

**RECORD HOPS TO RAVES:
AUTHENTICITY AND SUBCULTURAL CAPITAL
IN MUSIC AND MEDIA CULTURES**

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ABSTRACT

This PhD thesis explores the relationship between music and media by focussing on the cultural distinctions of British dance culture. Its main questions are the following: what are the changes in value brought about by the supremacy of recording over 'live' music? How are media central to the way youth imagine their own and other music-orientated social worlds? How are various media integral to the formation of youth subcultures? What are the principal axes of distinction in discotheque, club and rave culture?

These questions are investigated through multiple methods, principally participant observation and a detailed analysis of historical documents, relevant youth media texts and market research. The thesis both draws upon and interrogates Cultural Studies and Media Sociology scholarship to illuminate these research findings. The work on taste and cultural capital of the French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, is also employed and appraised.

The thesis comes to several key conclusions. British youth cultures have developed their own sub-systems of distinction, their own 'subcultural capitals', whose hierarchies relate to age, gender, race and class. The primary medium of music, recording, and the many secondary media which carry or cover music (from flyers and fanzines to prime time television and tabloid front pages) are integral to this cultural and social structure. They both construct community and mark boundaries. The perceived authenticity (or truth) and distinction (or prestige) of the music, the media and the crowd are the main axes of cultural value.

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INTRODUCTION

1. A NIGHT OF RESEARCH

Saturday, 22 September 1990

'Underland', London W8, 11 pm.

It's exactly eleven and I'm waiting for Kate.¹ We've never met before, but she knows I'm researching clubs and has promised to show me 'how to have fun'. The 'Hardcore Techno-House' of the dancefloor is just audible from here. With no vocals except for the odd sampled scream and few traditional instruments of any kind, it's a logical descendent of 'Acid House'. Two women police officers patrol on foot. Mostly same sex groups wear expressionless faces, walk slowly and deliberately until they've got past the door staff, then plunge down the stairs into the club. I feign uninterest because clubbing is the kind of activity that shuns official, parental, constabulary or even 'square' observation. Clubbers often voice antipathy towards the presence of people who don't belong and come to gawk.

A few minutes later, Kate jumps out of a black cab. She's energetic and her immaculately made-up eyes beam. Her brother runs this club, so she asks the doorwoman to 'sort us out'. The woman takes a pack of cards and hands me a three of diamonds, smiling: 'This will get you all the way.' We descend a flight of steps where a bouncer inspects my card, then ushers us in. The venue is plush, but transformed for tonight's club by large unstretched glow-in-the-dark canvases of surreal landscapes with rising suns and psychedelic snakes. The crowd, white and

¹ The names of participants and clubs have been changed. 'Kate' and I made contact through the letters page of the Face magazine. (cf Appendix)

working class, is still dressed in Acid gear (T-shirts, baggy jeans, Kickers) and just standing around, waiting for the dancefloor to fill. A boy, wired and talking a mile a minute, stops me in my tracks: 'Want some 'E'?' (He's referring to 'Ecstasy', the main Acid House drug.) He's eating his words and the volume of the music is such that I can only catch bits of his sales pitch: 'I got burgers and double burgers... 15 quid.'

We descend more stairs to the VIP room where another bouncer gestures for my card, then waves us in. This place is so restricted that, at this hour, there is no one here but the barmaid. But it's still early. We get a Coke and a mineral water and sit down. It feels private. Kate is very much at home. 'Tell me about your research then.' She's genuinely interested in my work, but also probing into whether I can be trusted. Her brother is one of the original rave organisers, who began by putting on parties in barns and aircraft hangars, then went legit, organising weekly rave-style clubs in venues around London. As Kate tells it, the police monitored all their parties from the beginning, but as soon as the 'gutter press' were hard up for a front page story the scene got out of hand: 'Kids, who shouldn't even have known about drugs, read about the raves in the Sun and thought, "Cor - Acid. That sounds good. Let's get some", and loads of horrible people started trying to sell swag drugs.'

During our conversation, the VIP room has filled up. Kate suggests I meet her brother who is sitting at the bar with a long emaciated blonde and a bottle of Moët and Chandon on ice. He is in his early twenties and wears a thick navy and white jumper, something which immediately distinguishes him from those here to

dance. Kate tells him that I've never taken Ecstasy ('Can you believe it?') and that we are going to do some tonight. He's not pleased. 'How do you know she won't sell this to the Daily Mirror?' he asks. Kate assures him that she's checked me out, that I'm all right. Later, they explain that they want someone to tell the 'true story' of Acid House and that they'll help me do it as long as I don't use their names.

Kate pours me a champagne and takes me aside. A friend has given her an MDMA (the pharmaceutical name for Ecstasy) saved from the days of Shoom (the mythic club 'where it all began' in early 1988). We go to the toilets, cram into a cubicle where Kate opens the capsule and divides the contents. I put my share in my glass and drink. I'm not a personal fan of drugs - I worry about my brain cells. But they're a fact of this youth culture, so I experiment in the name of thorough research (and confirm every stereotype of the academic subculturalist). Notably, there's 'Pure MDMA' for the VIPs and 'double burgers' for the punters. The jargon betrays Ecstasy's early history as a diet pill and the class connotations of its use today, not unlike the distinctions set up between McDonald's and 'no additives' health food.

'Millennium', London W1, 1 am.

Millennium is the kind of club which is not supposed to be mentioned in listings magazines but usually is. It imagines itself as entirely VIP chiefly because it's heavily into cocaine. At first, they won't let us in, but Kate uses her brother's name, and we're admitted for free. The crowd are older than average (mid-to-late twenties), expensively dressed and obviously concerned about who's who. This club

has little of the subcultural credibility of the first. In fact, it features several of the characteristics associated with the 'mainstream' much disparaged by serious ravers: there are women with handbags wearing high heeled pumps and the music is familiar, dance-oriented pop.

The club's organiser is famous for his early eighties New Romantic clubs. He looks sad. His face is pale and dry. Later, when I tell people I went to his club, they ask 'Is he still going?' The question seems to be written on his face. He's a has-been in a world whose fashions last six months and old in a world that fetishises youth. As we shake hands, he introduces me to a journalist who covers the club scene.

Dave writes regularly for a daily newspaper and a weekly music magazine. After a chat about sociology and some people we know in common, he pulls out a flyer for a rave in a church, suggesting I come along. The flyer is in the form of an elaborate card: its front cover displays a crest of a chicken dressed as a vicar holding a bible; inside are quotes from the new testament, various DJs and clothing designers. It's a charity benefit - 'strictly invitation only'.

'Cloud Nine', London WC1, 2:30 am.

Cabs are scarce, but we're finally in one, driving around looking at churches as the invite gives only a vague address. The driver stops and asks two police on their beat for directions. The policewoman peers into the back seat and asks, 'Are you going to see Boy George?' She's heard about this event and there is trace of envy in her voice. But her partner dutifully points the way - 'take your

first left, then second right' - to the fashionable event. This club scene sees itself as an outlaw culture, but its main antagonist is not the police who might *imprison*, but the media who continually threaten to *release* its cultural knowledges to other social groups.

St. George's is a neo-classical church on a main street. Nothing announces the club except for a few lights and a lone black doorman who, although he's a giant, looks dwarfed between the temple's columns. The DJ console is on the altar. The congregation dances, leans and lounges on pews. The all-male line-up of DJs are known as trend-setters; they play records before their commercial release and influence the sound of the national club scene. Some have their own radio shows or act as record company A&R men. While others are full-fledged 'artists' who have produced 'underground' dance hits and even No. 1 singles.

Dave and I get a mineral water for me and a Mexican beer for him, then go outside for an appropriate spot to lay out a line of coke. Like a lot of professional clubbers, Dave did two 'E's a day for almost a year. 'It was great,' he says as he uses the corner of his Visa card as a spoon, 'but then it started to screw me up.' Anyway, 'you can't get good "E" nowadays. Most people I know have quit.'

For the next hour or so, it's back and forth, between the drinks of the bar and the drugs of the dark outdoors. Dave is in a race of relatively inconspicuous consumption and each lap entails making our way through the dancers. They are 18-22, mostly white and 'beautiful'. Typically, the girls have dressed with more attention and elaboration than the guys. A few sport sixties-style bouffants and thick

eyeliner. The 'plus ones' (who got in as a guest of someone on the guest list) tend to be less outrageously clad, as their distinction lies not in their style, but in the fact that they are 'with him'. There is also a pack of arty media types, purposely less spectacular and less memorable.

Sometime after 4 am - time seems to be standing still - we venture into the VIP room in the minister's office behind the altar. It is white walled and spartan, with a desk, fireplace and bookshelves. The room is full of men who know each other - mostly DJs and club organisers - who are talking about good dance records and club events. I'm introduced to the operator of a Soho venue with a long-standing reputation for the hippest DJs, music and crowd. He tells me he's been running clubs since 1979. I could have guessed it - he seems to wear this history on his body. His blue eyes dart about like whirling disco spotlights and his conversation is a chaotic compilation of *non sequiturs*.

Drugs turn banal thoughts into epiphanies, and it is easy to see how club organisers, DJs and journalists - the professional clubbers - get lost within the excesses and irresponsibilities of youth. With no dividing line between work and leisure, those in the business of creating night-time fantasy worlds often become their own worst victims.

The lights come on. It's 6 a.m. The party's over. The remaining crowd mill around, confused about what to do with themselves, their pupils dilated, their minds 'blown'. Like Rock and Disco before it, Acid House supposedly democratised youth culture. On the dancefloor, it was said, everybody is welcome and elitism is out. Nevertheless, whatever their social background, this crowd is

interested in being a step ahead and a cloud above the rest.

The 'official photographer' of the event tells me Boy George never turned up and the church has to be cleaned for mass at 10 o'clock. The press weren't allowed in, but the church wanted some documentation of the fundraiser, so they hired him. 'Hilarious,' says Dave, 'what religion will suffer to stay in business.' The photographer tells us he has a few shots the Sun would pay dearly for, but he won't yield to temptation. He pauses and reconsiders - he could probably take a year's reprieve from his part-time job at the polytechnic. But no, it's beneath him. It would be 'bad faith.'

2. THE DISTINCTIONS OF DANCE CULTURE

This PhD thesis began life inside dance clubs and, from this base in participant observation, it could have pursued any number of themes. The social and sexual interaction of youth on the dancefloor is certainly worthy of substantive study. An analysis of the escape afforded by dancing, drinking and drugs or of the signifying styles of 1990s clothes and club design might also lead to striking conclusions. As time went by, however, I found myself less interested in these issues. What did continue to fascinate me were the judgements of value and gestures to cultural hierarchy made by the youth cultures that revolved around this site. Disparagement of the fake, the 'mainstream' and '*the* media' was prevalent amongst many different club cultures. Concern for authenticity and distinction seemed to be the norm.

It was with these issues in mind that I sought to supplement my ethnographic research with other methods and to explore the relevance of theories of cultural difference.² One set of distinctions revolved around the difference between *real*, *authentic* music and musical events, on the one hand, and fake and

² There is not much scholarship on discotheques and dance culture. What does exist comes from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, considers disparate issues from diverse theoretical and methodological points of view. As such, it doesn't constitute a *body* of literature *per se* and, for this reason, I offer no critique of it here. Instead, some books and articles are featured in the reviews of the literature which preface each section, while others are simply cited where relevant. For work on discotheques and contemporary 'first-world' social dancing, cf Back 1988; Blum 1966; Dyer 1992; Evans 1989; Frith 1981a; Gotfrit 1988; Griffiths 1988; Hanna 1988; Hazzard-Gordon 1990; Kopytko 1986; Krieger 1983; Langlois 1992; Lee 1988; McRobbie 1984 & 1993; Melly 1970/1989; Mungham 1976; Roman 1988; Rust 1969; Torp 1986; Wolfe 1968b.

disposable ones, on the other. While scholars have begun to make sense of the authenticity of 'live' music performances, little has been written about the authenticities that have accrued around records and recorded events. Moreover, few have explored the historical grounds in which these values were seeded. In pursuit of this problem, I began historical research into the rise of the discotheque and the decline of 'live' music for public dancing, finding that enculturation was a precondition to authenticity.

A second key distinction of club culture was between the 'hip' world of the dance crowd in question and their perpetually absent, denigrated other - the 'mainstream'. No matter what kind of club I was researching, whether it played House or Hiphop, Classic Disco or Chartpop, I never managed to find myself in the presence of the 'mainstream'. So I turned to market research to investigate this apparently silent majority - a resource which has the further advantage of charting the relation between cultural values and social differences, as it routinely classifies its data on music consumption and leisure activities by age, class and gender. My examination of this data generated a picture which contrasts with, as much as complements, my ethnographic findings.

The third main distinction I encountered amongst many different kinds of club and rave cultures was one between the 'underground' and a vague monolith called '*the media*'. The 'underground' was depicted as a renegade opposed to, and continually in flight from, a colonising co-opting media. In inquiring into this distinction, I turned my attention to those media which represented club and rave culture - from fanzines to the front page of the Sun and from pirate radio to Top of

the Pops. So, I brought a textual analysis of these media to bear on my ethnographic observations of the way media were crucial to the congregation of club crowds. This inquiry brought some surprises to light, principally, about the nature of the ‘moral panic’ around Acid House and about the role of the youth-oriented music press in the formation of subcultures.

The British dance scene is riddled with cultural distinctions. This thesis considers three of the principle ones. Each is the subject of a separate and self-contained chapter. My study of all three distinctions began in the empirical world of dance clubs, then moved through diverse methods to markedly different ways of thinking. This, in turn, led me to draw from and comment upon several discrete academic debates. With the first distinction between the ‘real’ happening and the non-event, good music and ‘naff’ rubbish, I engage in debates about authenticity and recording technology. With the second set of distinctions between the ‘hip’ and the ‘mainstream’, I consider the use of the concept of the ‘mainstream’ by sociologists and subculturalists and enter into debates about the social organisation of youth. With the third distinction between the ‘underground’ and *‘the media’*, I take issue with assumptions about an opposition between the media and youth subcultures and attempt to demonstrate the symbiotic relation between the two.

Though interdisciplinary and multi-methodological, the thesis is unified by its concern for the cultural values of the youth cultures that revolve around the site of the dance club. Each chapter contributes to a holistic (but not exhaustive) picture of the cultural and social hierarchies of dance culture.

Over the past two decades, there has been much productive inquiry

into the divide between high and popular culture and many studies of the 'resistances' of the popular to 'dominant' culture.³ Comparatively little attention has been paid to the hierarchies *within* popular culture. Although judgements of value are made as a matter of course, few scholars have empirically examined the systems of distinction and authentication that divide and demarcate contemporary culture, particularly youth culture.⁴

Studies of popular culture have espoused notions of culture as a *way of life* but spurned definitions of culture which relate to *standards of excellence*. (cf Williams 1976 & 1981) High culture is generally conceived in terms of aesthetic values, hierarchies and canons, while popular culture is portrayed as an oddly flat folk culture. One is depicted as vertically ordered, the other as horizontally organised. Of course, the people, from which 'popular' derives etymologically, are seen as discerning. They have likes and dislikes, but these tastes are rarely charted systematically as ranks or standards.

Not only have the meanings and structures of *popular culture* been set apart from those of *high culture*, they have also been excavated out from under *mass culture*. Academics have sequestered 'authentic' people's culture from mediated, corporate culture. Popular culture was said to be organic or grassroots - generated

³ Examples of the former include Huyssens 1986, Levine 1988, MacCabe 1986, Ross 1989, while cases of the latter include Hall and Jefferson 1976, Willis 1978, Hebdige 1979.

⁴ Feminist analyses are a general exception to this rule, but they tend to restrict their critique to the de-valuation of the feminine, cf McRobbie 1990 and Christenson and Peterson 1988. For broader considerations of youth's cultural hierarchies, cf Becker 1963, Polsky 1967, Frith 1981c, 1986 & 1987, Frith and Horne 1987 and Lewis 1990.

from below. While mass culture was an industrial product disseminated by the media from above. In this way, the popular was defended against the diatribes of 'mass society' critics. (cf Adorno 1968/1988) Moreover, in the case of youth, a subcultural segment could be seen as unambiguously active rather than passive, creative rather than manipulated. In practice, however, popular culture and mass culture are indivisible. British youth subcultures, in particular, are inextricable from media and commerce.

This study finds that, amongst British youth cultures, concern for truth (or authenticity) and prestige (or distinction) is significant and determining. Even in discotheques, one of the 'lowest' of contemporary cultural institutions, where outsiders have no doubt that cultural forms are disposable and homogeneous, hierarchies abound.⁵ Concern for cultural value and status is common in institutions seemingly devoid of them.

In my endeavour to make sense of youth's cultural hierarchies, I came to read the work of Pierre Bourdieu - principally his book, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste - and to draw upon his notion of 'cultural capital'. (cf Bourdieu 1984) According to Bourdieu, 'cultural capital' is knowledge accumulated through upbringing and education that both derives from and confers social status. It is the linchpin of a system of distinction in which cultural hierarchies correspond to social ones and taste is a marker of class.

But Bourdieu's model describes a total system which concentrates on

⁵ British adults (of whatever class or political persuasion) generally seem to classify discotheques below classical concert halls, museums, galleries, theatres, cinemas and even 'live' music venues.

the tastes of the middle aged, so amendment was required if the concept was to illuminate the culture of contemporary British youth.⁶ It seems to me that kudos in club and rave culture might be understood as 'subcultural capital'.⁷ Subcultural capital is the privilege of the socially young. It can be accumulated but not over a lifetime. It is a capital with built-in-obsolescence, which either gets converted into cultural capital proper (e.g. jazz was turned into 'PhD music')⁸ or depreciates in subcultural value (sometimes not without a fight, e.g. Bob Dylan). Of course, 'adult' cultural capital is also subject to obsolescence, but it isn't in-built, so to speak. Bourdieu characterises the *avant-garde* as the young bourgeois producing knowledges which will eventually become 'classic'. (cf Bourdieu 1986) But subcultural capital is different from this nascent cultural capital insofar as its main antagonist is not established art culture but mass culture and graduating up is not its standard route.⁹ *Subcultural capital* deteriorates with age and, in this way,

⁶ The empirical research upon which *Distinction* is based was conducted in France in the 1960s. Despite the fact that Bourdieu characterises the book as a 'sort of ethnography of France', its primary method of research was a questionnaire administered to a total of 1,217 subjects - something which makes it closer in method to contemporary, quantitative market research than qualitative, participant observation. (Bourdieu 1984: xi)

⁷ Age differences and aging in time seem to throw a spanner into the workings of class-based distinctions. Although youth subcultures are plainly within the field of 'popular aesthetics', they do not display the concomitant 'taste of necessity'. For a critique of the essentialism of Bourdieu's concepts, cf Frow 1987.

⁸ For an exploration of the meaning, uses and institutionalisation of new cultural capitals in America, cf Ross 1991.

⁹ Although the academic institutionalisation of cultural studies, media studies and studies of popular music may eventually change this, the avenues by which subcultural capitals are converted into cultural capitals would be different from those of the *avant-garde*.

maintains its status as perpetually 'young'.

As a result, subcultural capital is not as class-bound as cultural capital. After age, the social difference along which it is aligned most systematically is, in fact, gender.¹⁰ Girls and women often opt out of the game of 'hipness', refusing to compete and conceding defeat. They are inclined to identify their favourite music as Chartpop (rather than specialist genres), then defend their taste with expressions like 'It's crap but I like it'. In so doing, they acknowledge the subcultural hierarchy and accept their lowly position within it. Although many British girls and women refuse this defeatism, they tend to do so by distancing themselves from the feminine culture of 'Sharon and Tracy'.¹¹

The second main difference between subcultural and cultural capital is that the media is determining to circuits of the former much as the education system is crucial to the formation of the latter. Several writers have remarked upon the absence of television and other media from Bourdieu's theories of cultural hierarchy. (cf Frow 1987; Garnham 1993) But, with the distinctions of youth, the media is even more significant. Family and education are crucial, but their determinations are joined by those of a third institution.¹² Here, the media is not simply another symbolic good or mark of distinction (which is the way Bourdieu

¹⁰ Race and sexuality are also significant axes of difference as witnessed the complex and contradictory relationship between dominant straight, white 'hipness' and black and gay culture.

¹¹ This is discussed at length in Chapter II.

¹² For an analysis of the significance of art schools to the values of music culture, cf Frith and Horne 1987.

positions films and newspapers *vis a vis* cultural capital), but an organisation crucial to the creation, classification and distribution of cultural knowledge.

Nevertheless, subcultural capital operates in many ways like its adult equivalent. It can be *objectified* and *embodied*. Just as the piano displays cultural capital in a bourgeois home, so subcultural capital is objectified in the form of record collections and appropriate clothes. Just as cultural capital is personified in ‘refined’ manners and ‘standard’ accents, so subcultural capital is embodied the form of being ‘hip’ or ‘in the know’. Moreover, legitimisation is critical to the operations of both and cast as a problem of credibility and authenticity. As with cultural capital, concern for veracity and integrity is crucial to a system of subcultural distinction which claims to reflect substantial differences rather than hollow statuses.

This amendment of Bourdieu’s theory is a vital way to make sense of values and distinctions in British dance club culture. It acts as an organising framework which underpins the cultural and institutional analysis that follows.

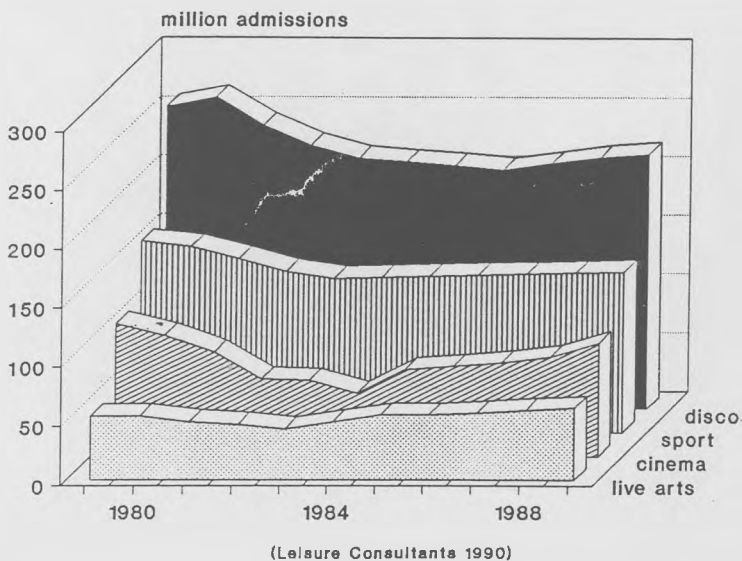
Before embarking on that analysis, however, I will consider the place of dance clubs within the larger context of youth’s social spaces and leisure activities. Why is the dance club so central to British youth culture? What are the appeals of the institution? How does it help define and fulfil youth’s cultural agendas?

3. BRITISH YOUTH AND THEIR SOCIAL SPACES

Clubs and raves have become the symbolic axis and working social hub of many contemporary youth cultures. They are places which bear witness to the apogees, the cultural climaxes and the excessive extremes of youth culture. Though not the most common out-of-home entertainment, they are often the first choice for a night out. The following section surveys the social spaces and media environments relevant to British youth as it is important background to understanding the cultural distinctions - the authenticity and hipness - of club cultures.

Table 1

Trends in entertainment 1979-1989

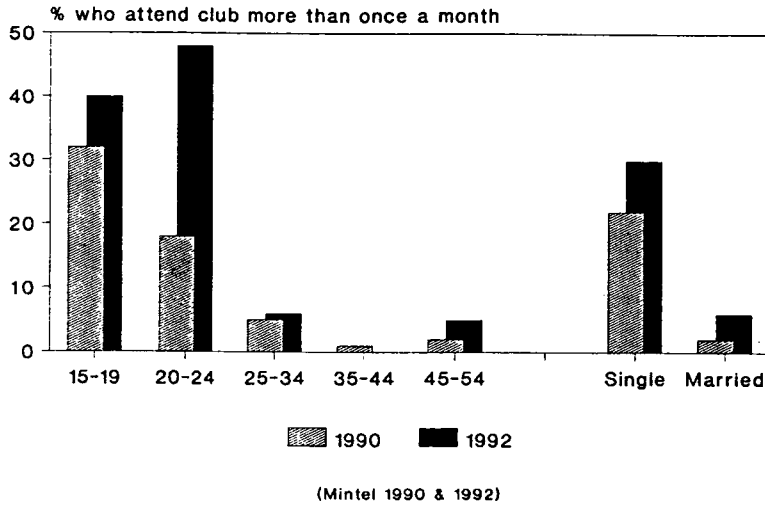


The scale of clubbing as a social phenomenon often goes unnoticed. Admissions to dances and discos are substantially higher than admissions to sporting events, cinemas and all the 'live' arts combined. Most of these dance attendances are made by a small core of aficionados who take on the name of the places they

patronise - becoming 'clubbers' or 'ravers'. Club cultures are cult cultures.

Table 2

Clubbers/Ravers By age & marital status



Going out dancing crosses boundaries of class, racial, gender and sexuality, but not differences of age.¹³ The most avid clubbers and ravers are between fifteen and twenty-four. The age boundaries of clubbing are tight, framed on the younger end of the scale by practical factors such as being allowed out of the house after 11 pm, having enough money to pay the substantial door fees, and successfully negotiating a loosely enforced drinking age of eighteen. A loss of interest in clubbing coincides with moving out of the parental home, which has

¹³ Table 2 measures nightclub attendance by age. 'Nightclub' is the term used by leisure industry to avoid the fashion connotations of words like disco, dance club or rave and convince share holders that such establishments are a reliable investment. When leisure companies report on the 'customer profiles' of their discotheques, they tend to legalize their demographics. *First Leisure plc*, for example, claims that 82% of their club goers are between 18 and 24 years old.

repercussions for young people's desire to get out of the house and escape the family. Most importantly, however, clubbing declines when people partner up in the form of living together or marrying. As the above graph demonstrates, single people are ten times more likely to be frequent clubbers than married people.

For a broad spectrum of British youth, then, going to dance clubs is an integral part of growing up. It is a rite of passage, which marks adolescent independence with the freedom to stay out late with friends, in a space beyond the neighbourhood which is relatively their own. Clubs allow their patrons to indulge in the 'adult' activities of flirtation, sex, drink and drugs, and explore cultural forms which confer autonomous and distinct identities.

The significance of dance clubs to growing up may be unique to Britain. In America, bars and clubs are important to the gay rite of passage called 'coming out', but are peripheral to heterosexual adolescence.¹⁴ In so-called 'Middle America' (i.e. straight, white, suburbia), learning how to drive and having access to a car offers the sense of freedom, mobility and independence that British youth find at clubs and raves.¹⁵ In Britain, fewer young people have a driver's

¹⁴ In being a haven with different rules of behaviour from the rest of society and in offering a focal point of community, gay clubs played a key role in the gay liberation movements of both Britain and the United States. cf Achilles 1967; Burton 1985; Delph 1978; Hooker 1969; Humphreys 1972; McCaskell 1979; Warren 1974; Wilson 1988.

¹⁵ In her study of Black American youth culture, Edith Folb argues that while the car remains a luxury item for teenagers from low income backgrounds, it is still significant to Black youth culture. Cars 'not only afford mobility and prestige, but they become total environments to themselves. They are literally like mobile homes.' This is accentuated by the practice of 'freaking off' cars, i.e. fixing them up and lavishly decorating their interior. (Folb 1980: 84)

licence, let alone access to a car. Car ownership is on the rise¹⁶; 'joyriding' is a juvenile crime new to Britain; and ravers are dependent on cars to the extent that the events sometimes take place in remote areas of the countryside. Nevertheless, British youth have yet to fully participate in 'driving' or 'parking culture'. The illicit activities of the back seat are vicariously understood from Hollywood films and American song lyrics, rather than from widespread experience.

One can make a parallel between cars and clubs in their respective national contexts. The centrality of the car to American leisure is the main reason behind a strictly enforced legal drinking age of 21. Conversely, the drinking age in Britain is seldom enforced at 18 - partly because British lawmakers don't have to worry about consequent road fatalities. As a result, by the age it is legal to go to clubs in the U.S., youth in the U.K. are starting to lose interest in the activity.

Just as British youth have less access to the 'home away from home' of the car, so they enjoy less personal space within the home itself. This is something that British youth in general have in common with American youth of the inner city in particular. Britain has a lower standard of living and higher population density.

Not only is there limited cubic space, the average British home enjoys less of the extensive if virtual social space afforded by the telephone. British youth are less likely to have their own extension, let alone their own line (which is an upper middle class norm in the US) and without that privacy, the phone is of limited

¹⁶ The number of households owning a car rose to 68% in 1989, while ownership of two or more cars increased to 20%. (Kinsman 1990: 43)

social use. Moreover, because one pays by the minute for local calls, the kind of social life where one spends hours talking to friends is prohibitively expensive for all but the most affluent. For this reason, young people's outgoing calls tend to be strictly regulated by their parents. (cf Silverstone and Morley 1990)

Youth often seek independence from the 'tyranny of the home' through their management of time. (cf Douglas 1991) Synchrony is crucial to the order and integration of the home. Youth therefore often adopt 'anti-social' strategies of time use such as schedules whereby they stay up late and wake up late to avoid parental scrutiny and control. Domesticity, in general, is anathema to youth culture.

It is not surprising, then, that youth watch less of that domestic medium, television, than any other age group (with the exception of infants). (cf BBC Broadcasting Research 1989) Moreover, youth television programming follows this logic of de-synchronization. Many youth-orientated shows are scheduled before and after prime time partly because, in single television households, youth can then watch alone, but also because youth are likely to be out in the middle of the evening. In fact, youth's absence from the home has led youth-orientated satellite services like MTV Europe to argue that ratings should take into account Out-Of-Home viewing when measuring rating youthful television watching. (cf Broadcast 14 May 1993; Marketing 13 May 1993)

A social space principally relevant to middle class youth is that of the campus. The campus is the cultural focus of a privileged but still substantial number of American young people, it has been accessible to many fewer Britons. The

residences, lecture halls, unions, cafeterias and other semi-public spaces of the college are still off bounds for the majority of British youth.

It is a commonplace of cultural studies that British youth are more subcultural than their American counterparts. For explanations, scholars have pointed to the rigidity of the British class system and the inaccessibility of higher education - both of which frustrate the possibility of social mobility, compelling male youth to divert their aspirations into leisure identities and subcultural style.¹⁷ These factors are undoubtedly determining, but the presence of centralised national media might also contribute.¹⁸ Compared to the USA, the UK has a preponderance of national rather than regional media and still has mass media which in the US have fragmented into niches. This media environment affects the way one imagines social groups: it engenders a strong sense of the mainstream and concomitant sense of difference.

British youth spend considerable time on the street. By night, young people often congregate outside pubs and clubs, and around hubs of public transportation. In fact, because late night buses are intermittent and tend to leave from a single square in the city centre, after-hours scenes develop at bus shelters where vendors sell hotdogs to youth on their way home, under the surveillance of bus drivers and police. Trafalgar Square at 3am on a Sunday morning, for example,

¹⁷ For comparisons of British and American youth which concentrate on differences in class consciousness and education, cf Mays 1965: 172-179 & Frith 1985: 326.

¹⁸ The relative ethnic homogeneity of Britain (95% white and 90% protestant) is also an important factor.

is worthy of an ethnography unto itself.

Eating out for British youth often means eating on the street, for high streets are more likely to have fish-and-chip and kebab take-aways than sit-down fast-food restaurants. This too relates to the high cost of space. Outdoor shopping is also a norm. Youth-oriented shopping streets (like Carnaby Street and parts of the King's Road) and weekend clothes-markets (like Camden Town, said to be the largest street market in Europe) are places for the spectacular congregation of subcultural youth. But limited opening hours means that these are daytime territories. The indoor malls, vital to the assembly of American youth, are relatively few and far between and close at 5:30 pm. As a result, they are less significant to British youth culture.

Although 16-24 year olds go to more films than any other age group, the cinema is relatively peripheral to the distinct culture of British youth. (cf Docherty et al. 1987) It is a significant option for an evening's entertainment, but it does not prevail over youth styles, tastes and activities.¹⁹ In the U.S., movies are probably more central to youth culture, first, because rates of cinema going are higher and, second, because Hollywood frequently depicts American youth. (cf Austin 1989) The much less prolific British film industry, however, concentrates on literary adaptations, period and 'art' films rather than 'teenpics' and, as a result, portrays British youth only sporadically. (For example, despite the impact of rave

¹⁹ Jon Lewis asserts that films are the 'principal mass mediated discourse of youth; a discourse that rather glibly and globally re-presents youth as a culture' and positions rock'n'roll as a 'corollary narrative'. (Lewis 1992: 2-3) This cinema-centric position results from Lewis's over-ambitious expectations of the conclusions one can draw from the textual analysis of Hollywood films depicting teenagers.

on British youth, there has been not been a single cinema release on the subject).

