



TAnZregrefß

zine for a **queer** rave gathering
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RAVE AS RITUAL

Let's go back, and forth. Let's travel into timeless oblivion. From the depths of the club to Greek ancient mountains, home to women known as the Maenads or the Bacchae (literally translated as the Raving Ones) who instigated the cult of the genderfluid deity, Dionysus. Let's journey from the place where our body-mind-spirit assemblages rave to the beat of the DJ, to the rituals where those marginalized by Greek society (women, slaves, outlaws, and non-citizens) came together to remove inhibitions and social constraints. These ancient margins, gathered through sacred mysteries, are merely one example of the myriad of worldwide cults whose details have been lost through the course of history and its systematic erasure of ritualistic ecstatic practices. But these practices are very much alive. Right here, right now.

A ritual allows for transformation. It also requires an intention for that which aims to be transformed. A ritual is a journey through which its participants can come into contact with liminal states. These liminal states imply entering a zone where daily identities are stripped, where time and being merge, it is a state of utmost vulnerability, open to personal and social change. In liminality, those undergoing a ritual establish non-hierarchical

bonds, direct, unmediated connections which foster a temporary community. Following a liminal state one enters the post liminal phase of a ritual, time for re-aggregation, cooling down, integration. Sounds familiar?

The Rave is a platform for the performance of contemporary rituals. A space for the margins, the precarious and those in need of alternatives to come together. To Rave means to propel something forth, to empower it with madness and enthusiasm. Set your intention and hang on to it for dear life. Can the setting of clear intentions for the rave when regarded as ritual operate as more than wishful thinking and a self help strategy for the come down?

DIY RAVE RAVE REVOLUTION

During the 80s, while the Thatcherite cultural revolution was working to reverse the social democratic consensus of post-war Britain, an altogether different culture of self-reliance started emerging in opposition to it. A lot of people, disillusioned or disenfranchised by the new spectacle of commodification, turned to one another in search for a way out of despondency and alienation. DIY, the culture of communal self-reliance and mutual aid, is born every time people get together and realize that the only way forward is to do things themselves by (re)appropriating the tools and (re)learning the skills for self-determination. Rave making is collective action by definition. It is the production of self-determined pleasure through reclaiming technocultural tools commonly used to dominate and divide life.

Roughly between '88-'94, the UK witnesses a real resurgence of the *culture of festivity* as the sound and "loved up" vibe of Acid House parties links up with dub and reggae-inspired mobile sound system culture, already popular for some decades, drawing an unseemly combination of urban ravers, punks, travelers, anarchists and hackers, and their respective sounds—DnB/jungle, breakcore, (psy-)trance, techno and happy

hardcore into unprecedented rituals of communal devotion. The legendary Castlemorton Festival in summer '92 was the culmination of this phase where some 30-40,000 ravers gathered for an entirely unlicensed and non-commercial carnival of sound under the open rural sky. Tinted with a shade of New Age primitivism and Rastafarian spiritualism, many saw the rave at the time as a neotribal strategy for re-enchanting the social and enlightening the modern soul. For members of Spiral Tribe, for instance, possibly the most politically feisty and spectacular of sound crews, techno was folk music: "Futurist pre-modernism is an important aspect of a tradition of countercultural thought... You can call us techno-pagans, whatever..." But any hope for a restorative function of the rave would have been dashed by the strictly "hardcore" commitment to week-long sleepless benders spent in the proximity of masochistically loud sound stacks, and an eternal life of the road, chased away by police, welcomed only at various "teknivals" around the continent.

On the other end of the spectrum of techno-social consciousness was the Exodus Collective, which in '93 squatted a farm to be turned into a rave-ground-slash-social-center, an off-the-grid safety net for

social marginal and outcasts and a land project for collective joy. In true DIY spirit, Exodus founding member, Glenn Jenkins, explains: "when we're not on the decks, not on the mix, not on the gate, no on the generators, then we know it's working." The drop in crime in the nearby Luton area after the inception of the Exodus land and social center project still did not deter local police to sabotage and try to frame collective members with serious crime.

