Rave culture in Sydney, Australia: mapping youth spaces in media discourse

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'A secret language of drug imagery-indecipherable to parents-is being used to lure teenagers to dance parties throughout Sydney' (Daily Telegraph, 27/10/1995:4)

In the late 1980s, 'raves' emerged as colourful new sites for musical subcultural practices in urban Australia, mobilising the 'warehouse party' format already established in Chicago, Detroit and across Britain. With them, fresh sounds, and unique physical spaces for the production and consumption of cultural meaning were constructed. Groups of young people clustered in sites not conventionally aligned with musical performance, to listen and dance to electronic dance music replayed by disc jockeys (DJs) into the early hours of Saturday and Sunday mornings. Unlike other musical subcultures already established in Sydney such as the alternative rock scene, where performances generally took place in formal regulated environments (such as concert venues, live pub music, disco night-clubs), the sites for performance of raves in big Australian cities such as Sydney began to include spaces normally used for industrial and manufacturing production - old warehouses, factories, carpet showrooms - or spaces whose meanings were inverted from those in the wider mainstream, suburban 'world' - bowling alleys, train stations, basketball gymnasiums, circus tents. Rave culture, as phenomenon of late 1980s and 1990s, attempted to invert the traditional tropes of rock 'n' roll authenticity: re-playing and re-mixing already-recorded music became 'live' music (counter to the rock myth of recordings attempting to capture the 'essence' of a live band); and DJs, producers, re-mixers, and dancers themselves, began to occupy the creative cutting-edge of this 'disc culture' (Thornton, 1995:4).

Since the late 1980s, rave culture in Australia, as in most countries, has fragmented, diversified and in many respects has become more contradictory - new distinctions and subcultural dichotomies have emerged - 'old and 'new skool' events demarcate differences in the age of participants, and the music, drugs and political meanings consumed in parties have shifted. Various subcultural niches have emerged under

catchphrases such as 'Doof'[1], 'Drum and Bass' and 'Happy Hardcore'. Meanwhile, controversies and public moral panics have meant that the trajectories that ravers have taken subcultures down have diverged - more politicised, illegal parties have ventured further 'underground' or 'gone bush', while more formalised venues - clubs and tightly organised and secured warehouse parties shifted towards the 'mainstream'.

While Sydney has at various stages supported a strong club scene and warehouse-orientated inner-city rave scene, a range of other spaces have become venues through music. Common areas used for outdoor events include Sydney Park, a reclaimed garbage dump in the inner south west of the city; Cataract Park, Appin in the outer South West; areas north west of the outlying suburbs of Richmond and Windsor; and the bushland and National Parks which cradle the Sydney basin to both the north and south. Common imagery employed in the promotion and decoration of these 'bush' raves emphasises the reunification of humans with their natural environment, tribalism, and unity (for example, 'Happy Valley (Dec 1994), 'Field of Dreams' (17/7/1993), 'Sundaze' recoveries (2/4/1995)). These types of rave events also maintain intimate connections to the trance/ecologist motifs that dominate dance culture on New South Wales' north coast, notably around the university town of Lismore and popular backpacker destination, Byron Bay; and 'Earthcore' parties staged in the rural hinterland of Melbourne. As with similar events in other countries, 'Goa' trance sounds dominate these events (Cole and Hannan, 1997; Chan, 1998a). Other parties have been incorporated into trans-continental political strategies: 'reclaim the streets' parties, linked with those in London, Berlin, and a range of other major cities around the world, that take over major intersections such as at King St, Newtown, and Crown St, Surry Hills; while 'Cryogenesis' chill/drum and bass events have 'reclaimed the harbour' (Sydney harbour foreshores being the most luxurious and expensive area of the city). Harbour cruise parties (mobile, and thus more difficult to track down and regulate) have remained popular.

In this article, we explore the sites of rave subcultures in Sydney, as they have emerged and been transformed over the last decade. Furthermore, in an attempt to demonstrate the ambivalent relationship between these spaces and wider society, we provide an historical overview of the ways in which 'rave' has been constructed and

[1] 'Doof' music gets its onomatopoeic name from the rhythm of hardcore bass drum beats (i.e. *doof doof doof doof*) - a parody used in Sydney and North Coast NSW to distinguish smaller scale, illegal events from formalised club nights.

represented in the Sydney print media. By seeing 'rave' spaces through the lens of mainstream news sources, we hope to more effectively represent how dominant discourses regarding 'youth dissidence' are produced; how these contribute to strategies of surveillance and control by authorities; and how they are incorporated into spatial agendas to contain 'deviant' behaviour in certain areas, or as Goheen (1998:483) has put it, the efforts of governments 'to orchestrate and control inherently dangerous behaviour in public spaces', while 'other powerful interests are at work to supplant genuinely public space with its privatised surrogates'. In Sydney's dance culture fragments, these 'privatised surrogates' can be seen as 'heterotopias' situated within or at the edges of an urban fabric, which are contested but which do not alter primary relations of power in society. In order to situate a media analysis of rave spaces then, it is necessary to briefly survey writing on 'micro-space' politics, areas within the disciplines of cultural and political geography that provide unique lenses for understanding music subcultures.

Popular (geo)politics: micro-spaces and ideology

The development of new approaches to geographical thinking within radical frameworks since the 1970s acknowledges the contested nature of place, the territoriality of power and the ways in which spatialities come to be 'known' through popular culture, and the codes of everyday life. The adoption of post-structuralism and semiotics within studies of place, nation, and community have reminded researchers that the 'scripting of geopolitics cannot be removed from the process of the social reproduction of knowledge' (Sharp, 1993:494). Foucault's ideas of the power/knowledge dialectic (and the wielding of an administrative 'panoptic' power that accompanies territoriality) have heavily informed this emerging body of 'critical geopolitics'. How political entities and 'enemies', distant Others, and the kaleidescopic micro-spaces of the city come to be understood by the general public and known alternatively by a myriad of local participants, is paramount in situating relations of power, and ultimately, material patterns of inequity and subordination (see for example, Goheen, 1998; and Herbert's 1996 study of the Los Angeles Police Department's surveillance strategies). As Edward Said (1993:7) has put it:

> Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings.