The cultural form closest to the lives of the majority of British youth is, in fact, music, rather than film or other media. Youth subcultures tend to be music subcultures. Youth television is to a large extent music television. (cf Frith et al. 1993) Youth leisure and identity often revolves around music. Even market research repeatedly finds that 'young adults are under a certain amount of peer pressure to keep abreast of trends in modern music which forms an important part of their active socialising with people of the same age group attending concerts, dances, pubs, clubs and "raves"'. (Mintel 1993)

One of the main ways in which youth carve out virtual, and claim actual, space is by *filling* it with *their* music.²⁰ Walls of sound are used to block out the clatter of family and flatmates, seclude the private space of the bedroom with records and radio or even isolate 'head space' with personal stereos like the walkman. The walkman often lends a feeling of autonomy and empowerment to the individual in the way it cuts wearers off from unwanted communication and distances them from their surroundings. (cf Hokosawa 1984) For this reason, portable personal stereos are used mainly by young people: 40% of 15-19 and 22% of 20-24 year olds listen to Walkmans, compared to 12% of 25-34 year olds and only 5% of those 35 and over. (Mintel 1993)

²⁰ Conversely, adults can make youth scarce by playing music that grates on their taste. In an attempt to deter teenagers from hanging-out in their stores, the American 7-Eleven chain began playing 'easy listening' music from loudspeakers outside their shops. Having experimented with many tactics, they found this method to be most effective. 'It really worked well,' said a spokeswoman, 'The kids found it was uncool to be anywhere near that kind of elevator music.' (Guardian 27 August 1990)

As meeting people is a prime motivation behind youthful leisure activities, however, communal listening is still paramount. Previously British youth subcultures might have found their consummate expression in 'live' music venues. But since Punk, increasing numbers of British subcultures have revolved around records as opposed to 'live' music. This has a complicated history which is recounted in Chapter I. Suffice it to say here that the long term decline of 'live' music and the slow rise of the discotheque in its many incarnations from record hops to raves, have led to a situation whereby the majority of British youth subcultures are in fact disc cultures.

Comparison with that quintessentially British institution, the public house or pub, is particularly revealing of the appeals of dance clubs. Although young people go to pubs more than any other place outside the home, pubs have not accrued the same symbolic or social significance of clubs and raves. (cf Mintel 1990) The reasons are manifold. Firstly, there is a simple legal determinant. Since 1964, having a dancefloor of a certain specification has been the cheapest and surest way to acquire a late liquor licence. As a result, dance clubs are one of the few spaces open when the pubs close at 11 pm in England and Wales, midnight in Scotland.

Secondly, pubs cross age and style boundaries, whereas clubs target youth, keep up with their fads and fashions by frequently changing their music playlists, decor, name, graphics and even location. Their adaptability is facilitated by the distinction between 'clubs', which operate on one night of the week, and their 'venues', the licence holding architectural spaces which they inhabit. By these means, permanent venues cope with fast changing fashions, try to avoid

identification with any particular scene, prolong their life and defer costly refurbishment.

Thirdly, pubs are continuous with their locality and tend to use the cosy decorative rhetoric of the home (often the Victorian home). Clubs, however, offer other worldly environments in which to escape, interior havens with such presence that one forgets time and place. Clubs achieve these effects with architecture, interior design, sound and lights - not to mention drink, drugs and the natural 'highs' of prolonged dancing. British clubs rarely have windows through which to look into or out of the club. Classically, they have long dark corridors punctuated by a series of thresholds - up or downstairs, past cashiers and cloakrooms - which demarcate inside from outside, private from public, the dictates of dance abandon from the routine rules of school, work, parents, teachers and employers.

In fact, so powerful are these feelings of 'liberation' that the most common argument about contemporary social dancing is that it empowers girls and women. (cf Blum 1966, Griffiths 1988, Gotfrit 1988, McRobbie 1984, Rust 1969) However, these studies suffer from over-politicising the field of leisure. They conflate the *feeling* of freedom fostered by the discotheque environment with substantive political rights and freedoms.

The latest incarnation of the discotheque - raves - further played with this sense of unique place. Raves are simply clubs that have moved out of traditional dance venues into new sites like warehouses, aircraft hangars and tents in farmer's fields. They are commercial parties in unconventional places. They had their genesis in Reggae sound-systems, blues parties and warehouse parties and their

decline as a result of legislation passed in July 1990, defining them as 'pay parties' which required special licenses. A main reason behind their appeal was their very illegality and sometimes just their perceived illegality, as many early 'Acid House' raves safely occupied a legal loop hole as long as they didn't serve alcohol. As one club columnist put it:

The best vibe came from the warehouse scene['s] strong criminal undercurrent... The unknown quantities, the illegality of the venue and the sense of danger all got the adrenalin pumping: the excitement then culminated in the joys of a mutual high... united under a banner of rebellion. (Soul Underground September 1990)

The frisson of transgression was fuelled by a 'moral panic', at least partly initiated by London Records, pursued by the subcultural consumer press, then covered by tabloids. In the wake of such sensational media coverage, raves took on mammoth proportions - with five, ten and occasionally even fifteen thousand people in attendance. Part of the appeal of raves then became the exhilaration of being involved in a mass movement, the excitement of making youth cultural history.

Fourthly and finally, in addition to the above functions, dance clubs facilitate the congregation of people with like tastes - be they musical, sartorial or sexual. Clubs have larger catchment areas, narrower demographics and taste specialisms than pubs. Through the use of flyers, listings, telephone lines and flyposting, club organisers come to specialise in delivering a particular crowd to a specified venue on a given night. To a large degree, then, club crowds come pre-sorted and pre-selected. The door policies which restrict entry are simply a last measure. If access to information about the club and taste in music fail to segregate the crowd, the bouncers will ensure the semi-private nature of these public spaces

by declining admission to 'those who don't belong'. Although clothes often act as the alibi, these policies are certainly ageist, classist, sexist and, most obviously, racist.

This institutional state of affairs is arguably the precondition for that oft-celebrated experience of social harmony, that thrill of belonging afforded by clubs.²¹ In other words, although some clubbers complain about the gate-keeping practices which assemble, construct and limit the crowd, these practices are undoubtedly a problematic part of their appeal. However, discriminatory admission policies are actually recommended by many local governments as a means of crowd control (and clubs need heed their suggestions if they want their licences renewed). For example, the now defunct Greater London Council was one of the few local governments to actually publish a code of practice for discotheques. It stipulated the following:

The type of person admitted to discos determines the standard conduct on the premises and the likelihood of violence occurring. Licensees should have a clear policy on the *sort of people* they want to see on their premises. Steps should be taken to *exclude anyone considered to be undesirable*. *Management can turn anyone away without explanation*. If in doubt they should refuse entry.

Management should have a clear policy on the following:

1. Type of dress permitted
2. Searching people at the door.
3. Whether there should be an equal balance of the sexes.
4. How drunks and *other undesirables* should be excluded.
5. Whether to keep a list of barred people.
6. Time at which admission to the premises ends.
7. Whether to adopt a price policy to discourage people who have been

²¹ Research into the importance of clientele in choosing a pub finds that explicit concern for the crowd composition is highest amongst 15-19s and declines with age. Not surprisingly, it also finds that singles are more concerned than married people. (Mintel 1988a)

drinking elsewhere from coming towards the end of the disco.

8. Whether to fix a minimum age of admission.

(G.L.C. 1979: 5; my italics)

Clubs, by popular demand and government recommendation, segregate. This segregation is sometimes condemned for being racist and elitist. Other times it is celebrated for guaranteeing subcultural autonomy and permitting subordinate social groups to control and define their own cultural space. The latter was theorised by subculturalists in the Birmingham tradition as a heroic 'winning of space' and resistant maintenance of subcultural boundaries. In Resistance Through Rituals, for example, Clarke et al. contend that subcultures '*win space* for the young: cultural space in the neighbourhood and institutions... actual room on the street or street corner. They serve to *mark out* and *appropriate* territory in the localities. They focus around key occasions of social interaction: the weekend, the disco, the bank holiday trip, the night out in the city centre'. (Clarke et al. 1976: 46; my italics)

There are at least two problems with this formulation. First, ideas of 'winning' and defiantly 'appropriating' mystifies the problem of youth and social space. To a large extent, places are 'won' when social groups are recognized as profitable markets. Venue owners hire club organisers (or club organisers hire venues) to target, promote and advertise to both 'rebellious' and 'conforming' youth.²² In the case of dance clubs and raves, their marketing has been most

²² Drugs, however, are a problem for venue owners, not only because the illegality threatens their licence, but because certain drugs (like Ecstasy rather than Cocaine) don't mix with alcohol and so threaten bar sales. Club organisers, on the other hand, are known to either peddle drugs themselves or, more frequently, to have lucrative agreements with dealers who sell in their clubs, partly because having a percentage of patrons on drugs is said to enhance 'atmosphere'.

successful when youth feel they have 'won' it for themselves. Second, discotheques may house alternative cultures, but they tend to duplicate structures of exclusion and stratification found elsewhere. Black youths, in particular, find themselves barred or more usually subject to maximum quotas. This on-going fact should not be forgotten in the face of the utopian 'everybody welcome' discourses in which dance clubs are generally enveloped. This is also true of large 'raves' which, despite their equality and harmony discourses, had distinct demographics - chiefly straight, white, working class and dominated by the lads. Raves may have trespassed on new territories for youth leisure, but they did little to re-arrange its social affairs.

As a semi-private, musical environment which adapts to diverse fashions, proffers escape (sometimes with added transgressional thrills) and regulates who's in and who's out of the crowd, the dance club fulfils many youth cultural agendas. Like youth subcultures themselves, the institution has mostly developed since the second World War and multiplied in kind and style since the seventies. In accommodating the social activities of a few fleeting years of youth, discotheques have become a lasting cultural establishment.

* * *

The thesis is divided into three chapters, each of which considers and contextualises a different cultural distinction. The first chapter considers the perceived authenticity or fraudulence of dance music and dance events. It considers the shifting credibilities of the recorded and the 'live'. It recounts an economic,

legal, technological and cultural history whereby the acts of recording and performance, to some degree, swap statuses: records become the original, while the 'live' becomes an exercise in reproduction.

In the second chapter, I investigate distinctions between the 'hip' and the 'mainstream'. The 'mainstream' is the phantom against which the *majority* of youth define themselves. What is the function of this discursive ruse? What social differences underpin this cultural discrimination? Rather than being historical, this section deals with the methodological problems involved in picturing the social organisation of youth, contrasting the findings of qualitative ethnography with those of quantitative market research.

The third chapter examines the distinction between the 'underground' and '*the* media'. Like the 'mainstream', 'the media' is a vague monolith against which subcultural credibilities and authenticities are measured. To be 'hip' is to be privy to esoteric 'underground' knowledges that are threatened by mass mediation. This chapter surveys media from club flyers and rave fanzines to prime TV and national newspapers. Rather than finding them divided and opposed, it discovers that diverse media are crucial to the continued definition and social organisation of the 'underground'.

I

DISCOTHEQUES:
THE AUTHENTICATION OF RECORDS

4. INTRODUCTION: AUTHENTICITY AND ENCULTURATION

Authenticity is arguably the most important value ascribed to popular music. It is found in different kinds of music by diverse musicians, critics and fans, but it is rarely analyzed and persistently mystified.²³ Music is perceived as authentic when it *rings true* or *feels real*, when it has *credibility* and comes across as *genuine*. In an age of digital reproduction and global mediation, the experience of musical authenticity is perceived as a panacea to alienation, manipulation and simulation. It is appreciated as a balm for media fatigue and an antidote to commercial hype. As a popular pleasure, authenticity is to music what happy endings are to Hollywood cinema; they are the reassuring reward for suspending disbelief.

While authenticity has been attributed to many different sounds, between the mid-fifties and mid-eighties, its main site was the 'live' gig. In this period, 'liveness' dominated notions of authenticity. The essence or truth of music was located in its performance by musicians in front of an audience. Needless to say, the ascent of 'liveness' as a distinct musical value coincided with the decline of performance as *both* the dominant medium of music *and* the prototype for recording. It was only when records began to be taken for music itself (rather than *records* in the strict sense of the word) that performed music really began to exploit the specificities of its 'liveness', like presence, visibility and spontaneity. The demand

²³ For articles that focus on authenticity in popular music, cf Averill 1989, Chambers 1990, Connor 1987, Frith 1981c & 1986, Gilroy 1993, Goodwin 1990, Grossberg 1992.

for 'live' gigs could be seen to be stimulated by the proliferation of reproductions which intensified the desire for the 'original' performer. Steve Connor contends that 'increasingly high fidelity reproduction stimulates the itch for more, for closer reproductions, and the yearning to move closer to the original'. (Connor 1987: 130)²⁴

During the same period, however, two sets of circumstances contributed to the formation of authenticities specific to recorded music.²⁵ The first relates to changes in music production. Initially, records transcribed, reproduced, copied, represented, derived from and sounded like performances. But, as the composition of popular music increasingly took place in the studio rather than, say, off stage, records came to carry sounds and musics that neither originated in nor referred to actual performances. In the 1960s, with the increased use of magnetic tape, producers began to edit their wares into 'records of ideal, not real, events'. (Frith 1987: 65) In the 1970s and 1980s, new instruments like synthesizers and samplers meant that sounds were recorded from the start. Accordingly, the record shifted from being a secondary or derivative form to a primary, original one - a condition particularly true of quintessentially recorded genres like Disco, House and

²⁴ As Andrew Goodwin argues, in the age of digital reproduction, aura has been transferred from the art object to its maker; it has taken up residence in the physical presence of the star. (Goodwin 1990: 269) This extends Walter Benjamin's argument that 'cult value does not give way without resistance. It retires into an ultimate retrenchment: the human countenance'. (Benjamin 1955/1970: 227-228)

²⁵ Lawrence Grossberg's distinction between old-style authenticity and postmodern 'authentic inauthenticity' could be seen to correspond with my contrast between 'live' and recorded authenticities. But, as Grossberg's distinction rests upon rather vague general 'sensibilities' and is not grounded in concrete processes of either production or consumption, one cannot be sure. (cf Grossberg 1992)

Techno.

In the process of becoming originals, recordings accrued their own authenticities. Contrary to Walter Benjamin's predictions about art in the age of mechanical reproduction, then, recording technologies have not corroded or demystified 'aura' as much as dispersed and re-located it. (cf Benjamin 1969) For example, degrees of aura are attributed to *new*, *exclusive* and *rare* records. In becoming the source of sounds, records have undergone the mystification usually reserved for *unique* art objects. Under these conditions, it would seem that the mass-produced cultural commodity is not necessarily imitative or artificial, but plausibly archetypal and authentic.²⁶

The second set of circumstances crucial to the development of authenticities particular to records relates to changes in music consumption. Records were not simply absorbed into a static system called popular culture. Nor did they automatically replace performance just because they resembled and reproduced music. Records had to undergo a complex process of enculturation, which involved transformations to the circulation, structure, meaning and value of *both* records and music cultures.

Discotheques played an important part in the process of enculturation. The gradual integration of records for public dancing is signalled by the institution's

²⁶ The inversion of the relationship between original and copy, performance and disc, is perhaps most aptly demonstrated by the proliferation of 'cover' bands from the 1950s to the late 1970s. These 'live' groups reproduced the tunes of latest hit records and were evaluated on the basis of their proximity to the original record, hence band names like 'Disc Doubles' and 'Personality Platters'.

changing names.²⁷ The *record hops*, *disc sessions* and *discotheques* of the 1950s and 1960s specifically refer to the recorded nature of their entertainment. In the 1970s, transition is signalled with the shortened, familiar *disco*. In the 1980s, with *clubs* and *raves*, enculturation is complete and it is 'live' venues that must announce their difference.

The ultimate end of a technology's enculturation is authentication. In other words, a musical form is authentic when it is rendered essential to subculture or integral to community. Equally, technologies are *naturalised* by enculturation. At first, new technologies seem foreign, artificial, unauthentic. Once absorbed into culture, they seem indigenous and organic.²⁸ Simon Frith has been most productive in analysing the ideologies of subcultural authenticity crucial to music culture. (cf Frith 1981c, 1986, 1988a) Frith argues that new music technologies tend to be opposed to nature and community. They are considered false and falsifying and, as such, threaten the authenticity or the 'truth of music'. (Frith 1986: 265) Behind the

²⁷ Despite their great variety, discotheques have evolved a conventional relationship between recorded music, social space and dancing audiences which is appropriately called an 'institution'. Curiously, there is no legal definition of a discotheque. Although a dancefloor is one means by which to acquire a special hours certificate, neither Liquor nor Entertainment Licensing Laws offer a definition. Similarly, although both Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) and the Performing Rights Society (PRS) license the institution, they do so within vague and varied categories. PPL include discotheques within 'specially featured musical entertainment' (as opposed to their other category of 'background music') by which they mean 'any locations where records are used to draw in the public specifically'. (Letter from PPL, 7 March 1989) PRS has five classifications under which they list discotheques: most are catalogued as 'clubs', but some are 'discotheques in hotels, restaurants and cafes', 'mobile disc jockeys', 'public houses' and 'youth clubs'.

²⁸ McLuhan's description of media technologies as 'extensions of man' aptly describes the *naturalness* of a technology when it is fully enculturated. (cf McLuhan 1964)

ideological oppositions, however, lurks the fact that technological developments make new concepts of authenticity possible. In the early days of the microphone, for example, crooners were said to have a pseudo-public presence and betray false emotions. Later, however, the extended intimacies of the microphone became a guarantor of new forms of authenticity; 'it made stars knowable, by shifting conventions of personality, making singers sound sexy in new ways... moving the focus from the song to the singer.' (Frith 1986: 270) Similarly, when first introduced, electric guitars were said to alienate music from its folk roots. Later, however, when fully enculturated by Rock culture, they became the aural stamp of Rock credibility. Records have taken an analogous, if more circuitous route, to become the authentic musical instrument of club and rave culture.

Today, records have been enculturated within the nightlife of British dance clubs to the extent that it makes sense to talk about 'disc cultures' whose values are markedly different from those of 'live' music cultures. "What authenticates contemporary dance cultures is not a unique music performance, but the buzz of excitement or overall positive feeling that clubbers call 'atmosphere' or 'vibe'." Clubbers congregate around DJs but they are not the object of the crowd's gaze, nor personalities or performers *per se*. "Liveness" is displaced from the stage to the interaction of DJ and dancefloor. The dancers are the *de facto* performers and the crowd becomes a self-conscious cultural phenomenon - one which generates moods immune to reproduction - for which you had to be there." This is even more pronounced when it comes to raves, the latest incarnation of the discotheque, which are conceived as one-off rather than weekly events, some of which have attained the

status of unique happenings on a scale that was formerly the lone preserve of the 'live' Rock festival.

Between the production and consumption of records, two kinds of authenticity are at play. The first kind of authenticity involves issues of originality and the aura of unique objects. While the second is about being natural to the community or organic to subculture.²⁹ These two kinds of authenticity can be related to two basic definitions of culture: the first draws from definitions of culture as Art, the second relates to culture in the anthropological sense of a 'whole way of life'. (cf Williams 1965 & 1976) With 'live' music ideologies, the two authenticities collide (and are often confused) at the point of authorship. Artistic authenticity is anchored by the performing author insofar as s/he is assumed to be the unique origin of the sound, while subcultural authenticity is grounded in the performer insofar as s/he represents the community.³⁰ Within disc cultures, however, the two authenticities diverge. The record is an authentic source and the crowd makes it a 'living' culture. DJs bridge the gap insofar as they are professional collectors and players of 'originals' as well as mediators and orchestrators of the crowd, but not to the extent that they are the primary seat of authenticity. (cf Table 3)

²⁹ This distinction roughly correlates with Walter Benjamin's distinction between economic and religious authenticity. One has commodity value, the other cult value. (cf Benjamin 1969)

³⁰ An important version of subcultural authenticity concerns national, racial and ethnic purity. Gage Averill examines the significance of being native born and truly national (*'natif natal'*) to the perceived authenticity of Haitian music. (cf Averill 1989) While Paul Gilroy considers the trans-Atlantic circulation of discourses about racial roots and 'authentic blackness' to the meaning of post-war popular music. (cf Gilroy 1993)

'Live' and disc authenticities complement one another in many ways. Both emphasize the cultural importance of being genuine, sincere and trustworthy and both seek to elevate their cultures above the realm of mass culture, media and commerce. Moreover, much popular music is entangled with both sets of values. Bands like the Rolling Stones are caught up in the logic of disc culture even if the dominant strains of their myth are about Mick Jagger as dramatic performer, Keith Richards as virtuoso guitarist and a legacy of gigging and 'live' stadium shows. Similarly, even hardcore disc cultures, like House or Techno, espouse residual variants of 'live' ideology, celebrating star producer-DJs and singing divas, who sometimes even tour the country doing 'PAs' or 'personal appearances' at clubs and raves.³¹ 'Live' and recorded authenticities are therefore not mutually exclusive categories, but part of a continuum.

Table 3

AXES OF AUTHENTICITY

	'LIVE' CULTURE	DISC CULTURE
<i>Authentic Aura/Art:</i>	Performing musician is origin.	Sampled & 'real' sounds combined in studio. Record is authentic source.
<i>Value:</i>	Unique	New, rare, antique
<i>Authentic to Subculture:</i>	Musician represents community. Audience commune with musician-star.	DJ and crowd interact through records to create unique happening.
<i>Site:</i>	Stage	Studio/Discotheque

³¹ Aurally, the stronghold of 'live' aesthetics is in the grain of the 'real' voice. cf Section 9.

The development of disc cultures, the enculturation of records for dancing and the cultural ramifications of the supremacy of recording are key issues here. Most academic work on recording technology examines its effects on production, in either its industrial or artistic guise. The main currents of debate consider whether it is democratising or hierarchising, rationalising or disruptive of production processes, commodifying or challenging to legal definitions of property, inhibiting or enabling of new creativities and sites of authorship.³² While this chapter touches upon these issues, it concentrates on the less investigated relationship between recording technology and consumption.

Each of the following six sections considers a different component in the enculturation and ultimate authentication of records for public music culture. The first two sections (numbers 5 & 6) are political economies; they examine the economic incentives and legal constraints behind the public use of records. Discotheques are part of an industrial revolution in music which led to new occupations (like disc jockeys) and new concepts in cultural property (not just *copy* but *performance rights*). The first section traces the economically-determined routes by which records entered the field of popular entertainments, tracking the rise of the records and decline of performance in certain kinds of time and place. The second considers some of the obstacles to the spread of records by focusing on the

³² This rich body of work includes: Austin forthcoming, Cutler 1984, Durant 1991, Eisenberg 1987, Frith 1987a & 1987b & 1988b & 1992a, Gelatt 1977, Goodwin 1990 & 1992a, Hayward 1991, Kealy 1979, Laing 1986 & 1990, Langlois 1992, Middleton 1990, Mowitt 1987, Negus 1992, Porcello 1991, Qualen 1986, Read & Welch 1976, Straw 1990, Struthers 1987, Theberge 1989 & 1991.

campaigns of the Musicians' Union, their exploitation of rights' legislation and deployment of an ideology of 'live' music.

The last four sections focus on social and cultural issues. The public acceptance of records for dancing was slow, selective and generational. For many years, records were considered a form of entertainment inferior to performance. They were not seen as appropriate ingredients for important rituals, special occasions or major events. They were not the 'real' thing and they didn't afford an authentic musical experience. Records were subject to degrees of estrangement, acceptance and approval, slowly embraced by audiences of disparate ages and classes. Section 7 examines how the social spaces of dancing changed to accommodate recorded music.³³ It considers how the new social alliances and architectural designs contributed to the eventual subcultural authenticity of records. Section 8 focusses on how record formats were modified in response to their increasing public use and how the status of DJs shifted accordingly.

Section 9 explores the specificities of recording and the kinds of music most at home with the medium. It considers how changes in the way popular music was recorded and disseminated contributed to transformations in the meaning and

³³ Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley identify four overlapping phases in the process of a technology's integration into the home: *appropriation* (by ownership); *objectification* (within the decorative space of the home); *incorporation* (into the temporal structure of everyday lives); and *conversion* (into topics of conversation and cultural bonds). (cf Silverstone et al. 1992) By analogy, these categories illuminate important dynamics in the enculturation of records into the public sphere of dancing. For example, I discuss something like 'incorporation' into temporal structures in section one and 'objectification' within the space of the dance hall in section three. Moreover, their category of 'conversion' is an important aspect of what I call 'authentication'. Clearly, however, a model generated by study of domestic contexts cannot be mapped directly onto the public domain.

value of records and ponders why certain music genres came to be perceived as quintessentially and authentically recorded while others did not. Finally, Section 10 looks at changes to the shape and meaning of the 'live' gig during the period in question. It identifies two seemingly contradictory trajectories. On the one hand, performances increasingly exploit those features which might distinguish them from records, retrieving spontaneity, making a theatrical happening, magnifying the presence and personality of the star. On the other, many performers adopted high technologies and pre-recording to entertain the massive audiences they had accumulated through records, radio and other media. How do the authenticities of the 'live' and the recorded work in this context?

This history and sociology of disc culture challenges three main assumptions about the determinations of techniques of reproduction. First and most fundamentally, it demonstrates the significance of enculturation as a complex material and ideological process. Many theorists of media technology have overlooked enculturation. For instance, Marshall McLuhan underestimates the issue because he sees media technologies as already cybernetic 'extensions of man'. (McLuhan 1964) And, Jean Baudrillard ignores the distinct statuses and effects of techniques of reproduction because he assumes that technologies which *simulate* are not in need of any form of *assimilation*. (Baudrillard 1983a)

Second, the history of discotheques can be deployed against another main hypothesis about record technology, namely that it necessarily privatises or domesticates music consumption. In his book The Recording Angel, for example, Evan Eisenberg reduces his otherwise compelling argument about the art of

‘phonography’ because, for him, ‘a record is heard in the home’ and its tendency is essentially private. (Eisenberg 1987: 99) Shuhei Hosokawa’s discussion of the Walkman, for another example, slips into positioning the personal stereo as the culmination of recording’s relentless logic of individuation. (cf Hosokawa 1984) By ignoring broader contexts, these theorists fail to see the contradictory effects of music technology and the diverse significance of recorded music. Recorded music is as much a feature of public houses, shops, factories, elevators, restaurants and karaoke bars as it is an attribute of the private home.³⁴

Third, the picture that emerges from this history of discotheques and dance cultures throws up substantial evidence against the idea that recording technology engenders cultural homogenization. Recording technology implicitly informed Theodor Adorno’s conviction that the primary characteristic of popular music was a standardisation that aimed at standard reactions. (Adorno 1968/1988) While disciples of Adorno, like Jacques Attali, continue to contend that mass reproduced music is ‘a powerful factor in consumer integration, interclass levelling, cultural homogenization. It becomes a factor in centralization, cultural normalisation, and the disappearance of distinctive cultures’. (Attali 1985: 111) But, the discotheque is an institution which caters for neither individual nor mass consumption, but the collective consumption of the small group. Rather than homogenizing tastes, dance clubs nurture cultural segmentation. Where, say, broadcasting (rather than narrowcasting) crosses borders and unites, clubs maintain boundaries and fragment.

³⁴ cf Ogawa for a sociological paper on karaoke in Japan.

In addition to engaging with these debates about recording technology, the chapter also enters discussions about distinctions of cultural value. Its main contribution could be seen as providing a more concrete framework from which to examine issues like authenticity, analyses of which are often awash in vague sensibilities and muddled terms. It attempts to anchor issues of cultural value in concrete historical and sociological ground.

5. ECONOMIC TRENDS AND RECORD ROUTES

Records were selectively enculturated into music culture: they moved from the private to the public sphere, from background accompaniment to specially featured entertainment, from minor occasions to momentous events, from modest locations to prominent places. Where 'live' music used to animate social occasions and cultural events of all kinds, recorded music now often performs the function. As a result, musician performances have declined in number and retreated to the fringes. This section pursues the economic logic behind the enculturation of records.

When sound recording technology was introduced in the late 1870s, Thomas Edison proposed many uses for the new invention, few of which suggested its entertainment value. His recommendations revolved around the notion of a 'talking machine' which could facilitate dictation, record telephone messages, record books for the blind or create family albums for posterity. (cf Read and Welch 1976) Edison mentioned, but did not give much credence, to the phonograph's potential as a 'music box'. Within thirty years, however, music would be the staple noise of recording.

Dance crazes, in particular, stimulated the early record business and repeatedly revived it in times of recession. In the 1910s, for example, dance instructors like Vernon and Irene Castle were important advisors to record company Artist and Repertoire departments (who decide who to sign and what material to record). They supervised records catering to the mania for tangos, one-steps, waltzes and walking dances. Even on the eve of the first World War in 1914,

Columbia and Victor's dance cylinders and discs were selling well. (Gelatt 1977: 189)

From its inception, then, one of the main activities of the record industry was the provision of music for dancing, but it was mainly devised for home consumption, for practising dance steps and throwing parties in the private sphere. Throughout the 1920s, sound quality improved, particularly as a result of the introduction of electrical recording. This, combined with the increasing variety of musical material, singers and orchestras offered on record, made the medium more attractive. In the United States, the public performance of records on coin-operated phonographs or 'jukeboxes' kept the industry afloat when domestic sales dried up during the depression. To 'juke' or 'jook' is an African-American expression meaning 'to dance'. (cf Hazzard-Gordon 1990) That the coin-operated phonograph took this name illustrates the importance of dancing to American out-of-home record-play at this time. In the UK, however, where the depression took a different form, the jukebox did not significantly penetrate the public sphere until the fifties and sixties, and recordings did not tend to be an attracting feature of out-of-home entertainment.

During the twenties, radio quickly became a dominant source of music, most of which was broadcast 'live'. The most popular programmes featured big dance bands playing for an audience of ballroom dancers as well as for those at home. (cf Frith 1987) Record companies saw radio as a problem of competition and did not send their recordings for promotional purposes. When the first BBC radio programme devoted to records began in July 1927, however, its impact on sales was

so obvious that record companies began to actively pursue air-play to the extent of buying plays on commercial continental stations like Radio Luxembourg. By the 1930s, argues Frith, radio was central to the new processes of record selling and star making which came with the shift in the commodity status of music:

The form of that commodity was irrevocably altered from live to recorded performance, from sheet music to disc, from public appearance to public broadcast - and its control passed from one set of institutions (music publishers, music hall and concert promoters, artists and agents) to another (record companies, the BBC, stars and managers). (Frith 1987: 288)

While it is undeniable that recording took over from publishing as the leading arbiter of musical taste and style, some qualification is required of a historical shift 'from public appearance to public broadcast'. Radio unseated the primacy of the family piano rather than challenged the dance hall; it re-arranged domestic consumption (in a way the gramophone had not done) and re-defined 'public', rather than instigating a massive withdrawal into the home.

During the thirties, recorded music was peripheral to out-of-home entertainment with one crucial exception - the cinema. Before the 'talkies', a large portion of Britain's professional musicians were employed to accompany silent films. But within eighteen months of the box-office success of The Jazz Singer (1927, the same year as the BBC's first record show), most of these musicians were out of a job and performance had received its first great blow. The development, however, was crucial for the record industry as movies would become a vehicle (additional to radio) for the international promotion of records. In the fifties, for example, the cinema would bring Rock'n'Roll attitudes and music to Britain with the film Blackboard Jungle and its closing track 'Rock around the Clock' by Bill Haley and

the Comets. By the late 1950s, the mutual marketing of movies and discs would be so entrenched that the album charts would be full of film soundtracks.³⁵

Aside from cinemas, recorded music could be heard in pubs, restaurants and coffee bars to the extent that, in the early 1930s, the record industry began to take a financial interest in the public performance of their product. The Copyright Act of 1911 was regarded as protecting manufacturers against the unauthorised copying, as opposed to playing, of their sounds; it established a reproduction, not a performance, right. Nevertheless, record companies started to affix labels stating that the record should not be publicly performed and in 1934 they sued Cawardine's Tea Rooms in Bristol for copyright infringement.

Previously, the companies had been explicitly unconcerned about public performance. In 1909, they told the Copyright Committee conducting research for the Copyright Act of 1911 that 'when a person has bought a phonogram he should be entitled to play it in public and not merely in his private room.' (McFarlane 1986: 133) In the Cawardine case, these earlier statements were overlooked and the record companies won the rights to the sound contained in their recordings and set up Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) to license the

³⁵ As 45 singles were the youth format in the 1950s, the soundtrack albums were not predominantly rock'n'roll. The biggest sellers South Pacific (1948), Love Me or Leave Me (1955), Breakfast at Tiffany's (1962) and The Sound of Music (1960) still tended towards 'family entertainment'. In the 1960s, a good percentage of both Elvis Presley's and the Beatles' albums were marketed as 'original soundtracks' (e.g. Elvis' GI Blues 1960 and Blue Hawaii 1961, the Beatles' A Hard Day's Night 1964 and Help 1965). By the end of the decade, the best selling soundtracks would also be youth-oriented due to the juvenilisation of film audiences (cf Doherty 1988) and the rise of the album format among youth with rock. The success of Simon and Garfunkle's soundtrack for The Graduate in 1968 can be seen as the turning point here.

broadcast and public performance of their records.³⁶

Until World War II, records tended to provide background accompaniment to leisure activities; they were rarely the main entertainment at large public events. Due in part to further improvements in technology, but primarily to the devastated condition of the British economy, the public performance of records increased dramatically during and after the War. The Musicians' Union (MU) was particularly concerned about the use of records for dancing as the bulk of their membership worked in dance bands. In 1949, the cover of their in-house journal, Musicians' Union Report, bore the watchwords 'Recorded Music or You!' and inside the Secretary General warned:

Probably the greatest threat from recorded music to the employment opportunities of our members exists in the field of casual dance engagements. There is abundant evidence that in recent years more and more dance promoters have availed themselves of the services of the public address engineer. In almost every town the man who runs the radio shop, or specializes in the provision of public address equipment, will undertake to supply recorded music for dances or other social events at a small proportion of the fee a good band would charge. (Musicians' Union Report September-October 1949)

At the beginning of the fifties, the introduction of vinyl records in the form of the 33 rpm LP and the 45 rpm single facilitated the public use of records, not only because they had superior sound quality, but because they were more portable, lighter and less breakable than 78s. Nevertheless, until well into the

³⁶ The discrepancy was later noted in the 1952 report which served the basis of the Copyright Act of 1956. There, the committee found it difficult to accept that 'after selling his wares for a price which he himself has fixed, the record manufacturer was thereafter justified in controlling the use to which they were subsequently put... This principle, if applied generally in trade, would produce astonishing results...' (McFarlane 1986: 134) Nevertheless, the right was upheld by the 1956 Act.

