Technics, Precarity and Exodus in Rave Culture

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Abstract

Without a doubt, the question of rave culture's politics – or lack thereof – has polarized debate concerning the cultural, social and political value of rave culture not only within electronic dance music culture (EDMC) studies, but in disciplines that look to various manifestations of subculture and counterculture for political innovation. It is time for the groundwork of this debate to be rethought. Ask not what rave culture's politics can do for you; nor even what you can do for it. Rather, ask what the unexamined account of politics has ever done for anyone; then question all that rave culture has interrogated – from its embodied and technological practices to its production of ecstatic and collective subjectivities – and begin to trace how it has complicated the very question of the political, the communal and the ethical. This complication begins with the dissolution of the boundaries of labour and leisure and the always-already co-optation of culture. To the negation of ethics, community and politics, this tracing calls for the hauntology of technics, precarity and exodus. And it ends with a list of impossible demands demonstrating the parallax gap of rave culture's politics.

Keywords

exodus, precarity, technics, multitude, workplay

> *He [Randy] predicted the [rave] parties will eventually disappear under the combined pressure of police, city and fire officials.*
> *"In the next year and a half it's going to vanish", he said.*
> *"Then, when they think it's gone, it will come back, becoming more underground again".*
>
> <div align="right">Parsons (1994: B3)</div>

While the raves finally did disappear, dance culture did not. When the UK's restrictive club regulations were relaxed in the mid 1990s, the clubs filled to capacity and the free party movement declined, leading Gilbert and Pearson to suggest that "it might be as accurate to see [the free party movement] and its DIY ethos as the ultimate example of consumer protest" (1999: 181). Now that the outlaw rhythms of electronic dance music could be consumed in state-sanctioned space, there was nothing left to stand up for; all that mattered, apparently, was a place to get down. The clubs became the

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"pleasure prisons" (Reynolds 2008: 424) of a generation too young to have partici-
pated in the occupations and interventions of collective sonic insurgency – and the
pleasure palace of a generation too exhausted from the undertaking, trading in auton-
omy and rebellion for the comforts of clubculture and a respite from the collective
fatigue of counterculture logistics. The restoration of corporate dance meant its pacifi-
cation. Rave culture, cut off at last from the dangerous rhetoric of DIY collectivism
and the even more suspect impulses of an-archic desire, and carefully severed frofm the
greater social body of travelers, hippies, anarchist enclaves, punks, hackers and freaks,
was safe for public consumption once again.

So goes the received wisdom – witness the rise and fall of rave culture as riotous
carnival declines into packaged hedonism. Precise dates vary from place to place across
the globe, though most place rave's demise at the *fin de siecle* of the long twentieth
century.[1] But to scholars who saw in acid house and rave culture not only its complic-
ity with entrepreneurial capitalism and the neoliberalisation of work, but its influence
upon the "unstable" labour of the "new culture industries", the "transferrable skills" of
rave culture – the multi-faceted events producer, designer, producer, DJ – have *popu-
larised* the insecurity of precarious labour (McRobbie 2002: 518-19). Although liber-
ating some aspects of work in regards to self-fulfillment and independence, rave's
"network sociality" dissolved the boundaries of labour from leisure, emphasizing the
liberating aspects of speed and mobility while downplaying the dissolution of privacy
within nonlabouring life. Network sociality has desituated labour from a fixed work-
place and fragmented the spatiotemporal unanimity necessary for a labour politics.
The consequence of rave culture's transformation from the communitarian production
of counterculture into the cognitive capitalism of the culture industries has been to
emphasize that "Speed and risk negate ethics, community and politics" (McRobbie
2002: 519, 523; cf. van Veen 2003: 93-94). This provocative claim calls for its analysis.
Indeed, it would appear that the consequence of rave culture's relentless destabilization
of the division of labour from leisure has been to render indistinct what were once
distinct existential spheres – ethics, community and politics, but also, and certainly
not least, labour and leisure.

An introductory, though necessary, aside: the complexities of this
socioeconomic analysis are such that one must ensure that correlation is not mistaken
for causation. What McRobbie's research suggests, and contrary to the myths of every
counterculture, is that rave culture was not co-opted by the new culture industries;
rather, its modus operandi developed in parallel to, if not in symbiosis with, cognitive
capital and precarious labour (the conditions of unstable and increasingly mobile, as
well as computerized, networked and always-on-call labour that came to dominate the
arts and culture "sectors" by the late 1990s – hence McRobbie's use of the term "new
culture industries"). Indeed, what appears in McRobbie's work is the discovery of a
new ideological formation. Rave culture's destabilization of labour and leisure
demands the enjoyment of precarity (as Zizek often notes, obedience demands the
fantasy of liberty, mobility and self-fulfillment as part of its ideological constellation).
By blurring the roles between participation and organisation, rave culture provided the
constitutive elements for an ontological subjectivity in which labour and leisure were
no longer distinct modes of activity. Within the pleasurable labour of the rave
collective, such as the UK's Spiral Tribe and Exodus (see St John 2009; Malyon 1998),
the US Midwest's DropBass Network (see Champion 1998; Silcott 1999) or Toronto,
Canada's Transcendance (see McCall 2001), not only do members develop multiple
labour skills in the organisation of leisure (DJ, doorperson, dancer, designer, etc.), but

the fluidity from labour to leisure constitutes the totality of a lifeworld. Glenn Jenkins from Exodus Collective writes that "we're a possible solution to to things we've never dreamed of. I mean, you start with entertainment, and you end up with the world, a rave new world" (Malyon 1998: 202). Yet one need not organise a rave to partake in the participatory labour of pleasure. Rave culture abounds with participatory micro-economies of sharing, gift-giving and performance, from dancing to exchanging massages (see McCall 2001: 78-98; Wilson 2006: 104-105, 122-124). Likewise, what blends within blends without. Transferrable skills infiltrate and develop new micro-economies of cultural production – from fashion to graphic design, music to marketing – as a means of precarious existence (see Chapman 2003: 3; McRobbie 1999: 25-30). Raving as activity blurs the line between work and play. It puts into motion the excess and expenditure of a general economy that is nonetheless operating within the limits of capital (see Bataille 1991), in which gift-giving is always an accursed exchange, in which leisure is always made up of labour.

Rather than working for the means to enjoy life, one is now meant to consume life as permanently precarious work. Rather than organising the workplace as a means to change the political (if not economic) system, the system changed itself so that no such organisation could (easily) take place. Moreover, work was now like leisure, so the grievances of labour (exploitation, worker's control over production, a living wage) lost their specificity. The imperative to enjoy the hybridity of precarious *workplay* comes with its corollary: with everyone working (and playing) for themselves, only you are to blame if you fail. The rave-era social networks of leisure (based around the imperative toward ecstatic enjoyment) and implementation of mobile labour (the deployment of temporary autonomous zones) provided network sociality's "professional" axis.

