

[warehouse . space : rave culture, selling-out, and sonic revolution]

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1.

In the early-90s, warehouses were powerful microscopes, magnifying socio-sonic relations of echoed beats, catalysing pounding grooves that raised the structure of memory from the cement and metal environs, bodies of movement always on the flight to the next dark night and industrial district search, the secret of the telephone messages and cryptic directions to be deciphered, the check-points deep in the heart of nowhere, school-buses to undisclosed locations of bohemian extropy, madness in the streets, a flash of bright clothing, movement through the bins and speakers, the DJs alive and wordless with speaking hands, the music connecting beyond language to central systems.

2.

Spin that today to a "raver" and hear the growing panic cross into confusion. Memories play across dark nights as the post-generation—post-Gen-X, post-political, post-everything—meanders through its doldrums of existence, aged and wondering where it all went... For at a point, several years ago, from the ashes of commercial '80s hair-metal arose a flourishing spectrum of movements and musics: hip-hop, grunge, and "techno:" the electronic musik cultures of Detroit techno, Chicago house, and UK acid house; the psychedelics of trance and goa, the aggressive darkness of jungle, the mellow of ambient and the abstraction of IDM. Despite a swath of subcultures, post-cultures, and social strata, these groups gathered and gained momentum as ragged bands, already fraying at the edges as vectors too close to a rocket's trajectory, shearing and scratching the heart of society. A late-night shake up of Western Civilization's late-80s dredge, a recycling project of all that had been laid to waste, another declaration of the revolution and there it was: the moment to overthrow once again the music industry, a revolt that through music was political to its dirty core, comprised of cement and metal and the structure, the warehouse, empty symbol of capitalism deterritoralised through dance, leaving us here, and alone, in two-thousand-and-three.

2a.

Tonight on the turntable is a nostalgic record, so sit back as we wax poetic. Slip the needle, play it at the point where another moment of conservatism has dominated the frequencies. Replayed as a token of the past, this record is a marker of what remains to come, yet brews and stirs from the deep of the dusky grooves.

3.

It was the warehouse that acted as intersection—*into sections, insection*; the insect and the join and the cut, the intersexion of musical cultures, sonic sex for insects, the nexus of history DJ'ed as electronic music, the politics of black liberation and the pride of sexuality. Each part of "rave" a different record, a different mix at different points of the experience. That today we recombine the final history and cement the past, put to our hard memory what we mediatize in this present as "rave culture" is a political necessity of counting the fallen. Not what we would call rave culture *today*—that which is a commercialized, consumerist apparition of its past—but what was rave culture at the height of its own hallucinated and speculated *then*—and that we leave that *then* open to recombine and remix all over and once again to set forth the politics of the warehouse.

[Breakdown]

4.

Ten years ago at 3am on a Sunday morning, standing in awe, below the sea: frenzied bodies explode, dancing, dark and cavernous the warehouse deep, in the heart of the city, like starved piranha the hungry crowd devoured beats, strip them bare with spastic, flailing movements—shark eye glint—sweat-encrusted pale bodies, sexless sexiness...madness all around the warehouse echoed sound—of revolutionary dreams...there, one of a hungry piranha, bloodthirsty and blood in my veins, again relentless pulse of the beat ...

5.

Spin This: Now, here I am, drink in hand instead of Ecstasy in my brain, up late, once & again listening to an old techno mix tape – scratch that record –I recorded that long year ago of 1995 – turn down the pitch – writing about it all and trying to explain a connection felt to that dirty and grimy warehouse – flip the power – the inhabitants of that city-scene that worshipped cement culture – the record slows down – trying to explain the bigger picture felt by a few of us at that moment – the beats drag out – when the connection between the metropolis and electronic music felt beyond city confines and enclosed space – slip beats running low sub bass – for space was space for movement, not stasis – scratch the rumbled echo – But here I am ten years later and all I can think about is Hunter S. Thompson in the early '60s – slip cue the dead deck – writing another article on the long extinct beat generation, his final eulogy in Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas to the counter-culture—stop the record—: Rave Is Dead, corpse, it was beaten down in 1996 in Vancouver when Nietzsche's "God Is Dead" parable was posted to the NorthWest Raves email list, it was beaten down by the cops at Prime Time Vancouver, at Building Blocks Toronto, at Richie Hawtin's border-bust, in court against Spiral Tribe UK and the 1994 Criminal Justice Act, with laws and batons and with blood...it was slagged from the inside and used like the whore it was to

sell cars and dot-bombs and pop muzak...and saying it again now is beating a dead horse not only rotting, carcass, but a horse long stripped and picked clean to the whites of its bones by the mindless, vicious piranhas—their hungry ghosts anxious again for revenge ... Remix.

[What is a warehouse?]

6.