1970s, performing musicians were preferred to records in most instances. In his business autobiography, Kevin Donovan tells of opening a discotheque called The Place in Hanley near Stoke-on-Trent in 1962. Although it had a capacity of 500, it received between ten and fifty patrons per night until he started booking 'live' bands.

As the owner explains:

The good people of Stoke-on-Trent had decided there was no point in paying to hear records which were played on the wireless for nothing... We were taught our first major lesson in promotion - give the public what THEY want. If you want to advance your own ideas, these must be solidly hooked to an established and accepted aspect in order to attract any audience... The format was decided, we would become a Discotheque which also provided Live music. (Donovan 1980: 14)

In general, records infiltrated the public sphere from the least profitable through to the most lucrative hours of the week. In the 1940s, it became standard for records to be played between the main band's sets (replacing the second support band) at all but the most extravagant or *aficionado* of dance gatherings. In the 1950s, there was a proliferation of lunchtime Rock'n'Roll record hops. In the 1960s, most disc sessions, whether in 'live' venues or discotheques, took place early in the week.³⁷ In the 1970s, records began to dominate the 'prime time' of out-of-home entertainment on Friday and Saturday nights. Not only that, in certain circumstances, 'live' music effectively became the interval between record sets. For example, musicians on the Northern Soul disco circuit tell of being hired to play

³⁷ For example, The Scene, a well-known Mod discotheque, had exclusively recorded entertainment on only Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights. Their schedule for a week in 1963 looked like this: Monday: Guy Stevens' *R&B Record Night*; Tuesday & Wednesday: *Off the Record* with Sandra; Thursday: Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds; Friday: Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames; Saturday: Bill Woods Combo; Sunday: Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds. (New Record Mirror 2 November 1963)

very early or very late in the evening (when the venue was empty) to fulfil PPL licence agreements. (cf section 6) When they did play at the height of the evening, however, patrons used the performance as an opportunity to take a break from dancing and get another drink. (Alan Durant in conversation, 1989) By the late 1980s, the relationship between performance and recorded entertainment had been reversed; live music was relegated to the beginning of the week where profit margins were not expected to be as high, while DJs and discs were the main attraction on the weekends.

Just as dancing to discs progressed through the structure of weekly leisure time, so records were selectively assimilated by diverse premises at different rates. Records first got a foothold in schools, community centres, youth clubs, town halls and other locations with low budgets. From non-profit premises, records moved to commercial ones - starting out small in basements, as extensions of coffee bars and as additional rooms to established venues. Only in the 1970s and 1980s, did the leisure chains start converting their ballrooms into large-scale discotheques.

Like cinemas, dance halls suffered from the post-war migration to the suburbs and consequence that people only ventured into the city-centre on the weekend. (cf Docherty et al. 1988) As one ballroom proprietor explained, 'the housing estates moved out of town, so then the youngsters went to record hops run in small halls near their homes. They only bothered with dance halls once a week. We can't afford to keep going on one night only.' (Melody Maker 6 June 1959) As a rule, only city centres had catchment areas sufficiently large to sustain big dance bands. (cf Thomson 1989) Whereas 'mobile discotheques' took a place in the leisure

of suburban and rural youth, well before they were called such.

By substantially cutting costs, records improved the profit margins and turnover of dance establishments internationally. Through the 1960s and 1970s, this was regular 'news' in relevant trade magazines: for example, 'Gabriel's Lounge in Detroit installed a discotheque - the club is able to sell drinks at only a nickel above other neighbourhood tavern prices, but 15 and 20 cents below prices charged by clubs with live entertainment.' (Billboard 20 March 1965) In fact, one jukebox manufacturer ran a hard-sell advertising campaign stating that they 'pre-programmed profits into their records'. (Seeburg ads in Billboard 1965)

The big boom in investment in permanent discotheque facilities followed the Top 40 chart achievements of Disco music and the box-office success of Saturday Night Fever. Disco, a music made specifically for discotheques, signalled the extensive and durable presence of the institution. Particularly after the media exposure the genre received on the coat-tails of the film soundtrack³⁸, Disco music and discotheques became a 'revolution' rather than a 'fad' in entertainment.

As Music Week wrote in 1978:

the disco revolution in America has not been equalled since rock exploded in the fifties - and it will happen here too... the rock takeover, the disco takeover... We're in the midst of a British club boom. More discos have opened their doors in the past month, it seems, than during the rest of the year. Many are following an All-American format. (Music Week 16 December 1978)

Leisure chains (like Rank, Mecca and First Leisure) and breweries

³⁸ Saturday Night Fever was the biggest selling album in international history (until 1983 when it was superseded by Michael Jackson's Thriller). Interestingly, the film premiered at Cannes, not at the film festival in May, but at MIDEM, the annual music industry convention, in January 1978.

(like Whitbread) adopted rolling programmes of refitting and refurbishing. (cf Disco International 1976-1984) When Disco music went out of fashion, pubs and dance halls continued to be converted and discotheques purpose-built. As the first discotheque trade magazine, which began publication in 1976, wrote: 'It's comforting to predict that as America's disco dinosaur becomes extinct, the social bedrock of the British disco is as firm as ever.' (Disco International December 1979) Through the 1980s, the quantity and capacity of discotheques, now called dance clubs, continued to increase. And, records became the source of music for larger and larger events to the point where they entertained stadium-size crowds of 10,000 and 15,000 people at raves.

The development and spread of discotheques is part of a general re-location and re-positioning of 'live' music. Before the second World War, the majority of Musicians' Union members were employed to play at dances of one sort or another. Today, few British musicians make a living from dance engagements. 'Live' dance halls dwindled in number and deteriorated in condition; some were restored for the use of devoted ballroom dancers, but many (if not already transformed into discotheques) were converted into bingo halls or simply closed. The economics of music is such that 'live' music is only profitable in a circumscribed set of conditions, and dance venues are no longer one of them.

Despite the resilience of 'live' ideology, it is reasonable to assume that the public presence of professional popular music performance has receded in recent years. The closure of 'live' venues have periodically spurred panics about a decline in 'live' music. In the seventies, the Rainbow Club was on the brink of

closure for several years and became a symbol of the threat discos posed to 'live' music in London. (cf Melody Maker and New Musical Express, 1973-1975) Recently, the threatened closure of the Town and Country Club spurred similar outcries:

Live music in London is in crisis: audiences are down, venues are changing hands at an alarming rate and many promoters are being forced to rely on club DJs instead of bands... the decline of live music is a national phenomenon... there is a whole generation out there which isn't being encouraged to go to gigs... (Time Out 3-10 April 1991)

The expense of 'live' music is not only one of musician labour, but one of the investment in the technologies of 'liveness', of instruments, amplification, MIDI and sound engineer controls, and in the large crews of roadies and technicians needed to move and operate it. From this point of view, discotheques, even lavish ones, are a sensible capital investment.

That 'live' music has become marginalised is perhaps best demonstrated by the fact that, in many British towns, 'live' venues are subsidized by local councils and student unions. In the 1990s, the Barbican in York, the Leadmill in Sheffield, the Junction in Cambridge and the Waterfront in Norwich were owned, operated or subsidized by local councils. Particularly outside London, universities host the largest share of middle-sized gigs, as college students now make up the core audience for 'live' popular music.³⁹ This circuit of council and college venues tends not to be populated by established acts, but by emerging ones. At this level, 'live' gigs offer short-term cash to musicians and small profits for student

³⁹ The audience for 'live' music is unambiguously biased towards men and university students. (cf General Household Survey 1986; Youth Surveys 1988)

unions. Most, however, would not exist without record company 'tour support' who invest in gigs because they are seen to build fan bases, establish markets and promote records.⁴⁰

One 'live' circuit which is lucrative, if high risk, is the arena and stadium concerts of the established Pop and Rock act. This sector would not exist if it were not for the massive audiences generated by recording and other media. Here, tours are again sponsored by record companies (who use the events as news for media and marketing campaigns), but also by advertisers of soft and alcoholic drinks, youth designer items and the like. While promoters of this sector (and there are not many in this league) make money from ticket prices, the bulk of revenue for the band comes from sale of merchandise like T-shirts and posters. Although merchandising had been around since the 1960s, it was not until the 1980s that it became integral to the economics of touring (and part and parcel of developing an artist) to the extent that acts now often sign merchandising agreements at the same time as they sign recording contracts.⁴¹

All this is not to argue that 'live' music is dead, but that it is no longer economical in many of the circumstances it was previously. Much 'live' music is made by unpaid amateurs and semi-professionals. Performance is an

⁴⁰ Ironically, the only obvious exception to this rule, was the Australia imitators of Abba, Bjorn Again, who played more university gigs than any other act in the academic 1992-93 year. But even they had a single to promote.

⁴¹ The landmark legal action through which artists gained the copyright to their image was against a company producing unofficial Adam and the Ants merchandise. Some bands like James and Inspiral Carpets have become wealthy by 'self merchandising'. (Applause May 1991)

enjoyable hobby for many pub musicians, buskers, church choirs and brass bands. (cf Finnegan 1989) However, some bands in this category, who aspire to a recording contract but need to be heard in the appropriate venue first, may find themselves paying the venue for the privilege of performing. These 'pay for play' situations usually take the shape of 'ticket deals' where the band buy fifty tickets then sell them to friends.⁴²

Over the past forty years, records have supplanted musicians as the source of sounds for most social dancing and contributed to the re-location and re-definition of 'live' music in general. This section has rather single-mindedly explored the technological and economic determinations behind the shifting public presences of recording and performance. But, although financial matters are crucial to understanding the enculturation and ultimate authentication of records, they offer only one perspective on the story. The next section focusses on the part played by copyright law and trade union campaigns on the pattern of assimilation.

⁴² The Musicians' Union persistently campaigns against this practice.

6. MUSICIAN RESISTANCE AND 'LIVE' IDEOLOGY

The enculturation of records was not in the interests of all. Firstly, the idea was not exactly enticing, at least not at first, to the majority of dancers. Secondly, dancing to discs ran counter to the professional interests of musicians, whose Union were the first (and for a long time the only) body to see the practice as a serious (i.e. alarming) cultural development. At the outset, the Union wanted to eradicate the practice; later they were satisfied with regulating it; after that, they were appeased by receiving a percentage of the millions accrued in performance rights; finally, they resigned themselves to the fact that recorded music was what people wanted. Throughout this forty year period, however, the Union reinforced their legislative efforts with 'propaganda' about the superiority and authenticity of 'live' music.

In the late 1940s, the Musicians' Union came to the first of many agreements with Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) to attempt to combat the public use of records. As musicians were hired *to perform* by dance hall operators and *to record* by record companies, the Union was able to impede the use of records by the former through the exploitation of rights agreements with the latter. Since its formation by an association of record companies in 1934 (after winning 'performance' rights in the Cawardine's Tea Rooms court case, as already discussed in section 5), PPL had been authorizing the use of their records simply in exchange for a licence fee. From 1946, however, they began licensing establishments on the condition that 'records not be used in substitution of a band or orchestra or in

circumstances where it would be reasonable to claim that a band or orchestra should be employed.’ (Musicians’ Union Conference Report 1949)

Differences of intention and interpretation arose between the trade union and the record industry association almost immediately. The Union saw the agreement as part of an ambitious initiative whereby ‘the performance of every record [could] be controlled and ultimately used for entertainment in the home.’ (Musicians’ Union Conference Report 1951) PPL, on the other hand, favoured less constraint because increased use of their copyrights meant more income for their members. Typical of their negotiations was the compromise about the practice of playing records between band sets: the MU demanded no recorded interval, while PPL thought this unreasonable. They eventually agreed that future licences would limit recorded intermissions to a total of twenty minutes - a stipulation that would be difficult to enforce. (Musicians’ Union Conference Report 1954)

Licensing restrictions were the driving force behind one of the first examples of the production of records specifically for public dancing. In 1950-51, Danceland Records produced ballroom numbers in standard arrangements on 78s. The objective of their records was not to provide continuous music nor fill the dancefloor (as would later be the case with the ‘Little LP’ and the 12-inch single) but to circumvent existing copyright law. They advertised their records for use in ballrooms, hotels, theatres and skating rinks and urged proprietors of these establishments to join the fight against PPL licensing restrictions.⁴³ (Musicians’

⁴³ As their recording sessions were held in Mecca ballrooms, the MU rumoured that the dance hall chain financed the project.

Union Report 1951)

In 1956, a new Copyright Act clarified the properties of the recording. It re-enacted the rights given to the record companies, defining the copyright in sound recordings as distinct from the copyright in musical works,⁴⁴ and reiterated the three acts which required a PPL licence: making copies of records, playing them in public and broadcasting them. The Musicians' Union was unhappy with the act for several reasons. Firstly, the record companies maintained exclusive copyright and only volunteered royalties to the MU. Secondly, although it gave PPL the right to set up musician employment restrictions, it also established a tribunal to which users of copyright material (like broadcasters, and dance hall owners) could protest. Thirdly, the new Act permitted the free use of records 'at any premises where persons reside or sleep' as long as no special price was charged for admission and at non-profit clubs and societies whose main objectives were 'charitable or otherwise concerned with the advancement of religion, education or social welfare.'

(Musicians' Union Report October 1956)

Many dance clubs came to exploit these loopholes. For instance, the Whisky-A-Gogo in Wardour Street (which, in the 1980s, abbreviated its name to the WAG) claimed exemption from the licence fee on the grounds the club was the headquarters of an international students' association. The club's solicitors set out the tongue-in-cheek objectives of the so-called 'Students' United Social Association' as follows:

⁴⁴ The copyright in sound recording is defined as the 'aggregate of the sounds embodied in, and capable of being reproduced by the means of a record'. (Copyright Act, 1956)

... to promote opportunities for recreation, social intercourse and refreshment for foreign and English students and for advancement and improvement of relations between British and foreign students and persons wishing to further good international relations between and for the provision of social facilities between young persons and language classes for members and to assist the promotion of social contacts for foreign students with English-speaking persons and general assistance and settling of foreign students in England. (Musicians' Union Report 1963)

Small clubs dodged PPL licences or their conditions of use in a variety of ways.⁴⁵

But, as these cases were generally too difficult and expensive to prosecute, the MU focussed its attention on dance hall chains like Mecca and Top Rank where substantial employment and licence fees could be gained *en masse*.

During the fifties, the Musicians' Union started calling for a propaganda campaign against records at the level of moral and the aesthetic ideas - one which would draw on the new notion of 'live' music and strengthen their position with PPL. The term 'live' only entered the lexicon of music appreciation in the fifties. As more and more of the music heard was recorded, however, records become synonymous with music itself. It was only music's marginalised other - performance - which had to speak its difference with a qualifying adjective.

At first, the word 'live' was short for 'living' and modified 'musicians'⁴⁶, later it referred to music itself and quickly accumulated connotations which took it beyond the denotative meaning of performance. First, 'live music' affirmed that performance was not obsolete or exhausted, but full of energy and

⁴⁵ The Saddle Room, for example, was licensed on the condition that it hire a trio of musicians, but musicians never actually performed at the club.

⁴⁶ As in the following passage: 'during and since the war, recorded music has been used more and more instead of "live" instrumentalists.' (Musicians' Union Report 1949)

potential. Recorded music, by contrast, was dead, a decapitated 'music without musicians'. (Musicians' Union Report 1956) Second, the term also asserted that performance was the 'real live thing'. Liveness became the truth of music, the seeds of genuine culture. Records, by contrast, were false prophets of pseudo-culture.

Through a series of condensations, then, the expression 'live' music gave positive valuation to and became generic for performed music. It soaked up the aesthetic and ethical connotations of life-versus-death, human-versus-mechanical, creative-versus-imitative.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Union discussions about live music were overlaid with a Cold War rhetoric typical of the time. Records were a 'grave threat', a 'serious danger' and an 'ever-present menace'. Recording technology was a bomb - a set of inventions which could bring about professional death: 'The musician may well become extinct and music may cease to be written.' (Musicians Union Report 1961) 'Live' suggested that performance was fragile in its vitality and in need of protection.

The ideology of 'liveness' was one of the Union's principal strategies 'to combat the menace' of recorded music. The Union initiated their 'live' music campaign in the fifties and appointed a full time official to oversee the project in 1965. The slogan 'Keep Music Live' was officially adopted in 1963. Invoking a difficult combination of aesthetic, environmental and trade union concerns, the campaign was meant 'to convince the community of the essential human value of live performance' and of 'the social good [generated when] the public has more contact

⁴⁷ Of course, for MU members, 'live' music was also associated with 'making a living'. (MU Conference Report 1951)

with the people who make music.' (Musician August 1971; Music Week 7 January 1978)⁴⁸

The Union's promotion of 'live' music was tangibly hampered by the musical taste that predominated among their members. For a long time, many members refused to pander to 'gimmick-ridden rock'n'roll rubbish' and couldn't understand why teenagers didn't appreciate 'good jazz'. (Musician's Union Report 1959) The exigencies of Union taste even allowed for musicians in 'beat groups' to receive lower rates of pay, as their agreements with Mecca and Rank referred only to 'musicians employed by dance band leaders' until well into the 1960s. (Musicians' Union Report January 1965)⁴⁹ In the end, then, the Union did not just champion performance over recording, but tried to encourage certain kinds of music over others. Their discourses and contractual agreements reinforced the 'natural' association of certain music genres, like Rock'n'Roll, with records. (cf section 8)

⁴⁸ It is tempting to draw parallels between the views of the Musicians' Union and Jean Baudrillard's treatises on hyper-reality and the death of culture. For both, culture is dying on the altar of techniques of reproduction. For Baudrillard, images are the 'murderers of their own model'. (Baudrillard 1983: 10) For 'live' music advocates, recording is slowly killing its original, performance: 'technology can destroy music itself.' (The Musician 1963). Just as Baudrillard describes the 'precession of simulacra' as the creation of images that no longer reflect the real but engender it, so 'live' music fans complained about the ability of recording to make more sounds and styles than physically possible for a band. Baudrillard and the Musicians' Union held similar notions of real culture as high culture, but faced with its death, the French theorist not surprisingly chose to write its obituary, while the British Union decided to lobby for protective legislation and disseminate propaganda.

⁴⁹ The American Federation of Musicians (AFM) engaged in a similar 'Live Music' campaign. A few AFM local branches, however, seem to have been more attuned to youth fashions, offering workshops to keep musicians up to date with latest dance music fads (like the Frug) and experimenting with event formats (like 'Live-o-theques'). (Billboard 24 April 1965)

The ideology of 'live' music, however, did eventually extend to Rock culture, becoming most strident in the mid-seventies, in reaction to the attention Disco music brought to discotheques. Discos were attacked for epitomising the death of music culture. They were said to be artificial environments offering superficial and manufactured experiences: 'a slick moving conveyor belt of the best product from the world's rock factories, relayed by the finest amplification, with a deejay and lights to inject further doses of adrenalin.' (Melody Maker 30 August 1975) While the American 'Disco sucks' discourse had evident homophobic and racist motivation (cf Marsh 1976; Smucker 1980), British anti-Disco sentiments are more directly derived from classist convictions about mindless masses. This has to do with the disparate audiences with which the same music was affiliated in the two countries. In Britain, discotheques and Disco music had a huge straight white working class following and were not, as they were in the USA, strongly identified with gay, black and hispanic minorities. Through the eighties and into the nineties, 'live' ideology continues to be a central feature of Rock, Indie and World musics, student and musician cultures. But, as explored in section 9, the definition of the 'live' has changed dramatically and, in some instances, changed beyond recognition.

While it is difficult to evaluate the effects of the 'Keep Music Live' campaign, PPL licensing restrictions seemed to have two main effects. First, they did indeed provide some employment for performing musicians. Second, the restrictions delayed investment in technology, hence, fewer jukeboxes and house sound-systems and a reliance on mobile discotheques until the late 1970s, early 1980s.

For over forty years, the musicians and the dance hall/discotheque operators negotiated their conflicting interests through the mediation of a record company collective body, PPL. Given their disparate financial stakes in 'phonographic performance', the relatively congenial relationship between the Musicians' Union and the record companies requires some explanation. The benefits of the relationship to the MU are more apparent. Because all copyrights were those of the record company, the Union's rights revenue was entirely dependent on its donation by PPL. Between 1947 and 1989, PPL gave 12.5% of its net royalty revenue to the MU in respect of 'the services of unidentified session musicians'. In 1987, that percentage amounted to 1.3 million pounds - a sum of considerable importance to the Union but one of less consequence once divided and distributed amongst the relevant record companies.⁵⁰

The reasons why PPL agreed to restrictions on the use of their product are less obvious but perhaps more numerous. Firstly, the Union helped PPL maintain its control on repertoire insofar as it forbade its members to record with non-PPL record companies. Although PPL administered the rights of 90% of all commercial sound recordings in the late 1980s, its monopoly was much less secure in the 1950s and 1960s.⁵¹ (cf Musicians' Union Report 1961) Secondly, Union

⁵⁰ It is presumably no coincidence that PPL stopped giving a percentage of its revenues to the Union at the same time as record companies started to become increasingly interested in the active exploitation of their copyrights. (cf Qualen 1985; Frith 1988)

⁵¹ Historically, the music outside PPL control had been that of foreign producers and once included 'large quantities of soul records which presented particular problems in some types of discotheque use.' (MU Conference Report 1971: 46)

members monitored record performances and copyright infringement at a local level - something PPL, with a staff of less than 60, had never been equipped to do. It was Union members who wrote letters to local newspapers, knocked on venue doors, censured club managers and effectively enforced copyright legislation on the ground. Thirdly, as musicians are not only the workers - but the artists - of the record industry, good relations with their union are a priority. Fourthly, the Musicians' Union helped legitimate the record companies' claims to copyright as a reward and incentive for creative production. As PPL explains:

The British recording industry is dependent upon the services of musicians for the continued uninterrupted production of excellent sound recordings. This requires a healthy broad based musical profession covering the whole spectrum of performance... Musicians only consent to recording sessions on the understanding that records will be produced and sold to the general public for normal domestic use and that PPL will exercise control over public performance. (PPL Press Release 1989)

Finally, despite the fact that the record industry does not profit directly from 'live' performance, but rather spends substantial sums on tour support, record company executives have tended to believe that the most artistically and commercially successful music comes from 'live' working acts. (cf Negus 1992: 52-54) The ability of a band to perform 'live' is seen as a guarantor that they will have a strong image and long career. Since disco, the global successes of non-'live' dance music have led to a proliferation of in-house and satellite dance labels and to 'club promotions' departments (whose aim is to nurture fan bases by plugging records to key DJs). Nevertheless, the ideal of the traditional white male performing Rock group still prevails in many record companies. Authenticity is a main selling point of music and its 'live' version still reigns.

In the late 1980s, relations between the three contenders in this conflict about licensing and regulation shifted decisively. In October 1987, PPL introduced a new tariff which reduced employment requirements but greatly increased licence charges. PPL recognised the case of the British Entertainment and Dancing Association (BEDA) that their dancing customers 'rarely wished to hear musicians and that the requirement was both costly and unnecessary.' The new licences required that only record sessions where the average attendance exceeded 150 need offer 'reasonable employment opportunities' to musicians. The effect of the change was that 75% of the sites previously covered by the requirement did not now have to hire any musicians. (cf *Monopolies and Mergers* 1988)⁵²

A year later, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission recommended that PPL completely withdraw its musician employment requirements.⁵³ The Commission concluded that needletime and 'live' performance requirements were 'anti-competitive practices' which they could not endorse. Moreover, they agreed with dance operators who argued that the 'live' music requirements were 'not only expensive but pointless' for two reasons. First, they argued that the dance sound conveyed by the records 'cannot be reproduced by instrumentalists playing direct to an audience'. Second, they maintained that 'audiences prefer recorded sound'. (*Monopolies and Mergers* 1988: 41) As a result, 'live' music (or rather the

⁵² In the nine month period from October 1987 to June 1988, PPL issued 3,669 licences for specially featured entertainment, of which only 707 (19%) contained a condition about employing musicians. (*Monopolies and Mergers* 1988: 22)

⁵³ The ruling against the Musicians' Union is typical of the fate of much union-related legislation under the Thatcher government. In few countries other than Britain, did musicians enjoy such protective arrangements in the first place.

requirement to hire musicians) was not found to be in the public interest. Musicians' Union representatives would later admit that 'live' music 'has ceased to be hip. Clubs with name DJs and the latest remixes are what appeals to people today.' (MU representative, Mark Melton, at IASPM conference, University of Liverpool, 19-21 April 1990)

Musician resistance to the enculturation of records was only effective insofar as it could be seen to coincide with the 'public interest'. When the Union eventually lost the ideological battle, it was only a matter of time before they lost the legislative one. Changes in the ideological status of recorded entertainment were dependent on several key factors which are the subject of the next three sections. First, records increased their allure as a result of being affiliated with the new types of occasion, new social spaces and 'new' social groups - all of which contributed to the increasing subcultural authenticity of records. Second, records adapted to their public use, changed their format to suit discotheques and to satisfy the exigencies of a new profession, the club disc jockey. And, third, as the studio rather than the stage became the key site for the origination of music, so records carrying certain kinds of music acquired aura.

7. ALTERED SPACES, MAIN EVENTS

The authentication of discs for dancing was dependent on the development of new kinds of event and environment, which recast recorded entertainment as something uniquely its own, rather than a poor substitute for a 'real' musical event. These new time-frames and types of place exploited the strengths and compensated for the weaknesses of the recorded medium. By using new labels, rubrics, interior designs and distracting spectacles, disc dances were rendered distinctive. They were effectively transformed from an occurrence into an occasion, from a migrant practice into a unique place, from a diverting novelty into an entertainment institution.

Before record hops, dancing to discs was not a cultural event in itself. The use of records was not highlighted in flyers, listings or advertisements. The Musicians' Union protested that dances using records were advertised in such a way as to create the impression that a 'live' band would be playing. More peculiarly, Union members often reported that audiences didn't notice the absence of performers. In 1953, one member contended that the young crowd of a West Bromwich dance hall had no idea they were dancing to records:

Amplification was so good as to be indistinguishable from an actual band heard outside the hall; and inside, soft lights, and a quick-change of records made the absence of a band unnoticeable. [There were] about 300 teenagers jiving like mad entirely oblivious of no band being present. (Musician's Union Report 1954)

Similarly, another MU member claimed that he had attended a musical play in which records had been so perfectly synchronised with voice and action that the audience

thought an orchestra was playing. When he told people sitting to either side of him, they allegedly refused to believe him. He concluded his report with the lesson: 'Members will therefore appreciate that the public, unless they are properly informed, will not know whether the music they are hearing is recorded or an actual live performance.' (Musicians' Union Report 1956)

Although these reports are undoubtedly exaggerated in the direction of stereotypes about mass culture and false consciousness, it does appear that many people didn't note the absence of musicians during this period. When asked today whether they danced to records at their local dance halls and youth clubs *before* Rock'n'Roll, people tend to remember if they were dancing to a band but not if they weren't. This may be evidence of the ability of records to 'simulate' in Jean Baudrillard's sense of the word; they do not so much *imitate* as '*mask the absence*' of performance. (Baudrillard 1983: 11) However, it is also testimony to the more mundane fact that, in the reports, the music was subordinate to, first, a social event and, second, a theatrical spectacle. Given these conditions of consumption, the audience didn't give the music the attention musicians expect and appreciate. In Walter Benjamin's terms, these audiences were 'distracted': they absorbed the music but the music did not absorb them. (Benjamin 1969: 239)

Rock'n'Roll record hops, however, focussed favourable attention on the entertainment format. An American import with a distinct name, 'hops' brought dancing to discs into vogue for the first time.⁵⁴ They gave the activity a distinct

⁵⁴ In the US, the record hop was endorsed by the new glamorous medium of television on the network show American Bandstand which enjoyed an after school (a.k.a. youth) slot in the schedule. British equivalents would not appear until the

identity, transformed it into a 'real' event rather than simply an intermission or occurrence. Significantly, record hops were identified with youth and youth alone. Like the spate of Hollywood 'teenpics', they capitalised on the emergence of youth as a new social category, consumer group and cultural identity. 'Never before... has the younger generation been so different from its elders,' wrote Colin MacInnes in 1958. (MacInnes 1961: 61)

Youth were the group with the least prejudice about the inferiority of recorded entertainment and with the most interest in finding a cultural space they could call their own. According to the first British market researcher of youth, Mark Abrams, the teenage market was characterised by 'economic indiscipline', i.e. they spent 'on goods which form the nexus of teenage gregariousness outside the home'. (Abrams 1959: 1)⁵⁵ Perhaps more than any other cultural phenomenon of the 1950s, record hops symbolised the new youth culture. Along with labels like 'teenager', they contributed to a heightened consciousness of generation and, with their large scale collective gathering, fuelled the first fantasies of a movement of youth. Records had become integral to public culture; they were an authentic part of the new community of youth.

Later incarnations of disc dances did not just target youth, but smaller demographic segments and shades of taste. In 1966 in New Society, Reyner Banham

1960s.

⁵⁵ It was also predominantly working class and male: middle class youth were still at school and college or just beginning their careers and disposing of much smaller incomes; 55% of teenagers were male because girls married earlier and 67% of teenage spending was in male hands because girls earned less. (cf Abrams 1959)

argued that the cultural formations that grew up around records were characterised by what he playfully called '*vinyl deviationa*'. One of the main social functions of records - their distribution of culture - had been superseded by radio. As a result, the gramophone became 'a system for distributing deviant sound to the disaffected cultural minorities whose peculiar tastes are not satisfied by the continuous wallpaper provided by radio [like the] BBC'. (New Society 1 December 1966) Of course, dance clubs are not only significant for minority taste cultures, but class, ethnic and sexual ones.⁵⁶ (These issues are discussed in Chapter II)

The enculturation of records for dancing was first fostered by the development of new kinds of event and, only second, promoted by new kinds of environment. The initial 1950s disc hops (like their direct descendants, mobile discotheques) did little to transform the dance halls and youth clubs in which they took place. The following description of a record session at the Lyceum Ballroom in the Strand, for example, contrasts the traditional architecture with the new cultural form:

The Lyceum was originally a theatre, and Mecca Dance Halls Ltd have left most of its Edwardian-baroque opulence untouched. Above, all is crimson and gold, cherubs and swags of fruit. On the band stand, a sharp young man in horn rimmed spectacles fades the records in and out on the two turntables of the enormous record player. On the floor over a thousand teenagers jive... the atmosphere is solemn and dedicated... All the dancers without exception wear the fashionable cut-off expression. (Melly 1970/1989: 68-69)

In the early 1960s, the 'discotheque' rendered dancing to discs

⁵⁶ There is substantial literature on importance of gay clubs to the gay liberation movement in the USA (cf Achilles 1967; Hooker 1969; Humphreys 1972; Krieger 1983) and to congregation of British gays and lesbians before and after the decriminalisation of male homosexuality in 1966. (cf Burton 1985; Weeks 1977; Wilson 1988)

fashionable in the way the record hop had done a few years before. This time, however, the institution was conceived as a French import and extended its influence to its architectural surroundings. Changes in environment were crucial to the definition of the new institution; they were meant to complement the culture of contemporary youth. La Discotheque in Wardour Street, for instance, was very dimly lit, gloomy by some accounts, with a number of double beds in and around the dancefloor. Invoking the new permissive sexual mores, the outlandish interior was an attraction in itself. The Place in Hanley near Stoke-on-Trent, for another example, was lit by red light and decorated entirely in black with the exception of a few rooms: the entrance hall was sprayed gold; the toilets sported imitation leopard skin wallpaper and a small sitting room was painted white, lit by blue light and called 'the fridge'. (cf Donovan 1981)

The spaces of 1960s discotheques defined themselves against the architecture of the dance halls whose interiors stayed the same for years and whose models of elegance were royal (hence the 'Palais' and 'Empires') or a relic of nineteenth-century bids for respectability (which referenced the classical world of 'Lyceums' and 'Hippodromes'). Either way, the ideologies of ballrooms did not speak to the youth of the day. Discotheques were emphatically different and self-consciously unconventional. They were *lounges*, *rooms* or simply *spots*; they were *places* with presence rather than palaces, hence names like the Saddle Room, the Ad-Lib, the Place and the Scene. The suffix 'a-gogo' was also used internationally to make their existence as young urbane dancing establishments absolutely clear: London and Los Angeles had Whisky-a-Gogos, named after the Parisian club.