From the genesis of McRobbie's critical negation, this missive seeks to rethink the question of rave culture and the political. It will even end with a list of impossible demands. Without a doubt, the question of rave culture's politics – or lack thereof – has polarized debate concerning the cultural, social and political value of rave culture not only within electronic dance music culture (EDMC) studies, but in disciplines that look to various manifestations of subculture and counterculture for political innovation. It is time for the groundwork of this debate to be rethought. Ask not what rave culture's politics can do for you; nor even what you can do for it. Rather, ask what the unexamined account of politics has ever done for anyone; then question all that rave culture has interrogated – from its embodied and technological practices to its production of ecstatic and collective subjectivies – and begin to trace how it has complicated the very question of the political, the communal and the ethical. This complication begins with the dissolution of labour from leisure which today takes the figure of a negation. If McRobbie is correct, the shadow of their negation would be etched across the planet, as their shared meanings, articulated in systems of governance, sovereignty, labour, law, hospitality and play, would recompose the conditions of subjectivity.

What is meant by *negation*? Negation, in the figure of a catastrophe, signals an absolute erasure – an absolute past without remembrance, the scorched earth of un-memory. If this negation has taken place, we cannot know it: without cinders, there are no signs left to decipher. Yet if by negation, we mean that some-thing remains – a memory, a ghost-effect, an inheritance – then the negation of ethics, community and politics is also its remembering. Has not the negation of these signs always been brought to bear whenever and wherever their historical end – which is always an end of history – is announced?

Indeed, preceeding models of ethics, community and politics have undergone transformations correlative to the technological mutations of material conditions and practices of labour. From this thought, it will be necessary to investigate the effects and constitution of the unstable, or better, *precarious,* character of creative, *cognitive* labour in relation to rave culture's spatiotemporal mobility – and its drive toward disappearance and exodus. From this reconceptualization of labour, the question can be posed as to how the *political* operates in the discourse and socioeconomic practices of rave's cultural technics – the global networks and media of rhythm and sound. To ethics, community and politics I will counterpose the following three figures of technics, precarity and exodus. But we must begin with an analysis of their conditions.

A damaging and depressing outcome: the withdrawal from politics

> The trouble is that multitudinous actions rooted in artistic, anarchist, and spiritual movements will invariably be revealed as failures, ineffectual and futile when gauged by the parameters of conventional contestorial politics (St John 2009: 17).

It wouldn't be difficult to assess rave culture's antics as the sum result of a narcissist generation without agenda save for the liberty of its own consumer desires. The disappearance of collective sonic insurgency into the containers of clubbing has signaled for many the failure of dance culture itself to articulate a representative politics.[2] Nowhere is this writ more precisely than by Gilbert and Pearson, who, in their seminal assessment of EDMC, *Discographies*, emphasize the contradictory aspects of rave culture's political inheritance. I quote here at length:

> If dance culture encourages a collective and individual withdrawal from "mainstream" political society, then its participants are not likely to be able to effect any serious political or social change. It might have been hoped ten years ago that rave culture's refusal of the work ethic and the entire framework of puritan values would result in a clearly articulated set of basic political demands, such as for a shorter working week and higher wages (i.e., more money for less work), that its celebration of community would encourage a return to collectivist politics. Instead it seems to have encouraged an outlook which sees the realms of "work" and "leisure" as entirely separate and unrelated, the latter a site in which to invest all of our energies and interest, the former an unreformable region of wholly negative experience. Dance culture and its experiences have thus been articulated with a libertarianism which is so anti-political as to be self-defeating, to have no real sense of what it is that actually curtails most people's freedoms in a capitalist society. This would be a damaging and depressing outcome, but it would not take much to change it (Gilbert and Pearson 1999: 182).

Where McRobbie discovers the hybridity of labour and leisure, Gilbert and Pearson claim their nonrelation; where McRobbie sees rave culture as feeding the precarious labour of the "new culture industries," Gilbert and Pearson witness the refusal of work. How can it be that Gilbert and Pearson conclude *Discographies* with near antithetical findings to those of McRobbie? The historian will note they are writing several years apart; yet surely the socioeconomic gestalt would be identifiable?

On the level of political expression – the articulation of clear demands – McRobbie and Gilbert and Pearson concur: there are none. Without space for antagonism – where, traditionally, the site of labour or leisure is articulated to the demand – the expression of politics disappears. As McRobbie notes, there is "no space

for expression" in networked club sociality; antagonisms must be "carefully concealed" (2002: 523). There is no longer the communitarian space formed within a common workplace that guards the organisation of political activity. Rather, every space (which must be distinguished from *place*), from club to computer, is a site of hybrid workplay, and challenging this nonspace means risking access to, and inclusion within, the network. It is not only one's career (or job) that is at stake, but the very inscription of one's ontology within increasingly entwined technological, economic and social networks.

For Gilbert and Pearson, rave culture's lack of expressive politics is the consequence of a withdrawal from "mainstream" political society, which in this context implies the procedures of *representative* politics. Even if a "collectivist politics" would appear to be the logical outcome of communitarian practices, it is at the level of representative politics that Gilbert and Pearson assess the efficacy of rave culture. Rave culture should produce "basic political demands," much like the unionist politics to which McRobbie implicitly alludes.

From these conflicting socioeconomic observations we can demonstrate, nonetheless, the coherence to their dissensus. That rave culture withdraws from representative politics follows from its symbiotic relationship to precarious labour and cognitive capital, which has dissolved the workplace as site of political activity in the hybridity of labour and leisure. Nonetheless, it is this hybrid form of workplay which now becomes the general category of labour. That it appears "unreformable" is all the more understandable given that work is simply no longer work, but a constitutive element of enjoyment (leisure). Capitalist workplay, as its hybridity suggests (and as Deleuze and Guattari noted in the subtitle to *Anti-Oedipus*), is an entirely schizophrenic experience, simultaneously and irreducibly negative and positive. Against this schizophrenic experience of everyday worklife is projected the fantasy of a perfected leisure which never entirely was. The parallax gap between these dissensual modes of experiencing precarious labour engender (consumer) desire. Yet, it is this incompleteness (or dissensus) of the socioeconomic totality which makes possible its change, and that articulates the re-moved site of the political. Necessary, then, is a strategic and categorical shift from politics – to which are ascribed the expressive and representative functions of a space – to the political. This shift is not determinate nor total, as the parallax gap of socioeconomic conditions demonstrates. Nonetheless, it has become prevalent, and thus imbued with power.