These geographies of inclusion and exclusion, of hegemony and counter-strategy, are now increasingly gaining attention from researchers across a range of issues. Recent articles have addressed articulations of local resistance in Nepal (Routledge, 1994); constructions of public space in modern cities (Goheen, 1998); the construction of American security discourse and fear of 'enemy' in the *Reader's Digest* (Sharp, 1993); and the nexus of tensions surrounding uses of public space in California (Mitchell, 1995; 1992 - see also May, 1996; Kasbarian, 1996; and Dodds and Sidaway, 1994 for examples of 'new' critical geopolitics). Concurrently, researchers now recognise popular cultural means as central to the construction of dominant ideologies and knowledges of spatial politics - in addition to the formation of geopolitical hegemony through 'elite' texts such as policy statements, official speeches and directives. Aspects of popular culture such as television, film and literature have been identified as new sites for post-structuralist analysis, and central to the growth of a new geopolitical imagination (Dodds and Sidaway, 1994; Luke, 1994; Sharp, 1993; Jameson, 1992; Gibson, 1999a). Consequently, spheres of everyday life such as musical subcultures (and musical texts themselves) must be seen as part of the complex of media in which political tensions and debates about public sites are also played out. The control of local spaces, and youth subcultures in those spaces, constitutes the main area of focus for this article. It remains imperative to search out possibilities for studies of the intersection of power and space that engage with the discursive and the material - how ideology and hegemony are constituted in the codes of policy texts and forms of media and popular culture; and interact dialectically with everyday conditions and circumstances. Consequently, here we suggest ways in which media constructions of rave spaces have had some influence over government policies, surveillance practices and strategies for spatial 'control', as newspaper interests enact a 'reorientation of the position of the reader vis-à-vis the state' (Ethington, 1994:309) with regard to the regulation of youth activities.

Table 1. Media articles on 'rave' and dance cultures, 1988-1997						
Year	Newspaper	Section	Type Of Article	Date	page	title
1988	smh	front	e	3-Feb	9	Is ecstasy as fast as speed?
1988	smh	front	e	1-Jun	11	AFP officer on 'ecstasy 'drug charge
1989	smh	front	b/c	23-Jan	12	Check on party
1989	smh	front	b/e	8-Feb	4	Noah supplies leads on ecstasy and crack
1989	smh	front	e	14-Mar	2	$7 million haul of ecstasy drug in Sydney worries police
1989	smh	front	e	15-Aug	7	American for trial over ecstasy supply
1989	smh	front	e	2-Sep	4	Court told of cult disciples' drug deal
1989	smh	metro	m/?	15-Dec	3s	Don't be a dance party dag
1990	smh	front	e	12-Jan	4	Ecstasy abuse on rise, says agency
1990	smh	headline	e	6-Apr	1	Ecstasy of the deep: RAN sailors face drugs investigation
1990	smh	metro	l	6-Jul	1s,7s	Death of the dance party
1991	smh	front	e	6-Jun	5	A date Amanda didn't live to keep
1992	smh	metro	m	10-Jul	3s	No Illusions
1992	smh	front	h	16-Dec	10	Dance party rules under review
1992	smh	metro	m	24-Dec	3s	Jack Marx explores the mysteries of the 'rave' brigade
1993	smh	front	e	21-Apr	6	Marijuana is favourite youth drug
1993	smh	front	b/c	9-Aug	4	Dance party arrests
1994	smh	front	b/c	12-Apr	6	Rave parties get reprieve
1994	smh	front	m	13-Apr	13	Rave on, rave on, rave on...
1995	sun herald	n/a	xl	15-Jan	120,121	Rave Review
1995	sun herald	n/a	c	14-May	21	Council's vibes upset ravers
1995	smh	front	b	8-May	8	Police shoot man after rave party
1995	sun herald	n/a	h	18-Jun	134	Making agony out of ecstasy
1995	smh	metro	m	23-Jun	5	Tuned to the fashions of dance
1995	smh	front	e	27-Aug	5	US plans to sell legal ecstasy here
1995	smh	front	a	25-Oct	3	Charges after Ecstasy girl, 15,dies
1995	daily telegraph	headline	a	25-Oct	1	Teenager's tragic dance party
1995	daily telegraph	double spread	a	25-Oct	4,5	Anna's Deadly Party
1995	smh	headline	a	26-Oct	1	Parents' plea over the designer drug that killed
1995	smh	front	a	26-Oct	5	Ecstasy pill laced with hard drugs, say experts
1995	smh	front	c	26-Oct	5	Carr moves to close down dance club
1995	smh	front	e	26-Oct	5	What goes up can come down with a thud
1995	smh	agenda	xl	26-Oct	13	Lethal Cocktail
1995	australian	front	a/c	26-Oct	3	Carr crackdown on clubs follows ecstasy girl's death
1995	daily	headline	a	26-Oct	1,4	Ecstasy Agony
1995	daily	special report	a	26-Oct	4,5	The tragedy of Anna
1995	daily	front	a	26-Oct	11	A waste of life
1995	smh	front	e	27-Oct	15	We are failing out young people in drug education
1995	daily	front	a	27-Oct	4	My girl's story is not over/Secret signs of Anna's death
1995	daily	editorial	a	27-Oct	12	Drug tragedy all too familiar
1995	australian	front	c	27-Oct	4	Dance organisers hit back
1995	australian	opinion	a/e	27-Oct	15	Agony and pursuit of ecstasy
1995	daily	headline	e	28-Oct	1,4	Drugs 'Right'
1995	daily	front	c/e	28-Oct	4	Dance party club to face court/Booklet preaches choice on drugs/Another parent grieves a daughter lost to drugs
1995	daily	front	a	28-Oct	10	Philosophy that could be lethal
1995	daily	editorial	a	28-Oct	-	How society failed Anna
1995	smh	editorial	a	28-Oct	36	Anna's death causes soul-searching
1995	daily	cover story	y	28-Oct	28,29	Living for the dance