Criminalization notwithstanding, once the free party Gini was out of the bottle, it was hard to put it back in. The dance music counter-cultures of the 90s continued to proliferate across the US, Canada and Australia (full moon gatherings, tekno-punks, cyber-tribes, sonic agitators, autonomous collectives of freedom fighters, etc.) going further off the radar as the long shadow of repression followed suit. The 90s renaissance of festive culture (naturally aided by new innovations in chemical intimacy) highlighted two things. It betrayed a deep longing in technologically advanced turbo-capitalist societies for exploring future-primitivist technologies of ecstasy and methods for re-enchantment of the technosocial. Second, the official state response, echoing the ancient repression of the cult of Dionysus and the medieval clampdown of the Carnival and public dances, demonstrated that the potential of the self-organized crowd capable to access the divine without the

help of any leadership is still felt as a threat to government and its precious grip on legitimacy. At the same time, since the 90s rave makers have had to come to terms with the intrinsic limits of exodus in modern society and the always-already cooperated nature of cultural production: "Unless the generator operates by wind power, and the party-goers arrive on foot and only drink from a babbling brook, all parties will line the government's pockets in some ways." (Mary Anna Wright, 1998)



THE WEST MUST APPEAR PROSPEROUS



RADICAL EDUCATION

WORKING WITHIN COMMUNITIES

DEMILITARISED ZONE



SHIT these guys are becoming hard to control



GUEST WORKERS ARRIVE FROM TURKEY ITALY SPAIN

DRAFT DODGES

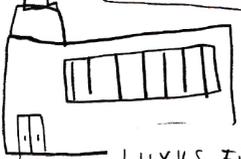
AFTER THE WALL COMES DOWN MANUFACTURING FALLS



Another EMPTY FACTORY

USE IT FOR OUR PARTY

EAST AND WEST START A NEW PARTY SCENE



LUXUS FÜR ALLE

ACID HOUSE



THE PARTIES LOOK COOL

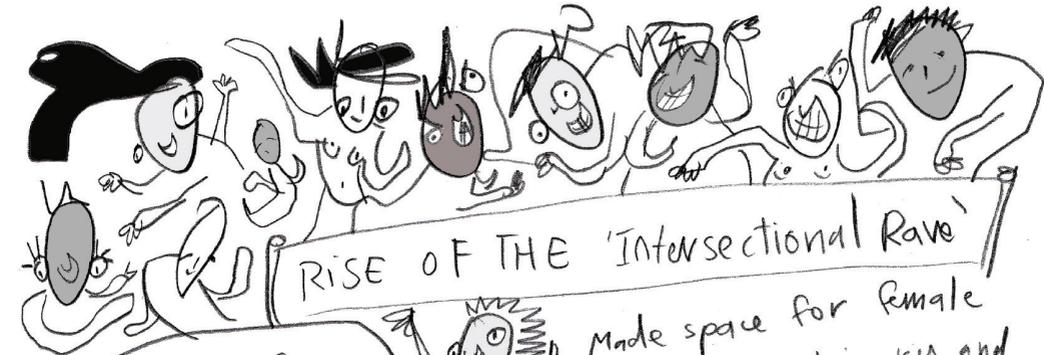
BUT ITS horrendously Macho n male dominated

LOVE PARADE



WE FELL ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL





RISE OF THE 'Intersectional Rave'

Fuck Your Macho Techno

Made space for female queer, none-binary and other-abled communities

LEGALISATION OF THE ELECTRONIC DANCE SCENE



Perfect Bill board for tourism



ALL this inclusion makes us look great,

No wife Radical

Liberal Baddy character



Sure have sex and take drugs Much easier to control that way. Meanwhile your rents gonna double

Legalisation means Rave has shed it's more anti capitalist orientation for cultural anti-oppression, work relating to inclusivity, visibility and safety all variations of Liberal rights!