To sample and scratch the French revolution, parallax is the order of the day. While, on the one channel, work no longer comes to ontologically define a subject that desires its political representation, on the other channel it is work that now shapes even leisure. Where rave culture provided refuge from work, it only did so through mass expenditures of labour. And where rave culture appeared to withdraw from workplace politics, failing to even stand up for itself, it nonetheless did so through the direct action of intervention and occupation.

The parallax of rave culture's "politics", then, is that it operates through withdrawal from representative and expressive modes due to its constitutive adaptation of the hybridity of labour and leisure. There is a word for this hybridity: culture. In this sense, what rave culture embodies – and enacts worldwide – is the autonomy of a culture, not from the simplism of socioeconomics (from which escape is consumed as ideological fantasy), but to *be* culture. By being culture, it enacts the only autonomous position possible within network socioeconomics.

Thus it is not withdrawal, escape or exodus which leaves in its wake the detritus of community, ethics and politics. These modes of intersubjectivity – of being-among-others – are "negated" only insofar as they are consumed in the fantasy of their impotence. The *geist* of community, ethics and politics lives-on as the fantasy of mourning for a past truth that never quite was. To this mourning of fantasies now devoured, rave culture has undertaken the exploration of operative movements on the level of the political, engaging exodus, technics and precarity as the means of its sonic warfare.

I. Precarity

Let us shift perspectives. If rave culture presents itself without an adequate representative politics, then the question must be posed in its reverse: is representative politics at all adequate to rave culture? There can be no return to a collectivist politics – unionist, collectivist representation and so on – if, as McRobbie suggests, rave culture's recomposition of labour and leisure through speed and risk negates politics, ethics and community. That there is no return to politics-as-usual signals not a failure in the particular, but a caesura in general that severs labour in general – and rave culture in particular – from the preceding historical composition of production. What is at stake is a caesura in the "the modes of subjectification" from which politics arrives in its antagonism (see Rancière 1999: 35). Antonio Negri identifies this caesura as the schism between the Fordist era, which more or less demarcated work from leisure, and the post-Fordist condition wherein "'work' refers to the entirety of social activity" (2008: 19).[3]

Unevenly distributed across the globe, this caesura – or rather, technological transformation of the conditions of labour from workplace to network – is also unevenly dispersed throughout the twentieth century. Nonetheless, the speed of its adoption (and thus its risks), has accentuated the stratification of multiple forms of production. Multiple forms transact at the global limits of time and space, reflecting an overall ascendancy of the network – and it is this recombinant aspect of labour that complicates the sociopolitical milieu of culture. Culture, like production, is no longer a distinct category of raw content, but a recombinant function of multiple activities: metaproduction (np. Deleuze 1995: 181). One can also reverse the line of causality. Network metaproduction (otherwise known as globalisation) has followed from not only the effects of global telecommunications and transportation, effectively reducing the thickness of time and space, but from the increasing demands of labour for an end to the disciplinary factory regime. Labour demanded control over *flexible conditions of employment*, notably with Italian Operaismo and Autonomia of the 1970s but also (in different forms) with the UK miner's strikes of the 1980s. In all cases, rather than procuring collective control over the temporality, equality and locality of work – flexibility, equity and mobility – these demands were answered with the deregulation of *capital* on a global scale. Global outsourcing and on-demand production, made possible by tele-technological networks and the deregulation of human labour provided the conditions for the subsequent regime of precarious labour (see Berardi 2009: 75-77; Virno 2004: 56-59; Negri 2008: 40-45). The demand for control over flexibility and mobility was answered with a new regime of modular control (or as Deleuze puts it, from the disciplinary to the control society, from confinement to codes of network access [1995]). As Berardi writes,

> Freedom from state regulation has become economic despotism over the social fabric. Workers demanded freedom from the life-time prison of the industrial factory. Deregulation responded with the flexibilization and the fractalization of labour (Berardi 2009: 76).

It is from within this global socioeconomic network of precarity that rave culture emerged only to balance, precariously, on the verge of its disappearance. The stuff of precarity had been shaped into the tools of its autonomy.

The precarious Jouissance *of the multitude: de-scripting disappearance*

Contract work, competitive employee-of-the-month contests, spec-work submissions, academic sessionalization, get-rich-quick seminars, one-offs, self-publishing – for the many that seek relief from the uncertainty, debt and stress of precarious labour, there are, of course, approved forms of temporary desertion, from antidepressants and pharmaceuticals to consumer fetishism and crack cocaine (Berardi 2009: 37-39). To compensate for the deficiencies of precarious labour, temporary strains of individualist pleasure are granted privilege. Is not rave culture such a temporary privilege? What distinguishes rave culture from the temporary pleasures of consumer culture?

To consider this question is not to claim that rave culture is, in fact, nontemporary, aconsumptive, nonaddictive and unprivileged. The network sociality in which rave culture traffics means that rave culture exists because it is networked, temporary and precarious. It does not oppose these conditions; moreover it cannot, as they are constitutive. Rave culture could not invent the novel foundation of a counterculture *ex nihilio*. I would rather pose the alternative hypothesis: that rave culture learned to manipulate – or better: remix – the constitutive scripts contained within the conditions of its becoming. Akrich describes scripts as revealing their constitutive behaviours at the point in which the projected use of an object contrasts with its mis-use: its repurposing, remixing, or "de-scripting" (Akrich 1992). Precarity is such a script revealed in the contrast between projected socioeconomic outcome (liberty of global capital rendering organised labour powerless) and de-scription (the emergence of radical, precarious workplay). Rave culture reinvented the world inscribed within its constitutive network scripts by exceeding their pre-scription (see Akrich 1992: 209).

Precarity is descriptive of a socioeconomic condition; moreover it exists as a *script* within a state of *things*. Things in general – the materiel of rave culture – are pre-scripted to replicate a world in which community, ethics, politics and workplay are (yet again) "negated" in their collective radicality by being re-scripted as objects of consumption. The world of things is "inscribed" with the fantasies of individual liberty, freedom, self-fulfillment and mobility at the same time that their precarity and consumption undermine the radical actualization of their scripts. Rave culture repurposed these scripts not against the totality of their socioeconomic conditions (i.e., by opposing precarity with stability, or temporariness with permanence), but by embracing the strategy of hypertrophy. It furthered them through their excess, intensified to the point of *jouissance*, which is to say, the obscenity of its hedonist abandon to pleasure. What had been done was the unthinkable in an era of globalized control: the collective emergence of a culture of *jouissance* that existed wholly through the metaproduction of its autonomous precarity, which is to say, on the verge of its disappearance from the projected script.