		(metro)				
1995	sun herald	n/a	a	29-Oct	28	The pill they rave about
1995	australian	editorial	a/e	28-29 Oct	24	Urgent need for drugs education
1995	australian	front	m	28-29 Oct	10	Ecstasy the key to high-energy rave scene
1995	daily	headline	a/e	29-Oct	1,8	Anna's Diary/Her death will not be in vain/ Home test shows teenage drug use
1995	daily	front	a	29-Oct	11	For Anna's sake, say no
1995	daily	front	a	30-Oct	14	Sister's drugs crusade
1995	daily	editorial	e	30-Oct	12	Ecstasy safer than alcohol/Policy on drugs 'misrepresented'
1995	smh	front	e	31-Oct	5	School anti-drug lessons to be reviewed
1995	daily	editorial	e/c	31-Oct	12	Ectasy's only trip: death/Dance blame unfair/Best way to battle drugs
1995	smh	headline	a	1-Nov	1,2	Anna: farewell to a young life
1995	daily	front	a/e	1-Nov	5	Drug trade as usual/Tears, rain fall on white roses
1995	daily	front	a	1-Nov	10	Teens' tears from the heart
1995	australian	front	a	1-Nov	6	Songs of sorrow for ecstasy victim Anna
1995	australian	editorial	e	1-Nov	16	Letting them think its OK
1995	smh	front	c	4-Nov	3	Bands attack threat to club
1995	daily	cover story (metro)	a/y	4-Nov	36,37	Three dead and a nation scarred
1995	sun herald	n/a	a	5-Nov	9	Ecstasy death: student forced out
1995	sun herald	front	c	5-Nov	13	Rave party for cops
1995	daily	front	a/y	5-Nov	8,9	Deadly toll on our young/Andrew-more than just a junkie
1995	smh	special report	e	6-Nov	15	Teenagers: the facts about drugs
1995	daily	front	a/e	6-Nov	34	We should No better
1995	australian	front	a	6-Nov	13	The agony and the reality
1995	smh	special report	e/xl	7-Nov	13	You never can tell.....
1995	smh	special report	e	7-Nov	1,3	Some seized drugs less than 1% pure
1995	smh	special report	e	8-Nov	9	Ecstasy, speed: tougher laws may cut supply
1995	smh	special report	e/l	8-Nov	19	The Hard Sell
1995	australian	Aust. magazine	xl	11-12 Nov	33-37	Pop is Dead, Long live Pop
1995	daily telegraph	front	a	15-Nov	9	This girl sold drug to Anna
1995	daily telegraph	front	a	15-Nov	30	Ecstasy teen fights for life
1995	smh	front	e	18-Nov	10	Dangerous impurities target of ecstasy team
1995	smh	front	c	30-Nov	5	Magistrate in row over rave party
1995	daily	front	e/ap	1-Dec	19	You won't find nirvana in a pill
1995	daily	front	e/ap	2-Dec	19	Confronting the drug threat to our children
1995	sun herald	headline	c	3-Dec	1	Police anger at rave party
1995	smh	front	a	5-Dec	1,3	Ecstasy case: magistrate warns media
1995	daily	front	a	5-Dec	15	Drug seller 'terrorised'
1996	smh	good weekend	xl	6-Jan	23-25	Rave new world
1996	smh	front	b/e	3-Jan	-	Ecstasy destined for party: police
1996	smh	front	e	19-Jan	3	Sting says legalise ecstasy, but the experts have doubts
1996	smh	front	a/y	22-Mar	17	Media mounts a witch-hunt on teenagers
1996	smh	front	a	30-May	3	Doctor links Anna Wood's death to taking ecstasy
1996	smh	front	p/b	5-Jun	10	Death case club faces cout
1996	smh	spectrum	a	15-Jun	12s	Teenage rebellion symptomatic of deeper ills
1996	smh	front	a	19-Jun	19	Anna Wood death: Coroner warns ecstasy users
1996	smh	front	b/e	22-Jun	17	Push to cut rave party ecstasy link
1996	australian	front	c	22-23 Jun	9	Water plan to keep dance raves cool

1996	smh	spectrum	e	29-Jun	11s	High-octane love in the chill-out room
1996	smh	spectrum	xl	24-Aug	1,4	The Techno Generation
1996	smh	special report	y	26-Aug	1	The generation that hit the ground running
1996	smh	special report	y	26-Aug	10,11	Wicked!
1996	daily	front	q	7-Oct	5	A $30 trip to hell
1996	smh	front	q	8-Oct	5	Internet recipes fuel experts' fears of increased drug use
1996	australian	front	q	8-Oct	3	Rave collapses not unusual: bouncer
1996	daily telegraph	front	e	8-Oct	3	New drug sold on Internet
1996	smh	agenda	q/e	9-Oct	15	Grievous Bodily Harm
1996	daily telegraph	front	q	9-Oct	11	Why they do it
1996	australian	front	q	12-13 Oct	10	Amphetamines gain foothold but ravers say dance is the drug
1996	sun herald	front	e	19-Nov	9	Drugs: top school acts
1996	australian	focus	y	7-8 Dec	26	Too Tuff on Teenage Crime?
1996	australian	tv and entertainment	m	11-Dec	17	Big league lags behind the beat
1996	australian	higher education	m	11-Dec	35	A philosophical dance stance
1997	smh	front	e	1-Feb	4	Baz takes Bob to task over censoring his craft
1997	daily telegraph	front	rj	1-Feb	11	Baz cut up at censor
1997	australian	front	m	12-13 April	3	Ravers spin new culture
1997	smh	front	c	23-May	-	New rave code to take agony out of ecstasy

Article descriptors		
Generalised articles about rave	**Related articles**	**Event articles**
b=brief	rj=rome and juliet	h=happy valley rave
m=medium	e=ecstasy	a=anna wood
xl=feature article	c=Carr/police	q=gold coast club
	y=youth	l=leah betts
		ap=anna wood project

Sources: The Sydney Morning Herald, The Daily Telegraph, The Australian, The Sun Herald, 1988-1997

Incorporating spatial agendas in media analysis

Table one illustrates a visual historical overview of representations of youth dance cultures in the Sydney press, which provided the data of 'discourse' in our study. The construction of a history of media representation of 'rave' (alongside other clearly associated terms such as 'ecstasy' and 'dance parties') involved an analysis of local broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph*, and the national broadsheet newspaper, *The Australian*, over a period of nine years between 1988 and 1997. The *Sydney Morning Herald Index* at NSW State Library Services enabled a complete analysis of the newspaper's coverage of rave subcultures from their conception in the public realm through to the portrayal of dance cultures in the late 1990s. Other sources were obtained through microfiche records of major newspapers.

The role of media production processes in the selection and representation of material in both broadsheet and tabloid press has been well documented in sociological literature (for example, Powell, 1993), and in the representation of rave by the Sydney press, many of these described processes are of profound influence. Journalists for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph* must work within an environment of competition and time limits, the necessity for 'newsworthy' material, institutional regulations and perceived audiences. The kind of authority given by the public to the different styles of newspapers also plays a particularly influential role in news production processes. The *Sydney Morning Herald* is considered to be a 'quality' newspaper with a more affluent readership that reports with fairness and accuracy and hence 'speaks to Sydney's dominant social groups' (Powell, 1993:xvi). The *Daily Telegraph* (owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation) in comparison, is Sydney's highest-selling paper, perceived as having a predominantly working class readership and tending to sensationalise news through the use of emotive techniques.

