rave. Foucault describes resistance to pastoral power as a resistance of spirituality and ethics that does not take political or economic motives as its principle or first-order justifying factor.

I argue that this is of particular value to the subject of rave as a cultural phenomenon that has been critiqued on account of its ambivalent political convictions.<sup>5</sup> It is important to acknowledge that the rampant commercialization and commodification of the art form is preceded by a history of raves produced in relation to the DiY ethics held by organizers.<sup>6</sup> The issue of rave versus the State is made intelligible through exploring metaphysics of carnivalesque spirit within the historicized field of political economy. In particular I develop a dialogue between rave's 'new age' spiritual practices and Foucault's notion of the *specificity of resistance* to pastoral power (what Foucault calls 'counter-conduct'). This is defined as an appeal to a spiritual rebellion cited in terms of transcendence and ecstasy that is bounded within the territorial field of political economy. The utility of turning to pastoral power in order to understand rave's relation to the State is worked through in detail. Foucault outlines how themes of mysticism, intoxication, vertigo, and Gnosticism appear in pastoral counter-conduct. In turn I explore how these themes can be used to enrich rave's genealogical relation to the history of festival.

I conclude that festivals are distinguished by the way in which they perpetuate spaces of leisure, escape and fantasy within societies organized along the axis of rationalism and economic productivity. Although modern State strategies effectively regulate spectacles through commodifying and licensing their excessive, exhausting and expending practices, desire for experiencing the liminal space of the festival persistently reappears. The emergence of rave is consistent with the endurance of festive space as it appears and unfolds within the context of late-capitalist, technologically advanced post-industrial society. In the context of rave

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<sup>5</sup>. Brian Wilson, *Fight Flight or Chill: Subcultures, Youth, and Rave into the Twenty-First Century*. (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006)

<sup>6</sup>. George McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance Since the Sixties*. (London: Verso, 1996), 103.

specifically, the mystification and new-age spirituality found within much of the culture is derived from what is speculated as a disenchantment of the world brought on by the secular rationalization of liberal civil society. The consequence of this is the enchanting of opaque technological instruments that increasingly govern people's lives in increasingly less understandable ways. Cast in this light rave appears as a yearning for the mystic and transcendental properties of religious experience that the rationalism of civil society dispels.

This desire is ultimately expressed through the liminal experience afforded by festive leisure space. Framed architecturally, rave sound systems structure a liminal rite of passage that symbolizes passage through festive space. Through technical mediation rave sound systems generate festive social relations. An examination of rave's transcendental concepts is communicated because of the way in which it appears as a retreat or dissent from the rationalization and secularization of an accelerating global techno-capitalism. Viewed this way the mystification of technology that occurs within rave culture is informed by a discourse on the relationship between the sacredness of festive space-time and the technological machines which displace the transcendental from an abstract metaphysical God and imbue it within empowered and affective technologies.<sup>7</sup>

### Journaling Rave: Tomorrowland and the Political Problem of Parody

In its ten-year lifespan the music festival Tomorrowland has continued to scale up in relation to electronic music's increasing market share in the profits generated by popular culture. Held annually in a large park in the town of Boom, Belgium, it has ridden the wave of electronic

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<sup>7</sup>. Tim Jordan, "Collective Bodies: Raving and the Politics of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari." *Body & Society* 1 (1), 1995: 126

dance music's grotesque transition into pop entertainment juggernaut. As a result, the festival annually hosts more than a hundred thousand attendees. Tomorrowland is presented as an idyllic escape from reality, a lavishly decorated pseudo-futuristic utopian dreamscape, journeying into what is essentially an amusement park that is haphazardly and lazily marketing themes of hope and optimism towards the future's uncertain potential. Conjuring allusions to the mystic, the mythological and the arcane Tomorrowland's narrative may be read as crudely drawing from the most obvious themes of genre fantasy. Dripping with the melodrama and soaked in an atmosphere celebrating superficial naivety, pulp fantasy at its pulpiest, Tomorrowland is a space of absurd contradiction. It is also a site haunted by the ghost of rave.

It is important to note that many scene insider' will understandably recoil in horror and disgust at the notion of deploying such a commercialized spectacle as a pretext for beginning a discussion on rave culture. For this I apologize, but I believe to have good reasons for proceeding in such a manner. Although in the eyes of many established cultural critics rave represents merely pointless hedonism and capitulation to thoughtless consumerism, to many others it is a sacred aspect of broader counter-culture practices defined by subverting and re-appropriating the intended function of tools and technologies in the digital age.<sup>8</sup> Admittedly the debate between the authenticity and inauthenticity of culture and artistic practice appears as though it is a worthy and challenging discussion to wade into. However, it is not within the purview of this dissertation to conduct an inquisition through purity tests that attempt to define which particular events are authentic raves and which are commercialized tragic farce. This dissertation instead centres on assembling and associating rave's relation to the State's legal apparatus which censor and reform it.

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<sup>8</sup>. Tobias c. van Veen, "Technics, Precarity and Exodus in Rave Culture." *Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture* vol. 1 no. 2 (2010): 44



I am wary of questions of authenticity being raised in spaces defined by the auspices of what Lacan labels as the University discourse, for such a discourse is at times pliant to being coded by the ideological truths of the epistemic regime it exists within. Tragically it is often blind to the relations of power contouring the limitations of debate. In assessing whether or not to develop an ethnographic method I could not help but conclude that pursuing the objective authenticity of rave based on ethnography would require shining a harsh light of judgment onto vulnerable and unsuspecting dancing bodies who, imbued with the authenticity of being in the world, strive to evade the symbolic violence of clinical examination.

In the following pages I instead offer an account of an undeniably commercial spectacle, in all its monstrous, grotesque visibility, in all its protocols of control, surveillance and sanitization. All the more interesting that the spectre of rave haunts landscapes in spite of such robust security apparatus and the slick sheen of consecrated cultural and economic capital. In this way I hope to spare the subterranean sonic 'underground' from the tragedy of being excavated and illuminated by the limelight it eschews. Tomorrowland is chosen because it is recognizable and highly visible in the public eye. It is something that is easy for one without much knowledge of electronic music to find familiar. It's ongoing popularity and its economic viability demonstrate the fact that although the spectre of rave may be driven from the shadows of forests, warehouses, basements and fields, it's '*esprit du corps*' is never fully exorcised from the assembled crowd.

Rave culture's appearance in legislation performs a secularized exorcism. This censoring of a nascent popular-festive form connects rave genealogically with the fundamentally ambivalent politics of festive space. The temporality of the festival is situated as interstitial to the historic poles of Western governmentality: Church and State. Although both forces vie to control

the energy of the festival to support or entrench the legitimacy of sovereign authority, history demonstrates a fundamental challenge in governing such environmental turbulence. In 2014 a crowd numbering in the tens of thousands danced under the watchful gaze of security to the shrill and blaring refrain of a track entitled, "Eat, Sleep, Rave, Repeat". The cyclical return of the festival informs a genealogical account rave's spectral perpetuation: reappearing, returning and travelling through even the most sanitized and regulated, the wealthiest and most decadent spaces of bourgeois luxury and commodified exchange.

My admissions ticket read "Full-madness pass". It included attendance at the festival grounds for the duration of the three-day festival and a spot to camp on-site in a place named Dreamville. Tomorrowland brims with clumsily direct language and sloppy marketing tactics that describe the three-day sensorial barrage of sound and light. A pun: a place to sleep, yet also a space of bizarre influence upon the population's imaginary register, a village of (for) the unreality of dreams. Poetically, many did not sleep at all. The campsite never fell silent. Hordes of people congregated together: laughing, imbibing, arguing, chanting, and drumming day and night. One afternoon a sudden rain shower drove many to seek shelter in their tents. When the rain subsided and the clouds dispersed, the returning sunlight was greeted by the wild howls and shrieks of people excited by the symbolism of its return. The noise caught on and in the span of several minutes hundreds of people were screaming and howling in unison, expressing the frenzied excitement gripping the crowd.

We (two old friends and I) came in on a train from Amsterdam after spending a few days in Holland. While exploring the city the night before we left for Belgium, we struck up a conversation with the staff at a local music venue about Tomorrowland. Their mood changed when we mentioned the festival. They issued a stern warning to us that if we visited any of

Amsterdam's famous coffee shops, under no circumstances should we attempt to smuggle contraband with us on our train ride into the festival. We were cautioned that it is a well-known fact that Tomorrowland is a heavily securitized space. Police will be awaiting our arrival and for obvious reasons attendees coming from Amsterdam are of acute interest. It was advice that proved to be completely accurate. After a luxurious and scenic train ride through the countryside, we arrived and emerged in a single-file line out of the railcar, passing dozens of police and dogs that sniffed at our luggage.

The juxtaposition of Tomorrowland's absurd luxury with the ominousness of our process for arrival and orientation demarcating entry into the space jarred the senses. Dogs leapt onto people and they immediately transitioned from hapless tourist into suspect. They were promptly removed from the queue. Watching their joy and excitement turn instantly into fear and confusion generated a climate of manic jitters amongst the dense crowd. It appeared as though very few people had anticipated this aspect of the festival. Perhaps they were too caught up in fantasizing about the hedonic weekend to remember the reality of the world they live in. Interestingly this moment is a continuation of an aspect of rave's history: the journey to the site of the event took often included the necessity of taking action to evade the forces of security deployed to blockade and detain the crowd before it fully assembled. Those who were detained stared wide-eyed at those of us who passed through unscathed, powerlessly hoping that anyone could save them from the process of methodical, grey inquisition they will be put through in the coming moments. The tension between those two emotions: excitement and fear, is compelling and we spent much of the next three days nervously laughing with one another as we reflected on the absurdity of such a paradox existing in such a commercialized space.

Tomorrowland is place of luxurious hedonism and consumption. Surplus is littered everywhere. A marketplace supplied campsites with food, drink and various creature comforts. The prices of everything are inflated to the same degree one finds at most sporting arenas. The intensity of squander, waste, excess, and abandon reached a feverish pitch inside the festival grounds. In the area designated for communal eating, I watched locally baked Belgian chocolate cakes purchased en masse and then strewn everywhere. They were launched as projectiles through the air or smeared in the faces of groups of friends and strangers. Large and delicious decadent cakes left behind, completely untouched. The thrill of the purchase was all that mattered. To me these cakes wonderfully symbolized the era of decadent nihilism Nietzsche speaks of. They, along with everything else for sale, are bought by scanning one's wristband that is preloaded via a credit card with Tomorrowland's form of currency: "pearls". Such a method of assigning a traceable RFID to each individual also provided a way of studying the festival's population flow. As we were scanned in and out of various areas of the festival grounds, our movement and purchasing habits were tracked and undoubtedly fed into larger metrics used to identify the ideal-type prosumer or a potential terrorist suspect.

Walking from the campground to the stages required passing through one more security checkpoint before finally accessing the space where the sound systems were located. Wearing by the time spent traveling and waiting in long lines surrounded by crowds of people, our plan was to settle at one stage and let the night unfold around us. The crowds are overwhelming, and one can easily make the mistake of being trapped, forever travelling between stages, barely hearing any music and instead standing in crowds of confused people screaming for lost friends, looking for a restroom, or frantically searching for a lost/stolen cellphone. We ascended stairs in order to access the upper balcony surrounding the dance floor on three sides. As we settled along a railing

my gaze took in the ocean of bodies below, soaked in sound and bathed in cascading light. It took about an hour for us to become appropriately acclimatized to the environment. Once my eyes adjusted, I became absorbed by the waves of sound washing over me.

### A Rave Review of The Opera House

An imitation of a rococo opera house fashioned the stage, with a few important updates: laser lights and several cannons for spraying pressurized CO<sub>2</sub> and water onto the crowd. In place of the elegant masonry used to erect cement pillars bearing the architectural load of modernist art, stood metal scaffolding hidden under a thin shell of decorative plastic and fabric. An imagined architectural aesthetic surrounded the real infrastructure. Gazing at this representation of post-modern pastiche decadence, a plastic opera house, drew me as always to reflect on Baudrillard who notes that the plastic kingdom of Disneyland presents the idea that, “[I]t is the whole political problem of the parody, of hypersimulation or offensive simulation, which is posed here.”<sup>9</sup> Now I ask: what is being parodied? One can easily identify that the opera is an artistic practice associated with ideas of a *civilizing discourse*. Attending the opera is an honoured cultural practice and consecrated by the elites of liberal society. People who visit and attend the opera are understood to *benefit* from their experience of it. In the practicing of culture, sentiments are transmitted through engendered social relations. The opera is a space of economic luxury and stratified social class before it is a medium for actualizing an aestheticized 'Ideal'. However, this logic is dependent on a completely uncritical egocentrism and total lack of class-consciousness. People who attended the opera are no more or less civilized or cultured than

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<sup>9</sup>. Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulation and Simulacra*. Translated by Sheila Faria Glaser. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1981), 21

anyone else. Importantly the wealthy and privileged also behaved like deviants: carousing, bickering and breaking laws. However, the cultural capital afforded by their socioeconomic class often spared them from the punishment exacted through criminalizing poverty.

The price of an admission ticket marks Tomorrowland as a site of wealth and privilege that is not so different from an 18<sup>th</sup>-century opera house. It was therefore unsurprising to see a stage designed in citation of one of the cultural practices held as a pinnacle of 'high-art modernism' and the history of liberalism itself. Of course, the performances at Tomorrowland are not an opera. And that is the point that is the "political problem of parody". Discharging itself over the next few days would be a festive spectacle parodying the civilizing discourse and contradicting the role of wealth in nurturing the pedagogic functions of artistic practice deemed best suited for representing the transcendental concept of beauty. This evening it unfolds within a staged opera house. Instead of a performing cast, there is a DJ, a version of artistry currently undergoing the process of having their artistic practice become consecrated. This is significant when one considers that in the year 2002, the United Kingdom, France and Belgium had all passed legislation banning the spectacles closely associated with DJ performance techniques: raves. What was put on display that evening was the ongoing commercialization and thus legitimation of a culture that decades before, during its nascent appearance, was defined as deviant and actively censored.

A massive Ferris wheel slowly rotates behind the stage. Looking out from the balcony offered the perspective of landscape. Within such a frame I saw a confusion of artistic themes signifying traditions of firmly distinguishing high and lowbrow forms of art. As these barriers dissolved the bizarre aesthetic enveloped me. The opera house and the Ferris wheel: both infrastructures for public amusement that are as well stratified socially. The opera house is a

space of civilized luxury. The Ferris wheel is an amusement ride that although once quite luxurious and unaffordable is now an icon of the folk spirit of the fair or carnival. As the Ferris wheel towered over the gauche opera house the atmosphere of the carnival became atmospheric. Such an affective environment pervades and envelops infrastructure, no matter how poised or beautiful their design. The frenzied laughter denied any recognition of the seriousness of the world it exists within. The more something poses in demand for deference, the more vulnerable it becomes to mockery, parody and laughter.

The frenzy of the opera house brought to mind the way in which grotesque realism inhabits and profanes matter that is invested with idealism. Or at least this is what my quickly jotted notes repeat back to me. No matter how elegant the stage design, how manicured and curated the space of privileged leisure (and thus how 'civilized'), the grotesqueness of the carnivalesque thrives within festive spectacles and it can never be fully exorcised. As the music looped onwards, I felt entranced by the lost future of a failing Enlightenment project. In the shadow of such collapsing philosophical ideals is the social lashing out against itself at the tragedy of being unable actualize the rationalist modernity it holds sacred. I find myself swirling deliriously inside a holographic projection contoured by laser lights and smoke machines, a world far outside of a society at its technological apex and fueled by scientific revolution. A frenzied population surrounds me, collectively fantasizing of escaping through the fracturing foundations of the Western world. Its technocratic ideologues are lost and adrift in a nostalgic false consciousness, dreaming of a non-existent past of the State's historic grandeur. Longing for times when the body politic could be shaped into 'ideal citizens' and when people still feared god.

### Grotesque Realism and the Political Problem of Parody

One thinker who understood how the festival contaminates distinctions drawn between high and low culture is Mikhail Bakhtin. Bakhtin's work on the "popular-festive forms" and of "dialogism" in communication are critical tools for explicating what Baudrillard surmises as the, "political problem of parody"<sup>10</sup>. In order to deliver the force of a vicious critique, Baudrillard moves too quickly. He casts parody aside as a relic of the past and instead prefers the sleeker, more technophilic term, 'simulation'. However, we are mistaken if we view traditions of mimicry and pantomime as quaint and crude tools that are disempowered and subsumed by enrapturing effects of the digital mediation.

Bakhtin develops important aspects of his literary theory through studying authors such as Francois Rabelais, whose work *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, profanely mixed elements of the social world that separated from one another through defining the sacred. For Bakhtin, Rabelais' novel is a genre read in the context of the social relations engendered during the time of the festival. Within this dimension, profane themes epitomize particular genre traditions and thus belong to a 'novel' form of artistic communication that is in itself carnivalesque. One such discourse constructed by the novel is what Bakhtin terms as the grotesque. The grotesque refers to the capacity for mockery, exaggeration, and parody to debase the sanctified and pure. Stated simply, the grotesque degrades.<sup>11</sup> Returning to Tomorrowland: as the music filled the air, a

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<sup>10</sup>. throughout this dissertation I borrow Bakhtin's concept of "popular-festive forms" as an appropriate signifier of rave's relationship to the concept of festival as it appears in an industrializing world.

<sup>11</sup>. one must be careful in reading what is meant by degradation. It is unwise to think that the grotesque is merely beauty inverted. Like a manicured face that swells and bruises, it is instead a gradient spectrum that mediates a process of making monstrous beauty. It is the idea that beauty can be exaggerated to such an extreme that it becomes grotesque. It explores the power or force of things defined as profane in relation to that which is held sacred. In this way it is importantly tied to the festive ritual, a time during which the ruling classes ideals are laughed at by those



grotesque parody of the opera's function as a civilizing discourse unfolded. A spectacle which had decades earlier been banned by the State had persisted and earned begrudging tolerance by the State apparatus through a process of "commercial purification".<sup>12</sup> If the spectre of rave could not be wholly exorcised (there is a small stage housed under a bridge somewhere on the festival grounds named the 'rave cave') then its energy should be transmuted into economic profit.

That night we watched icons of rave culture parody the civilized cultural capital invested and enchanting the opera house's architecture. The performers were figures whom, a decade earlier, often struggled to be recognized through the sanctified label of artist. They now perform at an epicentre of cultural and economic capital. It seems that this gives voice to an alternative discourse on a civilizing process (here defined as merely the generation of culture itself, detached from the value systems of a specific ideology). Rave's spectre continues to haunt. From the union-busted ruins of industrial manufacturing within city walls, the pastoral countryside, and finally into its graveyard (raveyard): the last bastion of the 'nightclub'. Culture proliferates through all of this socioeconomic circulation. Returning to the night at the opera, one may read the parody as being voiced through Bakhtin's polyphonic dialogism: the idea that multiple voices and multiple meanings exist and speak in simultaneity to the referent phenomena.

The grotesque parody demonstrated a few things. It revealed the arbitrariness of the way in which class structure defines bodies. Far from being a Platonic process of sorting people into their natural place in society according to their soul's *essence* instead we see that class structure and social stratification are historic processes in which relative positions are established through

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who are ruled. It means equally the stripping away or removal. In Bakhtinian terms the grotesque strips away the purity of transcendental ideas by associating them with aspects of the human body that contaminate it with the impurity of the external world. Bakhtin finds evidence for this in Rabelais' depiction of the orifice in human bodies as portals which enable the mixture of the sacred with the profane.

<sup>12</sup>. Nav Haq, ed., *Rave and its Influence on Art and Culture*. (Black Dog Press: London, 2016), 42

conflict and struggle over the materialization of capital, rather than indicators of eternal, universalist magico-religious phenomena that we might refer to as caste or essence of soul. It as well demonstrates the enduring tension between festival and government that is derived from the *ambivalence* of play. As Mark Fisher notes,

Raves also recalled the interstitial spaces -- between commerce and festival -- that provoked anxiety amongst the early bourgeoisie. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, as it struggled to impose its hegemony, the bourgeoisie was much exercised by the problematic status of the fair. It was the illegitimate 'contamination' of 'pure' commerce by carnival excess and collective festivity which troubled bourgeois writers and ideologues. The problem which they faced, however, was that commercial activity was always-already tainted with festive elements. There was no 'pure' commerce, free from collective energy. Such a commercial sphere would have to be produced, and this involved the subduing and ideological incorporation of the "marketplace" as much as it entailed the domestication of the fair.<sup>13</sup>

Standing in the midst of this State sanctioned audio-visual spectacle, such 'anxiety' became apparent. Bordered by security and unfolding on securely governed territory, the concerted attempts to incorporate and domesticate rave is made evident by the scale, opulence, and commercial branding of the event. Yet the anxious neuroses driven by unconscious recognition of the futile desire to purify the space through commercialization drenches the body politic in a nervous sweat. The carnivalesque, as Bakhtin notes, is fundamentally a thematic of turbulent rupture during which the barriers between sacred and the profane enter into obscene discourse. It is interstitial in that it exists between Church and State. The festival thus demarcates the third sphere of social life. Alongside many other carnivalesque events, parody appears within the crowd's laughter. Its ambivalence brings comedy to the tragic seriousness of sovereign power's violent desperation in attempting to keep the sacred and profane wholly separate from one another.

Tomorrowland works tirelessly to sanitize itself, to assert its legitimacy across the registers of both artistic value and economic success. In doing so it fully realizes the two sides of

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<sup>13</sup>. Mark Fisher, "Baroque Sunbursts" in *Rave and its Influence on Art and Culture*, ed. Nav Haq, (Black Dog Press: London, 2016), 43

decadence proper to the monstrosity of beauty. In this way the sign rave relates poetically to the mind/body dualism informing much of Liberalism. This dualism is also attended to by Bakhtin's theorizing of the festival as a time where the lower stratum of the body mixes profanely with the upper stratum of the civilized ruling class. That the tragic failure of attempts to sever a body into its upper, purely rational and lower, profanely embodied stratum cannot be made real is sensed through the polyphonic tonality of ambivalent laughter. Attempts to actualize such ideology are doomed, as are the real bodies forced into a project of becoming ideals that cannot be realized. The economic utility of Tomorrowland's production of commercial circulation cannot be actualized without the turbulent 'collective energy' of the people, whose swirling vertigo generates festive delirium belonging to the freedom of play. Bakhtin defines the aspects of festive space that are evasive to the social norms regulated by traditions of Church and State in relation to the Enlightenment's civilizing project.

In the age of Enlightenment, according to Engels, "cogitative reason became the yardstick of all that existed." This abstract rationalism and antihistoricism, this tendency to generalization and non-dialectic thought (the break between negation and affirmation) prevented the Encyclopedists from grasping theoretically the nature of ambivalent festive laughter. The image of the contradictory, perpetually becoming and unfinished being could not be reduced to the dimensions of the Enlighteners' reason.<sup>14</sup>

It is not a difficult stretch to imagine how and why a sign such as rave would indicate trouble in relation to an 'Enlightened' ontology. The concept of festival evades the tempered and impartial approach of the 'encyclopaedic' definition of the ambivalent euphoria intrinsic to it. The passivity and meditation defined by the term 'cogitative' is a form of reason haunted by rave's unreason. Before rave became cross-referenced with the modernism of 'subculture' it described a state of being that seemingly afflicted bodies for an indeterminate time: people went *raving*. The temporality of such a state of being clashes with the settled, domesticated and *civilized* social

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<sup>14</sup>. Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Hélène Iswolsky. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 118

constructs of the Enlightenment project. Especially troubling to the United Kingdom is rave's nomadism: it inhabited (squatted) transiently. It possessed space, exhausted bodies and remobilized. Its appearance coincides with the State investing tremendous resources into constructing urban environments designed in order to produce docile, productive bodies: a sedentary, nuclear family life that segments of the population begin to flee from the planned future's event horizon. We spent the evening watching rhythmic integration and communal desubjectification. The process narrated by the smooth and subtle blending of one track into the next. The fluid crowd howled delightedly each and every time a new moment of anticipation peaked with hypnotic refrain.

### The Vinyl Cocoon

At noon the stages opened again, and we were back on our feet, this time at the stage curated by a vinyl purist where artists perform exclusively by mixing vinyl. An important observation came to mind: although carnivalesque spaces are seemingly chaotic, there are still many rules to be observant of. In this case the artistic brand, Cocoon, is known for its preserving (incubating?) and advocating for vinyl records be enshrined as paradigmatic to DJ performance. The narrative has many layers, with psycho-acoustic arguments for a supposedly sonic fidelity achieved by a 'more analog' single path, to the economic: that preserving vinyl thwarts digital piracy and ensures artists are rewarded more fairly for the labour spent in producing music. Another thread critical to the discourse on vinyl in DJ culture is that it preserves the rarity of certain tracks, allowing for them to exist as unidentifiable secrets, possessed by only a small group of the chosen musicians. This practice is derived from the Jamaican dub music sound

systems which pressed certain tracks in small numbers (dance floor weapons) in order to mystify and mythologize their sonic force.

We felt it was important to spend time at the all vinyl stage because it was reminiscent of the nostalgic pastiche appearing often in discourse on contemporary music. The vinyl record is an iconic aspect of dance music. It is the original medium for the development of the DJ. The craft has transitioned beyond only vinyl, with digital media ushering in increasingly complex setups involving software/hardware hybridity. Although vinyl is undergoing a renaissance of sorts, turntables are more difficult and expensive to maintain in good working order in comparison to the proliferation of media players that follows. As such the opportunity to hear music presented through such a finely tuned and well-maintained artefact of music history was a great privilege. Cocoon indeed sheltered a great deal of house and techno music history that was at one-point peripheral, minor and obscure in relation to the 'top of the pops' showcased at the main stage.

The stage design was something that seemed as though it were vaguely gesturing towards Alice in Wonderland. A garden surrounded by water on three sides. The stage itself designed as a sort of carnivalesque 'fun house' reminiscent of playfully macabre styling of Tim Burton. As they did the night before, bodies again swirled. On this day the festival reached its peak attendance and the crowds became anxiously dense. Confusion reigned supreme. People wandered around, aimlessly and deliriously. A large mud puddle became a site of treachery and amusement as people slipped and fell over one another. Some gave up on attempting to avoid the hazard and simply played in the mud. Vinyl is not without its own treachery. A needle scratches across a record very easily. As confetti rained onto the crowd, a single piece fluttered down and landed atop the spinning disc, skipping the needle and causing the music to come to a screeching halt.

The crowd gasped in surprise and confused bemusement, the slightly irritated performer quickly got the record playing again and held up the offending strip to show the crowd what was responsible for breaking the groove. Confetti: a small strip of paper loaded with meaning. For some it represents the light-hearted fun of a party, clownish and full of surprise. To others it represents the clown's tragedy. The way in which the spectacle mocks, consumes and invalidates the artistry being showcased by rendering it as equivalent to a cheap trick for entertaining the drunken masses. Regardless of how one situates confetti, the event was a moment of spontaneity particular to the vinyl medium itself. Digital media is prone to all sorts of its own technical difficulties, but the sound of the needle scratching across a vinyl is an iconic contingency of the DJ. While many difficulties can befall the sound system and stop the music, there is a hypnotic fragility that emanates from the vinyl platters' sensitivity to the air surrounding it. Its motorized rotation drives the party and there is a noticeable delicacy to its mechanics. The record needle skims the surface of the vinyl, tracing the waveform etched into surface. It is no wonder the drum and bass pioneer "Grooverider" created such a moniker. A similar moment of tension occurred when someone wandered a bit too close to the turn-tables, the DJ quickly shooed them away, using hand motions to demonstrate that the record player must be afforded a wide berth. The crowd breathed through the musicality of suspense: with the absent presence of rhythm narrating a cyclic process for building tension and then resolving it with the warm thumping of bass. Such is the method for calling people into a trance dance. At such loud volumes the technique is highly affective. The absence of bass produces a noticeable lack of pressure on the body once one becomes entrained to the familiarity of its pressure. Its return is met with excited noise. Exhausted and drained, calves burning and knees creaking we returned to our tent and prepared to make the journey home.

### Indexing Rave as a Cultural Keyword

Providing adequate context for rave's cultural milieu begins by framing it within what Raymond Williams termed "cultural keywords". Thus, an initial move I make in order to cast light onto the opaque, clandestine, and veiled phenomenon of rave is through an appeal to a linguistic definition and then subsequently frame the term within the context of social flux that characterizes culture as a "keyword". For Williams,

The dictionaries most of us use, the defining dictionaries, will in these cases, and in proportion to their merit as dictionaries, list a range of meanings, all of them current, and it will be the range that matters. Then when we go beyond these to the historical dictionaries, and to essays in historical and contemporary semantics, we are quite beyond the range of the 'proper meaning'. We find a history and complexity of meanings; conscious changes, or consciously different uses; innovation, obsolescence, specialization, extension, overlap, transfer; or changes which are masked by a nominal continuity so that words which seem to have been there for centuries, with continuous general meanings, have come in fact to express radically different or radically variable, yet sometimes hardly noticed, meanings and implications of meaning.<sup>15</sup>

It is necessary to traverse the 'range of meaning' and the processes of inclusion and exclusion constructing such a range. I begin by first dealing with the 'proper meaning' of rave. The Cambridge Dictionary offers the following information on the word rave:

1. to speak in an uncontrolled way, usually because you are upset or angry, or because you are ill:
2. to praise something very much
3. an event where young people dance to modern electronic music and sometimes take illegal drugs

The Cambridge dictionary distinguishes (creates range) between formal and informal uses of rave. Again "...it will be the range that matters". The significance of range is its construction of a spectrum that puts the word's signifying function in a state of play. Range is a measurement of distance. In this case it is the distance that the "informal" usage of the term drifts from the

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<sup>15</sup>. Raymond Williams. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), xxix

formal. It is the play of meaning within this continuum that I traverse in order to produce discourse on the phenomena. Rave's informal usage refers to a nascent cultural formation. It is introduced into the Cambridge Dictionary in the early 1990s in response to the emergence of electronica. In an earlier period within English popular music, the word rave is used to describe a party; a style of playing instruments (usually through incorporating Jazz solos and improvisation into the structure of a song) and in 1965 is used by *The Yardbirds* in "*Having a Rave Up*." Surveying the lineage of rave's informal usage one sees a consistent signifying of the frenetic energy of festivity. Simultaneously one sees a term that plays with social norms regarding reason and rationality. In rave there is a significance placed upon a certain joyousness is expressed through one's experience of instability rather than a fear of the consequence of undermining the autonomy of reason that is referenced through ascribed definition as a signifier of the diseased mind.

It is clear that absent any knowledge of cultural history, rave's informal usage signifying a popular-festive form appears as somewhat of a non sequitur in relation to its formal usage. There is an apparent tinge of irony in the informal usage of rave as a cultural keyword. I read this irony as part of the ambivalent laughter intrinsic to festive spaces. Whereas both formal definitions deploy rave as a means for signifying healthy or diseased person, the informal usage seems to embrace this 'history of madness' through inverting meaning through quasi-ironic mockery. The sombreness of the formal definitions would certainly mourn and fear the loss of autonomy, rationality and the strictly bordered individual that the raving subject testifies to.

Consequently, the informal definition celebrates this dispossession and loss as a movement towards emancipating the self from its present conditions of social construction. What is significant is returning attention to the space between the binary of reason/unreason in order to



attend to the associative networks constructing both categories in dynamic relation to each other. The network cables this dissertation traces are those used to assemble a sound system. The rave culture emanating from such infrastructure is unsurprisingly subject to the re-structuring force of the State's civilizing discourse on paternalist liberalism. This discourse mediates concepts of political reason that design an ideal-type figure: the rational subject. In turn this 'iron-cage' of rationalism produce the docile and productive model citizen through the force of modern organizations responsible for public health and education. From this history it seems that rave signifies a collective desire for social re-assembly appearing within festive spaces. It overflows and exceeds the confines of individual personhood and thus belongs to a category of collective experience.<sup>16</sup> Rave signifies how this distribution of alienating affectivity amongst the assembled population produces testimonials to the singular narratives of language's ironic relation to carnivalesque madness.

Attempting to create a cartography of rave's material-semiotic dimension is however more than simply a linguistic game that fuels the mystique of literary criticism. Although documents produced by literary critics are exceptionally useful tools for addressing rave and the formation of culture itself. However, the documents that I use as foundational to producing a work of speculative theory are those produced by the sober rationalism of the State and its legal system. Emerging into the public eye of English social life in the 1980s, rave is the subject of expensive and drawn out legal battles with the State apparatus itself.<sup>17</sup> This sociolegal history answers the demand for a 'working definition'.

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<sup>16</sup>. Kai-Ewe Werbeck, "From Rubble to Revolutions and Raves: Literary Interrogations of German Media Ecologies". PhD Dissertation (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2012), 32

<sup>17</sup>. George McKay, ed. *DiY Culture: Parties and Protest in Nineties Britain*. (London: Verso, 1998), 25

My dissertation thus examines rave as a sociolegal fact. I examine the existence of the phenomena in relation to the way in which it is documented by the State rather than the personal testimonies of participants. This move is made in order to evade the questions of subjectivity and relativism that are deployed in order to critique and delegitimize the ethnographic and participant-observation methodologies of sociocultural anthropology. The spectre of relativism haunts the desire for inquiry based upon disinterested objectivity when it comes to encountering the aesthetic of sociopolitical representation. In the case of rave this appears as the distinction between noise and music that is materialized in the development of genres that oscillate between distortion and clarity in delivering their affects.

I ground this conversation in an analysis of the sound system as the material infrastructure rendering rave's polyphonic aesthetics. This notion of the sound system as the transmitter of cultural aesthetic is explored through sociological research on the liminal sites that rave assembles by technical means. To an earlier moment in history rave exists as a sign of madness. It becomes media that playfully mocks and traverses distinctions drawn by cultural capital's influencing of social relations. Such relations are possessed by dichotomies such as underground vs. mainstream, insiders vs. outsiders, commercial fame and idolized stardom versus the authenticity of faceless artistry.<sup>18</sup> Such divisions are critical and fundamental to the identity politics of rave itself.<sup>19</sup>

The demand for a definition of rave is almost always asked from the outside: those who have never borne witness ask, *what is it?* For those who have volunteered ethnographic data on the topic, there is a proclamation of an event: "I have raved!" The answer is phenomenological.

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<sup>18</sup>. Jeremy Gilbert and Ewan Pearson, *Discographies: Dance Music, Culture and the Politics of Sound* (London: Routledge, 1999), 145

<sup>19</sup>. John Borneman and Stefan Senders. n.d. "Politics without a Head: Is the 'Love Parade' a New Form of Political Identification?", 294

The testifying body attended a social gathering and found themselves among a dancing crowd, the rave 'massive'. The massive is the body mass clustered around the sound system. From locations distributed throughout the sound system's infrastructural layout, technicians and engineers engage with techniques of audio and visual synthesis. These titles include roles such as performers who operate audio playback devices such as record players, cd players or laptops, and the crew's assumption of multiple roles critical to the localized demands of powering, balancing, and maintaining the signal output. Audio/visual synthesis occurs through the many iterations of the 'beatmatching' technique utilized by DJs and also in more hybridized approaches including the triggering of audio playback devices, samplers, synthesizers, drum machines and video projectors.

All respective techniques involved in 'mixing' and integrating disparate audio and visual sources into a textured and layered soundscape are subsequently categorized within the transforming constellation of musical genre. Bearing witness to the sound system is an opening to the affectivity of the machinic audio/visual aesthetic. These bodies are hailed by rave. I theorize that the attraction to such mimetic lures associate the desire for sensations of dislocation and desubjectification in relation to spatiotemporal borders of the festival and of the distinction between self|other, subject|object, and science|art. There is a sense of abandonment, a straying afield from familiar aspects of one's self. A siren calls out for us to become 'lost' in the re-appropriation of space that acts in reverence towards the sound system's alienating landscape<sup>20</sup>

A discussion of rave as a signifier of electronic dance music may seem odd as scholars, music journalists and art critics often point out that the era of rave as a sign describing unlicensed unregulated and clandestine festal events occurring on the border or fringes of

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<sup>20</sup>. Pedro Peixoto Ferreria, Pedro Peixoto. 2008. "When Sound Meets Movement: Performance in Electronic Dance Music." *Leonard Music Journal* 18 (17): 2008, 17

modern society has ended following the consequence of successive waves of criminal legislation.<sup>21</sup> Music critics describe popular culture that develops artwork in the "post-rave era".<sup>22</sup> A 2012 panel discussion entitled "death of rave" gives appropriate context: "rave has died a thousand deaths," says Mark Fisher. The un-death of rave's festive time yields a persisting aesthetico-political spirit, which he defines as rave's affective hauntology.<sup>23</sup> When one speaks of the decline of rave events it is usually tied to a consequence of waves of legislation effectively regulating and normalizing the phenomena, enclosing the spectacles within licensed commercial venues that comply with a vast litany of health and safety codes.<sup>24</sup> The profit-generating impact of corporate sponsorship has managed to effectively reintegrate deviant acts of self-disintegration into the vibrancy of a "nightlife" leisure economy.<sup>25</sup> Since the early 2000s, electronic music is prominently featured as the aesthetic backdrop to the pop star's signature vocal narrative, with numerous chart-topping songs adopting the production techniques and sonic aesthetics that define the dance music's formative genres.

Although the process of rave's criminalization is documented historically, it is important to resist categorizing things in linear terms of rave's life and death, with life being the authentic space of non-commercial bohemian artistic production and death as fully commodified spectacle. Doing so presents the history as an inflexible linearity, as if it were possible for history to 'end'. I instead examine rave in the context of its machinic technologies and a sociocultural haunting: a re-appearing spirit and the legacy of historic events which provide sites for the mythologizing of

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<sup>21</sup>. Tammy L. Anderson, "Understanding the Alteration and Decline of a Music Scene: Observations from Rave Culture." *Sociological Forum* 24 (2): 2009, 310

<sup>22</sup>. Susan Luckman, "Rave Cultures and the Academy." *Social Alternatives* 17 (4) 1998:45.

<sup>23</sup>. CTM Festival, "Death of Rave UK" Panel Discussion with Mark Fisher, Alex Williams, Steve Goodman, Lee Gamble & Lisa Blanning, podcast audio, 2013. <https://soundcloud.com/ctm-festival/ctm13-death-of-rave-1-uk>

<sup>24</sup>. Steven J. Tepper, "Stop the Beat: Quiet Regulation and Cultural Conflict." *Sociological Forum* 24 (2) 2009: 277

<sup>25</sup>. Deborah Talbet, "The Juridification of Nightlife and Alternative Culture: Two UK Case Studies." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 17 (1) 2011:82

culture. Rave sound system technologies play with concepts of presence/absence appearance/disappearance through effacing humanism of artistry within technological networks. This dissertation traces the mobility of rave's spirit through the way in which it is always locatable in relation to a sound system. This vertiginous motion occurs during the disorganizing aspects of the festival. A residue that lingers despite the significant resources directed towards sanitizing the spectacle through commercial integration.<sup>26</sup> In rave, one finds roots that persistently betray the supposed pacifying function of entertainment and instead generate turbulence and confusion. Many can agree on rave's youthful 'life': its vitality as a body politic has a clearly locatable historic period. Precisely determining the time and place of its death is more troubling given the fact that beat from sound systems endures. The post-rave performance of rave continues onwards.

Rave is a social environment enabling the mediation of desires transversal to distinctions between body and mind. Earlier I explored this idea through Bakhtinian terms as the distinction between the upper and lower strata in the body. The festival exists as an event in which this division is mixed, contaminated, and hybridized. In doing so the formation of modernist binaries are re-cognized, flattening the hierarchical association of a thinking mind and somatic body within carnivalesque space. An important aspect of rave is defined through its negotiation with the limitations to the body posed by exhaustion and that is proper to festive rites. This is a trajectory with a velocity sometimes manipulated by the pharmacological effect of ritualized usage of entheogens.<sup>27</sup> Taken to extremes, such performances end in tragedies seized upon by

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<sup>26</sup>. Tammy L. Anderson, *Rave Culture: The Alteration and Decline of a Philadelphia Music Scene*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 80

<sup>27</sup>. Graham St John, "Aliens Are Us: Cosmic Liminality, Remixicism, and Alienation in Psytrance." *The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 25 (2) 2013:188

media outlets and subsequently deployed justifications for censoring the spectacle. This hunting rave's ghostly deviance continues into our present moment.<sup>28</sup> The mind|body, a question of the desire for liminal experience, rituals of social connectivity, transcendence of atomized individualism, and for re-evaluating principles for social organization.<sup>29</sup> Digitally synthesizing this dualism produces rave as a folk devil that stokes moral panic resulting from its non-humanist aesthetics. Rave does not live and die, because it is genealogically related to the recurring festive spirit. Festivals are based upon cyclic time: a revenant that comes and goes. In the context of seasonal festivals, it marks the moments of equinox within an ever-shifting gradient spectrum that gradually and almost imperceptibly intensifies. As a spectacle assembled, disassembled, and regenerated the sound system generates various liminal sites within its proximity. These are enacted (conjured?) through festal rituals. Within this dissertation the *topos* of rave is its construction within language and the geographic location of various performance sites where sound systems issue "...call[s] for the liberation of the Dionysian id."<sup>30</sup>

The premise pursued here is that rave parodies reason. Like all festivals, its ambivalence opens space for mockery and laughter. Its duality as social gathering and indicator of mental disorder presents a site haunting the *civility* of society. A concept of haunting is proper to the existence of folk devils and moral panics. The shock and fear mass mediated to domestic populations demonstrates rave's haunting affectivity. I trace this process through the way in which it is presented as an accelerated plunging into a virtual dystopia fuelled by artificial chemistry of designer drugs brainwashing the innocence of youth. This is the deviant spirit, the

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<sup>28</sup>. Belinda Kontominas, "Defqon.1: NSW Premier vows to shut down festival after suspected overdose deaths" *ABC News*, September 16, 2018. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-09-16/defqon-two-dead-after-music-festival-overdoses/10252848> (accused September 29, 2018)

<sup>29</sup>. Graham St. John, "Liminal Being: Electronic Dance Music Cultures, Ritualization and the Case of Psytrance." In *The SAGE Handbook of Popular Music*, 2014: 245

<sup>30</sup>. J.G Merquoir, *Foucault*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 34

folk devil that possesses the civilized body. These bodies go 'raving mad' and consequently may suffer traumatic realizations, encountering limits defined by exhaustion and expenditure. The State sanctioned normalization of law-abiding, docile youth trained to actualize their productive potential are seemingly lured en masse by rave's siren call. In response to this siren comes an urgent and frantic process of censoring the noise. I situate the consequence of this as the development of rave as a taboo sign - as evidenced by its criminalization in law and characterization in popular culture.<sup>31</sup>

In discussing rave, one must return endlessly to the question of spirit and the ways in which it inhabits the body, giving material form to what is defined as a spectral curse. Rave's spectre emanates from sound system association. The hypnotizing repetition of musical groove comes is exorcised by paternalist governmentality. Rave is driven from the borderlands it inhabits. The oscillating force of hiding and seeking, rave's persistence and the State's censorship, sees traps laid, sites staked-out, and persons of interest documented and monitored. Infrastructure is repurposed, facilitating pathways for rave assembly. Motorways and roads blocked in order to thwart the nomadic drift of desiring-machines, searching for a signal path to actualize the promise of a transcendent magico-religious experience through sound system assembly. Investing the cyclical motion of festivals with narratives of religious pilgrimage. This reformulation of State infrastructure sees roads and highways that become pathways not to facilitate economic transaction that recuperates the self, but instead leading towards transcendent waste: cultural hedonism and the sacrifice of surplus.

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<sup>31</sup>. Graham St. John, 'Rave From the Grave: Dark Trance and the Return of the Dead'. In *Zombies Are Us: Essays on the Humanity of the Walking Dead*, edited by Cory James Rushton and Christopher M. Moreman. (Jefferson: McFarland, 2011), 24

To deal with this spirit, prohibitions are applied to items deemed possessed by a profane relation to rave's carnivalesque spirit. Most tellingly is the sign rave itself: for a festival to be named as such and summoned into being is taboo. The sign's function within law as signifying deviant behaviour indicates this. Consequently, the sign rave disappears from its association with large, commercially sponsored festivals. This is a result of liability in the law. This makes the play of absent-presence all the more fascinating in the context of rave. The desire that organizes the sound system embodies energy that is expressed culturally as rave. When police arrive to break apart the crowd, the "rave massive", one of the first objectives will be to disconnect the sound system so that their own public address system can order the crowd to disperse. This struggle to control the festival persists and cannot be exhausted: 'rave dies a thousand deaths'. The body exhausts the self in order to renew the spirit. The evolution of this struggle is read well through Marx's theory of commodification. If one situates rave as a relation of labouring bodies to the use-value of tools and technical objects, the equation is as follows: human labour assembles or produces rave, it connects the sound system to a power grid. Bodies dance. These dancing bodies are put into a vertiginous state of 'play'. Use-value is derived from the sensation of joy actualized within the playful ambivalence of the festival. In various ways capital is extracted from this energy expenditure. In order to reform rave's generation of surplus it is consecrated through commodification. The State engages in the struggle over defining value with a market-based logic: it transmutes use-value into exchange-value. It attempts to enclose the spirit of rave in the nightclub and the commercialized music festival. In this way a sort of theological capitalism practices a ritualized process of commodity fetishism and exorcises the spirit of rave.