If rave culture de-scripted the world which was projected to arrive from the socioeconomics of precarity, it did so in the following ways:

First, rave culture operated unapproved as a cultural assemblage of exodus in which its pleasures were not supplementary but constitutive (we shall turn to exodus below), "an exceptionally conducive space for decadent, indulgent 'partying'" (Wilson 2006: 85). Unlike the dialectic of the cycle of consumption, rave culture opened toward a radical precarity in which its disappearance acted as a foundational leave-taking. It operated *within* a post-Fordist disintegration of regulated times and forms of work (see Hardt and Virno 1996) as well as contributing *toward* the further deconstruction of the material and social categories of labour and leisure (the use of Maffesoli's "neo-tribes" within "post-subcultural" research gestures toward this reconfiguration of the socioeconomic assemblage [see St John 2001; Ueno 2003]).

Second, the Xanadu dreams of *jouissance* took part in a collective pursuit of general conditions of existence, from experimental modes of communitas to "spiritual connectedness" (Olaveson 2004). These general conditions – which I will later articulate as impossible demands that transgress not only dance culture but representative politics – exceed the limited determination of "rave culture" not only as a *dance* culture, but as one limited to the precarious spatiotemporality of the dance event itself. All that proceeds and follows from the event needs to be taken into account, from the "extraordinary organizational capacity" (McRobbie 2002: 520) of rave culture to what Negri identifies as the *material* ability, as "living work," for rave *culture*, as a creative workplay, to produce de-scripted subjectivities (Negri 2008: 26).

Third, here again the limits of a representative politics are reached, as according to Paolo Virno (and Negri), radically precarious subjects do not coalesce into a *people* which would be unified by representation under the one sovereign, but "disintegrate into *multitude*, or into a plurality of individuals who resist the preliminary bond of obedience" (Virno 2008: 31). Though this plurality infamously coalesces into the experience of the "collective organism" (Douglas Rushkoff quoted in Landau 2004: 107), "interconnected ecstasy" occurs under the aegis of participatory disobedience and the collective labour of love. Rave's micro-economies of sharing produce what Negri and Hardt would call the "experience of the common" that breaks the impasse of the universal to the particular through love (2009: 120, 181). Precarious workplay itself is a labour of love inasmuch as it is love's corruption. It is this plurality or hybridity that reflects the energy of the multitude. That rave culture apparently lacked a politics, had no demands, disintegrated the boundaries between work and leisure and retreated into a nonrepresentational hedonism all reflect the observation that the multitude, "by not transferring its own rights to the sovereign, escapes from the political unit. The multitude is anti-state, but, exactly for this reason, it is also antipeople" (Virno 2008: 31).

Fourth, if, as Gilbert and Pearson emphasize, dance culture "achieves a great deal by simply existing" (1999: 179), then the question shifts to the technics of its ontology in light of rave culture's disappearance, precarity and exodus.

II. Technics

Technics of disappearance (hauntology)

To ethics, community, and politics I have counterposed the following three questions: technics, precarity and exodus. I undertake this operation neither as a negation (though this double negation hinges precisely upon the question of "tarrying with the negative"), nor as a transformation in which ethics, community and politics would be

superseded by new forms of collective enunciation (though this may account for the onticological difference). Counterposition (and correlation) partakes of a *hauntology* wherein spectrality is constitutive of the novelty of the event.

By thinking hauntology, the parameters that determine ontology as a metaphysics of presence (and all that follows, from theology to politics, community to ethics) are subject to the technico-symbolic network of delays and relays, differals and deferrals, in which the compartmentalized distinctions of time (past, present and future) as well as spacing (presence and absence) are interwoven with differentiated though cyclic returns. Introduced by Derrida to deconstruct systemic absolutism within ontology and political theory, *hauntology* names the living-dead or spectral effects of a wide array of tele-technical forms (texts, technologies, symbolic systems) that displace the frontier of the onto-political by affecting the temporal and spatial boundaries of the *res publica* (1994: 51). In this respect, hauntology specifies the "techno-tele-discursivity" of historical *différance* (51). It also aptly describes the challenge that rave culture poses to *critical* attempts of its total anthropology, political theorisation and historicisation.

For rave culture is certainly a spectral event – global, uncontainable, a caesura with previous collective forms through its embrace of technological performativity that at the same time resurrects, reiterates and repeats ritual forms of timeless gathering.[4] Hence the *revenance* of rave – its spectral recurrence, ritual and heterogeneous, as a chronic cultural revenant. With rave, practices of technosonic carnival both esoteric and neoteric intertwine in the event. The portmanteau of *technosonic* combines this revenance of practices recurring yet singular, marking rave in general as a technologically constructed gathering of embodied engagement with amplified, rhythmic sound. As a cultural trope, rave is more spectral than it is an 'ideal-type', though if one accepts the condition of spectral quasi-ideality it could be read as *instituant* (Gauthier 2004: 65).

As Marx realised, from *The German Ideology* to *Capital*, spectrality is but a recurring effect of economic relations of labour, capital and technology. In this sense, the revenance of rave would be but (yet another, though exemplary) effect of always-late capitalism – mere catharsis at the end-of-the-millenium, the spurious spectacle of collective action and the ghosts of insurrection. Following Marx's attempt to differentiate the *geist* of capital (exchange value) from its real body (use value), too often the *critical* question becomes one of how to put such ghosts to death, or, how to *exorcise* the spectral, a question that "knows no limit: without fail, it becomes ontological, ethical, political" (Derrida 1994: 132). This question is often articulated in multiple disciplines: how to judge, critique, or exorcise (rave) culture, to differentiate its true body from its capitalist ghost?

The entire genesis of this essay has been to disrupt this question by interrogating its conditions in all their complexity. I will continue with this theme.

Hauntology disrupts critical finitude by emphasizing the constitutive role of spectral technics. Derrida argues that spectrality cannot be exorcised without risking the boomerang effect of catastrophic violence – in short, the absolute judgements of totalitarianism (1994: 105, 128, 131, 141). It is the *krinein* of ontology – the decisive attempt to make *things real*, exorcise the specters, set the record straight – that attempts to conjure away spectrality. Rave not only participates in spectral economy – the precarious hybridity of use/exchange value embodied in the hauntology of work-play – but furthers it to the obscene excess of *jouissance*. In the moment of *ek-stasis* (see Hemment 1996), there is nothing uncommon about the spectral, wherein "the loss of singularity as the experience of singularity itself" (Derrida 1994: 161) marks the spec-

trotechnics of subjectivity. Through and through, spectrality is a technical and consti-
tutive operation. One cannot purify that which is constitutive; to do so calls for the
killing fields and the guillotine.