Chicago not only had a Whisky-a-Gogo, but a Bistro-a-Gogo, Gigi-a-Gogo and a Buccaneer-a-Gogo. (Billboard 6 March 1965)

But transformations in name and interior design did not stop here. The institution continually renovated and effectively *rejuvenated* itself in order to appeal to an ever shifting market of youth. Late 1960s discotheques would embrace psychedelic and strobe lighting, slide projectors and hanging beads. Seventies 'discos' would become a maze of shiny futuristic surfaces, chrome party palaces of mirrors and glitter balls. Eighties 'clubs' abandoned mirrors: walls in black or grey were particular favourites early in the decade, while painterly post-modern or tribal styles made their appearance in the second half of the decade. Late eighties 'raves' took dance events outside what had become 'traditional' venues to unorthodox locations like warehouses, municipal pools, aircraft hangars and farmer's fields. Each new version of the institution was meant to be an advance on what came before it - an adventurous departure, less defined. The following distinction between clubs and raves is similar to the perceived differences (in their time) of, say, record hops and discotheques, or discos and clubs:

The difference between a rave and a club is the same as [that] between a holiday resort that no one goes to - you've discovered this beautiful place - and going back five years later to find they've built 25 high-rise hotels along the beach. Raves explore new territory, while clubs are the same old predictable places. (Leo Paskin, club & rave organiser, Interview: 19 March 1993)

The fresh names and renovated interiors were not simply a means of *rejuvenation*, the discotheque's constant search for liberation from tradition extends to the legacy of British class cultures. The early sixties discotheque rejected the aristocratic fantasies of the ballroom/dance hall and effaced the hierarchical

distinction between the elite nightclub and the common dance hall. The discotheque, like youth culture generally, was positioned as classless. In 1965, George Melly described discotheques as 'those wombs of swinging London' which were 'virtually classless' where 'success in a given field is the criterion and, in the case of girls, physical beauty'. (Melly 1970/1989: 104) A few years later, Tom Wolfe took a more critical view, suggesting that these youngsters seemed to be classless because they had dropped out of the conventional class-job system: 'It is the style of life that makes them unique, not money, power, position, talent, intelligence... The clothes have come to symbolise their independence from the idea of a life based on a succession of jobs.' (Wolfe 1968: 104)⁵⁷

Each change in institutional identity positioned the new disc dance as both democratic and *avant garde*. 'Discotheques', 'discos' and 'clubs' were all meant to be both exclusive and egalitarian, classless but superior to the mass market institution that preceded them. Raves, in their turn, were enveloped in discourses of utopian egalitarianism: they were events without door policies where everybody was welcome and people from all walks of life became one under the hypnotic beat.⁵⁸ But the discourse could hardly be tested, for only those 'in the know' could hear of and locate the party. (cf Chapter III) It is a classic paradox that an institution so adept at segregation, at the nightly accommodation of different crowds,

⁵⁷ cf Murdock and McCron 1976 for a critique of the persistent myth of classless youth.

⁵⁸ Moreover, as Barbara Bradby argues, this kind of utopianism ignores the subordinate position that women occupy at all levels of rave culture. (cf Bradby 1993)

should be repeatedly steeped in an ideology of social mixing. The discotheque/disco/club/rave regularly re-invented itself to maintain an eternal youth and to obfuscate dated relations to class cultures.⁵⁹

The regular re-decoration of the discotheque also addressed the main deficiency of recorded entertainment. Eye-catching interiors were meant to compensate for the loss of the spectacle of performing musicians. In the 1960s, the biggest global jukebox manufacturer, Seeburg, publicly lamented the machine's 'negative image'. (*Billboard* 27 February 1965) The key to improving its status, they argued, was their new high volume, minimum distortion, stereo jukebox called 'DISCOTHEQUE', which they hoped would be accepted 'as a form of entertainment in much the same way as [the public] accepts films, radio or television'. (*Billboard* 15 May 1965) Crucially, the machine was accompanied by an 'INSTANT NIGHT CLUB' package of wall panels, modular dance floor, napkins, coasters and other decorations 'needed to transform a location into a discotheque'. (Ad in *Billboard* 23 January 1965) Equally significantly, the wall panels portrayed life-size white jazz musicians in the midst of a spirited jam session. Intended for the wall behind the jukebox, these panels offered a literal solution to the phonograph's problem of having 'a voice without a face'. (cf Laing 1990)

Although this sort of literalism was relatively rare, one trajectory in the changing shape of discotheques has been the proliferation of visuals. Lighting,

⁵⁹ In the US, discotheques have been further positioned as obfuscating racial and sexual divisions. As Richard Peterson writes, 'If disco provides an escape from alienating work, it also allows a fantasy escape from the 'accidents' of race, sex, ethnicity and sexual orientation.' (Peterson 1978: 29)

in particular, has become an elaborate accompaniment to the music, highlighting its rhythms, illustrating its chords. Sometimes, the roving coloured beams and flashing strobes decorate the dancers, making a superior spectacle of the crowd. Other times, swishing lasers and figurative patterns of light are an optical phenomenon in their own right. With recent dance musics like techno, the computer-generated fractals and other abstract designs of coloured light act as visual equivalents of the instrumental sound. With other musics, like House and Garage, club organisers use film loops, slide projectors and music videos to entertain the eye.

In dramatic contrast to old-style dance halls, discotheques have become total environments offering complete sensory experiences - ones often intensified by the use of drugs and alcohol (which have been mainstays of youth dance experience since record sessions took on their own premises).⁶⁰ Discotheques have become distinctive multi-media installations whose worlds are contiguous with the recorded fantasies of music video and the virtual realities of computer games, and whose 'club worlds' are markedly divorced from the 'real world' outside.⁶¹ Door restrictions sharply divide inside from outside, while long corridors, inner doors and stairways create transitional labyrinths which act, like

⁶⁰ 1950s record hops occupied the traditional dance hall, did little to alter their spatial environment and, by most reports, were not generally accompanied by drink or drugs. Only with the 1960s discotheque did the institution develop into a place where 'dream and reality are interchangeable and indistinguishable.' (Melly 1970/1989: 9)

⁶¹ To the extent that even Baudrillard once identified the discotheque (the 'spinning of strobe lights and gyroscopes, streaking the space whose moving pedestal is created by the crowd') as the ultimate hyper-real 'masterpiece of anti-culture'. (Baudrillard 1982: 5)

Alice's rabbit hole, as ritualistic pathways from the mundane world to wonderland.⁶²

⁶² In what must be the first study of discotheques, Lucille Hollander Blum argues that the appeal of discotheques results from the way they offer an escape from 'present day reality'. Discotheque dancers 'shake off the acculturated self', 'relax from societal stimuli', experience a 'delirious sense of freedom' and enter a 'state of complete thoughtlessness'. (cf Blum 1966)

8. NEW FORMATS, SOCIAL SOUNDS

Discotheques have carved out distinctive times and places for recorded music. With their different senses of place and occasion, they have *accommodated* - not only housed but adapted to - records. But enculturation involves transformation on both sides: not only did a new institution take shape around records, but records changed their format and the mechanisms by which they were played to suit the social and cultural requirements of the new dance establishment. The following section considers changes in the format of dance records and the role of club disc jockeys.

Crucial to the altered space of discotheques is the enhanced acoustic atmosphere which results from high volume, continuous music. The initial popularity of jukebox-fitted coffee bars and purpose-built discotheques over the record sessions in dance halls related not only to architectural style but improved sound-systems. According to one music weekly of the early sixties, 'La Discotheque' in Streatham was 'more than a dance hall' because of the 'quality and the volume' of the records they played. (New Record Mirror 19 January 1963) In the 1950s, record playback technology was not able to fill a large ballroom with high fidelity sound. Even in the early 1960s, few discotheques could provide all-around sound, highs or lows, or thumping bass.

The practice of dancing to discs eventually affected the design of records themselves. In the mid-1960s, many jukebox manufacturers, including the three largest, Seeburg, Wurlitzer and Rowe, started to manufacture extended-play

records for their dance-oriented jukeboxes - a decade before record companies extended the length of single with the twelve-inch format.⁶³ Seeburg argued that the discotheque would prevail as a form of entertainment only if it offered 'uninterrupted music'. As a result, they issued dance music in the format of the 'Little LP', a recording with three titles per side, with music in the lead in and lead out grooves, amounting to seven and a half minutes of continuous music. (Billboard 6 February 1965 & 1 May 1965)

In the 1970s, the extended '12-inch' singles became a standard product amongst American, then British, record companies. The idea came from American DJs who had been mixing 7-inch copies of the same record for prolonged play. Some began recording their mixes, editing them on reel-to-reel tapes, then playing them in clubs. When these recordings were transferred to vinyl, the extended remix was born.⁶⁴ Record labels became involved when they realised that discotheques were sufficiently widespread to make catering to them with special vinyl product a promotional necessity.⁶⁵

⁶³ Although record companies like Columbia, Epic, Atlantic and Command produced records for dance-oriented jukeboxes, few involved continuous music. (Billboard 1 May 1965)

⁶⁴ For extensive discussion of the American introduction of the 12-inch single, cf Straw 1990.

⁶⁵ Record companies were slow to react. Back in 1965, Billboard introduced a discotheque chart because they said that the discotheque was having 'a major effect on the entire music and entertainment industry. A look at Billboard's Hot 100 shows discotheque industry material all over the chart. (Billboard 27 February 1965) But it was not until a decade later, with disco music, that the industry really opened its eyes to the 'concept of transforming a routine nightclub into a catalyst for breaking records'. (Bill Wardlow, director of Billboard's music charts during the disco boom,

The new record format was better suited for playing at high volume over club sound-systems and its extended versions had instrumental breaks where the song was stripped down to the drums and bass with very little vocal to facilitate seamless mixing of one track into another.⁶⁶ These extended dance 'tracks' (rather than 'songs') helped sustain the momentum of the dancefloor and contributed to the hyper-reality of the discotheque.⁶⁷ The constant pulse of the bass blocks thoughts, affects emotions and enters the body. Like a drug, repetition can lull one into another state. As Frith said of Disco music, 'Previous popular music has only reflected the world in various ways; the point of disco, however, is to replace it.' (Frith 1978: 17)

Crucially, 12-inch records were made specifically for DJs. The recorded entertainment at the core of disc dance cultures is not automated. DJs

in Joe 1980: 8-9)

Will Straw argues that record company interest in dance clubs came at a time when radio play-lists were shrinking and companies were looking for alternative means of promoting their music. (cf Straw 1990)

⁶⁶ Apparently, dance bands of the 1920s and 1930s constructed dance numbers in a way not unlike 12-inches, with extended instrumental introductions and finales and short segments of lyrics in which the vocal acted as if it were merely another instrument. (Simon Frith in conversation, 1993)

⁶⁷ Although twelve-inches were originally for public performance in discotheques only, within a few years, they had become retail as well as promotional products. In Britain, the first two retailed twelve-inch disco singles were Undisputed Truth's 'You Plus Me', issued in a limited edition of 3000, and Goodie Goodie's 'No 1 DJ' in 1978. The first twelve-inch only release to make it into the Top 10 was Abba's 1981 single 'Lay Your Love on Me'. This honour is usually claimed by New Order's 'Blue Monday', which was released on twelve-inch only but, despite many weeks in the chart, peaked at number 9 in 1983. Although roughly 45% of singles sold in the early 1990s are twelve-inch vinyl singles, the format is still seen as primarily a promotional item by major record labels. Only for small independent companies with low overheads are twelve-inches a main earner.

incorporated degrees of human touch, intervention and improvisation. They played a key role in the enculturation of records for dancing, not so much as an artist but as a representative and respondent to the crowd. By orchestrating the event and anchoring the music in a particular place, the DJ became a guarantor of subcultural authenticity.

The changes in the DJ's occupational status reflect the progressive enculturation of recorded entertainment. The DJ's job has changed dramatically since World War II, moving from unskilled worker through craftsman to artist, but also through a less linear process involving degrees of anonymity and celebrity, collection and connoisseurship, performance and recording. (cf Becker 1978; Kealy 1979/1990; Langlois 1991; Austin forthcoming) In the forties, the person who played records for public dancing was not seen to possess much technical skill, let alone artistry. Although the Musicians' Union referred to the services of the 'public address engineer', they also suggested that the job was simply a question of unskilled supply. In a passage quoted earlier, for example, they said: 'In almost every town the man who runs the radio shop, or specialises in the provision of public address equipment, will undertake to supply recorded music for dances or other social events at a small proportion of the fee a good band would charge.' (Musicians' Union Conference Report 1949)⁶⁸ Even in the 1950s, playing records for dancing was

⁶⁸ Although various regional, national and international associations exist (like European Federation of DJs and Disco Mix Club), unionisation has eluded British DJs. Most DJs are involved in other kinds of employment. The least successful might supplement their DJ income with a totally unrelated day job. Whereas the most successful DJs tend to graduate into part-time or full-time jobs in the record or radio industry.

considered so unskilled that most thought it best to do it oneself. One didn't hire mobile DJs but their records. The advertisements read: 'Party records for a record party. Hire an evening's recorded music.' (New Musical Express December 1957) General opinion in the record industry was that the DJ was not endowed with any particularly special skills. As its main trade paper observed: 'The position of the disc jockey is not an easy one. He becomes a public figure by presenting someone else's talent.' (Record Retailer and Music Industry News 10 March 1960)

Supplying the records is certainly the first and most vital function of the DJ. Consistently through the years, DJs have been heavy record buyers, product hunters, zealous collectors. For example, Jocks, a magazine which addressed aspiring DJs, ran a weekly column 'How to be a DJ' which included a section on 'Buying Records'. They argued that the most important investment of a mobile DJ, other than his/her turntables and amplifiers, is a constantly updated record collection. Shopping 'once a fortnight is the absolute minimum... records can become huge surprisingly quickly and nothing is worse than going to a gig where half your audience wants you to play something new and you've never heard of it.' (Jocks October 1990)

Certain DJs have built a reputation upon having the most comprehensive collections of particular genres. An ad for a Northern Soul night at Blackpool Mecca in 1974 identifies the night's DJs, Ian Levine and Colin Curtis, and proclaims their main selling point: 'We have records that no one else has.' (Black Music January 1974) The status of DJs was partly the status of an exclusive owner with discerning taste. As one journalist commented at the time, 'the disc jockeys are

becoming more and more of a cultural elite in their efforts to outdo each other in finding exclusive records'. (Black Music June 1974)

Beyond the supply of records, the uses, skills and talents of DJs have long been viewed with some suspicion. The curious term, 'disc jockey', suggests perhaps some dexterity was required to perform the job. The new professional had to 'ride' a record much as a racing jockey might handle his horse at the track. But 'to jockey' also means to gain advantage by skilful manoeuvring, trickery or artifice. The implication might have been that disc jockeys deceived their listeners into thinking that what they heard was a 'live' performance. Well into the 1970s, the DJ had a dubious reputation. He/she was considered by musicians and 'live' music fans to be 'a parasite, the less successful being a mere spinner of discs, while the ranking DJ is a synthetic rock star with no musical ability'. (Melody Maker 15 November 1975)

During the sixties, the expectations of the DJ's job varied greatly. For example, in the mid-1960s, the American Whisky-A-Gogo chain employed women who acted as both DJs and gogo dancers. Called 'dance-DJs', they changed records and did 'dance routines in glass cages above the crowd'. (Billboard 1 May 1965) However, this arrangement was anomalous. The master of ceremonies, presenter or 'personality DJ' was a more common role. Most 'personality DJs' with a national profile came from radio. They filled the gaps between records with informative chatter and presided over disc hops touring the country promoting the product of a sponsoring record company. They also might broadcast a regular weekly show from a particular club. Radios Caroline, London and Luxembourg

broadcast disc shows from venues like the Marquee and the 100 Club throughout the 1960s.

Amongst youthful crowds, DJs were developing into leaders and local celebrities. In New Society in 1968, Angela Carter wrote about a disc jockey in an unnamed provincial city as the 'Prince of Cloud-Cuckoo Land'. She described how he presided over the controls of a monumental record player wearing extravagant white suits and paraphrased his philosophy: 'A disc jockey is in a position of power. He can mould taste. Maybe he could do more. You've got all these kids looking up to you and you're in a position of authority...' (Carter 1968) In this way, DJs started to be perceived as taste-makers or 'moulders of musical opinion in a very similar - and far more direct - way to the music journalist.' (Melody Maker 15 November 1975)

The best DJs would 'build a long standing rapport with the crowd and it reaches the stage where they will follow you from one club to another'. (Music Week 8 October 1977) The 'Tom Cat' mobile discotheque, for example, claimed a 'fan club' of 2000 members. They would hire the venues, promote the show by printing then distributing 1000 handbills in the street, put up posters and advertise in the press, and take the money on the door (as it was the only way to earn more than 10 pounds a night. The lead DJ explained their strategy: 'We're just like a pop group. We have our own signature tune and a back up jock who plays slow records for ten minutes before I come on.' (Melody Maker 30 August 1975)

However, it was as mixers, rather than personalities, that DJs entered the world of musicianship. As 'turntable musicians', they would perform elaborate

mixes which required much rehearsal (with names like the running mix, the chop mix, transforming, etc). DJs created new music in the process of mixing. Records became the raw material of DJ performance just as, with sampling, they had become the raw material of composition. As Tony Langlois argues in his study of British House music DJs, 'House records are not recordings of performances, but are actively performed by the DJ himself, allowing spontaneity, surprise and creativity.' (Langlois 1992: 236)

As the vinyl singles have been the raw material of DJ performance since Rock'n'Roll, it is not surprising that disc jockeys have reacted negatively to the rise of the CD in a manner not unlike musicians of the 1970s responded to the proliferation of mobile discos. Both involve threats to livelihood and creativity. Just as the dance musicians' repertoire became outmoded so the DJ's vast record collection threatens to become obsolete. Just as the years of practice put into mastering an instrument by the musician no longer promised employment, so the DJ who spent hours perfecting his touch, feeling the groove, sighting the track is now faced with a technology whose operations he/she cannot see or touch. As one DJ magazine wrote: 'In the age of digital reproduction... the DJ may be the last musician... records represent the last technology you can grasp - now with CDs it's all digital.' (Jocks September 1990)⁶⁹

Though DJs may be musicians, they are rarely performers in the Pop

⁶⁹ The analogy extends to the properties attributed to vinyl. According to mixing DJs the sound of vinyl is 'real', 'warm', 'imperfect' but full of integrity, while CDs are 'cold', 'clinical', 'inhuman' and 'unreal'. This binary opposition resembles the way 'live' music was polarised from recorded music only a few years ago.

sense of the word. In purpose built clubs, mixing booths tend to be tucked away and DJs unseen. As cultural figures, DJs are known by name rather than face. The main spectacle afforded by discotheques is, in fact, the dancing crowd. Most discotheques have no windows but, whatever the period, they tend to have mirrors (if not to the extent of classic 1970s discos). In the absence of performers, the gaze of the audience turns back on itself.⁷⁰ This is one reason why discotheques have restrictive door policies while 'live' music venues generally admit anyone with a ticket.⁷¹

What authenticates club cultures is not so much a unique DJ performance, but the 'buzz', 'vibe', 'mood' or 'atmosphere' created in the interaction of DJ and crowd. It is as orchestrators of this 'living' communal experience that DJs are most important to music culture. DJs respond to the crowd through their choice and sequence of records, seek to direct their energies and build up the tension until the event 'climaxes'. DJs are supposed to have their finger on the pulse of the event in order to give the dancing crowd 'what [they] need rather than what [they] want'. (Graeme Park quoted in New Musical Express 27 February

⁷⁰ Watching and being seen are key pleasures of discotheques. Angela McRobbie extends an analogy between the gazes involved in the cinema and those of the discotheque. Both offer 'a darkened space where the dancer can retain a degree of anonymity and absorption... but where the cinema offers a one-way fantasy which is directed solely through the gaze of the spectator at the screen, the fantasy of dancing is more social, more reciprocated.' (McRobbie 1984: 146)

⁷¹ Although advanced ticket sales have their own segregative functions insofar as one must be to some degree be 'in the know' and tapped into the appropriate media channels. Weekenders and raves have often used this method. (cf Chapter III)

1988)⁷² In this way, DJs are artists in the construction of musical experience. As Jon Pareles argues,

Disc jockeys, improvising with records or electronic gadgets and usually backed by immense sound systems, produce variations on hit records by taking them apart, adding new drum tracks, superimposing tunes or bass-lines - all with a careful attention to the sensuality of sound and the efficacy of rhythm. Not only does the music have the freshness of improvisation - and a function, to keep people dancing - but it has a richness rarely heard in live pop music. In clubs, there's no tension between music, technology and audience... (New York Times 22 July 1990)

Records are the pivot around which dance cultures have come to revolve. Contrary to many Rock ideologies, the 'live' does not have an exclusive claim on collective music culture, nor is it the original to which disc culture is a dull and distant echo. Disc culture is a distinct and authentic, high-tech folk culture. And, twelve-inch dance records in the hands of a mixing DJ are, quite literally, social sounds.

⁷² Beginning in the 1970s, DJs came to be acknowledged as experts in dance music and dance markets. DJs entered a number of new jobs in the studio as remixers, producers and even artists in their own right and invaded departments of A&R, promotions and marketing, sometimes even becoming managing directors of their own or satellite record labels. Many of these DJs continue to work in clubs as well. As musicians were initially hired by the record industry to record and by the leisure industry to perform, now DJs are hired by the music industry to sign, record, remix, produce and promote and by the leisure industry to perform.

9. THE AUTHENTICITIES OF DANCE RECORDS

The perceived authenticity of particular records and music genres is entangled in several factors. Firstly and most obviously given the discussions of the past two sections, authenticity is dependent on the degree to which the records are assimilated by a subculture. Authentication is the ultimate end of enculturation.

Secondly, the distance between a record's production and its consumption is relevant to the cultural value bestowed upon it. When original performers are remote in time or space, as is the case with foreign imports and revived rarities, records acquire prestige and authority. Thirdly, the environment in which a record is produced contributes to its authenticity. Records are more likely to be perceived as the primary medium of musics whose main site of production is the studio. And, finally, the ideological vagaries of music genres like their communication of bodily 'soul' or their revelation of technology (which can be placed on the 'live'/recorded continuum), play a main role in whether records come across as genuine. In other words, authenticity is ultimately an effect of the discourses which surround popular music.

In the 1930s, the British jazz appreciation societies called 'rhythm clubs' held 'recitals... given by records loaned by members'. (Godbolt 1984: 138) These gatherings mark a shift in cultural values whereby records became the pivot around which a collective culture developed and revolved. One of the first jazz fans to analyze the rhythm club movement from an academic perspective described their mania for the recorded form:

To understand the function of this sort of organization in the life of the European jazz fan, his utter dependence on phonographic records will have to be remembered. Cut off from the living music by time as well as space he submits to a particular shift in values. The record becomes more important than the music; minor musicians who have left recorded examples of their own work behind them become more important than those major musicians who for one reason or another have never got around to a recording studio; and the man who has met the musicians and knows his way through a maze of records becomes more important than the musician himself. (Ernest Borneman 1947 quoted in Godbolt 1984: 142)

The resolute focus on records of jazz connoisseur circles was an anomaly in the thirties which would become the norm much later with the advent of teenage dance cultures. Despite the unlikely pedigree, the genealogy is preserved in the etymology of the word 'discotheque' which literally translated from the French means 'record library' and gained currency in relation to Parisian jazz clubs.

Although jazz fans collected and fetishised records, they valued discs as 'records' in the strict sense of the word, as transcriptions, accounts, replicas, reproductions of a unique jazz performance. Jazz records were enculturated, they had prestige and authority, but they weren't fully authentic for reasons that related to their process of production (they were relatively straightforward documentations of particular performances) and the discourses in which they were enveloped (performance was unquestionably superior to recording, even if recording was superior to notation). (cf Newton 1959)

It was not until Rock'n'Roll that *records* started to serve as the *original*. With Rock'n'Roll, spinning discs were no longer a poor imitation of performing musicians; they were music itself. As one 'jiver' remembers it: records brought 'the real sound and real tempo of the mainly American [music that was] taking the charts by storm, rather than the house band's well-meaning but tidied up

cover versions'. (Nourse with Hudson 1990: 43) In fact, Rock'n'Roll was so tightly identified with records in Britain that PPL, who was willing to regulate the use of records for any other kind of music during this period, thought it 'unreasonable that musicians should be employed at so called "Rock'n'Roll" dances'. (Musicians' Union Conference Report 1961)

This was mainly due to changes in media environment and studio production. For example, in America as well as Britain, the development of Rock'n'Roll depended on records. The cross-fertilisation of Hillbilly music and Rhythm & Blues that engendered Rock'n'Roll was primarily brought about by records on radio. As Kloosterman and Quispel write, the black and white music scenes had few 'live' contacts because the southern states were strictly segregated. When television took over from radio as a national mass medium in the 1950s, radio went local and its audience segmented. One of its new target markets was the black population whose recently increased affluence meant that they now owned radios and were attractive to a handful of advertisers. Black music, therefore, made it onto airwaves which crossed neighbourhood boundaries and diffused black music among the white youngsters who chose to tune in. (cf Kloosterman and Quispel 1990)

Elvis Presley, who had little contact with the local Black population, gained his knowledge of R&B music from Memphis's black radio station. (cf Quain 1992; Wark 1989) Moreover, his sound and image were fashioned from an array of recorded influences, including radio, records, comic books, movies and television. Elvis's early records abandoned the attempt to mimic a 'live' performance in the studio; their novel use of echo created a specifically studio sound. (Middleton 1991:

89) Elvis' professional 'live' act followed his first hit on local radio; it was developed to promote his records. This series of inversions of the 'natural' route from performance to recording was an exception at the time (for example, Bill Haley and Little Richard were seasoned touring performers before they entered the studio). However, the precedence of recording over performance would gradually become the rule.

It is worth considering the role played by distinct times and sites of production and consumption. Records were preferred to performance in circumstances where the qualities specific to records were exploited. So, the ability of records to travel in space and time led to disc cultures revolving around imports, new releases or lost and almost forgotten old records. By these means, records acquired credibilities independent of performance. And, the onus of authenticity was shifted from a regard for the unique to an interest in the degrees of exclusivity found in the new, rare and antique.⁷³

Since the 1950s, one way that disc sessions have attracted audiences is by playing the 'latest releases'. In a modern world of proliferating communications media where the speed with which information travels and fashions change seems to get progressively faster, discotheques are able to deliver the freshest sounds. Performance has a difficult time keeping up: musicians must decide to expand their repertoire, rehearse the songs, by which time the sound may have lost

⁷³ However, a 'unique recording' or 'only copy' sometimes figures in disc dance culture. As Les Back argues, one key to the success of reggae sound-systems is having original music in the strict sense of the word: 'Dub plates, or recorded rhythms, are original acetates and they are usually the only copies... The records are made by artists especially for the sound[system].' (Back 1988: 145-146)

its currency. As a result, cover or copy bands are now few and far between. Live acts either play their own material or versions which are truly 'their own'. Today, British dance sounds are distinguished by a quick turnover of records, styles and sub-genres to the extent that vanguard audiences often dance to tracks on 'import' or limited edition 'white label' *before* their actual domestic release. Amongst pop music cultures, novelty and rarity displace uniqueness. This may be an instance of what Benjamin called the 'phoney spell of a commodity' but, in this way, records nevertheless enjoy a kind of attenuated aura. (Benjamin 1955/1970: 233)

The time-binding power of records fosters interest not only in the novel, but the archival. Records expedite cultural revival; they allow for 'dancing to music recorded and forgotten in another world and another time'. (Black Music June 1974) In London in the early 1990s, one could attend record hops where the boys jived and the girls did 'the Madison' or visit funk (a.k.a. 'rare groove') clubs where the crowd would 'get down' in 1970s style. While 'Classic Disco' nights had become a feature of almost every British provincial town, particularly in gay clubs.

Perhaps the first fully-fledged *archival* dance culture to draw attention to the distinct potentials of discs over and above performed music was the 'Northern Soul' scene of the early 1970s. Populated by white working class youth from Northern England who danced to obscure, in fact unpopular and long forgotten, Black American Soul records from the 1960s, the scene was considered by many to be 'the strangest and most unlikely manifestation of the entire black music experience.' (Black Music November 1975)

The logic of Northern Soul's appeal was not nostalgia but rarity.

Taking the Mod taste in Soul music (circa 1966) off on a tangent, Northern Soul DJs played increasingly rare records from the period. Not only were these records unavailable to dancers, few of them knew the names of the artists or record labels to which they danced. Nevertheless, the dancers avowed that they went to the Northern Soul discos to hear sounds they couldn't hear anywhere else. (Black Music June 1974)

Northern Soul records effectively displayed many of the characteristics of the work of art *before* the age of mechanical reproduction. They functioned as the axis of an elaborate ritual and displayed 'cult value'.⁷⁴ Certainly, their scene bordered on the religious. As one commentator wrote at the time, Northern Soul 'has evolved its own temples (Wigan Casino, Blackpool Mecca), high priests (the disc jockeys), false prophets (the bootleggers) and congregation (thousands of working class kids pulled from the heavy industry belt of the North and Midlands).' (Black Music January 1975)

The ease with which records travel in space and time has enabled the continual crossover and growing globalisation that characterise post-war popular music. While not quite 'a music hall without walls', recording technology does trespass on the borders of neighbourhood and nation. (McLuhan 1964: 248) Crucially, it also traverses time: records are more readily available *and* longer lasting than 'live' music; they efficiently distribute *and* preserve sound. It was in exploiting the time and space-binding characteristics of recording that disc cultures

⁷⁴ My sense of 'subcultural authenticity' is related to Benjamin's notion of 'cult value'. (cf Benjamin 1969)

acquired distinction.

The ideologies of music genres also play a crucial role in the authentication of recorded music and discotheques. Contemporary pop music has seldom been anathema to discotheques and rarely tried to deny its recorded form. Rock, however, has pivoted ideologically around the ideal of the 'live' music event despite the fact that it is known by most listeners first and foremost in its recorded form and has often been played in discotheques. This idea is specific to late sixties Rock. In the mid-sixties, Billboard's list of top discotheque records included not only the Beatles' 'Eight Days a Week' and the Beach Boys' 'Do You Wanna Dance', but Bob Dylan's 'Subterranean Homesick Blues'. (Billboard 1 April 1965) Just a few years later, Dylan would not be considered optimum discotheque music.

The meta-genre, 'dance music', does not have an exclusive claim on dancing. For instance, Rock audiences do not sit in quiet, contemplative appreciation. Headbanging, fist raising, air-guitar solos and other movements which mimic the performers are all dancing in the broad sense of the word. Many 'live' Rock gigs involve degrees of toe-tapping, finger-snapping, rhythmic clapping, pogoing and slamming. Even though the audience tend to face forward, eyes glued to the stage, these crowds do dance and their musics do inspire it.

The repertoire of body movements associated with Rock music often fails to be categorised as 'dancing'. This may be because the gaze of the dancers is focussed elsewhere, but it may also relate to issues of cultural hierarchy. In the late 1960s, when Rock'n'Roll became Rock, it abandoned its *overt* function for dancing. If it was to be taken seriously as an art form, then listening, not dancing,

would be the requisite mode of appreciation. Dancing is still stigmatised as uncritical and mindless to the extent that it can debase the music with which it is associated.

Today, 'dance music' is more accurately called 'discotheque music'. Rather than having an exclusive claim on dancing, the many genres included under the rubric share this institutional home.⁷⁵ Genres often announce it in their names: Disco music was so called because of discotheques, while House and Garage were named after key clubs - the Warehouse in Chicago and Paradise Garage in New York. Discotheques have played a wide range of music. Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean genres have been particularly affiliated with the institution: R&B and Soul in the 1960s; Funk, Disco and Reggae in the 1970s; Hiphop, House and Garage in the 1980s; Ragga and Dancehall in the 1990s. Nevertheless, one should not reify the relationship and forget about white traditions in 'dance music'. Rock'n'Roll, Electro Pop, varieties of gay and Euro-disco, New Wave and the New Romantics, Hi-NRG, British Acid House and Techno, to name just a few, have had predominantly white performers, audiences and sounds.

To a large degree, the ideological categories of 'black' and 'white' define the main axes of value within dance music. 'Black' dance music is said to maintain a rhetoric of body and soul despite its use of sampling and other computer technologies. Whereas 'white' or 'European' dance music is about the celebration and revelation of technology, to the extent that it minimizes the human among its

⁷⁵ Exceptions, like Country and World music, do not play a very large part in the dance cultures of British youth.

sonic signifiers. Of course, these categories often have little to do with the actual colour of the people making the records, rather they are two discourses about the value of dance music. Both have their authenticities. 'Black' musical authenticity is rooted in the body. Whereas Euro-dance authenticity, like white ethnicity, is disembodied, invisible and high-tech. To be organic to a discotheque, it had to ring true to its recorded form. Despite the fact that both operate mainly within disc cultures, these two values can be mapped onto the continuum of the 'live' and 'recorded'.

Both traditions have been at the forefront of studio experimentation since the sixties. Free from the constraints of imminent performance, makers of dance music have explored the aesthetics of new musical instruments like synthesizers, drum and bass-line machines and samplers. Unlike rhetorically 'live' genres, the truth of dance music is often found in the revelation of technology. Genres like House, Hiphop and Techno have conspicuously featured technologies hidden by other genres. They sampled and blatantly manipulated vocals at a time when most pop producers were using samplers to mimic the high production values usually furnished by numerous studio musicians and to correct the lead singer's odd bad note. They used new equipment, not to imitate 'natural' sounds, but to explore new sound possibilities.

The 'Black' tradition, however, maintains a key interest in vocals. Authenticity tends to be anchored in the body of the performer/artist/star - in the grain of their voice and the perceived honesty of their performance. In other words, authenticity is rooted in the romance of the body and soul and relates to essential,

verifiable origins. Whether it be soulful House or Rap, Adeva or Jeff and the Fresh Prince, musical authenticity resides in a rich, full, emotive voice.

The 'white' dance tradition exchanges fidelity to the body for the romance of technology.⁷⁶ Described as Electronic, Progressive, Industrial and Techno dance, these musics tend towards the instrumental and explore new computer sound possibilities. When they use vocals, they tend to be sampled and heavily manipulated into something which sounds futuristic or 'inhuman'. Often, certain technologies will come to define a genre. For instance, Acid House came to be closely associated with a novel bleep made by a Roland TB303 bass-line machine. And their technophilia is demonstrated in their choice of name, LFO, T99, or 808 State (named after the Roland 808 drum machine).

Both 'White' and 'Black' dance music are primarily producer's rather performer's mediums.⁷⁷ But, in the 'Black' tradition, individual singers or rappers will often stand in as authentic sources, whereas in the 'European' dance groups embrace the 'facelessness' said to be endemic to dance music. Techno acts, in particular, use corporate logo-style monikers. With names like DNA, SL2, 2 Unlimited and the KLF, Techno artists play with strategies of *branding* rather than the personas of the artiste. To some extent, their credibility is measured by their author's invisibility. Their lack of image matches their aural abstraction, for as

⁷⁶ Here, I am defining dance music rather narrowly to exclude varieties of pop like Madonna in accordance with the discourses, found amongst clubbers, DJs and the specialist music press, that I am describing.