## Chapter 1: Sound System as Rave Generator

### Rave Culture is Rooted in a Sound System

Julian Henrique's *Sonic Bodies* develops a paradigmatic study of how sound systems *work* to generate and propagate culture. He states that "...a sound system is a unique apparatus - a musical medium, technological instrument and a social and cultural institution."<sup>32</sup> I interpret his text as presenting a process philosophy of dub music. His methodology develops an account of the sound system as an infrastructural node that radiates, or *sounds* culture. While his study of genre centres on dub music and the way in which it helps us understand the broader philosophical relation between the construction of knowledge and the transmissions of aural culture, my dissertation cites this approach as influencing my methodology in terms producing a document on cultural formations that cultivate an aesthetic through the medium of sound. As a scholarly report it hopes to contribute to accounting for the influence of dub sound systems on contemporary electronica. As the alienating aspects of electronic music become increasingly commodified for mass consumption, its history tends to be rewritten along a Eurocentric 'avant-garde' axis. Michael Veal articulates the problem of narrating history in such a manner in his text "Dub: Soundscapes & Shattered Songs in Jamaican Reggae". Veal develops a thread similar to Henrique's, documenting the methods by which psychoacoustic effects achieved through audio engineering techniques specific to the production dub music. The importance of situating dub

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<sup>32</sup>. Julian Henrique, *Sonic Bodies: Reggae Sound Systems, Performance Techniques, and Ways of Knowing*, (New York: Continuum, 2011), 3

music technologies as paradigmatic for any citations of contemporary music production is stressed by Veal through the pertinent lens of political economy.

Instead of being recognized as an important and generative moment in the history of popular music, dub runs the risk of becoming a mere footnote to those musical movements built upon its innovations. Timothy Taylor, for examples, warns that although contemporary "electronica" has strong antecedents in black dance music, historical writings tend to construct its history as based in the Western tradition of experimental/electronic music."<sup>33</sup>

It is thus important to carefully cite the historic antecedents of the culture examined in this dissertation in order to ward against a forgetting of origins associated with acts of cultural appropriation. In order to do so, the following pages chart the paradigmatic significance of dub music production techniques on an emergent rave culture. I accomplish this through considering the confluence of audio production and networked event organizing derived from dub sound systems. This sociotechnical relation is essential to the emergent generation of rave sound systems appear in the United Kingdom beginning in the late 1980s. In subsequent chapters I turn to a discussion of Spiral Tribe, a rave sound system formed in the United Kingdom who are held responsible for organizing a rave that results in the criminalization of the spectacle. Although culturally quite different it is clear that the tools and technologies developed by dub sound systems are paradigmatic to the rave sound systems that spread throughout the industrialized world.

In documenting this process I link the development of sound systems to the skilled labour of the Hedley Jones who manufactures some of the industrialized world's first sound systems and develops techniques that are foundational to the way in which bass frequencies are recorded and reproduced. Jones developed his knowledge of audio technologies during the time he spent as a member of the British Royal Air Force as a radio operator. Upon retiring he received his pension

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<sup>33</sup>. Michael Veal, *Dub: Soundscapes & Shattered Songs in Jamaican Reggae*. (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2007), 92

and returned to Jamaica, deploying the skills he acquired that ushered in the creation of a new cultural formation. Through tracing the association of low-frequency response from dub sound systems to rave it becomes clear that rave is linked genealogically to dub music. Its roots, or better yet its network of cables, can be followed to their source in the performance techniques and organizational strategies proper to the legacy of sound system assembly pioneered by Jamaican reggae music and its incipient dub sound system culture. The cables that inevitably entwine and entangle amongst each other network the infrastructure together and generate a cultural milieu. The visible presence of these cable snakes is useful not only in diagramming how the 'signal flow' of various machines form interactive circuits. By tracing the cables, we also trace the paths walked by the people who laid them in such a way and with particular intentionality. The significance of identifying common practices that become mythologized traditions of sound system assembly are twinned the significance of the available range of artistic creativity within structures of tradition. These creative choices mediate variations in artistry, craftwork, and artisanal actions that shape the idiosyncratic formation of genres.

Aspects of dub music's sociotechnical acculturation are essential to its mediation by the force of electrically powered sound systems. Through tuning sound rigs to reinforce low-frequency response, dub sound systems are paradigmatic to all forms of dance music that come after it. In the case of rave this is especially obvious: No sub? No party. Low-Frequency response is essential to rave's affectivity. The institutionalization of the cultural formation is locatable within the sturdy infrastructure that, once networked, radiates its aesthetic. The proliferating subsequence of dance music genres cite-as-repetition an attention to culture's location within bass frequencies that are foundational to electronic music. These genres are formed through their distinct approaches to producing rhythmic groove and their repetition generates the consistency

that forms the plateau, in this case a dance floor, upon which the difference defined in terms of genre, style or scene appears. Any discussion of contemporary dance music or 'sonic cultures' producing musical compositions emphasizing low-frequency response and bass tonality benefit greatly by dedicating attention to the logic underpinning the particularity of the infrastructure that houses and scaffolds sound's metaphysics.

In the early 1950s radio infrastructure proliferates across the island of Jamaica. Locals source parts used to amplify audio and construct public address stations. These sites offer publicly accessible social space; generate commercial activity in the form of food and beverage sales and foster communal relations amongst the attendees. In order to improve the presentation of recorded music, engineers develop systems of audio routing designed especially for the amplification and enhancement of musical audio playback that differs from the techniques used to mix live instrumentation. The ability of these systems to enhance the fidelity of a recorded audio source offered a different mode of listening than conventional radio broadcast stations and emerged as a desirable medium for socializing. Through the craftwork associated with audio engineering, technicians develop strategies for imparting distinct sonic signatures on the audio in order to differentiate themselves from other sound systems. This transformation in audio technology can be traced to the work of Hedley Jones, a technician who manufactured and assembled Jamaica's first sound systems. In an interview he describes the effect that improving public address (PA) technologies has on audio mixing equipment, techniques of sound system reinforcement and the atmosphere of the event itself.

These popular dance halls that had in the pre-war and early war years accommodated the big bands providing live dance music for common folk, now featured what were commonly called "sound systems"<sup>3</sup> - a Tom Wong designation. The sound system operators mentioned above used RCA PA systems with very limited audio range, as they were made for voice reproduction and their output mostly was with steel re-entrant horns as speakers. Where there existed a cone speaker, it was a small unit in a no-vent wooden enclosure hung from any convenient structure. The operators mentioned above depended on me to service their equipment. I made improvements where possible, but was limited by the original purpose of the equipment plus the speaker limitation. Except to point out these drawbacks, I made no attempt to sell to

them ideas that perhaps they could ill afford...With my record sales department in place, I designed and built a high fidelity audio amplifier using my newly acquired electronic technology. Equipped with what I presumed to be the best recorded sound reproducer any where, I set out on a Saturday night in mid-1947 to demonstrate my thunder. I started to play some Perez Prado recordings. A crowd gathered, and from the crowd emerged two streetside dancers. They called themselves "Pam-Pam" and "Chicken". Little did I realise that Tom Wong's sound was contracted to perform at the Jubilee Tile Gardens, almost opposite my business place. Tom's puny sound with his re-entrant steel horns was no competition for my bass reflex baffles, mid-range speakers and high-range tweeters. His dance, in Jamaican parlance, flopped. The following Monday morning, I was in for a surprise, as Tom paid me a visit, complete with cash down for one of my amplifiers. Within two weeks his system was transformed with a Jones amplifier and two bass reflex speaker baffles loaded with twelve-inch heavy-duty Celestian speakers. The true Jamaican sound system was born, and scratchy recorded noises receded into oblivion forever.<sup>34</sup>

Jones introduces several critical improvements to the design of public address systems. He notes in particular the importance of utilizing a different geometric arrangement: the conical shape instead of horns. This shift in form produced a flatter (more even) frequency response and a more transparent amplification of the audio source in comparison to the horn shape popularized by the gramophone, which amplified higher frequencies with a greater intensity than lower frequency. In this way Jones' innovation improves the acoustics of sound reinforcement technologies. Recognizing that portions of the recorded audio are being obscured by sound system design based on radio broadcast units he develops a sound system tuned to broaden the amplification of the frequency spectrum beyond focusing especially on the waveband associated with the human voice.

These changes improved the fidelity of the audio signal. This fidelity is experienced audibly as reducing the volume of noise present in the signal chain. Although noise is intrinsic to audio signals that are amplified electronically, reducing the noise floor vastly improves musical listening experience by presenting a clearer audio signal. Minimizing noise and static opens up space (what is called 'headroom' in the audio channel) that is then claimed by the subtleties of musical tonality and timbre. In the context of more instrumental music it is these subtleties that

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<sup>34</sup>. Hedley Jones, "The Jones High Fidelity Audio Power Amplifier of 1947." *Caribbean Quarterly* 56 (4) 2010: 10

'sing'. In doing so the tradition of listening most attentively to the frequency spectrum associated with the human voice's harmonic content is de-centred.

The proliferation of these sound systems gave audiences and artists with a new medium of musical experience. An important feature of these sound systems is the way in which they develop modes of enhancing low-frequency response, which is sound occurring at a low-frequency threshold that straddles what is considered the normal range for a human to hear. This infrasound is experienced more as an application of pressure onto the body than it is harmonic tone. Through distributing the audio signal's wavebands into discrete channels that are fed into loudspeakers, infrasound is given both a slight harmonic tonality that mixes with the pressure its sound waves apply onto the human body. The techniques associated with working with this range of the frequency spectrum are crafted in relation to the development of dub music. It is from this style of audio production, recording and playback dedicated to the forceful clarity of low-frequency response that a nascent rave phenomenon is emerges from. Dedicating loud speakers to the amplification of bass and sub-bass frequencies (between 20-80hz) allows for them to take on a more prominent role in the narrative structure of music. From dub's attention to the previously inaudible depths of the frequency spectrum emerges what is described as the materialism of bass|base culture. In this regard Steve Goodman notes that, "[w]hat makes these Afro-diasporic music cultures key here, aside from their content as music, is that they generate bass ecologies within underdeveloped zones of megalopian systems. As such, they have cultivated, with Jamaican sound system culture as the prototype or abstract machine, a diagram of affective mobilization with bass materialist foundation."<sup>35</sup> In terms of rave, these innovations to low-frequency response that are prototyped by Jamaican dub sound systems develop

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<sup>35</sup>. Steve Goodman, *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect and the Ecology of Fear*, (MIT Press, 2009), 175

paradigmatic techniques for designing a bass drum's sonic aesthetic. This bass drum is responsible for producing the pulsating thump that defines a composition's time signature and consequently provides a framework within which different groove patterns are established.<sup>36</sup> The bass drum is critical to all forms of dance music. This idea is demonstrated by the fact that various drum machines become revered objects, canonized and mythologized by artists for producing hypnotic rhythms sculpted out of low-frequency sounds.<sup>37</sup> Much of the mythology surrounding rave culture is derived from the association between the pulsation of the bass drum and pulsation of the human heart.<sup>38</sup> This is present in discourses on the bass drum generating rhythmic patterns that develop a plane of consistency in synergy with a heart as it beats to the tempo of various stages of excitement.<sup>39</sup>

Henrique's focus on the sound system as a cultural milieu also helps situate the competition for cultural capital that occurs as new forms of artistry emerge and are absorbed by a market economy's professionalization and commercialization of such technologies and techniques. In this way roles such as performer, spectator, engineer and technician and the technological apparatuses are discussed in relation to their effect on the proliferation of a cultural aesthetic and associated professional artistry. The success of a sound system is defined by its ability to mobilize and assemble festive events. Mobilization depends on its crew's technical knowledge. Consequently, passing this technical knowledge contributes to the proliferation of genres that are in one way or another finely tuned to low-frequency response as foundational to

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<sup>36</sup>. Phillip Tagg, "From Refrain to Rave: The Decline of Figure and the Rise of Ground." *Popular Music* 13 (2) 1994: 214.

<sup>37</sup>. A broken Roland TR-909 owned by Moby is for sale with a list price of CAD \$5,725.67

<sup>38</sup>. Martin Zebracki, "Embodied Techno-Space: An Auto-Ethnography on Affective Citizenship in the Techno Electronic Dance Music Scene." *Emotion, Space and Society* (20) 2016: 116

<sup>39</sup>. Trammachi, Des, "Entheogenic dance ecstasis: cross-cultural contexts". In *Rave Culture and Religion* edited by Graham St John Rave. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 137

artistic practice.<sup>40</sup> That rave is rooted to this history of bass culture is identified by Henrique in his description of the musical genres most directly affected by the innovation of sound system technologies.

The sound system crew member's expertise and skilled techniques for playing the set have certainly contributed to Reggae's international success, as well as its influence on many other music genres. These techniques have been the foundation for a host of musical genres from Hip Hop, to Techno and Grime. Jamaica is arguably the source of black power. In music, this was initiated with King Tubby's innovative dub techniques, anticipating sampling and being felt across pop and avant-garde music, as well as Big Youth's "toasting" pioneering Rap in the 1980's. In addition, the Jamaican musical influence has been felt internationally in Hip Hop, Jungle, Drum & Bass, Garage and currently Grime and Dubstep. As an instrument for enjoying music, sound systems have also shaped DJ performance technique, the studio practices of versioning and re-mixing as well as the pleasures of listening in Raves, Clubs and Carnivals.<sup>41</sup>

Situating performance techniques as an important factor in driving (mediating) the cultural force of sound systems, Henrique explores the history of Jamaica's sound systems through emphasizing the materialist and corporeal aspects of sound's metaphysics that are experienced sonically and realized within embodied cultural practices which are principally aural and musical. Such an approach usefully mediates the dualism of form and matter, a dichotomy that is increasingly being rendered problematic by scholarly approaches that blur boundaries between subjects and objects.<sup>42</sup> This give way to a focus upon the *quasi* status of intermingling human subjects and technical objects established through the human interfacing with particular instruments, such as the mixing desk, in order to hear, feel predict, respond and control their effect on the sound source. Such an approach helps inform Bruno Latour's notion that any concept of the technical is one that is necessarily social as well. He defines this networked relation through his idea that, "technology is society made durable."<sup>43</sup> In this light it is unsurprising that the technical processes of manufacturing a sound system in turn generate a

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<sup>40</sup>. Goodman, *Sonic Warfare*, 49

<sup>41</sup>. Henrique, *Sonic Bodies*, 6

<sup>42</sup>. Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*. Translated by Catherine Porter. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 51

<sup>43</sup>. Bruno Latour, "Technology Is Society Made Durable." *The Sociological Review* 38 (1) 1990:104



social and communal culture that surrounds and permeates the infrastructure. In this way sound system technologies generate the enduring social relations informed by musical genre.

Audio engineering techniques such as the live mixing of audio sources and the application of audio effects such as reverb to recorded audio contributed to the innovation and development of sound engineering in general. In doing so both the artist who produces music and the technicians who operate the sound system through curating and mixing audio and visual sources exist within a relational network that is obscured by theories that attempt to categorize social life on the assumption of a de-facto hierarchical structures of influence. Thus, the sound system itself becomes an important site of sociotechnical analysis. This flattened and horizontal approach aides in developing a discourse on contemporary DJ techniques and technologies by mediating modernism's subject|object divide. As we will see the humanism of the DJ, understood as the uniqueness of 'talent' frequently disappears or dissociates into the broader apparatus of the sound system's infrastructure. In generating such an argument, it is prudent to recognize that the strategies for mixing and effecting pre-recorded audio sources are first pioneered by dub and reggae sound systems. This history helps trace how the DJ, now a highly visible, individualized and privileged category of artist, emerges from a history that coincides with the broader commercialization of artistic practice defined as 'popular culture'. I have thus far examined how specific techniques first developed by these dub sound systems are paradigmatic to the rave sound systems that follow them. This develops a link between cultural formations and technical objects that is dependent on a describing how a sound system is assembled and attuned to the particular aesthetics and practices of the culture it emits.

Christopher Partridge's text "Dub in Babylon" aptly charts the struggle of black musicianship appearing as a mode of storytelling narrating the trauma of the Atlantic slave-trade,

then as a cultural practice of survival as the culture spreads into one of the centres of the colonial world: London, England<sup>44</sup>. Partridge's text sets the terms of this struggle clearly: dub, as an expression of minority religious beliefs, struggles to survive and maintain its ethos as a minority force within the civilizational might of Babylon. In the context of dub's vernacular, Babylon refers to the corruption of artwork and disintegration of community occurring within the dominant political paradigm of commercialization. In this way dub music narrates a story which compels one to escape from this landscape and build a new social reality. Such themes of escaping into the ethereality of a new, unknown world are delivered through the way in which reverb symbolizes both the past and present. With the sound echoing voices from the past (words spoken by figures such as Haile Selassie, an icon of Rastafarianism) that are chopped, spliced and repeated in order to communicate that messages from history also compel populations to shape futures in a reimagining of the past. Partridge's work situates the way in which Afrofuturism plays a critical role in developing popular music culture. In the context of rave, Detroit techno is itself modelled on similarly futurist sentiments and U.K artists such as A Guy Called Gerald continue describing their artwork as paying homage to this tradition of Afroliberation. Partridge as well pays acute attention to the sound system as the base|bass of cultural formation. Similar to the ideas advanced by Henrique, Partridge situates the sound system as an economic, social, and cultural engine. Through facilitating social networking and leisure time, artists generated capital which they invested in producing artwork. This feedback-loop allowed for sound systems to proliferate rapidly and the skills they acquired in audio engineering proved to be extremely marketable in the broader recording industry. Of most interest to the scope of this dissertation is Partridge's linking of the magico-religious to the sound

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44. Christopher Partridge, *Dub in Babylon*, (Sheffield, Equinox Publishing, 2010), 25

system machine. I trace this thread to the development of techno music which presented similar ideas regarding liberation through appropriating and transforming tools.

### The Quasi-Objectivity of Rave Media's Cyborg

The sound system generates the culture known as rave. The following section informs this process by attending to the sociocultural function of spirituality and religion and the way in which they mythologize culture. These concepts correlate to the sound system's transmission of sociotechnical mediation. An important dimension of research produced on the topic of rave is relativistic subjectivity of phenomenological experience. The scholarly fields of religious studies, ritual experience, technoculture, transhumanism, and ethnography produce rave's analytics. These approaches share a discourse on concepts of the transcendental that are mediated through embodiment. In this way the sound system acts as the agent that effects the bodies touched by its sound waves and who interpret the vibrations as music. The human relation to technical objects produces a mythologizing of transcendental exteriority: bodies go *raving* and briefly dissociate from normalized sense of self.

Hillegonda Rietveld is a paradigmatic figure in constructing a discourse on the spirit of rave. She describes rave as a, "spiritual rite of the post-industrial cyborg."<sup>45</sup> Elsewhere she keenly theorizes the way in which house music mimics the transcendental narratives of rapture narrated by gospel music's fervent religious proselytizing.<sup>46</sup> For these reasons Rietveld's work is canonical to the study of rave culture and her writings appear in one of the first scholarly

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<sup>45</sup>. Hillegonda Rietveld, "Ephemeral Spirt: Sacrificial Cyborg and Communal Soul". In *Rave Culture and Religion*, edited by Graham St. John, (London: Routledge, 2003), 47

<sup>46</sup>. Rietveld, *Ephemeral Spirt*, 56

publications on the topic. A consistent theme in her work addresses the concept of *spirit* as the 'ephemeral' sign that accounts for the way in which technology mediates subject and object.<sup>47</sup> In the context of this dissertation I locate this spirit within the sociocultural concepts that inform the sound system's radiating sound waves that distribute its cultural aesthetic. Rietveld's interest in the spirit of rave as mediating the dualism of subject-object appears in an essay she publishes entitled "*Living the Dream*".<sup>48</sup> 'Living the dream' is of course an idiomatic reference to the fantasy of living a life defined by the imagination's endless limits. Her essay playfully explores rave culture's polyphonic modalities of symbolizing a lived dream. This dream is locatable in both the imaginary landscapes of rave's music and the way in which these fantasies are territorialized in the aestheticized representations of specific events and their mythological narrativizing of freedom's ethereality. These discourses generate sociocultural and economic capital through the methods of entrepreneurial capitalism that are used to design and disseminate codes of fashion and lifestyle practice that symbolize rave's fantasy of escape.<sup>49</sup> Escapism is a concept critical to the metaphysics of rave and substantiated through deconstructing language's privileged role in the articulation of politics. This flight from language is noted by Bernd Herzogenrath who argues that, "[t]echno's non signifying strategy, its deterritorialization of both the voice and representation machines, comes close to such a creative resistance."<sup>50</sup> As I will demonstrate in a later chapter, the polyphony of resistance is proper to the way in which the joy of festival and the anger of protest appear simultaneously within carnivalesque spaces.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>. Rietveld, *Ephemeral Spirt*, 56

<sup>48</sup>. Hillegonda Rietveld, "Living the Dream" In *Rave Off: Politics and Deviance in Contemporary Youth Culture*, edited by Steve Readhead. (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1993), 41

<sup>49</sup>. Rietveld, *Living the Dream*, 61

<sup>50</sup>. Bernd Herzogenrath, *An American Body Politic: A Deleuzian Approach*, (Lebanon: Dartmouth College Press, 2010), 239

<sup>51</sup>. Gilbert and Pearson, *Discographies*, 162

Rietveld is appropriately cautious of escapism's desires because rave's historic conditions demonstrate a vagueness regarding what is being emancipated. She urges that this escapism should be first interrogated for traces of fascistic tendencies intrinsic to encoding masculinist gender norms. This impulse is to be negotiated in terms of mapping emancipation through distinguishing the shared experience of communal desubjectification from its relation to the festival's ancient tradition of frenzied self-annihilation. In this regard Rietveld notes,

There seems to be a self-annihilating urge amongst contemporary men, an identity crisis, which requires an intense and, for some, often repeated rite of passage, an experience of self-destruction and redefinition as sacrificial cyborg. This may not be strategically beneficial for those who are currently engaged in defining their embodied selves and who could gain more from a sense of communal soul.<sup>52</sup>

Here Rietveld's argument finds purchase with canonical anthropological work on the festival which, rather than being a vehicle of utopian political emancipation, is instead a troubling paradox of destruction's creativity. In this regard Roger Caillois seminal work on the festival notes,

In festivals . . . violence remained accidental; merely adding to the fertilising effervescence from which it sprang through excessive vitality and which it then raised to a feverish pitch...Orgy and carnage, festival and war: two symmetrical phenomena that are both violent. They perform the same supreme function in two different contexts and hence share a similar capacity to fascinate – the first attracts and the second terrifies – depending whether the crisis is meant to fertilise or destroy, welcome or repulse. The path leading from festival to war merges with the evolution of technical progress and political organisation.<sup>53</sup>

In distinguishing communal desubjectification's androgyny from the total war of humanism's self-annihilation through a gender-based, 'evolution of technical progress and political organization', Rietveld's work can be read as a cautious awareness of the 'accidental' violence intrinsic to festive space. This is well situated in the context of rave through the tragedy of accidental overdose that appears in relation to the 'feverish pitch' of a festive event which clouds judgment and destabilizes humanist subjectivity defined in relation to the category of reason. Rietveld remains cautiously optimistic however that 'communal soul' may be generated through

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<sup>52</sup>. Rietveld, *Ephemeral Spirit*, 47

<sup>53</sup>. Roger Caillois, *Man and the Sacred*. Translated by Meyer Barash. (The Free Press, 2001), 297

rave's potential to dissociate human bodies governance by heteronormative biopolitical technologies.

In the context of rave this occurs through the way in which sound systems have an affective potential to render the futurism of cyborg androgyny sensible. This is accomplished through the aesthetics of hybridizing subject-object dualism and breaking down the political boundaries of self/other. It is the metaphor of the cyborg who mediates this process. Neither wholly organic nor wholly technical the cyborg is a metaphor for the post-human constructs that transgress binary categorization and in doing so and reveals their porousness. Such border creatures are bridged beings, interfaced through networked interactivity. The point here, as Rietveld notes, is to caution rave's annihilation of the human body's subjectivity at the altar of an machine god's object orientation. She does so by documenting these events in terms of their potential to resolve conflict in the social world derived from modernism's binary structuring of self vs. other. This is perhaps made possible by the way in which a sound system generates space in which the crowd collectively experiences a futurist potentiality to embody concepts of the cyborg's androgynous apparition. I link the potentiality of this appearance to one of rave's peculiar myths: that the social relations generated by the sound system's projection of a dance floor is an asexuality which generates communal networks rather than facilitating sexual interaction.<sup>54</sup> However this is speculative theorizing must be sobered by the reality of alarming statistics regarding sexual violence and abuse that occurs in crowded spaces such as nightclubs and music festivals. Determining the accuracy and efficacy of these quasi-humanist narratives requires paying attention to the way in which particular sound systems deploy an aestheticized

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<sup>54</sup>. Gilbert and Pearson, *Discographies*, 67

appearance as a form of cultural communication regarding the rules, obligations and protection of vulnerable political communities.

Set against the optimism of communitarian desubjectification are moments of tragedy. One such tragedy is escapism's realization of the death drive which becomes the body without organs. In Rietveld's text this is structured by the identity crisis of the male gaze's vision of its impending obsolescence through the loss of authority over the technological apparatuses that surround it. She argues that the, "...man-machine is a subject-object relationship, in which the machine plays a role in the game of (spiritual) seduction. Not only do dancers give themselves up to the machine metaphors of the music; there is also a self-absorbed masculine pleasure in taking control over this cyborg relationship, as DJs, producers and programmers."<sup>55</sup> This pleasure of self-absorption is tragically linked to the crystallization of subjective identity through intensifying practices of accumulation and consumption. In the context of rave's genealogy one finds excessive consumption to be intrinsic to the modality of festival itself. As van Veen notes, "a raver's relation to masochism: not something that is often talked of in rave culture. In masochism we approach rave's dangerous dance with a sonic fascism, an aural passion for abolition, an obliteration by sound, a sacrifice to the speaker."<sup>56</sup> Such danger results from a crisis of masculinity over its potential obsolescence within an oncoming age of the cyborg. This anxiety codes algorithmic frenzy and distributes it through the sound system.<sup>57</sup> The affectivity of sonic force, what Henrique refers to as "sonic dominance", disintegrates the privatized grandeur

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<sup>55</sup>. Rietveld, *Ephemeral Spirit*, 55

<sup>56</sup>. tobias c. van Veen, "It's Not A Rave, Officer, It's Performance Art: Art as Defense from the Law and as Offense to Society in the Break-In Era of Rave Culture." Conference Manuscript. (U of Calgary: University Art Association of Canada, 2002), 4

<sup>57</sup>. Although considering the imminent conditions of ecological devastation in the era of the anthropocene it is perhaps better to view the futurity of the cyborg as an event-horizon that is now a lost-future, as the planet will be unable to sustain human industry to the point where such a reality emerges.

of an individuated human as they are defined from the perspective of the male gaze's assumptions of their supposed command and control over the intentionality and directionality of technological augmentations. Rietveld associates this process with the aesthetic of techno music's tempo and the frenzied thresholds that demarcate impulses self-annihilation.<sup>58</sup> She states that the danger of ambivalent technological acceleration and its blurring and liquidating effect is demonstrated by the fact that,

The techno interface offers a precarious liberation to women, it seems, in the form either of androgyny or of a sexual metaphor for technology. A cyborg subject position is a 'body-without-organs' to borrow Deleuze and Guattari's concept...in that it 'amounts to the annihilation of female embodiment before a female-defined corporeality even exists.'<sup>59</sup>

I interpret Rietveld's approach regarding the precariousness of the sound system as vehicle for political emancipation in relation to Bakhtin's theorizing of the ambivalence of popular-festive forms which authorize social reassembly through the novelistic mixing of sacred and profane linguistic categories and embodied representations of cultural practices. In this respect Bakhtin notes that this occurs through the way in which the aesthetics of popular-festive forms play with concepts defined in contradiction to one another (life/death, mind/body, heaven/earth, subject/object) in order to arrive at new conditions of thought through confusing their meaning. Bakhtin states,

Beyond the formal contrast of meanings presented by these interjections, beyond their subjective interplay, there stands the objective ambivalence of being. This objective convergence of contrasting elements is not clearly realized, but is somehow dimly felt by the participants in the festival...This ancient ambivalence is not a dead remnant of the past; it is alive and finds a subjective echo among the participants in the festival precisely because it is objective, even if this objectivity is not completely grasped.<sup>60</sup>

This genealogical relation situates the appearance of rave's apolitics as emancipation through escape into festive. This distinction demarcates the political divisions drawn between the

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<sup>58</sup>. This strongly foreshadows the way in which rave functions as a sign of technocapital's acceleration as theorized by the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit out of Warwick University

<sup>59</sup>. Rietveld, *Ephemeral Spirit*, 55

<sup>60</sup>. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 249



turbulence of festivals and more coherently organized public assemblies defined as protests. Rietveld's cautions attend to the 'beyond' alluded to by Bakhtin because the vertigo of the festival results in consequences that are, 'not clearly realized, but [are] somehow dimly felt by the participants in the festival'. A 'dim' affectivity is locatable in the hazards associated with the turbulence of festivals. Security apparatuses refer to this as the problem of crowd control. This is apparent in Rietveld's noting that rave's spiritual narratives regarding emancipation are easily confused with a "self-annihilating urge."<sup>61</sup> In terms of rave, the specificity of political leanings are demonstrated through the way in which particular sound systems practice culture by establishing norms and rules. Thus, documenting the politics of rave requires attention to the specific sound systems involved and the peculiarity and contingency of the political aesthetic they generate. The imaginary landscapes projected by rave sound systems attend to themes of evasive escapism and often do not conform to traditional definitions of the political. This is consistent with rave's genealogical relation to the festival as a social milieu partially exterior to the social apparatuses that attempt to govern it. Rietveld's work is foundational to later research translating the spirituality of escapist themes into a ritualized performance of rites of passage, during which the subject experiences transition through various thresholds that are defined through the interpretations of work done on rite of passage started by Arnold van Gennep and continued by Victor Turner.

Thus far I have situated rave culture within sound system infrastructure and brought it into an encounter with scholarly meditations on claims to spiritual experience which emerge in response to the affectivity of festivals engendered by sound systems. This method is an interpretation of Bruno Latour's argument regarding the necessity to conceive of technical

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<sup>61</sup>. Rietveld, *Ephemeral Spirit*, 47

objects *in situ* of the social relations informing them. These social relations were documented by Rietveld's discussion of an embodied identity crisis in relation to the technological augmentation of humanist principles. This yields a discourse on spirituality relating to the human interfacing with emerging sound system technologies. Her work foregrounds the way in which this discourse is further refined through the anthropological lens of liminal rites of passage. To continue this association of the social and technical germane to the sound system's status as a quasi-object, I present a cartography of rave that argues that the mediating aspects of a liminal rite of passage are conditions generated through the assembly of a sound system.

### Neoliberalism and Liminal/Liminoid Hybridity

Victor Turner's work on the topic of the *limen* leads him to define it as a physiological response known as "threshold experience" and as a social, geographic, and psychological phenomenon.<sup>62</sup> His work is inspired by Arnold van Gennep's paradigmatic text on the sociology of rites of passage.<sup>63</sup> It has since been developed in relation to social theories in fields such as tourism, travel, leisure, and auto ethnography.<sup>64</sup> From this constellation of themes one can infer that liminality indexes the role that passage, travel, or journeying plays within ritualized practices such as pilgrimages.<sup>65</sup> Subsequent social and cultural anthropology inspired by Turner's work deploy concepts of the liminal in order to explain the phenomenology of rave.<sup>66</sup> Turner

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<sup>62</sup>. Stephen Bigger, "Review Article: Victor Turner, *Liminality and Cultural Performance*." *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, 30 (1) 2009: 2

<sup>63</sup>. Arnold van Gennep, Arnold. 2011. *Rites of Passage*. Translated by Gabrielle Caffee and Monika Vizedom. (University of Chicago Press, 2011), 10

<sup>64</sup>. Johnson, Patricia Claudette. "Writing Liminal Landscapes: The Cosmopolitical Gaze" *Tourism Geographies*, 12 (4) 2010: 505

<sup>65</sup>. Dewi Jaimangal-Jones, Annette Pritchard and Nigel Morgan "Going the distance: locating journey, liminality and rites of passage in dance music experiences", *Leisure Studies* 29 (3) 2010: 253

<sup>66</sup>. Ruth Herbert, "Reconsidering Music and Trance: Cross-cultural Differences and Cross-disciplinary Perspectives", *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 20 (2) 2011: 201

discusses the space and place of the *limen* through the social interaction ritual known as the rite of passage. A tripartite structure of experience is assigned to this rite: separation, transition, and incorporation. Given the vast range of rituals encompassed by this concept, Turner attempts to further distinguish and categorize such passage as flowing through either liminal and liminoid modes of transition. An important critique of Turner's work notes that his desire to firmly divide the liminal from the liminoid does not account for the way in which these categories collapse as a result of the neoliberal hybridization of work-play and the erasure of distinctions between public and private life accomplished by the digitization of culture. Thus, it is important to read Turner in a way that accounts for the fact that the liminal and liminoid both gesture towards the concept of interstitial space that is defined in relation to the experience of various thresholds.

Turner's work helps make sense of the rave's genealogical relation to other festive spectacles and their particular social relations. In the following pages I develop this idea by describing several threshold sites that appear in relation to the assembly of a rave sound system. Framed by Turner's categories of the liminal and liminoid, I work through a concept of interstitial space which describes performative acts, organizing processes, and the experiential unfolding of the festive event known as rave. This method is consistent with approaches linking the experience of liminality to the organizational principles of modern festivals.<sup>67</sup> Some, such as the dance floor or the entrance queue, are marked by their distinct geography. While others, such as the performance technique of the 'track transition', are psychoacoustic phenomena. The liminal/liminoid sites of rave are derived from rites of passage as they adapt to the historic context of industrialized society. Exploring resonance between Turner's theories of the liminal/liminoid and rave helps trace the nascent culture's genealogy.

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<sup>67</sup>. Mike Lucas, "'Nomadic' Organization and the Experience of Journeying: Through Liminal Spaces and Organizing Places." *Culture and Organization* 20 (3) 2014: 196

Turner's theoretical framework for distinguishing between liminal and liminoid appeals to Durkheim's categories of mechanical and organic solidarity. He notes as such that,

Liminal phenomena tend to predominate in tribal and early agrarian societies possessing what Durkheim has called "mechanical solidarity," and dominated by what Henry Maine has called "status." Liminoid phenomena flourish in societies with "organic solidarity," bonded reciprocally by "contractual" relations, and generated by and following the industrial revolution.<sup>68</sup>

Thus, one of the first distinctions drawn between liminal and liminoid is that of historical materialism, with liminal rites of passages predating and prefiguring the social conditions under which the more contemporary liminoid emerges. In Western society, the liminoid tends to occur in reference to the organizational power of industrial capitalism, in specific, the modes available for navigating the contemporary manifestation of concepts of work and leisure. Turner's distinction of the liminal from the liminoid reflects his ideological stake in the larger narrative on sentiments regarding the disenchantment and desacralization of the world through perceived effects of rationalization.<sup>69</sup> Such a process erases obligatory rites of passage (liminal) and replaces them with a commodified form of leisure and group participation (liminoid). Turner's claims are convincing when situated historically, with the concept of the 'liminal rite' referring to social life prior to neoliberalism's hybridization of work and play. The proliferation of commodified objects which are sites of workplay and demonstrative of this hybridity.<sup>70</sup> For post-industrial economics the blending of work and play is paradigmatic of this political economy through the function of increasing portability of computers and workstations, effectively eradicating the possibility of one to fully 'stop working' or 'unplug' from the network. It is an interface for hybridizing stress derived from work and obligation, joy derived from leisure, and tedium derived from boredom. Turner's anthropological method maintains an adamantly Marxian

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<sup>68</sup>. Victor Turner, "Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbolology." *From Ritual to Theatre. The Human Seriousness of Play*, 1974, 84

<sup>69</sup>. Turner, "Liminal to Liminoid", 90

<sup>70</sup>. van Veen, *Technic*, 44

distinction regarding the alienating effect of industrialization and rationalization on work, labour and leisure and the bifurcation of the liminoid and liminal. Attending to such drift Turner notes,

Liminal phenomena tend to be ultimately eufunctional even when seemingly "inversive" for the working of the social structure, ways of making it work without too much friction. Liminoid phenomena, on the other hand, are often parts of social critiques or even revolutionary manifestoes-books, plays, paintings, films, etc, exposing the injustices, inefficiencies, and immoralities of the mainstream economic and political structures and organizations. In complex modern societies both types coexist in a sort of cultural pluralism. But the liminal-found in the activities of churches, sects, and movements, in the initiation rites of clubs, fraternities, masonic orders and other secret societies, etc.-is no longer society-wide. Nor are liminoid phenomena, which tend to be the leisure genres of art, sport, pastimes, games, etc., practiced by and for particular groups, categories, segments, and sectors of large-scale industrial societies of all types. But for most people the liminoid is still felt to be freer than the liminal, a matter of choice not obligation. The liminoid is more like a commodity-indeed, often is a commodity, which one selects and pays for-than the liminal, which elicits loyalty and is bound up with one's membership or desired membership in some highly corporate group. One works at the liminal, one plays with the liminoid. There may be much moral pressure to go to church or synagogue, whereas one queues up at the box office to see a play by Beckett, a performance by Mort Sahl, a Superbowl Game, a symphony concert, or an art exhibition. And if one plays golf, goes yachting, or climbs mountains, one often needs to buy expensive equipment or pay for club membership. Of course, there are also all kinds of "free" liminoid performances and entertainments-Mardi Gras, charivari, home entertainments of various kinds-but these already have something of the stamp of the liminal upon them, and quite often they are the cultural debris of some unforgotten liminal ritual. There are permanent "liminoid" settings and spaces, too-bars, pubs, some cafes, social clubs, etc. But when clubs become exclusivist they tend to generate rites of passage, with the liminal a condition of entrance into the "liminoid" realm.

Organizing a philosophical toolbox that is of utility for discourse on the topic of rave is aided by several of Turner's insights. His identification of social relations engendered by exclusivist clubs as generating rites of passage in the form of admission to the site is particularly salient. These relations inform notions of exclusion, distinction, and elitism that underpin the distribution of cultural capital within electronic dance music. Such themes are explored in depth in the literature on the topic.<sup>71</sup> Similarly the division of compulsory aspects of liminality versus the optionality of a commodified liminoid experience is germane to rave. While not all rave events possess an obligatory passage through a staged admission procedure, whether in the form of an entrance checkpoint guarded by security, or through the commodified transaction of an entrance fee or ticket purchase, it is a consistent tendency within the cultural phenomenon. Discussing these

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<sup>71</sup>. Griffin, Christine Elizabeth, "The Trouble with Class: Researching Youth, Class and Culture beyond the 'Birmingham School.'" *Journal of Youth Studies* 14 (3) 2011: 245

threshold conditions in terms of tendencies and trends rather than the essence of steadfast rules attempts to take into account the multitude forms of festive events that come into actual existence.

From a theoretical perspective, it is critical to maintain that Turner historically distinguishes the liminal and the liminoid while also acknowledging that in the contemporary era they both belong to a common category: the interstitial space of threshold experience. In this section the cultural pluralism of liminal/liminoid sites is contextualized through situating several experiences common to a rave event within liminal/liminoid categorization. Such an approach maintains a consistent overarching theme of theorizing rave as a threshold experience made apparent within respective liminal and liminoid sites. Thus, the value I see in working with Turner's ideas in reference to the task at hand is preserving a notion of multiplicity that resists overt determinism by structure when dealing with social relations. In attending to the sound system, Turner's work is useful for charting how humanist concepts of beauty and art are used to mythologize technology. This process of mythologizing attends to rave's genealogy by identifying the architecture it shares with the topologies of other popular-festive forms.

### Mediating Thresholds

The social aspects of rave sound systems are aided by examining the concept of liminality because its semiotics attend to various threshold experiences and the way in which they are made sacred in the form of a rite of passage.<sup>72</sup> These rites of passage unfold at the base of the sound system, mythologizing and mystifying its material infrastructure. In the following pages I associate this rite of passage with sociotechnical dimensions of sound system assembly.

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<sup>72</sup>. Jaimangal-Jones et al, "Going the Distance: Locating Journey, Liminality and Rites of Passage in Dance Music Experiences.", 253

This concept of the social milieu denotes the temporal stabilization of culture appearing as a shared spirit of rave (bodies at play). Such experiences mediate binaries of subject-object, human-nonhuman, and social-technical. My approach here entangles questions of how artwork is assigned value in relation to human labour, critiques of aesthetic judgment, processes of system building, and the technical functions of tools. It attends to what Latour refers to as symmetry between humans and non-humans.<sup>73</sup>

In the following pages I articulate sound system assembly as the process essential to materializing rave culture. Situating rave within the architecture of the sound system as technical object and site of social relations is useful for several reasons. One is its focus on the co-dependence and interrelation of materials and ideals necessary to the event's unfolding. This is defined as the principles for organizing rave through techniques of sound system assembly. The technical dimensions of the sound system are mystified and mythologized by conceptual narratives regarding ecstatic transcendence and associated with the liminal rite of passage. This passage charts the human's journey into narratives articulated through artistic performance and the embodied by the corporeality of dance that enact the sacredness of ritualized practices. This generation of electronic carnival is judged by the State as an immoral lifestyle practice. Consequently, it is rendered subject to a sovereign ban. This may be read in multiple ways. First consider virtue and vice in an 'amoral' sense. In this light, the sovereign act of censoring rave illuminates the State as an Apollonian force of virtue, tightening its restraint on cultural expression that betray political ethics. Set against this force is rave's vertigo, belonging to a

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<sup>73</sup>. Bruno Latour, "On technical mediation." *Common Knowledge* 3 (2) 1994: 53

genealogy of Dionysian art forms extolling vice: the loosening of established regulations of social order.<sup>74</sup>

This chapter plucks and strums the strings of both idealist and materialist philosophy in order to explore their tensile and harmonizing resonance. I meditate upon the technological agency of materials used in the networking of a sound system. It is thus suggested that a discussion of rave requires articulating the aspects foundational to infrastructure. I use the term infrastructure to gesture towards the way in which concepts of community and communal relations occupy the imaginary register and how these spaces are materialized through techniques of sound system assembly. The organization of rave is thus its distribution through the sonic affectivity of a sound system. What is theorized in particular are ethical presuppositions indicated by the State's censoring and regulation of the spectacle's appearance. The legislating of rave as a deviant social formation is meticulously documented and thus may be traced through to an antagonistic relation to paternalist governmentality. A move critical to authorizing the criminalization of the spectacle begins by denying that representations of the cultural practice the are forms of legitimate artwork.<sup>75</sup> This situates a struggle regarding morality, ethics and the role of the State in mediating culture and social interaction. I follow this tension along the sound system's networked architecture. This denotes the mediation of human subject with technical object which describe the processes of sociocultural formation.<sup>76</sup> Working through this networked association attends to the documents produced by the legislative body which appeal to the reasonableness and rationalism of censoring forms of festive delirium. It is this festive site's

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<sup>74</sup>. John I. Fitzgerald, "An Assemblage of Desire, Drugs and Techno." *Angelaki - Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 3 (2) 1998: 43

<sup>75</sup>. Ramzy Alwakeel, "The Aesthetics of Protest in UK Rave." *Dancecult* 1 (2) 2010: 53

<sup>76</sup>. George Revill, "Music and the Politics of Sound: Nationalism, Citizenship, and Auditory Space." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* (2000), 601



emergence from a sound system where spectators encounter the cognitive dissonance of liminal rites of passage.