The twentieth century is, of course, marked by the naked ascension of technol-
ogy. This would also imply the historical expansion of spectrality – a point Derrida
makes when he writes of "the increasingly powerful historical expansion of a general
writing" (2000: 20). Rave culture existed as such an effect of the ascendancy of spec-
tral technics. It was perhaps even exemplary in this respect.

The effect of Derrida's work – and its relevance to our theme – has been to
complexify, by way of spectralization, arguments that remain polarized between
technological determination on the one channel and constructivist agency on the
other by proposing a non-linear mutability of differentiated recursivity (*différance*) for
thinking the *technical* conditions of spatiotemporality. Here, technics operates at the
junction between words and things, as the mutable condition upon which formations
of the political, ethical and communal take shape (and time). Technics, then, forms a
condition of the *political*.

Rave as technosonic laboratory of time and space

Rave culture, infused with rhythm, emerged from within a mutual relationship with
technology as it attempted to expand the experiential horizon of time (one precarious
night an autonomous lifetime). These rhythmic returns are inscribed through techni-
cal means, applied throughout complex interstices of technoglobalization, from tele-
communications in general to rave culture's amplification of technosonic ritual. As
hauntology *categorizes* the technological condition, in which time and space are sub-
ject to rhythms, speeds, accelerations and delays, jet lag and peak time, it provides the
general framework for thinking through the historico-temporality of not only rave
culture, but all that it participates in and affects. Through spectral effects, we must
interrogate what the shifting and globalized frontiers of the *res publica* (and the *polis*)
effectively means to a technologically-infused cultural politics of sound, setting the
stage for the return of the politics of exodus, and the precarity of global labour in the
"new culture industries".

It may be that the institutionalized terms of politics, ethics and community
underwent metamorphosis in the experimental cultural laboratory of the rave. Michel
Gaillot raises these questions when he asks if rave's "new forms of sharing" do not
devolve "factual belonging to State, Nation, or Ideology", giving way to a "multiplicity
of elective communities which no longer repose on some Meaning or Truth to be
represented, appropriated, or prophesized" (1999: 15).

Certainly ethnographies of EDMC have aptly demonstrated that a circulation of
meanings and truths have saturated rave's semantics and practices, from religious mo-
tifs to anarcho-politics (see St John 2004, 2009). Yet Gaillot implicitly approaches rave
culture not as a delimited object of study (through ethnography or otherwise), but as a
question of approach, in which rave is re-composed through Gaillot's subtitle as "an
artistic and political laboratory of the present", which names his philosophical *métis-
sage* inasmuch as it attempts to give meaning to the culture of "techno". For Gaillot,
rave is *sub specie tekhne*, or under the aspect of technics, a technics that is *a priori* to
politics, culture and the system of representation itself. Technics, in this reading in-
debted to not only Heidegger but Marcuse's reading of technics as the creative engine
of life, is "the means through which man [*l'homme*] becomes a work of his own"

(Gaillot 1999: 33). Because humanity is without essence and empty of meaning (a vacuum in the heart of being), technics, as the labour of self-constitution, is the "proper" world activity of humanity. Dwelling within the world means dwelling within technics as the finitude of meaning (Gaillot 1999: 41). Rave culture renders explicit this relation of humanity to technics. But to what end? For Gaillot, *techno* is the culture of ecstatic sharing made possible by machines (33), in which the festive is both the means and the ends to dwelling within the (technical) world (28). To do so requires "mastering" technics (33).[5] Rave culture is nothing less than the "will to appropriation of technics" in which intimacy and freedom are reclaimed from utilitarian and economic uses and in which expenditure and technics are reconciled, "effecting an opening for an existence made whole again within the 'machinic' world" (Gaillot 1999: 33).

Even as Gaillot embraces rave culture's techno-utopianism with theoretical certainty (effectively dosing Heidegger with MDMA), Gaillot marks out the architecture of rave's symbolic order – the way in which its apparently meaningless and empty core of obscene hedonism is not merely a symptom of rave culture, but marks the condition of humanity itself. Rave culture, as the laboratory of *tekhne*, has radicalized (workplay) practices that have come to reposition the very axioms of what being-human means. With a different approach, it is in this sense too that McRobbie extrapolates from rave culture to rethink the patterns and consequences of workplay hybridity.

By shifting the angle through which the object is composed, the object of study becomes not an object at all, but a network of practices, each of which claims different accounts of what is fundamental to genesis in general. That said, that *tekhne* has shifted the conditions under which genesis itself is composed is a pervasive argument of twenty-first century philosophy of technology. By positioning technics as axiomatic to sociopolitical conditions of community (and thus politics and ethics), Gaillot argues that rave is generative of new communal practices that shift from a logic of representation to participation, or from being an audience or spectator to a participant. Yet, even if technics might be seen as axiomatic to the human condition, and even if one accepts that there is a manifest culture of technics that embodies participation, does it follow that participation negates representation?

In this sense, and as we shall turn to shortly, the question is a political one; for representation still coordinates the basic structure of sovereign politics as a pro-ject (whether democratic or totalitarian), as that which is placed before us all to embody us all. Representation operates through the logic of synecdoche, of the part for the whole, in which the part *is* representative of the whole, whether that part is the individual sovereign (who ontologically and in his *corps* embodies the whole of the State) or the elected assembly (who re-present the many of the citizenry through the will of the majority).

In conversation with Gaillot, Jean-Luc Nancy questions whether *techno* replaces representational logic with a participatory one, noting the *mise-en-scène* of festivity (1999: 100). Maffesoli, though he acknowledges, like McRobbie, an implosion of philosophical and political representation – "a growing lack of interest in politics or in labour causes" – nonetheless also notes a slippage between presentation and representation in musical gatherings (Gaillot 1999: 111). To this question of representation/ participation must be posed the question of exodus.

III. Exodus

Withdrawal and disappearance

> The contemporary world is riddled with such anarchic spaces, and the more successful they are, the less likely we are to hear about them (Graeber 2004: 34).