For the purpose of this study, news production processes play a secondary role to the part played by mass media in constructing normative social boundaries. The efforts of newspapers in the representation and continual process of production of public spaces have been crucial, as assumed 'public spheres' form the basis of a body of moral commentary on individual events in the city. As Sharp (1993:494) argues, common sense is a powerful tool used by media to simplify and solidify our understanding of the world - a vessel into which the arguments and representations of the mass media

are slid, in order to naturalise ideology beyond its constructed nature and appeal to a generic 'public sphere'. To build on Barthes' *Mythologies* (1973), 'because myth hides nothing its effectiveness is assured: its revelatory power is the very means of distortion...for the myth to work as myth it must seem entirely natural' (Lechte, 1994: 124). Media communication can entrench myth in relation to subcultures by setting up normative boundaries that define deviance, and politicise youth subcultures through this representation. This process has begun to be documented in subcultural writing, particularly Thornton's (1995) analysis of media representation of the development of youth subcultures, in which she argues that media coverage associated with moral panics about dance scenes is integral to the self-definition of rave cultures. Constructing notions of deviance and illegality, commercial media act not simply in opposition to youth subcultures, but are implicated in defining 'authentically underground' activities that further entrench subcultural practices and establishes patterns of 'subcultural capital'.

The tendency of rave subcultures to encapsulate ritual behaviour and politics within particular spatialities (and the physical and epistemological conflict that inevitably arises over these spaces) has only recently been incorporated in studies of dance cultures (see for example Chan, 1998a; Malbon, 1998, Homan, 1998). As Chan (1998a:96) states, 'it is more the combination of venue, music and people that creates the meanings' of dance events, rather than the music alone. Examining the politics of youth cultures involves not only the patterns of consumption of certain styles of music, but the social and spatial contexts of consumption. These sites in turn cannot be removed from symbolic and material struggles over the definitions and representations of spaces in cities. Thus far, debates over the representation of public spaces in media have largely occurred in quite different areas, such as in the field of environmental politics, examining the diverse and highly-politicised representations of environmental issues and conflicts, and human-nature interactions (Burgess, 1990:141; see also Burgess, Harrison and Maiteny, 1991; McGregor, 1998). Other research has focused on popular meanings constructed around urban open spaces (Burgess, Harrison and Limb, 1988; Routledge, 1997); spatial bias implicit in news production processes (Walmsley, 1980); and media constructions of masculinity and agricultural space (Liepins, 1996). To link these studies back to issues of youth subcultures in Sydney, an analysis of media representations of youth subcultures with respect to urban space gives insight into the dependency of social institutions upon the media for legitimisation. Anderson (1983) argues that the rise of the nation state coincided with the rise of print culture largely because it required a newspaper reading public to legitimate its implementation of control strategies. The operations of the

media are entwined in politics in this respect, as boundaries of meaning for 'youth deviance' are entrenched and to implement effective control strategies over the subversive spaces occupied by dance parties. The media wield knowledge as a form of power through understanding or 'decoding' the styles and spaces associated with dance subcultures. (For a comparative study within more 'conventional' geopolitics, see Meyers, Klak and Koehl, 1996). In order to understand rave spaces in Sydney, and how representations of youth activities have been created through media reports, it is necessary to trace the roots of the term 'rave' in Sydney's early news coverage.

Sydney's early rave scenes: from fashion to fascination

Sydney's rave subcultures found their genesis in 1988 and 1989 during the wave of ecstasy-influenced music that emerged from the Manchester (or 'Madchester') warehouse scene in the UK. These embryonic dance scenes in Sydney built upon large-scale dance parties which were held by the Recreational Art Team (R.A.T.) in the Hordern Pavilion (part of the former Royal Agricultural Society Showgrounds) throughout the 1980s. Other events were organised by Sydney's Gay and Lesbian community (the 'Sleaze Ball' and other parties associated with Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras), the meanings and styles of which increasingly 'spilt over' into mainstream crowds through commercially-orientated parties such as Bacchanalia, Sweatbox and Erasure, which attracted a more heterosexual and largely wealthy, inner-city clientele (Murphie and Scheer, 1992). These large-scale events, geographically central to the business district of Sydney, prompted the use of city spaces in semi-regulated environments. The lack of police surveillance of events at the time enabled dance parties to be held in fixed locations, such as the now-disused Hordern Pavilion, while still considered to retain an edge of subversiveness by its participants.

Many of the subcultural meanings associated with early rave culture were clearly English imports: styles of music, the emphasis on crowd participation rather than musical performance from a stage; subversive use of warehouse and other spaces, and discourses of Utopianism and the return of the 'summer of love' (Halfacree and Kitchin, 1996). These imports were partly a result of the active participation of British backpackers in Sydney's embryonic dance music scene. Murphie and Scheer, in their study of early dance parties in Sydney, characterise this appropriation of subcultural meanings from the UK dance scene as aesthetic and affective, creating a simulacra of a distant 'original', yet somewhat devoid of the radical, illegal, and vibrant intent of English warehouse raves. 'Rave' delineated a scene where "a diverse group of

designer bodies is involved in the pseudo-collective process of constructing a 'groove' which, in any event, takes place 'somewhere else' in the virtual space shaped by designer drugs" (Murphie and Scheer, 1992:180; Mitchell, 1996 to some extent reiterates these observations).   These affectations consequently represent at times an almost megalomaniacal appeal to a sense of internationalism, as sense of finally 'being on the map' of a global dance culture, despite the paucity of local dance artists or releases (cf. Harley, 1995).

These observations now seem somewhat askew at the turn of the millennium. Australian dance music is established as a major presence in youth cultures, despite the internal fragmentation that has characterised club and rave scenes; and large numbers of local DJs and sound systems are now turning to producing music (Chan, 1998b). Major overseas DJs and event promoters such as *Ministry of Sound* and *Decadence* tour Australia in the Southern Hemisphere summer, and concerns with Sydney's place in a world dance music network seem less intense than the 'cultural cringes' of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The ways in which musics from elsewhere allow local participants to create meanings out of space - in terms of the material practices associated with dance music, and the use of spatial narratives and advertising for events, also remains a crucial aspect of local dance cultures. While perhaps ninety percent of the dance music played on any given night in Sydney's clubs might be English, American or German, there is a sense in which participants do not identify the music with an 'authentic' origin - dancing becomes an act of consuming music in particular spaces, with a range of meanings attached to those performative experiences, rather than a passive act of simply listening to European dance music. Dance music's relative anonymity and placelessness, exacerbated by its emphasis on beat and bassline over lyrics, allows dance music experiences to be inscribed with meaning in localised places, as things that are popular in the UK become subversive, avant guarde, confirming differences not between English and Australian musics, but between dance subcultures and a wider, largely unaware 'mainstream'.