### Sound Systems and Threshold Experience

I have thus far foregrounded a point of entrance for speculative theorizing regarding the organizing principle for raving bodies by presenting the sound system as infrastructure critical to the social phenomena. Situating rave sound systems as generating thresholds for liminal rites of passage is supported by reflecting upon the semiotics associated with the subjective narratives of embodied experience. The sign rave clearly marks a crossing of boundaries drawn between reason and unreason.<sup>77</sup> To think of rave in the context of the liminal 'betwixt and between' is logically proper to the name itself. Rave signifies the liminality of space interstitial to concepts of reason|order and unreason|disorder. It is often used as a dynamic verb: someone *raves*. This dynamism implies the mediation between the calm complacency of reason and the frenetic rambling of unreason. Rave is thus a verb indicating the subjectivism of phase-shifting through various states of mind. This in-between space, the "betwixt and between" as Victor Turner treats poetically, is alienating and transitory.<sup>78</sup> The acoustics of such space also resonate with the alienation intrinsic to Latour's notion that quasi-objects are neither wholly natural nor wholly social. In the context of rave this geography is referenced in the strangeness of soundscapes punctuated by rhythmic vibrations effecting the imaginary.<sup>79</sup> The subject of liminal transition speaks to a relation with time attending to the way in which passing through thresholds addresses

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<sup>77</sup>. Fitzgerald, "An assemblage of desire, drugs and techno", 45

<sup>78</sup>. Turner, "Liminal to Liminoid", 90

<sup>79</sup>. Herzogenrath, *An American Body Politic: A Deleuzian Approach*, 250

concepts of the sacred.<sup>80</sup> What is routinely defined as sacred in these conditions are the temporal dimensions of transit, passage, and voyage associated with a spiritual journey. This is 'being' as a revenant, in the sense of something that 'comes and goes', that Derrida alludes to as part of metaphysics of haunting.<sup>81</sup> Within the discourse of Religious Studies, the 'betwixt and between' place is often identified as the place of sacred experience. In the context of rave sound systems, this experience is embodied within the performed gestures of dance that narrate a discourse on the imagined ideals of escaping the world and passing through carnivalesque geography.<sup>82</sup> The experience of transition, threshold, or 'limen' that is first assembled within an environment and then performed at the base of an operating (transmitting) sound system produced by the social dimension of rave sound system technologies. To explore this idea, several liminal sites that occur within a rave event are situated as indicators of system architecture: an experience of a liminal rite of passage and corollary techniques of social organization and artistic performance. The substantial body of speculative literature appealing to the supposed mythic quality of rave's environmental transmissions, distributing infectious sensations of 'vibe' or 'atmosphere' seemingly indicate this.<sup>83</sup> These terms collectively signify intense affects and are linked to emotions such as euphoria, energy, joy, excitement, or ecstasy.<sup>84</sup>

Situating rave within discourse on the concept of liminality is a canonical theme made apparent by a large body of literature on the topic appealing to such a distinction.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>. Bigger, "Rites of Passage", 10

<sup>81</sup>. Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, (New York: Routledge, 1994), 25

<sup>82</sup>. David Matsinhe, "Nightlife, Civilizing Process, and Multiculturalism in Canada." *Space and Culture* 12 (1) 2009: 117

<sup>83</sup>. Graham St John "Aliens Are Us: Cosmic Liminality, Remixticism, and *Alienation* in Psytrance" (2013) *The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 25: 2, Summer 2013

<sup>84</sup>. Alexander Sasho Lambevski, "Bodies, Schizo Vibes and Hallucinatory Desires - Sexualities in Movement." *Sexualities* 8 (5) 2005: 570

<sup>85</sup>. Marlies de Groot and Hilje van der Horst "Indian Youth in Goa: Scripted Performances of 'True Selves' *Tourism Geographies* 16 (2) 2014: 303

Through exploring techniques of sound system assembly and audio engineering in the context of rave, the functional performance of transitioning between tracks is offered as an effective technology that dialogues with the liminal thresholds rave sound systems generate. This approach is inspired by a meditation on Morgan Gerard's essay entitled, "*Selecting Ritual DJs, dancers and liminality in underground dance music*". Within Gerard presents an ethnographic methodology defines the way in which liminal experience shared by participants within the now-defunct Turbo nightclub in Toronto, Canada. Gerard describes several DJ performance techniques as an allegory that narrates a subject's experiencing liminal space and the distribution of culture via an aural medium. In the following pages, I lend further support to this approach by incorporating this method with the discourse I have thus far produced on rave's roots in the technique of sound system assembly. In particular an analysis of the DJ performance techniques that Gerard attributes to the production of liminality is situated within the tripartite systemization of rites of passage, in which the subject moves procedurally through separation, transition and incorporation. I take this analysis further by examining the performance techniques in relation to the specificity of the technical objects that enable them. While this transition is distinct from a material geography, in that the bodies do not necessarily travel vast spatial distance, it unfolds instead within the psychic register as a form of imaginary landscape that is traversed by the psyche.

### The Rite of Passage: Separation, Transition, Incorporation

Turner provides a framework for further theorizing how rites of passage produce liminal experience when subject bodies are placed in a transitional phase state. This approach helps to render the affectivity rave sound systems through categorizing the shared and common

experiences embodied through participating within the temporality delineated by the festive atmosphere. This relation is unpacked further in the following section through addressing how particular phases of the rite of passage theorem are informative of experiences typical of rave. In the context of rave, the period of separation, transition, incorporation is addressed through attending to several liminal sites: the process of admission, the dance floor, and the technique of audio transitions. Similarly, the period of transition is situated as a moment held sacred by the way in which artistic performance affects the crowd through techniques augmenting and narrating a liminal experience. In the context of rave, incorporation is situated in terms of crowd psychology and techniques for blending and mixing audio. Here, in particular, Julian Henrique's discussion of performance techniques intrinsic to the development and proliferation of culture through sound system assemblage finds purchase in the contemporary mythologizing of the DJ, producer and sound engineer as artist.<sup>86</sup>

#### Separation

"The first phase is separation, the phase which clearly demarcates sacred space and time from profane or secular space and time (it is more than just a matter of entering a temple-there must be in addition a rite which changes the quality of time also, or constructs a cultural realm which is defined as "out of time," that is, beyond or outside the time which measures secular processes and routines). It includes symbolic behavior-especially symbols of reversal or inversion of secular things, relationships, and processes-which represents the detachment of the ritual subjects (novices, candidates, neophytes, or "initians") from their previous social statuses. In the case of members of a society, it involves collectively moving from all that is socially and culturally involved in an agricultural season, or from a period of peace as against one of war, from plague to community health, from a previous sociocultural state or condition, to a new state or condition, a new turn of the seasonal wheel.

#### Transition

During the intervening phase of transition, called by van Gennep "margin" or "limen" (meaning "threshold" in Latin), the ritual subjects pass through a period and area of ambiguity, a sort of social limbo which has few (though sometimes these are most crucial) of the attributes of either the preceding or subsequent profane social statuses or cultural states. We will look at this liminal phase much more closely later.

#### Incorporation

The third phase, called by van Gennep "re-aggregation" or "incorporation," includes symbolic phenomena and actions which represent the return of the subjects to their new, relatively stable, well-defined position in

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<sup>86</sup>. Henrique, *Sonic Bodies*, 65

the total society. For those undergoing lifecycle ritual this usually represents an enhanced status, a stage further along life's culturally prefabricated road. For those taking part in a calendrical or seasonal ritual, no change in status may be involved, but they have been ritually prepared for a whole series of changes in the nature of the cultural and ecological activities to be undertaken and of the relationships they will then have with others-all these holding good for a specific quadrant of the annual productive cycle.

Bodies move through three phase states. First, they are separated from pre-existing social grouping or category; this prepares them to undergo interstitial transition before becoming reincorporated. Although these phases shift in a procedurally linear form, i.e., separation precedes transition and transition precedes incorporation, the *limen* is atmospheric and emergent, appearing within scattered sites of variable temporal scale. In attempting to clarify this point, a few of these sites will be examined below in terms of their relation to these events of phase shift that occur within the festive temporality of rave. Presenting rave as a site for experiencing thresholds of intensity turns to several aspects demonstrative of the tripartite structure of a rite of passage. Rave contextualizes this rite of passage through the way in which bodies gather and interact with one another in relation to the performing sound system and, as well, in ways intrinsic to performance technique itself. An overarching signification of rave is its sensation of uncanny liminality, expressed in corollary concepts of ecstatic being and, more colloquially, as a 'vibe'. I supplement this claim by identifying the social construction of liminal sites that occur in proximity to rave sound systems. These include events such as being vetted by security at an entrance queue, the DJ technique of transitioning between discrete tracks, and the hazy and vertiginous geography of the dance floor.

### **Liminal Site: Admission and Entrance as Separation**

In the context of rave liminal experience is marked by the process of separation occurring within the context of surveillance and security. While rave events sometimes unfold in defiance or evasion of State authority, they nonetheless share a necessary aspect of government with the

State: concern regarding crowd control. As such, the organizing body deploy strategies for population surveillance, or 'reading the crowd', that resemble government. The particularity of the method of crowd control is often critiqued in the context of nightclubs and discotheques for functioning oppressively by authoritatively claiming the power to exclude certain bodies. These methods are sometimes criticized as firmly anti-democratic because of their arbitrary rules for denying access to the space on the basis of discriminatory perceptions.<sup>87</sup> Nonetheless, the structuring of protocols regarding entrance, admission, and permission contribute to the production of liminal experience. Returning momentarily to political ethics, it is important to emphasize that the practice of screening bodies before admission is often necessary in order to protect the vulnerability of marginalized or subjugated populations in public space. By vetting bodies, organizers strive to construct safer spaces that facilitate and celebrate the visibility of forms of life that suffer tremendously as a consequence of ongoing forms of systemic violence in the world outside of the festival.

The strategies of surveillance, control and evaluation deployed by security personnel at raves make apparent how the social relations of the crowd are influenced by the geography they unfold within. The process of lining up or queuing engenders this idea in order to enter the event space. Consider the protocols for securing the event space. Bodies are first separated from their chosen affinity group. Although people typically arrive in groups at events, they are often processed at the entrance queue and admitted individually.<sup>88</sup> One can locate this act of individualizing through the fact that security often makes a point of making eye contact with each individual as they enter the event space. This can be understood in relation to what Foucault

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<sup>87</sup>. Bastian Lange and Hans-Joachim Bürkner, "Value Creation in Scene-Based Music Production: The Case of Electronic Club Music" *Economic Geography*, 2012: 149

<sup>88</sup>. Morgan Gerard, "Selecting ritual DJs, dancers and liminality in underground dance music" In *Rave Culture and Religion*, edited by Graham St. John, (London: Routledge, 2003), 171

terms as 'dividing practices' which reference how sovereignty is asserted over a particular territory. In this instance sovereign authority is appears through the process of authorizing admission. These individual bodies pass through a period of assessment and evaluation before being reintroduced to the social network they are familiar with. This individuation is frequently a necessary condition for transitioning into the interiority of the event space itself. Although many rave events unfold within a defiant context regarding trespassing, copyright infringement, and noise bylaws, it is incorrect to say that the spaces are completely ungoverned or totally autonomous.

Despite the variability in the protocols for accessing rave's festive space it is nonetheless possible to develop a schematic routine to the entry process. Upon arrival at the site one typically finds the entrance guarded by bodies responsible for evaluating and assessing the admissibility or inadmissibility of individuals into the space. This act of judgment is ubiquitous in contemporary nightlife and music festivals. In order to access the space, bodies arrive in prearranged social groupings, as close friends or general acquaintances. They are then individuated via a process of 'lining up' or 'queuing'. Once arranged in a single-file, they submit to a security checkpoint that identifies and often performs a physical search of each body. This ranges from a simple pat down, to being ushered through sophisticated metal detectors. In licensed spaces this process is quite familiar: presentation of government issued identification verifies status and authenticity that the body attending is indeed the body named by State documentation. Thus it seems adequate to conclude that the process of entering such a space includes a functional separation, whereby bodies desiring to enter the space are individuated by security personnel and subject to their critical judgment. It should be noted that this security apparatus is not always deployed in the same way. Many spaces, for example, perform no such investigation at all.

The consistent existence of personnel bearing responsibility for the security and safety of participants attests to the existence of a governmental apparatus or society regulated by protocol. Along with security these functions are also clearly embodied by medical personnel who assist with security in a more paternalist manner. What I note is that attention to the health of the population and the monitoring of sites of entrance and exit are productive of the liminal sites that are mythologized. The question of security/insecurity is demonstrably apparent in the often stern, authoritative expressions worn by faces bearing the burden of providing security to the space. Placed in a state of work and labour, their faces frequently show anxiety and concern. Assuming responsibility for crowd control is an undeniable agonistic burden. Those who repeatedly assume such roles develop an experiential wisdom that crowds are turbulent and dynamic. Periods of calm and joyful celebration do not foreclose the potential for radical shifts in spirit.

A critical question pervades the atmosphere: how to prevent harm from befalling participants? There is a tension and anxiety regarding this issue that precedes the event itself. It is well known that the potential for excessive exhaustion exists. The intensity of such spectacles frequently generates environments that drive bodies to collapse. The security apparatus forms a privatized extension to the concept of policing. This crossing of demarcated zones is reminiscent of the airport, another 'portal' of travel, another infrastructural hub where attempts to smuggle contraband across are carefully guarded, territorial borders are marked firmly and transgressing these divides punishes harshly. The function of security guard is to request that the body presenting itself provide some means for self-identification. This may take the form of government issued photographic identification and/or ticket which grants admission before perform a bodily search and thus be evaluated for the possibility of admission into the space. Of course for many events there may be no process of evaluating bodies at the door. In these cases



the filtering process for admission is determined by one's ability to become familiar with the social network organizing the event. Here the process of vetting occurs before the event occurs.

In most cases it is largely up to the milieu itself to watch out for one another as bodies flow in and out of the space. Security personnel appear as circumstances dictate. People assume the responsibilities of dealing with problems as they emerge. A position of by-standing or passive spectatorship is discouraged in favour of active contribution and membership. Contrasting these anarchic events are the stridently regulated, yet similarly chaotic, commercially sponsored music festivals. For many of the (often) young bodies who attend these massive festivals, the fear, thrill and risk of smuggling contraband into a festival site becomes a rite of passage that generates cultural capital within peer groups. Within commercialized festivals this capital is accelerated by the element of associated risk.

What is of interest then, is the way in which the question of access to the space always remains tensely ambiguous: 'how does one get in?' Working through existing records of this quest archived on various social media platforms one finds a commonality in questions asked of the space: "what is security like at the venue?" "how thorough are security in their searches?", "will there be police", "will there be drug sniffing dogs?". This discourse is readily apparent on the reddit page dedicated to Burning Man. The stream of social media is rife with questions regarding the specifics of security surrounding the journey to and entrance to the site itself.

This has developed an at-hand vernacular updating fellow travellers on the conditions of surveilling by LEO (law enforcement officers) of highway 447 in Nevada referred to as the 'Kessel Run' by festival attendees. The 'Kessel Run', is a nod to the treacherous route used by smugglers who want to avoid their vessel from being boarded in the 'Star Wars' universe. It implies that keen navigating skills and a bit of luck are necessary to avoid being detained and

thoroughly searched while en route to the festival grounds. The fear and anxiety is not unwarranted. The security apparatus found at high profile festivals such as Burning Man is robust. Law enforcement use the event as a way of practicing and refining sophisticated surveillance techniques. Thermal, satellite and aerial imagery is used to map the space and track suspects, officers roam the space undercover or hide in desert camouflage. It is treated as a sort of war game with the grounds used as a laboratory for measuring population flows and developing surveillance technology.

The mobilization of the sound system and its distribution of rave is a consistent theme of its historic inquiry. Its evasive tendencies mobilizing both nomadic movement that takes flight from a paternalistic surveillance State and as an encrypted, subterranean network that incubates 'authentic' 'non-commercial' artwork within permanent structures that whether hidden or not, are nonetheless guarded carefully. One sees this indicated in the names of historic and established venues and artist communities such as the club, "Womb" in Japan, where up until 2015 a law existed that made dancing at night illegal, or the German techno collective "Cocoon". This concept is most forcefully felt in the work of Underground Resistance, an artist collective for whom the 'underground' symbolizes the narrative of ongoing emancipation that is mediated through the aesthetic of afrofuturism.<sup>89</sup> Thus the mythologizing of an artistic "underground" becomes a metaphor for describing the sacredness of occlusion, disguise, and passing between states of visibility and invisibility. Such sacredness is derived from the way in which the militancy of electronic music comes from re-appropriating and subverting the tools and technologies that are products of industrialized capitalism itself.

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<sup>89</sup>. tobias c. van Veen, "Other Places of There: The MythSciences, Chronopolitics and Concepttechnics of Afrofuturism." PhD Dissertation (McGill University, 2014), 43

### Liminoid Site: Temporal Track Transition

As an artistic performance, the DJ brings an audience through an encounter with liminality through generating and releasing tension. This experience is narrated via the technique of transitioning between tracks and adding|subtracting sonic elements from the overall audio mix itself. An overtly simplified definition of a track transition is defined as a synchronizing of the tail end of one track so that it flows into the beginning of another. This temporal space of transition expresses itself as progression, continuity|discontinuity and is contextualized by the process of curating disparate audio sources into an aesthetic relation to one another. Distinctions held between beginning and end, start and stop are foregrounded. Through looping any particular fragment of the arrangement can be isolated from the broader structure of the refrain. The audio sources are selected due their relation to the mix itself: harmonic key, tempo, intensity, and 'feel' all contribute to how distinct audio fragments come to 'sit in the mix'. This mix, though ubiquitous from the perspective of time-signature, in that the mix must *keep time*, is dependant on the tonality of the music to define which harmonic content maintains the pitch and feel of the mix. The relation to time is of particular significance, with build-ups and breakdowns narrating oscillation between excitement and contemplation that is mimicked by the crowd. This temporality and the tension of interstitial space are critical to the rave or festive moment and hinges upon the DJ transitioning through their selected media. These artworks are discrete compositions that generate and alleviate stress, tension, energy and excitement. Although it would be incorrect to locate this technique in rave alone, one can point to the common criticisms and mockery of dance music for its gratuitous 'bass drops' and brash melody as demonstrating the critical significance of transitioning through interstitial space to the festive moment. Whereas much musical performance revolves around the individuation of discrete 'songs' or

'acts', it is the temporal process of *integrating* discrete audio signals into the 'mix' itself that is critical to rave's structuring of liminality. While the DJ adopts a similar role to other live music performers, what is particular to their technical skill is specific to the mixer used to blend discrete musical compositions into a fleeting groove. It is this constellation of techniques that define the means for producing liminal space. This is achieved through the sonic affects of transitioning between pieces of music. What is sought after, or the intended outcome of mixing, is addressing the liminality of the imaginary register. To understand this process more clearly, consider the DJ mixer as the instrument or tool used to signify the human relation to liminal temporality through sounding a betwixt and between' sense of transition.

The way in which a track transition is performed is dependent on the range of functions enabled by the particular routing of audio into the mixer used by the performer. The specificity of technique deployed in accomplishing a transition is also dependent on the acoustic features paradigmatic to the particular genre or style of music on display. Common practices are derived from the popularity and familiarity with the particular feature sets of the mixdesk. These instruments offer several tools I extrapolate in support of the argument regarding the liminal space of transition. Performance techniques use a gradual fading or rising of volume in order to introduce or remove sonic themes within an established rhythmic groove. The specific audio frequencies that correspond to a harmonic key and give the work of art aesthetic cohesion are added or removed to the mix through frequency equalization. By adjusting the sonic balance of these elements, DJs engage in a process of revealing and concealing, weaving and enmeshing sonic textures informed by production techniques particular to the genre of music being performed. Thus the DJ possesses technical knowledge in generating and maintaining the sound system's generation of liminal sites through interfacing with the mixing desk.

The technical knowledge intrinsic to artistic creation is thus critical to a sound system's structuring of liminal experience. From the perspective of the DJ, this begins with a process of selection and curating of discrete musical compositions. The individual works are subsequently grouped thematically, and their audio signals are then mixed procedurally into one another. The structuring of liminal space is narrativized by the DJ's track selection as the performer curates and presents aural fragments as artefacts citation of one another. In a 'traditional' DJ setup this takes the form of discrete art objects, compositions produced independent of one another and offered to the DJ as a tableau for re-mixing and transitioning through the themes and moods that are recorded.

Like all artistic practice, the techniques are constantly evolving. Emergent technological development in looping audio samples and the integration of new instruments continues to expand upon and alter this core process of transition. Gerard describes the production of liminal space as a period of temporality affected as one track blends into another. He stresses the range of potential in this act noting that, "Depending on the DJ, this phase can last between one and five minutes, usually involving a delicate manipulation of the EQ in which the 4/4 pulse of one or both records is removed from the mix in order to synchronize 'the structural past and the structural future'"<sup>90</sup> This temporal period is situated as the phasing transition that affects members of the audience. The structural past is referenced as the existing groove and the structural future is which modifies the repetition while maintaining a consistency of flowing through an experience of time that is narrated sonically in the form of musicality. The vernacular phrase referring to a performing DJ being, 'in the mix' here refers to negotiation with liminal experience. The sensation of suspense in music harmonizes with the liminality of being

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<sup>90</sup>. Gerard, *Selecting Ritual*, 176

suspended 'betwixt and between'. Hopeful anticipation is projected towards life's futurity. This is blended with a nostalgic reflecting upon past memory: here defined in the fading or looping of the previous track that sustains the introduction of the new. These 'vibes' are amplified and given elasticity by the DJs interaction with the mixer, whose integration of sonic textures generates moments of tension and surprise. An interesting distinction of this sort of performance is that elements of surprise are derived from the DJ presenting unfamiliar recorded material or manipulating familiar sonic content in clandestine ways. The purpose of such guise is an intensification of psychoacoustic effect. In this case it is the familiarity of a musical compositions becoming confused or synthesized in such a way that transitions are the sounding of an ever-expanding harmonic synergy. Liminal space is given an aesthetic imprint through the act of mixing audio signals. This process of mixing emphasizes the synchronicity and citation of discrete works of art.

The 'mix' signals the liminal in that as one track ends it suspends the listener in a space of uncertainty. Tension relates to the duration of this uncertainty, confusion or disguise as the groove shifts, slips and flows between discrete established repetitive patterns. This tension is satisfied by the return or introduction of the next soundscape, symbolizing the continuation of the festive event, that the party goes on, that tension finds an outlet for release. It seems in many ways akin to the cycle of night and day: the absence of one is felt through its relation to the presence. Sets performed outdoors during sunrise or sunset are cherished because of their relationship with liminal transition. Journeying through the night and being met with the return of the sun's light symbolizes continuity and generates warmth as accompanying the joy of leisure. This celebration and acknowledgement of anxiety is demonstrated by the fact that low-volume points in sets are supported by noise from the audience. Electronic music and DJ mixes

emphasize reflecting upon a dialogical imagination that celebrates the experience of a liminal space that is sensed as existing in-between the cohesiveness of discrete musical composition. DJs reveal and conceal through a subtractive form of synthetic audio mixing. Energy and excitement is made palpable through the affective tension emitted by the counter-punctual presence/absence of sonic waveforms radiating from the sound system. The relation between the presence and absence of the vibrations that may a fused contradiction: both warm and soothing while simultaneously loud and dominating.

### **Liminoid Site: The Dance Floor as Incorporation**

Consider rave as an aesthetic testifying to having borne witness to a sound system. This collective experience is concentrated upon the terrain labelled the dance floor. The dance floor is a space that is in many cases porous and invisibly bordered, yet nonetheless, its existence as a distinct terrain can be mapped delicately. One is aware when they have entered the dance floor and also that they have exited it. One of these signs is temperature; inside the dance floor it is much warmer than the outside. This distinction of inside and outside is critical to rave. Earlier it was presented in the question of admission to the space. It now appears in proximity to the existence of a dance floor. Distinguishing between those who perceive the sound system as producing pleasant or enjoyable music, versus those who view it as a nuisance and are distressed by their proximity to its effective range hastily draws up the cartography of a dance floor. For those who perceive the sound as pleasant music, the dance floor becomes the terrain beneath their feet. It draws them closer to the sound system. The sound encourages and invites dancing. Or rather the desire for dance may be empowered by sound offering rhythmic narrative that is embodied.

This distinction between outside and inside directly contributes to the culture's appearance within criminal legislation, where justification for the criminalization of rave is predicated on the fact that the noise produces a distressing effect on neighbouring communities. Another important aspect of the inside|outside distinction permeating rave is the theme of the "underground"; the hidden, the clandestine, the out of sight. Originating from sites of abandoned buildings and the farmers' fields bordering the decaying post-industrial metropolitan space rave sustained itself through guise and misdirection.<sup>91</sup> There are many senses in which rave is an apparition. Its distinction or abnormality in relation to other festive spectacles may not be immediately apparent. The significance of mis-recognition and confusion becomes accelerated hyperrealism once the spectacle is named as a deviant subject within law.

The technicians tune the sound system such that the space of the dance floor site of an intention for balanced sound. Since the desired acoustics must take into account and work with the limitations or features imposed by the environment, the dance floor becomes an area delimited by the attempts made to optimize audio fidelity. Sound that is well balanced entices bodies to gather in the area. In this way the dance floor becomes a distinct space with borders and contours that may be visible or invisible. Visible borders exist in the form marked structures such as gates or barriers to manage and facilitate flows of people entering and exiting the space. Invisible borders are those where no such physical markers exist and with borders that fluid and permeable, emerging from the particular spatial arrangement of bodies who dance amongst each other. Like vortices in flowing water, spontaneous dance circles suddenly appear and disappear within the crowd. Nonetheless it is still possible to sketch the dance floor's topography through the way in which those who assemble the sound system and populate its dance floor refer to it.

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<sup>91</sup>. Alessio Kolioulis "Borderlands: Dub Techno's Hauntological Politics of Acoustic Ecology" (2015) *Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Music Dance Culture* 7(2) 2015: 64



There are also, however, importantly subtle distinctions drawn between the inside and outside of the dance floor that help dictate the way in which spatial arrangements contribute to subjective experience of the audio/visual performance itself. For example, as audio technicians work within environmental limitations to achieve a desired acoustic effect, one could say the epicentre of the dance floor is the region achieving the technically specified audio/visual balance. This could be rendered sensible through the usage of SPL (sound pressure level) meters used to measure the decibel level of the sound system. Often a time-worn phrase suffices: "trust your ears, sounds good? Is good". The dance floor's centre is thus the point where the intention to sustain audio fidelity is clearest.

Pragmatically the dance floor emerges from bodies assembling in proximate relation to one another. Typically, many enjoy being as close as possible to equipment responsible sound amplification, even though this is not the 'ideal' listening environment. This is because sound waveforms (especially bass frequencies) must expand over a certain distance in order to fully express their harmonic content. Bracketing out the neuroses of the audiophile, the space directly in front of the sound system is an area where bodies tend to congregate en masse. Bodies swirl within dance floor in a variety of inventive ways. Some spend time directly in front of the subwoofers, thrilled by the intense pulsations emitted by drivers. Given the opportunity to do so, some will stick their heads inside the bass bins, laughing excitedly at the sensation of powerful vibrations rattling their skull and communicating the acoustic features of timbre and tone. Attempts to climb, scale and explore the infrastructure housing the equipment are ubiquitous. Delight is taken in dancing atop whatever stage exists, removing self from the crowd and gazing at landscape. Of course, this introduces risk: sudden flows of population that concentrate upon space threaten to collapse or damage infrastructure. Collapsing a structure or speaker stack

because of body weight is an ever-present hazard. Left unchecked and given the opportunity to do so, bodies will enter into the space where the DJ, VJ, or artist is performing (referred to as the booth), lingering behind and to the sides of the artist otherwise exploring the environment from different angles and perspectives.

The existence of certain rules, whether explicitly stated in signage or enforced socially through word of mouth also helps one to grasp the social dynamics of the dance floor. Smoking, for example may be expressly discouraged or not permitted on the dance floor because it is a space where bodies swirl and move unpredictably and there is a risk of people being burnt, or that an open flame may start a fire, which is particularly dangerous in crowded situations. Many of these rules exist and emerge out of practical experience: open flames on the dance floor do burn people and embers that are left unattended start fires. History demonstrates multiple instances where fire spreads rapidly in a crowded venue, resulting in injury and death. While people may socialize on the dance floor, the volume of the music often makes sustained conversation difficult. As a result, people wishing to socialize or otherwise take a break from the intensity of the dance floor's epicentre populate space to the side or behind the sound equipment. In this context the dance floor becomes the topology of the liminal, in that it provides a shared and common space for experiencing the transitional narrative woven by the DJ. Entering the dance floor is a clear sign that one has 'arrived' at the rave. Although rave is a spectral phenomenon, its spirit is felt most intensely within the contours of the dance floor. The transitional period of entering the space and passing through its particular checkpoints is ended by the incorporation of bodies within the dance floor itself.

### **DJ As Magician**

This section addresses the process of mythologizing the human interfacing with rave's technological artefacts. It uses the term myth not in order to emphasize the truth or falsity of rave's mythopoeic narratives; rather it situates the concept of the mythic as an appeal to philosophical idealism. In the previous section, these ideals are gathered under social theories of escapism and liminal rites of passage. In turning to the technical dimensions, it is useful to read rave as an experience of spirituality along the axis of magico-religious practice. To accomplish this, I turn to Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss's *A General Theory of Magic* because of its attention to the way in which spirituality is imbued within technical objects through a form of mimesis. I develop Hubert and Mauss's category of the magician as a useful archetype for understanding the role the DJ as a cultural communicator plays in the spiritual dimensions of rave culture. Their work is useful in that it develops a magico-religious paradigm that categorizes magic along the visible, materialist, observable and technical axis. While the religious attends to the transcendental axis of ideas: concepts, belief and values.

The curated aesthetic genre defines the particularity of the sound system's social interaction rituals. Rave's structural foundation lies in the materials necessary or intrinsic to sound system assembly, however once assembled one sees merely a diagrammatic, inert and schematized scaffolding of rave culture. In order to highlight the spirited, enlivened and vibrant aspects as generative of culture and its transmissive flourishing, I explore the mythologizing of the DJ through its relations to aspects of the sound system that surround and permeate architecture. This attends to the symbolic power radiating from infrastructure traceable into artefacts. To explicate

this topic, consider the role of the DJ who, in curating and re-presenting sound sources becomes the mediator of a shared desire for experiencing the sensation of liminal passage. This sense of liminality derives from rave's association with ideas often maligned as irrational superstitions based on pseudo-science. This is consistent with the volume of writing on the DJ as 'technoshaman',<sup>92</sup> however my approach differs in that it does not seek to validate or invalidate the authenticity of the DJ's shamanistic properties, rather I situate the appearance of such mythology in relation to the sociotechnical association of DJ and the sound system.

The idea that raves represent a 'new age' of religiosity has been met with skepticism and eye rolling from the outset. Rave's conditions of actual existence are often considered as illegitimate. Much debate rages over which historic events were authentic raves and which were not. Similarly, it is argued that the era of rave ended through its legislation and commercialization. Nightclubs, in essence, are the graveyards of rave.<sup>93</sup> This criticism occurs in spite of the ongoing testimonies derived from ethnographic research that are too often dismissed as being articulated in bad faith. Within our contemporary zeitgeist we are likely to accept as more authentic the testimony of one who speaks in tongues following an experience of Evangelical rapture over the excited 'raver' who, after dancing to psy-trance for 24 hours, claims to have undergone a spiritual experience. The notion that a rave constitutes a site of religious worship, or that the sensations affecting participants resemble the intensity of passions that characterize the dogmatic fanaticism observed by followers of more orthodox traditions is rejected by our world's twin pillars of knowledge: faith and reason. On the side of faith: it is

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<sup>92</sup>. Scott Hutson, 'Technoshamanism: spiritual healing in the rave subculture', *Popular Music and Society*, 1999: 53

<sup>93</sup>. Troy D. Glover, "Regulating the Rave Scene: Exploring the Policy Alternatives of Government." *Leisure Sciences* 25 (4) 2003: 307

blasphemous and morally disturbing to assume that hedonistic spectacles of abandonment and exhaustion are in any way 'religious'. This will be demonstrated later in the dissertation through examining how the term 'cult' is used by the State to signify rave.

Reason's sobriety assumes a calculus that raving bodies do not approach metaphysics that are akin to the transcendent ecstasy of Christianity's Holy Ghost. Instead, they are only looking for ways to justify depraved behaviour and make some money. Similarly, from the perspective of aesthetic criticism, the spectacle is considered childish and immature, lacking any meaningful relation to the actual productivity of creative labour that modern biopolitics nurtures. Testimonies by ravers who claim spiritual experience and religiosity are discredited, labelled as confused victims of false consciousness. In their naivety believing that their spectacle is a form of protest and that their leisured enjoyment is anything other than counter-revolutionary: an exhaust pipe that relieves the pressures of class conflict and thereby sustains the machinations of capitalist realism. However, this process of delegitimization is consistent with the history of western thought's historic disciplining by the teleology of Judaeo-Christian social formations that are supplanted by the Enlightenment's supposedly secularized rationalism. Many issues are surround the delegitimizing of rave culture. It should be recognized that the process of casting rave out from other discourses that claim a legitimate appeal to the transcendental positions it in such a way that allows an examination of the legal system's legislative framework. In this way the criminalization of rave describes the ideology of the State more so than it does the phenomenon in question. Later chapters will explore this in detail. For now, I situate the DJ not as a religious figure, but rather as the magician.

## Trickster Fingers

The practice of cultural communication found in the magician is a useful category for describing the artistic practice of the DJ. In their seminal work on magic, *A Theory of Magic* Hubert and Mauss articulate a magico-religious continuum, with the realm of magic belonging to applied, technical action, while the realm of religion attends to ethical principles and metaphysics. Hubert and Mauss thus notes,

In practice, magic differs from religion in desired outcome. Religion seeks to satisfy moral and metaphysical ends, while magic is a functional art which often seeks to accomplish tangible results. In this respect magic resembles technology and science. Belief in each is diffuse, universal, and removed from the origin of the practice."<sup>94</sup>

In the previous discussion of threshold experience I presented how techniques of track transition provides an aural citation of liminal space. This effect occurs through the technical operation of the mixer. During this operation the human hand interfaces with technical apparatus. I argue that this interfacing resonates strongly with the magician's practice of the sleight of hand. Although we are accustomed to thinking of sleight of hand in terms of its deception or guising of what is truly happening: hiding the fact that the wizard of Oz is in fact no wizard at all. Instead consider in the case of the DJ that the sleight of hand is instead a continuation of the all too human tradition of mystifying and mythologizing aspects of everyday life that are 'blackboxes' in terms of knowledge and understanding. These mixers, themselves often boxes that are grey or black, are complex pieces of technology that require expertise in order to maximize their utility. Elsewhere I have discussed how the blending of music together is based upon the oscillation of concealing and revealing sound. It is in this vein that the idea of a sleight of hand finds purchase. The Merriam-Webster dictionary notes the following of 'sleight of hand',

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<sup>94</sup>. Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic*, Translated by Robert Brain (London: Routledge 2001), 112

The word *sleight*, meaning "the use of dexterity or cunning, especially so as to deceive", comes from the Old Norse. The phrase *sleight of hand* means "quick fingers" or "trickster fingers". Common synonyms from the Latin language include *prestidigitation* and *legerdemain*. Seneca the Younger, philosopher of the Silver Age of Latin literature, famously compared rhetoric techniques and illusionist techniques.

Like the magician the DJ uses motor skills and dexterity to bring musicality to the disguise. In the oscillation of concealing and revealing, distinctions are blurred between the disparate soundscapes that are presented. Here the sleight of hand is traced across the mixer and it's operating by the human hand that heighten elements of tension and surprise through various occluding tactics. While the traditional magician uses sleight of hand to disguise the simplicity of the trick, the DJ's sleight of hand is that it instead reveals far too little, as far too much attention is placed on the immediacy of the human interfacing with the machine and its effect on the sound rather than on the broader sound system itself. To consider this point further I now turn to a discussion of the way in which DJ sets are filmed when performing for an audience.

### **The Pressure of the 'Boiler Room' Mystifies the 'Black Box' of DJ Technologies**

In popular audio/video recordings of DJ events one often sees cameras pointed over the mixer, providing a view of the artist as they interface with the mixer. The placement of the camera in the videography of most DJ sets is significant in that it focuses on framing and capturing the relation between the audio playback/mixing devices and the artist as performer in order to 'reveal' the artists role in conducting or orchestrating the movement through the musical act. This is especially tense in electronic music which suffers from a constant anxiety crisis over the role of the human in the spectacle. This anxiety appears in the discourse surrounding the aptly named "Boiler Room", a famed series of recorded DJ performances that attests to the

consistency of this documentary style. That the direction that the eye of the camera is pointing at the mixer demonstrates the ongoing confusion surrounding the humanism of a DJ's artistic practice. The camera lens, the eye of the spectator, seeks visual knowledge of what is a sonic interpellation. The eye wants to track what the ear is hearing. It is not enough to merely listen because of the privileged status of vision to our species. It is clear that the purpose of the camera is to concede to the curiosity intrinsic to spectatorship. The camera is there to reveal the mystery and decrypt the methodology so that the technology can be demystified. Interestingly, the camera seems only to generate further cryptic mythology. Laid bare, captured in high-definition, recorded and repeatable, the "art" of the DJ remains shrouded by mystique. One needs to look no further than the comment section of any recorded performance. Debates rage over which genres are good, which are bad, who is a commercial sell-out, who has talent, who pays for ghostwriters and so on. People watch as the performer turns a knob and then break into argument over whether or not it had a discernible effect on the sound and thus, they are doing it merely for show. More analog art critics often criticize electronic music as simply 'knob twisting', a disempowered capitulation of humanist exceptionalism to a routinized programming by non-human machines. This debate is reminiscent of Latour's work on how humans are posed with the challenge of technical objects as 'black boxes' whose workings are difficult for scientists to definitely understand.<sup>95</sup> In the context of the Boiler Room one notes many instances where the interface generates unexpected effects as a result of glitch, user error, or unintended consequence. A 'ghost in the machine' appears suddenly that leaves even the performer who is supposed to be in command of the situation surprised and briefly disoriented.

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<sup>95</sup>. Bruno Latour, *Pandora's hope: essays on the reality of science studies*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987) 30



It is this question of authenticity, humanism and the mythologizing of technical objects that prompted my turning to Hubert and Mauss's work on magic regarding how the performing artist's technical merit may be documented. All of this unfolds in the larger context of how artistic performance is defined in relation to humanism and consequently whether or not the techniques deployed by a DJ constitute such a category. This critique occurs in relation to the blasphemous fact that during many commercially sponsored music festivals it is common for DJs to pre-record their set so that it can be easily synced with the lighting and pyrotechnics. In this case the DJ simply presses "play" and rides along with the machines, appearing sporadically by shouting in the microphone, dancing on the table, running in circles around the stage, or occasionally applying audio effects. This indifference to humanist artistic traditions is a source of trauma for many cultural critics.<sup>96</sup> The alienation of the human body's relation to the prized concept of talent appears as the performer physically separates their body from an 'arm's reach' to the site of performance and reveals that it is the machines and not the human being who commands the audience's attention. This anxiety helps inform why the camera lens revealing the artist's interaction with the mixer generates such furor.

One is tempted to state that this confusion over how to situate the human subject viz a viz technical objects is derived from the way in which the technological medium that the DJ interfaces with is not dominated or controlled by the human performer, rather the relationship is much more horizontal. This flattening of the relationship between human being and machine can be understood by the paradigm shift that occurs through the introduction of computerized, algorithmic beat-matching software that supplants vinyl turntables. The art of the DJ is founded during the artist's relationship to the turntable that plays vinyl records. In this paradigm the skill

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<sup>96</sup>. Mark McCutcheon, *The Medium Is the Monster - Is It Live or Is It Deadmau5? Pattern Amplification in Canadian Electronic Dance Music*. (Athabasca University Press, 2018), 156

of the artist in the mix is to ensure that multiple sound sources synchronize with one another. With vinyl records played on turntables this included a focus on the keeping the turntables synchronized and preventing the record from skipping or rattling out of sync with one another. Thus the "meaning" of the DJ as an artist is a product of their relationship to the medium as a site of demonstrating their technical proficiency. This is bound inseparably to the particular strategies adapted to specific audio playback and sound mixing apparatuses.

As audio technology develops the changing relationship between the human hand and the technical object alienates artisan craftwork from certain aspects of its original function. This alienation is expressed in the confusion and argumentation over what modes of interfacing with technology actually represent artistry and which ones do not. With CD players replacing vinyl as the dominant medium, associated techniques for transitioning through tracks are altered. However, this transition did not occur without significant criticism regarding the devaluation of artistry that occurs in moving from vinyl to CD. Advantages of CDs included a decrease in the delicacy of playback skipping; the ability to loop fragments of audio and a general convenience and affordability of CDs over vinyl. The method for beat-matching is altered by the introduction of the "CUE" button which allows the DJ to quickly start and stop track playback in order to achieve synchronization in tandem with the traditional methods of touching the rotating platter to nudge the alignment of the track into the groove and using the pitch bend slide to speed up or slow down the tempo. After CDs come the era of fully digital setups that are now the current objects of scorn due to their supposed ease of use which eradicates a clear distinction between amateur and pro performers and claims to the inferior sound quality of digital files. As with most audiophile debates this cannot be proven conclusively and is instead better situated along the

continuing axis of locating artisan craftwork within the role of the DJ as a cultural communicator.

The way in which different technical objects are assigned value as cultural capital is usefully read through Hubert and Mauss's interpretation of the concept of mana and the way in which the DJ as magician must *absorb* mana from an enchanted object. If that object is not viewed by the crowd with reverence (thus not enchanted) it is likely that the performance will not be as highly valued. This term mana can be translated by our industrialized ontology into a form of cultural capital. This is of interest considering that from perspective of aural or sonic sensation, the same tracks mixed together on vinyl, CDs, or digitally sound largely the same. It is incredibly difficult for even an obsessive audiophile correctly identify through hearing alone what playback medium is being used. Nonetheless videos of DJ performances that use digital controllers to mix music are viewed as less valuable and subject to harsher critique than more analog methods. This distinction attests to the idea that the magician must interact with objects imbued with mana and successfully absorb from the object's enchanted force (cultural capital) in order to possess that mana/capital. Another way of interpreting this is that the DJ's source of mana is derived society's fetishization of particular technological apparatuses. That vinyl is currently experiencing a period of fetishization is consistent with the condition of nostalgic 'retromania' that is argued to be symptomatic of malaise within postmodern late capitalism.<sup>97</sup>

The history of DJs movement from shrouded figure who presents another artist's work into a worshipped icon coincides with an increasingly antagonistic relation to the spectacle and its ancillary technologies. An important transition can be noted through examine the absent-presence of DJ performance. There remains a celebration of the anonymity of the DJ. With

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<sup>97</sup>. Simon Reynolds, *Retromania*. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), xxv

recognisability comes commercialization, something that is viewed as a threat to true artistry. At some events DJs mixed records in a room separated from the main dance floor in order to emphasize the importance of desubjectification and naturalization within the environment itself, rather than principally being about bearing witness to the spectacular abilities of the performing idol or icon. A sense of mystery and intrigue continues to pervade the act of mixing tracks. For much of the history of the DJ, up until the advent of cell phone-based technology such as "Shazam"<sup>98</sup> the tracks played by the DJ are a coveted and secret commodified possession. This is especially apparent in the production of limited release 'white label' records that do not display the artist name or title. For much of the history of DJ, it was considered poor etiquette to request the list of tracks played by during their performance. Still today, the practice of 'trainspotting' (identifying the tracks played by the DJ) remains a controversial practice. This cultural norm's continuation points towards the enduring mystique and guise surrounding the DJ's artistry in relation to their interfacing with technical objects.<sup>99</sup> Coinciding with this are the many strategies of obfuscation, concealment, and cunning comprising the technique of mixing audio sources. For example, some DJs mislabel their audio sources in order to engage in a tactic of misdirection in order to frustrate curious inquisitors. Thus, part of the DJs 'magic' is sourced from the way in which their performance adopts these strategies as a way of absorbing the mana located in the recorded music and the tool used in playback.

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<sup>98</sup>. Shazam is an app that uses a phone's microphone to 'listen' to audio and cross-reference it with an online database in order to identify the artist and song title.