A warehouse conjoins sound and architecture, people and politics. The *location of culture*. Rumble of metal roof and the echo of cement beats; dance is a necro embodiment, a ritual of the vampiric vulture on the empty signifiers of capitalism, for the warehouse is the empty nest of surplus value. Dancing in a warehouse is a contradictory act, alive and dead, at once such a dancing deterritorialises the proper use of the physical space, at once the financial and economical backbone of the rave maintains the actuality of the structure and its potential to be utilised again for the drives of capital... Subvert the space: break-in, throw the free party, occupy land, squat. To capture the space for short term operations, to gain territory at the moment it is made temporary and stolen, piece by piece and off the board: Deleuze and Guattari call this restless nomadology the game of Go as opposed to chess. Move in lines, ravers form nomadic spaces: Temporary Autonomous Zones to organise sonic communities that existed only in the repetitious singularity of the single night once a week (that Saturday which was re-named Life).

7.

A warehouse becomes more than space as it becomes a space of becoming.

1a. Becoming-time that cannot be measured for its delimitations are *echoed memories* (the dance conjures every memory of the previous dance, the previous rave; the musik with its beat-echoes propels this *sonic memory*).

1b. How different this is from physical incorporations of rote recitation and the boredom of learning and education (this memory is not driven in as rote, it is echoed as physical experience): *beat traces in the revolutions of wax*.

2a. Nor indeed must it be simply a grey and dirty structure in the bowels of the city on the outskirts of a polluted waterway, *it becomes more than that*, a "warehouse" moment. Dancing moves to deconstruct codified and "proper" usage of not only actualised, physical space, but of the propriety of time.

2b. The transformation of time as well as the space. The movement of space to the nonsense of time and the dowsing for psychic space, what Charity Marsh calls "mind dancing," remix Bergson and call it the *DJ's durée* (or we might talk of a raver's parable of the virtual from Brian Massumi). *Ravers call it "peak time."* Peak time, something other to clock time, a *pause* to hear the echos of beat

memory, an erotic mixture of the new moment of the *now* and its always-already conjunction through *movement*.

8.

Flip the record: Lo, it was the misunderstanding of peak time as transcendental, perhaps through the filters of Ecstasy, perhaps through the existing network of capitalist structures, that led to the worship of ridiculous acronyms such as PLUR—Peace Love Unity Respect. From PLUR arose an "It's All Good" philosophy that served as blinders to the reality of the scene: drug abuse, unhealthy lifestyles, destroyed minds and bodies, social distress—the ravages of capitalist entertainment taken to its destructive conclusions. PLUR was a totalitarian rebound of the "warehouse" paradigm on an underage majority quick to embrace an exit to contemporary pop culture, ready to take any exit—even those hyped as the next phase. Yet what a disaster as that one signified was replaced with another: PLUR and its rave hierarchies (Promoter, DJ, Dealer, etc.). PLUR is the consumerist message of capitalism remixed to commodify what was, up to that point, unmarketed by capital. PLUR was a brand name and a jingo that sold the rave. A time machine to the '60s, then the business plan: the yuppies can market, sell, rape, pillage.

[Scratching Peak Time]

9.

Peak-time is a moment of tangible power—social power that is touchable and tactile, uncontrollable in its final explosion at the end of the trajectory. Paradoxical movements: the Temporary Autonomous Zone became recodified, mixed with PLUR, producing advertising, not action; the end was near, the tension of rave culture was apocalyptic and palpable.

10.

Not all engagements with peak time hinge upon transcendental, PLUR mytho-hierarchies that recreate capitalist theosophies. The TAZ undid its moments, gave rise to sideways constructions and fractured lines away from rave and away from contemporary culture. Recorded examples include <ST> Communications (Vancouver), who explored the relation between rave culture, fascism, masochism and magick; the Dolphin Intelligence Network (Ontario) brought together the rave and industrial traditions to question magickal, fascist and psychedelic experience; Toronto's Transcendance pursued the mental mindset of spatialised topographies through the advent of minimal techno (a dark warehouse, a red spotlight, glowing bassbins and Plastikman). A whiff of post-anarchism, undefinable and beyond the textbook, gained movement through explorations of Hakim Bey and Deleuze and Guattari on the one channel, while Afro-Futurism was remixed through drum n' bass and Detroit's Underground Resistance on the other. Spiral Tribe UK fought on the street, in the squat, and through the courts, although in the end banned from their country for their deeds

of disturbance to the grey, drab palette of London rain. Nevertheless, Kodwo Eshun and Paul D. Miller sent missives from the outer-reaches, charting the distances still to be adventured.

11.

The relief of tension through dance is both a response to, and a fight against the city and its inherent structures: *polis*. The assumed foundations of the "social" are put to question through the sonic and through movement. Whether the "warehouse" takes its space and time within an actual warehouse or the backcountry, a forest or a field, it acts in affirmation, in deconstructive movement, to a codification of the permanency of pop temporality.

12.

The city calls when the metropolis is all but empty, the overwhelming aesthetic desire to interact with the architecture becomes a situation of musical insurrection. It's erotic. And yet it would be presumptuous to say that the sonic love affair with the city died in the same moment as "rave culture" sold out. Did the excitement felt by so many—that dangerous energy of entering the underground and the dark when the skyscrapers were sleeping, that moment of pure sheer terror in the field at night a thousand kilometres from the nearest town—dissipate to nothingness? Decades of committed dance have left a mark, and its transmutation grows foul in the belly of the beast that arises to fight the restrictions of capital.

[Drop the Needle]

13.

A freeway screams past.

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