Exodus, though always open as the "lines of flight" constitutive to any blockage,[6] becomes an activity of the many only when the material conditions of existence approach levels of near pathology. Exodus, withdrawal or disappearance is often negated by critics only because it is thought as a withdrawal *from* effective strategies (mainstream politics) rather than an "engaged withdrawal" *toward* a place in which the terms and processes of belonging can be reaffirmed in light of drastic upheaval to the conditions of labour, leisure and politics. What exodus proposes, as a movement, and as a thesis, is that if there is a "politics" of rave culture, then it takes place in this "founding leave-taking" of a "new Republic" (Virno 1996b: 197). Rave culture is a movement of exodus; it strains through its obscene excess at the limits of a constrained world by "reappropriating the common" (Hardt and Negri 2009: 164). Exemplary for their occupationist "sonic warfare" (Goodman 2009), Spiral Tribe have starkly expressed exodus as the battleground for the common:

> Actively resisting the rightwing regime built upon violence, private ownership of land and profiteering, the Spirals aligned their artistic and musical spirit with a relentless campaign of events that for brief (yet intense) moments took back the land into the realms of common shared experience (*SchNEWS* 2003, quoted in St John 2009: 37).

Exodus marks not the politics *of* rave culture; rather exodus is the condition of rave *as* a culture of the common. Exodus is the condition of the political opening of rave. Why? The first reason is evident in the failure of rave's political representation: exodus presupposes that representative politics is inadequate, not only to rave culture but to precarity in general. Moreover, it is effaced within the dialectic of labour/leisure. The occlusion of representative politics unveils exodus, that "forbidden moment, an unforgiveable denial of the dialectic" (Bey 1991: 100).

The second reason follows from rave culture's generative role in hybrid forms of cultural labour: that rave culture *anticipates* the disintegation of representative politics. Its modes of workplay engender subjects (and forms of workplay) that are scarcely representable within the current schemas of "legitimate" political expression. This is not because they exceed the capabilities of the *political*, but because "politics" remains encapsulated in forms of sovereignty, representative or totalitarian, that no longer reflect network sociality and metaproduction. In this respect, exodus offers a means to retreat from normative politics, and to re-treat the terrain upon which forms of politics arise. The terrain itself, though it remains and if not accelerates the convergence of the commons (see Negri 2008), is no longer bound to the historical forms of centralization found in the *polis* (which raises questions as to the abdication of the *oikos*, the hearth, and the altar of the sacred, upon which sacrifice retains its ritual value of ensuring the spatiotemporal coherence of the *polis*). The political terrain has become that of the network: discontinuous yet common, connected yet vast. Likewise, it is through exodus that nonrepresentable subjects are able to find a common bond for their obscene excess.

Exodus is a praxis "without content" as it investigates the possibility of reinvent-

ing content itself. In this sense, exodus is a passage through the deconstruction of *politics*. With many different possible modes, exodus explores alternative unfoldings of being-with-others. Not simply flight, "an uprising must be *for* something as well" (Bey 1991: 103). Exodus is the means to articulate this *for* with the belonging of the *whom* in the reconstruction of the *how* (what, when, and where). The *why* has already been demonstrated. Exodus, though flight, is not to be mislabeled as a phantasmatic escape from a de facto reality. If anything, the ideological imperatives to enjoy and consume are precisely such an escape, serving as the cathartic performance of approved excess that maintain, through consumption and exhaustion, the economic imbalances of the social order. If anything, it is the belief that sovereign forms of political order represent the precarious subject that is fantasy (see Dean 2006; Debord 1992; Zizek 2006: 308-317).

From exodus then, is posed the question, or rather the distinction, between politics and the political (see Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 1997). The passage through exodus enacts a defection or disappearance from politics (and its logic of representation) to the political, to that open, endless night in which the activity of subjectification continually reconstitutes an "'accustomed place' that never preexists the experience that determines its location" (Virno 1996a: 33). We might introduce Hakim Bey's notion of the Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ) as an "encampment of guerilla ontologists," where the "best and most radical tactic will be to refuse to engage in spectacular violence, to *withdraw* from the area of simulation, to disappear" (1991: 102). Rancière in particular has described this moment: "Political activity is whatever shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes a place's destination" (1999: 30). Exodus abandons assigned destinations; it errs away from wherever it should be; it ends up customizing its place with new customs. Being where it shouldn't, exodus announces not the disappearance of politics, but its return. Indeed, this is why politics is "antagonistic to policing" of every sort (1999: 29) – and which is why the politics of rave culture combats, evades or undermines policing actions with every desertion into darkness and disappearance.

Exodus, then, performs the encounter with reconstituting politics as such, that is, an often shocking encounter with the "ultimate equality" of the social (Rancière 1999: 16). The gap (qua violence) between the empty freedom of the many and the ultimate equality upon which all politics draws its force sets into motion the desertion of exodus. Engaged withdrawal begins with the perception that politics-as-usual began "with a major wrong" (Rancière 1999: 19). But exodus is not one form among many. The passage through the political *risks* – in the catastrophic sense that McRobbie implies, for it "demonstrates the sheer contingency of the order" (Rancière 1999: 30) – redress of this inequality at the heart of politics itself. Exodus is the name for the pathway of reconstituting politics. As we have seen, it renders existential categories of activity indistinct. In doing so, it potentially risks everything. Wherever subordinated subjects excluded from the representation (and control) of the whole remain, nonetheless, necessary for its constitution (as its essential excess), and wherever "a part of those who have no part" is demonstrated (Rancière 1999: 230), there lies the path of desertion and defection toward a reconstitution of politics itself.[7] If, as Gilbert and Pearson implicitly suggest, only a "mainstream" politics is *politics at all*, then under these conditions it is a politics without politics, for it excludes the possibility of dissensus concerning political process. Any imperative that presupposes the proper mode of effective politics does so only by negating the irruption of antagonism (between policing and equality) that opens the heterogeneous terrain of the political –

that moment when the subject calls into question its re-presentation, identification or otherwise interpellation within existing processes of subjectification.

Disappearance: Exodus as the Absence of Signs

> ...the TAZ is in some sense a *tactic of disappearance* (Bey 1991: 128).

Exodus appears in its absence of signs. Compared to punk's semiotics of rebellion that proudly displayed the symbols of its anticapitalist subculture (see Hebdige 2007), rave culture slipped away into the night, dowsing its fleeting incarnation of ecstatic defection through the praxis of the TAZ, a "guerilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/ elsewhen, *before* the state can crush it" (Bey 1991: 101). Written in the 1980s and virally disseminated by the 1990s net culture, Bey's *Broadsheets of Ontological Anarchism* and manifesto of the *Temporary Autonomous Zone* outlined various procedures for exodus with remarkable prescience. Such a politics would appear as a disappearance of politics itself, an "anti-politics", defection or desertion from acceptable modes of collective and individual responsibility. Within the logic of representation, it is only when rave emerged into the light in 1995 with the urban sound system occupations of Reclaim the Streets (RTS) and its "unrehearsed, informal, illegal 'guerilla' street festivals" (Luckman 2001: 207) – to pinpoint one particular example – that rave culture appeared as a properly "political" movement. But had not rave culture emerged *from somewhere*? Was rave not operating, in this moment, not as a protest politics attempting to re-present a set of demands (in the only way it would know how), but as a participatory carnival of alternatives to the remnants of the political order of representation?