<sup>99</sup>. Mark McCutcheon, "The DJ as Critic, 'Constructing a Sort of Argument'" *English Studies in Canada* 41 (4) 2015: 100

### Powering Rave Circuitry

Consider rave as an expressive conduit for the embodied response to the flowing audio signal emanating from a sound system. The signal flow describes the route an audio signal takes as it moves from generative source to the devices amplifying its signal. In describing the generation of rave, I approach its basic form schematically and produce a cartography of the sound system itself. As we have seen, the rave sign denotes a cultural phenomenon that is seemingly inescapably vague, opaque, fleeting, and often difficult to discern. Nonetheless, rave is locatable geographically and documented historically. A significant discourse which constructs rave historically is its labelling as form of profaning the sacredness of certain social norms.<sup>100</sup> In consulting a wide range of documents produced by State and non-State actors, a definition of rave is produced through focusing on the materials critical to its structural integrity.

The 1994 UK Criminal Justice and Public Order Act defines rave as a form of public assembly. They are 'gatherings' of people. Essential to the gathering is the existence of the sound system. The sound system forms a cultural monolith that the population congregates at. Rave is thus dependant on assembling a sound system. Disassembly of the sound system, such as it being deprived of power, damaged by electricity or weather will often result in dispersing the population. Thus, the existence of a powered sound system is essential to what is theorized as the 'raving body'. As we have seen, the sound system is engineered: 'strung-up' from components used to produce, record and amplify sound such that it may be clearly and often forcefully audible to the space of the dance floor, upon which the population gathers.

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<sup>100</sup>. Herzogenrath, *An American Body Politic*, 241

A sound system works in concert. It functions through a synergy of elements interacting in order to perpetuate a melodic or musically harmonic spectacle. In modern times this synchronous relation extends into electrically powered technologies, requiring them to be drawn into the ongoing synergy in order to produce the spectacle. An example of this is the syncing of lighting effects to important moments in the music being presented. A sound system is therefore a network of technical devices and musical instruments that augment the humans engaged in sustaining the network. An essential condition for the assembly and operation of a sound system is a method for securing access to electricity. For events held in remote, 'off-grid' locations, this is often achieved through the use of mobile generators. In urban areas it is usually possible to tap into the infrastructure of the pre-existing power grid in order to provide electricity to the sound system. However, if the geographic location of the event lacks access to power, such as spaces which are either derelict or abandoned, a generator will be necessary if the sound system cannot extend its cables to reach a suitable point of access.

Once the sound system is assembled or 'strung-up' within the event space, audio engineers distribute the signal through dividing the frequency spectrum into separate wavebands and then channelling those waves into their respective loud speakers. Like the human ear, the membranes of speakers are highly sensitive to sudden changes in amplitude. As such a process exists for powering the sound system up and down in order to protect the speakers from damage resulting from sudden fluctuations in electrical current. The devices outputting an audio signal and the mixer are the first to receive power. At this point it is useful to begin sending an audio signal to the mixer in order to ensure the devices are outputting a signal before the speakers amplify the audio channel. The speakers are the last pieces of equipment to receive power. Working in this way prevents damage resulting from the 'clicks and pops' caused by sudden

power surges that occur when a signal generating device is switched on. These surges can drive the speaker cone with amplitude that may damage the equipment (blow the speaker). When powering down the sound system the process is reversed, with the speakers being powered off first, followed by the mixer and finally the audio signal source. The audio frequency spectrum is divided according to the number of speakers available and their particular design. A common method of distribution divides the spectrum into three bands: low, mid and high. Consequently loudspeakers available to the sound system can be sorted into three (or more) categories: subwoofer, midrange, and tweeter. However this simplicity belies the vastly complex and inventive potentials for sound design and sonic experimentation that are navigated by decisions made by audio engineers in mixing and balancing audio signals. To give a sense of this complexity a consideration of the 'crossover frequency' is useful.

### Crossing Over

Once the sound system is assembled or 'rigged up', it is ready to receive input from an audio signal. In order to separate the audio signal into discrete frequency bands the sound engineer uses a crossover. For clarity's sake I will discuss the routing of a simplified signal flow. This is the two-way crossover which divides the frequency spectrum in a high-frequency waveband and a low-frequency waveband. Each band contains range defined by assigning a cut-off point within the frequency spectrum in order to direct the lower frequency to the subwoofers and higher frequencies to the loudspeakers. This point in the frequency spectrum that functions as the dividing line is known as the crossover frequency. Although the modes for distributing sound across the available speakers vary, for clarity's sake it is typical for the frequency spectrum to be divided or filtered such that the bass or low frequencies are divided from each other and treated as separate 'wave bands' by sound engineers. A healthy human ear is able to detect sound

that resonates between 20 to 20,000 Hz. Sound below 20 Hz is mostly "felt" as pressure applied onto the body according to the amount of energy used to amplify the sound waves. Interestingly, because the density of bass frequencies, their tonality is often 'heard' more fully the further one is from the sound source as the waveform expands more fully. It is the subwoofer that is responsible for driving these sound waves. A subwoofer is a powered speaker dedicated to reproducing low-pitched audio frequencies ~200 Hz.

The particularity of dividing the audio spectrum into frequency bands and then distributing those bands through the sound system is determined by the options afforded by the tools available to the audio engineer. An effective audio balance is achieved through combining a working knowledge of audiology with an artistic practice of dynamically mixing disparate audio sources in order to effectively balance audio such that it is clearly audible according to the acoustic idiosyncrasies of the performance space. Loudspeakers are ideally elevated off the ground in order to separate their assigned frequency spectrum from clashing with the lower frequency wavebands emanating from the subwoofers. The vernacular for this arrangement of audio equipment is the speaker stack. When attending to the low frequency waveband, subwoofers are ideally placed on a riser that elevates them several inches from the ground. Slightly elevating subwoofers allows for the sound wave to more fully expand before it begins losing energy as its penetrating force is absorbed by the surrounding terrain.

The reasoning for assigning a specific point of cut-off is dependent on numerous factors. A general 'rule of thumb' states that 80 Hz is a standard crossover frequency. As a way of contextualizing this, for a standard keyboard that uses scientific pitch notation, an 80 Hz crossover frequency will direct all notes lower than 'e2' to the subwoofer. Thus, all audio below 80 Hz, or the note e2, is divided into one waveband while all audio above 80 Hz is gathered into



another. In the vernacular of sound engineers, subwoofers are often referred to as 'bottoms' and other loudspeakers as 'tops'. At the risk of being repetitive: one should not see these values as essential and immutable rules that cannot be bent or broken. Sound system assembly has many dynamic possibilities, and distributing the audio frequency spectrum is a combination of technical limitations and creative artistry. Subtle innovations on established rules may result in tremendous impact on acoustics. Sonic fidelity does not necessarily mean obeying formal traditions of musicality. For many genres of electronic music (such as Darkcore, Industrial, Hard Trance, or most poignantly: Harsh Noise), traditional rules for preserving 'clean' tonality are broken in order to purposefully 'degrade' or 'distort' signals through including noise and static that is intrinsic to the particular aesthetics of the genres in question. In the history of dub music and subsequent electronic music, the emergence of many genres is predicated on incorporating traditionally "undesirable" audio effects (the harsh sound occurring when an audio signal is clipped is referred to as the 'artifacts' that appear in the audio signal) into avant-garde artwork.<sup>101</sup>

In the vernacular of Jamaican sound system culture, assembling the sound system is referred to as "stringing-up". Consider the 1977 dancehall recording, "string up the sound system" by Michael Palmer. As narrated earlier by Hedley Jones, the notion of assembling, or putting together is especially pertinent to the context of constructing culture itself. These sound systems were built in a bricoleur methodology, made from the parts that are readily available. Many early sound systems are created out of discarded car audio and broadcast radio units. As a cultural institution a sound system is defined by its affective network, which is the interaction between the equipment used to amplify, equalize, and enhance source audio with the ensemble or

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<sup>101</sup>. Simon Reynolds, *Generation Ecstasy: Into the World of Techno and Rave Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 1999), 282

troupe of people who work to maintain the fidelity (perhaps better labelled as the audibility) of the signal chain. Through maintaining the network's security sound systems produce social environs for leisure and commercial exchange.

As we saw earlier, once power is secured it becomes essential that the electrical current be distributed evenly according to the wattages drawn by the various pieces of equipment. Failure to evenly distribute electric current may overload power receptacles and damage critical infrastructure. The most taxing items on the power grid are the sound amplifiers. The fact that artistry and craftwork is essential to audio engineering means that a static explanation of sound system design solely through a description of concrete rules regarding how audio is to be 'ideally' distributed through the sound system encounters many decisions that are context based. Thus the technical skill of sound system assembly is to be read in relation to culture generated by the sound system

### Beatmatching

An obvious point of entry to a discussion of the techniques critical to rave is beatmatching. Beatmatching defines the evolving process of how a DJ synchronizes multiple rhythmic patterns. Beatmatching requires attuning to the selected composition's tempo. This practice is historically enshrined in the functionality of the motorized turntable's sliding pitch fader used to speed up or slow down playback speed. By gently nudging the spinning record while adjusting the pitch fader the incoming track is synchronized within the established groove. Synchronization is critical to the seamless blending of discrete compositions. Significant developments in technology, however, have radically changed the tools used to achieve this unifying of timing. In our current era, it is common for recordings to be analyzed by software

that returns a precise measurement of the tempo quantified as beats-per-minute, or 'bpm' and the harmonic key. Once the tracks are analyzed the bpm and harmonic key are saved as meta-data to the file. This allows the performer to ascertain which compositions fit easily into one another quickly. A large range between tempos means that there will be considerable difficulty in mixing tracks with subtly. Similarly layering tracks that are off key relative to one another results in dissonant harmony.

A fascinating issue surrounding beatmatching is the controversial role of software viz a viz the notion of artistry. Undeniably the tools now at hand make the process easier and more streamlined. Many media playback devices now have a button dedicated to syncing the incoming track to the current tempo. However, for many, the use of software to sync tracks with one another eradicates the appearance of humanism in artistry. This argument shares much in common with discussions of the 'musicality' of swing and gradual modulations of timing in rhythmic patterns adding complexity to droning minimalism that is lost when translated by the rigid precision of software quantization algorithms. This is described elsewhere as the problem of 'liveness' in electronic music.<sup>102</sup> This problem is constant anxiety regarding the human relation to the sound system machination. It raises the troubling question of how artistry is locatable and attributed with an aesthetic value within larger entertainment spectacles. It is another iteration on the question posed by Walter Benjamin regarding art's aura in the era of its technological reproducibility. While some argue that using software aides the performer in further texturing mixes through the ease of syncing multiple tracks. Others claim the inverse: that using software to beatmatch reduces the performer to a spectator while the machine runs the show. This counter-argument is frequently supported by pointing to the common practice of artists prerecording their

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<sup>102</sup>. McCutcheon, *The Medium Is the Monster - Is It Live or Is It Deadmau5?* 160

sets and then playing them uninterrupted at large music festivals in order to sync the music to lighting and pyrotechnics. I have examined this earlier in relation to Hubert and Mauss's work on magico-religious phenomena. It is repeated here to foreground the relationship between beatmatching and the rhythmic syncopation that is used to mix tracks and establish new and unpredictable groove structures produced through the DJs technical skill. It is this unpredictability and capacity to generate rhythmic difference out of repetitive patterns that narrates the 'betwixt and between' aspects of a liminal experience.

### The Mixdesk

Rave appears within the acoustic space emanating from the sound system. A sound system is a useful umbrella term for the collection of technicians and engineers who assemble, operate and maintain an audio/visual network responsible for outputting and reinforcing (gain staging) the audio signal. Turning again to the paradigmatic influence of dub music, sound systems are a form of public broadcasting that amplifies and distribute an audible signal to a directed area. Communal space emerges from the particular aesthetics of the audio signal. A sound system maintains the audio signal chain, which is the route an audio source takes from the point of origin to devices amplifying and projecting the sound. A clear signal chain is structured as follows: source audio is routed via cables into a mixer which is responsible for balancing input signals. The mixer then outputs an amplified stereo mix to the loudspeakers. It is the mixer that allows the engineer to interface with audio sources and affect them creatively. To communicate a sense of the importance and effect of the mixing desk for the sound system, I describe a few of the most paradigmatic techniques for audio mixing and sound engineering. While a multitude of

methods exists, the mixing desk is a powerful tool for interfacing with digital audio technologies.

Michael Veal summarizes the condition aptly,

[u]ltimately, the unity of engineer, mixing desk, and music is in the end no different than the unity of musician and instrument...Using the mixing board as an instrument of spontaneous composition and improvisation, the effectiveness of the dub mix results from the engineer's ability to de- and reconstruct a song's original architecture while increasing the overall power of the performance through a dynamic of surprised and delayed gratification. The engineer continuously tantalizes the listener with glimpses of what they are familiar with, only to keep them out of reach, out of completion.<sup>103</sup>

The mix desk is thus a tool for narrating a discourse on the experience of liminal transition. This is performed via its available feature set, with mixers having multiple options for effecting audio through a responsive and tactile interface. In this way the mixer is a powerful tool used to control and manipulate the dynamics of an audio signal. For many artists mixing is ideally accomplished with a dedicated console, although often the loudspeakers themselves also have tools for filtering and equalizing audio, however these control panels are not as easily accessed and manipulated in a musical way as the mix desk itself.

### Equalization and Filtering

As reviewed earlier, the audio frequency spectrum is divided into segments (wavebands) that allow the engineer to control the frequency spectrum by isolating, amplifying or neutralizing target regions through modulating the amplitude of the audio frequency range in order to prevent resonant frequencies from clashing against one another in discordant or non-harmonic ways. As part of the tools available within a mixer, filtering and equalization are instrumental to the sound design and performance of electronica. An operating manual for a mixing console aptly describes the function of equalization and filtering,

The Parametric Equaliser allows tonal adjustment of the channel sound. It provides independent control of 4 frequency bands, each with three parameters that can be adjusted:

LF (low frequency)

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<sup>103</sup>. Veal, *Dub*, 78

LM (low mid frequency)  
 HM (high mid frequency)  
 HF (high frequency)

Gain – Boost or cut frequencies by up to 15dB. Centre 0dB is flat response (no affect).

Frequency – Each band can sweep its centre point frequency across the full range from 20Hz to 20kHz. This means you can overlap bands and have more precise control over problem frequency areas.

Width – Each band has a bell-shaped response. The width of the bell can be varied from a very wide 1.5 octaves affecting many frequencies to a very narrow 1/9th octave affecting a small range of frequencies. Setting LF or HF to widest position using the screen rotary changes its response to shelving.

Experiment with the controls to hear their affect on different sounds. Switch the PEQ in or out using the In key or button to compare the sound. It is better to cut rather than boost frequencies where possible.<sup>104</sup>

Equalization and filtering are thus the way in which the sound engineer interfaces with audio wavebands in order to shape and affect their audibility. This parametric equalizer in particular divides the audio signal into four wavebands. From the perspective of musical performance, they are tools for blending disparate audio sources in a harmonically pleasant way. Blending is accomplished by identifying and then removing frequencies which clash together, resulting in discordance or a muting of volume via phase cancellation. The technical writer who produced the manual leaves the reader with an established 'trick of the trade': it is better to cut rather than boost. This means that one should strive to remove frequencies rather than amplify them, as this prevents the appearance of harsh noise occurring when an audio signal clips the channel. However, this is balanced equally with the appeal to the creativity intrinsic to all artistic practice, "experiment with the controls to hear their affect on different sounds." The dynamics of audio mixing inform the principle techniques for transitioning between audio signals. Source audio is blended into a progression through the musical themes edited together by the artist. Filters refine the sound passing through them, emphasizing one aspect of the audio spectrum by removing the audibility of the others. Audio filters typically come in three forms: high-pass, low-pass, and band-pass. A filter operates by allowing the desired range of the frequency spectrum to pass through it, while filtering out the sound that exists either above the cut-off point (this is a low pass filter) below the cut-off point (this is a high-pass filter) or by emphasizing a narrow range defined by the median of the cut-off point (this is a band-pass filter). Whereas equalization precisely targets specific audio frequencies, filters are typically broader and less precise. They are used to dynamically sweep through the audio range and create moments of tension and subsequent release which dramatize performance scenarios. It is worth

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<sup>104</sup>. *Allen and Heath Qu Series Reference Guide*. AP9372 Issue 6 2015.

noting that these mixing tools are not unique to rave or sound system culture but rather belongs to a larger sphere of techniques for producing studio recordings and live performances. As we have seen, it is the emergence of dub music which provides rave with its essential tools. Specific genres emerge from the strategic use of these tools. Exploring the functionality of several tools used to divide the audio spectrum is useful as a way of understanding this process in broad and general strokes. Thus, although many different musical aesthetics uses these tools, here it is sufficient to demonstrate the relation between audio mixing as artistic practice and the technical skill of sound system assembly in directing particular wavebands into amplifiers that are suited to distribute them appropriately.

### Reverberation

As a psychoacoustic phenomenon, reverberation or echo is defined as the,

collection of reflected sounds from the surfaces in an enclosure like an auditorium. It is a desirable property of auditoriums to the extent that it helps to overcome the...dropoff of sound intensity in the enclosure. However, if it is excessive, it makes the sounds run together with loss of articulation - the sound becomes muddy, garbled. To quantitatively characterize the reverberation, the parameter called the reverberation time is used.

An unprocessed audio signal is referred to as 'dry', while the effected signal is called 'wet'. Wet and dry signals are mixed with varying degrees of intensity and as such, are not binary states.

Adding reverberation to a sound source adds presence, depth and longevity to the sound. Reverb occurs naturally as sound waves reflect off objects (echoes) it contacts. Allen and Heath, a longstanding manufacturer of audio equipment, include a digital emulator of a reverberating effect on many of their mix desks and describe its utility as such:

This is the most popular effect in live sound mixing. The SMR Live (Spatial Modelling Reverberator) features 4 fully configurable spatial models - Classic, Hall, Room and EMT plate. Each of these use different reflection and decay algorithms to add natural sounding space to the dry signal whether subtle small room echo, vintage vocal plate or a massive arena. Reverb can make a vocal sound spacious and smoothing the mix or add body to an instrument such as acoustic guitar or flute.

Reverb is an essential tool for audio engineers and paradigmatic for many genres of electronic dance music. The musical compositions of most dance music build upon repetitive and minimalistic loop-based arrangements that introduce variation and difference through subtle adjustments to the balance of audio rather than dramatically changing the arrangement of notes.

By applying reverb to the various instruments, a sense of space and 'body' is added, lending a sense of evolving modulation to an otherwise static drum loop or melody. Gradually increasing the amount of reverb creates an acoustic effect known as 'swelling' or 'sweeping', which is used to build up and demarcate transitions between different parts within the arrangement. The swelling of reverb is critical to building tension and energy within a track's composition. As such reverb fx frequently appear on DJ mixers and are used by the DJ as a tool for emphasizing particular moments within a composition, or as part of transitioning through or blending between tracks. The psychoacoustics of reverb are discussed beautifully in relation to the integrity of the genre of dub music, where it produces the ethereal and resonating echo within the instruments. Kodwo Eshun describes reverb as such, "[a]s soon as you have echo, listening has to completely change. Your ear has to chase the sound. Instead of the beat being this one event in time, it becomes this series of retreating echoes, like a tail of sound."<sup>105</sup> Thus the temporality of reverb identified by Eshun is significant for the psychoacoustic effect it has on the audience.

Reverb plays with the transience of sound and the relation between presence and absence is sensed through the gradual decay of volume as sound disappears. It swells into crescendo and decays into silence. Wonderfully this effect can also be recorded and then played in reverse, resulting in a gradual increase in volume that signifies an inversion of the relationship. The time spent 'chasing' the reverberating groove provides the audience with a demarcated period of anticipation and reflection. This echoing effect is essential to the soundscapes generated by techno music. Here the use of reverb is paradigmatic to what is labelled the 'warehouse' sound. An interesting doubling of meaning: warehouses signifying cavernous, resonant, and echoing acoustic spaces that are also advanced as a paradigm of the idyllic dystopia of the rave space

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<sup>105</sup>. Henrique, *Sonic Bodies*, 141



itself. It is important to note as well that some artists choose to record their sounds completely dry, preferring to use the natural reverberations provided by the space they perform in, navigating the acoustic reflections of space *in situ*. Regardless of the particular technique used, reverberation is a critical element of rave sound systems structuring of liminal rites of passage. Within such a psychogeography the cavernous, swelling echoes of sound swirl throughout the environment and narrate the disjuncting effect on an experience of time that characterizes liminal passage.

## Chapter 2: Rave as Sociolegal Fact

### Sociolegal Study or Criminology?

Approaching the topic of rave through a sociolegal lens provides distinct advantages for engaging with the spectre of relativism haunting discourse on taste-based cultural phenomenon. Canonical sociological work on rave stress moral panic's effect on governmental social policy and public health research.<sup>106</sup> In this vein, two sociologists critical to research on rave, Tammy Anderson and Philip Kavanaugh note that the vast majority of quantitative research on the topic of rave dwells upon questions of substance abuse informed by overtly penal strategies. These tactics stem from the extremism of "zero tolerance" securitization of addiction and substance abuse within the aptly labelled "War on Drugs".<sup>107</sup> The consequence of operating within this ideological paradigm is revealed in the consistency of quantitative research methodologies on the topic of rave designed as data gathering exercises on drug use at raves.<sup>108</sup> This methodology has little interest in questions of value in the particularity of the cultural or aesthetic fields in which they work. When bodies are studied in this way legitimacy is denied to the diffuse iterations of lived experience that are contained by social relations. Instead the population is lumped together into the category of deviant. These studies are the medical and juridical foundation of rave's policing. The expansion of State power associated with criminalizing rave is responsible for unnecessarily severe punitive measures being applied to civilian populations.

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<sup>106</sup>. Sarah Riley, "Identity, community and selfhood: understanding the self in relation to contemporary youth cultures" *Beyond Current Horizons* (2008), 8

<sup>107</sup>. Anderson and Kavanaugh, *Solidarity and Drug Use In the Electronic Dance Music Scene* (2008), 182

<sup>108</sup>. Michael H. Dore, "Targeting Ecstasy Use at Raves." *Law Review*. (88) 2002: 1583

This dissertation supports the pivoting of social work towards strategies of 'harm reduction' and 'community policing'. These insights stem from a focus on addressing the challenges of substance abuse through education, awareness, amnesty, and decriminalization. By changing disciplinary protocols, community members and cultural gatekeepers are better equipped to deal with the localization of mental health issues associated with larger population trends. Liberal governmentality is increasingly being forced to consider the efficacy of decriminalizing possession of controlled substances as a method for addressing the various health crises associated with widespread substance use. It seems clear that the evidence of the scope of substance use far out-scales the validity of anti-drug strategy founded upon the purity spiral of prohibition and criminalization. In this way crime and health are intertwined. By addressing rave as a sociolegal fact, the genealogy of rave dwells upon the historic moment where it is defined criminally through a rationalist discursive framework that can be critically assessed.

Although in my eyes regrettable, discussions of rave seem to always flow into questions of youth deviance.<sup>109</sup> As a result there is an abundance of quantitative analysis derived from methodologically coding deviant behaviour at rave events. To understand the source of this securitized discourse it is helpful to look at the relationship between rave and the United Kingdom. While vast differences exist within rave culture as it is generated within localized geographies, the United Kingdom is selected as a point of entry because it is the site where its criminal outlawing first appears. It is thus chosen because it documents the establishment of a legal precedent. Rave's first offense is by trespassing. Rave appears within environments that they do not have rights to access. The nuisance of trespassing becomes problematic to the State when mobile homes or caravans enable and empower these nomadic lifestyles. This mode is labeled as

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<sup>109</sup>. Glover, Troy D. 2003. "Regulating the Rave Scene: Exploring the Policy Alternatives of Government." *Leisure Sciences.*, 308

"New Age Travel" and it is this cultural practice, in particular the generative cycle of festive events, that rave emerges from.<sup>110</sup>

Rave's sociolegal facticity works through processes by which the State recognizes a threat to social order and subsequently deploys criminal law in order to discourage public interest in participating in what it defines as deviant social relations. In this instance rave's facticity is derived from the fact that the law itself names it. Its existence is fundamentally tied to an informing by the legislation designed to regulate it. This process has a chronology, with the first legislation banning the spectacle and enshrining the sign 'rave' in law appearing in England's 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act. In the following decades European and North American nation-states will follow suit. Making sense of the legal justifications for the criminalization of rave is aided by reflecting upon trespassing as a form of deviant social movement. In England this takes on particular significance and is dubbed the "National Problem of Caravans".

Thus, in the following pages I explore the legislating of a rave taboo and argue that this is the result of liberal State paternalism. As a sociological topic, initial considerations of the phenomena categorized it as a 'sub-culture' emerging in the late 1980s and associated with electronic music. It is described as a 'neo-tribal' form of group association, defined through bricoleur methods of aesthetic representation (sampling, mixing of futurism and primitivism, utopian views towards technology balanced through often militantly ecological politics).<sup>111</sup> Much of the work done on the policing of rave focuses on situating it within larger criminological theories related to the 'War on Drugs' policies that emerge in the 1980s as the

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<sup>110</sup>. The Economist, "The Travellers Club" 15-21 August 1992

<sup>111</sup>. Christopher Partridge, "The Spiritual and the Revolutionary: Alternative Spirituality, British Free Festivals, and the Emergence of Rave Culture." *Culture and Religion* 7 (1) 2006: 42.

factor most significant in engaging its process of criminalization. In reviewing the ethical claims which justify a tabooing of rave, it is apparent that the stakes of the conflict point to a genealogy much older than the modernity of a 'War on Drugs'. I will conclude this dissertation by attending to this history as it is depicted in artwork. This demonstrates the conflict between the perseverance of popular-festive folk rituals in the face of a government increasingly invested in regulating the health of its population. Approaching history in this way offers precedents for relating to the events of the Battle of the Beanfield and Castlemorton Common to a broader history of the carnivalesque. Rave's censorship is not simply about the forbidding of contraband, nor can understanding its criminalization be explained solely through assumptions regarding rave's association with the criminality of drug possession.<sup>112</sup> This chapter explores this question by working through several interrelated themes.

I attend to a sociolegal study of rave through identifying the significance of the legislative action taken to define and subsequently criminalize rave as a deviant form of social relation. This chapter studies administrative documentation that constructs the deviancy of a rave taboo and I argue that the process of its criminalization is demonstrative of pastoral strategies for government. This notion of pastoral power addresses forms of government policy that are of a pastoral spirit mediated through State paternalism. The State's focused attention on rave displays a particular interest in and sensitivity to the specific demography of the participant population. Meticulous focus on data gathering and production of statistics regarding the socioeconomic status of the population of rave allows for carefully tailored legislation to address the rave taboo

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<sup>112</sup>. Jill Adair McCaughan, Robert G. Carlson, Russel S. Falck, and Harvey A. Siegal, "From 'Candy Kids' to 'Chemi-Kids': A Typology of Young Adults Who Attend Raves in the Midwestern United States." *Substance Use and Misuse* 40 (9–10) 2005: 1503

according to its particular nature.<sup>113</sup> This clinical focus reveals the importance the liberal State assigns to bodies on the basis of their socioeconomic status. Primarily white and middle-class, the socioeconomic background of rave's population is of particular concern to ideas of national identity for Englishmen within the United Kingdom's government.<sup>114</sup> This is defined as a threat to the reproduction of class identity deemed critical to maintaining structure of liberal government. In these conditions, strategies for addressing the rave taboo centre upon reformatory, correctional and paternalist strategies, fusing the social construction of criminal deviance with the physiological facticity of an unhealthy body's incapacity to properly care for the self.

The relationship between the State and rave is usefully informed by Foucault's work on several interrelated themes: governmentality, pastoral power and the form of resistance that exists in specific relation to it: "counter-conduct". The third chapter addresses Foucault's theories at length. For now, it is adequate to remark that these themes combined with a critique of liberalism's politicization of medicine and healthcare in the form of bio-power provides an appropriate framework for a social theory of rave. The intensity of surveillance and investigation of rave occurs because in order to govern life it must first be known (an essential feature of biopower). As an emergent and nascent cultural artifact, rave had to be first studied and understood by the State before it could be regulated and circulated as a commodified entity in support of liberal political economy.

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<sup>113</sup>. Simon Lenton, and Peter Davidson. 1999. "Raves, Drugs, Dealing and Driving: Qualitative Data from a West Australian Sample." *Drug and Alcohol Review* 18 (2)1999: 153

<sup>114</sup>. Beatrice Aaronson, "Dancing Our Way Out of Class through Funk, Techno or Rave" *Peace Review* (1999) 231

### Legislating Rave "Powers in Relation to Raves" (1994)

In 1994 the United Kingdom targets an emerging form of culture identified by the sign rave. This censorship is echoed a decade later by the United States' brilliantly titled. Reducing Americans Vulnerability to Ecstasy (RAVE) bill. In both cases government institutions have ultimately struggled to concretely define the phenomenon subject to police regulation. The confusion is made apparent in the language of the legislation itself and it is this confusion I pursue as integral to the spectacle's history. Appearing within Part V of the act under the heading, "Public Order: Collective Trespass or Nuisance on Land" the power relations between rave and the United Kingdom are detailed under the title, "Powers in relation to raves", with the following sections dedicated to the phenomenon:

- 63. Powers to remove persons attending or preparing for a rave.
- 64. Supplementary powers of entry and seizure.
- 65. Raves: power to stop persons from proceeding.
- 66. Power of court to forfeit sound equipment<sup>115</sup>

In subsequent passages I will review this struggle between folk culture and State apparatus through the context of Foucault's concept of pastoral counter-conduct: a revolt in ethics that is principally driven by neither political nor economic motives. Before leaping ahead, however, let us first work through the legislation itself. Section 63 outlines the Statist definition of a rave:

This section applies to a gathering on land in the open air of 100 or more persons (whether or not trespassers) at which amplified music is played during the night (with or without intermissions) and is such, as by reason of its loudness and duration and the time at which it is played, is likely to cause serious distress to the inhabitants of the locality; and for this purpose –

- (a) such a gathering continues during intermissions in the music and, where the gathering extends over several days, throughout the period during which amplified music is played at night (with or without intermissions); and
- (b) "music" includes sounds wholly or predominantly characterized by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup>. United Kingdom Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, 1994

<sup>116</sup>. United Kingdom Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, 1994

Several conclusions can be drawn: raves are large 'open-air'<sup>117</sup> land gatherings. Raves occur regardless of whether or not people have legitimate access to the site (trespassing). They involve the amplification of music. The question of volume becomes a particularly sensitive issue when it endures through the night. Its intensity 'distresses' bystanders as a result of the volume and duration of event. Rave is generated by a particular (wonderfully vague) musical arrangement: defined by a, "succession of repetitive beats". This last condition, defining rave music as a "succession of repetitive beats" is the most enduring source of confusion, bemusement, and ambiguity regarding the spectacle. It is clear that the definition is vague, however the intent on the part of law makers is obvious. Legislators intend to signify music categorized within the emerging genres that may be loosely affiliated under the term "electronic". Given the rhythmic nature and homogenous structure of popular music, in passing the bill the State as well empowers local authorities to censor any music that passes a certain threshold of repetition (a threshold which is not defined). The sloppy law-making indicates that censoring all musical genres is not the State's primary intent. Instead the principle motivation is the need to empower the police to disable sound systems, disperse noisy public assemblies and to ultimately prevent raves from being organized.<sup>118</sup>

A legal definition of rave situates and grounds the significance of an emergent culture. In this way the culture itself is inextricably bound to a relationship with regulations imposed upon it by the State. While many forms of emerging popular culture draw the ire of established social

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<sup>117</sup>. (already a paradox emerges as the popular image of the rave would indicate the space of the warehouse). And indeed it is the warehouse space that gives an architectural form and geographic locale to the concept of rave.

<sup>118</sup>. Michael J. Allen, and Simon Cooper. "Howard's Way: A Farewell to Freedom?" *Source: The Modern Law Review*, (58) 1995: 365



and political elites, it is a perception of rave's unnatural, quasi-human aesthetic that triggers State interdiction. This is peculiar considering contemporary arguments of the prima-facie triviality of apolitical narrative that frames electronic music.<sup>119</sup> It would seem that the bizarreness of human-machine hybridization signifies a post-human futurity that horrifies the staunchly humanist politico-aesthetics of the State. Appearing as the amorphous aesthetic of the horizon for technological singularity suggests that the site of conflict between rave and the State gestures to a location that is partially exterior to framing conflict solely resulting from political economy and competition for resources. It is true that the State could have simply banned the musical genres 'house', 'techno', 'trance', but they lacked the vernacular knowledge required to precisely define the social ill and thus painted in broad strokes. This is likely because these genre categories seem to appear retroactively, with the process of encyclopaedic categorization mattering more to those tasked with making sense of the spectacle than it does to the raving bodies.

The case of the rave ban has contributed to a debate on the problematic role of vague language in the structure of the law itself. Rave's inclusion within the domain of criminal law results in the production of a linguistic paradox that problematizes the distribution of justice. Legal scholars have subsequently debated the linguistic structure of this law on grounds that the sign of the crime, the sign rave, amounts to what legal scholars label a vague predicate. Within the philosophy of law, vague predicates are linguistic constructs that produce logical paradoxes. They pose a problem to the rationalism of a legal system, which approaches the concept of justice through deliberation and appeals to precedent in order to deliver consistent and fair adjudications. According to this logic: in the interest of securing a rational legal system, laws

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<sup>119</sup>. Sarah C.E Riley, Christine Griffin, and Yvette Morey. "The Case for 'Everyday Politics': Evaluating Neo-Tribal Theory as a Way to Understand Alternative Forms of Political Participation, Using Electronic Dance Music Culture as an Example." *Sociology* 44 (2) 2010: 346

should not be structured in a manner that prevents judges from reaching impartial decisions. In attempting to assure liberal society that vagueness does not necessarily unravel the legal system through the arbitrary nature of deciding upon vague terms, Jeremy Waldron notes

Since words do not apply themselves, since it is we who apply them to cases, of course we may need further rules for their application, and of course we will eventually run out of analytic meaning-rules before a precise application is determined. There cannot be a rule to tell us how to apply every rule: sooner or later one simply makes a judgment. Ludwig Wittgenstein, in his later work, is responsible for the insight that judgment cannot itself amount to "following a rule" in one's own mind; in the end, it must come down simply to participating with others in a form of life.<sup>120</sup>

It will be the arbitrariness of this act of judgement in deciding the borderline cases of whether or not an event is a rave which poses a paradox for the legal system. At issue in this instance, and in this dissertation as a whole, is the cultured function of the word rave which describes the technical assembly of a sound system. From a sociolegal perspective what is of interest is how it is applied to the category of population. As a social gathering, rave is a spectacle that hinges on participating with others in a form of social interaction mediated by an operating sound system. In relation to the State it is defined as a form of crowd participation that is criminalized. Attendance is deviance, for it is the mass of bodies who populate the spectacle. Once labelled a rave, there is no longer a 'bystander'. Used as a means for the justification of using the legal system to adjudicate culture, appearance within the deviant space comes to be defined as an indication of a social illness. Still this legal rationalist perspective cannot shed itself of troubling effects of vagueness in the law: the sorites paradox. Rave is criminal, but what specifically? For whatever is illegal about rave is already found in other legal prohibitions: laws against excessive noise, laws against possession of contraband, laws against trespassing. All of these exist already. Shown in this light rave is an assemblage: a spectacle that is significant because it is more than the sum of its constituent parts.

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<sup>120</sup>. Jeremy Waldron, "Vagueness in Law and Language: Some Philosophical Issues." *California Law Review* 82 (3) 1994: 509

The legal scholar Timothy Endicott presents a discussion of rave as a sorites paradox. Endicott's analysis of rave within the law is part of a larger work on the philosophy of vagueness. He pursues a thesis that works in relation to the principle of bivalence which is paradigmatic for the operation of law itself.<sup>121</sup> In the context of the philosophy of law bivalence is a principle of formal logic stating that there are only two possibilities (yes or no) for determining whether a law does govern or does not govern a particular circumstance. Working through this logic, Endicott presents rave as signifying an event of indeterminacy as a consequence of its vague definition. What can be concluded from this assessment is that there is an irreducible vagueness intrinsic to the way in which rave is defined in law. In subsequent sections I demonstrate how this concept of vagueness harmoniously synchronizes with the effervescent metaphysics of rave's cultural discourse on the sacredness of desire for ecstatic transcendence. Before broaching the subject, we first consider rave as a sorites paradox. This is the paradox of the heap, or, stated otherwise: how many dancing bodies make a rave?

#### Rave as Sorites Paradox - "Hercules and the Quietest Rave"

In a philosophical treatise on the effect of vagueness in the law Timothy Endicott presents the scenario through proposing a thought experiment. A fictional judge named Hercules faces a series of cases requiring adjudication. I infer that Endicott names the fictional judge Hercules in order to assert that this paradox poses a logical challenge that even a 'superhuman' struggles to reason with. Hercules is a figure meant to connote exceptional capacity as a judge burdened with the responsibility to dispense justice. Endicott constructs the challenge as follows,

In prosecutions under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, Hercules would develop a conception of serious distress in the context of raves. That task would require him to develop a constructive interpretation of the law - an account of what the law requires that both fits the legal history of the United Kingdom and

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<sup>121</sup>. Timothy Endicott, *Vagueness in Law*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2001), 6

puts it in the best light. He would seek to portray the Act as a good piece of legislation, and to portray its requirements in the case before him as consistent in principle with the rest of British law. In any particular case, Hercules would find that a concert is a rave if that decision would portray the state's coercive interference with the organizer as justified by the political virtues that law ought to exhibit: justice, fairness, procedural due process and integrity." (Endicott pg. 161)

But suppose that Hercules were confronted with the whole series of concerts out of which we might construct a sorites paradox, all at once. One million rave organizers are in his court on charges of disobeying a direction to turn off their music, and they have all put on identical concerts - except that each successive defendant in the series of cases played the music at an imperceptibly lower volume than the one before. The first defendant tormented all of Shropshire; the last defendant played music that was scarcely audible.

As the volume goes down with each case, Hercules will have to choose a quietest rave, and a noisiest concert that is not a rave. He has no room to say that police interference was *somewhat* legally justified—he has to convict or acquit. Yet Hercules' fully developed conception of serious distress—the outcome of the interpretive method—cannot yield a quietest rave. It must *itself* be susceptible to sorites reasoning. His conception aims to be principled. But what scheme of principle, what constructive interpretation could account for a statement of the requirements of the law according to which one organizer in our series is convicted and the next is acquitted? How can Hercules treat  $x_i$  in the same way as  $x_0$  and treat  $x_{i+1}$  in the same way as  $x_{1,000,000}$  when  $x_i$  and  $x_{i+1}$  have done materially the same thing? Why should an imperceptible difference in volume make a polar difference to the legal outcome? An interpretation on which there is a sharp boundary will suffer in the dimension of justification, because it will lack integrity: there will be no consistency in principle between a conviction and acquittal for materially equivalent conduct. Yet, faced with the series of defendants, Hercules himself can come up with no other result.

In this predicament it seems that Hercules would suffer a nervous crisis. He would convict one rave organizer for conduct materially the same as for which the next is acquitted. He would not be able to portray those decisions as consistent in principle. Law as integrity would fail by its own standards. And this is not the sort of breakdown that might result when the interpretive attitude cannot be sustained (when, for example, no scheme of principles that fits the history of the community makes it look at all attractive). It is a breakdown that results in any legal system in which legal rules can be stated in vague language. We can leave behind the 'application' view of law in favor of the interpretive view—and the problem remains. The problem arises not only if the requirements of the law are determined by authoritative formulations of law, but if the requirements of the law can be expressed (as the outcome of the interpretive process) in language that is susceptible to the sorites paradox. Unless the paradox can be resolved, those requirements will be indeterminate in some cases.<sup>122</sup>

Endicott uses rave as an example of the problem a sorites paradox poses to the law. The sorites paradox, also referred to as the paradox of the heap, is a logical paradox appearing when one attempts to definitely categorize things that differ only marginally from each other. In this case the law defines rave in relation to an intensity of volume of sound which harms or 'causes serious distress' to others. In this scenario Hercules is forced to adjudicate on seemingly identical cases (as they are separated by a material distinction occupying the limits of aural perception: merely

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<sup>122</sup>. Endicott, *Vagueness in Law*, 162

one decibel in volume). The parallel existence of the legal concert and the illegal rave that differ from each other only by one decibel of volume initially seems to undermine the Hercules's process of decision making. If the material conditions are basically equivalent between both cases, how may a fair process of adjudication be realized? In the analytics of legal scholars this problem is fortunately not as curiously hopeless as Endicott first frames it. At the end of his book, Endicott ultimately develops a conclusion that is consistent with already established solutions to the anomaly: when vagueness in language cannot be avoided or reduced in the law, one solution is for judges to simply appeal to other reasons for justifying their decision. The 1994 UK Criminal Justice and Public Order Act provide such avenues when it notes that raves are events which not only cause distress through the volume of amplified sound but as well lack the necessary license to use the land for spectacles and entertainment. Given the absence of a clear definition of what constitutes rave, actions are taken to evade the consequent paradox of this vague legal construct.

These caveats are outlined in sections 64, "Supplementary powers of entry and seizure" 65, "Raves: power to stop persons from proceeding" and 66, "Power of court to forfeit sound equipment". The solution Endicott offers contains an admission that rave's identity is predicated on irreducible vagueness. Some events are indisputably raves, such as those which self-proclaim itself as a rave, last multiple days in a remote or re-appropriated space, and feature electronic dance music. It is also clear that some events are not raves, such as several friends listening to electronic music as they carpool to work in the morning. It nonetheless remains that borderline cases exist that are remarkably similar to one another such that the distinction of a firm cut-off point between materially equivalent cases appears as though it is arbitrary. Equally so, this dissertation encounters the inverse: events that are defined as raves by State security apparatuses

even as the event organizers specifically deny such a charge. Paradoxically it is often the events that deny the force of a rave sign that become landscapes where the raving spirit is felt most intensely. Rave's effervescence speaks to this question of spirit and the force of desire to assemble and bear witness to these spectacles.

The intrigue of Endicott's writing is not so much its impact on legal philosophy, as its conclusions are more or less in line with the accepted method of working through the role of vague predicates in the law. Rather, for the purpose of this research, Endicott's work is interesting because it addresses the phenomenon of rave without any demystification of rave as a cultural keyword. The sign is defined as essentially vague and a solution to its irreducible vagueness is subsequently developed on the basis of that premise. This focus on the vagueness of rave is of interest because of its relationship with the concept of liminality -- a similarly difficult to pinpoint or discern phenomena representing the blurring of lines and boundaries between discrete categories and states of being. Thus, the legal definition of rave is accurate, if unwittingly so. It correctly identifies rave's vagueness and places it within a liminal space that is resolved by judgement. This notion of liminality has already been explored in the context of rave's architecture.

Nonetheless the question of rave's distinction remains. Its distinction from other similar events (festivals, parties, concerts) is that it produces a *sense* of escape through liminal desire which is in turn perceived by the State, resulting in an governmentality anxious of control protocols. What defines this difference is a mythologizing of a liminal journey that narrate many ethnographic accounts of the raving body. Rave is often critically assessed as a spectacle of "pure escapism", or "meaningless escape".<sup>123</sup> It is sensed as a fleeing from reason, responsibility, duty,

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<sup>123</sup>. Wilson, *Fight Flight or Chill*, 120

or otherwise commitment to a cause or court of action. The State senses this escape -- the search for an outside, transcendence or an otherwise metaphysical beyond. Moreover, it is these sensations which produce the reflexive action of legislative banning; an attempt to ensure that subjects remain inside the space of government.

The problem that the sorites paradox poses is the notion of arbitrary decision making when it comes to the process of adjudication. In legal philosophy the Rule of Law is an ethical concept of the role the law plays in society. Consider this statement from the Supreme Court of Canada on the concept, "The rule of law vouchsafes to the citizens and residents of the country a stable, predictable and ordered society in which to conduct their affairs. It provides a shield for individuals from arbitrary state action."<sup>124</sup> Of the espoused ideals, what appears tantamount are notions of predictability, consistency, and prohibiting the arbitrary. This is echoed by a summary of the Rule of Law published by a Faculty of Law in their introduction to Common Law for newly admitted law students,

Common Law judges are law-makers but they make law by supposedly unearthing customs and rules. They are not supposed to invent new principles from the ether. Common law judges ensure consistency, continuity and certainty in the law by abiding by the doctrine of precedent, that is the concept of *stare decisis*. Common law courts, however, amend the law they make in this manner by distinguishing, reinterpreting or overhauling past decisions and by reinterpreting the requirements of *stare decisis* and the extent to which they are bound by their past decisions.<sup>125</sup>

In presenting scenarios that differ only marginally from one another, the sorites paradox challenges the prohibition of arbitrariness and desire for certainty. When it comes to adjudicating seemingly equivalent cases, the borderline situations that characterize a sorites paradox threaten the predictive capacity necessary for establishing a condition of legal certainty. That judges may come to different decisions regarding materially equivalent cases is a challenge to philosophies

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<sup>124</sup>. Lexisnexis Canada: Rule of Law  
<https://www.lexisnexis.ca/en-ca/about-us/rule-of-law.page>

<sup>125</sup>. uOttawa Faculty of Law Orientation

of justice and the system of Common Law. This conclusion appears in a review of Endicott's text published by the Oxford Journal of Legal Studies.