The word 'rave' wasn't discovered in the local press until the early 1990s. Up until this period rave subcultures, with their stylistic differences from the 1980s' clubbing scene, were often identified as a new trend in dance parties rather than through associations with illicit drugs or youth deviance. Ironically, reporting of the meanings and codes of 'rave' was limited to the *Sydney Morning Herald's* fashion pages. This earlier media coverage tended to treat this new dance party culture as a form of exotica, and directed their writing towards a younger, participatory audience with

articles such as 'Don't be dance party dag', providing a novice's guide to the etiquette - the 'ten commandments of cool' of dance parties. These 'how to be hip' articles, represented by the media as stylistic innovations in dance party culture, outlined some of the significant reasons behind the development of the early rave subculture in Sydney, parallel to the early British scene. The article 'Don't be a dance party dag', for example, outlines the kinds of (anti)social behaviour associated with scenes of clubbing and pubbing, of exclusivity and sexual aggression, to which rave was in part seen as a response (see *Sydney Morning Herald* 15/12/89:3s).

By the early 1990s police surveillance of these large-scale dance events had increased dramatically, with many venues such as the Hordern Pavilion under threat of closure due to noise complaints by residents, and suspicions by the NSW police of illegal drug use. The lack of suitable alternative venues to hold these events, and new rulings by the Liquor Administration Board about noise regulations, would be 'The Death of the Dance Party' according the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and perhaps even threaten the Mardi Gras, increasingly one of Sydney's premier tourist attractions (*Sydney Morning Herald* 6/7/90:7s). The conflict over the Hordern Pavilion as a dance party venue space, as represented in local media coverage, became a battle to retain Sydney's cultural distinctiveness, waged between regulatory bodies, and an assumed culturally-informed newspaper reading public sphere.

Simultaneously, alongside the growth of large scale dance parties, smaller, more subversive 'warehouse' raves organised largely by English backpackers and the local student population emerged in Sydney's inner city suburbs using spaces that were both unregulated and transient (Chan, 1998b). These spaces were distinct from the R.A.T. parties in that the geography of 'ideal' warehouse raves was continuously shifting, with the location of the event not being disclosed until hours before the event. Hakim Bey's (1991) theory on the Temporary Autonomous Zone has often been invoked by left-anarchist participants (in often decidedly romantic ways) to describe the political implications of this kind of mobility, as a sort of 'guerilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to reform elsewhere/elsewhen before the state can crush it' (Bey, 1991, 101). The spatial fluidity of these events made them more difficult for the media to access, and government bodies to regulate, consequently defining subcultural capital, and erecting 'boundaries' between it and other musical practices (such as the club's reliance on more regulated, standardised nightlife environments).

Meanwhile, the Sydney press was also engaged in entrenching subcultural meanings for 'rave', as subcultures themselves developed new spatial strategies. The term 'rave' began to appear in the local broadsheet papers in 1992 in relation to a perceived new and emerging youth subculture. The media began to explore the 'mysteries of the rave brigade' with a fascination distinct from the curious, fairly ambivalent approach taken to the large-scale dance parties of the late eighties. Rave in a sense was re-discovered in a more marketable form. The coinage of the term 'rave' gave the press a means to label and attach significance to what had previously been only seen as a kind of dance fad. The word itself became a selling point, as is evident by the plethora of articles playing on the term 'rave' that followed its discovery by the press; later to be replaced by references to the drug 'ecstasy' (see Table 1).

The growing warehouse party scene that had prompted this re-discovery of rave culture was slowly being made accessible through a dual process of commercialisation and media representation. Telephone numbers for access to 'secret' locations began to appear in articles about up and coming rave parties, as did guides to 'ravers shopping lists', opening up both the spaces that rave occupied, and the styles that identified it. The media also attempted to situate or locate this new subculture 'where common sense would have them fit' (Hebdidge, 1979:97), namely with regard to images of subcultural precedents from the 1960s and 1970s. Authoritative figures from within the subculture, such as DJ Spellbound tells the reader that he takes his dad to rave parties, 'like how dangerous can it be?' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 13/4/1994:13), while ravers are described as a kind of new age hippie, with their scene summed up as 'no sex, but drugs and rock roll' (*Sun Herald*, 15/1/1995:120,121). Despite the press interest in this new youth taste culture rave was represented as lacking 'real life gravity' and hence much of the 'rave review' that occurred in the media remained relegated to the specialised sections of the papers (Thornton, 1995:136). Associations made between the scene and illegal drugs such as ecstasy (which was later to provide the basis for a moral panic in the press) were significantly played down by the media at the time. Nonetheless, parallel headlines began to emerge such as 'rave review' and 'dancing with death', which mapped out the lines upon which a key discursive battle would later be fought. Some media supported the legitimation of rave spaces through a kind of 'domestication' of these subversive activities, yet at the same time ran negative stories to avoid appearing 'soft on drugs', a moralist battle-cry that would soon inflate around proposals for trials of medically-administered heroin in the mid to late 1990s in Sydney (see *Sydney Morning Herald* 15/1/95:120,121).

The role of the press in defining 'difference' from 'deviance' is starkly illustrated by the difficulties faced by politicians such as Vic Smith (a South Sydney local councillor) in gaining support for closer surveillance of these 'subversive' activities. Journalists even deliberately and pointedly misconstrued Smith's policy of condemning illegal rave activities, representing an apparently whole hearted support for the scene, taking his policy statement out of context and into the headlines: 'Its about young people having fun in safe environments' (see *Sydney Morning Herald* 13/4/1994:13). The *Sydney Morning Herald's* reporting of Smith's attempts to close down an illegal dance party put on by Vibe Tribe (an inner-city based collective of DJs and artists), constructed a sympathetic account in favour of the rave organisers, tapping on social concern about police violence with emboldened text such as 'blood was everywhere' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 14/5/1995:21)[2].