RAVING VS. CLUBBING

Somewhere in the mid-90s, the electronic dance music ecosystem split into two streams, one stream swallowing the pill of respectability and legality provided by tax-paying venues, the other wandering even further off the grid to avoid state repression and enclosure into a profit-driven, hierarchically-organized industry. If the rave was about returning skills, tools (including the tools of spiritual enchantment) and common resources (esp. land) to an alienated and disenfranchised modern soul, clubbing looked very much like a continuation of passive entertainment and depoliticized hedonism. To trade in the anarchist (DIY, insurgent, collectivist) spirit of the free rave for the comforts of clubland it was also necessary to drive a wedge through the social body of the rave between the travellers, hippies, punks, hackers and freaks, commonly seen at illegal parties, and the students, artists and urban bohemians, less willing to rough it up for defending the right to assemble and *dance in public*. A revolution without dancing is not my kind of revolution, has been the anarchist pleasure mantra first uttered by Emma Goldman. But if the collective dance becomes a tax-paying billion-dollar hype machine

is it still part of the revolution? Or, more simplistically, is clubbing still counter-cultural?

To be fair, clubland—"dancing under the sanction of the law"—is as rich and diverse an ecosystem as the free rave scene, and is equally saturated with politics though less so in the collectivist-anarchist spirit of *reclaim!* and *occupy!*, and more so in the sense of running a micro-economy or a mini-state. The difference is most palpably seen in the divergent role of the organizer. The free rave organizer is usually a soundsystem-operating crew, which is prepared to assume great risks for defending the values of free culture and big bass, and enlists all participants in an act of anarchist defiance through their own propaganda of the deed. The club owner or party promoter, on the other hand, is a sort of nightlife curator with sovereign prerogatives holding absolute powers over bookings, communication, visual presentation, and most importantly access to the club, all in the name of producing a vibe, which in the best-case scenario can resemble something of a "communism of emotions" for one night.

An unlikely beneficiary of this enclosure has been queer-

feminist culture. Over the past decade, independently run queer and feminist crews have staged their own DIY takeover of club infrastructures to create visibility, safer spaces and places of gathering and celebration for communities marginalized by both club culture and anarchist raves. Inspired by identity political insights about the uneven distribution of privilege and access across race, class and gender, the “intersectional rave” has been trying to push back against pervasive masculinism and lack of diversity in electronic dance music on all fronts, from sound technicians to dance floor presence. Most interestingly, though, the re-politicization of the party has required that progressive promoters continue to retain full control over the inside/outside boundary of the party and the question of security. Politically-minded organizers find themselves in the bizarre position of having the power to frame, *guard and legislate* prefigurative communities of a utopian society to come by using police-like border-patrolling tactics (e.g., denying entrance, invigilating safety requirements, banning wrongdoers). Moreover, in order to safeguard the needs and sensibilities of their vulnerable denizens, queer-feminist promoters have to tacitly accept the property and power relations intrinsic to club economy just to secure access to space and the sustainability of their projects. Despite best grassroots efforts to turn clubs into

heterotopic queer playgrounds, it is ironic and regrettable when queer visibility and inclusivity depend on enclosed, highly regulated and commodified spaces to implement their radical vision, thus further entrenching the neoliberal separation between identity (inclusivity, equality, anti-oppression) vs. material (law, order and property-related) struggles or, in our case, between safer-space clubbing and the anarcho-punk rave.



THE BODY OF THE RAVE

“Within the rave-event, human bodies are no longer fleshy lumps of tissue and bone detached from the mind. They are portals. Wormholes to a pre-personal continuum of intensity and affect.”

Plugging in: The Ecology of Rave,

Charlie Mills, 2018

When a body is erased, broken, unseen, cast aside, pushed around and ultimately destroyed, it needs out. It needs to get out. It cannot be contained, it squirms and it rattles. Unsatisfied bodies, the bodies whose intensities and turmoils could not be contained, the oppressed bodies, bodies whose anxieties, frustrations and needs to envision other modes of believing and embodying the world refuse to stand still, the bodies that need to dance, those are the bodies who have pushed the rave through.