For the principal source of the problem for a judge in (say) a sorites series is not that there is a metaphysical indeterminacy as such, but rather the appropriate cut-off points are not discoverable. If a cut off-point exists but is not discoverable, then a judge can no more be guided by it than if it didn't exist at all. It is only if both the law and the facts are decidable that a judge can make a grounded judgement<sup>126</sup>

The arbitrariness of defining the boundary between lawful and unlawful in the context of rave is derived from the sensations produced by each discrete event. Given the opacity of its legal qualification -- the emitting of a "succession of repetitive beats", what is left regarding the adjudication of a rave event relies on a combination of corollary infractions (zoning and noise laws) as well as the presence of penumbral rave indicators, such as a caravan travelling with a large sound system, or participants uttering the taboo sign itself. In exploring the consequence of Endicott's usage of rave as a case study in the legal theory of vague predicates, the solution to the issue is framed as follows,

...sometimes, even when the law is vague, 'judges have a duty to give (in fact, to *impose*) resolution' (198). In the example of the sorites series of raves, the magistrate must provide a cut-off point, even though there is insufficient reason to choose one cut-off point rather than another very close to it. However, although this means that when she does so, the magistrate will be acting at *one* level inconsistently, unpredictably, and in a manner partly unconstrained by the facts, at *another* level, she will be acting in quite the opposite manner, at least if she is acting conscientiously. Thus she will *have* to act in a manner that will seem arbitrary at one level, but at the higher level she will be constrained to do this by the very nature of the law. Equally, although she will make judgements that will seem inconsistent at one level, if she goes about it in the right way, her judgements will be consistent with other judgements of a similar sort, at least to the extent that they cohere with general structural requirements on vague laws -- as that any such judgement must come from salient penumbral areas. Finally, although which way she decides on this particular occasion could not be known in advance, at least if she deliberates conscientiously, the fact that she will have to make one such judgement from the penumbral areas will. All of this means that if potential ravers do not wish to be punished for organizing a rave, they should avoid organizing not only definite raves, but also what might reasonably be thought of as penumbral raves. If they do not, their gatherings run the risk -- consistently, predictably and in an appropriately constrained manner -- of being placed in the category of raves.<sup>127</sup>

While this conclusion may satisfy those interested in preserving the integrity of legal philosophy, it is certainly less appealing to those involved in electronic music's production and performance.

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<sup>126</sup>. S. G. Williams, "Indeterminacy and the Rule of Law." *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 24 (3) 2004: 542

<sup>127</sup>. Williams, "Indeterminacy and the Rule of Law", 562



And while the integrity of a Common Law system perhaps holds more value for contemporary society than dance parties, the paradox remains. With it comes the troubling appearance of arbitrary power: "...judges have a duty to give (in fact, to *impose*) resolution." The spectre of power relations is sensed here in the shadowy notion of the penumbral. The arbitrary distribution of justice is prevented if adjudication is done responsibly. In this case through an appeal to what could be reasonably thought of as the salient areas relevant to 'penumbral raves'. Extrapolating from this logic it appears as though the definition of rave is inherently networked. It becomes a spectacle that is an assemblage of things: bodies, music, dancing, intensity of noise, temporal duration, categorization through forms of genre and aesthetics. At some point, the spectacle becomes more than the sum of its constituent parts. It transitions from noisy concert to quietest rave. However even if one appeals to the shadow of rave, the tools for decision making remain problematic. While the minutia and semantics are intriguing, a unifying narrative exists. The key for the organizers of these dance parties is to avoid "being placed in the category of raves." Thus, they must stay out rave's shadow as conceptualized by the reasonable ideations of the rational judiciary.

#### "It's Not a Rave Officer, Its Performance Art"

The vagueness of rave's liminal geography is often explored by social and cultural anthropology. One particularly interesting account appears in a conference paper delivered by Tobias van Veen. Here one sees an account of a liminal site that places the participants in a state of ambiguity regarding transgression and an ambiguity of the transgressive act itself. Did it transgress the law? Was the event a crime? Narrating an encounter at the University of British Columbia, van Veen describes a confusing scenario that depicts the spectre of the absurd and the frustrations of arbitrary authority which lurks beneath the surface of a rationalized legal system.

It's 2:30am and the police have arrived and in force. Truncheons and pepper spray. Above the trailhead are waiting paddy wagons. The organisers are standing back and surveying the moment. The needles screech to a halt. Re-wind, a memory flash, a warehouse just a few weeks ago, where a bust became violent, police storm, breaking cameras, fingers, and the law. Ravers publicly strip-searched, decks destroyed and beatings behind this industrial structure of cement and metal. Tonight there is a strange turn in the air. An organiser is talking to the Constable. There is a pause in the proceedings. "It's not a rave," says the green-and-red fatigued DJ, "it's performance art." She says this clearly with the tone of one who is taking a measured stand. The Constable is stunned. "But you're dancing!" he says. "No we're not," says the organiser, absolutely pokerface, "we're performing bodily expression. What is dancing?" The Constable, flabbergasted, wiggles his arms in exasperation. "Now that's dancing!" says the organiser. Surprisingly, perhaps caught slightly off guard, the party--performance ?--is broken up peacefully. But not before the Constable tells the participants in an exasperated voice: "Why don't you just go to the big legal rave happening next week at UBC?!"<sup>128</sup>

There is a fundamental messiness in securing the ideals of lawful order in a world of chaotic materiality. Of parsing out figurations of intolerable deviance from constitutionally enshrined rights to self-expression. The peculiar absence of a clear identity for the criminal body is put on display in this ethnographic mis-en-scene. Most wondrous is the 'exasperated' appeal to the "big legal rave": it begs for a connection to the language which structures the conditions of its permissibility. The paradox exposes the question, what renders bodies deviant and thus subject to forcible intervention? Of course, there is the obvious: drug use and criminal trespassing, but the police officer's exhausted voice speaks to the exhaustion of the sign itself -- through legislation it becomes licensed -- the problem is supposed to have been solved! Go to the "big legal rave" and evade this paradoxical space where bodies are held in the suspense of judgment regarding the nature of the event they have assembled.

Like all ethnography, fact from fiction, storytelling or journalism asks that the reader trust the author. Rather than treat this scenario as fact and thus hinge analysis on the truth of the event's history, instead I work with the narrative provided by the text. For van Veen there is a

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<sup>128</sup>. tobias c. van Veen, "It's Not A Rave, Officer, It's Performance Art: Art as Defense from the Law and as Offense to Society in the Break-In Era of Rave Culture." Conference Manuscript. (U of Calgary: University Art Association of Canada) 4

drive that approaches the contours of fascistic militarization, an *e'spirit du corps* that is entrained by the intensity of sound. It is one that may ultimately threaten the physiology of raving bodies.

A raver's relation to masochism: not something that is often talked of in rave culture. In masochism we approach rave's dangerous dance with a sonic fascism, an aural passion for abolition, an obliteration by sound, a sacrifice to the speaker...The DJ's position as spinning sonic narratives amounts to an aural history physically interpreted by the body. At points, attempts were made to push this sonic response to the limit, to see how far a dancing body becomes its relentless beats, embraces a militancy, becomes-intense in what can be seen as a dangerous escape. Seen from experience: the warehouse littered at 7am with the passed-out bodies of fallen dancers.<sup>129</sup>

The transcendent exteriority of exhaustion rave mythologizes is what justifies arbitrary judgement in the face of imperceptible material differences between spectacles (volume, distress, etc). The event contained under the title, "big legal rave" attempts to siphon some of this energy off into the logic of consumer behaviour in order to maintain a transactional economy. However, the utility of this does not necessarily change how the event is perceived. It is what is *felt* by those assigned the responsibility to judge (make sense of) that casts a shadow of rave. The distinction generated by such sensation cannot be justified quantitatively: an arbitrary point of demarcation must be decided upon. This sensation is affective in that rave indicates attempts to realize escapist fantasy.

### Legislating Caravans: A National Investigation, A New Age of Travel (1958)

A curious actant to consider in relation to the travelling nomadism of rave sound systems are mobile caravans. Their influence on social life is germane to the atmosphere of moral panic disseminated by the rave massive's liminal journey. This section develops a narrative of the mobile caravan's mass production and proliferation as a technology that empowers a cascade of lifestyle arrangements that the State comes to regulate and normalize. This history can be traced to the effect of mass production and distribution of Caravan 'mobile homes' produced by English

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<sup>129</sup>. van Veen, "It's Not A Rave, Officer, It's Performance Art", 5

automobile manufacturers in the late 1950s. The motorized augmentation to of the caravan increases the range of mobility of the population to participate in nomadic lifestyles. As a mode of travel, caravan accommodations improve upon the tradition of caravanning through improving the standard of living available to those who live in such conditions. After a decade of growing sales, the State reacts by introducing the "Caravan Sites and Control of Development Bill" on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1960. Introducing the bill, the Minister of Housing and Local Government and Minister for Welsh Affairs, Henry Brooke, remarks,

The modern caravan may move about, but it has come to stay. More and more people find caravans a lovely way of having holidays, even though caravans clustered together in the wrong places may be anything but lovely. Large numbers of people are living in caravans all the year round. This being a free country, they should be free to do so, although it may well be that most of them are hoping to move out of their caravans into houses of their own one day.

The law relating to caravans leaves a lot to be desired. I doubt whether anyone would challenge that. Certainly not the caravan interests. Certainly not the local authorities. I believe that people generally, knowing that some caravan sites are bad and having read about troubles on some of them, have a common feeling that things are not really as they should be. That is definitely the view of the Government.

The Bill represents a carefully worked out plan to do justice to caravaners, to get caravans on to the right sites and off the wrong ones, to bring attractiveness to caravan sites as well as all modern conveniences, to give freedom to the single travelling caravan, and to stop the caravan slum.<sup>130</sup>

In identifying the dividing line demarcating "right from wrong" in terms of the proper sites for caravans a pariah appears. One is the Roma people, an ethnic group historically marginalized, persecuted or otherwise ignored by European nation-states. The other is a

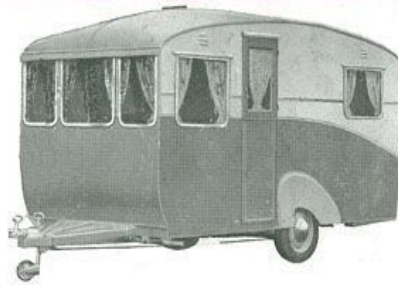
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<sup>130</sup>. United Kingdom Caravan Sites and Control of Development Bill (1960)

The BAILEY MAESTRO-14ft. FOUR-BERTH CARAVAN

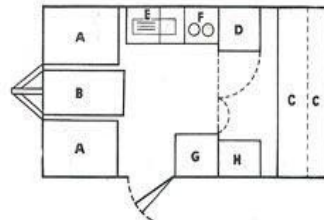


Price  
ex-works  
£329



Touring and  
Holiday  
Model

Fully  
Guaranteed



DATA	
Unladen Weight, ex works	15 cwt.
Towing Bar Height	18in
Body Length	14ft
Body Width	6ft 6in
Overall Length	17ft 2in
Overall Height	8ft
Maximum Headroom	6ft 4in

- A. Seats—Convertible with B to "Double Dinette" (day) or "Double Bed" (night)
- B. Table—detachable
- C. Settee—Convertible to Double or two Single Beds (one above the other)

- D. Wardrobe
- E. Sink Unit
- F. Cooking Unit
- G. Food Cabinet
- H. Chest of Drawers etc.

**CHASSIS.**

Manufactured from high-grade steel and of robust construction, fitted with Jockey Wheel and standard Ball-hitch coupling complete with cable type hand-operated brakes, four brace-operated Parking Jacks and complete with "stop-go" rear lights and number plate.

**BODY.**

All aluminium "exterior shell and roof" of modern design, including fibre-glass mudguards and special tow-bar casing, fully insulated and painted in "high gloss" two-tone colour scheme thus ensuring full protection against all weather conditions. Eight polished aluminium framed, rounded corner, adjustable type windows (2 fixed & opening) providing maximum light and ventilation when required. Stable-type Entrance Door with patterned glass window in upper section, also fixed ventilators, two Gas Light Fittings of modern type, "amber" perspex adjustable Roof Vent, etc., etc.

**INTERIOR FIXTURES & FITTINGS.**

Centrally situated "Cooking Cabinet" with polished light oak fold-down top, containing gas-heated Griller, with two burners, ho in an aluminium lined fire proof recess, also Modern Perspex Sink Unit, with Drainer, etc., below which are fitted large cupboards with sliding polished wooden fronts and above which there is a Roof Locker with sliding art glass front for china, etc. On the opposite side of the Caravan will be found a large "Kitchen Unit" for food storage comprising four Cupboards with fitted shelves etc., and drop-down "food preparation flap", adjoining which there is a Chest of Drawers. There is also a spacious Wardrobe, which has a large Mirror, fitted to the outer side of the door, and a folding Partition fitted to the inner side.

**SLEEPING & LIVING ACCOMMODATION.**

This comprises a large Settee at the rear end which is easily convertible to either a Double Bed or two Single Beds (one above the other) and there is also a Double Bed at the front end, which during the day forms a "Double Dinette" with the use of the large polished detachable wooden Table.

All the furniture is executed in French polished light oak with the very latest fixtures and fittings, and all mattresses are of the interior sprung type specially built to provide maximum comfort combined with general usefulness, and upholstered in good quality hard wearing material of attractive and pleasing design. There is also a fitted carpet and curtains to match the general layout.

\* Model is especially constructed for easy conversion to a "Five Berth" by the purchase of additional bed-board and mattress.

\*The manufacturers reserve the right to modify specifications or prices without further notice

**F. G. BAILEY LTD.**

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BRISTOL, 3



For Fine Finish "BETTER BUY BAILEY"

*1959 Advertisement for a Mobile Caravan*

population of English nationals participating in the 'counter-cultural' social movements of the 1960s. This population comes to be known as "New Age Travellers" and are defined as such,

**NOUN**

**1**

A person who is travelling or who often travels.  
*'thousands of air travellers were left stranded'*

*'business travellers'*

More example sentences

**1.1** *British* A Gypsy or other nomadic person.

Example sentences

*'Millionaire residents have been stunned to learn of a farmer's plan to sell land in their affluent Cheshire neighbourhood to gypsy travellers.'*

*'Mr James, who recovered, was left in intensive care after a brawl at a travellers ' wedding led to him being shot.'*

*'Many Romany gypsies and Irish travellers have since been unable to find suitable sites and have occupied land without planning permission.'*

*'The proposals were first floated in a report produced by a council-led scrutiny inquiry into gypsies and travellers and were revealed in the Daily Echo in October.'*

*Police have revealed a feud between rival travellers ' gangs led to three men being shot in Wickford.'*

**1.2** *British* A person who holds New Age values and leads an itinerant and unconventional lifestyle.

In this definition one sees that all iterations share a common depiction of the traveller as a figure of strangeness, disorder, and social dysfunction. It is as well loaded with prejudiced language towards the Roma people. The example sentences all describe the 'function' of the traveller as engaging in various acts of deviance. As well we see the inclusion of the Roma within the British idiom. Recalling Williams's statement on the significance of 'range' in dictionary definitions I turn to a discussion of how State paternalism regulates this modality as its popularity grows among the British working class.

### "New Age" As Mode of Travel and Lifestyle

Although the measured and reasoned language used by Henry Brooke on the topic of caravan accommodations depicts a situation of an orderly calmness, the legal documentation portrays conflict and debate over what exactly is to be done. While the State appeals discursively to the population's 'free-will' choose their desired living arrangements, such a discourse is balanced by the development of numerous strategies for intervening and regulating the lifestyle choices made. For example, commentary on the issue of living in caravans appears in the English journal *Law Review*,

THE caravan, " shining with newness, painted a canary yellow picked out with green, and red wheels " was once perhaps no more than the romantic's dream of escape from reality. Now for many people it provides their only home; the industry which produced 1,000 caravans was building twenty years caravans each year.<sup>2</sup> There could hardly be a clearer the impact of social change on the law than the law involving caravans. Caravan sites now boast their own statute, having caused "more litigation than any other type of development."<sup>131</sup>

The introduction of motorized caravans empowered the domestic population to exercise their rights to mobility and free assembly. In this way the caravan contributes to materializing this 'romantic dream of escape from reality' and develops a very real lifestyle that is supported by such mobilization. Along with this came an increase in civic conflict over precisely constituting rights of access, free assembly, and what defines the unlawful or deviant counterpart of squatting and trespassing. This debate becomes the "national issue" of caravan accommodations.

An important context to keep in mind is that what is mean by 'national' is the question of the *specific* population demographics who are pursuing this escapist dream. The State is alarmed by *who* the travelling bodies are. The dividing line struck through the concept of nationalism is made clear. As we will see it is not the Roma, who have for centuries suffered disenfranchisement, rather what is troubling to the English State is that the caravans are filled

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<sup>131</sup>. Paul Jackson, "The Law and the Caravan." *The Modern Law Review* 28 (2) 1965: 217

with young British citizens who seek escape from the enclosing of life associated with urbanism. What becomes problematic is the desire for this population to 'drop out' and flee from the urban city centre in favour of a transient life lived on the border of town-country itself. In the case of rave this geography involves both the movement out of the city as well as the repurposing of the urban cavernous spaces, which, like the rural fields, become fallow when the economy shudders.

That the nomadic behaviours of caravan communities are perceived as a threat to the State's organizing of civil society and subject to paternal reform is significant because of the initial support for the caravan itself. In the early 1950s British automotive manufacturers introduce the caravan to the domestic market.<sup>132</sup> Caravans and mobile homes are publicly marketed as an ideal form of leisure activity and holiday locale. They are presented as a vacation option available to all social classes, appealing particularly to those who could not afford to travel by plane. That their existence becomes politically problematic is interesting in relation to the at times opaque ways technology augments social reality.

The notion of the 'mobile home' and the appearance of supposedly dilapidated and makeshift caravan encampments stokes socioeconomic tension. A racist element is derived from the historic disenfranchisement of Roma populations, whose distinct cultural practices in regard to arranging domestic environment are subject to an ongoing process of delegitimization and criminalization. Here class antagonism intertwines racial prejudice. While caravans are marketed as an affordable vacation option, in practice they operate as semi-permanent housing. As encampments dot the landscape surrounding highways, their cultural aesthetic comes to represent

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<sup>132</sup>. Alison Ravetz and R. Turkington, *The Place of Home: English Domestic Environments, 1914-2000*. (London: Routledge, 2011) 25



a rejection of the socioeconomic conditions of modern urbanism. This is an unexpected development to the urban planners.

Thus, in the late 1950s the notion that caravan sites are becoming a problem is debated in parliament. From this debate is the conclusion that caravans pose a problem on two grounds: public health and city planning.<sup>133</sup> The appearance of such sites is framed as resistance to an expanding suburban environment developed by State funded social policy. Earlier we saw how their aesthetic is discussed in moderated language. These caravan sites are 'unsightly' and their aesthetic is suggestive of a failure by ministries responsible for housing and urban planning to improve the living conditions within urban areas and thus quell desire to escape the 'urban trappings' of responsible and productive full-time employment. In this vein is, as well, that caravans signified an idea challenging the vision of the British Empire as an advancing civilization, with caravans recalling a return of medieval dark-age practices: the sight of horse-drawn carriages chartered by social dropouts and aesthetic misfits confronted the assigned value for the beauty of modern living arrangements and the progress of a civilizing project. That the aesthetic perception of the caravan site as 'unsightly' renders it subject to the medico-legal gaze is critical to its legislative process.

In 1958 the House of Commons publishes several administrative documents offering recommendations and possible strategies. On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1958 Lord Beswick, a Labour party MP and Lord Bevens, a Tory who is part of the incumbent government debate the issue:

Mr. Beswick

I asked the Minister of Housing and Local Government and Minister for Welsh Affairs whether he will request Sir Arton Wilson, who is to conduct an inquiry on his behalf into the nature and extent of the use of caravans as residential accommodation, to include within his inquiry the special problem of the Romany caravan dwellers.

Mr. Bevens

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<sup>133</sup>. Caravan Sites Control and Development Act (1960)

No, Sir. As the hon. Member indicates, the Romany caravan dwellers are a special class and my right hon. Friend does not think that they create problems which require a national investigation. In any event, I am afraid it could only complicate and prolong Sir Arton Wilson's investigation to include them and that my right hon. Friend is not willing to do.

Mr. Beswick

I am bound to say that I am rather surprised at that answer. As the hon. Gentleman is aware, the local authorities throughout West Middlesex who asked to see him on the special problem of the itinerant caravan dweller have been told that no purpose can be served in seeing him because the inquiry is to be conducted by Sir Arton Wilson. Surely, the hon. Gentleman is ignoring the problem which the local authorities have brought before him.

Mr. Bevins

I do not agree. The major problem with which the House is concerned is the normal caravan problem rather than the gipsy problem. The inquiry would only be complicated and prolonged if it were extended in the way suggested.

Mr. Beswick

I asked the Minister of Housing and Local Government and Minister for Welsh Affairs whether, in the course of his inquiry into the use of caravans as residential accommodation, Sir Arton Wilson will be taking evidence from local authorities; what invitations are being sent to such local authorities; and when the invitations will be sent.

Mr. Bevins

I understand that Sir Arton Wilson proposes to invite evidence from local authorities and my right hon. Friend would prefer to leave the arrangements in his hands.

Mr. Beswick

Will the Parliamentary Secretary say how his right hon. Friend proposes to deal with this other difficult problem of the Romany or itinerant caravan dweller, which constitutes such a nuisance, especially on the outskirts of the Metropolis? Is the Minister simply shirking the issue, or does he propose to do anything about it?

Mr. Bevins

My right hon. Friend is not shirking the issue. We want to confine the inquiry to the major problem. The Romany problem is not a national one but varies from area to area.<sup>134</sup>

This exchange is quoted at length because it offers insight into the State's logic in regulating caravans. This logic calls attention to the medico-legal process that requires knowledge of the caravan population's demography in order for State policy to mediate the issue. In the cited dialogue it seems that the most urgent concern is the usage of caravans as residential accommodation. This is indicated by its label as the 'major problem' effecting a nation. Interestingly, this definition is one that *a priori* excludes the Roma population. This is a result of

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<sup>134</sup>. United Kingdom. *House of Commons Debates*, Caravans (Inquiry) 16 December 1958  
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1958/dec/16/caravans-inquiry>

prejudicial bias within government that identifies them as an 'Other', and therefore occupying a subordinate to English society. In addressing the national problem of caravans, the government of the United Kingdom takes its first step by dividing the population of caravan communities in such a way that Roma populations are excluded from paternalist regulations. This move is consistent across much of Europe: that the Roma population are historically subject to discriminatory treatment at the hands of the ruling class. Thus, in this specific case the "Romany caravan dwellers" are identified as a "special class" and excluded from the category of English ethnicity. In this light, 'special' does not indicate privilege; rather it refers to government neglect, disinterest and disenfranchisement. Much of the state's *raison d'etre* is revealed in this passage. Lord Bevin's desire to segregate the Roma caravans from the English caravans seems to indicate that the fantasy of a shared national identity is always bound to an idealized aesthetic of ethnicity.

While nations occupy and govern physical territory, nationality begins as a concept that is in turn projected onto landscape. This disconnection of national identity from geographic locality is made apparent in Lord Bevin's statement, "The Romany problem is not a national one but varies from area to area.". In this case the national problem of caravans is a problem because they contain a growing English population of the nation of 'Englishman' – the national population of Britain, not all citizens governed within the sovereign territory of the United Kingdom (which would include the Roma). Here we see that the definition of the problem facing English nationalism, in its categorical exclusivity, is a specific subject of the government's investigation, and that problem is defined as "...the nature and extent of the use of caravans as residential accommodation" by an *English* national population. This point is stressed by Lord Bevin who argues that including the Roma within this category would negatively impact the

research program and, "...confuse and prolong the inquiry". The urgency of the caravan site issue meant that, "We want to confine the inquiry to the major problem". That problem, again, is identified as the problem of British --not the Roma-- residing in mobile homes and adopting nomadic styles of living instead of sedentary life within metropolitan space.

Lord Bevin and Lord Beswick's debate unfolds in the context of anticipating the findings that will be produced by Sir Arton Wilson, who is tasked to produce a study of the living conditions and familial arrangements of caravan sites and publishes his findings in a document entitled "Caravans as Homes" in 1959.<sup>135</sup> Wilson's findings prompt the government to produce the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act in 1960, requiring that caravan sites come under a system of registration and licensing designed to ensure that they are used as temporary vacation properties and not permanent residencies. Wilson's report is one element that begins a much broader program of social and medical research into the quality of life within caravan sites, with an acute focus on its effect on children and their prospects for socioeconomic development.

Dr. G. Hodgkin, a general practitioner, publishes one such medical report that is used by the legal system as a way of justifying regulatory action on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1960. His research is an addendum to Wilson's disappointing conclusions which did not strongly point to the need for the State to intervene on the issue. Dr. Hodgkin thus notes that

[Wilson's] report says that, though many local authorities are concerned about the ill effects of caravan life, they have not been able to show whether caravan dwellers are in fact less healthy, for such reasons, than the general population.<sup>136</sup>

As a result of this insufficient data, Dr. Hodgkin develops a longitudinal study regarding the health problems experienced by caravan populations, with the intention of addressing this "lack

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<sup>135</sup>. Unfortunately this document exists only as a hard-copy in the British national archives and so my discussion of its content are limited to second hand interpretations produced by other scholars in the field.

<sup>136</sup>. G.K.H. Hodgkin, "Caravans as Homes: A "Retrospective Record Survey", *British Medical Journal* 1960: 854

of data". To this end he states, "The objects of this paper are to produce statistical evidence that the health of children who lived on one permanent caravan site was not as good as that of their counterparts from orthodox homes." The study concludes

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the greater incidence of disease in the caravan children should be attributed to the 'caravan life' itself. Several factors may have been responsible: (1) Inadequate washing and baths... (2) Close contact of families and shortage of space... (3) The excessive and sudden difference in temperature and humidity which are marked in caravan life.

Thus, by the early 1960s the transient aspects of caravan life are identified by the State as an urgent social problem constituting a threat to both the vision of a strong economy supported by a workforce of metropolitan industry and finance. This problem is connected directly to the well-being and health of the demographic population on the basis of the residential accommodations they live in. In this way caravan dwelling becomes a site of deviance that is intervened upon.

To address this issue, methods of research instigate practices of subdivision and classification, isolating population demographics so that precise aspects regarding age, health and background may be determined. Beginning with the initial exclusion of the Roma as belonging to the population in question, strategies for controlling the population are tailored to the acute specificity of the demographic in question. Lord Bevin and Lord Beswick's exchange demonstrates that in order to govern the nomadic elements of English society effectively, the population must be first subdivided into more specific categories. Revealed within the language of this governmental discourse, is the notion that the cultural practices of English nomads are of more acute significance to the United Kingdom than the enduring problems of poverty and xenophobia that afflict the Roma population. In turn Roma caravans will receive their own specific legislative action derived from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government's 1968 report, "Gypsies and other travellers". Within are policy strategies that are criticized by social workers for doing little to alleviate the Roma's exclusion and marginalization from English

society. Of critical interest to the subject of rave is the stark contrast of this policy of excluding the Roma juxtaposed against repeated attempts to integrate and reform the population of English caravan dwellers.

Government policy on caravans at this time makes it clear that the issue of British nomadism is viewed as a population crisis, whereas the place of Roma communities in the United Kingdom's field of socioeconomic status is understood as operating within the accepted boundaries of normality. Of significance to this is the fact that the communities of new age travellers and subsequently, rave, will source largely from this same demographic of British citizens. This claim is supported by its similarity to arguments advanced in, "The Place of Home: English domestic environments, 1914-2000". In their study of English domestic environments, Alison Ravetz and R. Turkington's summarize the issue of New Age travel as follows,

New Age travellers introduced a fresh dimension to the problem of fitting nomadism into a settled society. They were not rooted in any ancient tradition as gypsies were, but rather self-selected 'drop-outs' from urbanized industrial society who came to prominence in the 1960s. Many were completely individualistic but many, perhaps the majority, had a strong sense of solidarity in their taste for illegal drugs and for national festivals of music, alternative therapies and cult observances such as Stonehenge...there were real contradictions in travelling lifestyles that were difficult for sedentary citizens to come to terms with. Thus New Age travellers liked to hibernate in winter (typically in otherwise hard-to-let council flats) and they were content to pay road tax and collect unemployment benefit; but come spring they wanted the freedom to roam, and their festivals and 'raves' made urgent physical demands on otherwise quiet rural districts...At best, settled society tolerated nomadism when it could be accommodated on margins and fringes not wanted by anyone else...it viewed [New Age] travellers as deviants who, ideally, should be persuaded or coerced into sedentary living.<sup>137</sup>

While Ravetz and Turkington conflate rave with their new age traveller predecessors, there are distinctions to be noted between these various groups that share a nomadology. Addressing the similarities and differences between such forms of nomadic community attends to a genealogical network that allows us to document how certain cultural practices become subject to government intervention. From there it is possible to theorize and infer what such decisions tell us about the State itself. Stark and confrontational differences in culture and values exist between the

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<sup>137</sup> Ravetz and Turkington, *The Place of Home: English domestic environments*, 100

generations of people gathered under the label New Age travellers versus the younger, fledgling rave population. Both share cultural practice crystallized through the cycle of festive rituals. Indeed for rave, the moment of festival, or the territorial space of rave, materializes and embodies such fantasy through a wide range of cultural practices.<sup>138</sup> In the early 1980s, electronic dance music articulated through the musical genres known as disco, acid house and techno, generate communities responsible for organizing and assembling rave and then subsequently appear at festivals sites organized by caravans of new age travellers. From these experiences a new vocabulary describing rave's cultural aesthetics develops.

As we have seen, rave is organized by 'sound systems' – groups of people responsible for sourcing and assembling the materials needed to host electronic music performances. The conflict between these two cultural formations will centre largely on musical taste. Whereas festivals such as the one held at Stonehenge feature more traditional forms of folk music performance, centred on enduring aspects of folk culture such as spoken-word storytelling and acoustic music, rave will naturalize the aesthetic of technoculture in a way which at first alienates and transforms the mythological storytelling and narrative based artwork of new age travel's pacifist and often technophobic political philosophy. In this vein conflict will not be the only invasive culture to the sites of new age festival, the more militantly anti-State ethos of punk manifests itself in the genres of music known as Jungle, Hardcore, and Drum and Bass. A digitization of sonic militancy appears amongst the population of attendees.<sup>139</sup> Emerging from

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<sup>138</sup> Anthony D'andrea, "Global nomads: Techno and new age as transnational countercultures in Ibiza and Goa." In *Rave culture and religion*, edited by G. St John, (London: Routledge, 2004), 236

<sup>139</sup> Emily Ferrigno, "The Dark Side: Representing Science Fiction in Drum 'n' Bass." *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 9 (1) 2011: 97

these clashes of culture is proliferation of rave sound systems whose festivals mimic, embody and assimilate the nomadic life of the New Age travel festival circuitry.<sup>140</sup>

### Field and Force: The Battle of the Beanfield (1985)

On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1985 a pivotal moment in the relation of power between State regulation and the nomadism of caravanning populations occurs. Police are deployed in order to block roads leading to the prehistoric monument Stonehenge. They are tasked with preventing access to the site grounds in order to prevent the festival from taking place. The road blockade diverts a convoy of around 600 people in vehicles and mobile homes into a nearby field. It is reported that there are attempts made ram through police road barriers. Unsuccessful, they subsequently barricade themselves inside their vehicles. A tense standoff ensues as police surround the makeshift encampment. The stalemate culminates with riot police overwhelming the group, arresting members of the caravan convoy en masse. Approximately 1300 police officers are deployed, and hundreds are arrested. As arrests begin, resistance to the process of mass detention grows increasingly violent. Police use significant force in order to arrest those barricaded inside vehicles.<sup>141</sup>

Local news organizations depict a chaotic scene, with vehicles set on fire or otherwise damaged irreparably. The aftermath of the violence results in a significant disruption to the effected community. Children are removed from the care of their parents who are summoned to court in order to defend against charges of child abuse, malnutrition, and neglect. Families taking part in the procession are deemed negligent in their duty to provide care for the minors they are

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<sup>140</sup>. Andrew Hill, "Acid House and Thatcherism: Noise, the Mob, and the English Countryside." *British Journal of Sociology* (53) 2002: 89

<sup>141</sup>. McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty*, 160



responsible for. The intensity of the skirmish results in the end of the annual Stonehenge Free Festival (1974-1984), a folk festival organized around the summer solstice at a site of cultural significance to pagan rituals. Since the early 2000s people are once again allowed to return to the site for the purpose of observing pagan beliefs linked to the summer solstice, although the event is now officially licensed. The festival's popularity brought tens of thousands of people to the site and is often framed as a binding mythology or folk legend of attempts organize communal life along interpretations of anarcho-communism.<sup>142</sup>

Framing the sociopolitical ramifications of the Battle of the Beanfield necessitates considering the impact of legislation on distinguishing private from public spheres of society.<sup>143</sup> Through trespassing upon land, the new age travellers infringe upon the property rights of those who possess lawful title, in this case the territory of Stonehenge comes under the jurisdiction of "Crown land", a status of belonging to the government of the United Kingdom and subject to their terms of use. The struggle for control of this contested public space is territorialized by intensifying the sanctions applied to trespassing, upgrading it from a civil nuisance into criminal act. The deviant bodies, trespassers, are a population gathered under the label of 'new age travellers': squatters, vagrants and 'of no fixed address' nomads who form travelling caravans that roam the English countryside, spending their summer months organizing festivals and selling handicrafts as a way of sustaining their lifestyle.<sup>144</sup>

Population demographics indicate lower-income, 'working-class' regions of England and while their reasons and motivations vary, many scholars point to the collapse of stable work in

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<sup>142</sup>. McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty*, 103

<sup>143</sup>. Zoe James, "Policing Space: Managing New Travellers in England." *British Journal of Criminology* 46 (3) 2006: 470

<sup>144</sup>. Peter Kabachnik, "Place Invaders: Constructing the Nomadic Threat in England." *Geographical Review* 100 (1) 2010: 95

the manufacturing industry,<sup>145</sup> inflating costs of urban living, and a rejection of the sociopolitical values of nuclear familial structures as being significant motivating factors. The violence that marked the Battle of the Beanfield is subsequently used by the government of England to justify expanding police power regarding the nature of trespassing as a criminal offence. For these caravan communities, group assembly through squatting in uninhabited territory is targeted by legislation restricting access to public land in the 1986 law. Part V of the act authorizes the police to lay newly created criminal charges specific to trespassers who refuse to obey police instructions to leave land under the following conditions:

39, (1) If the senior police officer reasonably believes that two or more persons have entered land as trespassers and are present there with the common purpose of residing there for trespassers to any period, that reasonable steps have been taken by or behalf of the occupier to ask them to leave the land.

(a) that any of those persons has caused damage to property on the land or used threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour towards the occupier, a member of his family or an employee or agent of his,

or

(b) that those persons have between them brought twelve or more vehicles on to the land, he may direct those persons, or any of them, to leave the land.

(2) If a person knowing that such a direction has been given which applies to him-

(a) fails to leave the land as soon as reasonably practicable,

or

(b) having left again enters the land as a trespasser within the period of three months beginning with the day on which the direction was given, he commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale, or both.

(3) A constable in uniform who reasonably suspects that a person is committing an offence under this section may arrest him without warrant.

(4) In proceedings for an offence under this section it is a defence for the accused to show-

(a) that his original entry on the land was not as a trespasser,

or

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<sup>145</sup>. The Economist, 'The Travelers Club.', 15-21 August 1992.

(b) that he had a reasonable excuse for failing to leave the land as soon as reasonably practicable or, as the case may be, for again entering the land as a trespasser.

PART V " occupier " means the person entitled to possession of the land by virtue of an estate or interest held by him;

" property " means property within the meaning of section 1971 c. 48. 10(1) of the Criminal Damage Act 1971;" senior police officer " means the most senior in rank of the police officers present at the scene;

"trespasser", in relation to land, means a person who is a trespasser as against the occupier of the land;

"vehicle" includes a caravan as defined in section 29(1) 1960 c. 62. of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960; and a person may be regarded for the purposes of this section as having the purpose of residing in a place notwithstanding that he has a home elsewhere.<sup>146</sup>

In practical application, the bill is intended to prevent the assembly of ad-hoc caravan sites on public land. Such regulation is aimed at addressing the growing population of English citizens who are defining domestic life along the axis of nomadic travel and temporary squatting.<sup>147</sup>

The law is demonstrably comprehensive in tackling the issue. The social relation labelled as new age travel is thus regulated through its definition within the law. A caravan is defined as a possible combination of two or more people occupying land they do not possess title to, any appearance of vehicular assembly, and the modular utility of a caravan as both a mobile vehicle as well as living-space.<sup>148</sup> The sum total of these respective definitions enables authorities to disperse communities of new age travellers wherever they may appear. In subsequent years the law is tightened by further reducing the number of vehicles necessary to constitute the offence. Gleaned from this information is the fact that the force applied in dispersing these communities materializes the normative ethics of a juridical discourse identifying caravan sites as an urgent social problem. It indicates that the existence of certain caravan sites and the question of their

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<sup>146</sup> Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, Statutes of Great Britain 1986, c.64.  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/64>

<sup>147</sup> Riley, Sarah, Yvette More, and Christine Griffin. "The 'Pleasure Citizen': Analyzing Partying as a Form of Social and Political Participation." *Young* 18 (1): 33–54

<sup>148</sup> which closes a loophole regarding the definition of 'motor', as some are towed by horse rather than powered by a vehicle's motor itself

appropriate regulation is assessed by the government of the United Kingdom as an environment harmful to the bodies which inhabit it.<sup>149</sup>

### Acid House and the Corrosion of Intellectual Property (1990)

Judge: 'What is acid house music?'

Inspector Brown: 'I have seen it on "Top of the Pops". It is just a din, a noise which goes on and on. No rhythms, no words, but it seems to be the current trend.'

Judge: 'If he had played country or Beatles music, would it have made a difference?'

Inspector Brown: 'Probably.'

Judge: 'What did you intend to charge them with?'

Inspector Brown: 'After I heard what kind of music was being played, I intended to charge them under the Misuse of Drugs Act.'<sup>150</sup>

Rave's notoriety is signalled by the alarm raised within the popular press, responding to the paternalist tone of police set out to round-up a flock of liberalism's wayward souls. These bodies are drawn together by Roland's TB-303 synthesized wailings, a machine responsible for defining the genre known as 'acid house'. The machine's shrill, squelchy, and gliding bass lines output a rhythmically liquid siren song. Some are lured, others are horrified. Sensationalist tabloid and attention-grabbing evening news segments seize viewers with a thrilling narrative: young, promising souls become lost in decrepit buildings, enslaved to the pleasures of hedonistic excess and reckless abandon. Acid house and the massive spectacles that come to be known as 'rave' unfold within an atmosphere of moral panic.<sup>151</sup> The issue, like so many other developments in popular culture, is framed as a crisis in youth deviance and ultimately a threat to public health. By the spring of 1990, the culture amasses enough force (capital) to warrant governmental inquiry. Strategies for intervention and rehabilitation are debated. Appearing in the following

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<sup>149</sup> Zoe James, "New Travellers, New Policing? Exploring the Policing of New Traveller Communities Under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994" (2004)

<sup>150</sup>. Matthew Collins, *Altered State: The Story of Ecstasy Culture and Acid House*, (London, Serpent's Tail, 2010), 120

<sup>151</sup>. Hill, "Acid House and Thatcherism", 94

pages is a textual analysis of parliamentary debates on the emergence of the genre of music known as 'acid house', which for many exists as the quintessential sound of rave itself.

As a genre acid house is a cross pollination of techno and house music. Manufactured between 1981-1984, the Roland TB-303 (transistor bass) is initially intended to supplement rock and roll musicians by providing them a tool for programming bass note sequences. However, critics panned the instrument because it sounded nothing like a bass guitar. The lukewarm reception of the instrument resulted in poor sales and a reduction in the sale price. Its affordability meant the tool became widely accessible and it rapidly made its way into the skilled hands of emerging house and techno producers.



*Roland's TB-303 (Transistor Bass) Analog Synthesizer.*

By the late 1980s it is the signature sound of acid house and an integral instrument of nascent rave culture. Decades on, the TB-303 is now considered an essential element in electronic dance music and a highly fetishized and prized musical instrument.

The etymology of Acid House is deeply contested and shrouded in mythology. Some argue it signifies the psychedelic atmosphere of house music's formative years and legacy of the psychedelia of the 1960s and 1970s. Others point to its usage as a way of condemning the copyright infringing practice of sampling audio: acid corrodes established traditions of valuing artistic integrity and ownership of content (intellectual property).<sup>152</sup> Irrespective of the true story, what is certain is that acid house draws the ire of English government. David Hesmondhalgh's essay on dance music and political economy surmises the situation aptly,

The term 'acid house' was widely understood to be a reference to drugs. A tedious debate continues to this day about whether the term derives from LSD or from a more esoteric reference to the distorted bass lines of a dance sub-genre developed in Chicago. Whatever the origin of the term, imported American house music and the more commercial British version became associated with illegality and marginality.<sup>153</sup>

Evidence of this "illegality" and "marginality" is found within the legislation passed in 1986. The amended law amplifies the power to police modes of new age travel and itinerant sites, however it was unsuccessful in discouraging a youthful population from engaging in such activities. More disillusioned entrepreneurs, 'Thatcher's children', appear.<sup>154</sup> Equipped with the tools and instruments of an emergent digital age and producing a genre of sound known as 'rave', they adopt modes of nomadic travel inherited from the festive circuits and travelling carnivals preceding them.

Possible avenues for exploring the mass media's dissemination of moral panic over the emergence of acid house and rave can take many angles, all of which offer particular advantages

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<sup>152</sup>. Mark A. McCutcheon, "Techno, Frankenstein and Copyright." *Popular Music* 2007: 261

<sup>153</sup>. David Hesmondhalgh, 'The Cultural Politics of Dance Music', *Soundings* (5) 1997: 168

<sup>154</sup>. Rietveld, *Living the Dream*, 45

and disadvantages associated with their broader corollary political ideologies. Regardless of the specificity of approach, several overarching themes emerge. One is the tradition of Cultural Studies theory of the 'resistance as ritual'. In these terms acid house is framed in relation to the legacy of Thatcherism, neoliberal political economy, and a sociopolitical shift in privileging the privatized individual over the public community.<sup>155</sup> Through this lens acid house functions as the soundscape upon which one escapes from the painful experience of isolation that is experienced during the collapse of welfare State communitarianism.<sup>156</sup>

In 1987 Thatcher incredulously demands an end to the fantasy of a non-existent social. In this statement what is implied is that only individuals and the nuclear families which produce them are relevant to government. There is a sublime beauty in the irony of her words being uttered just prior to an emergent cultural phenomenon which calls citizens into supposedly non-existent social spaces situated in the storm's eye of festive vertigo. 'Thatcher's Children': the anarcho-capitalist entrepreneurs of economic recession, a depressive population that is socially alienated and unsurprisingly discover modes for evading the bleak futurity of the individual and the family functioning as a well-placed unit within a normalized urban environment facilitating the productive work week.

Rave's cyclical process of renewing spectacles of supposedly occultist hedonism become, in the State's eyes, an urgent crisis to public health. The State ponderously fails to see the *reason* that so many of its young, healthy, and well disciplined bodies prefer clandestine dance parties, the 'cheap thrill' of intoxication, and the squalor of living in caravans at the outskirts of town or squatting in abandoned buildings to the ordered beauty and well-lit streets of urban existence.

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<sup>155</sup>. Neil Nehring, Neil. 2007. "'Everyone's given up and Just Wants to Go Dancing': From Punk to Rave in the Thatcher Era." *Popular Music and Society* 30 (1) 2007, 4

<sup>156</sup>. Antonio Melechi, *The Ecstasy of Disappearance*, 37

Foucault is useful in this respect: "Full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness, which ultimately protected. Visibility is a trap."<sup>157</sup> Like many other Statist philosophies, the Idealism of the actually existing unfettered individual's material reality who creates and innovates heavily burdens the real bodies saddled with the impossibility of such theocratic hope.