⁷⁷ The producer is often a hypothetical, remote origin. The voice - whether sampled or not - cannot be seen to belong to them; and a guitar riff does not necessarily bear the trace of their hand.

Robert Christgau has written, 'Techno reduces 'vocals to samples and melodies to ostinatos, the average Techno hit doesn't leave the average listener... much to grab onto.' (Village Voice 16 February 1993) Moreover, not only do Techno acts adopt brands, they continually change them, eschewing the brand as soon as it is established. In so doing, they avoid 'selling out' and preserve their niche audience. (cf Chapter III)⁷⁸

Another way in which 'black' and 'white' versions of authenticity differ is in their provenance. Although both bear witness to trans-Atlantic influences, 'black' dance musics tend to be rooted in local urban scenes and neighbour-'hoods'. London Records' House Sound of Chicago volumes and Virgin's Techno: The Sound of Detroit, for example, positioned the source of the music as the 'underground studios' and 'underground clubs' of these cities. Local subculture and city places authenticate music, authorize and affirm it, render it tangible and real.

'White' dance musics, by contrast, are said to be global, nationless or vaguely pan-European. Techno is said to be a musical esperanto. Although Kraftwerk's 1977 album, Trans-Europe Express, is often cited as the founding album

⁷⁸ While many musics harmoniously fuse the two traditions, problems sometimes arise when the two traditions collide. When the Italian duo, Black Box, sampled and literally stole New York soul diva Loleatta Holloway's voice for their track 'Ride on Time', to some it was a classic instance of a white European appropriation of black soul. (Holloway's voice was sampled without permission, subject to a court case between Holloway's New York label and De Construction/BMG Records, and settled out of court.)

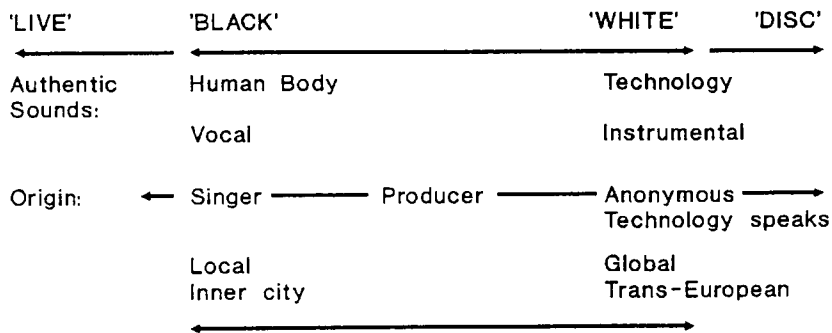
Milli Vanilli, as their name suggests, can also be seen in such a light. The miming by two Black male models (one German, the other French) was accepted when they played 'live'. But when it was exposed that they did not sing on the record, their American Grammy Award was revoked.

of the electronic dance tradition, Techno's European roots are often effaced or forgotten in a language striking in its cultural imperialism. As one producer said, 'Electronic music is a kind of world music. It may be a couple of generations yet, but I think that global village is coming.' (Ralf Hutter quoted in Savage 1993: 21)

These distinctions between 'white' and 'black' musics do not simply reflect the position of Black culture within the ideologies of white British clubbers, for they are held equally by Black youth. Nevertheless, the discourses bear witness to the legacy of racial essentialism and white imperialism.

Table 4

THE AUTHENTICITIES OF DANCE MUSIC



Since the 1950s, studios have been editing their wares into 'records of ideal, not real, events'. (Frith 1987: 65) Discotheques are an ideal environment for ideal musical events. They are an appropriate site of consumption of musics for

which the studio is the main site of production. The development of genres of music which are quintessentially recorded and the growth of the values which assert their cultural worth. Whether they draw from older 'live' or newer disc-oriented value systems, disotheque musics have evolved their own auras and authenticities.

10. THE CONCOMITANT HISTORY OF THE 'LIVE' GIG

Since the sixties, record sessions and discotheques have gained popularity by providing increasingly superior sites for socialising to the tune of a preferred soundtrack. As a result, the number of engagements for live music have diminished; music performance was threatened from several sides. It was records rather than performances which were beginning to offer the *best* sound and were being positioned as its *origin*. Faced with, at worst, being swept out with the tide or, at best, positioned as a simulation of recording, music performance was on the defensive; it was forced to embrace new technologies and compelled to re-invent itself.

Since the mid-1950s, records had increasingly taken precedence over the live shows and dictated the nature of performance. The record moved from being 'a primarily mnemonic form (preserving songs known through performance) into a formative or prescriptive one'. (Durant 1984: 111) This was partly because people came to know a group's music through its records and their aural expectations shifted accordingly.⁷⁹ As early as the mid-fifties, there were increasing complaints about the quality of 'live' music and its events. Letters from fans to the weekly music press complained not only of high prices, but bad sound: 'While promoters continue to bring bands to [Manchester], my friends and I will just buy a record with

⁷⁹ Richard Middleton argues that not only are live performances 'checked' against memories of recordings, when the band fail to approximate their recordings, the 'audience's collective memory takes over and it "hears" what it cannot hear, in the sketch provided by the band.' (Middleton 1990: 88)

the money and be more satisfied,' wrote one Melody Maker reader. (Melody Maker 29 December 1956)

Records also became paradigms of performance because new production techniques, particularly those derived from the use of magnetic tape, allowed for multi-track recording, corrective and creative editing. In the late 1960s, the *concept album* and the genre, *album Rock*, implicitly contended that records were musical events in themselves. It is no coincidence that the album, rather than the single, was appraised as the art format. Firstly, the long play allowed for the exploration and development of sounds, themes and ideas. Its duration was similar to a band's set. Secondly, since the 1950s, the album had been the configuration of classical music. It was established as suitable for movements, symphonies, for unravelling oeuvres. Rock might elevate itself by association. Thirdly, album consumers had the appropriate demographics; the bulk of them were white, male and adult (more specifically, young adult rather than teenager). (1968 is the year that the album sales overtook singles sales and the year in which the album became widely acknowledged as an art form).

The difficult predicament of performance in the mid-sixties is perhaps best symbolised by the Beatles' American tours. The Beatles were the first band to hold concerts in the huge arenas and stadiums normally reserved for sporting events and the last band to get away without changing their performance to accommodate the new environment. In 1965 at New York's Shea Stadium, for example, they played a pub-style gig on a small platform on the pitcher's mound in the middle of the field. There were no sets nor lights, just the four band members poorly

amplified and looking like ants to even those screaming in the front row. Drowned out and effectively overpowered by their fans, it's hardly surprising that they abandoned performing a year later in 1966.

The main reason the Beatles gave for quitting was that performing impeded their musical creativity. As George Harrison told their authorised biographer in 1968: 'We were held back in our development by having to go on stage all the time and do it, with the same old guitars, drums and bass.' (Davies 1968/1992: 344) Being the first to meet crowds of 50,000, the Beatles could envision music making as *either* on stage *or* in studio, but not both.

Other bands, however, would start bringing the technologies of the studio to the stage. The Grateful Dead, for example, a successful live act for over three decades, invested heavily in new sound technologies. As Tom Wolfe recounts,

The Dead [had] equipment such as no rock'n'roll band ever had before, the Beatles included, all manner of tuners, amplifiers, receivers, loudspeakers, microphones, cartridges, tapes, theater horns, booms, lights, turntables, instruments, mixers, muters, servile mesochronics, whatever was on the market. The sound went down so many microphones and hooked through so many mixers and variable lags and blew up in so many amplifiers and rolled around in so many speakers and fed back down so many microphones, it came on like a chemical refinery. (Wolfe 1968: 223-224)

The Dead also pioneered the development of music performances as mixed media events. Motivated by a desire to simulate an LSD drug experience ('without the LSD'), their gigs used black light, strobes, slide and film projections as well as the machine - later the stamp of psychedelia - which projected light through plates of glass containing oil, water and food colouring. In the seventies, the spectacular technological displays of Progressive Rock groups like Pink Floyd were means by which 'live' gigs could handle new expectations and new proportions.

Since then, stadium concerts have become so complex that they are planned down to the smallest detail with storyboards and scripts because it is the only way to co-ordinate the hundreds of designers and technicians. Many of the best 'live' groups have relied for several decades on much electronic mediation. Today, a glimpse at the extensive ads in trade magazines like Applause or Live! demonstrates the sophisticated technologies necessary for producing immediate, apparently improvised, effects. Moreover, during the 1980s, a high proportion of shows began using recorded music and sound effects to bring the performance closer to clarity and richness of their recordings. According to Rolling Stone, 'anywhere from 75 to 100 per cent of touring Rock acts use technology to reproduce sounds achieved in the studio and that 25 per cent or more of what the audience hears in an arena show is prerecorded'. (Rolling Stone 6 September 1990) Few seemed to care that the music might be recorded: synthesizers replaced horn sections and stringed instruments; drum machines were used instead of drummers and other percussionists; digital samples supplemented on-stage musicians. Amazingly, none of this extensive use of records on stage threatened the 'liveness' of the performance. At least, not until it was suggested that the vocalists might never be singing but lip-synching.

Analysing 1990s reviews of live gigs published in the music press who keep 'live' music in high regard, musicianship is rarely mentioned. Playing a 'tight set' obtains its bonus points, but references to 'a group of workman-like chaps' is a definite put down. (Melody Maker 9 January 1993)⁸⁰ While there are few

⁸⁰ Many of the 'best' rock musicians were not initially known as masters of their musical instruments. Although their particular styles came to be admired, it was as much for their revelation of distinctive personality as any absolute measure of

allusions to the playing of instruments, references to records abound. Single and albums and their place in the charts are read as signposts to the meaning and structure of a gig.

Technology alone would not save the live gig, however. Music performance had to find its essence, its superior values, its *raison d'être*. Its reaction to recorded entertainment was not unlike the response of painting to photography a century earlier.⁸¹ Painting became impressionist and expressionist, rhetorically more spontaneous and personal. It experimented with colour, light and shade, investigated perception and portrayed layers of inner selves. So music performance would elaborate and amplify its personalities, develop spectacle, heighten and highlight the semblance of spontaneity.

Chief among the qualities celebrated in music performance is spontaneity particularly insofar as it could elevate the performance into a unique event. Sometimes, the semblance of spontaneity was as minute as the well-rehearsed deviation from the record (in the indulgent guitar or drum solo) which was meant to underline the performance as precisely that. Other times, the deviation would be more dramatic. In the late 1960s, for instance, the Who would borrow ideas from art world happenings and smash their instruments on stage. Here, music performance moved into territories beyond its usual preserve. Later, Punk bands would pit this new version of music happenings against musical competence

musical mastery.

⁸¹ Of course, records are not photos *per se* but rather 'comparable to a photomontage.' (Laing 1990: 188)

altogether. They would abandon musicianship and find the essence of performance in discordant arrangements, flat singing and false notes.

Musical improvisation is a specialist taste. Regular Rock punters are more likely to enjoy behavioural spontaneity - dramatic, reckless, involuntary or unconscious behaviour. Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Jim Morrison have legendary status as 'live' performers, not only because they were innovative musicians who died young, but because their abuse of drugs and alcohol made them appear out of control on stage.

It is in the service of these 'live' qualities that the electronic and digital 'Rock arts' flourished. Beatles fans may have been satisfied by the aura of the band itself, but subsequent acts would need to dramatise and amplify their presence to maintain an audience for repeated stadium gigs. (cf Goodwin 1988/1990)

The ways and means of magnifying aura are manifold. The glam images of David Bowie and Roxy Music, for example, meant that although these musics sounded good in discotheques, their fans still wanted to see these personalities perform, if not emulate their style. With flamboyant dress and make up, these artists gave striking features to what could have been faceless records.

With the help of multi-media technologies, the lead singer or group leader is often made out to be a sort of conductor orchestrating the show. This sometimes extends to positioning the pop star as a deity. On his Dangerous Tour, for example, Michael Jackson waved his arms in a gesture of 'let there be light' (and there was), he emerged from clouds of smoke and ascended to heaven (in an astronaut suit).

Large-screen high-definition video technology has become almost a standard feature of arena and stadium gigs. Not only do these screens portray scenic images and video clips, they are increasingly used to give 'live' close ups of the performing star. On his Secret World tour, Peter Gabriel took this concept to new extremes by strapping a tiny pivoting video camera to his head, treating his audience to shots taken an inch away from his eyes and others practically in his mouth, peering down to see his vocal chords at work. This was an oblique reference to his Grammy award-winning video for 'Digging the Dirt'.

In the 1980s and 1990s, it is not just the record against which the performance was measured, but the music video. To some degree, audiences expect to enjoy the spectacle they saw on television. The 'Baudrillard effect', as Frith has wittily called it, is when 'a concert feels real only to the extent that it matches its TV reproduction.' (Frith 1988: 124-25) So, Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation tour captured not just the flavour of the videos but sometimes even re-enacted them, in what seemed like a step for step reproduction of the choreography.

No matter how dazzling the technological revelation of personality, the band are expected to personify the music. At smaller gigs, in particular, they should *appear* to be the inspired source of the sound. The audience expect to appreciate aura. For example, when Madness played a few reunion gigs in late 1992, they were panned. As one reviewer explained:

Rarely have I seen such a bored bunch of people at a gig. Not the crowd... But [the band who] look as bored as a plank full of drill holes. It was like being at a show by the Australian Madness - Mad Again or somesuch; as if a crew of clones had donned the clothes, got the hits down pat, and dragged themselves out onto the stage. (Melody Maker 2 January 1993)

Although the performers must seem to embody the music, they don't have to be playing it there and then. For this reason, a 'PA' (or 'public appearance', also sometimes called 'track date') by Sister Sledge singing to backing tapes at the Odyssey discotheque in Bristol received a improbably favourable review in that outpost of Indie Rock values, New Musical Express (NME), because they had presence and were the undisputed vocal origin: 'The atmosphere in this cavernous glitzerama niterie borders on volcanic, but Sister Sledge... soak up this scary mass hysteria with seasoned assurance... such is the euphoria three feisty divas and a karaoke machine can inspire for half an hour... great disco, like fine wine, clearly matures with age.' (NME 30 January 1993)

PAs are an *explicit* hybrid of 'live' performance and recorded music. As such their difference from gigs is a matter of degree - the ratio of high tech to old tech, of recorded to 'live' (in the old sense of the word) is inverted. It is also a question of aesthetics. As one fanzine writer compares the two forms:

Gigs are out - PAs are in. A gig was originally a musician's term for a live show or concert... Very often it's a complete mess with feedback, bum notes, inaudible vocals, broken guitar strings, vomit and punch ups. A 'PA' or 'Public Appearance' on the other hand is designed to bring a little order to the proceedings. The band (or more often solo artists) perform their songs to a backing tape or CD. Some will 'mime' totally with not one note actually being sung or played. Others will prefer to sing and play part of the music live whilst using CDs to enhance the backing...

So where does this leave the 'Sweat & Blood' attitude of the good ol' Rock'n'Rollers? In reality they're in a different league, where classic poses, endless guitar solos and the 'macho man' image still rules. (Tab Bumper Techno Issue 1991)

In the late eighties, PAs were a main feature of raves. Raves were formulated as one-off events rather than regular weekly clubs or even shows on tour. This contributed to their status as unique happenings on a scale that was formerly the

lone preserve of the 'live' Rock festival. With raves and rave-style clubs, PAs became more elaborate, involving more than lipsynching by solo singers. Acts like Adamski, The Orb, 808 State and The Prodigy toured clubs and raves, delivering a 'live' show. Samplers, computer sequences and turntables, sometimes with added 'live' vocal and 'improvised' keyboard parts are combined with a laser light shows to create events that were hailed as 'live' and managed to build up artist identity in a way previously not considered possible by these kinds of club dates.

The key to these new kinds of performance was to deliver recorded music that was different from that already available on released records. The bands therefore re-enacted the studio procedures involved in making the music in the first place. As The Orb explained: 'What we're trying to do is take the studio out in front of 2,000 people and mix it live... For previous [tour] excursions... we mixed all the tracks completely differently in the studio, then re-recorded them and ran samples and weird effects over the top live.' (Future Music June 1993)⁸²

The rave format also affected the configuration of the gig. The Shamen, in particular, actively blurred the lines between the gig and the club. Starting off as an Indie band, they got involved with the rave scene and began playing a progressively more dance-orientated sound. They came up with a hybrid

⁸² The battery of music technology played by the members of the Orb includes: two Akai S1100 (one with DAC optical drive), three Alesis A-DATs, an Atari 1040ST with Unitor running Notator, a Casio CZ5000 (with little labels stuck to the keys denoting which key triggers which sample), an old Korg MS-10 monosynth, a MiniMoog (with MIDI), a Numark DM1775A pre-amp DJ mixer, an Oberheim Matrix-12 polysynth, a Roland PC-200 keyboard controller, SCI Prophet 5 (with MIDI retrofit), a Sony Discman, a Technics Quartz SL1210 twin turntables, a Vestax CD-33 double CD and controller and a home-made 'Tweeter Eater' designed to 'punch various parts of the equalisation at random'. (Future Music June 1993)

they called 'Synergy' where their own set was only part of the night's entertainment and DJs like Paul Oakenfold and Colin Faver, MC/rapper Mr C, live keyboards by Irresistible Force and impressive lighting effects were included. The distinction between the musical entertainments of DJ and turntable and 'live' act was effaced. The show was all-inclusive. People were dancing to the DJ and kept dancing when 'the band' came on. They argue that the traditional Rock gig, on the other hand, 'is outmoded... They're no fun to do and no fun to go to: you stand around listening to crappy tapes played through a [public address system], the band comes on and then you go home'. (Face April 1990)

'Liveness' has been a guarantor of the cultural vitality, sincerity and uniqueness of music events. Although once a value assigned exclusively to music performance, in the past decade, 'live' qualities have been increasingly attributed to recorded events. One reason is that the live gig has become mediated more and more by new technologies, many of which include recording technologies. The other reason is that disc dances, particularly their most recent incarnation, raves, have attained the status of unique events that revolve around the 'live' creativities of orchestrating DJs, prepossessing PAs and dancing crowds. Live gigs and varieties of contemporary disc session are best seen on a continuum rather than in opposition.

11. CONCLUSION

Authenticity in popular music and its primary medium, recording, appears at first to be an idiosyncratic value. Upon sustained consideration, however, one can discern material foundations and ideological logics. The vagaries of the value can be related to concrete practices of production and consumption.

With respect to production, I have tried to explore some of the ramifications of 'original' records, the changes in value that occur when the studio is the main site of music production and records precede and prescribe performance. First, records found artistic credibility by exploiting properties specific to them rather than qualities that imitated performance. Second, under certain circumstances, rare and exclusive recordings acquired 'aura'.

This chapter, however, has concentrated on processes of consumption and found that enculturation is key. The enculturation of records for dancing was not automatic but slow enough to be the subject of 'gaps' between several generations. It was (and still is) an uneven process dependent on diverse influences. Its history involves: big businesses, trade unions and copyright law, the semantics of interior design, the social requirements of distinct crowds and the evolution of new professions, the production processes and travel patterns of particular genres, and discourses about the honesty and integrity of music.

Records were no mere substitute for performance, they were a different form altogether - one which fostered new types of event and social space. To harmoniously accommodate such sounds, dances had to change their appearance

and structure. So the discotheque eventually became a site of consumption appropriate to music whose site of production is the studio.

Since Rock'n'Roll, records have become increasingly indispensable, integral and organic to music cultures. They have become the authentic musical axis around which club and rave crowds gather and scenes revolve. In fact, today, British youth culture is dominated by disc dance cultures which fetishise recorded sounds, ally themselves with DJs and assemble at select discotheques. Nevertheless, the culture is 'live' in the sense that DJ and dancing crowd work together to produce unique atmospheres and spontaneous happenings where the audience is the show.

II

DANCE CROWDS: THE MYTH OF THE MAINSTREAM

12. INTRODUCTION: THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF DANCING

Embodied social structures. This means... that social science, in constructing the social world, takes note of the fact that agents are, in their ordinary practice, the subjects of acts of construction of the social world; but also that it aims... to describe the social genesis of the principles of construction and seeks the basis of these principles in the social world. (Bourdieu 1984: 467)

When investigating social structures, it is impossible to avoid entanglement in a web of ideologies and value judgements. Nevertheless, it is important to maintain *analytical* distinctions between: empirical social groups, representations of these people and estimations of their cultural worth. Academic writers on youth culture and subculture have tended to underestimate these problems. They have relied on binary oppositions typical of *us-them* social maps (sometimes their own, sometimes those of their subjects) and combined loaded colloquialisms like the 'mainstream' with academic arguments, ultimately depicting 'mainstream' youth culture as an outpost of either 'mass' or 'dominant' culture.

By comparing clubber discourses with ethnographic observation and market research, I hope, first, to interrogate the notion of the 'mainstream', then, to gain some insight into the distinctions and hierarchies of youth and, finally, to generate another picture of their social and cultural organisation. The use of multiple methodologies is one way to give fuller representation to the complex stratifications and mobilities of contemporary youth culture.

Before this, however, it is worth considering the ways in which the cultural world of youth has been previously constructed by British academics. Dick Hebdige's influential Subculture The Meaning of Style (1979), for example, is heavily dependent on the mainstream as the yardstick against which youth's

'resistance through rituals' and subversion through style is measured. But Hebdige's mainstream is abstract and ahistorical.⁸³ He compares Punk apparel, not to Disco attire or other contemporary clothing, but to 'the conventional outfits of the man and woman in the street'. (Hebdige 1979: 101) He contrasts Punk 'anti-dancing' with the 'conventional courtship patterns of the dancefloor'. (Hebdige 1979: 108) One could point out, however, that 'conventional courtship patterns' have been a rarity in youth dancing since the Twist.

Each reference to the 'mainstream' in Subculture points in a different direction, but if one tallied them up, the marked group would be some version of 'la bourgeoisie' whose function within Hebdige's history is, of course, to be shocked.⁸⁴ While framework complements his repeated characterization (but scant documentation) of subcultural youth as 'predominantly working class', it hardly does justice to the bulk of young people who are left out of the picture. Hebdige's multiple opposition of *avant garde-versus-bourgeoisie*, subordinate-versus-dominant, subculture-versus-mainstream is an orderly ideal which crumbles when applied to historically specific cultural groups of youth.

Nevertheless, inconsistent fantasies of the mainstream are rampant in subcultural studies. They are probably the single most important reason why subsequent cultural studies find pockets of symbolic resistance wherever they look.

⁸³ Hebdige's definition of subcultures doesn't ground his argument either. For him, subcultures are 'loaded down with mystery... suggesting secrecy, masonic oaths, an Underworld.' (Hebdige 1979: 4)

⁸⁴ While Hebdige later qualifies his position, he holds on to this structuring opposition, cf Hebdige 1988.

(cf Morris 1988) Rather than making a clear comparison, weighing the social and economic factors, and confronting the ethical and political problems involved in celebrating the culture of one social group over another, they evoke the chimera of a negative mainstream.

When academics turn their full attention to the mainstream (and don't just infer it from their discussion of subcultures), the results are also often reductive. Geoff Mungham's article 'Youth in Pursuit of Itself' from Working Class Youth Cultures (1976) is based on research done at a *Mecca* dance hall in an unnamed town. Despite the singular site of his research, Mungham contends that his study is not about any particular dance-hall, but about the 'scenario of the mass dance' which is the 'forum for what might be called mainstream working class youth.' (Mungham 1976: 82) In order to make this dance hall stand in for the mainstream, Mungham doesn't rationalize its representativeness but, rather, strips it of its difference and specificity by refusing to mention details of occupation and location and by avoiding cultural references altogether. In fact, according to Mungham, the cultural aspects of the 'mass dance' are insignificant to its real meanings:

While the music may change, while shifting fashions and tastes may chase after new stars and performers, social relationships inside the dance hall stay unchanged. There is an order and youth partakes of it gladly. Respectable working class youth, on its nights out, is largely quiescent and conforming. (Mungham 1976: 92)

Mungham searches for the normal, the average, the routine and the mundane. He positions his study as a counter-balance to sociology's orientation toward the conspicuous and bizarre, repeatedly straining to emphasize the conformity, conservatism and 'sheer ordinariness of this corner of youth culture'.

(Mungham 1976: 101) In the end, Mungham describes the dance as a 'mechanical configuration' and '*Meccanization* of the sexual impulse'. (Mungham 1976: 92) Despite his ethnographic observation, he projects a 'Mass Society' style vision onto the *Mecca* dancers, portraying them in a way not unlike Theodor Adorno depicted jitterbug dancers of the 1940s as 'rhythmically obedient... battalions of mechanical collectivity'. (Adorno 1941: 40)

Both Hebdige and Mungham define subcultures and mainstreams against each other. But are they really dichotomous? As far as I could gather from my participant observation, if you looked at the mainstream for long enough and in sufficient detail, you would find a subculture or many - perhaps not in 'resistant' sense of the word, but certainly in the sense of the earlier formulations of the Chicago school whose subcultures consisted of sub-societies that were not attenuated into lifestyles without a social base. (cf Gordon 1947/1970; Becker 1963, Arnold 1970)

The antithesis set up between mainstream and subculture derives from the high cultural ideologies in which both formulations are entangled. Hebdige perceives his mainstream as bourgeois and his subcultural youths as an artistic vanguard. Whereas Mungham sees his mainstream as a stagnant 'mass', only their deviant 'others' are, by implication, creative and changing. Although assigned different class characteristics, both 'mainstreams' are devalued as normal, conventional majorities.

In her article 'Dance and Social Fantasy', Angela McRobbie questions these value judgements but preserves the binary structure of these social

constructions. (cf McRobbie 1984) McRobbie maintains the distinction between mainstream 'respectable city discos' with 'subcultural alternatives' but instead of exclusively celebrating the latter, she suggests that dancing offers possibilities of creative expression, control and resistance to girls and women in either place. In several essays, McRobbie has explored the substantial complications that gender poses to this binary paradigm, but has stopped short of disputing the dualism. (cf McRobbie 1991)

The mainstream-subculture divide is not the only dichotomy to which the musical worlds of youth are subject. Other sociologists contrast the culture of middle class students with that of working class early-school-leavers. In his study of Keighley youth, for instance, Simon Frith outlines a split between a mostly middle class 'sixth form culture' of individualists who buy albums, listen to Progressive Rock and go to concerts and a working class 'lower fifth form culture' of cult followers who buy singles, listen to 'commercial' music and go to discos. (cf Frith 1981b) He links these research findings to a broader distinction between Rock culture and Pop culture:

the division of musical tastes seemed to reflect class differences: on the one hand, there was the culture of middle-class rock - pretentious and genteel, obsessed with bourgeois notions of art; on the other hand, there was the culture of working class pop - banal, simple-minded, based on the formulas of a tightly knit body of business men. (Frith 1981: 213-214)

Frith admits that this conception of two worlds is a simplification insofar as 'Pop culture' is both younger and predominantly female in addition to being working class. But a further problem arises. While the sixth formers of his study do espouse

this us-them binarism,⁸⁵ his lower fifth formers seem to embrace a more plural vision of music audiences - one in which the sixth form 'hippies' become just one among many youth cultures.⁸⁶ Frith seems to view the terrain of music crowds through the eyes of his middle class student interviewees - the result of a 'natural' and, perhaps, not quite conscious identification.

In his paper 'Nightclubbing: An Exploration After Dark', Stephen Evans similarly universalizes the outlook of the students who now frequent dance clubs and distinguish themselves from a mainstream of working class *Mecca* disco attenders. (cf Evans 1989) Accordingly, Evans finds two distinct nightclub cultures in Sheffield: one 'commercial', the other 'alternative'. The commercial culture takes place in 'glitzy palaces' which play Top 40 chart and party music and is populated by white, early school leavers of working class origin. The 'alternative' culture, by contrast, is situated in darkly lit 'dives', focuses on the newest developments in dance music and is occupied primarily by students.

There are certainly differences between the leisure cultures of early school leavers and further education students, but this is only one measure of difference - and not the one privileged by the working class 'glitzy palace' crowd. Even in a small city like Sheffield, this schema necessarily omits specialist music club nights as well as the city's gay and rocker clubs. It could certainly not cope

⁸⁵ For example, the sixth form students 'differentiated themselves from the masses as a self-conscious elite by displaying exclusive musical tastes'. (Frith 1981: 208)

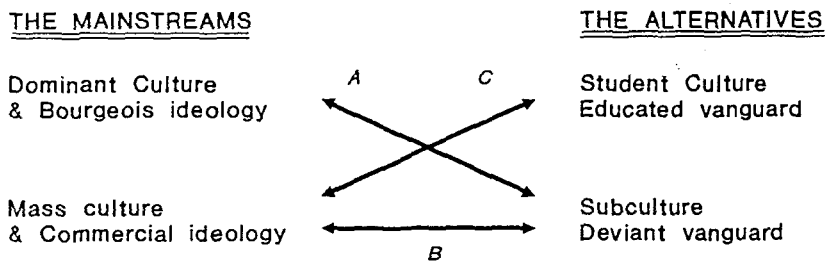
⁸⁶ As one fifth former says, 'I don't know what youth culture means. I think it means what you are - Skin, Greaser, or Hairie. I am none of these'. (Frith 1981: 207)

with the highly differentiated activities of a metropolitan centre like London or the complex cultural axes of the national club scene.

Dichotomies like mainstream/subculture and commercial/alternative do not relate to the way dance crowds are objectively organised as much as to the means by which many youth cultures imagine their social world and measure their cultural worth - their 'subcultural capital'. Hebdige, Mungham, McRobbie, Frith and Evans uncritically reflected the common beliefs of students and subcultures at the time and, with the exception of Frith, got caught up in denigrating or, in the case of McRobbie, celebrating the 'mainstream'. In the 1970s, when the study of popular culture was just beginning, these formulations admirably contributed to our understanding of the social organisation of music culture. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, one need pursue a more complicated picture and explore the ideological functions of a concept like the 'mainstream'.

Table 5

The Divides of Youth Culture



Interestingly, the main British traditions on the social structure of

youth culture contradict each other. One positions the mainstream as a middle class, 'dominant' culture, the other as a working class, 'mass' culture. Some, then, see the alternative as (middle class) student culture, others as (working class) subculture. (In the above diagram, Hebdige and the Birmingham tradition espouse axis *A*; Mungham and McRobbie embrace *B*; Frith and Evans advocate *C*.) Each tradition has tended to subsume the contradictions raised by the other. For example, the subculturalists deal with the complications posed by student culture by arguing that it is not really a 'subculture' but a diffuse 'milieu' within the dominant culture. (cf Clarke et al. 1978) While sociologists, like Frith, have pointed to the student origins of many 'working class' subcultures. (cf Frith and Horne 1987) These discrepancies might equally have been used to pry open the dichotomies themselves.

North American exponents of cultural studies have taken up the task. In his 'The Politics of Music: American Images and British Articulations', Lawrence Grossberg begins by asserting that subcultures and the mainstream have 'fluid boundaries' which are a 'matter of degrees and situated judgements' (Grossberg 1987: 147-148)⁸⁷ Later, he goes further, contending that subculture and mainstream are indistinguishable: 'the mass audience of pop, the mainstream of style, is the postmodern subculture'. (Grossberg 1987: 151) Grossberg does so by conflating (or imploding) polar opposites: the centre is 'a floating configuration of marginality'; homogeneity is 'a social pastiche'; conformity is the pursuit of individualism; authenticity is really cooptation. (Grossberg 1987: 147-148) While

⁸⁷ For a parallel analysis of the American Top Forty, cf Crane 1986 and for an elaboration of Grossberg's theories of proliferating affective subcultures, cf Straw 1991.

these statements are attractive in theory, two problems arise for those concerned with understanding the distinctions of youth. Firstly, it ignores the social significance of the 'mainstream' to youthful maps of the cultural world. Secondly, it ultimately pictures youth as an undifferentiated mass, as homogenous in their heterogeneity and 'in-different' to distinction. In the end, then, Grossberg shuns notions of social *structure* in favour of plurality without pattern or design.⁸⁸

Rather than painting an omniscient picture of the social organisation (or disorganisation) of youth culture, the following sections consider the 'mainstream' as an important feature of the 'embodied social structure' of youth, exploring its ideological functions and social ramifications. It then considers some of the methodological and epistemological issues involved in researching and representing a 'mainstream'.

⁸⁸ While William Straw's article, 'Systems of Articulation, Logics of Change: Communities and Scenes in Popular Music', does not posit homogeneous heterogeneity, it is similarly indifferent to structures of social disparity. It maps out imaginary communities (or 'scenes') with little reference to their material, racial or sexual roots and infers political 'alliances' and 'coalitions' from common buying, listening and dancing habits. (cf Straw 1991)

13. CLUBBER AND RAVER MYTHS OF THE 'MAINSTREAM'

'Clubland', as many call it, is difficult terrain to map. Dance music is characterised by a fast turnover of singles, styles and genres. Club nights continually modify their style, change their name and move their location. Individual clubbers and ravers are part of one crowd, then another, then grow out of going out dancing altogether. Moreover, club culture is very fragmented as well as faddish. Even if the music and the clothes are globally marketed, the crowds are particular, local, segregated and subject to distinctions dependent on the smallest of cultural minutiae.