These bodies have assembled with machines, dissolving and blending themselves with technology, props, spaces, places, histories, struggles.

Let's get on the roller coaster: watch the collapse of disco in the 70's, its critique aimed at the gay and african american communities, wow look over there, now it's Chicago house blossoming: *“Chicago's house sound was developed for and in the city's primarily queer and black clubs, mixing older disco with Italo disco, funk, hip-hop and European electro pop. In contrast to NY garage's heavier gospel and soul influences, Chicago house drew deeply from funk music, with a more high-energy “jacking” sound that featured driving percussion and higher tempos.”* Keep going, twist turn and land in suburban Detroit, the debris

of the automobile industry, human labor being substituted by technology. Echoes of the music of the future taking hold of that same technology. Bam! things get intertwined, they travel and cross pollinate, the UK, acid House, DIY free raves pushing through the weekend, running from the cops while Ibiza grows, clubs commodify the movement (...) *“Although rooted in queer, black and Latino nightlife—and while certainly different from “mainstream” club culture at the time—rave in the UK at the end of the '80s had become a primarily straight, white, middle- and working-class affair.”* (<https://www.residentadvisor.net/features/1927>)

Rewind! Back to square one, thirty years later, bodies keep dancing, keep struggling, keep raving. What can the body of the rave do?

The body of the rave may temporarily fissure the fabric of reality, shredding colonialism, patriarchy, neo-liberalism and all them big nasty monsters, melting them in flames lit by the lightning bolts that jerk out of dancing bodies, but can't the raving bodies of today also assemble and make demands through the spaces these bodies rave in, the way these bodies set up a rave, the bodies that are invited and granted access to the rave?

THE MINOR ART OF QUEER NEGATIVITY

Shortly after the 1969 Stonewall riots, gay liberation became structured around tropes of pride, positivity and free love. Alongside dive bars, sex cinemas and public cruising spots, dancefloors have always provided an essential antidote to the social marginalisation and cultural normalisation of gays and gender-nonconforming people. The boundary-dissolving and unifying power of dancing (“equal under the groove”) licenses narratives of positivity, confident communalism and a utopianism capable of healing the social rift. Gay Pride TM, Love Parade TM, and the PLUR (“peace, love, unity and respect”) mantra of the 90s rave have each, in their own ways, interpreted the power of the beat as a joyous end to ideology, politics and antagonism. Bliss through stasis. Transcendence through innocence.

Parallel to this legacy runs the more minor but no less vociferous strand of “queer negativity.” Pessimism as political critique; self-defense and direct action instead of the false safety of separatist spaces; transcendence through pain over self-care and resilient self-love. Is there power and political merit in rejecting utopianism?

Trans non-op musician and writer, Terre Thaemlitz, aka DJ Sprinkles, is

one of the most systematic critics of the cultural demand for positivity: “I keep saying over and over again: ‘Forget about dreams and hope!’ Organizing around hopes and dreams is how we get to absurdly abstract notions like ‘love is the answer,’ and that dancing or making music is enough to change the world.” *Resistance, they insist, is an inherently negative drive organized around the unwillingness to accept the unacceptable any longer.* Politics is the domain of friend vs. foe, not unity through love. For those who take a more political interpretation of queerness, to queer also means to negate, it is to wrestle with the impossible contradiction of trying to gain recognition and survival within an insufficient gender regime that ultimately needs abolishing. DJ Sprinkles’ urge to “Fuck utopianism, please! Struggle to get real!” applies equally to the field of politics as it does to the existentialist drama of subjecthood. To recognize that nothing can heal the lack constitutive of the human condition or the rupture foundational of the social contract is not just killjoy cynicism. It is the stuff of serious engagement. In its late hour, the rave is just as much a ritualized technology for transcending the ordinary as it is a celebration of the void. It’s just a matter of what you’ve got your intentions set on.



PICTORAVE
PROPAGANDA

I think I have a slight problem with WERN