The atomization of the individual painfully alienates. Consequently, there is experimentation through straying afield of one's self. In doing so rave dethrones the paragon of the individual through the festival's absurd parody of audio/visual stimulation. In such an environment, to varying degrees of hedonistic intensity, the burden of expectations to produce and the numbness of docility are tuned out.<sup>158</sup> This approach offers many convincing and curious ideas to support such an argument. The availability of unused large industrial spaces which became sites of rave is entangled within the history of urban planning and economic restructuring by globalization and free-trade agreements. As the labour market expands globally job security for the western working class erodes as domestic manufacturing encounters competition which lowers wages and working conditions. The disintegration of labour unions, the erosion of collective bargaining power, and the globalizing of manufacturing practices as part of a project to increase the efficiency of supply chains calls for the space of industry to be reimaged. Rave however cannot be explained solely as an economic, class-based phenomenon. Although the distinction Bourdieu draws in respect to the history of art's cultural capital being dominated by the old and challenged by innovations produced by the young remains consistent, a curiosity of rave stems from the fact that they are populated by a socioeconomic milieu that incorporates bodies shaped by both bourgeois and proletarian histories.

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<sup>157</sup>. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979) 200

<sup>158</sup>. Death of Rave Podcast



Another point to consider is the psychosocial or entheogenic dimension derived from pharmacological explanations of affective group experience. In this context acid house is positioned according to the efficacy of its environmental conditions to affect participant bodies in ways that are assigned religious or mystic significance.<sup>159</sup> Here ‘environment’ refers to the event's milieu, a space where a variety of relevant stimuli and sensory experiences mediate subjective experience.<sup>160</sup> Pharmacological approaches are interested in the phenomenology of sensation. In this vein culture’s existence is produced through intense group affects, described in terms of spiritual journey or through appealing to the metaphysics of bliss.<sup>161</sup> While entheogens are presented as a catalyst for the ‘psychoactive’, the affective approach also theorizes the force of rhythm and tempo as well as non-verbal forms of communication such as dance and mimicry in indexing the event's phenomenology.<sup>162</sup> Discussing rave and acid house in terms of affectation usefully incorporates many experiences accounting for the potentially diverse socioeconomic populations who may appear at the events. It as well attends to the enduring features of rave's spirituality and mysticism. Such accounts appeal to the DJ’s shamanism, the temporality of the event as sacred space-time, and the performance area and dance floor as a sacred altar as all resonating with questions of sensation and sentiment.<sup>163</sup> Equally so, questions of political economy remain transversal to theories of affect.<sup>164</sup>

Even at their most DiY extreme, rave, like the carnival, is a space of social and economic circulation and transaction. There are no longer spaces in which capital does not circulate. To the

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<sup>159</sup>. Lyttle, Thomas, Michael Montagne, Thomas Lyttle, and Michael Montagne. 2017. "Drugs, Music, and Ideology : A Social Pharmacological Interpretation of the Acid House Movement" *The International Journal of the Addictions* 27 (November): 1159

<sup>160</sup>. Lyttle and Montagne, “Drugs, Music, and Ideology”, 1160

<sup>161</sup>. Gilbert and Pearson, *Discographies*, pg. 66

<sup>162</sup>. Arun Saladanha, 'Goa Trance and Trance in Goa: Smooth Striations'. In *Rave Culture and Religion* (2004), 244

<sup>163</sup>. *ibid*

<sup>164</sup>. Gilbert and Pearson, *Discographies*, 118

State, the size and profitability of the event's feedback-loop circuitry become a problematic 'black market'. Similarly analyzing the culture from the perspective of participants and organizers produces distinctions in political economy relating to owning the means of producing the festive event itself. This includes the aura of commodity fetishism surrounding expensive equipment such as sound systems, turntables, CDJs, recording studios, and synthesizers. In the realm of cultural capital, it is important to acknowledge the force multiplier of a promoter's ability to cultivate large social networks which are tapped into as potential consumers.<sup>165</sup> Across all registers these consumers generate capital for the organizers by populating the events.

This discourse analysis works by playing with the meaning of the word "acid". It is anchored to the administrative documentation produced by the State apparatus's attempt to make sense of the genre. To the ideology of the ruling class and its most pliant media outlets, acid house is defined as such because it is corrosive and corrupting to the bodies it effects. As stated repeatedly in parliament: it is the 'Acid House cult'.

### Acidifying Morality

The impact of Acid House is expressed through the State's appeal to the necessity for neutralizing its corrosive and corrupting effects.

Andrew Mitchell

We are aware of the danger of the drug problem escalating in the midlands. The Nottinghamshire police feel that the parties appeal to young, usually responsible, people. But there is not only evidence of corruption at those parties, but a calculation to corrupt. We should be anxious to protect young people from such corruption. The parties are a local nuisance and are redolent of the 1960 pop festivals.

There is a lack of consideration for local people and the misery caused to them. Such is the nuisance caused that, in some cases, the noise from the parties has been heard 10 miles away. Problems also arise from traffic congestion, parking and the size of the crowds. I hope that he will keep under review whether further Home Office measures are required to protect young people from the innate corruption of acid house parties.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup>. Hesmondhalgh, "The Cultural Politics of Dance Music", 10

<sup>166</sup>. United Kingdom. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*. Orders of the Day -- Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Bill. 9 March, 1990

Appearing here is paranoia regarding the elevated deviance associated with conspiracy. The term "calculation" indicates intentionality, foresight and planning - premeditation. In the spectrum of legal culpability: to plan a crime is to calculate and premeditate. Premeditated deviance is the penultimate guilt. It is punished more severely than the criminality that happens by accidental circumstance or ignorant negligence. For the State, the problem of organizing rave goes above and beyond the profits associated with hosting a ticketed event, it carries with it a desire to mislead, confuse, and consequently damage the participating bodies. Mitchell's language is clearly anxious. Anxiety is always already paranoia. In this case paranoia is magnified by the imagined consequence: acid house corrupting the futures of the bodies it touches.

John Patten

Let us be clear what we are talking about and let us have no more loose talk about acid house parties. As I said earlier, the illegal entertainments are pay-parties where promoters make substantial sums--often from parties that never happen. It is a deeply corrupt practice. Many young people pay £15, £20 or £30 for tickets for ghost parties that never happen. The use of the phrase "acid house parties", with its implications of drug taking and glamorous music, is part and parcel of luring young people into believing that the parties are glamorous and exciting occasions. Perhaps they sometimes are for those who seek excitement. However, my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris) told us this morning about the dangers that are implicit and my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling spoke of the moral dangers for very young people who go to such parties. Let us have no more glamorous titles. The parties are a way for evil and corrupt men to make a lot of money.<sup>167</sup>

Moralistic sermonizing argues for just cause in deploying the police to disperse the bodies congregating around sound systems. It is stated in clear terms that the power of acid house to corrupt is 'implicit', and that the 'glamour' of these events obscures their harmful effect. Here one may draw a parallel with the concept of the spectacle as a type of social relation that obscures its true conditions. In this case such an essence is the 'truth' of the rave environ's harmful effect upon the attending bodies. In place of this 'Truth' is, from a sociological perspective, rave as fantasy of utopian simulacrum and ecstatic transcendence. The metaphysic is

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<sup>167</sup>. United Kingdom. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*. Orders of the Day -- Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Bill. 9 March 1990

seemingly problematic, predicated on an intoxicating vertigo that may nauseate the body. Subjects escape rational subjectivity (ecstasis), through delirium. Given that the power of the spectacle obscures this apparent reality, a paternalistic State assumes the responsibility to formulate a strategy for curing such illness.

Jacques Arnold

So what can we do? We need good intelligence and heavy penalties. We need good police intelligence to combat such events before they even take place. I am glad that a good start has been made. A joint intelligence unit for the south-east, staffed by eight police forces with additional input from the Metropolitan police, has been established in Gravesend in my constituency. It has monitored the planning of some 249 parties, and headed off many of them or stopped them. I should like to pay tribute to the outstanding work carried out in anti-social hours at the Gravesend police station. However, we also need heavy penalties, and this is where my hon. Friend the Member for Luton, South is doing us all such a service with this Bill. It provides for fines of up to £20,000 and-- this is an important point--for sentences of up to six months' imprisonment. The current maximum of £2,000 and no custodial sentences outside Greater London is derisory.<sup>168</sup>

The following passage documents an attempt to find a solution to the emergent problem: first a surveillance project gathers intelligence in order to construct a discourse on the topic. Armed with this information, police are deployed to neutralize the actants critical to generating the event. It is worth noting that this practice is consistent with the way in which other youth cultures are viewed as threatening the consecrated ideologies held by social and political elites. In this case the particular historic context is the shadow of Thatcherism and Tory control of English society. Whereas the punk rockers were viewed as a political threat along the axis of the spectre of communism, rave is targeted by a politics attacking the straw man of the lazy and disaffected who refuse to behave as hardworking citizens.

Organizing Disorder, Corrupting Youth, and the Surveillance State

In order to combat rave's acculturating force, the State deploys a surveillance program identifying key agents deemed responsible for proliferating disorder and organizing the raving

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<sup>168</sup>. United Kingdom. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*. Orders of the Day -- Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Bill. 9 March 1990

mass. In an attempt to curtail to the 'soft power' of rave, the song "We call it Acieed" by D-Mob is banned from the radio.<sup>169</sup> It is clear that the genre's popularity is viewed as a threat to the public. Public policy is thus deployed with the intent to prevent rave's contagion. Acid House's corrosiveness appears as clear and present danger to the State because of its supposed power to corrupt the youth. The underlying reasons for its popularity and, worse, the frenzied desire for its consumption remains more mysterious. In working through the documentation of this fact a curious distinction is drawn. Blame is ultimately not assigned to the population for attending the spectacle. Rather fault lies principally in the "organizers" who are responsible for conspiring in order to design space which lures otherwise innocent and law-abiding bodies into deviance. In this way a haunting mysticism begins to shroud Acid House. Law makers fantasize it as a power capable of possessing the otherwise law-abiding subjects with the 'cheap thrill' of deviance. The corruptibility of the human condition and its tendency to stray from the path of virtue is an enduring theme in liberalism. Nonetheless the reality of youth deviance shocks and appals the older generation of political elites. We see this narrative unfold in the comments made by a police officer tasked with leading the surveillance operation on Acid House,

At first, like many in authority, Ken Tappenden couldn't even comprehend how such an insatiable appetite for drugs existed. 'These were nice kids -- my son, your son,' he says. But they were gobbling the stuff and coming back for more. Reviewing surveillance video of on particular party, he was astounded: they were rolling bags of pills off the back of a low-loader in costermongers' barrows!

'We did a sweep of the field after they'd gone, you could see the packets of drugs all over the place. Most of the kids were spaced out. You can't dance six to eight hours to fairground music they way they were. When we started to tell MPs and the Home Office what was really going on, they wouldn't believe it. It was always denied by everyone, including the government.'<sup>170</sup>

This report is an excerpt from a detailed surveillance project undertaken by local authorities that is dubbed the "1989 Pay Party Unit". Officially assembled in order to prevent people from being

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<sup>169</sup>. Chas Critcher, "'Still Raving': Social Reaction to Ecstasy." *Leisure Studies* 19 (3) 2000: 146

<sup>170</sup>. Matthew Collins, *Altered State: The Story of Ecstasy Culture and Acid House*, 112

scammed out of money by purchasing tickets to fake events, in truth its scope extends far beyond regulating price fairness in business. The police quickly discover what the kids are up to, and the findings incite moral outrage from the State.

The unit monitored pirate radio, tapped phones, and organised helicopters to track the organisers. After three months, they had begun 20 major investigations. As Matthew Collin and John Godfrey note in their book *Altered State*, the Pay Party Unit's database held 5,725 names and details on 712 vehicles. Within weeks, their 200 officers had monitored 4,380 telephone calls and made 258 arrests.<sup>171</sup>

The scale of the project's scope in surveying and documenting the emerging cultural formation indicates the gravity of the situation for those concerned with the social engineering of a population. In the letter of the law the legislation heavily penalizes individuals found responsible for organizing events without possessing necessary regulatory permits and permission from local government. In a broader context this legislation is enacted within a social climate of affective panic and alarm caused by the proliferation of electronic music events that shock and disturbs elements of civil society and governmental institutions. The popularity of the events surge population sizes to critical levels of force and visibility. If several thousand bodies remained assembled around a sound system then police could not to break the crowd up, less a riot or stampede occur as bodies fled en masse in an attempt to avoid being detained. In order to regain territorial control, moral panic surrounding drug use is bracketed strategically in order to pursue more pragmatic approaches to crowd control.

The decision was made not to pursue the parties on the grounds of drug use, but to concentrate on environmental offences, noise and fire regulations and obscure local bylaws.

If you took it as a hard issue on drugs, I don't think you'd have got the support of all the other authorities,' explains Tappenden. 'Health and safety means a lot to a local authority, drugs don't. Health and safety took on board every conceivable public authority we could get involved. The fire brigade came on board an all the district councils. Why health and safety? Why emergency lighting? Why noise? Because it was easy,

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<sup>171</sup>. Tim Guest, "Fight for the Right to Party" *The Guardian* (2009)

drugs was difficult without thousands and thousands of men.' Furthermore, at that time Ecstasy was not considered to be a major public health problem by the government; the 'war on drugs' was invariably a war on heroin, and raves were seen as a law and order issue.<sup>172</sup>

Given this history it seems critical that the construction of rave's genealogy requires absorbing its relationship to government into its cultural fabric. This method is valuable for it focuses upon the relations between folk culture, public policy, and the welfare State. An intersection which expands far beyond this dissertation's topic and yet allows for rhizomatic cross-pollination and interdisciplinary discourse to flourish. It is this cable which helps trace a network: the social relations of the ambivalence of popular-festive forms within the particular societies they appear within. It as well holds rave apart from the prismatic lenses of the political ideologies belonging to the various groups whose engagement with the phenomenon is associated with socially constructing its idiosyncratic reality. To the State legislature, these distinctions are of little interest. Its program of surveillance designed to define the phenomenon as a hierarchy and punish those placed at the apex. These are the body or bodies responsible for organizing the events.

Mr Stuart Randall, Kingston upon Hull West 11:23 am, 9th March 1990

Like many other hon. Members, I congratulate the hon. Member for Luton, South (Mr. Bright) on his initiative in ensuring that the Bill came before the House today. Essentially, it substantially increases the penalties on those who promote illegal and unlicensed acid house parties, as well as those who promote legal and licensed events. In broad terms, acid house parties can be illegal in two ways. First, the event may proceed without the promoter obtaining an entertainments licence from the local authorities. Secondly, sometimes promoters fail to enforce the licence's conditions as agreed between him and the local authority. That means that if a promoter fails to keep noise levels down to the agreed levels or to have adequate crowd control, hygienic or fire arrangements, it can result in a violation of the licence.

It is important to realise that the licensing of such events exists to ensure the safety of those who attend them in such large numbers. Local authority licensing should also aim to protect the interests of the residents who live in the vicinity of the events, which are not only attended by large numbers but can go on for several days. Often, once the event is over, many people remain on the site, camped in fields and so on.

Huge events can be a menace to local communities if they are not properly and efficiently organised. There have been cases of severe damage to homes and properties, noise nuisance, terrific traffic problems and bad

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<sup>172</sup>. Collins, *Altered State: The Story of Ecstasy Culture and Acid House*, 14

behaviour, often resulting from alcohol and drugs. Those attending often move on leaving all their garbage and filth for others to clear up. The impact on communities is sometimes nothing short of disaster.

Such behaviour is not only unacceptable but unfair to local people who have to put up with it. I want to make it absolutely clear to the House that the Labour party believes that tough action must be taken against those who organise illegal acid house parties.<sup>173</sup>

This text is presented in order to further document the patterning of assigning blame for the events. Deviance is located in the figure of the "organizer" who become a sort of paternal figure in their creation of an unnatural ecology. Their irresponsibility, carelessness, and disregard for the environmental conditions they are responsible for facilitating is pointed out by Mr. Randall who claims that the impact of these events is "...nothing short of disaster". That the figure of the organizer comes to be the deviant is significant because it directly alleviates blame from the participant population. This is stated directly by Mr. Bright who condemns the organizer for "...catering [to] large numbers of young persons who were minded to use dangerous drugs in a social setting." What is peculiarly noted is that it is not the 'mindedness' (I.e reason|rationality) of the participant's *intent* to use 'dangerous drugs' that is targeted by the State. Blame is assigned to the organizers on the basis of their negligence to bear responsibility for what they have created. They are labelled negligent in failing to bear responsibility for the safety and well-being of the attending population. They are thus blamed for luring populations into spaces where their deviant potentiality may be brought-forth.

It seems that the significance of actively targeting the architects of a 'maddening' culture indicates the struggle between the State and this nebulous formation of rave organizers over how bodies are governed within particular territorial boundaries.<sup>174</sup> While it is not in doubt nor

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<sup>173</sup>. United Kingdom. *House of Commons Debates, Acid House Parties* 9th March 1990 (Stuart Randall, Labour Party).

<sup>174</sup>. In the third chapter this idea will be explored in detail through the work of Foucault. For now, it is interesting to note that this characterization is richly informed by Foucault's work on the State's increasing interest in the constitution of the *souls* of its citizenry.



question that the rave's territory contains hazards, whether they be overcrowded, poorly accessible, or simply sketchy, what is of interest is the length the State goes in avoiding connecting responsibility or agency on the part of participants in attending such events. While it is certainly true that some would not know of the risks, the fact remains that many as well actively seek out such spaces. It is of significant interest that a discourse emerges between government and architects over the duty to care for the well-being of participants within a socially constructed environment. In this struggle participants become harmless and innocent bystanders naively lured into danger.<sup>175</sup> Mr. Randall addresses this notion when he states that

The attraction for the public at these events is that they are seen 'to be the place to go' and because the public know that they are so called 'street events' and obviously antiestablishment. The public that go to these events are quite young and they themselves rarely cause any problems.<sup>176</sup>

Mr. Randall draws a distinction on the basis of a change in behaviour and identity occurring when individual psychology becomes group behaviour. In isolation the 'quite young' population are viewed with the optimism and patience traditionally assigned to the youth by paternalist dogma. 'The youth' are the innocent and law-abiding. The well-mannered, fledgling English citizen is the embodiment of the empire's bright future. Conflict occurs once this population is organized into a body politic known as the 'rave massive'. What is interesting is that the State is initially reluctant to accept that participants share responsibility for these events. In fact given the anarchic, contributory and gift-oriented nature of many, participation often is equivalent to organizing. In excluding this notion of personal responsibility what is left out of the conversation is the fact that these events transpire in order to supply the demand. This question commerce and the festival is expanded upon below.

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<sup>175</sup>. As we will see, Foucault's concept of pastoral power helps inform the history of this sociolegal discourse.

<sup>176</sup>. United Kingdom. *House of Commons Debates, Acid House Parties* 9th March 1990 (Stuart Randall, Labour Party).

### The Political Economy of Acid House

Consistent with the history of youth culture's relationship to popular music, acid house and rave initially appears as a form of bizarre defiance to consecrated traditions of artistic practice. Combined with a 'cheeky nod' towards psychedelic alienation, a recipe for moral panic regarding youth culture is crafted. For the State assigning a coherent meaning to the spectacle is needed in order to take control of the situation. It is quickly decided that its meaning is one of unhealthy temptation which threatens otherwise upstanding, law-abiding youthful citizens. A bill is introduced requiring one obtain a permit in order to host music events held outside of commercially zoned and licensed property. Debate in the English House of Commons rages about how best to deal with the problem of "Acid House Parties". Mr. Graham Bright introduces a private members bill with the intention of addressing this issue through imposing stiff financial penalties and the potential for incarceration if violations occur. Such legislation places the onus of blame on those who organize and facilitate the events. In doing so a comparatively non-violent culture is rendered deviant through a process of criminalization. The tone adopted by government is consistent with the paternalism of liberal ideology. State power is authorized in the interest of public health and as part of a duty to care for the welfare of the young.

#### Mr Graham Bright, Luton South

If my hon. Friend listens carefully to what I have warned him will be a lengthy speech, he will hear that there is no way in which I am setting out to ban parties. I am simply seeking to ensure that they are licensed, legal and--more important--that they are safe. Once the Bill is enacted, that will certainly be much more likely.

Despite claims to the contrary in some sections of the media, safety considerations have been uppermost in my mind. Some of the media have been pandering merely to increase their circulation. I have here a photocopy of Face, which in my opinion has been irresponsible in not pointing out the safety dangers to young people.

The use of domestic and even commercial premises for noisy parties at which alcohol is consumed, music performed and dances take place has been going on for many years. The police and the local authorities, as well as environmental health officers, have the experience and a range of powers to deal with them. What is new and disturbing is the spread of pay-parties on a much larger scale. I understand that it began with the gatecrashers' ball in London in 1988. Subsequently it expanded so rapidly that the capital's clubs and night

clubs were no longer willing to allow their premises to be used for the purpose. The potential profits from such parties prompted a search for other venues capable of holding audiences of several thousand. That was inevitably a magnet to unscrupulous operators and, indeed, criminal gangs.

Those who organise such parties, whether reputable individuals and companies or not, object to the term "acid house party". The term derives from Chicago slang describing the theft and subsequent mixing of recording tracks played at warehouse parties. But because of its association with drug [LSD](#) or "acid", the promoters prefer to use descriptions such as all-night party, warehouse party, dance party, rave and, I am sure, many other names. I know that one of my hon. Friends may introduce us to some of them later.

Having fun and protecting the right of young people to enjoy themselves are not what the acid house party cult is all about. It is about making money and exploiting a lucrative market for as long as possible. The cult is about taking money on occasion without even providing a party, and about operating at or beyond the boundaries of the law. That is bad enough; but to endanger the safety of young people and of unfortunate nearby residents for the sake of one's bank balance is callous and evil.

As Judge Rivlin pointed out when sentencing the organiser of three parties last year, they were "a purely commercial venture" in which the organiser was catering for large numbers of young persons who were minded to use dangerous drugs in a social setting. That is true, and it is the worst possible example to set.<sup>177</sup>

I note the significance of what United Kingdom defines as, "what is new and disturbing". Such newness is defined as the spectacle's surprising popularity and the consequent concern over leaving its contagion unchecked. An important part of the spectacle's growth is a result of the economic profits made possible by the size of the crowds in attendance. In an attempt to define the spectacle's meaning, the tone is articulated through the language of superstitious mysticism. Acid house parties become associated with the occult. They are held as distinct from other forms of noisy, raucous popular-festive forms in that, "...Having fun and protecting the right of young people to enjoy themselves are not what the acid house party cult is all about." Here we see a claim which attempts to define acid house's criminal motive: exploiting the profitability of operating at the borders of the law itself. In other words, the modern problem facing market-based economics: the profitability of a black-market.

I find this idea within the enduring debate regarding the meaning of 'acid' in 'acid house'.

Cultural mythologies state it implies the theft of records, the theft of royalties/ intellectual

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<sup>177</sup>. United Kingdom. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*. Orders of the Day -- Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Bill. 9 March 1990

property through the method of sampling, and of course the spectre of contraband. Interestingly, what is seemingly conceptually unified by the attempt to identify a criminal motive is the idea that *acid dissolves things*. Entangled within the futurist trends of digitizing culture, the disintegration of media into an emergent cyber-space initially challenges protocols for controlling intellectual property. One may also note strategies of government that are particular to modern liberal politics: the intent goes beyond the traditional sovereign "ban".<sup>178</sup> The intent to regulate and normalize, to "ensure that they are licensed, legal and -more importantly- that they are safe." One subsequently notes that 'safety' is assumed to be derived from government influence, particularly that legislative mechanisms are effective tools for governing a civic population. From Mr. Bright's comments one may consider that there are principally socioeconomic motives for introducing the bill. This is indicated by the statement, "what is new and disturbing is the spread of pay-parties". At issue is the fact that several of the largest and most profitable acid house parties occurred on property not zoned for commercial use and outside the State's economic framework.

Rave organizers rapidly facilitated crowd assembly and in doing so frequently eschewed the existing regulations for hosting large events which necessitate compliance with local ordinances regarding public safety issues, such as fire code regulations. The socioeconomics at work here situate rave's proliferation through anarcho-capitalist methods.<sup>179</sup> These black market economics bypass the State from receiving the benefits of the surplus generated by these events. Noting the hints of moral panic caused by rave's spectrality is also of interest: acid house disturbs the State. Consequently the culture is defined as incubating criminality. It is treated superstitiously: a "cult" profiting from hedonic desire by youth populations. A dangerous ritual

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<sup>178</sup>. Although this does come later, when implemented regulations are deemed ineffective

<sup>179</sup>. Graham St. John, ed. *Weekend Societies EDM Festivals and Event-Cultures*. (Bloomsbury Academic, 2018) 2

that, "...Endanger[s] the safety of young people and of unfortunate nearby residents [which] for the sake of one's bank balance is callous and evil". As the moral panic over rave reaches its zenith during a 'summer of love' resonating from sound system transmissions of magico-religious environments, the fears of a population swayed by cultish practices translates into real lawmaking. These events result in fierce police interventions and, on several occasions, mass arrests. One such event, the Castlemorton Common Free Festival, is described in the following pages because of its pivotal role in instigating the State's repressive force and its historic enshrinement as a legendary event for rave itself.

### Spiral Tribe and the Castlemorton Common Free Festival (1992)

In May 1992 the nightmare of an "Acid House cult" luring youthful bodies away from the paternal care of the State peaks in intensity. The U.K sound system Spiral Tribe plays a pivotal role in organizing a rave that results in legislative response. Describing his encounter with Spiral Tribe's sound system, Simon Reynolds notes,

The midsummer night scene is somewhere between a medieval encampment and a third world shanty town. The lanes are choked with caravans, buses, ex-military transports, gaudily painted horse-draw vehicles, and hundreds of cars...The fields are jammed with a higgledy-piggledy throng of tents, pavilions, and eerie-looking fluorescent sculptures. The third world/medieval vibe is exacerbated by the bazaar atmosphere. Peddlers hawk their illicit wares...propositioning us with wraps of speed, magic mushroom pies, and innumerable brands of Ecstasy. The most medieval aspect of all, we discover later, is the total absence of sanitation. Venturing out onto the camp's perimeter, we quickly learn to trend gingerly to avoid the excrement in the bracken. A big placard commands "Bury Your Shit," but unlike the seasoned travelers, urban ravers haven't come armed with spades. After stumbling through the murk for what feels like a small eternity, we finally make it to Spiral Tribe's own enclosure, a Wild West – style wagon circle of vans and trucks circumscribing a grassy dance floor. While the event is free, in accordance with the Spiral credo "no money, no ego," ravers are invited to give donations in order to keep the generators running. Inside the circle, the scene is like a pagan gathering. With their undulating dance moves, it seems like the crowd has evolved into a single, pulsating organism. Faces are contorted by expressions midway between orgasm and sobbing. It's time for us to get "on the vibe", as the Spirals put it...Dancing with the stars overhead, its hard not to succumb to the back-to-nature romanticism that is part of Spiral Tribe's eco-mystical creed, crystallized in the buzzword "terra-technic", using technology to unlock the primal energy of Mother Earth.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>180</sup>. Reynolds *Generation Ecstasy*, 165.

Rave's genealogy is in many ways tied to Spiral Tribe's history, for they are held liable by the government for the festival. Held in England's Worcestershire County during the 22-29 of May, Castlemorton is cited as demonstrable proof of its threat to British society and motivate the criminalization of rave. For this reason, the history of rave can be in many ways helpfully aestheticized and localized in Spiral Tribe's sociopolitical reality. This is wonderfully narrated in a documentary on the topic entitled, "Rave: The Beat Goes On". Produced by BBC News', journalist Jolyon Jenkins weaves together a series of interviews with the founding members of the group as a means of foregrounding the impending government



*Aerial Photography of Castlemorton Common Free Festival Taken by Local News*





*Aerial Photography of Castlemorton Common Free Festival Taken by Andrew Dunsmore*



intervention into rave. Spiral Tribe begins as a group of vagabond artists and squatters who host a series of music performances that proliferate in size and intensity. After numerous encounters with local police, Spiral Tribe are branded as the subversive instigators of the United Kingdom's encounter with nascent rave culture. Spiral Tribe's aesthetic practice of acculturation deploy mythological allusion and espouse idyllic politics that are critiqued for advancing a recklessly utopian definition for freedom that captivates population of the disaffected. Emanating from their sound system comes a social practice of nomadic journeying. A rejection of sedentary social structures in favour of an identity as what Guy Debord refers to as the "derive": drifting tangentially from festival to festival. For the lived experiences of bodies engaged in such a practice, teleological questions: meaning and existential purpose for one's life is satisfied through the labour needed to produce artwork and the time spent transporting and reassembling the sound system's infrastructure.

Spiral Tribe's events facilitate a lifestyle based on the needs of the sound system as an interdependent, networked entity. Its socioeconomic model meant that the group sustained itself by attracting and absorbing members within its cultural milieu. One performer who travelled with Spiral Tribe succinctly describes the praxis, "setting up the sound system and seeing if you get away with it."<sup>181</sup> The subversive aura, whether one believes it to be real or imagined, of Spiral Tribe's parties allow them to cultivate an atmosphere of cultural rebellion. Through their utilization of machines in order to envision futurist soundscapes, electronic music is woven into a much larger desire to escape or transform certain routines of contemporary social life. This reimagining of social life becomes embodied through creating alternative modes of social networks that structured by cyclical festive rituals.

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<sup>181</sup>. Jenkins Jenkins "Rave: The Beat Goes on", BBC Radio 4, Oct 22, 2015

In rejecting elements of life belonging to residential neoliberalism, Spiral Tribe shares a political economy in common with the industrialized pessimism which new age travel responds to. Such response forms a population whose lifestyle depends largely on resources derived from a combination of government funded low income assurances and self-sustaining communities of craftworkers, exchanging goods during festive events. Bearing resemblance to the nomadism of new age travel, Spiral Tribe thrived in transience. It is described by one of its older members as a, "marauding pirate convoy"<sup>182</sup>. Both monikers reference a population sourced from predominantly white working-class bodies. As a demographic viewed as posing a high-risk for participating in deviant behaviour, Spiral Tribe quickly ran afoul of police. After the aggressive dispersions of several Spiral Tribe parties held in derelict urban environments ('the warehouse rave'), they begin moving their parties into the countryside, where it is easier for larger populations to assemble unnoticed. Although the Castlemorton Common Free Festival involved many more sound systems than Spiral Tribe,<sup>183</sup> their involvement in a belaboured court battle in the ensuing aftermath establishes them as legendary icons of rave's notoriety.

Reynolds attends to Spiral Tribe's cultural significance in his seminal text on rave, "Generation Ecstasy". He authors a rich demonstration of Spiral Tribe's nomadism, fusing the machines of new age travel with rave's nascent technoculture into a spectacle labeled the 'teknival'. Unfolding within his autobiographical account of attending the festival, Reynolds attributes Spiral Tribe's cultural force to the political charisma of one of its prominent spokespersons, Mark Harrison. In an interview with Harrison describes Spiral Tribe as follows,

We keep everything illegal because it's only outside the law that there's any real life to be had. The real energy in rave culture comes from illegal dance parties, pirate radio, and white-label 12-inches that bypass

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<sup>182</sup>. Jenkins, "Rave: The Beat Goes on"

<sup>183</sup>. Other sound systems had similarly revealing names such as: Bedlam, Circus Warp, Techno Travelers, Circus Normal.

the record industry altogether. Rave is about people creating their own reality. Last summer we did a party that went on for fourteen days nonstop. It's a myth that you need to sleep. Stay awake and begin to discover the real edges of reality. You stop believing in anything that anyone told you was true, all the false reality that was hammered into you from birth.<sup>184</sup>

Harrison's anarchic ideas resonated with a large number of alienated British nationals and the chaotic themes of Spiral Tribe's cultural aesthetic produced a futurism that is thrillingly bizarre, brought into reality through co-operative efforts of a population defining itself through the cultural work of assembling, transporting and recycling the sound system itself. A music producer who performed often at Spiral Tribe's events expresses that his attraction to the music itself is due to its freedom from meaning and identity enabled by the transience of Spiral Tribe's enabled by increasingly affordable forms of technology.<sup>185</sup> This proliferation artwork represents a democratizing of the labour of art itself and thus making possible new systems of valuing creativity.

Irrespective of criticisms of its authenticity or legitimacy as a 'culture', rave culture thrives on the palpable energy generated by Spiral Tribe's sound system. Their parties grew in size and frequency: a body politic eagerly participating in alternative means for social organization. The sound system distributes rave music's emerging genres: house, techno, acid, and trance as aestheticized narratives for an identity politic evasively defying contemporary vocabulary's used to define artistic value and human technique. This reimagining of acceptable forms of artwork and the historic definition of technical expertise as demonstrative of value as Capital (cultural and onwards), abdicates certain criteria used for criticism, and thus increases culture's freedom to proliferate.

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<sup>184</sup>. Reynolds *Generation Ecstasy*, 164

<sup>185</sup>. Jenkins, "Rave: The Beat Goes on"

# Hippies abandon festival common

POLICE regained control of Castlemorton Common shortly after midday yesterday — almost a week after the beginning of an illegal festival that involved 25,000 travellers and ravers.

The police operation used about 300 officers in riot vans and coaches. They moved on to the Hereford common supported by a fleet of breakdown trucks and a mobile incident room.

But they arrived to find all but a handful of travellers had packed up and left the beauty spot on the lower slopes of the Malvern Hills.

Throughout the morning hundreds of travellers had moved off the site in a procession of old fire engines, ambulances, former Army trucks, caravans and double-decker buses.

Police had shouted tannoy warnings from a helicopter telling them they were due to be evicted. Officers moved onto the com-

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By Richard Smith

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mon after Malvern Hills' conservators obtained a possession order from a judge in chambers at Worcester County Court at 10am to remove the hippies.

Several burnt out or wrecked cars were left behind but a mountain of rubbish was cleared by the travellers before they left.

Non-stop acid music pounded out from the festival, which spawned a mile-long shanty town with no sanitary facilities.

Drug dealers freely sold LSD, ecstasy and cannabis while smartly dressed middle-class ravers partied with down-at-heel travellers with Mohican haircuts.

Trees and fences were used for firewood, two homes were burgled and 40 sheep were savaged by dogs. By last night police had made 100 arrests. The majority

were for drug offences but 25 people alleged to have operated the festival sound systems were also being questioned.

David Blakey, West Mercia's chief constable, rejected many villagers' claims that the spot had been reduced to a no-go area by police reticence.

"I've taken some stick over this for a week but I was right," he told a press conference. "The people who say the police should have gone in and cracked heads are really talking nonsense."

"I know the residents here will have preferred the way I dealt with it than going in with truncheons and riot shields on Thursday."

The force had faced an entirely new phenomenon with 15,000 ravers joining the travellers to bring two completely different cultures together at the event for the first time, the chief constable said.

Last night life was returning to normal on the common. Kevin Hammett, who has patrolled his poultry farm near the common with a shotgun for the week, said: "It's been an experience. I've learnt a lot but I don't think I could stick it again."

"I've never seen so much lawlessness in my life. I was offered drugs and two ravers were offering sex for £20."

"They used my field as a latrine but the low point came when someone crapped on my jumper in the control room."

Among the last of the travellers to leave was a former motor mechanic, Stephen Rexworthy, 37, who has been travelling in his caravan for five years.

"These commons have been here since the Middle Ages for the poor to have somewhere to go and we were here to have a good time," he said.

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*News article detailing the aftermath of the week-long Castlemorton Common Festival*

The culmination of Spiral Tribe's ravepolitik is the Castlemorton Common Free Festival. Turning again to Reynolds' first-hand account of his experience at the festival, we encounter the bizarre mixture of the past and the present, the ancient and futurist; a community embracing technology as a liberating force, all the while rejecting the modern normative society responsible for producing these machines. At the end of the festival Castlemorton is attended by a population estimated to be between 20,000-40,000. Scenes of chaos broadcast on local news make national headlines. Some journalists from *The Guardian* call the festival "lawless", "anarchic" and "intimidating".<sup>186</sup> In fact members of Spiral Tribe themselves lament the unbridled chaos that appear at Castlemorton. Political fallout of the spectacle is made clear at the Conservative party's summer convention. In discourses delivered there, Castlemorton is labelled symptomatic of the blight of rave's new age travel. Michael Howard receives a chorus of resounding applause as he announces, "this summer at Castlemorton and other places saw unacceptable and outrageous examples of the problems caused by new age travellers and ravers, there will be no soft option given under the [proposed reforms to] the criminal justice act"<sup>187</sup>. Due to the size of the gathering and with the memory of the Battle of the Beanfield's legal aftermath, in which several officers are found guilty of assault, police wait people begin to leave before surrounding the site with the specific task of identifying, locating and arresting members of Spiral Tribe. 13 members are arrested and charged with a smattering of offences, the most serious being, "conspiracy to commit mass trespass".

Tim Guest is one such journalist from the Guardian. In his own reflection on attending Castlemorton and its subsequent aftermath he notes,

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<sup>186</sup> Jenkins, "Rave: The Beat Goes On"

<sup>187</sup> Jenkins, "Rave: The Beat Goes On"

In all, 13 Spiral members were charged with public order offences. Their trial became one of the longest and most expensive cases in British legal history at the time, lasting four months and costing the taxpayer £4m. The police used any tactic they could to support their case. "We even all had our handwriting analysed," says [Spiral Tribe's] Simone. "We had a messy office full of stuff, and they were trying to ascertain who'd written some philosophical rant. It was incredible. Actually, in the end it turned around in our favour. There was no conspiracy to bring down the government, which I think they were looking for. In the end everything was thrown back in their face, and the jury saw that. It was painful, laborious - luckily, there was a good team of lawyers, everyone had to go in every day and have their chance on the stand. Everyone was just as honest as they could be. There was nothing to hide." All 13 were acquitted. According to one witness, a superintendent approached a group of Spiral members on the steps outside the court and said: "I just want you to know that I don't agree with what is happening to you here. This is a political stitch-up."<sup>188</sup>

Just as the Battle of the Beanfield spelled the end of the Stonehenge Free Festival, the consequences of the Castlemorton Common Festival prove dire for rave. Police introduce two strategies for preventing its reoccurrence, entitled Operation Snapshot and Operation Nomad. The powers afforded by amendments to the Criminal Justice and Public Order act punctuate this intervention. Operation Snapshot gathers intelligence through profiling identities and behaviours of sound system members, beginning with information obtained from those detained at Castlemorton. Specific details that are of interest to police regard persons responsible for organizing and maintaining the festival circuit, home address and/or 'place of residence' and, of course, suspected role in production and sale of contraband. Operation Nomad develops strategies for preventing and dispersing raves through surveilling the mobilization of equipment and the detention of sound system technicians as they assemble.

Decades onwards a 2007 report echoes the past in discussing rave's effect on youth. The persistent issue of raving bodies and the need to comprehensively identify and understand the population. Although legislation is passed in 1994 expanding police power to criminally sanction rave and force many sound systems into the areas of licensed nightclub environments, the desire

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<sup>188</sup>. Tim Guest, "Fight for the Right to Party"

for the 'free' festival endures. In summarizing the findings gathered by the Association of Chief Police Officers', 'working group on public order' Lord Coaker states,

He asked, if I remember rightly, whether it would be possible for attendance at a rave, or organising a rave, to be made a criminal offence. The group will be able to consider whether that is appropriate, whether other legislation covers that, or whether something could be done.

On the importance of partnership working, the hon. Gentleman might also like to know that the Local Government Association announced last month a five-point plan for councils to combat illegal raves. That included work with police and other agencies, intelligence gathering, which is crucial, and asking landowners to be vigilant. He might want to ask his local authority whether it is aware of that, and what steps if any it is taking in that respect.

Clearly, the hon. Gentleman called the debate because of concerns in his constituency of South-West Norfolk. I therefore want to conclude by providing him with some reassurance that Norfolk police are taking the matter seriously. They have an analyst working part-time monitoring rave websites, and the force holds a database of music rigs that are being used to organise raves in the Norfolk area. As the hon. Gentleman rightly said, help to gather intelligence is critical if we are to move forward in this area. We are therefore required to look at rave websites, magazines and other types of media in which information about where an illegal rave might take place is shared. I congratulate Norfolk police on their use of an analyst, as that can help us to deal with the problem. Officers from Norfolk, Essex and Suffolk, together with other agencies, gathered information during this year's Easter and May bank holidays to prevent illegal raves from taking place.<sup>189</sup>

Although true, it is far too sweeping and nebulous to conclude at the fact that cultural production operates as a site of struggle for representation and meaning. We waver searching for further clarity on this topic. This dissertation thus interrogates the encoded relations of power between the State and rave through assembling a fragmented history of the legal discourse which codifies it as criminal. It seems that in spite of being subject to criticism as a form of apolitical escapism, by the early 1990s rave embodies elements of Punk's direct action ethos, "anarchy in the U.K!", whether by human design or. In turn it comes to be identified as a population in need of reform through State policy.<sup>190</sup>

After Castlemorton, rave becomes the subject of intense government scrutiny and debated often in British parliament. It is, unsurprisingly, of particular concern to Tories, who view the

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<sup>189</sup>. Britain. House of Commons Debates, Raves 19 July 2007

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070719/debtext/70719-0021.htm>

<sup>190</sup>. Brian L. Ott and Bill D. Herman. "Mixed Messages: Resistance and Reappropriation in Rave Culture." *Western Journal of Communication*, 3rd ser., no. 67 (2003): 249

spectacle as demonstrative of the State of Nature narrativized in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. The Labour party as well struggles conceptually with the issue, as tens of thousands of their electorate, known as the 'youth vote' demographic, take pleasure in these haptic zones of carnival. That the Labour Party caves to the governing Tories insistence on criminalization is part of liberalism's need for 'centrism': avoiding appearing 'soft on crime' and becoming effectively neutralized in a parliament acclimatized to the political domination of Margaret Thatcher's charismatic authority. Yet in spite of the government's intense focus on rave, is the fact that their method for defining it is particularly opaque and haphazard.

Part V of the *1994 United Kingdom Criminal Justice and Public Order Act* criminalizes rave through the authorizing of, "Powers to remove persons attending or preparing for a rave." It defines rave in the following terms:

This section applies to a gathering on land in the open air of 100 or more persons (whether or not trespassers) at which amplified music is played during the night (with or without intermissions) and is such, as by reason of its loudness and duration and the time at which it is played, is likely to cause serious distress to the inhabitants of the locality; and for this purpose –

- (a) such a gathering continues during intermissions in the music and, where the gathering extends over several days, throughout the period during which amplified music is played at night (with or without intermissions); and
- (b) "music" includes sounds wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats.<sup>191</sup>

This definition signals confusion regarding the target population. From the standpoint of the State, it seems easy to see that the intent is to establish methods for corralling and limiting the modes of new age travel that are responsible for troubling events such as the Stonehenge free festival and Castlemorton. This is accomplished through generating a legal definition of caravan sites and the conditions responsible for trespass. When defining rave there is, however, a profound failure of language to articulate what exactly is taboo. Given this site of contested

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<sup>191</sup>. Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, 1994



meaning, examining the government's interdiction of rave occurs through the relation State policy has to the functional deployment of the police. In the case of rave, Foucault's work on paternalist forms of administrative logic and reformatory policing presents a lens through which the population of rave is reformed into a productive and hospitable way which I argue may be usefully read alongside Foucault's notion of biopower. To explore this idea, consider the following discourse on rave in a parliamentary session entitled "Liberal Democrats and Raves in Littleborough and Saddleworth" occurring on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

That this House is concerned to learn that Councillor Ruth Mysack, a key campaigner for Littleborough and Saddleworth Liberal Democrat Candidate, Chris Davies, has called for a rave to be held in Saddleworth; considers the idea that a rave should be staged in Saddleworth is outrageous and offensive to local residents; recognises that raves in the North West are characterised by thousands of young people from across the region descending on a town for parties that run all night; and suggests that young people must be provided with opportunities for recreation and leisure that are beneficial to them and the community, rather than being encouraged into environments where drugs and disorderly conduct are rife.<sup>192</sup>

The paternalism of this approach to government invests heavily in this sort of language. Here the apparatus of liberal government preforms the role of a concerned yet tolerant parent. Deviance is to be reformed, corrected, so that the citizen may return to proper forms of behaviour. Unpacking this strategy, consider Foucault's research on the police as official administrators of paternalism. He states, "the police has to do with everything providing the city with adornment, form and splendor. Splendor denotes not only the beauty of the state ordered to perfection but also its strength, its vigor."<sup>193</sup> What is of interest is the way in which repressive mechanisms of policing (arrest, detention, restitution) are bound to the aesthetic of pleasantries that the "splendor" of the modern world provides. Similarly, the splendor of power is understandable in the image of the suburban middle-class enclave that modes of new age travel retreat from. In this instance perfection is defined as the desire to materialize a transcendental idea of beauty through the

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<sup>192</sup>. Britain. House of Commons Debates, 'Saddleworth Rave' 1997

<sup>193</sup>. Michel Foucault, "Omnes et Singulatim": toward a critique of political reason." In *Power*, ed. JD Faubion, (The New Press, 2000) 318

structured form of political rationalism. Suburban environments are the esteemed and hallowed territory of the *demos*. They are an essential aspect of the ideal distribution and allocation of the citizenry's human resource. As a referent culture, it is easy to see how the idea of habitat relates to the divergent political economies of nomadic new age travel versus sedentary suburban life. This 'new age' of travel and the emergent site of rave draws this population away from their intended home as constructed by governmental ministries for housing and education. In deviating from this norm, they are in turn made subject to reformatory strategies. The struggle between new age travel and State is not simply antagonism between economic classes; it comprises, as well, a magic-religious intent by government to achieve a beautified Ideal population through its distribution within sovereign territory.