For these reasons, many regular clubbers would say it is impossible to chart the patterns of national dance crowds. Nevertheless, they constantly catalogue and classify youth cultures according to taste in music, forms of dance, kinds of ritual and style of clothing. They carry around images of the social worlds that make up club culture; these mental maps, rich in cultural detail and value judgement, offer them a distinct 'sense of one's place but also a sense of the other's place'. (Bourdieu 1990: 131)

While most clubbers and ravers have difficulty characterizing their own crowd, they are generally happy to label the crowd to which they don't see themselves as belonging. And while there are many 'other' scenes, most hardcore clubbers see themselves as outside and in opposition to the 'mainstream'. When I began research in 1988, hardcore clubbers of all kinds located the mainstream in the 'chartpop disco', specifically the *Mecca* disco. 'Chartpop' does not refer to the

many different genres that make it onto the Top 40 singles sales chart as much as to a particular kind of dance music which included bands like Erasure and the Pet Shop Boys but was identified most strongly with Stock, Aitken and Waterman (the producers of Kylie Minogue, Jason Donovan, Bananarama, Kim Appleby and other dance-oriented acts).

The oft-repeated, almost universally accepted stereotype of the chartpop disco was that it was a place where 'Sharon and Tracy dance around their handbags'. This crowd was considered unhip and unsophisticated. They were denigrated for having indiscriminate music tastes, lacking individuality and being amateurs in the art of clubbing. They were put down for being a homogeneous herd overwhelmingly interested in the sexual and social rather than musical aspects of clubs. Many clubbers referred to 'drunken cattle markets', while one envisioned a scene where 'tacky men drinking pints of best bitter pull girls in white high heels and Miss Selfridge's mini-skirts.'

This image of the mainstream makes no bones about its assumed demographics. Firstly, the most obvious connotation to those who employ the cliché involves class.⁸⁹ Sharon and Tracy, rather than, say, Camilla and Imogen, are what sociologists have tended to call 'respectable working class'. They are not imagined as poor or unemployed, but as working and aspiring. Secondly, although many clubbers are reluctant to recognise it, the femininity of the stereotype is hard

⁸⁹ When questioned, clubbers (particularly students) will usually acknowledge that the stereotype is classist.

to deny.⁹⁰ A variation on the cliché occasionally substitutes 'Sharon and Kevin' for 'Sharon and Tracy' but the femininity of the image is still reinforced by the handbag, a much fetishised feminine appendage.⁹¹ This 'mainstream' points to the relevance of Andreas Huyssen's 'mass culture as woman' thesis, but here the traditional divide between virile high art and feminised low entertainment is replayed within popular culture itself. (cf also Modleski 1986 and Morris 1988b) Even among youth cultures, there is a double articulation of the lowly and the feminine: disparaged 'other' cultures are characterized as feminine *and* girls' cultures are de-valued as imitative and passive. Authentic culture is described in masculine terms *and* remains the prerogative of boys.

The objectification of young women, entailed in the 'Sharon and Tracy' image, is substantively different from the 'slags or drags', 'mother or pretty waif' frameworks typically identified by feminist sociologists. (cf Cowie and Lees 1981; McRobbie 1991) It is not primarily a vilification or veneration of girls'

⁹⁰ When confronted with the femininity of the cliché, clubbers and ravers are often genuinely shocked and puzzled. The class implications seem to float just below the surface, while the gender connotations are well submerged. This is probably because, in Britain, class is more determining and more politicised than gender. In America, I'm sure one would find the reverse to be the case. The fact that American market research indexes income rather than occupation and relegates class to the area of 'psychographics', while British research investigates 'social grades' as a matter of course, is telling.

⁹¹ British 'handbags' receive much more cultural attention than American 'purses'. Freudian cultural critics could have a field-day with the symbol. For example, Margaret Thatcher's handbag often seemed to be the repository of her (phallic) power. When John Major came into office, many cartoons and comedians, jokingly wondered how he could possibly govern without one. When his cricket bat was unveiled, commentators were quick to point out that it had none of her handbag's authoritative mystique.

sexuality, but a position statement (made by youth of both genders) about girls who are not culturally 'one of the boys'. In being criticised for not being 'hip', mythic 'Sharon and Tracy' point to *distinction* as another level of differentiation and to *subcultural capital* as currency which correlates with and legitimates unequal statuses.

The third social difference suggested by the image of 'dancing around handbags' relates to age and the commitments of adulthood. The handbag is something associated with mature womanhood or with pretending to be grown up. It is definitely *not* a sartorial sign of youth subcultures, nor a form of objectified subcultural capital, but rather a symbol of the financial shackles of adult life. Many young people, irrespective of class, refuse the responsibilities and identities of the work world, choosing to invest their attention, time and money in leisure. Back in the 1940s, in his article 'Age and Sex in the Social Structure of the United States', Talcott Parsons argued that young people espouse a different 'order of prestige symbols' because they cannot compete with adults for occupational status. (Parsons 1964: 94)⁹² They focus less on the rewards of work and derive their self-esteem from leisure - a sphere which is more conducive to fantasies of classlessness and dreams of upward or downward mobility, both of which are central to club and rave

⁹² Bourdieu identifies an analogous pattern for bourgeois youth alone: 'bourgeois adolescents, who are economically privileged and (temporarily) excluded from the reality of economic power, sometimes express their distance from the bourgeois world which they cannot really appropriate by a refusal of complicity whose most refined expression is a propensity towards aesthetics and aestheticism.' (Bourdieu 1984: 55)

culture.⁹³

Having loosened ties with family but not settled with a partner nor established themselves in an occupation, youth are not as anchored in their social place as those younger and older than themselves. Youth is that point in the life-cycle most characterized by insecurity and potential upward or downward mobility. This investment in leisure can be seen as a way that youth refuse or procrastinate being fixed in social space - something Bourdieu calls 'social aging' and describes as that 'slow renunciation or disinvestment... which leads agents to adjust their aspirations to their objective chances, to espouse their condition, become what they are and make do with what they have, even if this entails deceiving themselves as to what they are and what they have...' (Bourdieu 1984: 110-111)

The material conditions of this investment in subcultural capitals result from the fact that youth, from many classes, enjoy a momentary reprieve from necessity.⁹⁴ According to Bourdieu, economic power 'is first and foremost a power to keep economic necessity at arm's length. This is why it universally asserts itself by the destruction of riches, conspicuous consumption, squandering and every form of gratuitous luxury.' (Bourdieu 1984: 55) But *conspicuous*, *gratuitous* and *squandering* might also describe the spending patterns of 16 to 24 year olds. Since

⁹³ Even market reports suggest that 'most nightclubs are aimed at a highly aspirational market of young people... who are brand and image conscious.' (Intel 1992)

⁹⁴ This is true of youth from all but the poorest sections of the population, perhaps the top 75%. While youth poverty, homelessness and unemployment are widespread, there is still remarkable discretionary income amongst the bulk of 16-24 year olds. Social class and consumer spending are discussed with respect to market research below.

the 1950s, the 'teenage' or 'youth market' has been characterised by market researchers as displaying 'economic indiscipline'. Without adult overheads like mortgages and insurance policies, youth are free to spend on goods which form 'the nexus of teenage gregariousness outside the home' like clothes, music, the cinema, club entry fees, drinks and drugs. (Abrams 1959: 1) Freedom from necessity, therefore, does not mean that youth have wealth so much as that they are exempt from adult commitments to the accumulation of economic capital. In this way, youth can be seen as momentarily enjoying what Bourdieu argues is reserved for the bourgeoisie, i.e. the 'taste of liberty or luxury'. Youth subcultures exhibit that 'stylization of life' or 'systemic commitment which orients and organises the most diverse practices' that develops as the objective distance from necessity grows. (Bourdieu 1984: 55-56)

Toward the middle of 1989, in the wake of extensive newspaper coverage of Acid House culture, clubbers began to talk of a new mainstream. Its music was variously called Acid House, Bleep or Techno. Wherever its actual location - a school disco, an old ballroom, a basement club, an aircraft hangar or farmer's field - the event simulated a 'rave' or dance event where the crowd were said to become one under the hypnotic flash of the strobe and the high 'beat per minute' music.

Instead of being populated by 'Sharons and Tracys', this culture was inhabited by 'mindless ravers' or 'Acid Teds'.⁹⁵ Teds were understood to travel

⁹⁵ Scottish clubbers seem to refer to 'Acid casuals' and 'Acid Neds' rather than 'Teds'. Although there are no direct stylistic connections between these 'Acid Teds' of the late 1980s and the Teddy Boys of the 1950s, both were understood as laddish

in same-sex mobs, support football teams, wear kickers boots and be out of their head. Like Sharon and Tracy, they were white, heterosexual, suburban and working class (perhaps less respectably so). But unlike the girls, the ravers espoused the subterranean values proper to a youth culture. They were into drugs, particularly Ecstasy or 'E', and their music was not identified as 'Pop' even though it dominated the Top 20 Compilation Album charts throughout 1990, 1991 and 1992 with titles like Hardcore Ecstasy, Awesome 2 and Steamin! - Hardcore '92.⁹⁶

Rather than fully mainstream, however, Acid Teds were positioned as second-wave Acid House fans, media-inspired imitators, phoney followers. The distinction between the authentic original and the hanger-on is perennial. In 1960s Britain, aspiring Beats were called 'Pseuds' and aspiring Mods were called 'Tickets'. These distinctions are partly about age - the older connoisseur deplores the naive enthusiasm of the younger fan. They also about class insofar as they insinuate that the cultural identity has moved up or down-market to that slice of the skilled working class positioned as the 'mainstream'. Either way, they tell of losing distinction and inevitable merging with the mass.

When the culture came to be positioned as truly 'mainstream' (rather than just behind), however, it was feminised. Talk of 'Acid Teds' was superseded by discussions of 'raving Sharons' and 'Techno Tracys'. As one clubber wrote, 'The rave scene is dead and buried. There is no fun in going to a legal rave when

and working class.

⁹⁶ Rave music was said to have become so mainstream that even Pete Waterman, doyen of the chartpop disco, has jumped on the bandwagon, producing 2 Unlimited, a rave act which achieved several Top Ten singles.

Sharons and Tracys know where it is as soon as you buy a ticket.' Even consumer magazines ran spoof columns, 'Six of the best ways to be a Techno Tracy', which advised readers to 'discard your 25 carat gold belcher chains in favour of a crystal pendant' and 'laugh at the girls you've left behind at the local disco, because 'they just don't understand good music'. (Face November 1991)

Some clubbers and ravers might want to defend these visions by arguing that Stock, Aitken and Waterman, then Acid House-come-Techno respectively dominated the charts in 1987-88, then 1989-91. But there are several problems with this logic. First, the singles sales chart is mostly a pastiche of niche sounds which reflect the buying patterns of many minorities rather than a majority. (cf Crane 1986) Second, buyers of the same records do not necessarily form a coherent social group. Third, whether these 'mainstreams' reflect empirical social groups or not, they exhibit the burlesque exaggerations of an imagined 'other'. *Teds* and *Tracys*, like *lager louts*, *sloanes* and *yuppies*, are more than euphemisms of social class and status, they demonstrate 'how we create groups with words'. (Bourdieu 1990: 139) The activities of 'Sharon and Tracy' should by no means be confused with the dance culture of working class girls. The distinction reveals more about the cultural values and social world of hardcore clubbers because, to quote Bourdieu again, 'nothing classifies somebody more than the way he or she classifies.' (Bourdieu 1990: 132)

14. ETHNOGRAPHIES OF 'HIPNESS': PARTICIPATION VERSUS OBSERVATION

Howard Becker's ethnographic study of dance musicians in the late forties (published in The Outsiders 1963) offers several clues to the uses and abuses of the 'mainstream'. Becker investigated how the white, middle class jazz musicians appreciated themselves as 'hip' and disdained their audience as 'square'. To be hip was to possess a mysterious attitude which could not be acquired through education and which ensured one's membership in an exclusive culture. The hip musicians went against social conventions and valued idiosyncrasy, whereas 'squares' were considered intolerant and ignorant: 'they don't know what it is all about.' (Becker 1963: 91) The musicians were so quick to differentiate themselves from 'those of conventional society' that Becker surmised that the primary function of the musicians' esoteric tastes was to make this 'differentiation unmistakably clear'. (Becker 1963: 98)

In the early 1960s, Ned Polsky researched the cultural world' of Greenwich Village Beatniks, finding that the Beats distinguished not only between being 'hip' and 'square', but added a third category of the 'hipster' who shared the Beatnik's fondness for drugs and jazz, but was said to be a 'mannered show off regarding his hipness'. (Polsky 1967: 149) According to Polsky, the overwhelming majority of Beats were neither exhibitionists nor publicity seekers but precisely the opposite: 'the cool world is an iceberg, mostly underwater'. (Polsky 1967: 151)

Club and rave versions of 'hipness' very much follow this logic, down

to alliances with black culture, associations with drugs and subdivisions of labels. Though continually changing their choice of words, youth have long distinguished between the 'hip' and the 'square' in order to construct absolute oppositions between themselves and adults and children, and themselves and other young people. In this context, to be 'square' means to identify with the adult world of work without the time or inclination to devote oneself to the pursuit of alternative culture. It connotes being trapped in the recesses of received, parental and/or mass culture. It suggests a lack of independence and individuality and an embracement of the subordinate status accorded to young adults. Conversely, to be 'hip' is to be emancipated from the shackles of family life, delivered from drab domesticity, free to be who one wants to be. Not surprisingly, 'square' is not a self-identification of clubbers. (Generally, only people who no longer feel young will identify themselves as being or having been 'square'.) Hipness is perhaps best understood as youth-orientated subcultural capital. Although 'there is no way out of the game of culture', youth certainly attempt to change the rules. (Bourdieu 1984: 12)

However, the term 'mainstream' also has different emphases than 'square'. It is more directly related to the idea of a mass, distance from which is a measure of clubber and raver subcultural capital. Youth's discourses of authenticity and distinction are as anti-mass culture as those of the art world. But the two should not be confused. (This is a difficulty in Horne and Frith 1988) Certainly, both discourses criticise mass culture for being derivative, shallow, manufactured and *femme*. But they differ insofar as club cultural ideology romanticises the 'street' and the crowd, not artists' studios and individual genius.

Moreover, rather than the dreaded 'trickle down', the problem for *under-ground sub-culture* is popularisation by a gushing up to the mainstream. These metaphors are not arbitrary for they betray a sense of social place. Subcultural ideology implicitly gives alternative interpretations and values to young people's, particularly young men's, subordinate status; it re-reads the social world.

In the course of four years ethnographic research, I was unable to find a crowd I could comfortably identify as typical, average, ordinary, majority or mainstream.⁹⁷ Not that I didn't witness people dancing to 'chartpop' or to House and Techno music at raves. On the contrary, I observed all sorts of different configurations of these crowds. Several times, I even observed the feminine and masculine mainstreams together in the same room. At a Glasgow club in early 1989, for example, the music alternated between 'chartpop' and what had just ceased to be called 'Acid House' and the population of the dancefloor fluctuated according to the genres. It went from being entirely female with the exception of one boy (who was, for that night, 'one of the girls'), to all male with the exception of a couple of girls (who danced in a world of their own to everything). But I also observed predominantly female rave-oriented high-fashion clubs, gay and upper class 'chartpop discos', and many 'respectable working class' alternative clubs.

To apply the label 'mainstream' to any of these would have run the risk of denigrating or normalizing the crowd in question. I could always find

⁹⁷ Some might argue that this was because my ethnographic research concentrated on London and Glasgow where crowds are fragmented and specialist tastes reign. But, as I argue below, the 'mainstream' poses problems for sociological methods which are more rudimentary than urban bias.

something that distinguished them - if not regional and local differences, then shades of class, education and occupation, gradations of gender and sexuality, hues of race, ethnicity or religion. Ethnography is a qualitative method that emphasizes the diverse and the particular. The mainstream, by contrast, is an abstraction that assumes a look of generality and a quantitative sweep.⁹⁸ Moreover, participant observation is not equipped to establish whether a particular dance crowd is nationally dominant unless, of course, it is mass-observation proposing to quantify inspections of Britain's over 4000 nightclubs.

One thing foregrounded by my dance club research is that ethnography is not one method but two. Moreover, the two methods, participation and observation, are not necessarily complementary and often conflict. As a participating insider, one adopts the group's views of their social world by privileging what they *say*. As an outside observer, however, one gives credence what one *sees*. In this case, the results of the two methods contrasted dramatically.

The 'mainstream' was a perennial point of discursive reference, perpetually absent from view. If experience doesn't yield a 'mainstream', then where do clubbers acquire their ideas about chartpop discos and raving mobs? Many clubbers who put down the mainstream confess that they have never attended such a dance club. Moreover, they use a limited repertoire of cultural details, metaphors and metonyms - a fact which suggests that their knowledge of these other crowds is mostly second-hand, either heard along grapevines or gathered from media sources.

⁹⁸ As suggested earlier, for this reason, I find it incredible that Mungham (1976) professes to offer an ethnography of mainstream dancing by doing research in a single dance hall.

Both mainstreams are, in fact, closely associated with specific media texts. The 'dancing around handbags' crowd are imagined first and foremost as an enthusiastic audience of Top of the Pops (for over 25 years, the key point of exposure for the singles sales chart) and, secondarily, as people who naively identify with The Hitman and Her (a late-night programme presented by Pete Waterman of the above named producer trio, Stock, Aitken and Waterman).⁹⁹ While 'Acid Teds' were characterized as Sun readers (the widest read paper in Britain, with a daily circulation of between three and four million).¹⁰⁰

In contemporary Britain, the media are bound to be an important source of information about other social groups and, consequently, a means of orientating and visualizing one's social maps. But it is a different case, when rather than drawing conclusions from the representation itself, one imagines an audience and infers a homogeneous taste culture from a sound and style. Like its forbearer the mass, the mainstream is to a large extent read off media texts. Theodor Adorno associated the worst tendencies of mass culture with the 'radio generation' much as David Riesman defined his indiscriminate majority as 'the audience for the larger radio stations and the hit parade', so club crowds conceive their mainstreams with the aid of national television and tabloids. (Adorno 1942: 40; Riesman 1950: 8) This process may be common to other interest groups, but it is inflected by the youthful common sense that club culture is the inverse of broadcasting's domestic

⁹⁹ As two clubbers respectively explained: chartpop discos are 'full of the Hitman and Her elements' or full of people who 'think Top of the Pops is trend-setting'.

¹⁰⁰ Local listings and subcultural consumer magazines are crucial to this process of labelling. cf Chapter III.

and familial accessibility and that, among middle and lower middle class youth cultures, it is the antithesis of widely disseminated tabloid talk. The concept of the mainstream grows out of the inextricability of the media and lived culture.¹⁰¹

Disparaged others like the mainstream contribute to the feeling of community and sense of shared interests and identity that many people report to be the primary appeal of clubs and raves. In letters written in the summer of 1990, clubbers and ravers explain:

It is so wicked to go somewhere and be surrounded by loads of people your own age and into the same stuff - the last time you had that it was at school, but that wasn't through choice!

The appeal of clubs comes down to people who you would like to surround yourself with. Being with people who are similar to yourself creates a feeling of belonging...

The thrill (and it really is a thrill) of going to clubs is the communal experience, the feeling of sharing something with other like-minded people.¹⁰²

Many clubbers talk about the rightness and naturalness of the crowds in which they have had good experiences. They feel that they fit in, that they are

¹⁰¹ No wonder that the consensus in North America is that the mainstream is a cluster of subcultures. (cf Crane 1986; Grossberg 1987; Straw 1991) The size, ethnic diversity and proliferation of regional rather than national media in the USA weaken the myth of the 'mainstream'. While the fact the 'mainstream' is a more powerful idea (to youth and academics alike) in the UK can be related to a predominately white, Anglo-Saxon population and to the primacy of national media centralised in London.

¹⁰² The feeling of belonging can override obvious social differences. A straight woman who only goes dancing in gay men's clubs writes: 'I tell my [boyfriend] that this is my private - among 2000 people - freak out session... I do not want him to come with me when I go out dancing - for one thing the venue is full of "those gays and dykes"... plus this is one place that is my place... I love to wander around the club and feel unthreatened by being female...'

integral to the group. The experience is not of conformity, but spontaneous affinity: they are familiar strangers. This is most important because clubbing is one aspect of that 'well developed leisure activity, the discovery of self'. (Dorn and South 1989: 179)

It is worth noting that 'crowd' is the casual word used by clubbers and ravers to describe their dancing peers. It is an appropriate term to describe the collections of people who go out dancing for it implies a congregation of limited time and unity, but leaves the exact structure open to further definition, suggesting neither the hierarchical structure of a 'gang' nor the equal statuses of a 'peer group'. Crowds may contain a nucleus of regulars, degrees of integration and/or clusters of cliques. Unlike the 'public' or the 'mass', they are local and splintered. Moreover, they are not simply a consumer group or an audience, because they are also the show.¹⁰³

The door policies are the most obvious means by which the crowd are segmented and regulated. (As discussed elsewhere, however, it is in fact only a last measure, cf Introduction and Chapter III). Here, the key differences are visual. Even if less than 5% of the British population is black, race is a primary

¹⁰³ For the colloquial speaker, the power of the word 'scene' lies in its elusiveness and euphemism and, as far as I'm concerned, it is precisely this vague quality which renders the term impotent for more than casual academic use. For example, Will Straw (following Shanks 1991) defines a musical scene as 'that cultural space in which a range of music practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization.' (Straw 1991: 369) 'Scenes' all too easily lose their social footing and float aimlessly. Crowds, by contrast, are explicit and concrete.

distinction.¹⁰⁴ After the body itself, clothes are the key means of regulating the crowd. It is the door staff's job to compose a crowd, to style the club's internal image, contribute to its cohesive total environment. Door people can be seen not only as key readers, but authors, in their arbitration of the 'meaning of style'.¹⁰⁵ Some clubbers liken getting through the door to passing an exam: one need study the look, prepare the body and stay cool under pressure. This does not mean that club crowds are stylistically or superficially similar rather than socially alike. Clothing is a potent indicator of social aspiration and position, or as Tom Wolfe put it, 'fashion is the code language of status'. (Wolfe 1974: 23) It is for this reason that items of clothing frequently act as metonyms for social groups. 'Blue collar', 'white collar' or handbags and kickers). Clothes are a form of objectified subcultural capital.

Despite being 'similar' and 'like-minded', when asked to describe their crowd in demographic terms, clubbers are inclined to say they are 'mixed'. This might best be understood as the vision of difference entailed in experiential observation. Just as other crowds are assumed to be homogeneous, so own crowds

¹⁰⁴ For an insightful analysis of the way clubs employ black bouncers to implement racist door policies, cf Mungham 1976.

¹⁰⁵ Authors like Dick Hebdige and Elizabeth Wilson de-contextualise clothes and overlook the role of the reader in their discussions of the meaning of style. (cf Hebdige 1979; Wilson 1985) Rather than privileging their own interpretations (which result, in part, from the interpretative community of North London intellectuals to which they can be seen, despite their differences, to both belong), they might have kept clothes in situ and anchored sartorial meaning in key readers like the doorman. In this way, their cultural studies would not conflate what Anne Hollander is careful to distinguish, i.e. clothes in works of art and clothes in real life. (cf Hollander 1975) For further work on youth and fashion, cf McRobbie 1989.

are perceived as heterogeneous. But, generally, it is observable that most clubs have 'master statuses', be they sexual, racial, occupational or based on other class fractions.¹⁰⁶ In the period of my research, sexuality was the most strict axis of difference along which crowds were segregated.¹⁰⁷ Homosexuality is a master status to the extent that listing magazines often publish the week's gay clubs in a separate section. After that, it varies with the club, with demographics fragmenting into fractions of taste.

Popular discourses about dance crowds have the crucial function of anchoring and orienting their beholders in the social world. But as their view of the social organisation of youth is the product of both a specific lived experience of the social structure and a vicarious encounter with other social groups through national broadcast and newspaper media, their social maps must be carefully cross-referenced. Sociologists of youth and music culture have often unselfconsciously espoused then universalized the view of a particular student or sub-culture. While it is important to take up youth's perspectives and grant credibility to their accounts of the world (cf Becker 1967), it is vital to contextualise, compare and contrast their

¹⁰⁶ In his article, 'The Dilemmas and Contradictions of Status', Everett Hughes argues that race, sexuality, class and professional standing take on different precedences in different contexts, cf Hughes 1945.

¹⁰⁷ This probably changes in different historical periods and along with different fashions. The New Romantic, 'gender-bending' clubs of the early 1980s were reported to be sexually mixed. The late 1980s may have seen a decline in gay/straight mixed clubs because of the rise of AIDS and anti-gay legislation like Clause 28 and 29 which led to increasing separatism on the part of the gay and lesbian communities and increased homophobia on the part of young heterosexuals. Another contributing factor might be that, compared to other club cultures, rave was not much about exploring gender and sexuality. A vogue for cross-dressing in 1991-92, with clubs like 'Kinky Gerlinky', shifted this slightly.

outlooks. Only then, can one figure out how these many senses of place and embodied structures combine to form youth cultural hierarchies.

15. MARKET RESEARCH OF NIGHTCLUBS, YOUTH AND MUSIC¹⁰⁸

Just as clubber and raver discourses have the important function of orienting their beholders in the social world, so the figures of marketing research are meant to give marketers a picture of the social position of a product or practice. Both discourses therefore have vested interests in the empirical world and both are limited by the purposes to which they are put. Marketing research, for example, doesn't understand 'crowds', but population segments and other statistical stratifications. It doesn't consider social groups or social spaces, but consumer groups and, of course, markets. Markets are defined by different organisations in different ways. Generally, however, they are understood as 'the total demand for a product or service' which can measure existing or potential in numbers of people or pounds. (Lancaster and Massingham 1988: 119)¹⁰⁹

While the qualitative methods of ethnography highlight the diverse and the particular, the quantitative methods of marketing research emphasize the general

¹⁰⁸ It is worth pointing out that Bourdieu's theory of distinction is based on quantitative research not unlike contemporary market research. His 1963 survey featured 692 subjects, which is roughly the minimum for a representative sample in Britain today. However, when Bourdieu carried out more research in 1967-68, he simply added the new findings, bringing the total number of subjects to 1,217. (cf Bourdieu 1984: 505) This would be considered a major flaw by the standards of contemporary marketing research, which often run surveys annually or biennially to monitor changes in taste.

¹⁰⁹ A market is often specified further as 'people with needs to satisfy, the money to spend and the willingness to spend it.' (Lancaster and Massingham 1988: 11)

trend.¹¹⁰ So, where my participant observation of many dance crowds was unable to proffer a mainstream, the macro-sociological tools of market research make it ideal for grasping such abstract formations. The following section asks several questions. First, what might be the empirical grounds for the demographics and distinctions of the mythic mainstream crowds? Second, can one identify (by other means) a mainstream, in the sense of a 'majority', when it comes to youth or dance culture? And, finally, what are the strengths and limits of marketing research in this context.

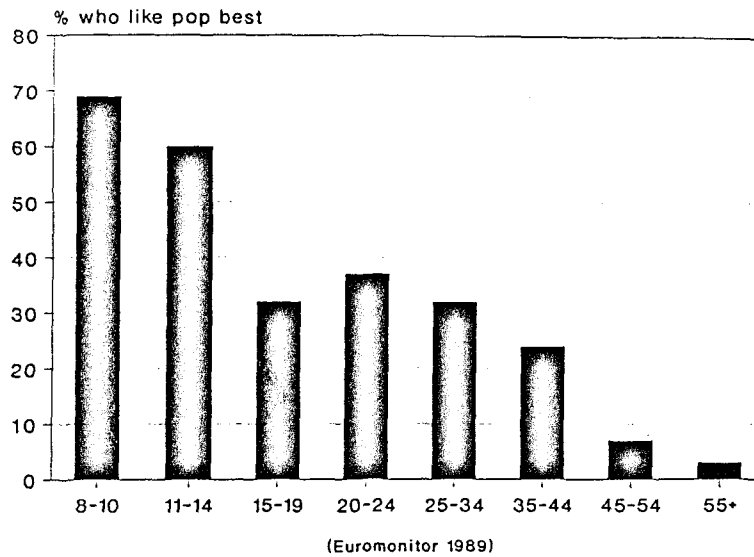
There is relatively little market research into the population of dance clubs. Few nightclub owners are in a financial position to commission their own surveys and, because dance clubs are not big advertisers, they cannot rely on information from the bulk of research which is advertising-led. Mintel Leisure Intelligence's 'Nightclubs' 1990 and 1992 are the only two published special reports to concentrate exclusively on clubs.¹¹¹ Youth and music, however, are subject to regular and systematic research.

¹¹⁰ While marketing research sometimes includes qualitative small group interviews, the bulk of research is quantitative. Market research is more than simply a method; it is a method in a specific industrial context.

¹¹¹ Leisure in general is not heavily researched. In 1991, the ten industries which spent the most on market research were, in descending order: food and soft drinks; media; public services and utilities; alcoholic drinks; health and beauty aids; financial services; vehicle manufacturers; central and local government; pharmaceutical companies; business and industrial. (AMSO quoted in Marketing 19 March 1992)

Table 6

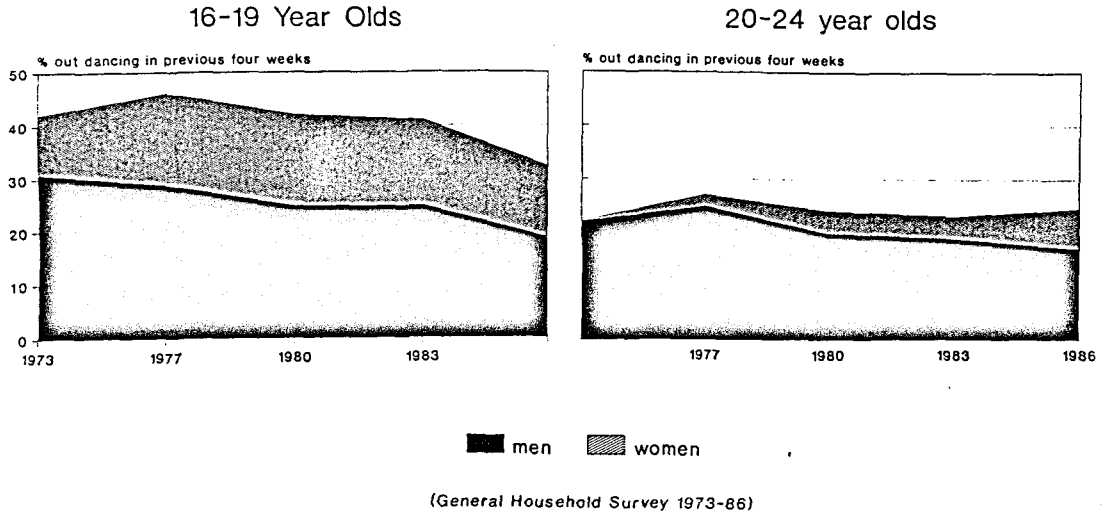
Preference for Pop by Age



As demonstrated in the Introduction, the first axis along which to define the nightclub market is by age. The most avid clubbers are between 15 and 24 years old. It should come as no surprise, then, that 'pop' is most popular among children (8-10 year olds), followed by pre-teens (11-14s). Clubbing age groups prefer other kinds of music. Less than a third of 15-19s and just more than a third of 20-24s said pop was their favourite music. In other words, it is unlikely that pop music is preferred among more than a small segment of clubbers. Regular clubbers are more likely to have specialist music tastes, if only because they consume music in a dance setting and access their music beyond TV and radio. Given these figures, it is doubtful that chartpop discos are in the majority. Moreover, when regular clubbers disparage chartpop, they belittle the preferred sounds and styles of 'teenyboppers' rather than their clubbing contemporaries.

Table 7

The Gender Differences of Dancing



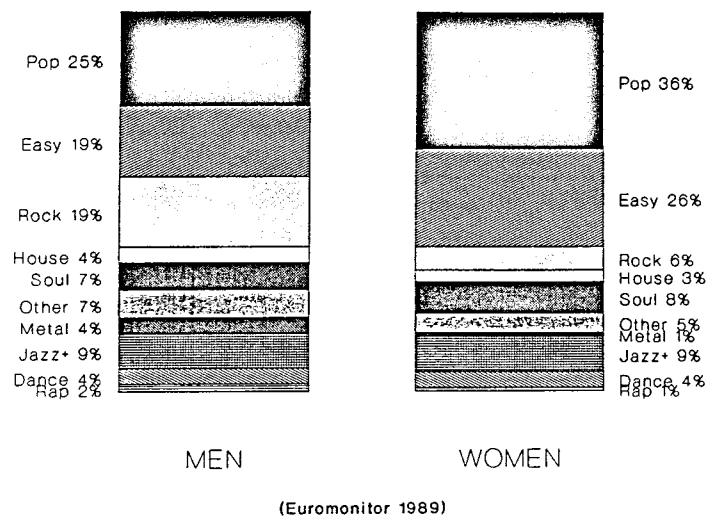
Gender is another factor crucial to the composition of dance crowds. Consistently over the past two decades, girls have gone out dancing more than boys. Girls start clubbing at a younger age, so the disparity between 16-19 year old boys and girls is considerably more than that between 20-24 year old men and women.¹¹² Dancing is, in fact, the only out-of-home leisure activity that women engage in more frequently than men. Men are ten times more likely attend a sporting event, twice as likely to attend live music concerts and marginally more

¹¹² If the discourses about rave culture are any reliable indication, there may have been a slight rise in men going out dancing in 1988 and 1989. Unfortunately, the General Household Survey ceased to index dancing in 1987, so current figures are unavailable.

inclined to visit the cinema. (General Household Survey)¹¹³ When it comes to preferences rather than the above depicted practices, gender is again decisive, for the first choice for an evening out for women between 15 and 24 is a dance club whereas the most popular choice of men the same age is a pub. (Mintel 1988)

Table 8

Genre Preferences by Gender



Girls and women are also more likely to identify their taste in music with pop. Over a third of women (of all ages), compared to about a quarter of men, say it is their favourite type of music. Women spend less time and money on music, the music press and going out, and more on clothes and cosmetics. (Mintel 1988; Euromonitor 1989) One might assume, therefore, that they are less sectarian and specialist in relation to music because they literally and symbolically invest less in their taste in music and participation in music culture. With their American

¹¹³ Leisure shopping, however, was not included in this survey.