5. The agony of ecstasy: moral panic and the construction of social deviance

In similar ways to the reporting of 'rave' in Britain throughout the early 1990s, dance parties in Sydney eventually became associated with tropes of youth deviance and illegality - constructing rave spaces in the public consciousness as sites beyond the ambit of the mainstream, thus eliciting strong reactions, and calls for increased 'control' over events. Central to this was the appropriation of individual events as catalysts for shifts in the perceptions of the 'public sphere' toward which newspapers aimed articles – as newsworthy events unfurl, ideas of the readership as 'public sphere' (and in turn, 'public spaces'), are transformed. The ecstasy-related death of teenager Anna Wood (from Sydney's wealthy North Shore area) at an 'Apache' party in October 1995 resulted in an unprecedented wave of media attention and public panic that dramatically altered the nature of rave as a subculture, and its rave spaces within the public eye. The tragic circumstances of her death were magnified to unprecedented levels, particularly by the tabloid press, with the *Daily Telegraph* running front-page reports related to Anna's death for nearly two weeks. Local papers were filled with highly emotional images of Anna's grieving parents and school friends, such as the front page report 'Ecstasy Agony' run by the *Daily Telegraph* the day after Anna's death, appealing to 'touch the hearts' of Sydney residents, and

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[2] The 'Freequency' rave, held by the Vibe Tribe collective (April 8, 1995) was closed down after noise complaints from local residents. In the ensuing conflict with ravers, police used physical force to obtain access to, and thus silence, the sound system used to broadcast music on the night. An inquiry was later held into the incident that revealed unnecessary and inappropriate actions were taken by police in order to control the situation.

catapulting the portrayal of rave spaces to a national scale (see *Sydney Morning Herald* 26/20/1995:1,4). Over seventy articles appeared in a two month period, many of which were only partially related to the issue, thus linking images of raves to other unrelated news such as an incident in which two schoolgirls were murdered at around the same time: 'society was shaken [by Anna Wood's Death]. And Again.' (*Daily Telegraph*, 4/11/1995:36). Editorials were filled with supportive letters to Anna's parents, and cautionary advice to parents in general (*Sydney Morning Herald* 28/10/1995:36). The initial response of sympathy by the public to Anna's death turned into fear and anger that progressed 'from the site of tension and social anxieties, to the full blown social and political crisis' (McRobbie, 1994), which positioned 'rave' as scapegoat. Special reports such as 'Anna's deadly party' attempted to mystify rave as an ecstasy culture with its own secret language 'indecipherable to parents' (see *Daily Telegraph*, 25/10/1995:4,5).

The spaces in which rave dance musics operated and communicated, including both dance party venues and the street newspaper *3D World*, were represented as zones of subversiveness and mystique, 'Ecstasy's secret world' (*Daily Telegraph*, 27/10/1995). *3D World* was portrayed as a kind of modern day, seductive 'pied piper', riddled with explicit drug messages and 'secret' promotions 'attracting children as young as 14 to dance parties' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 27/20/1995:4). The hype surrounding these representations of rave resulted in a drug 'crusade' upon these spaces, with 'outsiders' observing rave events and reporting scenes of children as young as thirteen asking 'Can you get me some speed or eccy [ecstasy]?' (*Daily Telegraph*, 30/10/1995:14). This process involved the mobilisation of two distinct but commonly associated tropes in Australian media discourse: that of 'youth deviance' generally (see Powell, 1993 for comparative research), and the construction of public spaces as seductive, dangerous and addictive, into which young people are located (cf. Goheen, 1998). The death of Anna Wood was interpreted as 'but a symptom of the malaise affecting many young Australians' (*Daily Telegraph*, 5/11/1995:8), whilst 'the merchants of illegal drugs didn't pause in their evil trade' (*Daily Telegraph*, 1/11/1995:5), and the NSW state government 'acted rapidly to close the clubs and bars which have promoted drug parties' (*Sunday Telegraph*, 29/10/1995:11).

Ecstasy, the drug held responsible for Anna's death, had primarily been represented by the press in the past as belonging to the world of crime, delinquency and secrecy (see Table 1 for 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991). Yet, the 1991 ecstasy-related death of another seventeen-year-old, Amanda, a 'street kid from the wrong side of town', was given scant attention in the media, as 'the type of girl who did experiment with drugs', her death was seen more as an inevitability rather than a tragedy (*Sydney Morning Herald* 6/6/1991:5). In comparison, Anna Wood's death was a sign of much deeper symptomatic ills within society that threatened the viability of 'the family'. Special reports such as 'Anna's deadly party' attempted to mystify rave as an ecstasy culture with its own secret language 'indecipherable to parents' (see *Daily Telegraph,* 25/10/1995:4,5). Symbols used by dance culture such as smiley faces and the letter 'e' were imbued with subversive meanings by the press because of their reference to illegal drugs in a kind of 'semiotic guerrilla warfare' reminiscent of the of punk culture's appropriation of 'common' objects such as the safety pin (see *Daily Telegraph*, 25/10/1995:4,5; Hebdidge, 1979:105).

Meanwhile, the reaction to Anna Wood's death could also be interpreted as a moral panic that shrouded attempts to promote docility and domesticity in a general public – almost an attempt to make people 'feel at home' with suburban, consumptive lifestyles. Reacting to the incident, many authors of news reports framed their observations with incredulity - the act of raving, of dancing, of consuming illicit drugs, was seen as a mystery; why would young people engage in such activities, despite the 'just say no' anti-drug campaigns that operated throughout the 1980s in Australian media and schools? What was 'in it' for the people involved? Thus, rave spaces legitimated a call for a retreat to the domestic, to the safety of existing social relations, encouraging people to adopt 'a more passive demeanour, of showing less sociability, and of having less knowledge and confidence in their mastery of the public sphere' (Goheen, 1998:482; Sennett, 1994):

> It can make us realise that an ordinary life without too much drama or too many highs and lows is enough (*Daily Telegraph*, 4/11/1995:36).

Table 3. Common words in media articles, 1995	
Drugs	534
Ecstasy	237
Rave/Drugs in same sentence	97
Rave	97
Dance party	89
Heroin	48
Marijuana	42
Club	38
Illegal	30
Amphetamines	29
Speed	21
Victim	17
LSD	13
Dangerous	12
Techno	11
Cocaine	10
Illicit	9
Dancing	9
Morphine	8
Cabramatta	8
Underground	4