Texts such as Graham St. John's "Technomad: Global Raving Countercultures" are one such location where the legacy of Spiral Tribe's ravepolitik appears. St. John has long-studied rave in the context of modern magico-religious practices. He is responsible for curating and editing together a global network of research practice and writings on rave and a leading figure in assembling its anthropological research. Technomad documents rave's nomadological praxis, charting the locations in which sound systems mobilization and proliferation, appearing and disappearing globally in search of politically emancipated space. St. John charts an excellent path to follow, tracing rave's spirit, 'vibes' as the culture globalizes, adapting to localised rituals and practised knowledge, while equally remembering historical materialism: the sound system is both technical object and cultural practice. St. John charts the maturation and crystallization of rave's political strategies. These form spectacles blurring the line between political demonstration and artwork. What is taken away from St. John's text is a documentation of the efficacy of sound system nomadology. Through mobilization and transmigration, the communities oriented around

the cyclical assembly and disassembly of sound system's produce real spaces of alternative social formations that work to transform lifestyle and embody meaningful social change. St. John's text is significant because it emphasizes the political activism of rave, a theme often ignored or criticized on the basis of fundamental misunderstandings regarding what constitutes political life. His work on Spiral Tribe mark moments where carnival becomes protest momentarily, before drafting back into the ambivalent space of festival itself. These crystallizations of more traditional political agents are found in events such as "free-tek", denoting a more militant and confrontational form of sound system.

## **Chapter 3: The Security, Territory and Population of a Festive Milieu**

### Governmentality and Liberalism

Having sketched a history of rave's relationship to the State apparatus, one can now approach rave culture through the theoretical lens of governmentality. This method addresses pastoral power's roots in liberal civil society secularising Christianity's particular technologies of the self. Gathered under the rubric of policing, these apparatuses are integral to modalities through which rave culture is regulated. The salience of this approach is demonstrated by mapping the geography of the terrain upon which the struggle oscillates.

Governmentality refers to a broadening of the concept of government in order to include social institutions traditionally viewed as beyond the scope of political science. Theorising the governmentality of liberalism based, for example, on a distinction between private and public life and action has historically defined the political as belonging to the realm of public life. A sharp distinction between the private and public life is a social construction of classical liberalism and an enduring approach to the study of politics that is being rendered obsolete by the hybridity of workplay in emerging technological networks. Critics of classical liberalism argue that distinctions between the private and public often served reactionary politics by marginalizing or delegitimizing the voices of political struggle and therefore actively excluding them from discourse formation. Put succinctly, the criticism of a division between private and public life meant that certain forms of conflict occurring in the private sphere are depoliticised facts of 'nature' and thus not viewed as primary sites of struggle within the force of social engineering.

Pivotal to this re-cognizing of government is the interdisciplinary work of Michel Foucault. Introduced in a 1977 seminar entitled *Security, Territory, Population* Foucault offers a hesitant and speculative, yet imaginatively fruitful definition of his neologism,

By this word "governmentality" I mean three things. First, by "governmentality" I understand the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculation, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument. Second, by "governmentality" I understand the tendency, the line of force, that for a long time, and throughout the West, has constantly led towards the pre-eminence over all other types of power-sovereignty, discipline and so on-of the type of power that we can call "government" and which has led to the development of a series of specific government apparatuses (appareils) on the one hand [and, on the other] to the development of a series of knowledges (savoirs). Finally, by "governmentality" I think we should understand the process, or rather, the result of the process by which the state of justice of the Middle Ages became the administrative state in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and was gradually "governmentalized"<sup>194</sup>

Governmentality is a networked or relational study of power. Conditions for the exercise of power are assembled through relations between methodically designed infrastructure (institutions and procedures) theoretical ideas (analyses and reflection) and cartography (calculations and tactics). Next, it locates the intentionality of government; defining its purpose, telos and architecture. Governmentality pursues a holistic methodology for population governance. Its strategies are based on acquiring knowledge of the body politic through the surveilling, data gathering functions of political economy (demography, statistical analysis, census, health records, spending habits and so on). In the terminology of institutional politics, governmentality enacts policy reform through deploying security apparatuses which function as technical instrumentation.

Like much of Foucault's work, governmentality is presented not as a sudden eruption or revolutionary transformation, but rather as a process of genealogical inheritance and subtle transition traced as a "line of force" emerging from the particular historical conditions that

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<sup>194</sup>. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78* Edited by Michel Senellart. Translated by Graham Burchell. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 108

influence and shape potential outcomes. Turning first to governmentality's history, Foucault traces its development to the metaphor of pastoral power as a narrative foundational for and indispensable to liberalism. To this end Foucault states,

I will now try to show you how this governmentality was born, [first], from the archaic model of the Christian pastorate and, second, by drawing support from a diplomatic-military model, or rather, technique, and finally, third how it could acquire its present dimensions thanks to a set of very specific instruments, the formation of which is exactly contemporaneous with the art of government, and which is called, in the old, seventeenth and eighteenth century sense of the word, police. I think the pastoral, the new diplomatic-military technique, and finally, police were the three major points of support on the basis of which that fundamental phenomenon in the history of the West, the governmentalization of the state, could be produced.<sup>195</sup>

This "governmentalization of the state" refers to the continuation of a political-aesthetico project that associates a State's strength and health with adhering to the Idealism of Form that the subject population approach and, of course, tragically never achieve through the welfare state's institutional disciplinary practices. To understand the ideas influencing the forms of policy involved in this process I now unpack the notion of pastoral power so that it may serve as a metaphor for interpreting the State's encounter with nascent rave culture. The primary instrument mediating this power relation is the police. In this light the police are both a concept of political ethics defined by the duty to care and as an instrument used by the State to shape, reform and rehabilitate bodies.

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<sup>195</sup>. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 110

### Political Technology: Policing Rave

Much of Foucault's theorizing of the policing as a political technology references his interpretation of a treatise on the police authored by Louis Turquet de Mayerne in 1611. Foucault interprets it as a characterization of the productive, formative, and paternalist measures the law will use in order to structure domestic life carefully. More than a way of obscuring the violent traditions underpinning the birth of nation-states, discipline and punishment within the suburbs occurs in the context of producing healthy subjects. Health becomes associated with concepts of correction rather than punishment and an explicit emphasis on the measurement of public health comes to indicate a form's 'splendour'.<sup>196</sup> This aesthetico-political understanding policing emphasizes the modern era of science and technology accessing disciplinary practices for their vitalist effects. This biopower permeates human subjectivity and is the logic of Justice when ruled by sovereign authority who rules over and no longer merely alongside death, who "makes live and lets die." In this era of biopower, the ancient truth of humanity's urge for violent expressions of retribution are tempered by compassionate rationality; domestic populations ruled through an appeal to the rationalist bodies of authority who govern based on the metrics of the health and well-being of the species itself. Laws are enacted in the interest of reforming deviant behaviour. There is a correction of action, even if the mind continues to be 'plagued' by defiant, deviant desires. All of this is of particular salience to the policing of rave culture. Critically this medico-legal discourse is merged with the politics of aesthetic concepts of beauty.

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<sup>196</sup>. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow. *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983) 139

In thinking of the police in this way Foucault addresses the peculiarity of defining the police in aesthetic terms noting that they are, "... the art of the state's splendour as visible order and manifest force."<sup>197</sup> The relation between splendour and order being visibly recognisable and 'manifest' through the force of government demonstrates the aesthetico-political. Thus, government designs societies rules with the intention of making them as sites of beauty. Working through the State's reformation of rave culture offers reasons to consider the concept of policing, as the legislation targeting raves appears within the subsection that is entitled "Police powers".<sup>198</sup> It is thus clear that it is the function of the police to enforce and embody the legislative decree. In assembling much of Foucault's reflections on the concept of the police, social theorists and Foucault scholars Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow summarize the police in the following terms,

The job of the police was the articulation and administration of techniques of bio-power so as to the state's control over its inhabitants...through a reading of administrative manuals of the age, Foucault shows that the chief role of the police...was the control of certain individuals and of the general population as they related to the state's welfare. Now the police were concerned with men in their everyday activities, as the essential components of the state's strength and vitality. It was the police and its administrative adjuncts who were charged with men's welfare and with their control<sup>199</sup>

Turning to the appearance of raves as the target of police intervention with these tools in hand provides a valuable resource for understanding the site of struggle that this cultural aesthetic represents. The methodology of policing rave is evidenced through the proliferation of administrative documentation on rave as a problem of population health. Thus far I have curated multiple documents: debates in parliament, overviews of police surveillance operations and medical reports. In this way biopower's regulation of aesthetic practice becomes clear. Again I note the significance of what is meant by splendour in respect the police's Statist function.

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<sup>197</sup>. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 314

<sup>198</sup>. United Kingdom Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994)  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/33/contents>

<sup>199</sup>. Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 15



For Foucault the police embody the power of the productive efficacy of technology to intervene in developing a population's subjectivity. As a social institution the police function as a new modality of power,

In the first place we see that, at first level – its first distinction with regard to this general function - it appears as a function of the state that is distinct from the three other traditional institutions: justice, the army, and finance. These were the traditional institutions, and now a fourth must be added, police, which is administrative modernity par excellence...[T]he role of the general Reformer of police...must see to the loyalty and modesty of citizens, and so he has a moral function. But he must equally be concerned with wealth and household management, that is to say, with the way in which people conduct themselves with regard to their wealth, their way of working, and consuming. He is therefore concerned with a mixture of morality and work. But what particularly strikes me as essential and typical is that when we look at the very heart of police, at the object and concern of the bureaus of police in the strict sense, we see that it is education on the one hand, and then the profession, the professionalization of individuals, on the other; it is concerned with the education that must train individuals so that they can have a profession, and then the profession, or at any rate, the type of activity to which they will devote themselves. So, we have a set of controls, decisions, and constraints brought to bear on men themselves, not insofar as they have a status or are something in the order, hierarchy, and social structure, but insofar as they do something, are able to do it, and undertake to do it throughout their life...what matters to the police is not the distinction between the nobility and the common people; what matters is different occupations, not differences in status.<sup>200</sup>

Thus for Foucault the police represent a function of the State that in many ways mimics the structural-functionalism of the Church as an institution responsible for administering moral instruction to the citizenry. The police are an institution unique in that they are responsible for overseeing both private and public spheres of life, as they are "...equally concerned with wealth and household management" and the 'education' and 'professionalization' of the body politic..". Policing attends to multiple plateaus, the privacy of familial home and publicity of social life.

Working with Foucault's texts develops the 'patience' that is necessary in order to assemble a genealogy. It entails situating rave's cyclical practices in relation to earlier generations of New Age traveller caravan convoys. It develops a consistency within the medico-legal discourse used to locate, evaluate, and correct expressions of monstrous abnormality or deviance. As we have seen, the emergence of caravan accommodation as a familial home is one such 'monstrous' mutation of the caravan's intended design principle. To develop this conclusion

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<sup>200</sup>. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 321

the modalities of caravan lifestyle are observed scientifically, compared against the State's intentions for populating territory. The salience of Foucault's claim that what matters, "is different occupations, not differences in status" seems to find purchase in relation to the way in which the Roma population are defined as well-placed and serving their intended function within the political economy of England, versus new age travellers who are defined as a deviating from their intended lifestyle practice. This deviance is a drifting afield of occupational status. It is therefore the role of police here to ensure that the population is shepherded back into occupational categories that are normal for the demographic. This 'mixture of morality and work' bears similarity to Weber's notion of the Protestant ethic. Considering the demographic background of New Age travellers (predominantly white citizens of Judaeo-Christian background) makes apparent their prioritization as a social problem relative to the much more unequal socioeconomic conditions of the Roma. The population of New Age travellers are a problem because of who they are. It is a demographic challenge. Instead of settling appropriately within the expanding suburbia that rings the city, they are instead following a lifestyle that the State does not plan for them. Their identity politic becomes deviant when undertake a nomadology supported by the cycle of festivals. In a Platonic metaphor: the problem is that of a population of gold and silver souls deviating from their well-ordered placement in the public realm.

This method of working through legal documentation seeks support through its methodological similarity to Foucault's archival work with documents on modes of administering government. In the *History of Sexuality*, he notes that, "[The] juridical institution is increasingly incorporated into a continuum of apparatuses (medical, administrative, and so on) whose

functions are for the most part regulatory".<sup>201</sup> Already with the appearance of the caravan site and its subsequent relation to the state we have identified numerous documents produced by such medical and administrative apparatuses. Of course, this history stretches much further, and to foster this network it is helpful to bring Foucault's work on the concept of population into the discussion.

In *Security, Territory, Population* Foucault draws attention to the concept of "population", a term referring to broad social categories such as race and class and negotiation with administrative state policy. In chapter five of this text he identifies this relationship as, "The triangle formed by government, population, and political economy".<sup>202</sup> It is evident to me that that the appearance of the caravan site, the new age traveller, and rave is demonstrative of what Foucault identifies as the, "...emergence of the problem of population."<sup>203</sup> I define this triangulated power relation at work when defining population as the bodies engaged in the modality of new age travel which produces the rave event. In particular it is contextualized within this dissertation as rave's evasive trespassing upon sovereign territory and through the assembly of a sound system repurposes and recodes the infrastructure of State paternalism. Security refers to the deployment of the police as a force intervening into the population in order to reform deviations from the ongoing process of crystallizing identity. Foucault further describes the triangulation of this power relation as, "...sovereignty, discipline, and governmental management, which has population as its main target and apparatuses of security as its essential mechanism."<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>201</sup>. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1: An Introduction*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984) 144

<sup>202</sup>. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 87

<sup>203</sup>. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 104

<sup>204</sup>. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 108

In contextualizing legislation concerning the appearance of caravan sites and carrying it forward into the explicit banning of raves, one sees how the State comes to identify a population in its demographic particularity and subsequently manage the group through legal policy that mobilizes the police as an "apparatus of security". This method is consistent with what Foucault elsewhere refers to as "dividing practices". Dividing practices are bound to the question of the subject and the processes of assigning membership within a particular demographic category. In constructing the genealogy of this practice Foucault describes it as a, "...a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects."<sup>205</sup> For clarity's sake, one may interpret 'subject' to reference bodies rendered 'subject to the force of governmentality'.

In his writings Foucault identified many of these modalities through researching the historic practices of confinement, psychiatric asylums and the rationalist logic of medical science. He defines dividing practices as the method by which, "the subject is objectified by a process of division either within himself or from others."<sup>206</sup> A subject may be divided from 'within', for example, through social norms and taboos encouraging the subject to relate their sense of self to the dominant values of the society they inhabit. This division functions as a repressive or censoring force. A concept such as heteronormativity, for example, divides the self through its power relation with authoritative social institutions such as religion or education in conditioning subjects that certain thoughts, desires and pleasures are forms of immorality. The subject may also be divided from others through actions such as imprisonment, censorship or vilification. In the case of New Age travel and rave one sees how division from within comes by assigning this behaviour as deviant and criminal (trespassing becomes a criminal offence, raves

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<sup>205</sup>. Foucault, "*The Subject and Power*", 208

<sup>206</sup>. *ibid*

become a site of criminality) the desires associated with such social phenomenon are thus defined as a desire for anti-social criminality.

As a popular-festive form, the size of rave's population disturbed the State apparatus. In censoring the spectacle, it became important to justify censorship through appealing to a definition of rave as an immoral practice. This justification is demonstrably apparent in the sensationalized tabloid coverage sourced from statements issued by the State acting as arbiters of rendering cultural practices sensible to broader demographic categories. Subjects encounter this division in terms of relating to classification on the basis of either accepting the State's limitation on their freedom to assemble or reject lawful authority and thus enter a space of illegality. In turn division from others is found through the arrest and detention of figures identified as important leaders or organizers of the contaminated culture itself in hopes that it will disintegrate the culture itself. Individual members are targeted with the intention being to correct or transform the structure fundamental to the culture itself. In the case of rave, this is documented as a successful operation, with the expansion of legislation criminalizing the spectacle and holding it accountable to a litany of licensing issues and resulting in the 'nightclub' becoming the appropriate container of such spectacles.

Viewing concepts of population and dividing practices alongside one another allows me to say thus that one of the functions of assigning rave a criminal taboo is to engage in a practice of population division. As noted in several police statements, there is no by standing. Attending a rave is criminal. Returning to the parliamentary hearings cited previously between two figures of government, Lord Beswick and Lord Bevin, we see how this process unfolds. The evolution of the law's relation to the existence of caravan sites, New Age travel, and rave depends heavily on the knowledge determined by the population's demographics itself.

The appearance of caravan sites in England raises the problem for State intentions for population distribution within sovereign territory. Caravans were supposed to provide the working-class with an affordable way to vacation away from the city for the weekend. However, the utility of their technology ultimately results in them facilitating lifestyles which explicitly reject such a mode of circulation. In order to appropriately note this dividing practice, consider that one of the first divisions made is the segmentation of the Roma population as belonging to a group distinct from English caravan dwellers. Even though both demographic categories share a common lifestyle, it is the English bodies that are attended too (privileged) by intensive State paternalism, while the Roma populations are defined as a less urgent, despite robust evidence regarding their impoverished and disenfranchised conditions. Here we find evidence supporting Foucault's claim that population is defined through processes of statistical modelling and data gathering. What is of interest viz a viz rave is that way in which it is dealt with by the State in a way that is paternalist before it is militarized. Although violence between rave sound systems and police does occur, it emerges through an intensifying and escalating process after assembled populations refuse to disperse.

Beginning with the legislation of caravans we see how government relies on data gathered through observational study in order to legislate. It is through statistical data that the State knows its population: size, age, health, and the characteristics that help define itself through relevant distinction from other categories. In the case of rave, tactics of police surveillance fittingly titled as operation snapshot and operation nomad, demonstrates such a project. Appealing to the medical literature measuring the quality of life within caravan sites demonstrates how these actions are justified. Together they develop the medico-legal framework that Foucault identifies as a liberal government's linking of health and economic prosperity.

## The Pastoral Field of Power

In the previous section, we saw how concepts of governmentality intersect with the body politic through the technology of the police. For Foucault these processes are part of the network of power relations comprising the 'art' of government. In the liberalism of the western world this is given the context of the pastorate. His writing on the aptness of the metaphor of the shepherd who exists within a relation of power referred to as pastoral indicates this. In the following pages, it will be demonstrated that the policing of new age travellers and raves is locatable within this same field of power. In outlining the pastorate Foucault's notes are as follows: "First outline of the pastorate. Its specific features: (a) it is exercised over a multiplicity on the move; (b) it is a fundamentally beneficent power with salvation of the flock as its objective; (c) it is a power which individualizes."<sup>207</sup> Foucault contextualizes this historical episteme as, "the organization of a pastoral power in the pre-Christian and Christian East". He then traces its development into 19<sup>th</sup> century western liberalism. Thus, pastoral power is a relational ontology of population governance that is exercised over a multiplicity on the move. It deploys biopolitical strategies (a beneficent power with salvation [health] of the flock as its objective). Finally, it produces the crystallized essence of the subject of liberal governmentality: the individual with its corollary notions of rationality and autonomy. It is clear from these terms and conditions that pastoral power belongs to the genealogy of the liberal welfare State as a way of articulating its guiding and justifying principles. In turn, I argue that many of its features transpose easily onto the relation of power between New Age travellers, rave and the State.

To demonstrate this transposition, let us work through the specific feature of Foucault's concept of pastoral power piece by piece. Its first feature, "exercised over a multiplicity on the

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<sup>207</sup>. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, vii

move" finds purchase in the development of laws against trespassing, the assembly of caravan sites, and rave's organizational tactics in searching out hidden spaces and evasive response to State surveillance. Its "fundamental benefice" is that it takes the 'salvation' of the subject's soul as its objective. In the context of rave this appears within the paternal language used by politicians in their description of strategies for censoring rave culture itself on the ground that it is not, "beneficial to [self] and community".<sup>208</sup>

The power relations which normalize a domesticated and individuated subject resonates with methods of new age travel. Medico-legal transcripts document that many caravan communities existed as non-traditional familial structures. Similarly much of the existing sociological and anthropological literature on raves contain ethnographic accounts of experiencing a 'loss' of subjectivity through assimilation into crowd mentality. In the nomadism of sound system assembly there is a 'straying afield' of the self which is disciplined by liberal biopower. Simon Reynolds wonderfully describes this disintegration of the individual in his earlier cited description of Castlemorton in his description of the crowd surrounding the Spiral Tribe sound system, "With their undulating dance moves, it seems like the crowd has evolved into a single, pulsating organism."<sup>209</sup> Cast in this poetic light I argue that an aspect of rave's sociopolitical consequence is locatable in its developing of a sensation of liminal experience during which participating bodies flee from forces of individuation, consciously or unconsciously. It is this ambivalent dissimulation by a population that is supposed and intended to be both productive and docile, disciplined into occupying and reproduce the State apparatus itself which concerns government.

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<sup>208</sup>. Hansard Parliamentary Debates House of Commons Debates, 'Saddleshworth Rave' 1997

<sup>209</sup>. Reynolds, *Generation Ecstasy*, 130



That the pastoral is a, "beneficent power with salvation of the flock as its objective..." draws interest when considering the subject population demographics. The significance here is in the process of segregation and categorization which divides new age travel caravan populations from Roma populations. The notion of 'beneficence' is rich in meaning; it implicates state paternalism that resonates with concepts of charity. It is a power relation that works to actualize the 'best interests' of a governed body. Such beneficent ideas are clearly expressed in earlier cited discourse on by British parliamentarians arguing that rave must be regulated because, "young people must be provided with opportunities for recreation and leisure that are beneficial to them and the community, rather than being encouraged into environments where drugs and disorderly conduct are rife."<sup>210</sup> Such textual evidence presents ideas of the duty to care and expresses responsibility for the salvation or well-being of others. What I note as significant is that government defines rave as the result of a particular neglect on the part of the government. Young people must be *provided* opportunities. This implies that the absence of such opportunity results in the subject "...being encouraged into environments where drugs and disorderly conduct are rife." In multiple instances actors who voice the State note that the bodies behaving deviantly are not *in essence* deviant, but have instead been lured by the corrupting, cultish sounds of the Acid House siren song. Thus, what we have seen in this project of coming to understand rave and draw it under the aegis of law and order is a deployment of a particular technique of power that bares resemblance to the genealogy of liberal governmentality worked on by Foucault.

In defining governmentality Foucault thus situates a strategic logic for population management. The specific tactics adopted, what Foucault terms as a triple displacement<sup>211</sup>, is refracted through the structural-functionalism of the figuration of the religious pastor. In a

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<sup>210</sup>. Hansard Parliamentary Debates House of Commons Debates, 'Saddleshworth Rave' 1997

supposedly secularized form, the strategies of liberal governmentality are implemented through the political technology of policing. Correlated to the logic of liberal governmentality is the specific way in which it defines its subject population. Foucault articulates this relationship via an analysis of this pastoral power relation. This governmental subject is the pastorate and,

What the history of the pastorate involves, therefore, is the entire history of procedures of human individualization in the West. Let's say also that it involves the history of the subject. . . . [The pastorate is] a prelude to governmentality through the constitution of a specific subject, of a subject whose merits are analytically identified, who is subjected in continuous networks of obedience, and who is subjectified [subjectivé] through the compulsory extraction of truth.<sup>212</sup>

It is the metaphor of the shepherd and the flock they tend which describe conditions of pastoral power relations. However, this metaphor is also an allegory for the structural administration of how bodies are actually governed. Outlining the pastorate as the subject of liberal governmentality develops a pragmatic approach to understanding the logic appealed to by governmental administrative bureaucracy when contaminated by the aesthetic concerns of a population's virtuous 'beauty' as derived from being well-placed and well-ordered in society. Earlier we saw this intrinsic to the technology of policing who not only secured internal order, but in doing so attended to the 'splendour' of the citizenry well distributed within the constructed suburbia.

The pastoral is therefore helpful because it refers to a form of social relation, a geographic locale and as well, an individual occupation. As a social relation, the pastoral belongs to other expressions of a "duty to care" that form the concept of paternalism. Geographically, the pastoral refers to the country-side, or space that exists beyond the limits of towns and cities. It is often framed dialectically against the city -- a space where animals roam freely across a wild landscape.<sup>213</sup> As a professional occupation, the pastoral refers to the mode of care exercised by

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<sup>212</sup>. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 184

<sup>213</sup>. Terry Gifford, "Pastoral, Anti-Pastoral and Post-Pastoral Reading Strategies." *Critical Insights: Nature and Environment*, (42) 2012: 26

the pastor. It signifies a position of authority and responsibility. For Foucault the relations of power referenced by this position is crucial to his understanding of pastoral power. The pastor exists in a form of agonistic relation or dependence upon the pastorate. The salvation of the pastor is dependent on the salvation of the population. This power relation is agonistic. It is derived from assumptions about the relationship a shepherd has to his flock of sheep. Although the sheep are autonomous animals, their health and well-being are a moral and economic imperative for the shepherd. It would seem in these conditions that morality is bound to the functional utility of economic structure. If the sheep are mistreated, they will suffer and die. As such they are a force of political economy which exercises restraint on the Shepherd's life.

#### Field and Force

Of critical importance when using Foucault's theorizing of power is attaching with it the necessity of resistance. Foucault is often criticized for creating fantasies of totalized structures in which agency is lost and the potential for change foreclosed. However, such interpretations are too affected by the aesthetic force of Foucault's narration of discipline, punishment, and confinement and tend to lose sight of the fact that, "where there is power, there is resistance." This is noted not as a hopeful addendum, instead it is noted because it is an essential condition of power relations. These relations mark the tragedy of totalizing governmental strategies because they cannot achieve their objective of establishing normalized, self-regulating and self-contained, closed systems. Like the excess of energy which escapes as heat and cannot be returned into the system, something is always 'lost' to such exteriority. Loss dialogues with the neurotic obsession of the pastor who must ensure the salvation of *all*. The pastor's own salvation depends upon achieving this impossible totality. In describing resistance's irreducibility to power, Ben Golder aptly summarizes the conditions of struggle within the field of liberal governmentality.

And yet all this would hardly be a recognizably Foucaultian engagement with power if the question of resistance were not also raised, and this is the question with which I want to close this discussion of STP. Readers of Foucault's 1970s genealogical investigations of punitive rationalities and apparatuses of sexuality will be familiar with the notion of resistance being "inscribed in [power] as an irreducible opposite," and with the idea that where there is a power relation there is always of necessity a resistance to this power, conditioning it, traversing it, supporting it, and so forth. In lecture eight, Foucault discusses various forms of resistance to the pastorate, of pastoral counter-conducts, "all of which tend to redistribute, reverse, nullify, and partially or totally discredit pastoral power in the systems of salvation, obedience and truth". These forms of resistance, or struggle over the terms of pastoral government, are: the practice of asceticism, the formation of communities, the cultivation of mysticism, a return to scripture, and an embrace of eschatology. As Foucault stresses, these forms of resistance to the pastoral conduct of souls are "clearly not absolutely external to Christianity, but are actually border-elements". They are neither external to Christianity nor do they aim at a complete overthrowing of relations of governance tout court. Rather, they try to disrupt the particular alignment of governance practiced by the pastorate, along the axis of salvation, obedience, and truth. For example, asceticism is a challenge to the pastorate's emphasis on obedience to the other, the master. The ascetic excludes a relation of obedience to the other through the prioritization of the ascetic relation of self to self; as Foucault says, "in asceticism there is a specific excess that denies access to an external power". The cultivation of mysticism, on the other hand, challenges the pastorate's political mobilization of truth -- in mysticism, as Foucault recounts, "[t]he soul is not offered to the other for examination, through a system of confessions [aveux]. In mysticism the soul sees itself. It sees itself in God and it sees God in itself. To that extent mysticism fundamentally, essentially, escapes examination". These forms of resistance to the pastorate all seem to coalesce around the question of the relationship of self to self, the fundamental question of the refusal of the categories of political individualization and the politics of truth upon which the pastorate, in its openly theological form and its statist avatars, relies.<sup>214</sup>

Foucault refers to the specificity that resistance to pastoral power takes as counter-conduct. As Golder notes, it is not a revolutionary dialectic, rather it is force disrupting the cyclical function of government that 'rules and is ruled in turn'. Critically, this power relation is also a border-element to Christianity. Foucault's work on pastoral power and the specificity of resistance to it informs the association between rave, festivals, the State, and Christianity. Counter-conduct escapes interpellation by logics of domination through re-evaluating the subject population's relationship to teleological ends, defined by the transcendental metaphysics of concepts such as salvation, justice and truth. Embodied practices such as asceticism, community formation, mystic appeals, and the Gnosticism of secret societies that challenge the Judaeo-Christian structuring of moralist eschatology within Western society exercise this resistance. The argument that this dissertation further unpacks is the specificity of counter-conduct as a way of articulating rave's

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<sup>214</sup>. Ben Golder, "Foucault and the Genealogy of Pastoral Power." *Radical Philosophy Review* (10) 2007: 158

relation to the State. This reflection frames discourse regarding conflict between the State and nascent rave culture. In doing so rave is thus situated genealogically as continuing the ambivalent function of the festival in social life.

### Pastoral Counter-Conduct: Mysticism, Intoxication, Vertigo, Gnosticism

Foucault works at defining pastoral counter-conduct by distinguishing it from economic and political motives. Although there is a political economy at work, it is an ethical rebellion that is spiritual before it is economic and political. The economic pole focuses on resistance to exploitation that is derived class struggle. The political pole charts resistance as directly challenging legitimacy of sovereign authority. In this instance it can be located in reference to the specific laws that are used to govern and regulate behaviour. Foucault diagrams the way in which beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the law begins functioning as a tool for reforming society that includes the diagnostics of medical research in the process of legislative decision making. We have thus seen how this is justified on the basis of biopower's pastoral ethics: its beneficent and individualizing force. Counter-conduct is evasion of the rationalism of medico-legal discourse. It instead challenges modes of caring for the soul through relating differently to the technologies which augment this care. Put differently, it questions established traditions of moral and ethical behaviour through appealing to the exteriority of mysticism rather than the interiority of rationalism.

My second remark is that these revolts of conduct have their specificity. What I would like to show you is that they are distinct from political revolts against power exercised by a form of sovereignty, and they are also distinct [from economic revolts against power]† inasmuch as it maintains or guarantees exploitation. They are distinct in their form and in their objective.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>215</sup>. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 260

Through bracketing out the economic and the political as providing the reasons space for theorizing appears as one is called to explore how resistance appears in forms that do not belong to the political or economic register. Of course, this notion of the political is working on two levels. In bracketing the economic and the political one is bracketing out not all politics in all its potential forms, but rather bracketing out a defining of the political through liberalism's governmentality. Foucault's work on pastoral power and forms of counter-conduct are part of a larger project performing a genealogy of the liberal state itself. Thus, Foucault's interest in counter-conduct is that it is a revolt that does not engage strategies that are historically intelligible to the schematics of political liberalism. Nonetheless, they do exist in relation to and unfold within the field of liberal politics, for counter-conduct is a form of resistance to the way in which the metaphors of pastoralism inform and influence the practical policies adopted by liberalism's rational political apparatus. Foucault addresses the networked relation as such: "the specificity of these struggles, of these resistances of conduct, does not mean that they remained separate or isolated from each other, with their own partners, forms, dramaturgy, and distinct aim. In actual fact they are always, or almost always, linked to other conflicts and problems."<sup>216</sup> Thus although the primary objective of counter-conduct is its resistance to domination by certain modes of ethical practice, this objective is not a pure or sole fact - the economic and political of course contributes in varying degrees. Corollary to this power relation is social arrangements which resist being structured by government institutions. Foucault labels these forms of resistance "counter-conduct" in favour of the more 'common sense' of dissidence,

So let's give up this word, and what I will propose to you is the doubtless badly constructed word "counter-conduct" – the latter having the sole advantage of allowing reference to the active sense of the word "conduct" – counter-conduct in the sense of struggle against the processes implemented for conducting others; which is why I prefer it to "misconduct (inconduite)," which only refers to the passive sense of the word, of behavior: not conducting oneself properly. And then maybe this word "counter-conduct" enables us to avoid a certain substantification allowed by the word "dissidence." Because from "dissidence" we get

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<sup>216</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 261

"dissident," or the other way round, it doesn't matter, in any case, dissidence is the act of one who is a dissident, and I am not sure that this substantification is very useful. I fear it may even be dangerous, for there is not much sense in saying, for example, that a mad person or a delinquent is a dissident. There is a process of sanctification or hero worship which does not seem to me of much use. On the other hand, by using the word counter-conduct, and so without having to give a sacred status to this or that person as a dissident, we can no doubt analyze the components in the way in which someone actually acts in the very general field of politics or in the very general field of power relations; it makes it possible to pick out the dimension or component of counter-conduct that may well be found in fact in delinquents, mad people, and patients. So, an analysis of this immense family of what could be called counter-conducts.<sup>217</sup>

In distinguishing dissidence from counter-conduct, the articulation of a specific power relation emerges that is distinct from the revolts against established political ideology implied by the term 'dissidence'. Foucault's skepticism of the linguistic baggage attached to dissident may be interpreted as being influenced by the usage of dissidence within the context of the USSR and the splintering factions vying for control over communist ideology and struggle for power that were occurring. In developing a vocabulary from counter-conduct in place of dissidence Foucault asserts that revolts against pastoral power are distinct from political or economic revolts in their form and objective. Similarly, by deploying counter-conduct as the signifier of specific revolts against pastoral power, ethical theories of political revolution are bracketed out. This move is made in order to separate counter-conduct from political struggles which engage in valorizing specific individual figures as emancipatory figures of leadership. Here counter-conduct signifies revolt that is not characterized by idolatry, counter-conduct against pastoral power is not a political struggle derived from charismatic leaders who vie for the legitimacy of claims to justice. Foucault's focus on figures who are peripheral in terms of political agency is expanded upon in the forms of counter-conduct he subsequently articulates.

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<sup>217</sup>. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 267

## Counter-Conduct and the Carnavalesque

Carnavalesque counter-conduct is found within the mystic practices adopted by communities.

Foucault expands upon this power relation as a "phenomena of hierarchical reversal".

We also find phenomena of hierarchical reversal. In these groups you have systematic reversals of hierarchy. That is to say, the most ignorant or poorest person, or someone with the lowest reputation or honor, the most debauched, the prostitute, was chosen as leader of the group. This is what happened, for example, with the Society of the Poor and Jeanne Dabenton, who was reputed to have led the most dissolute life and who, precisely because of this, became the group's pastor. Somewhat as asceticism had this aspect of almost ironic exaggeration in relation to the pure and simple rule of obedience, we could say that in some of these communities there was a counter-society aspect, a carnival aspect, overturning social relations and hierarchy. In short, we would have to study (... it's a whole problem) the carnival practice of overturning society and the constitution of these religious groups in a form that is the exact opposite [of] the existing pastoral hierarchy. The first really will be the last, but the last will also be the first.<sup>218</sup>

Here Foucault is citing particular religious communities which obey demands of the sacred in ways that are heretical to Christianity. Of critical significance is the system of reversal of hierarchy and the allusion to the social and anthropological function of the carnival or festival as a "practice of overturning society and constitution of these religious groups in a form that is the exact opposite [of] the existing pastoral hierarchy." This appeal to the sacred as the source for legitimation is interesting in that the history of its relationship to both Christian theology and liberal politics is one of conflict. As well it is consistent with the body of literature that situates carnival in terms of its profane relationship to normalized class structures and ethical modes of social interaction. Roger Caillois seminal work on the carnival identifies the festival as just that: a ritual of hierarchical reversal.

## Mysticism Intoxication, Vertigo, Gnosticism

Mysticism functions on the plane of transcendental metaphysics as a resistor. It works in relation to established principles of defining what is called logic and/or reason. In the specific case of pastoral counter-conduct in Judaeo-Christian society

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<sup>218</sup>. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 279



Mystical experience short-circuits this hierarchy and the slow circulation of the truths of teaching. Third, while it is true that mysticism accepts and functions according to a progressive principle like teaching, it has a completely different principle of progress, since teaching follows a regular progression from ignorance to knowledge through the successive acquisition of cumulative elements, whereas the mystical path passes through a play of alternations – night/day, dark/light, loss/return, absence/presence – which are continually reversed. Better still, mysticism develops on the basis of, and in the form of, absolutely ambiguous experiences, in a sort of equivocation, since the secret of the night is that it is an illumination. The secret, the force of illumination, is precisely that it blinds. In mysticism ignorance is a knowing, and knowledge has the very form of ignorance. To that extent you can see how far we are from the typical form of pastoral teaching. In the pastorate, the pastor's direction of the individual soul was necessary, and no communication between the soul and God could take place that was not either ruled out or controlled by the pastor. The pastorate was the channel between the faithful and God. In mysticism there is an immediate communication that may take the form of a dialogue between God and the soul, of appeal and response, of the declaration of God's love of the soul, and of the soul's love of God. There is the mechanism of perceptible and immediate inspiration that makes the soul recognize God's presence. There is also communication through silence. There is communication through the physical clinch, when the mystic's body really feels the presence, the urgent presence of the body of Christ Himself. So here again you can see the distance separating mysticism from the pastoral.<sup>219</sup>

The tautological reasoning presented in this account of mysticism provides an apt contextualization of rave's appeal to transcendental metaphysics in the form of New Age spirituality and the production of religious practices and concepts of the sacred. The distinct break from Christianity that mystic practices mark is significant given the history of Judaeo-Christianity in developing a secular liberal State apparatus. The processes linked to the regulation of bodies within State territory are inextricably bound to this history and the emergence of rave and its cultural practices demarcate a form of rebellion linked more to questions of spirit than questions of politics or economy. Mysticism in rave emerges as a specific mode of resisting the pastoral power of the English State apparatus. It appears in the symbolic and cultural capital assigned to artists and performers and to the function of the environment itself. Ethnographic accounts of rave discuss its temporality as a "sacred time", where the site of artistic performance functions as though it were an altar.<sup>220</sup> All of this unfolds in a historical epoch that Nietzsche refers to as the 'twilight of idols'. Twilight is simultaneously an end and a

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<sup>219</sup>. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 280

<sup>220</sup>. Graham St. John, "Techno Millenium, Dance, Ecology and Future Primitives", in *Rave Culture and Religion* (2004), 223

beginning, a space where idolatry is caught between the two worlds of revered worship and despised abjection. Twilight refers to the interstition of night and day, the liminality of two distinct atmospheric states gradually mixing into one another before separating. Thus, this twilight is not the linearity of beginning and end, for it guarantees a return. One sees this return in the spirituality injected into the machinic processes which produce rave: the sound system.

Appeals to the magico-religious plane of mysticism are further informed by the pastorate's relation to the experience of fidelity, dogmatism and zealotry which anchor concepts of faith. The reversal of hierarchy produces a diametric embracing of the opposite. In this case the meaning of a rave culture is clear: madness is reason, the time and space of the carnivalesque destabilize and threatens codified structures of meaning and practice.

The pastorate was formed against a sort of intoxication of religious behavior...This might be, for example, a kind of vertigo or enchantment provoked by a sort of unlimited asceticism that could lead to suicide: freeing oneself from matter as quickly as possible. There is also the idea, the theme, of destroying matter through the exhaustion of the evil it contains, of committing every possible sin, going to the very end of the domain of evil opened up by matter, and thus destroying matter. Let us sin, then, and sin to infinity. There is also the theme of the nullification of the world of the law, to destroy which one must first destroy the law, that is to say, break every law. One must respond to every law established by the world, or by the powers of the world, by violating it, systematically breaking the law and, in effect, overthrowing the reign of the one who created the world.<sup>221</sup>

In working through a genealogy of the pastorate and pastoral power Foucault arrives at a conclusion regarding the specificity of its power relation. Interestingly here the minimalism of aesthetics is placed in a dialectical relation to the maxim of total consumption and waste. As the festival, in this case known as rave, is indeed a state of leisure one may also assume it belongs to a state of play. The sensation of vertigo or dizziness is a fundamental element of play, to be excited, to experience joyous affects is to also open one's self up to delirium and to welcome the

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<sup>221</sup>. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 260

disorientation it offers. The place of the festival bounds the reversals of hierarchy and the confusion of class and status. The effect of this is a mediation of shock and trauma associated with the experience of dizziness of confusion when encountering a form of difference that casts doubt over the certainty of sense radical change through the confusing influence of dizzying the senses.

### Raving Spirit: Rave as Counter-Conduct

Describing rave's relationship to the broader society it is situated within is made apparent by documenting its ethical discourse on the subject of spiritual rebellion.<sup>222</sup> Attempts are made by various sound systems to materialize these ideals through generating communal space designed to facilitate the sublimation of self.<sup>223</sup> Often modern festivals will refer to this process as the principle of "radical self-experimentation". That the specificity of revolts in ethical conduct distinguishes them from political or economic struggles seems to render such an analysis useful for situating an analysis of rave. Critical to the thesis pursued in this dissertation is Foucault's description of particular methods of counter-conduct to pastoral power, which I argue allows rave to become situated within the genealogy of festive rituals. The themes drawn from Foucault's work on pastoral counter-conduct provide several points illuminating the peculiarity of the State's interdiction of caravan living as a modality of 'new age travel' and the nascent rave culture that develops within the onset of technoculture. Its distinction from traditional avenues of dissidence (the political and economic) seems to indicate that it may be situated within the theoretical paradigm outlined by Foucault.

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<sup>222</sup>. Andrew Wagner, "Gettin' Weird Together: The Performance Of Identity And Community Through Cultural Artifacts Of Electronic Dance Music Culture." (2004)

<sup>223</sup>. Scott Hutson, "The Rave: Spiritual Healing in Modern Western Subcultures.", 35

Rave in particular is often criticized for its abandonment of a particular tradition of counter-culture politics based upon proletarian class struggle and Marxist ideology as a rallying point for revolutionary politics.<sup>224</sup> Similarly although economic and political factors do contribute the emergence of new age travel and rave, issues of environmentalism, spirituality and dissatisfaction with political traditions are significant. The social construction of rave as a crisis in healthcare and well-being emerge in relation to the counter-conduct of its new age travel modality. These terms are of interest because they link the clinical with the ethical. As well the contemporary conditions of political economy increasingly appeal to the well-being of the working body as a means for escaping the effects of alienation that are by-products of the necessity to sell one's labour power in pursuit of economic security. Rave is thus an imperfect representation of the theory of pastoral counter-conduct.

The head of a police task force assigned to survey, prevent and intercept rave from assembling discusses the choice of tactics deployed by the State in similar terms. In order to combat the expansion of rave culture in the U.K, the issue becomes framed as a crisis in the health and safety of a population. This is made clear in a statement released regarding the surveillance and regulation of rave events. In discussing the rationale behind adopting particular strategies for preventing these festive events from appearing.