The complexity of exodus has been identified (in so many words) by Rodrigo Nunes, who in conversation with Benj Gerdjes and Gavin Grindon, discusses the tension between prefigurative politics (being the change you want to see) and the politics of the carnivalesque (subverting the social order to achieve insurrection or upheaval through the accumulation of historical ruptures) (Gerdjes et al. 2010: 3). Both are forms of nonrepresentative praxis that arise from exodus. And as Rodrigo points out, both forms have their failings. Prefigurative politics has been critiqued for leading to a depoliticized lifestylism that reduces social change to a matter of individual, if not consumer "choice" (itself oblivious to socioeconomic determination of choice), while carnival risks its subsumption by way of catharsis, as the energy of revolt is mitigated back into existing sociopolitical orders.

From their conversation, the suggestion arises that the difficulties with these two forms of nonrepresentative praxis arise not from a lack of representative politics, but possibly because too much of it remains. Attempting to exorcise the remainder, however, risks reinstituting the catastrophic violence of every tribunal of purification (see Derrida 1994). The challenges of exodus are that of living-with, and learning-from, the spectral inheritance of the past, of negotiating the stratification of coexisting heterogenous processes wherein "the very movement of withdrawal bears features of what it negates" (Adorno 2002: 26). It is precisely this activity of re-membering the political body (rather than its complete dismemberment, which every revolution exemplifies) that guards exodus from returning as a new state of policing. And yet a further difficulty arises, fundamental to politics itself. Though politics is heterogeneous to policing, it is bound up with it (Rancière 1999: 31). This is because politics has no object of

its own; politics is a form of encounter between heterogeneous forces (it has no content). And in this encounter, *not everything is political*. Rather, politics is specifically (though in general) the encounter between the logics of policing and equality, between constrained imperatives (such as representative politics) and the transformative open of the political.

The challenge of exodus is such that "there is no *outside* to our world of real subsumption of society under capital" (Negri 2008: 25). Nonrepresentative forms of exodus and desertion are correlative to, in a wholly integrated manner, socioeconomic shifts in the global fabric of capital and technology. Exodus cannot achieve escape velocity from the systems within which it defects. Though heterogeneous, exodus remains a passage of excess within a network that recuperates its incident before the fact. If this is the case, then what precisely can exodus offer? Nothing less than the time and place for an experimental laboratory of subjectivity; an examination of the prevailing modes of politics; and the reconstitution of the passages of encounter – which is to say, sufficiently more than the constraints of representative politics.

Exodus remains a passage. Though Negri argues for the autonomy of *puissance* (freedom as potency) in catalysing new forms of being and resistance to capital (2008: 26), the integration of the telematics, technologies and techniques of the control society with the passage of exile appears unstoppable – if not complete. Yet, as the passage through ontological freedom, exodus mines deep within a stratified world: it unearths autonomy, pirate havens, viral strategies. There can be no absolute containment of all that every passage through exodus returns from the night.

Conclusion: the parallax gap of political demands

Quivering in front of a thundering soundsystem, captive in the deafening blur, it is without a doubt that the experience of *jouissance*, in particular rave *ek-stasis* (Hemment 1996) – the ritual, sonic engagement with embodied transcendance – affords few, if any, places from which to build a platform and vocalize a list of demands. Though a tennis court might make a good space for an all-night TAZ, it is unlikely that revolutionary oaths will be sworn in classic fashion – though they may be enacted, and alliances formed.[8] In the sonic maelstrom of the rave, all that holds court also upholds the overwhelming rhythmic crush of the embodied milieu and its repetitive release of *jouissance*. All of which leaves the question as to where and when rave culture might engage in the representation of its interests, at least to organise and sign a petition or two – to please sir, let us dance some more.

Though rave culture and representative politics appear antithetical, in Gilbert and Pearson their demands are summarized in terms of unionized labour: to shorten the work week and raise wages (one can imagine the outcome: more money for pills and parties – is this the limit of an imaginable politics of rave culture?). Insofar as any representative class aims to universalize its own conditions of existence, what would rave culture re-present save for its own interests in ritual sonic release? Would not such a representative framework only serve to *constrain* rave culture's force, narrow its demands, enframe in limited ways its creative capacities? And indeed, if rave culture's force, by way of its integration within what McRobbie calls creative labour, is enough to negate not only ethics and community but *politics itself*, then its containment by representation appears as the last ditch effort to constrain its boundaries and restrain its effects, lest it bring about utter social catastrophe.

The impasse reached by McRobbie and Gilbert and Pearson have gestured respectively toward the need for an alternative theory of work and leisure – and thus of "politics" – in respect to the "creative industries" of rave culture. Yet, such an alternative must operate without reducing rave to a sanitized dance culture lacking any demands whatsoever, just as much as it must account for rave's global dissemination, obscene hedonism, spectral technics, precarity and exodus. What proceeds from rave culture exceeds the distinctions of work and leisure, politics and pleasure, even as its effects – its resistant and subversive capacity, its disruptive dismantling of site, place, space, time – are by no means exterior to what Negri calls the "postmodern caesura" in which all resistance is recuperated (2008). Rave's "always, already" commodification does not render its force impotent. Rather, it reveals that its containment is fragile, insofar as rave culture *incorporates itself* into the belly of the beast, infiltrating global mechanisms of control as one of many such unassimilable artifacts of *puissance*. Rave is a cultural technics, an invented and inventive force in contrast to institutional power [*pouvoir*], an undigestible other within the fabric of capital (see Derrida 1986). As such it is possibly an "*invention of a new 'use value' inside power*" (Negri 2008: 26). Any demands that follow will always appear impossible, viewed as they are at the parallax gap between politics and the political. But if one were to concede a short list of demands, then so be it, in conclusion, though not conclusively:

i) that rave culture implicitly – and at many points explicitly – undermines the enclosure of public space (see St John 2009).[9] As Hebdige writes, rave culture "reaffirmed the right to congregate in public" (2008: 86). Rave culture struggles for the self-organised determination of spatiotemporality *in general*, whether technically regarded as private or public (such as in the case of squats, occupations, and repurposing of abandoned land);