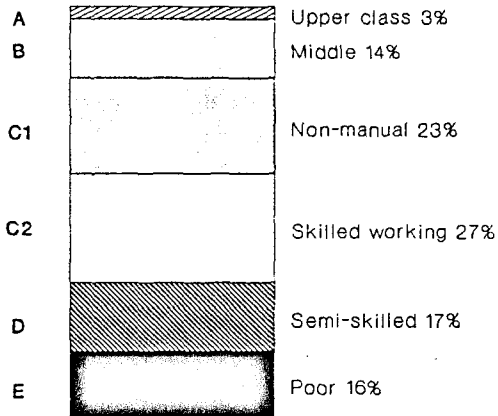
research, Christenson and Peterson found marked gender differences in attitudes to the 'mainstream' amongst American youth. Their research suggested that men regarded the label *mainstream* as 'essentially negative, a synonym for *unhip*' whereas women understood it as 'another way of saying *popular* music'. (Christenson and Peterson 1988: 298) Moreover, their women respondents were more likely to say that they used music 'in the service of secondary gratifications (e.g. to improve mood, feel less alone) and as a general background activity'. In other words, they describe male 'music use and allegiance' as 'central and personal' and female orientation to music as 'instrumental and social'. (Christenson and Peterson 1988: 299)

A predilection for pop should not be confused, as it often is, with a lack of discrimination. The many different sounds that cross-over to make pop in Britain are no less complex than the niche sounds of less popular genres. In fact, there is much fast and fluid movement between specialist genres (like House, Hiphop, Indie, Gothic Punk and Heavy Metal) and pop, only the latter is said by some to be degraded by familiarity, too widespread approval and too little distinction.

Table 9

SOCIAL GRADES

National Profile: Households 1990



Class is understood by marketing research in terms of 'social grades'.

These grades are determined on the basis of occupation alone and slotted into one of six ranks. The resultant hierarchy weds economic and cultural capital. So, for example, the C1 white collar, lower-middle class are ranked above the C2, skilled manual workers even though the latter have a higher average income.¹¹⁴ Generally, however, the scale descends from those with the highest incomes and longest educations to those with the least. While the grades are remarkably predictive of certain kinds of commodity consumption, they are probably weakest when it comes to youth because it is the point in one's life-cycle when occupation is the least reflective of class. For example, undergraduate students living on grants are categorized as C1 regardless of whether they have recently come from A or D

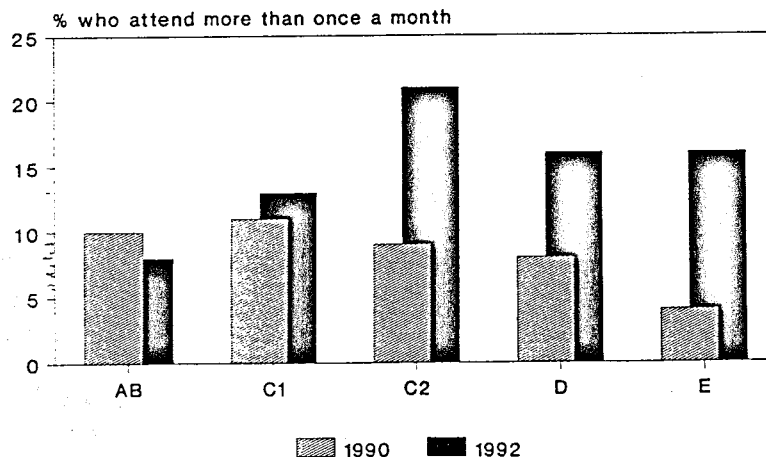
¹¹⁴ According to Chippindale and Horrie (1990), the C2 social group form the core of the *Sun*'s readership and were responsible for delivering Conservative majorities in the 1979 and 1983.

homes.

As a result, the information about class and clubs that can be sifted out of the research is often contradictory. For reasons that relate to high disposable income and physical mobility, up-market ABC1s go out more often, but not always to dance clubs more frequently. (Mintel 1988; Mintel 1990) Down-market C2DEs, however, are more likely to prefer Pop, but only slightly (with only a 4% discrepancy between the social grades compared to the 11% differential between the sexes). (Euromonitor 1989) Within the C2DEs, it is the skilled working class (C2) who consistently rate pop a bit higher than other groups. (Mintel 1989) Generally, the conclusions on class are vague and contradictory. Table 10, for example, demonstrates that, in 1990, BMRB research carried out for Mintel found that going to nightclubs was biased towards middle/lower middle class ABC1s, while in 1992, they found a marked C2DE, working class bias to the activity.

Table 10

Clubbers by Social Grade 1990 & 1992



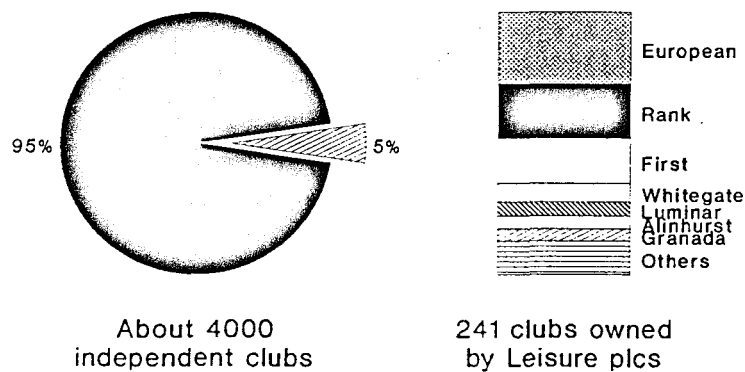
(Mintel 1990 & 1992)

Taken as a whole, these market statistics corroborate the feminine, younger-than-youth and, to a lesser extent, working class features of the crowd imagined for the 'chartpop disco'. It would seem that the 'dancing around handbags' stereotype gets its demographics right, then adds ageist, sexist and classist value judgements. However, this is not to say that its vision of the mainstream is anything more than an extrapolation and abstraction. What the figures do establish, however, is that the 'mainstream' is a nebulous minority, rather than a 'silent majority'. (cf Baudrillard 1983b) It's existence is neither social nor statistical, but an imaginative fiction based on fact.

To further illuminate the structure of British dance crowds, it is worth considering in detail the institution that has been consistently identified as the site of the mainstream by dance crowds and academics - namely, the *Mecca* disco.

Table 11

U.K. Nightclub Ownership 1992



(Mintel 1992)

The dance market is lamented by the leisure industry for being 'highly fragmented' since publicly listed companies own and operate only 5% of all Britain's nightclubs, with an estimated market share of around 20%.¹¹⁵ In 1990, *Mecca* was taken over by *Rank Leisure* and its corporate brochure claimed that although it owned only 58 nightclubs (which had declined to 50 by 1992), because they were large and well attended venues, they had the largest market share with 10% of admissions. *Mecca* (and things did not change substantially under *Rank*) was understood as an old fashioned business with highly centralized operations and hierarchically ranked brand name chains: their main lines, *Ritz* and *5th Avenue*, followed by their 'smaller, more intimate and exclusive brand', *Cinderella*, *Rockerfellas* and topped by their flagship, *The Palais* in Hammersmith.¹¹⁶ Despite their mid-week student nights and attempts to woo up-market Bs, they have a solidly C2 customer base.

It was relevant to the late eighties image of *Mecca* discos that the majority of Pete Waterman's *Hitman* and *Her* TV shows have been shot on location in *Mecca* venues and that the Waterman produced artists, Kylie Minogue and Jason Donovan did their initial national tours in *Mecca* discos. (Waterman, in fact, got his start as a DJ at a *Mecca* Ballroom in the 1960s.)

¹¹⁵ This is markedly different from the composition of the music industry, for example, where the six largest companies are responsible for 70% of the singles and albums charts.

¹¹⁶ Despite their centralized operations, *Mecca* dance halls have been the home of several alternative fashion cultures. For example, Tottenham *Mecca* was a Teddy Boy hang out in the 1950s (and has since then been the site of many alternative music cultures) and Blackpool *Mecca* was a hub of the Northern Soul scene in the 1970s.

Whatever its position in the past, the *Mecca* disco can be seen as something much more specific than mainstream. With a 10% market share and a C2 dance crowd, it is possible to imagine this 'chartpop disco' as yet another niche culture, but one located half way up (or down) the class structure, which is occasionally televised and frequently positioned as average and standard.

Mecca-come-Rank was the only company to consistently attempt to provide branding and increase consumer awareness of brand image. In the past couple of years, however, they came to realise that their branding policy actually facilitated its negative positioning as the mainstream, and so they abandoned all attempts at a single unifying brand concept and their venues have been renamed under individual banners. As Mintel reported it, 'Rank does not see any advantages of nationwide branding in this market'. (Mintel 1992)¹¹⁷

It is difficult to find majorities when it comes to dance culture. Even statistically, youth and music markets are fragmented. In one of the more detailed reports on youth in recent years, the British Market Research Bureau and Mintel claim that a mass of teenage consumers no longer exists. They write:

Marketers and advertisers should be constantly aware that the young are not a broadly homogeneous group taking part in a mass event called the late 1980s (as was to some extent the case in the 1960s or early 1970s). In the U.K., youth culture, if it exists at all, is made up of a highly diverse mixture of subcultures. (Mintel 1988)

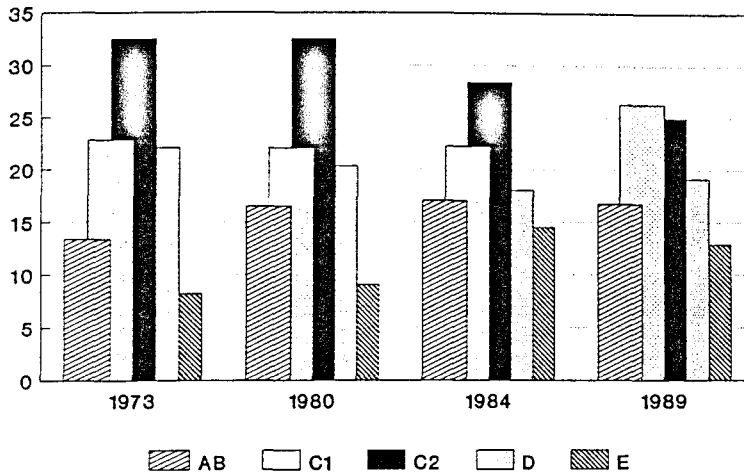
According to JICNARS, C2s have shrunk from accounting for 32.5% of the population in 1973 to 24.9% of the pop in 1989/90, while D's have shrunk

¹¹⁷ Marketers of many kinds are desperate to be mainstream in the sense of being generic for the norm, e.g. Biro for ballpoint pen or Kleenex for tissues. However, Mecca for mainstream nightclub is bad for business.

even further, from 32.1% to 19.1 in the same sixteen years. As Table 12 demonstrates, the other social grades have grown by several percent.

Table 12

Social Grades, 1973-1989
Percentages of all adults over 15



The shifts demonstrated in the above graph are not only to be found in the social structure per se but in business thinking. Over the past twenty years, commercial discourses have moved away from mass marketing to target or niche marketing. Might this be responsible for a new vision of difference? Marketers now find C2 niche markets where they once saw the masses? It is worth noting that, in the music business, the mainstream has long been characterised by 'cross-over' or an accumulation of smaller markets which culminates in 'mainstream success'.

Even when omnibus market research sees diversity, it ignores two key differences of dance club culture. For, in addition to age, gender and class, both going to dance clubs and the formation of dance crowds are conditioned by sexuality and race. This is not just to say that their rates of clubbing are not monitored separately, but that black and gay dance cultures are crucial sources for youth's

cultural alternatives.¹¹⁸ Young people habitually adopt tastes and fashions which obfuscate parental class cultures by borrowing from taboo cultures. Jon Savage has argued that the camp and kitsch sensibilities of gay male culture have been repeatedly taken up by British youth. (cf Savage 1988) In an American context, Stephen Lee has argued that the trendy club scene often maintains its esotericism by hiding in gay clubs and drawing from gay cultures which threaten the college 'jocks'. More often noted is British youth's habit of borrowing from African-American and African-Caribbean culture - not necessarily with much understanding of the original culture and often with a romantic, 'orientalist' appropriation of Black cultural tropes. (cf Hebdige 1979; Said 1984) Even the word 'hip' is said to have its origins in Black 'jive talk' where the phrase 'to be on the hip' initially meant that one was an opium smoker but was later generalized to mean 'in the know'. (Polsky 1967)

Quantitative methods are known for making a muddle of culture. Music marketing research is forever developing new categories of 'psychographics' which magnify divisions, subdivide class fractions and attempt to get to the bottom of taste.¹¹⁹ Recent debate in youth marketing has focussed on the inability of

¹¹⁸ Of course, clubbing patterns vary with racial identity. There is little market research available on race and leisure, so based on my participant observation and the popular discourses, it would seem that there is a higher rate of clubbing among Afro-Caribbean youth and a lower rate among Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi youth, both of which relate to their respective parent cultures, religions and ideas about the activities appropriate to unmarried women.

¹¹⁹ For example, one recent report tries to identify six types of music user: 'purists', 'followers', 'dormants', 'traditionalists', 'passives' and 'rejectors'. (cf Confidential report based on BMRB data, 1993)

quantitative research to come to grips with rave culture. But rather than recommending the traditional focussed discussion group, some radical-thinking marketers are actually advocating ethnography:

Participation is the essence of rave culture and it needs the involvement of the marketer. If you want to understand the effect of rave on UK youth, you have to get down and get dirty. Number-crunching respected surveys and skimming through the style press won't help, nor will 'hauling the kids off the street to talk about advertising for an hour-and-a-half', says [account director, Chris] King. (Marketing Week 16 April 1993)

16. CONCLUSION

Whatever its exact status, the mainstream is an inadequate concept for the sociology of culture. References to the mainstream are often a way of deflecting issues related to the definition and representation of empirical social groups. Sometimes, it signals an unquestioning acceptance of youth's point of view. Other times, the binary thinking (which accompanies referral to the mainstream) is entangled in a series of value judgments, political associations and journalistic clichés which hardly do justice to the youth cultures in question. Their schemas, like the youthful ideologies they reproduce, mix and match oppositions such as the following:

US	THEM
ALTERNATIVE	THE MAINSTREAM
Minority	Majority
Independent	Commercial
Rebellious	Conformist
Culturally radical	Conservative
Insider knowledge	TV & tabloids
Hip	Straight/square
Diverse	Homogeneous
Individual	Anonymous
Rough or arty	Respectable
Boys/men	Girls/women
Real youth	Pre-teens & housewives
Specialist Genres	Chart Pop
Authentic	False/phoney
Subcultural capital	Family-oriented mass culture

The 'mainstream' is a particular problem for subcultural studies where, despite convoluted theories of ideology and claims that subcultures are 'not simply ideological constructs', empirical social groups have been elided. (Clarke 1976: 46) In universalising the embodied social structure of a particular group, they

have mistaken youth's maps for the social terrain and supported their social ladders without considering how they replicate the elitism of dominant highbrow-lowbrow hierarchies. As Gary Clarke has noted, it is ironic that their populism is accompanied by such snobbery. (cf Clarke 1990)

Popular ideologies about dance crowds are riddled with implied statuses, refined echelons and subcultural capitals. Rather than subverting dominant cultural patterns in the manner attributed to classic subcultures, these crowd ideologies offer 'alternatives' in the strict sense of the word, other social and cultural hierarchies to put in their stead. They may magically resolve socio-economic contradictions, but they also maintain them, even use them to their advantage. Youth class cultures are as numerous and finely graded as ever. Not binary nor tertiary nor even well represented by the six grades standard to market research, but subject to subtle stratification and envisioned in full colour with fetishistic attention to detail.

The mainstream has a certain kind of epistemological existence. It is about the intricate relations between the media and lived culture and, as a result, it can only be properly understood as an entanglement of the ideological and the empirical. For many youthful imaginations, the mainstream is a powerful way to put themselves in the big picture, imagine their social world and measure their subcultural capital. As such, the mainstream is a revealing trope through which to consider the relationship between age and the social structure. Age and gender perhaps override issues of class when it comes to the distribution of subcultural capital. While race and sexuality are differences that can be seen to aid in the

creation of alternative distinctions. Either way, cultural hierarchies are clearly linked to a social hierarchy of consumers.

Recent feminist and post-structural theorists have rightly criticised views which claim to be non-involved, transparent and distant. (cf Keohane 1982; Barthes 1972) They have written objectivity into history as an abuse of male power and class privilege, as a specific and located perspective which doesn't understand itself as such. While some have celebrated, others have lamented the loss of an omniscient or imperial view with which to grasp the totality of the social structure as 'crippling to political experience'. (Jameson 1988: 353)

Market research does not offer a transparent window on the social world any more than do clubber discourses. Both frameworks offer partial pictures which bear the signature of their respective uses. Market research paints by numbers in large abstract strokes whereas clubber images give highly evaluative, even fetishistic, attention to the smallest details. When combined, however, the two discourses give a glimmer of the empirical social groups who go out dancing and make up dance crowds, particularly when interpreted from a third perspective afforded by observation.

III

MULTIPLE MEDIA: 'MORAL PANIC' AND 'SELLING OUT'

17. INTRODUCTION: CLUB 'UNDERGROUNDS' AND THE MEDIA

The idea that authentic culture is somehow outside the media is a resilient one. In its full-blown romantic form, the belief imagines that grassroots cultures resist and struggle with a colonising mass-mediated corporate world. At other times, the perspective lurks between the lines, inconspicuously informing parameters of research, definitions of culture and judgements of value. Either way, theorists and researchers of music and youth culture are among the most tenacious holders of the idea. This chapter, however, argues that the distinctions of many music subcultures are, in fact, a phenomenon of the media.

Every music scene has its own distinct set of media relations. 'Acid House', a dance club culture which mutated into 'Rave' after sensational media coverage about drug use, is particularly revealing of the cultural logics involved. In considering its case, this chapter finds no opposition between subcultures and the media, except for a dogged ideological one. It uncovers no pure origins or organic homologies of sound, style and ritual, nor does it vilify a vague monolith called '*the media*'. Instead, it examines how various media are integral to youth's social and ideological formations. Local *micro-media* like flyers and listings are means by which club organisers bring the crowd together. *Niche media* like the music press construct as much as they document subcultures. While national *mass media* like the tabloids develop as much as distort youth movements. Contrary to youth subcultural ideologies, then, 'subcultures' do not germinate from a seed and grow by force of their own energy into mysterious 'movements' only to be belatedly digested by '*the*

media'. Rather, the media and other culture industries are there and effective right from the start. They are central to the processes by which, in Bourdieu's terms, we 'create groups with words'. (Bourdieu 1990: 139)

My approach is indebted to and critical of four existing accounts of the relationship between youth, music and media. First, it diverges on several key points from the cultural studies associated with the Birmingham tradition. In the introduction to Resistance through Rituals, Clarke et al. suggest that their consideration of post-war youth subcultures will 'penetrate beneath [the] popular constructions' of the mass media. (Hall and Jefferson 1976: 9) When they come to define 'subculture', they position the media and its associated processes outside, in opposition to and after the fact of subculture. In so doing, they omit precisely that which clearly delineates a 'subculture', for labelling is crucial to the insiders' and outsiders' view of themselves as different. By discarding this key symbolic interactionist insight, their classification of subculture is indeterminate. (cf Becker 1963) Subcultures are said to have a 'distinctive enough shape and structure to make them identifiably different'; they are 'focussed around certain activities, values,... territorial spaces' and can be either 'loosely or tightly bounded'. (Hall and Jefferson 1976: 13-14) This definition could be applied to many cultural groups.

The Birmingham tradition tended to study previously labelled social types - 'Mods', 'Rockers', 'Skinheads', 'Punks' - but gave no systematic attention to the effects of various media's labelling processes. Instead, they described the rich and resistant meanings of youth music, clothing, rituals and argot in a miraculously media-free moment when an uncontaminated homology could be safely identified.

Moreover, the Birmingham tradition frequently positioned subcultures as transparent niches in an opaque world as if subcultural life spoke an unmediated truth. They were insufficiently critical of subcultural ideologies, first, because their attention was concentrated on the task of puncturing and contesting dominant ideology and, second, because their theories agreed with the anti-mass media discourses of youth music cultures. While youth celebrated the 'underground', the academics venerated 'subcultures'; where one group denounced the 'commercial', the other criticized 'hegemony'; where one lamented 'selling out', the other theorized 'incorporation'.

Sociologies of moral panic, a second academic tradition that addresses the subject of youth cultures and the media, contrast with the cultural studies on several key points. (cf Cohen and Rock 1964; Cohen 1980; Young 1972; Cohen and Young 1973) While the culturalists depict full blown subcultures without any media intervention, scholars of moral panic assume that little or nothing existed prior to mass media labelling. So, in his classic Folk Devils and Moral Panics, Stanley Cohen suggests that there were few antagonisms between Mods and Rockers, nor even thoroughly articulated stylistic differences, before reports of their seaside scuffles. (cf Cohen 1980) Also, while the subculturalists are implicitly indebted to the youth-oriented music and style press, the moral panics scholars often seem unaware of their existence. In Cohen's book, for instance, the media is synonymous with local and national newspapers, while magazines which might have been read by his subcultural subjects are ignored (i.e. the Mod girl's Honey or the Mod boy's

Record Mirror).¹²⁰

Sociologies of moral panic offer important theories of deviance amplification, self-fulfilling prophecies and composite stereotypes called 'folk devils', but they do not take a sufficiently sweeping look at associated processes of cultural production and consumption. According to Cohen, 'folk devils' are 'unambiguously unfavourable symbols' but a devil in the tabloids is often a hero or, more commonly, an idiot in the youth press. (cf Cohen 1980) The negative tabloid coverage of Acid House, for example, was subject to extensive analysis by the music and style magazines. The writers were fascinated by their own representation and, however much they condemned the tabloids, they revelled in the attention and boasted about sensational excess. What could be a better badge of rebellion? Mass media misunderstanding is often a goal, not just an effect, of youth's cultural pursuits. As a result, 'moral panic' has become a routine way of marketing popular music to youth.

Ethnographies of music scenes, like subcultural studies, tend to see the media as outside authentic culture. (cf Finnegan 1989; Cohen 1991) They depict internally generated culture, disclose local creativity and give positive valuation to the 'culture of the people' but only at the cost of removing the media from their pictures of the cultural process. When media are theorized by traditional ethnographies, they are generally seen as akin to the ethnographer's own

¹²⁰ Features such as Queen's 1964 'Tickets and Other Labels' substantially complicates, even confounds, Cohen's version of moral panic. It describes a 'Ticket' as a 'sub-Mod, imitating the Mods but always three months behind' who nevertheless knows that 'nothing happened' at Brighton or Margate and that 'the whole incident was simply a Press invention'. (cf Queen 26 August 1964)

representational practice, as depicting and disseminating the culture in question. (cf Clifford and Marcus 1986) But media sights, sounds and words are more than just representations; they are mediations, integral participants in music culture. Needless to say, there are no primordial pre-media cultures in Britain today. Even when a youth culture defines itself against the overexposed entertainments of the Sun or the prime-time pleasures of Top of the Pops, its identity and activities are conditioned by the desire to be part of something that is not widely distributed or televised.

This is not to posit the reverse, postmodern 'ecstasy of communication' proposition, in either its euphoric or mournful incantation. Visions of endless mediascape are as wilfully one-sided as the anthropologist's dream of pure culture. Iain Chambers's cruise through 'the communication membrane of the metropolis', for instance, does little to clarify the concrete relations between youth and music cultures and their various media. When we are said to have screens for eyes and headphones for ears, then communication is automatic, indiscriminate and total. (cf Chambers 1986) But access to information is restricted at every turn. We are not all plugged in, so to speak, and certainly not into some central bank of sight and sound. In fact, being 'hip' or 'in the know' is testimony to the very selective nature of contemporary communications; 'subcultural capital' is defined against the supposedly obscene accessibility of mass culture. (cf Baudrillard 1982).

To understand the relations between youth subcultures and the media, one needs to pose and differentiate two questions. On the one hand, how do youth's subcultural ideologies position the media? On the other, how are the media instrumental in the congregation of youth and the formation of subcultures? The two

questions are entwined but distinct.

Youth's 'underground' ideologies infer a lot but understand little about cultural production. Their views of the media have other agendas to fill. Like other anti-mass culture discourses, they are not always what they purport to be, i.e. politically correct, moral or vanguard. Subcultural ideologies are a means by which youth imagine their own and other social groups, assert their distinctive character and affirm that they are not just 'attention spans' to be bought and sold by advertisers nor faceless members of an undifferentiated mass.

Even the most *political subcultures* are also *taste cultures*. Given that the vast majority of British youth subcultures past and present do not espouse overt political projects, nor even constitute 'subcultures' in the more stable sociological senses of the term (cf Arnold 1970), issues of taste and distinction deserve attention. Rather than de-politicising youth subcultures, this move actually gives fuller representation to the complex and not always progressive politics of popular culture. While difference is not necessarily resistant, it is always caught up in systems of distinction.

Similarly, the second question about how the media do not just represent subculture but mediate within youth culture can only be fully understood in relation to club cultural ideologies. For the positioning of various media outlets - prime time TV chart shows versus late night narrowcasts, BBC versus pirate radio, the music press versus the tabloids, flyers versus fanzines - as well as discourses about 'hipness', 'selling out', 'moral panic' and 'banning' are crucial to the ways young people receive these media and, consequently, to the ways that media shape

subcultures.

The term 'underground' is the expression by which clubbers refer to things subcultural. More than fashionable or trendy, 'underground' sounds and styles are 'authentic' and pitted against the mass-produced and mass-consumed. Undergrounds denote exclusive worlds whose main point is not elitism but whose parameters often relate to particular crowds. They delight in parental incomprehension, negative newspaper coverage and that best blessing in disguise, the BBC ban. More than anything else, then, undergrounds define themselves against the mass media.

Like 'subcultures', undergrounds are nebulous constructions. They can refer to a place, a style, an ethos and their crowds usually shun definitive social categorisation. Mostly they are said to be 'mixed' but, although the subcultural discourses I describe do cross lines of class, race and sexuality, their holders are less likely to physically cross the relevant thresholds.¹²¹ Generally, underground crowds are attached to sounds. As one label manager put it: 'There are records out there that are more radical and, at this moment, have a more radical audience - a smaller, more selective audience - but the sounds in that area will be the next generation of sounds we're all used to... That's what I mean by underground.' (Select July 1990: 57)

Underground 'subcultural capital' has built-in-obsolence so it can

¹²¹ Though these 'underground' discourses operate in gay and lesbian club cultures, as the alternative cultural capitals involved in exploring sex and sexuality complicate the situation beyond easy generalisation, I describe only their heterosexual manifestation. Moreover, 'campness' rather than 'hipness' is the prevailing subcultural discourse in these communities. (cf Sontag 1966, Savage 1989)

maintain its status not only as the prerogative of the young, but the hip. This is why the media is crucial; it is the main disseminator of fleeting cultural capitals.¹²² It is determining of circuits of subcultural capital in much the same way that the education system is crucial to formations of cultural capital. This is not to say that family and education are not significant to subcultural capitals, but that their determinations are joined by those of a third institution. With subcultural capital, the media is not simply another symbolic good or mark of distinction, but an institution crucial to the creation, classification and distribution of cultural knowledge.

The logic of the underground is aptly symbolised by its attitude to two product types. Its distinctive format is the 'white label' - a twelve inch single produced in limited edition without the colourful graphics that accompany most retailed music, distributed to leading disc jockeys for club play and to specialist dance record shops for commercial sale. The rarity of white labels guarantees their underground status. (While accumulating them contributes to 'objectified subcultural capital'. The size of one's record collection has long been a measure of a man's subcultural capital!) At the other end of the spectrum, the format with the least credibility is the TV advertised compilation album of already charted dance hits.

¹²² Just because hipness is fleeting, doesn't mean it isn't 'capital'. Nicholas Garnham and Raymond Williams write, 'it is the convertibility of cultural capital into economic capital that ultimately defines it as capital.' (Garnham & Williams 1986: 123) Even if subcultural capital does not convert into economic capital with the same ease or financial reward as cultural capital, a variety of occupations and incomes can be gained as result of hipness, like DJing or clothes designing. (Anyway, as any university lecturer knows, economic capital is not commensurate with cultural capital.)

One fanzine writer ranted against amateur ravers who buy such albums: 'Wise up sucker, get hip to musical freedom, stop investing in K-Tel compilations with titles like *Nonstop Mental Mega Chart Busting Ravey Rip Off Hits Vol 234516*'. (Herb Garden 1, 1991) While these hit compilations may contain music that was on a white label only six months earlier, the sounds are corrupted by being accumulated and packaged.

The underground espouses a fashion system that is highly relative; it is all about position, context and timing. The underground romantically imagines itself as outside commerce, as forbidden just because it's unauthorised and as illicit even though it's not illegal. Its main antagonist is not the law which might *repress* but the media who continually threaten to *release* their knowledges to others.

Mass Media

18. THE BETRAYALS OF BROADCASTING AND THE AESTHETICS OF ATMOSPHERE

Most British homes receive only four television channels (cable penetration is less than 1% and satellite's market share is less than 5%). Of these, two stations - the public service BBC1 and commercial ITV - account for almost 75% of all television viewed. TV in Britain is therefore a mass medium in the old sense of word: there is little regional or local programming; niche targeting is new and tends only to operate well outside of prime time. As a result, the only regular prime-time music show occupies a key position within the symbology of the underground.

Having been on the air for over twenty-five years, Top of the Pops is an institution with close to universal brand recognition and is the unrivalled nemesis of the underground. This half-hour programme combines 'live vocal' performances attended by a free-standing studio audience with video clips - both of which are introduced according to their current position in that week's Top 40.¹²³ As the show is considered domestic, familial, accessible and tame, the ultimate put down is to say a club event was 'more Top of the Pops on E than a warehouse rave.' (i-D June 1990) Moreover, it is assumed that 'for dance music to stay vital, to mean

¹²³ The Top 40 singles chart is a long-standing boundary of the musical underground. (cf Riesman 1950 on the Hit Parade) The first British singles chart was published in New Musical Express in 1952, while the first album chart was published in Melody Maker in 1958.

more than the media crap we're fed from all angles, it has to keep Top of the Pops running scared.' (Mixmag December 1991)

Top of the Pops is seen as the main gateway to mass culture and a key point of so-called 'selling out'. For instance, a member of a Techno dance act (called LFO) with a single in the charts warns, 'don't expect to see us on Top of the Pops. We might let them show the video, but we [won't] have people pointing at us, regarding us as sell-outs. LFO is purely underground stuff... We hate all those false and fake people in the charts. We only like the hard stuff.' (NME 28 July 1990) If one were to take this discourse about selling out at face value, one might see it as anti-commerce or resistant.

Dick Hebdige theorizes selling out as a process of 'incorporation' into the hegemony. He describes this recuperative 'commercialisation' as an aesthetic metamorphosis, an ideological rather than a material process whereby previously subversive subcultural signs (i.e. music and clothing) are 'converted' or 'translated' into mass-produced commodities. (Hebdige 1979: 97) But as the popular rhetoric of 'selling out' assumes that records with low sales aren't 'commercial' (even though they are obviously products of commerce) and validates the proliferating distinctions of consumer capitalism, this fusion of populist and marxist discourses is wistful.

Within club undergrounds, it seems to me that 'to sell' means 'to betray' and 'selling out' refers to the process by which artists or songs sell beyond their initial market which, in turn, loses its sense of possession, exclusive ownership and familiar belonging. In other words, selling out means *selling* to *outsiders*, which in the case of Top of the Pops means those younger and older than club-going 16-24

year olds - who do not form the bulk of the programme's audience partly because they watch less TV than any other age group.