The decision was made not to pursue the parties on the grounds of drug use, but to concentrate on environmental offences, noise and fire regulations and obscure local bylaws. "'If you took it as a hard issue on drugs, I don't think you'd have got the support of all the other authorities,' explains Tappenden. 'Health and safety means a lot to a local authority, drugs don't. Health and safety took on board every conceivable public authority we could get involved. The fire brigade came on board and all the district councils. Why health and safety? Why emergency lighting? Why noise? Because it was easy, drugs was difficult without thousands and thousands of men.' Furthermore, at that time Ecstasy was not considered to be a major public health problem by the government; the 'war on drugs' was invariably a war on heroin, and raves were seen as a law and order issue.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>224</sup>. Redhead, *Rave Off*, 15

<sup>225</sup>. Collins, *Altered State: The Story of Ecstasy Culture and Acid House*, 114

It is the question of health and its relationship to lifestyle, behaviour and risk that provides a narrative for the criminalisation of rave. A Foucauldian narrative helpfully addresses the issue at hand presents three key concepts: security, territory, population. The intersection of these three categories indeed addresses new age travel and the power of rave assembly. The synthesis of security, territory and population is indicated by Tappenden's appeal to 'health and safety' as a sort of ethical omnibus. This strategy is cognate with Foucault's notion that the field of healthcare exists as a vital site of struggle.

In its modern forms, the pastorate is deployed to a great extent through medical knowledge, institutions, and practices. We can say that medicine has been one of the great powers that have been heirs to the pastorate. And to that extent it too has given rise to a whole series of revolts of conduct, what we could call a strong medical dissent, from the end of the eighteenth century and still today, which extends [from] the refusal of certain medications and certain preventive measures like vaccination, to the refusal of a certain type of medical rationality: the attempt to constitute sorts of medical heresies around practices of medication using electricity, magnetism, herbs, and traditional medicine; [the] refusal of medicine tout court, which is frequently found in certain religious groups. Here we can see how movements of religious dissidence were able to link up with resistance to medical conduct.<sup>226</sup>

As demonstrated previously the question of the health of caravan living and the effect of new age travel on the physical wellbeing of participant bodies is an object of study by the State.

Sociological reviews of rave culture have similarly found an overwhelming emphasis on State-funded research projects favouring quantitative methodologies that analyze drug use at raves. A similarly medico-legal analysis of caravan site living conditions is funded and supported by the State in order to determine the most effective strategy for ensuring the lifestyle practice complies with health standards.

The salience of connecting the medical or clinical gaze with the history of scholarly methods examining rave as a form of medical crisis is significant in that one sees how counter-conduct performs resistance to State intervention. Consequently, research produced by medical institutions is used to justify its censorship. In the case of mobile homes or caravans functioning

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<sup>226</sup>. Foucault, *Security Territory Population*, 266

as living spaces for British citizens, part of their assignment as a "national problem" by government is derived from findings produced by a comprehensive program studying the health of members. It determined that the quality of life for children within living in such conditions is far below accepted modern standards. Rave similarly becomes increasingly policed as a result of the way in which medical research on participants identifies and emphasizes the severity of health and safety risks associated with substance abuse within sites of trespass. In doing so security apparatuses are increasingly empowered to investigate and survey the clandestine space. Similarly, medical research which contributes to the narrative on rave as a crisis in public health receives significant resources to document the crisis in its full extent, demonizing the culture at large and presenting its essential message as one which threatens the health and safety of the youth population.

#### Festive Counter-Conduct: Rave as Genealogical Remix of The Fight Between Carnival and Lent

Thus far I have sketched the interplay between Foucault's work on pastoral power and the history of rave's coming under the jurisdiction of criminal sanction. This seems to be a prudent undertaking, for as we saw in the codification of rave, its definition is ambiguous. Further examining this opacity in language is significant because the principle of legal certainty is essential to the system of common law. In essence: law must be understandable in order to satisfy the requirements of the concept of legal certainty. Beyond the quizzical ambiguity of defining rave as an "emission of a succession of repetitive beats", the sudden violence of the Battle of the Beanfield urges an acute focus on the context provided by history. Trivialities aside, these communities that are sustained through new age travel caravans and affirming identity at annual festivals are targeted with severity.

That the technique of government known through pastoral power is inherited by the administrative apparatus of the modern States from the Judaeo-Christian institutions that preceded it is further supported by the appearance of artwork presenting narratives of struggle between church and State. Framed as a dialectic of antagonism between carnival and lent, situating the criminalization of rave within theories of carnival and festival is a route often taken by scholars addressing electronic music, raves, and youth culture. However, as critics eagerly note, it is a path fraught with the constant lure of rhetoric and hyperbole. It is generally viewed with much suspicion when one takes Bakhtin's concept of carnival and applies it to the logistics of contemporary festivals.

Sampling from the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin's seminal writings on Francois Rabelais has produced a massive body of writing attempting to apply Bakhtinian concepts of the carnivalesque onto modern or contemporary events, for better or for worse. In response, this way of practicing cultural theory is severely criticized. In spite of this it seems that theorizing carnivalesque and festive rituals offers insight into the events presented in the previous project that cannot be ignored or cast aside. Especially when situated as a way of understanding the process of mediating sovereignty through a process of secularism occurring as modern liberalism replaces Christian institutions with legal rationality. This claim is supported by the process Foucault's references in his writings on pastoral power and paternalist governmentality. Thus, the argument for making sense of rave's appearance in the law is buttressed further through situating it as an embodied iteration of this struggle. What I am exploring is rave's carnivalesque form. The criminalization of rave and the government's repression of festivals such as the Stonehenge free festival is a strategy of pastoral power belonging to societies contextualizing virtue and vice in relation to the Christian institutions of continental Europe and is found

represented in various renaissance era works of art. The tension is over the legitimation of authoritative bodies as a transition of power from Christian church to modern nation-State takes place. Within this site of struggle the event of carnival takes on significance. Moving forward it is appropriate to question the methodology at use and the reasons for which Foucault is called upon to perform this task.

In this regard Foucault's utility belongs not only to the appropriateness of identifying governmentality: in this case the logic deployed by the State in enacting law. It is as well crucial to stress the role of Christian myth and storytelling|sermonizing in this history. Pastoral power is a relation of power within the episteme of a society modernizing in the shadow of Christian political ethics. It describes a structure of legislative authority that is made sensible through appealing to themes and symbols prominent to Christianity itself. The relation between the shepherd and the flock of sheep bears resonance with societies utilizing pastoral approaches to agriculture. It bears even deeper resonance with the Christian communities emerging from these practices of animal husbandry. A young calf of the herd is incarnated as the Son of God: sent to sacrifice the self, selflessly. And through the lens of a Christian power relation the significance of the criminalization of rave is further deepened.

One channel of the sociologic research on rave focuses specifically on the rituals of group association at play in the emergence of a rave culture. It is the power of these structures that forms the dialectic by which the State enacts a sovereign ban. Traditionally in continental Europe and North America this struggle is named as the conflict between Church and State. In citing various religious communities which resist pastoral power through particular forms of counter-conduct Foucault describes them as possessing a "carnival aspect" that forms the process of



phenomena which enact reversals in a hierarchy.<sup>227</sup> This claim is consistent with other literature on the social and cultural anthropology of festivals extricated by Rogers Caillois and Victor Turner. In pursuing this trajectory, I consider Pieter Bruegel's painting, because it insightfully portrays of this conflict as a form of landscape. In reading Bruegel's painting in such a fashion what emerges is a depiction of the stakes of the fight, quarrel, or struggle that is taking shape.

Pieter Bruegel's painting, 'Carnival's Quarrel with Lent' offers a vivid narrative of a political struggle for social order. Bruegel interweaves a complex network of actors, agents and institutional structures in various stages of emergence, dissolution and conflict. Scholars have diligently pored over the painting for centuries, exercising careful patience in working through an artifact that is kinetic and rich in metaphor and allegories that provoke questions of folk population, government, public life, and relations of power and authority. In the interests of candour and specificity, I assert that some of the narratives presented in Bruegel's painting are indispensable to an adequate understanding of the events detailed in the preceding chapter. To demonstrate this claim, I assemble interpretations of Bruegel's painting as a way of connecting several themes. These include the pastoral function of policing the Battle of the Beanfield, the chaos of Castlemorton Common Free Festival and the criminalization of rave. All of these events are informed by Foucault's discourse on pastoral power relations. Working through the relations of power presented by Bruegel's work helps genealogically situate the implications of the last chapter's conclusions. In my writing this painting functions as an exhibit of both the genealogy of festival and as well the appropriateness of the Foucauldian methodology I have adopted.

I begin with C. G. Stridbeck's comprehensive analysis of the painting entitled, "'Combat between Carnival and Lent' by Pieter Bruegel the Elder: An Allegorical Picture of the Sixteenth

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<sup>227</sup>. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 279

Century" published in 1956 by the Warburg Institute. In his writing Stridbeck's first move is to situate the painting historically.

In 'Combat between Carnival and Lent' the artist's subject is the traditional yearly carnival which during the week before Lent dominated life in the Flemish villages and cities. This carnival was one of the many half-religious, half-secular festivals characteristic of the latter part of the Middle Ages. Towards the end of the Middle Ages the religious festivals tended to degenerate; their religious character retired into the background, and they became primarily an excuse for loose living and orgies of eating and drinking.<sup>228</sup>

Already the sociopolitical stakes of this painting begin to emerge. The subject of the painting, what is being studied, is not one person (as in a self-portrait) or the significance of a group of people (as in a Royal family or the priestly caste), but rather the painting draws attention to the power of the event's *mis-en-scene* itself. What is expressed in the artwork is the environment of social upheaval. Its power as a spectacle appears within the gathering of the village in a public space, subsequently 'dominating' the collective life of a town or village, temporarily interrupting, altering, or bringing into abrupt confrontation the structures of social hierarchy that govern.

The panoramic landscape that Bruegel depicts demonstrates that the spectacle itself is the principle subject of his painting. The scene is one that features a crowd, populated by 170 figures and typically interpreted as divided in half by two groups of people who are participating in a joust, which is a re-occurring event in carnivals that pits a symbolic figure of Carnival against a symbolic figure of Lent. In Bruegel's painting the figure of Carnival is a portly man riding a barrel that one would assume to contain alcohol. As a weapon for the duel, he wields a stake skewered with pieces of meat as though it were a spear. On the ground surrounding the barrel are several playing cards, suggesting both chaos in the form of chance and issuing a defiant challenge to the prohibitions on gambling enforced by Christianity. Against this figure of Carnival is the figure of Lent: a frail and emaciated woman wielding a paddle with fish upon it.

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<sup>228</sup>. C. G. Stridbeck, "'Combat between Carnival and Lent' by Pieter Bruegel the Elder: An Allegorical Picture of the Sixteenth Century." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* (19), 1 1956: 100

Fish are symbolic of an important Christian parable, referencing a miracle performed by Jesus Christ in which he fed a large group of people who came to hear him speak with one small basket of fish and bread.

The distinct purpose of the respective instruments demonstrates an important distinction. The paddle is suggestive of discipline: it is a tool of correction and reformation. This stands in contrast to the sharpened point of the spear, with the penetrating edge of a spear implying a more focused violence than the distributed bludgeoning of a paddle. The sharpened edge of the skewer and the blunt force of the paddle symbolize different approaches to governmentality. Spears are used as lethal weapons, while paddles reform bodies through corrective discipline. Reading the skewer alongside the dice draws parallels between the chaotic milieu of the festival and the chaos of war itself. Both scenes seem to exist in a 'fog', to borrow the environmental language Carl von Clausewitz adopts in describing the dissolution of clear chains of command occurring during combat. A branch of cultural anthropology heavily indebted to structuralism reinforces the relation between festival and war. In this vein war and festival share the feature of existing as moments where structures of society are paralyzed or re-distributed. Roger Caillois referred to this moment as a paroxysm describing the festival as,

In its most complete form, in fact, the festival must be defined as the paroxysm of society, which it simultaneously purifies and renews. It is its culmination not simply from a religious point of view but also from an economic point of view...Festivals appear everywhere, no matter how differently they are pictured and whether altogether in one season or spread out during the course of the year to fulfill a similar function. They constitute a break in the obligation to work, a deliverance from the limitations and constraints of the human condition: it is the moment in which myth and dream are lived. One exists in a time and in a condition in which one's obligation is to use things up and spend oneself. Motives of acquisition are no longer acceptable; one must waste and everyone outdoes the other in his squandering of gold, his provisions, his sexual or muscular energy.<sup>229</sup>

Within this quotation it seems that there are many themes found within Bruegel's painting as well. Purification and renewal, relationships between religion and political economy, breaks in

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<sup>229</sup>. Caillois, *Man and the Sacred*, 100

the obligation to work, moments of waste and excess, a temporary period in which 'myth and dream are lived'. In Bruegel's painting the clashing of forces, the site of battle represented by the joust emerges from two architectural sites. Situated on the left-hand side of the painting is the Inn and on the right is the Church. Immediately one can pay attention to the distinction between right and left in Christianity: the right hand is the 'hand of God', while the left is symbolic of betrayal, as Judas of Iscariot is depicted as left-handed in Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* (15<sup>th</sup> century). The Inn represents a place of vice and sin: prostitution, gambling, and drinking. It is also an important site in the story of Christ's birth.

In Catholicism, Christ's birth occurs as Joseph and his wife Mary travel to Joseph's place of birth, the city of David, in order to participate in a census. Along the way Mary goes into labour and gives birth to Christ in a manger, as the nearby Inns were either full or would not make room for them. In the manger, shepherds tending to their flock of sheep surround Joseph and Mary and bear witness to an angel who appears and declares the newborn baby to be the Son of God. That Christ is the metaphoric 'lamb of god' and shepherds the ethical caretakers of their flock, responsible for the care of souls by bearing witness to God and spreading word of the truth of the Christian religion is derived from this parable. Thus, the Gospel of Luke presents the story as,

[7] And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

[8] And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

[9] And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

[10] And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

[11] For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

[12] And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

[13] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

[14] Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

[15] And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath

made known unto us.

[16] And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

[17] And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

[18] And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

[19] But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

[20] And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

[21] And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Consequently, by turning Mary and Joseph away, the Inn comes to represent a site of apostasy, scorn and moral struggle for Christianity. Inn's represent commerce, wealth, esteem, and luxury, themes that are resolutely rejected by Catholic ethics glorifying impoverishment through the dispossession of material goods. This conflict between the ethics of poverty and wealth is found on another level in Bruegel's painting, as the moment in history it depicts is in the midst of the Protestant reformation of Christianity which sought to wrest power away from the Vatican and place it within European nation-states.

The Inn is an apt representation of a commercial site as it becomes symbolic of modern luxuries such as the idea of pastoral vacation. Much of these ideas are supported by Weber's seminal work "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" which details the way in which the Protestant reformation alters Christian ethics in order to support capitalism's cycle of wealth generation through re-investment.<sup>230</sup> In this way the Inn is symbolic of not only a rejection of Catholicism in favour of the emerging Protestant teachings, but can also be viewed as space which replace the social function of the Church and indicate the approaching socioeconomic transformation that will occur through the Enlightenment and the age of modernity. In essence that the Church will no longer dominate public space and will instead yield its authority to the institutions created through commercial transaction.

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<sup>230</sup>. Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (New York: Routledge, 2001)

As one continues to dwell on this site of conflict between carnival and lent characterized by the figures participating in a joust one notices a difference in the procession of figures who support either side of the battle. On the right-hand side, priests file out from the Church in a single line, paying attention to those figures who are emblematic of poverty (economically destitute or sick) along the way. While they are not part of the procession that is pulling the cart carrying the figure of Lent what is of interest is its contrast with what is occurring on the other side of the painting, just outside the Inn. Directly outside the Inn doors is a performance of the play *The Dirty Bride*, a folk play that is also the subject of an engraving by Bruegel. The play mocks the sanctity of marriage as a Catholic sacrament and as well the monogamy that it represents.

Fish belong to an important parable for Christianity itself, referencing a miracle performed by Jesus Christ, where he fed a large group of people who came to hear him speak with one small basket of fish and bread.<sup>231</sup> Having addressed the site of conflict between Carnival and Lent as being represented in the act of the joust it is now important to further nuance Carnival's role. Bruegel's painting depicts a struggle between carnival and lent, where carnival is in this instance a site of mediating Catholic ascetic practices and the Protestant Reformation. It is viewed with suspicion by both sides as a result of its pagan political history and it is this history which is of crucial significance.

All of these themes are critical to a Foucauldian conceptualization of pastoral power: the agonism of the relations of power existing between the shepherd and his flock. The territory of the site of struggle depicts a form of counter-conduct in that the conflict is indeed distinct from political and economic revolts. Bruegel's figure of carnival and the forces gathered under this

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<sup>231</sup>. Gospel According to Matthew 14:13-21

rubric represents a disorganizing force that depicts a system of hierarchical reversal. The overturning of social relations into a form profanes the pastoral arrangement is powerfully displayed in the dialectic that the figure of carnival and lent's joust with one another render. Interestingly it is only the figure of Lent who is associated with State or government, as Lent in this age represents a form of political rule in which Christianity is fundamentally bound to the history of the emerging political liberalism.

Bakhtin's discourse on the carnivalesque is eminently useful in theorizing the sociopolitical stakes of this 'fight'. In the past chapters I have sought to connect a sociolegal study of rave with Foucault's work on liberal governmentality. In order to connect the two topics, an examination of Foucault's concept of pastoral power and the specificity of resistance that power relations engender was advanced. This counter-conduct, which is principally neither economic nor political, is referenced as spiritual dissidence developing alongside and in relation to population urbanization. It can thus be situated within the festival's role as the 'third sphere' of social life proper to a Bakhtinian theory of the carnivalesque.

Bakhtin grappled with themes spanning vast periods of human history and he developed his concept of the carnivalesque from diverse sources (Goethe, Rabelais, Dostoevsky). His famous conclusions on the enduring, cosmic features of festive time offer us tools for reading the carnivalesque in a way that accounts for both its conservative stasis in the form of crowd appeasement and its progressive change in the form of deconstructing social norms which contribute to organizing social life. It seems prudent to connect the criminalization of rave to the older and broader history of the State's relation to popular-festive forms. One thread to be followed is the ambivalent politics at play in the space of the festival. The festival's political function: both supporting order through placating the masses and producing disorder through the

chaos and vertigo of the carnivalesque renders the space ambivalent in terms of concrete social function. I have already earlier brought forward Bakhtin's notion of grotesque and parody in order to demonstrate the mixing of sacred and profane that occurs within the space of the festival. Much of the literature discussing the concept of festivals and their social utility stress the turbulent and chaotic forces which govern their duration. Bakhtin's work on popular-festive forms provides an index of themes that are useful in documenting the competing forces at play during festive occasions. I have as well explored how these themes dialogue with Bruegel's painting. The festival provides leisure and enjoyment to the population by interrupting the consistent and normal modes of behaviour that subjects are prescribed to carry out. Yet this interruption's force is not without some violence.

During this period of interruption, a cathartic discharge of repressed energy, aggression, and trauma occurs as the population interacts with itself in modes and arrangement distinct from the average or day-to-day experience. Shrewd government must capitalize on this psychology if security and stability is to be maintained. Festivals, for example, operated as excellent pacifiers for war-weary, oppressed, or mourning populations. They helped subjects to forget past pains and indulge in more immediate pleasures. Soothing old scars and preparing the group resume passive compliance to the norms of society. Bakhtin notes this by the way in which Carnival encourages sin in order to enforce the importance and inescapability of confession.

Simultaneous to this reinforcing function is the destabilizing chaos necessary for the experience of festive euphoria itself. And herein lies the paradox. Festivals contribute to good government, but only to a point. Beyond lies the consequence of Dionysian abandonment: a giving of one's current self into the unknown new; as Bakhtin notes, the carnival is an experience of ambivalent liberation. Social order and its established hierarchies function different from



normal routines. The social elites mix with the common, the minutia and granularity of an entire schematic for accepted actions and behaviour become suspended or forgotten in an ad-hoc way. And it is this act of forgetting, this loss of what was once present which contains in it the chaotic potential to either normalize and entrench or destabilize and fragment. At the level of human behaviour, we see this mostly clearly in the moments where festive celebration becomes riotous carnage. It is in these moments that the crowd becomes mob.

In our contemporary moment where music and art festivals are marked by the appearance of electronic music it is useful to reflect on why the signifier rave becomes taboo due to its historic relation to the State apparatus. There is an ongoing fear that its appearance signifies the performance of parodying reason. Ethnography demonstrates that if one says they are going to a rave than one does indeed rave. For those responsible for ensuring things remain as they presently are, this must be avoided. Reading Bruegel's landscape of the 'fight' helps inform several early sites of conflict that I have visited.

### Illness as Indicator: Population Health and the Socio-economic Costs of Deviance

This question of assessing the health of a city's population as indicator of State strength, the wellbeing of the population, and liberal political economy is addressed by Foucault in his analysis of attempts made by the state to regulate population mobility and economic flows through conceptualizing this as a process of interactive circulation. This question of circulation inspires much research on city planning, urban design and critical approaches to the distribution of population in space as being a site of intense conflict. The state's particular focus on new age travel and rave is reveals that its paternalist strategies are not extended to the entirety of its civil society. The lack of paternal concern for the wellbeing of Roma caravan populations is demonstrative of prejudicial and discriminatory practices. This decision reflects a socioeconomic

logic based upon cost-benefit analysis. The metric can be surmised as follows: Roma communities are permitted to live in unsanitary living conditions because the issue is deemed too expensive to fix. In contrast rave becomes a target because the bodies participating in the spectacles are seen as too useful to the English economy. They cannot be allowed to squander their potential to produce surplus-value for the State. It then becomes a priority that they be reformed regulated and reinserted into production itself.

Working historically Foucault discusses the onset of this neo-liberal State strategy (its 'birth') in the work of Alexandre Le Matre

In short, the interesting thing is that Le Maitre dreams of connecting the political effectiveness of sovereignty to a spatial distribution. A good sovereign, be it a collective or individual sovereign, is someone well placed within a territory, and a territory that is well policed in terms of its obedience to the sovereign is a territory that has a good spatial layout. All of this, this idea of the political effectiveness of sovereignty, is linked to the idea of an intensity of circulations: circulation of ideas, of wills, and of orders, and also commercial circulation. Ultimately, what is involved for Le Matre – and this is both an old idea, since it is a matter of sovereignty, and a modern idea, since it involves circulation – is the superimposition of the state of sovereignty, the territorial state, and the commercial state. It involves fastening them together and mutually reinforcing them.<sup>232</sup>

This process of 'fastening' and 'mutual reinforcement' contributes to an understanding of how the Roma are excluded from a specifically paternalist state gaze. By the logic of government, they exist within territorial space in a way which is "well-placed" (subject to inequality and prejudice) relative to the governmentality of England's fantasy of national identity. In contrast, the nascent rave spectacle with its nomadic movement and formation of underground black-market economies becomes problematic in that it removes elements of the middle-class from developing in a way that will reproduce the existing structures of socioeconomic status.

A poignant exposition how Foucault's theorizing of circulation renders the onset of intensifying biopolitical strategies intelligible is developed by Dillon and Louis

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<sup>232</sup>. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978--1979*, trans. Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)

Circulation is concerned with flows, but flows have to be monitored and regulated. Amongst many other effects, the task of monitoring and regulating flows changes the basic routines and practices of governing institutions including, for example, those of borders. Borders have never simply differentiated inside from outside.<sup>233</sup>

In the context of this chapter it is assumed that act of defining the Roma as distinct from new age travellers and nascent rave culture in debating the "national issue of Caravans" is related to the desired modes of circulation assigned to particular groups by sovereign authority. In reviewing the administrative documentation, it is clear that the living conditions of the Roma are considered to be of lesser priority than the emerging rave culture and its strategies of new age travel. This is because nascent rave culture sources its population from a principally white middle-class demographic. Deviance by such a core population demographic is consequently viewed as more destabilizing to English civil society.

Thus, in prioritizing new age travel and rave as a crisis in public health it is clear that government is indeed involved in, "the tasks of monitoring and regulating flows". Coinciding with the *lassie-faire* approach to an emerging neoliberalism, it is readily apparent that in defining rave and new age travel as a health crisis, this definition can be useful explored through grounding it in assumptions of the unnatural mode of circulation it represents to the state. In an essay on Foucault's pastoral power Michael Dillon and Luis Lobo-Guerrero elaborate upon this notion,

While in their emergent preoccupation with the economy of contingent distributions, biopolitical security techniques were generally well-disposed towards *laisser-faire*, effective regulation of *laisser-faire* nonetheless also required an increasingly sophisticated knowledge of circulation if subtly crafted interventions were to profit from the force of the independent dynamics of circulation, contingency and economy – in the form, for example, of markets. What was required were the means by which circulation which was desired could be distinguished from circulation which was not. In effect, the security problematic of circulation as the generic space of operations for these new biopolitical security mechanisms posed itself in terms of differentiating good circulation from bad circulation. It also posed itself in terms of the balance to be struck between too little and too much regulation of the manifold circuits of interchange which characterises the life of species existence. These dilemmas were to become the classic dilemmas of

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<sup>233</sup>. Michael Dillon and Luis Lobo-Guerrero. "Biopolitics of Security in the 21st Century: An Introduction." *Review of International Studies*, (3) 2008: 268

an expanding system of biopower relations distinguished by the manifold ways in which it encouraged biopolitical self-governance via contingency management as the principal means both of securing the welfare of population and their everyday self-rule.<sup>234</sup>

An interesting conundrum emerges for State regarding regulation and freedom. On the one hand: the desire for control and influence that is founded in the ethics of paternal care. On the other: the socioeconomic principles of neoliberal ideology that state an industrialized market-based economy is best run through lean and efficient (re: minimal) regulations by State bureaucrats. It is this relationship that distinguishes how the State must paradoxically regulate in order to ensure 'natural' forms of circulation that are seen as intrinsic to capitalist market-based economies. The mode of control exercised is one that appeals to the ethics of a 'natural course', yet also possessing a sense of responsibility for shaping conditions that support favourable outcomes.

The distinction between good and bad circulation in relation to commerce is clearly demarcated. Although rave generates revenue, if this revenue supports a black market than intervention is warranted.<sup>235</sup> Thus the English State frequently refers to the spectacles as 'pay parties' and stresses the negative impact they have on local economies. The issue of the black market and "bad" circulation has already been touched upon in an earlier section on Acid House. The popularity and profitability of the spectacles became a significant point of alarm and tension for authorities as the expanding circulation aided in the proliferation of new sound systems, acquiring the tools needed to rapidly assembly and further spread the culture across England. Addressing this issue directly Mr. Graham Bright presents the negative economic impact as evidence supporting legislation which would regulate the events.

Apart from the profits to be made from selling tickets to the parties, profits can be derived from the sale of soft drinks. At one party 20,000 cans of Coke, that had passed their sale by date and had been bought for a few pence each, were sold for £2 a can. The profits available from drugs are even greater and that is why

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<sup>234</sup>. Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero, "Biopolitics of Security", 280

<sup>235</sup>. Christina Goulding, Avi Shankar, Richard Elliot, and Robin Canniford, "The Marketplace Management of Illicit Pleasure." *Journal of Consumer Research* (35) 2009: 759

the control of security arrangements at such parties often attracts criminal gangs. They can keep out competitors and control the distribution and sale of LSD, ecstasy and cocaine. The largest haul of amphetamine tablets found on one person by the police was recovered from someone who readily acts as the security chief at acid house parties. That says it all. I understand from the police that every raid on an acid house party has found either individuals in possession of drugs or drugs discarded to avoid arrest. Takings of between £30,000 and £90,000 from drug sales at any one party are no exaggeration.<sup>236</sup>

Bright's comments are made during the introduction of a bill entitled "Entertainments" and dubbed by popular media as the "Acid House Bill". It sought to punish organizers for promoting events that did not follow protocols for land-use permits and other regulatory codes associated with public assembly. The desired form of commercial activity is vitalized by a productive and healthy body, which is supported inasmuch as it performs the desired economic function. This is the balance between docility and productivity that Foucault attempts to articulate. In this case of this dissertation, for new age travellers and the various bodies 'slipping through the cracks' of an enmeshing State, modes of marginal or border straddling life-style result in regulatory techniques. Thus,

Lives on the margin in fact become a prevailing concern locally as well as globally, politically as well as medically, socially as well as economically. Marginal life seems no longer 'marginal' but...marginal life emerges as central organising category in the bio politicised power relations and continuous policy preoccupation of biopolitical governmentality. Increasingly characterised by a preoccupation with heterogenesis, recombinant biopolitics is as concerned with pre-life as it is with post-life as it pursues its vocation of making life live.<sup>237</sup>

Investigating the health of nomadic, marginal or minor lifestyles produces the 1956 report on the living conditions of caravan populations. Subsequently new age travellers and rave are subject to similar administrative processes. As we have seen, the liminality of margins and thresholds mediates the subjective experience of rave.

Anderson and Kavanaugh note how rave's marginal lifestyles are studied by a distinct methodology oriented towards the charting the illness of minor lifestyles. They note an economic

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<sup>236</sup>. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, Graham Bright

<sup>237</sup>. Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero, "Biopolitics of Security", 287

divide in the type of research supported by State institutions responsible for the policing and administration of public health. Within sociological and anthropological approaches to the study of rave, quantitative research designed to categorize and index its various deviant behaviours are vastly supported by resource grants and institutional cooperation over qualitative methods addressing the ambiguity and ambivalence of sociocultural approaches.

Today scholars and authorities debate the current state of raves. Two perspectives tend to dominate. The first is especially favoured in the United Kingdom among British scholars. They conclude that raves are over in both the United States and the United Kingdom, but they do not rule out their return...Raves' decline or death, they argue, is largely due to both local and nationwide social control policies...Another viewpoint is more drugs and deviance-oriented. It is favoured among government institutions in both the United States and United Kingdom and most clearly articulated by substance abuse and public health scholars. The viewpoint claims raves still exist in the United States and constitute a public health problem. Many drug researchers have obtained large grants from federal agencies to study club drug problems...They consider raves any extended-hour or all-night events, featuring EDM and illicit drug use; by this definition, raves are alive and well.<sup>238</sup>

This state of rave is wonderfully paradoxical and contaminated. Cultural critics examining rave in the context of the work of art's relationship to commodification and narrative structures of authentic and inauthentic define the spectacle as 'undead'. In dialogue with this is the narrativized moral panic which defines the spectacle as a form of unconscious death drive afflicting the youth.<sup>239</sup> To the State these dimensions of cultural capital are largely irrelevant. Rave exists as a shimmering spectral potential. It lures youth away from more productive routines. Preventing its apparition requires active vigilance and ongoing regulatory strategies developed in relation to the transformation of culture itself. Attempts by the State to control rave results in governmental apparatuses experiencing frustration by the illusory promise of a strategy for total social control. A sovereign banning of the spectacle does nothing to address the persistent desire that produces sound system assembly. As control increases, so too does the population's energy to search for an outside, and underground, or a transcendental beyond. All

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<sup>238</sup>. Tammy L. Anderson, and Phillip R. Kavanaugh, "A 'Rave' Review: Conceptual Interests and Analytical Shifts in Research on Rave Culture." *Sociology Compass* (1), 2, 2007: 5

<sup>239</sup>. Thorton, *Club Cultures*, 116

are spaces of mirage: hidden and camouflaged in order to evade State surveillance as the festival unfolds.

The spectral haunting of desire perpetuates the anxiety of crises. The imagined rave revenant scenario is framed as an apocalyptic hopelessness that generates a panicked, moralistic hysteria stoked further by the true impossibility of achieving the 'War on Drugs' sobering objectives. Rave signifies desire to embody a particular experience of sensation: ecstatic transcendence materialized within effervescent spatial arrangement. These events cast shadows that haunt liberalism's body politic. In these terms rave is a crisis of public health, like an air-borne illness capable of viral infiltration. The contagious point of contact is sonic. Much like the spectre who passes through barriers and objects, rave signifies a nomadic illness that may affect the domestic population by satisfying the desire to rave or by interpellating the curious proximate body. In a supplementary co-authored piece on the framing of rave as a crisis in public health Anderson and Kavanaugh note,

Public health scholars most often adopt a "culture of risk" approach when studying raves. This perspective is dominant in the US, and has been increasing in the UK (Riley et al. 2001; Sherlock and Conner 1999), Europe (Van de Wijngaert et al. 1999), Australia (Topp et al. 1999), and Asia (Laidler 2005). The culture of risk approach is minimally theoretical and heavily quantitative. It adopts a strict epidemiological framework and provides concrete policy suggestions. Research using this approach has portrayed raves as a dangerous drug subculture or "hot-spot" for drug use and other criminal and deviant behavior. Drug use is portrayed as the defining characteristic of the rave scene. Subsequently, researchers focus on documenting patterns of use and various risky behaviors associated with it.<sup>240</sup>

Approaching rave as a crisis of public health constructs a securitized discourse in terms of its consequent research findings. As the population is defined with increasing responsibility for unhealthy effects upon the body various governmental institutions engage intensifying mechanisms of social control. For the purpose of this dissertation what is of critical interest is the way in which this dialectical relationship to pre-existing social arrangements, the antagonistic

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<sup>240</sup>. Anderson and Kavanaugh, "A Rave Review", 15

function which binds society through scapegoating a population defined as unhealthy. This connects rave with the perpetuating tension between government and festival over the desire to materialization politico-aesthetic ideals. A history of securitization ends in the criminalization of a rave territory and the culture adapts and mutates in relation to an awareness of its subjection to State surveillance. Framing rave as a public health crisis permanently affixes a medical gaze onto it.<sup>241</sup> Through this gaze rave is 'truly' an illness that realizes its self-appointed label of a mental disorder. Anderson and Kavanaugh point to the extremely productive results this has for particular research designs in a way that echoes Foucault's skepticism of forms of knowledge that are constituted by self-referential feedback loops.

[S]cholars adopting a public health type of approach view raves as a drug subculture, a dangerous social context for the young, and an urgent drug problem requiring extensive investigation and local and national policy. It may be that this behavioral definition of raves and the pursuit of federal funding for club drugs research, leads public health scholars to indirectly endorse the political ensnarement of raves in the U.S. War on Drugs. This is a point we return to below...Public health scholars most often adopt a "culture of risk" approach when studying raves. This perspective is dominant in the US, and has been increasing in the UK (Riley et al. 2001; Sherlock and Conner 1999), Europe (Van de Wijngaert et al. 1999), Australia (Topp et al. 1999), and Asia (Laidler 2005). The culture of risk approach is minimally theoretical and heavily quantitative. It adopts a strict epidemiological framework and provides concrete policy suggestions. Research using this approach has portrayed raves as a dangerous drug subculture or "hot-spot" for drug use and other criminal and deviant behavior. Drug use is portrayed as the defining characteristic of the rave scene. Subsequently, researchers focus on documenting patterns of use and various risky behaviors associated with it.<sup>242</sup>

In pointing to the increasing dominance of defining rave through a medical gaze at the expense of cultural accounts, Anderson and Kavanaugh echo the effect of biopolitic's vital duty of care. It similarly exacerbates the affective dimensions of the folk devil's social function. Situating the role of the medical gaze in effective social practices, Foucault notes that the practice of medicine is,

no longer be confined to a body of techniques for curing ills and of the knowledge that they require; it will also embrace a knowledge of healthy man, that is, a study of non-sick man and a definition of the model man. In the ordering of human existence, it assumes a normative posture, which authorizes it not only to

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<sup>241</sup>. Michael Dore, "Targeting Ecstasy Use at Raves." *Virginia Law Review* (88), 7 2002: 1583

<sup>242</sup>. Anderson and Kavanaugh, "A Rave Review", 15



distribute advice as to healthy life, but also to dictate the standards for physical and moral relations of the individual and of the society in which he lives.<sup>243</sup>

Much of Anderson and Kavanaugh's initial speculations are reinforced by the function of categorizing rave as a site of observable criminal deviance within medical and pharmacological research programs. While a substantial body of literature on rave does emerge from cultural studies and related humanities disciplines, it is vastly outweighed by the volume and resources dedicated to understanding rave in the context of its deviant and risk-taking tendencies of participants. In turn these fields inform larger disciplinary networks which have significant resources at their disposal for the deployment of strategies for social control.<sup>244</sup> As pharmacological research programs produce health related research; State security apparatuses are increasingly legitimated to enforce the regulation of the spectacle. Consequently, the growth of discourse defining the rave environ as a space of mental illness renders the spectacle a macabre place of stigma and alienation.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion this dissertation traced the association between sound systems, the formation of culture and the criminalization of rave. The significance of its findings located in rave situated genealogically as a contemporary iteration of the festival's relationship to broader society. I speculate as to what allures about the machinic features of such interaction. Rave is a mimesis resonates with the sound system's sonority. Bodies assemble because the temporal period of the festival promises joy. Festivals are an ancient and enduring 'third sphere' of social

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<sup>243</sup>. Michel Foucault, Michel. 1973. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. Translated by A.M Sheridan. (London: Routledge, 1973) 34

<sup>244</sup>. Smith, ER Doctor: Drug Fuelled Raves are Too Dangerous and Should be Banned (2010).

life, distinct from defining time according to the respective logic of the Church's sacred/profane distinction or the State's division of work and leisure.

Such speculative theorizing hopes to attend to the way in which rave's situation relative to other music cultures augments and overflows the strict yet helpful category of "resistance as ritual" that are ready at-hand and critical of the non-politics of rave. Although a comparative analysis of rave viz a viz other youth 'subcultures' is a useful starting point, it is clear that rave's relation to the State demonstrates that the ideological confusion of a *ravepolitik* incorrectly translated as 'mindless' hedonism is in itself something to be unpacked. The politics of rave is much like the politics of the festival, an ambivalent non-representational joy that thrills and horrifies liberalism's rationalist methodologies deriving explanatory principles from the motives of political interest.

The main independent contribution of my dissertation comes in the form bringing Foucault to bear on the administrative documentation of the process of preventing sound systems from generating the festive events defined as rave. This has been produced through original archival research into the parliamentary debates and program of surveillance and reformation deployed by the State. Such research is then translated through the robust sociological, anthropological and criminological literature existing on the topic. In terms of my situation within a relevant academic field, my work attempts to describe hybrid conditions of subject|object and mind|body advanced by Latourian scholarship which describe social environments through tracing their necessary association with technologies and techniques that can be identified and mapped. Given rave's hybrid meanings: social relation, indicator of mental illness, cultural aesthetic the topic provides a fruitful site for exploring the human entanglement

with machines. This machine is the sound system and its relationship to the humans who assemble and operate it.

This is accomplished in several ways. In the ethnographic section Bakhtin's work on the popular-festive form is brought forward in order to make sense of my own experience. Bakhtin is useful for projects of hybridity because he accounts for the aesthetics of mixture or blending of the sacred and profane that is part of the festival's social reality. His work helps to demonstrate how much of what is understood by the term rave is linked genealogically to the history of festival itself. The history of festival appropriately broadens the scope of the conflict between rave and the State by indexing its relation the social it reconfigures. In the first chapter, I locate the culture's base materials: the sound system. It is the sound system which generates the site of the festival and which distributes the carnivalesque atmosphere. In the second chapter I explore how the historic appearance of these sites is negotiated by the rationalist framework of liberal governmentality. This is then speculated upon theoretically in the third chapter through the work of Foucault's exploration of legal theory and the association between text and body. This association has two trajectories, the State's Christian political ethics and the scientific biopower which supplant it.

In moving this work forward, I believe it is important to document rave in the context of Mark Fisher's cultural theory. In particular his argument regarding the beginning of a new paradigm of social reality outlined in his text, "capitalist realism: Is there no alternative?". His text dwells upon Frederic Jameson's notion that postmodern discourse signifies *logos* belonging to the materialist history of life within late (post-industrial, post-fordist) capitalism. Just as Jameson found the term postmodernism problematic due to its vague signification, choosing instead to refer to the "logic of late capitalism", Fisher takes similar issue with the term and

instead replaces postmodernism with the concept of capitalist realism. For Fisher, capitalist realism defines, "the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it." This notion permeates much of Fisher's work including, 'K-punk', his long running blog dedicated analyzing cultural artifacts. In the wake of ontological realism, Fisher feels malaise and disaffection with western society. Identified starkly within artwork created in the wake of neoliberalism's globalization, capitalist realism denotes the mourning of lost futures. These potentials include a loss in the belief that technology would (or could) emancipate labour from alienating conditions and a loss of the ability to imagine a space outside political economy.

The fading starlight of revolutionary history dimly outline the lingering sense of listlessness regarding the potentiality of the future's promise. A generation born in this twilight naturalize a culture of evasive mobilization. Starting with the sound system as quasi-object allows us to trace rave's history. The cultural formation proliferates within the crumbling architecture of modernism's pinnacles: warehouses once filled with consumer goods, now derelict and crumbling, disintegrating [alienated] labour unions, a fragmentation of the socioeconomic status of the proletarian vanguard, and a fusion of spheres of life once deemed separate: work and play. Neoliberal hybridization and fluidity saturate socioeconomic and political institutions with the logic of the marketplace. Nowhere is this sentiment more prevalent than in a statement issued by Warwick University's Cybernetic Culture Research Unit, noting that political life hinges on a standpoint beginning from places of "submersion" rather than "subversion". This distinction is drawn on the basis of the fact that the exteriority of the Western world locatable within its traditional bi-polar balancing against the 'actually existing socialist State' is a disappearing ghost of modernism. This geopolitical reconfiguration generates praxis

assuming that while it is unavoidable that the body politic be totally submersed in liquid capital, the relationship between human beings and machines means,

Agents should not assume that the absence of explicitly seditious signifying material from Hyper-C transmissions indicates that they are devoid of content or without effect. On the contrary: the fact that these transmissions in no way resemble excepted modes of political address is indicative of their extreme virulence. The 'disassembly of music into sonic machineries' has gone alongside the dissolution of politics into tactics. The aspirational and representational logics of 'protest music' have given way to a technics of direct action, in which sound is used as a 'neuronic trigger'. Once again, agents should not imagine that there is anything metaphorical about this. Hyper C sonic weaponry is stealthy but highly effective; it attacks the organism very directly, opening up defensive membranes to an immersive 'acoustic space'. The abstraction of sound made possible by new technologies enables a hitherto unimaginable distribution of 'the secret coded rhythm patterns' Hyper- C is dedicated to spreading. Operatives should take special care with sonic strains labelled Wave-2 Detroit techno, catajungle, 2-step, death garage, sinofuturism.

The CCRU's cryptic transmissions sourced energy in response to the soundscapes produced by the frenetic tempos of emerging genres of electronic music. Investigated as sites with significant force to disrupt and distort the social rave demarcates a terminal site of capitalism's liquidity. The cultural mythologizing of techniques for dissolving the self into the 'rave massive' situate Fisher's theorizing of a totalizing political realism Tragically or thankfully, depending on one's political orientation the CCRU, viewed as parasitic to academic knowledge production, eventually collapsed in exhaustion. The production of music which inspired such theorizing continues, and rave's spectre continues to haunt.

Despite the efficacy of strategies which regulate and commodify rave, it persists as a site of desire never fully reducible to forms of leisure that merely sublimate commercial exchange. Its contradictory demanding of joyous excess and thrilled exhaustion promises escape in its ambiguity. Its appearance at times embodies desires to escape subjective malaise and ontic numbness brought on by lost futures that disappear through a unifying technocracy. Mark Fisher's idea of lost futures enlighten rave's carnivalesque energy. Fear of a drifting deterritorialization and the uncertainty of decelerating social innovation situate technology's potential to function as an emancipatory vehicle as running out of gas. The hopeful yearning of

humanity to harness the escape velocity of technological innovation finds aesthetic expression in a rave machine's frenzied emergence. Exploring rave as a festival haunting civil society, at times threatening subjectivity with the will to nothingness, I argue its persistent re-appearance even within spaces where it is most intensely regulated and commodified are significant because it raises questions regarding technoculture's biopolitical regulations. Like a mirage, the spirit of rave appears and disappears. Commodified and regulated, its carnivalesque spirit nonetheless escapes, breaks free: a revenant spirit.

The participant's desire to conjure liminal experience signifies a symbolic form of festival's escapist disorganization: constructing fleeting experiences of liminality in search of ways to transform the self. The swirling vertigo of these festivals produce visions of lost futures and alternate realities. One such political vision is that of an world outside of liberal-democratic politics populated by bodies medicated into docility. The comfortability of life regulated by biopower unfortunately flows into ennui. Sound system technologies amplify and augment this sensation and produce discourse on escape, disengagement, dissolution of the self, and an archaic mode of social reordering: the Dionysian festival. Throughout human history festival remains as a temporal dislocation, a becoming liquid, of social norms defined through a sacred/profane dichotomy. Such transformation is mediated in contemporary times through the liquidity of capital itself. Raving bodies desire a liquidity of self in order to sense the multiplicity of communal subjectivities. Ways of being in the world which offer hopeful transformations of social reality and which challenge fears of insecurity intrinsic to defining human subjectivity through the lens of political realism.

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