A closer textual analysis of media reports at the time illuminates the ways in which associations between rave spaces and key 'triggers' - words, phrases, terms designed to sensationalise these sites - are created, and the more subtle ways in which ideology is normalised, rendered invisible under the rubric of 'common sense'. We examined 55 media articles between October 25, 1995 and December 5, 1995, aggregating the occurrence of particular words and associations of words within sentences (see Table 2.). Unsurprisingly, the most common words to appear in these articles were 'drugs' (534 times) and 'ecstasy' (237 times). Nonetheless, it could be argued that rave spaces were also shaped through this discourse in relation to the association of the term 'rave' with others, close by in the same sentences, or as part of a wider syntax operating through the articles. Thus, 'rave' is mentioned ninety seven times in the articles as the site of these activities, dance parties are quoted eighty nine times and clubs are cited thirty eight times. Of these, the words 'rave' or 'dance party' were used ninety seven times in the same sentence as references to drug use. Curiously, words such as 'dance' (the central activity of raves) and 'techno' (the style of music that dominates raves and defines its subcultures) were mentioned rarely, if at all. Moreover, articles tended to conflate the words 'rave' and 'dance party' with other

highly loaded 'triggers' that have emerged from other unrelated issues. Heroin (a drug rarely, if ever used at raves) is quoted frequently throughout, and no references to specific sites occur, with the exception of the Phoenician Club (the venue at which Anna Wood is said to have consumed Ecstasy), and Cabramatta, a western suburb of Sydney rendered infamous in the Sydney press for its heroin trade (yet which is not at all recognised as a focal point in rave subcultures). Thus, rave spaces come to be defined in relation to drugs, they are inscribed as 'drug events', 'drug parties', as part of a 'drug culture' in broad public space, without reference to actual streets, parks, public buildings or city squares (*The Weekend Australian*, 28-29/10/1995:24). In these moments, the music is silenced, spaces erased of particular traits, the bodies of dancers are stilled, and are represented as conduits for the seductive hedonism of a consumptive drug experience.

In addition to the construction of rave spaces as drug arenas, a range of classically geopolitical terms are used in relation to these sites. Events are equated with 'danger' and 'secrecy', the growth of the rave scene is portrayed frequently as a 'crisis', meanwhile the activities of drug taking are described as 'evil' acts of 'terrorism', with drug-related deaths now being counted as part of a 'toll', as 'victims' fall. Meanwhile, social workers' attempts to educate young people about the practical effects of drug use are implied to be acts of 'drug pushing', as part of a reactionary and intensified 'drug war', a 'battle' manifest not only discursively, but in police raids carried out after the death of Anna Wood on various dance parties in Sydney.

The NSW Labor government initially responded to this moral panic through attempts to close the Phoenician Club that Anna had attended on the night of her death, and subsequent to this a crackdown on rave events in general. Where previously public support for the surveillance of dance parties appeared relatively lacklustre, Premier Bob Carr now promised to come down like 'a ton of bricks' on outlets that allowed underage consumption of alcohol or the use of drugs (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 26/10/1995:5). The legal action taken against the Phoenician Club is examined in detail in Shane Homan's (1998) study of the regulation of performance venues in Sydney. Homan illustrates, among other processes, the ways in which the Anna Wood death came to represent a range of wider social and political debates concerning the exercise of governance over youth spaces. These wider debates include continuing 'law and order' priorities of both major political parties in NSW (Australian Labor Party (ALP) and Liberal (conservative) parties), that resulted in the tabling of several legislative moves to restrict personal freedoms of young people (such as The

Summary Offences And Other Legislation (Graffiti) Amendment Bill 1994); and aesthetic debates on the value of dance music. Quickly following the death of Anna Wood, NSW Premier Bob Carr promised to remove the Phoenician Club's functions licence and cancel its liquor licence. Complaints of breaches to licensing regulations for registered clubs against the Phoenician were upheld as the 'Apache' events were not seen to satisfy definitions of appropriate 'cultural' or 'community' events. Here, as Homan demonstrates, rave spaces were defined as different than other forms of entertainment across NSW such as live bands, disco clubs and other music events that take place legally, in similar formats, under appropriate legislation for registered clubs. As he argues, 'If the Apache function were found to be against the public interest within the broader understanding of how clubs should be conducted, then all club functions with little of no apparent connection to the club's formative principles are, de facto, against the public interest' (Homan, 1998:64). Furthermore, rave spaces are represented as 'danger zones' that lure young people from idealised suburban backgrounds into their midst. The construction of Anna Wood as an 'innocent', 'served to confirm the extent of the raves-drugs 'problem' in emphasising subcultural appeal which transcended age and class barriers' (Homan, 1998:71), a problem now cast beyond the carefully-bounded realm of the rave itself. The politicisation of rave as deviant and subversive, and media representations of the effects of rave activities on 'average' Sydney families enabled the state to implement broader schemes of surveillance and control of youth activities, acting as a kind of connective strategy, which 'enlargens the influence of the state into the private sphere of the family, leisure, and everyday life' (McRobbie 1994:207).

The subcultural response to the negative press coverage of the rave scene after Anna Wood's death proved to be much more complex than the relationship between government entities and the media. Editorials in local papers often featured concerned ravers attempting to reverse the misconceptions build up by the media. Thornton in her study of the moral panics surrounding the rave scene in the British Press sighted negative press as the essence of subcultural resistance (Thornton 1995:137). Participants' condemnation of the media's representation of rave, Thornton argues, was also part of a fascination with their own representation. The number of ravers who keep collections of articles cut from local papers from this time period perhaps attests to a similar fascination on the part of the Sydney rave culture and its representation in the press.

Decoding the space- new strategies of surveillance and control

As the hysteria surrounding Anna Wood's death began to subside, tabloid papers tended to print articles about dance cultures only intermittently, and then only as adjuncts to the wider issues of drug law reform and as asides to sensationalised, conservative articles on the debates over heroin trials. Meanwhile, broadsheet papers began to re-visit feature articles about youth with particular reference to dance subcultures, forming part of a shift from reactionary tactics on the part of authorities (mainly expressed through events closures, some involving physical confrontation), towards containing subcultures within acceptable limits on the edges of society - *heterotopias* that wall-off deviant activities in sanctioned spaces. Accordingly, broadsheet coverage of the scene maintained a kind of curiosity, but with a subversive twist. 'World weary baby boomers' are granted access to this 'rave new world' as ravers shopping lists again appear in the press (see *Sydney Morning Herald* 26/8/1996:10,11 and *Good Weekend* 6/1/1996:23-25). This shift towards containment rather than opposition appears to have eased the commercialisation and incorporation of rave style into the mainstream through the growth of standardised club environments, what could be identified as 'privatised surrogates' of genuinely *public* spaces (whether these occur in open public spaces such as streets or in indoor venues considered part of the 'public sphere' – see Zukin, 1995). Many of these are based on the 'superclubs' in the UK, such as *Sublime* and *Home*, which utilise similar advertising campaigns to the *Ministry of Sound* or *Decadence*. This continuous process of commercialisation in may respects acts as a kind of catalyst for dance cultures that forces fragments of the scene back 'underground' to rejuvenate itself (Homan, 1998). 'Doof' music emerged in the inner-city area of Newtown as a reinvigorated local scene, its nickname established after a disgruntled and noise-affected neighbour caricatured the sound of thumping trance emanating from next-door (i.e. 'doof doof doof doof'). This term consequently spread, and is still in wide use in Sydney and on the north coast of NSW to describe dance events, despite being temporarily replaced in 1997 by 'Doof is Dead' parties when they too became associated with mainstream impulses within dance scenes.