ii) that rave culture, by practice of the free exchange of digital samples and remix practices in the   production and dissemination of music, art and culture, and in its deployment of internet technologies facilitating worldwide sharing and gift economies, undermines the prevailing regime of copyright[10] – as can be heard in the sampladelia (and witnessed in the resulting media hysteria) of the JAM's plundering of Abba, The Beatles and others on *1987 – What the Fuck Is Going On?* (KLF Communications, 1987) and The Orb's transformation of a Rickie Lee Jones interview on "Fluffy Little Clouds" into an ambient house anthem (Big Life, 1990) – challenging what Jonathan Lethem samples as *imperial plagiarism* – "the enclosure of commonwealth culture for the benefit of a sole or corporate owner" (2008: 37);[11]

iii) that rave culture, by espousing an atmosphere of autonomy in regards to criminalized psychoactive substances, and other technics of ritual displacement, openly flouts prohibition, emphasizing knowledge as the prerequisite for choice, balanced by the self-organisation of harm reduction initiatives and distribution of scientific literature, in short, a culture that demands "stop the hypocrisy [...] let's work toward reducing the harm that can result" (Saunders and Doblin 1996: 18) and recognises that "drugs saturate all facets of Western civilization" (McCall 2001: 101);

iv) that rave culture embraces liberated gender and sexuality in all of its forms by way of its creation of nonsexist spaces of encounter, contributing to the "feminization" of culture (see Gilbert and Pearson 1999: 181; Pini 1997: 154-55; McRobbie 1990);

v) that rave culture demonstrates the capacity of the throng to self (dis)organise without police or State intervention, calling for the unhindered passage of assembly, but also for the lived praxis of continuous and collective re-invention in the ongoing encounter between policing and equality.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. The parallax of its object leaves it ultimately inexhaustible. To what extent can representative politics account for such demands? Even if rave culture were to propose constitutional amendments that would address fundamental questions of property, space, personal liberty, collective power and limitations on state power, the depth of such a challenge would unsettle the basis of representative politics itself. At the very least, the demands of rave culture are such that their full extent signals a threatened existence which cannot petition its government, for to do so would dismantle the conditions of its becoming. Yet has this not already begun? Rave culture is only one such fragment in a necessarily incomplete exodus of the multitude toward a new republic. And so it takes leave through its dismantling of politics, and ultimately, its moment. If rave culture had needed a representative politics to validate its existence, it could never have taken place.

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Notes

1   See, for example, the CBC Radio 3 documentary "The Death of North American Rave Culture"   by Eric Szeto, at <http://radio3.cbc.ca/#/blogs/2008/11/The-Death-of-North-American-Rave-Culture> (accessed 11 February 2010). Through interventionist research in Vancouver's technoculture and rave scene, I place the mark of its particular demise, the point when its energies peaked, and then dramatically receded, with the violent police assault upon the 1997 PRIME TIME rave, which splintered the rave scene into oppositional and conformist elements (see St John 2009: 197-98).

2   Of course, representative politics is not equivocal to the politics of representation. What is meant by the former will be investigated in relation to what are often assumptions concerning the latter. Whereas the former is a system of hierarchical mediation in which the diverse desires of the many are ultimately unified in the one will of the sovereign, the latter defines what kinds of bodies – in their re-presentation, their identification, their privilege – may become valued members of the many.

3   Post-Fordism has perhaps met its demise with the 2007/2008 economic collapse that seals the transition to a "war economy" characterized by the "network power" of non-state actors (see Marazzi 2008: 14: 86; Negri 2008: 20-21; Hardt and Negri 2009: 205). Under these "other powers" falls the "*global spread of insubordination*" (Negri 2008: 21).

4   For the "religious" aspects of rave ritual, see essays in (St John 2004). That rave participates in what François Gauthier names "*instituant* experiences of the sacred" (2004: 67) calls into perspective the relationship between *theos* and *tekhne*, or what might be called theotechnics. That applied technologies might amplify encounters with (divine) alterity is a path of thought no longer confined to the millenarial cults of Y2K, but affects the (often violent) negotiation of theocultural difference today – which is to say, in the ongoing futurity of technosapiens.

5   A crucial proposition, one that is all the more problematic given the dialectic of technics, in which the master of creative technics is all too often a slave to technology.

6   Exodus, as a line of flight in Deleuzean terminology, opens itself by way of becoming, and is by definition inexhaustible (Deleuze and Guattari 2000: 103). Deleuze and Guattari write that "power centers are defined much more by what escapes them or by their impotence than by their zone of power" (217).

7   The general form of this necessary inclusion of the necessarily excluded is to be found in Derrida as the "strange" structure of the supplement (here in temporal terms): "by delayed reaction, a possibility produces that to which it is said to be added on" (1973: 89).

8   Though I say unlikely. For certainly the activities of soundsystems and other rave-era anarcho-enclaves dispell this myth (see St John 2009). Oaths have indeed been sworn, in ritual fashion. The rave has served as the site for weddings, celebrations of age, birth and death, as well as ritual inductions into alliances and collectives. Networks have been formed, plans hatched. And as Robin Sylvan's research has indicated, "spiritual" raves use language to signify religious commitments (2005). Do any of these practices conform to an articulated agenda of representative politics? At points, yes (such as organising against the RAVE Act in the US, the CJA in Britain, etc). But naked oaths cannot be contained within representative politics. For such demands exceed the capabilities of sovereign power to address them; the constitution of power itself must change in order to articulate what is already-lived.

9   See, for example, "BLM issues a 5-year permit to Burning Man" at <http://www.burningman.com/news/060621_blmpermit.html> (accessed 11 February 2010), and by contrast, new land restrictions issued by the BLM in 2009: <http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/wfo/blm_information/newsroom/2009/august/blm_issues_temporary.html> (accessed 11 February 2010).

10   For a meditation upon DJing as "the forefront art form of the late 20th century" as it questions "intellectual property and copyright law" by way of "sonic… alchemy," see Miller (2005); for a reflection upon the role of the turntable that "marks the real rupture in the mode or method of the forms [between live or electronic music and replaying music]", see Mudede (2004); for a historically informed defense of a "state of music without fences, but where, as in scholarship, acknowledgement is insisted upon", see Oswald (2005).

11   In his remix notes to the essay – wherein Lethem demonstrates how his text is constructed with remixed phrases – Lethem writes that *Imperial Plagiarism* is the title of an essay by Marilyn Randall (2008: 48).