The approach to control and surveillance taken by local politicians and regulatory bodies has also altered since the Anna Wood moral panic, departing from policies of suppression largely effected through closures. In May 1997 the *Draft Code of Practice for Dance Parties* was announced and later passed by the NSW parliament,

in part a legislative response to the media portrayal of raves, aimed specifically at dance parties and the spaces they occupied. This legislation, unlike previous attempts to control the 'deviant' aspect of the scene through closure, recognised the inability of the government to 'stamp out illegal drug use at parties' and instead aimed to 'make it safer for people who are taking drugs' (see *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23/5/1997). The now-enacted *Code of Practice for Dance Parties* primarily involves applying current health and safety codes to dance venues. A number of these safety requirements (such as the ability to freely obtain drinkable water) were applauded by members of the subculture as overdue measures to counter to the tendencies of increasingly profit-oriented promoters to neglect safety measures and encourage profits through sales of overpriced drinks. Meanwhile, the major criticisms of the *Draft Code* raised by both academics and many of the subculture's authoritative commentators included its application to both locally-produced, and commercially-orientated raves - its application ranging 'from 50 to several thousand people' (Peril, 1997; Homan, 1998). The costs of implementing the code's requirements (including such exercises as obtaining engineering and safety consultants to check and ensure the structural standards of the venue) would result in expensive ticket prices for small, locally-produced parties. For collective organisations such as Vibe Tribe, Jungle Punks, Beyond the Brain and Clan Analogue, whose commitment is to keeping the scene community-based and affordable (consequently implying the avoidance of the many legal, structural and formalising conditions imposed by the *Code of Practice*), its passage into legislation has been predicted to result in the closure of parties and the levying of heavy fines. It seems that the ability of governments to implement this strategy remains linked to the media's growing representation of the scene as a kind of 'legitimised deviance'. Whilst the 'moral panic' surrounding dance scenes may have subsided since 1995, raves continue to occupy sites of negotiated power, as these activities are normalised and gain acceptance in regulated and surveyed, yet also marginal, 'from a distance' spaces. Rave events are being incorporated within the structure of society as a legitimised space for subversive activities, as 'heterotopias of dissent' (Foucault, 1986:25). Thus, the *Code of Practice for Dance Parties* constitutes a form of 'decoding' - not of style, *but of space*.

Space beyond heterotopia: the end of the underground?

In this article, we have provided one account of the politics of rave spaces in Sydney. Through media analysis of the representations of dance cultures over a period of nine years, we have traced the twists and turns of an often-contradictory discursive trajectory. At various times, rave spaces have been identified as a curious object, with

feature stories giving 'insider accounts' into the scene and its markers of fashion and style; elsewhere moral panics have rendered rave spaces as seductive, dangerous, destructive. More recently, rave spaces have been constructed as heterotopia - accepted spaces of deviance located at the margins of, but at least in part sanctioned by wider society. These processes have culminated in the formation of the *Code of Practice for Dance Parties.*

The spatial strategies of control over rave spaces encapsulated in the *Code of Practice* undoubtedly mark a turning point in the nature of dance subcultures. Hebdidge's (1979) account of the incorporation of punk into the mainstream was captured through a decoding of style, styles that for punk cultures were interpreted as the essence of resistance. The decoding of rave spaces mimics the demise of punk in many respects. As we have briefly shown here, media moral panics and representations of dance venues (read as text) are dialectically reproduced in government strategies of control, and legislative responses to the subversive use of space. The commercialised and regulated events that will (by their very scale) be encouraged under the new *Code of Practice* are seen by many as the 'death of diversity', namely the death of an underground scene of low budget, experimental dance parties (Peril, 1997; Homan, 1998). Dance music is undoubtedly part of the fabric of Australian music at the end of the 20th century; whether these new heteoropic sites can retain the imagination and creative drive that has for a decade sustained youth subcultures remains to be seen. Foucault (1986) identifies some creative possibilities within the heterotopia with reference to the metaphor of 'the ship', whose spatial fluidity across social boundaries, while still remaining within the bounds of the state still holds an element of the subversive:

> The ship is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates (Foucault, 1986:27)

Many within the dance scene have articulated such optimism. For example, Special K, in an account of Sydney rave event 'Cryogenesis' (held on an island in Sydney Harbour) describes how the space within which the event was held was both an example of heterotopia, and also able to retain the subversive characteristics of the mythological Temporary Autonomous Zone. It is suggested that the nature of the space, arguably the most elemental requirement for a rave, can be preserved within the boundaries of the heterotopia (Special K, 1997). Similarly, there is a gradual movement of many of the elements of the underground into new 'spaces' outside of

the rave itself, in search for new zones beyond the heterotopia. The movement of rave musicians and collectives such as Clan Analogue, Organarchy Sound Systems and Vibe Tribe into cyberspace, where activities are organised within virtual spatial networks, has been lauded as a potentially creative arena for dance music (Gibson 1999b). These spaces constructed within the web may to various extents remain external to strategies of surveillance and control through state regulation.

Rave's perpetual search for significance in the underground is thus wrapped in the subculture's unique relationship with space and mobility, and its apparent attempts to achieve a more permanent 'emancipation', a kind of utopia, or truly autonomous space beyond place. The fundamental philosophical contradiction within the concepts of Temporary Autonomous Zone and heterotopia concerns the extent to which strategies of spatial mobility, as progressively radical features of youth subcultures, are forced to rely on evermore fixed, static spaces for their very survival. In turn, these spaces are then subject to discursive constructions in media and other public arenas. Foucault describes this contradiction through another metaphor - of the 'mirror'. The nature of these sites occupied briefly by raves is subversive, in that they invert the rule of the social (much as the mirror inverts one's reflection), yet they still remain grounded in the material spaces of the city. On this note, it remains to be seen whether media constructions of rave activities will continue to render public spaces as 'empty space, a space of abstract freedom but no enduring human connection' (Sennett, 1994: 375). For participants in youth cultures, the process of 'finding oneself' beyond Foucault's mirror, going 'through the looking glass' and into a utopian 'wonderland', therefore involves the discovery and acknowledgement of an absence in the place where we are.

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