Despite several academic arguments about the opposition of youth subcultures and TV culture (implicit in the Birmingham work, explicitly argued by Attalah 1986 and Frith 1988), British youth subcultures aren't 'anti-television' as much as they are against a few key segments of TV that expose youth subcultural materials to everybody else. The general accessibility of broadcasting, in the strict sense of the word, is at odds with the esotericisms and exclusivities of club and rave culture. It too widely distributes the raw material of youth's subcultural capitals. Other music-oriented television programmes which tie into club culture (like MTV Europe or ITV's Chart Show) have not accrued the connotations of Top of the Pops. Firstly, these programmes are sufficiently narrowcast to escape negative symbolisation as the overground. Secondly, they have high video content - a form which is somehow seen to maintain the autonomy of music culture and has credibility amongst clubbers.¹²⁴

The Techno artist quoted above differentiates between appearing on Top of the Pops in person (which amounts to 'selling out') and appearing in video (which is considered a legitimate promotion). This is a common distinction of

¹²⁴ The relation of MTV Europe to music culture is also conditioned by the fact that the satellite station boasts a high ratio of Out-Of-Home viewing in pubs and clubs. Called the 'OOH factor', the non-domestic contexts and communal consumption contribute to MTV's credibility. (cf Broadcast 14 May 1993; Marketing 13 May 1993)

underground ideology.¹²⁵ Frith argues that 'the rise of pop video has been dependent on and accelerated the decline of the ideology of youth-as-opposition'. (Frith 1988: 213) But underground dance acts seem to think that videos help them resist the mainstream. Several factors might contribute to this attitude. Firstly, videos allow the band to present themselves (with the help and hinderance of the marketing and promotions departments of their record company) in a controlled manner closer to their own terms. Videos enable them to avoid being tainted by the 'naff' context of Top of the Pops. The artists protect their authentic aura by refusing to make a physical appearance. (cf Goodwin 1990: 269) Secondly, the practice of lipsynching and acting out songs which have no 'live' existence undermines the creative credibility of these artists. With few lyrics and few performers *per se*, much contemporary dance music (particularly House and Techno) is still in the process of developing an effective style of 'live' presentation. Videos are an appropriate visual accompaniment to a music which is quintessentially recorded. It is now often forgotten that the music video had its debut in discos in the 1970s and is still a feature of many clubs.¹²⁶

Dance acts must nevertheless negotiate 'live' Top of the Pops appearances. For, as one TV promotions manager put it, 'underground or not,

¹²⁵ For another example, Lime of the DJ duo SL2 who had a ragga-techno track go to Number One believes: 'Bizarre Inc definitely sold out by actually appearing on Top of the Pops. You don't have to go that far to promote your record. Prodigy got to number two and they only had their video shown.' (quoted in Touch November 1991)

¹²⁶ In 1977, 90% of the video cassette sales were to discos. (Music Week 24 September 1977)

major labels encourage their dance acts to appear because Top of the Pops shows hardly any videos, unless you're U2 or a breaker and then you only get 20 seconds'. (Loraine McDonald, EMI: Interview 2 September 1992) Two basic strategies for maintaining an underground sensibility and immunizing oneself from the domesticity of Top of the Pops are disguise and parody; dance acts frequently hide their faces with sunglasses, hoods and hats and/or go 'over the top' in their performance. Nothing is less 'cool' than taking Top of the Pops seriously.

The other TV programme crucial to youthful conceptions of the national club scene is The Hitman and Her. When House music became too popular for its early aficionados, it was deplored as being 'Hitman and Her fodder.' (Letter to Herb Garden 2) Though similarly denigrated, this late-night low-budget show is caught in a different cultural logic to Top of the Pops. The show is shot on location in dance clubs, rather than TV studios, features a local club crowd rather than a studio audience and revolves around a DJ-presenter (the Hitman) and his assistant (Her).¹²⁷

The narrowcast Hitman and Her offends underground sensibilities in at least three ways. First, the show's reception was entangled with the cultural positioning of its DJ-presenter, Pete Waterman who is also the owner of PWL Records and the producer (with Stock and Aitken) of Rick Astley, Kylie Minogue, Jason Donovan, Bananarama and 2 Unlimited. After consecutive hits, but

¹²⁷ The closest American equivalent to The Hitman and Her might be a programme like Club MTV shot at the Palladium in New York City. But the MTV show is hosted by a Black British woman with a young 'hip' image ('Downtown Julie Brown'), the dancers are vetted and video clips are used to relieve the viewer from the monotony and embarrassment of watching non-professionals dance.

particularly after the success of Kylie Minogue, an afternoon soap actress-cum-singer with a large female teeny-bop audience, Stock/Aitken/Waterman were considered manufacturers of sentimental chart pap to the extent that their music was frequently cited as evidence of the cultural bankruptcy of the Majors (even though they mostly worked on Waterman's independent label). Stock/Aitken/Waterman came to signify the low end of popular music even more than Top of the Pops.

Worse still, as a DJ, Waterman was seen as someone who preferred to 'fill a club to the rafters with 2,000 of the biggest wallies than have it half empty with the coolest trendies.' (Clubland March 1992) This is the second reason for clubber difficulties with The Hitman and Her - the crowds of these televised clubs were not remotely underground. They were as close to the imagined 'Sharons and Tracys' as television could provide. The following statement amends the stereotype to include the men depicted on screen and damns the show with faint praise:

Despite coming from the *No Jeans, No trainers, Soul in a Basket* optional end of clubland, there is something perversely enticing about this programme... Pleasure can be gleaned from the sight of 2000 Herberts and Tracys dancing around their beer and handbags at Le Discotheque... The appeal of The Hitman and Her lies in its honest approach, it's admittance of the 'so bad, it's good' theory. (Soul Underground April 1989)

Even with a new presenter and a different crowd, The Hitman and Her would not win subcultural capital. The act of putting bright lights on the crowd (as opposed to the dance acts), the process of illuminating a culture that is supposed to take place in the dark, usually destroys the 'atmosphere' which is the linchpin of

club authenticity.¹²⁸ Documentarists of club and rave culture repeatedly use techniques like slow motion, erratic rapid cutting, extreme high and low camera angles, constantly moving cameras, computer generated blurs and high grain celluloid stocks in their attempt to capture the frissons of a 'hip' night out. (cf the following hour-long documentaries: Club Culture 1988, Ibiza: A Short Film About Chilling 1990 and Madchester 1990) These televisual techniques, borrowed from promotional video rather than documentary traditions, protect the dancers from the harshest of the camera's de-mystifying glares. They create a new televisual 'atmosphere' rather than trying to capture a club one.

Research repeatedly finds that young people have more respect for adult-orientated programming than for shows made specifically for their age group. The 'so bad, it's good' index of appreciation is often the best that non-video youth programming can hope for. Channel 4's The Word and BBC2's DEF II programmes fall into this category. According to market researchers, CIA, for example, 'fashion advertisers are better off avoiding The Word if they want to target trend setters who think the show is naff.' (Music Week 15 April 1993)

As a medium of image, print and sound which fills more leisure hours than any other form of communications, television is in a position to violate the esotericisms and semi-privacies of club culture more than any other. Nevertheless, clubber and raver discourses about television programmes are intricate and

¹²⁸ This is not to say that The Hitman and Her didn't attempt to get 'hip'. In 1992, Pete Waterman set up a techno label featuring acts like 2 Unlimited, Capella and Opus III and the TV programme became a 'mental rave night' called Not the Hitman and Her. (DJ April 1992)

discrepant. They relate to the audience at home because indiscriminating exposure to outsiders is a betrayal. They concern the people depicted who can become objects of ridicule rather than points of identification, seeming incarnations of an ideological 'other'. Underground discourses also involve issues of format and aesthetics insofar as music video and its stylistic practices are valued as means by which music culture can be televised but somehow preserve its rhetorical autonomy and authenticity.

Though these are the prevailing ideologies of club culture, they are not all determining nor without loop-holes. For example, a Top of the Pops appearance is often seen by the dance act's original fans as an affirmation of their taste as well as something to be viewed with suspicions of selling out. Ironically, nothing proves the originality and inventiveness of subcultural music and style more than its eventual 'mainstreaming'. Similarly, subcultures that never go beyond their initial base market are ultimately considered failures. Moreover, music television like Top of the Pops is important for the recruitment of 15 and 16 year olds to youth subcultures as its eclectic play-list frequently offers glimmers of other-worldly cult cultures.

The betrayals of broadcasting and the aesthetics of atmosphere are but two cultural logics of club undergrounds. Negative coverage in the form of either well-publicized omissions from programmes like Top of the Pops (sometimes characterised as censorship) or TV news features on club and rave culture as a serious social problem (often framed as moral panic) are also important to the relationship between media and youth subcultures. Even though these issues are relevant to TV, they will be discussed in relation to radio and tabloids where they

are arguably a more commanding dynamic.

19. MARKETING MORAL OUTRAGE AND SETTING UP THE CENSORS

Youth resent approving mass mediation of their culture but relish the attention conferred by media condemnation. How else might one turn difference into defiance, lifestyle into social upheaval, leisure into revolt? Moral panics can be seen as a culmination and fulfilment of youth cultural agendas insofar as negative newspaper and broadcast news coverage baptise transgression. Whether the underground espouses an overt politics or not, it is set on being culturally radical. In Britain, the best guarantee of radicalism is rejection by one or both of the disparate institutions seen to represent the cultural *status quo*: the tempered, state-sponsored BBC (particularly pop music Radio One) and the sensational, sales-dependent tabloids (particularly the Tory-supporting Sun).

As the only national pop station, 30% of the British population tune in to Radio One each week. Unlike Top of the Pops, the radio station does not limit its output to Top 40, but plays an average of 1100 different titles a week, including dance catalogue, particularly from the more melodic end of the genre. The dance-oriented press therefore alternate between complaining that the station gives short shrift to dance music and admiring genres like Acid House and Techno for not being radio musics. Either way, Radio One represents the accessible and safe mainstream.

Being 'banned' from Radio One is therefore a desirable prospect. It acts as expert testimony to the music's violation of national sensibilities and as circumstantial evidence of its transgression. Being banned is consequently the most reliable way to gain what is in theory a contradiction in terms, but in practice a

relatively common occurrence - namely an underground smash hit. The Beatles' 'A Day in the Life' (1967), Donna Summer's 'Love to Love You Baby' (1976), The Sex Pistols' 'God Save The Queen' (1977), Frankie Goes to Hollywood's 'Relax' (1984) and George Michael's 'I Want Your Sex' (1987) were all banned because of their references to sex, drugs or politics and became hit singles or spearheaded hit albums. In the case of tracks featuring the word 'acid', several climbed from the Bottom 40 to the Top 40 as a result of rumours alone.¹²⁹

In October 1988, the first explicitly Acid track to enter the Top 20, D-Mob's 'We call it Acieeed', caused some commotion. Radio One denied allegations, which emerged from the D-Mob's record company, of having banned the record explaining that the single was not on the play-list because 'it wasn't right for the mood of some programmes such as the breakfast show'. However, as the Radio One play-list functions only at peak times, the single had received 14 plays from individual producers outside the play-list system, more times, in fact, than the Whitney Houston track that was number one that week. In other words, Radio One insisted that they had imposed no ban on Acid House in the strict sense of the word, i.e. they were *not censoring* Acid House. Whereas the record company kept suggesting that the music was 'banned' in the conveniently loose sense of the word, i.e. Acid House was *not play-listed*. The subcultural consumer press favoured the more sensational record company line - it made good copy and kept things friendly

¹²⁹ As the Executive producer of Radio One, Stuart Grundy, explained: 'Even Radio One, as part of the BBC, is seen as the establishment. Anything considered anti-establishment has a head start as far as teenagers are concerned.' (Interview: 26 August, 1992)

with a main advertiser - and few clubbers took note of the story's sources or distinguished between the two kinds of 'banning'.

Conscious of the curiosity generated by anything said to be censored, the BBC try to keep their gate-keeping low profile and if that fails they attempt to play down the offending issues. The BBC's spokesman stated that the radio service understood the lyrics of the D-Mob single to be anti-drugs: 'it expresses the ideal sentiments for our forthcoming Drug Alert campaign.' (NME 29 October 1988) While Radio One DJ Simon Bates gave interviews asserting that 'Acid is all about bass-line in the music and nothing to do with drugs.' (Daily Mirror quoted by NME 12 Nov 1988)

Back in January 1988, however, London Records had successfully launched Acid House as a genre on the coat-tails of its drug-oriented potential for scandal. The sleeve notes to The House Sound of Chicago Volume III: Acid Tracks described the new music as 'drug induced', 'psychedelic', 'sky high' and 'ecstatic' and concluded with a prediction of moral panic: 'The sound of acid tracking will undoubtedly become one of the most controversial sounds of 1988, provoking a split between those who adhere to its underground creed and those who decry the glamorisation of drug culture.' In retrospect, this seems remarkably prescient, but the statement is best understood as hopeful. Moral panics are one of the few marketing strategies open to relatively anonymous instrumental dance music.

While the BBC conducts its 'bans', the logic of moral panic operates most conspicuously within the purview of the tabloids. Britons have a choice of eleven national daily newspapers which range between 'quality' broadsheets and

'popular' tabloids. Unlike papers like National Enquirer or USA Today, the British tabloids are read by over half the British population every day. They cover political issues in dramatic and personal terms and take a regular interest in youth culture which they tend to treat as either a moral outrage or a sensational entertainment. Most importantly, the tabloids have a swift domino effect; their 'shock! horror!' headlines frequently make the news themselves, get relayed by TV, radio and the qualities and generate much word-of-mouth (so that one often knows what's going on in the tabloids without having read them).¹³⁰

Mods, Rockers, Hippies, Punks and New Romantics have all had their tabloid front pages, so there is always the anticipation - the mixed dread and hope - that a youthful scene will be the subject of media outrage. Disapproving tabloid coverage legitimates and authenticates youth cultures. In fact, without tabloid intervention, it is hard to imagine a British youth movement. For, in turning youth into news, the tabloids both frame subcultures as major events and disseminate them. A tabloid front page, however distorted, is frequently a self-fulfilling prophecy; it can turn the most ephemeral fad into a lasting development.

Following London Records sleeve notes, the subcultural press repeatedly predicted that a moral panic about Acid House was 'inevitable'. In February 1988, a good six months before a daily paper ran a story and a few weeks after the compilation's release, the three main music weeklies ran stories about a new genre called 'Acid House' that was liable to cause moral panic. As one of them

¹³⁰ Theories of agenda-setting tend to concentrate on direct effects on public opinion rather than influence of one part of the media on another.

put it: 'I wonder how long it will be before our moral guardians start claiming that promoting the music is helping to promote drug-taking among the young?' (Record Mirror 20 February, 1988)

Some months later, innuendo about drug use in British clubs started to appear in the style and music press, but it was left to two music weeklies experiencing flagging sales (and with little feeling of responsibility to this particular club scene) to expose the domestic drug taking. In July 1988, NME ran several stories under the Timothy Leary slogan 'Tune in, Turn on, Drop Out' which exposed and investigated Ecstasy use in British clubs. Although they admitted that it was 'hardly a matter for public broadcast', they explained the appeals of the drug (it gave one the energy to dance all night and reduced inhibitions), offered proof of its prevalence (the names of London's House clubs signalled the chemical nature of their attraction, while the packed dancefloors and deserted bars suggested that alcohol was not the preferred substance) and listed the possible negative effects like nausea and recurring nightmares, emphasising however that the worst effect was 'making a complete and utter embarrassment of yourself by babbling E talk and intimate confessions to whoever happens to be in earshot'. (NME 16 July 1988)

Melody Maker followed with, among other stories, 'Ecstasy: a Consumer's Guide' which rated batches of MDMA. The legendary 'yellow capsules', they said, 'induced immediate feelings of having being ripped off and a buzz akin to trapping your toe in the door'. While the 'New York tablets' were the 'most consistently reliable Ecstasy... the lasting sensation being one of unbruishability and general bliss.' (Melody Maker August 20, 1988)

By the end of August, many music and styles magazines were wondering why the tabloids were ignoring the issue. Rather than joyous, they were ambivalent that the Acid House scene was 'in many ways...still an underground movement.' (Time Out August 17-24 1988) Ecstasy, they complained, had 'received little of the gutter press scare treatment afforded Crack yet the latter drug has yet to make any real inroads into British drug culture.' (NME 13 August 1988) Some magazines, confident of eventual moral panic, went so far as to project possible headlines:

It's not hard to imagine the angle the tabloid press will choose if they 'report' on the Acid House scene. Its supposedly symbiotic relationship with psychedelic drugs will make banner headlines of shock-horror proportions, along the lines of 'London Gripped by Ecstasy!', 'Drug Crazy New Hippies in Street Riot' or 'Yuppies On Acid!' The clubs will be portrayed as drug dens, the music will be 'mind-numbing' and the clubbers 'hooligans'. It could be the ideal Silly Season story once Fergie's little Princess has left the front page. (Time Out August 17-24 1988)

When the 'inevitable' moral panic ensued, the subcultural press were ready. They tracked the tabloids every move, reproduced whole front pages, reprinted and analyzed their copy and decried the misrepresentation of Acid House by what they variously called 'moral panic', 'media hysteria', a 'gutter press hate campaign' and a 'moral crusade'. However much they condemned the tabloids, clubbers and club writers were fascinated by their representation and gloried in the sensational excess. As one journalist admitted, 'The irony is that whilst [the Sun] runs acid stories, I buy the paper everyday, just to see what they dream up next'. (Soul Underground July 1989)

Even well after the waves of tabloid coverage, the magazines compiled top ten charts of 'ridiculous platitudes' used by the popular press - 'Killer Cult', 'In

the grip of E', 'Rave to the Grave'. (Herb Garden 3) Others ran spoof scandals about millions of kids 'hooked on a mind bending drug called A' (for alcohol) or stories about the designer drug 'T' which was 'openly on sale in supermarkets and supplied in a small perforated bag'. (Herb Garden 2; Touch February 1992) Impressed but not surprised, the club press had their explanations. As i-D, a magazine whose reader profile brags that it is, according to the Economist, 'painfully hip', wrote:

Every sub-culture breeds its own moral panic, every moral panic is stereotyped by its own devil drug. Think of all those headlines from the past which have screamed themselves hoarse: mods on speed, freaks dropping LSD, punks sniffing glue, blacks smoking dope, even cocaine-crazed yuppies. Gay bikers on acid just about sums it up. (i-D June 1990)

In 1991, however, when the negative stories had lost their news value, the tabloids started publishing positive articles with headlines like 'Bop to Burn: Raving is the Perfect Way to Lose Weight', 'High on Life' and 'Raves are all the Rage'. Needless to say, clubbers and their niche press were outraged. How could the tabloids about-face and ignore the abundant use of drugs? How did they think ravers stay up till 6 am, if it weren't for the numerous amphetamines inside them? The music press attacked these affirmative tabloid stories with unprecedented virulence. For example, Touch magazine wrote:

'10,000 DRUG CRAZED YOUTHS' This was the headline carried by the Sun newspaper during the summer of 1988. It was part of an uncompromising effort to bring disrepute and destruction upon the rave scene that was growing at a rapid rate across the country... Now three years after that headline was printed, the Sun has launched 'Answers' - its so called comprehensive guide to weekend raving.... What audacity! How dare they? On approaching the Sun about their change in attitude we were informed by some clueless dimwit that the rave scene is now, in their opinion, a respectable, clean and drug-free zone. Anyone who has been to the major clubs recently knows that drugs are still very much a part of the club rave

culture. We're not saying this is a good thing, but it does prove that the Sun knows absolutely fuck all about what's happening on the Rave scene, just as they knew fuck all in 1988 and 1989. The truth is that the Sun is run and staffed by a bunch of hypocritical, no good, Tory, band-wagon jumping wankers. (Touch December 1991)

Although negative reporting is disparaged, it is subject to anticipation, even aspiration. Positive tabloid coverage, on the other hand, is the subcultural kiss of death. In 1988, the Sun briefly celebrated Acid House, advising their readers to wear T-shirts emblazoned with Smiley faces, the music's coat of arms, in order to 'dazzle your mates with the latest trendy club wear', before they began running hostile exposés. Had the tabloid continued with this happy endorsement of Acid House, it is likely the scene would have been aborted and a movement would not have ensued. Similarly, rave culture would probably have lost its force with this second wave of positive reports had it not been followed by further disapproving coverage (about ravers converging on free festivals with 'travellers', i.e. newly nomadic 'hippies' and 'crusties' who travel the countryside in convoys of 'vehicles').

Cultural studies and sociologies of moral panic tend to position youth cultures as innocent victims of negative stigmatisation. But mass media misunderstanding is an objective rather than an accident of youth's cultural pursuits. Moral panic can therefore be a form of hype orchestrated by the culture industries that target that market.¹³¹ Perhaps the first publicity campaign intentionally to court moral outrage was conducted by Andrew Loog Oldman, who back the mid-

¹³¹ The music press certainly understood the Acid House phenomenon in this way, arguing that forbidden fruit is most desirable and that prohibition never works. The hysterical reports of the popular press, they argued, amounted to a 'priceless PR campaign'. (Q January 1989)

1960s, promoted the Rolling Stones as dirty, irascible, rebellious and threatening. (cf Norman 1993) Rather than some fundamental innovation, Malcolm McLaren's management of the image of the Sex Pistols in the 1970s followed an already well-trodden promotional path. In the 1980s and 1990s, acts as disparate as Madonna, Ice-T and the Shamen have played with these marketing strategies, for moral panic fosters widespread exposure at the same time as mitigating against accusations if 'selling out'.

'Moral panic' is a metaphor which depicts a complex society as a single person who experiences sudden groundless fear about its virtue. Although the term serves the purposes of the record industry and the music press well by inflating the threat posed by subcultures, as an academic concept, its anthropomorphism and totalisation mystifies more than it reveals. It fails to acknowledge competing media, let alone their reception of diverse audiences. And, its conception of morals overlooks the youthful ethics of abandon.

Popular music is in perpetual search of significance. Associations with sex, death and drugs imbue it with a 'real life' gravity that moves it beyond lightweight entertainment into the realm of, at the very least, serious hedonism. Acid House came to be hailed as a movement bigger than Punk and akin to the Hippie revolution precisely because its drug connections made it newsworthy beyond the confines of youth culture. While subcultural studies have tended to argue that youth subcultures are subversive until the very moment they are represented by the mass media (Hebdige 1979 & 1988), here it is argued that these kinds of taste cultures (not to be confused with activist organisations) become politically relevant

only when they are framed as such. In other words, disparaging media coverage is not the verdict but the vehicle of their resistance.

20. THE CONTROLLED FLOW OF INFORMATION AND CROWDS

So far the discussion has focussed on mass media such as prime time television, national radio and tabloid newspapers whose audiences, aesthetics and agendas are generally contrary to underground ideology. But, what about those micro and niche media which are more directly involved in the congregation of dance crowds and the formation of subcultures?

‘Crowd’ is the colloquialism used by clubbers to describe the collections of people who go out dancing. Unlike mobs, club crowds are local and fragmented. Compared to scenes, they are explicit and concrete, but unlike communities, they are transitory and disorderly. Club crowds are not organic formations which respond mysteriously to some class-based collective unconscious. They are tied together by networks of communications and actively assembled by club organisers whose job it is to deliver a crowd to a specified venue on a given night.

Flyers are considered the most effective means of building a crowd insofar as they are a relatively inexpensive way to target narrow audience segments. Their distribution is conducted in one of three ways: they are mailed directly to clubbers (often members) in the form of invitations, handed to people in the street ‘who look like they belong’ or distributed to pubs, clothing and record shops in

order that they might be picked up by the 'right crowd'.¹³² While the first method uses the means of the private party, the last two trace young people's routes through the city, exhibiting an understanding of what Michel de Certeau would call their 'practices of space'. (de Certeau 1985) Club promoters talk about how the dissemination of flyers is a deceptively tricky business: one must be wary of printing too many and finding them littering the streets; of depositing them in unsuitable places and procuring a queue full of 'wallies'. The dispersal of flyers influences the assembly of dance crowds; the flow of one affects the circulation of the other.

In her book Design After Dark: the Story of Dancefloor Style, Cynthia Rose celebrates flyers (in a Hebdigean manner) as 'semiotic guerilla warfare', likening the form to the old political handbill as well as new art-forms which play with mass reproduction processes. But while flyers have clear aesthetic significance, they are more accurately seen as direct advertising rather than cultural combat. 'Direct marketing' is the subject of more advertising investment than either magazines or radio, but because it targets tightly, it often feels more intimate and less 'commercial'. (Marketing 13 August 1992) Moreover, rather than contesting the *status quo*, flyers mainly suggest that the club whose name they bear satisfies questions like the following: 'Where can you find the wildest, craziest, maddest, most hedonistic, **HARD CORE**, dance experience that takes place every Friday and

¹³² Mailing lists are compiled in a variety of ways. Sometimes, advertisements in fanzines and the subcultural consumer press invite people to send ten pounds to become a member or one can pay for membership at the door. Other times, the addresses of regulars are requested by the club organiser or, in the case of a club called Rage, people are chosen from amongst the crowd to have their picture taken, be issued with a photo ID and be placed on the mailing list.

Saturday night?' (printed on Uproar flyer, 1990)

While clubs and raves advertise unique selling points like loud sound systems, spectacular laser light-shows, 'warehouse style' venues, 'go-go boys in cage', 'massive open air roof gardens', 'two floors of vibes', personal appearances by dance acts ('PAs') and late closing times, they most consistently mention music genre. Sometimes the music is specified by a short generic list (e.g. 'Techno, Hardcore, Alternative, Trance'), other times by an exhaustive catalogue of the artists played (e.g. 'The Charlatans, The Mondays, The Farm, The Stone Roses...'). Frequently, the music is invoked by naming DJs who develop followings, become main attractions and attain degrees of celebrity. By whichever means the music is conjured, it relates directly to the promised crowd for, despite many discourses to the contrary, taste is not an individual matter. Musical preference has a complicated and contingent but unmistakable relation to the social structure; as George Lewis put it 'we pretty much listen to, and enjoy, the same music that is listened to by other people we like or with whom we identify.' (Lewis 1992: 137)

A key recipient of flyers are local listings magazines who relay their information (along with that of accompanying press releases) to preview or attend then review clubs for their readers.¹³³ Listings magazines contain at least three gradations of exposure: the relative obscurity of the listings themselves, the discreet disclosure of a column mention or the open exhibition of a feature in the front pages. The listings are written in a kind of shorthand which is often indecipherable to those

¹³³ Time Out, London's main listing magazine, began publishing a weekly listing of discotheques, 'evaluating the music, the ambience, the prices and people' in March 1978. (Time Out 24-30 March 1978)

who are not already familiar with clubbing. (For example, American students at the London School of Economics for a term told me that after reading Time Out, they still had no idea where to go out dancing because they found the listings incomprehensible.) When a club is singled out for recommendation or comment in the columns which precede the listings, overviews are offered and terms are occasionally defined. When the magazine runs a feature - usually on a new scene or 'vibe' - labels are translated and codes revealed; the culture is exposed and explained to non-clubbing outsiders.

Published listings need to be negotiated as carefully as flyer distribution. They can stimulate or stifle interest, under or overexpose. While a crowd needs to be assembled, too much or the wrong kind of coverage can close a club down in a matter of weeks. Just enough and the right kind of publicity, on the other hand, can reserve a place in the annals of club cultural folklore. 'Shoom', the club retrospectively hailed as the origin of Acid House culture, offers a telling case of the cultural logics involved.

The first entry for this Saturday night club in the London listings weekly, Time Out, read as follows:

NEW! The Shoom Club, Midnight - 5 am. If you're lucky enough to get one of their invites then you'll know the location of this underground House party in E1 which was packed and jumping at their Valentine rave and now goes weekly. DJ Danny Rampling and guest DJs the Cold Cut Crew mix the House variations and rap-dance for a very lively crowd of trendies with great decor on the walls. It's fast becoming a legend so become a member before its too big for its venue. (Time Out February 24 - March 2, 1988)¹³⁴

¹³⁴ As the writer had not yet attended the club, the listing contained several errors of fact. The club was not in E1 but SE1 and the play-list was not predominantly House and Rap but an eclectic mix of what would later be called

The implied thrills of being part of an elect and taking part in the hip and happening are common to club listings; therefore it is two other themes set this blurb apart from the rest. First, although the club had yet to go weekly, the listing predicts the club's mythic status: it is 'fast becoming a legend'. Like the sleeve notes to London Records' Acid Tracks compilation which predicted moral panic, we might ask, to what extent is this speculation idly prescient or actively self-fulfilling? The comment may only have picked up on a consensual 'vibe', but what if it hadn't? Media confirm, spread and consolidate cultural perceptions - even amongst those who were there to experience the event. Their predictions have repeated if unpredictable effects.

The second distinguishing feature of Shoom's listing is that it publicised the secrecy of the night's location, it promoted the club by withholding its address. Tantalising statements like 'if you're lucky enough to know the location of this underground party' candidly play on the hip capital of being 'in the know'. Mystery locations are one guarantee of being underground and part of the excitement of raves. As raves grew in size and number, listings would announce the event, tell the reader to look out for the flyer upon which was printed a phone number through which they could get tickets, then later get directions to the rave's location on the day of the events. In order to avoid premature closure by the police, the organisers would only indicate the general whereabouts of the rave until the evening of the event, when they would give out directions that would get more and more specific

'Balearic Beat'. (David Swindells, Time Out Club Editor, Interview: 2 September 1992)

towards midnight. Computer information phone lines were also an innovation of Acid House and rave marketing, when one became a member of a club organisation, one received a number to call for information about their upcoming events.

One Shoom strategy was to refuse access to mass media like TV News but tell niche media like the subcultural consumer press all about it. (Just as record companies occasionally issue music they know will be banned from TV or radio in order to generate more print media attention.) The resulting copy was favourably superlative.

When a BBC camera crew arrived unannounced at Danny and Jenny Rampling's Shoom night, arrogantly pushing their way to the front of the queue, expecting free entry, they were in for a shock. Jenny showed the direction of the door on the spot... Warehouse parties were all but killed off by overexposure by the media... so a big round of applause goes out to Jenny Rampling. (Soul Underground August 1988)

This event became a key moment in the written and oral history of Acid House. Although the reputation of Shoom cannot be wholly explained by the way the Ramplings managed the ebb and flow of information about their club, their gate-keeping is undoubtedly a contributing factor.

Like censorship and moral panic, the practice of advertising the inaccessible plays a media game which is in harmony with underground ideology. It doesn't betray so much as reveal a mask; it doesn't double-cross so much as indulge in *double entendre*. It doesn't sell *out* so much as identify the people and places that are 'in'.

One reason why Shoom did such a good job at managing their own exposure was because they had to. By many off-the-record accounts, 'ninety per cent' of the Shoom crowd were taking the drug Ecstasy. Club cultural media could

be trusted to handle this information with care; other niche and mass media could not. For example, after the Time Out writer had attended the club, the magazine published a different blurb which judiciously both exposed and protected the club.

Shoom... is providing the appropriate aural (not to say, astral) atmosphere for the euphoric and whooping crowd to take the idea of dancing to its outer limits, way beyond the confines of the dancefloor and the two step shuffle. It has the kind of wild, uninhibited style that you'd normally only associate with mixed-gay trendy nights. (Time Out March 16-23, 1988)

'Astral', 'euphoric', 'outer limits' are coy references to drugs whose rationale is explained by their author with the following:

In a job like mine, you need to be reasonably conscientious. You want to write about it but not destroy it. Scenes are fragile, bloody small and relatively insignificant. You get to know the people involved, develop a cosy relationship and maybe you don't write as objectively or journalistically as you should. My job is to tell people what is happening without threatening the scene. (David Swindells, Time Out Club Editor, Interview: 2 September 1992)

Listings magazines manage the flow of information like a three lock dam - listings, columns, features - each with their own level of jargon, innuendo and omission. Their gate-keeping has effects upstream as well as down insofar as they pool, fathom and appraise subcultural knowledges; they create the esoteric as they maintain boundaries. The movement of flyers, however, follows then attempts to lead, the circulation of people through the social spaces of the city. Flyers and listings are not marginal representations of subculture, but integral mediations in subculture. They rely on being 'in the know' and in the 'right place at the right time' and are actively involved in the social organisation of youth. Being 'hip' is testimony to the selectivity of contemporary communications.

21. THE VESTIGIAL ROOTS OF SUBTERRANEAN MEDIA

While flyers have their celebrants, the media venerated for epitomising the authenticity of dance subcultures are word-of-mouth, fanzines and pirate radio. Although these media are romanticised as pure and autonomous, they are generally tainted by and contingent upon other media and other business. While they are assumed to be in the vanguard, they are just as likely to be belated and behind. Though these media are said to be closest to subcultures, various social and economic factors limit and complicate their intimate relations.

Word-of-Mouth is considered the consummate medium of the underground. But conversations between friends about clubs often involve flyers seen, radio heard and features read. Rather than an unadulterated grassroots medium, word-of-mouth is often extended by or an extension of other communications media. For this reason, club organisers, like other marketers and advertisers, actively seek to generate word-of-mouth with their promotions. Likewise, romantic notions of the 'street' forget that it is a space of advertising and communication, subject to market research by 'Outdoor Site Classification and Audience Research' and given ratings called 'OTS' or 'opportunities to see'.¹³⁵ Outdoor advertising reaches large, non-TV audiences with a young, male, up-market bias. This is one reason why record company's allot marketing pounds to what they

¹³⁵ The 'OTS' rating considers the details of people who pass particular poster and billboard sites in cars or on foot, adjusting figures to take into account distractions such as rival sites or poor visibility. Although they do not survey illegal outdoor advertising like flyposting or spray painting, we can infer similar demographics.

call 'street marketing' and why flyposting and spray painting are effective means for rave organisations to gain a higher profile and draw a crowd. Word-of-mouth and word-on-the-street are rarely as pure and autonomous as the underground (or subculturalists and anthropologists) would like to believe.

More than any other medium, fanzines have been celebrated as grassroots - as the active voice of the consumer and as the quintessence of subcultural communications. While the former is undoubtedly true, the latter is open to question. Rave fanzines give vent to unruly voices, local slang, scatological juvenilia, moaning, ranting and swearing. First person narratives are common, particularly ones about drug experiences which recount stories of brilliant or nightmarish times on Ecstasy, tales of having one's 'gear' stolen by bouncers who then sell it back to you in the club, anecdotes about experiencing 'aggro' from 'charlie casuals' and 'lager louts' (i.e. aggravation from abusers of cocaine and beer).

Having small print runs and little money to lose, the fanzines often flout libel and copyright laws, if only in hope of a bit of publicity. Some make allegations about the sexual exploits of 'high profile, coke snorting' record company bosses. (Gear 2, 1991) Others write outright: 'Do you know a cause worth fighting or more importantly any chance of some free publicity. Write and let us know. We pay five pounds.' (Herb Garden 2)

Fanzines are the only place to find writing about clubbing from an explicitly female (though not feminist) point of view. Several are edited by women (i.e. Duck Call and Gear), while even the laddish Boy's Own has the occasional

'Girl's Own Nightmare' feature which discusses such problems as 'death by sisterhood on eight tabs', surviving the loo queue and the handbag problem. Similarly, the Herb Garden ran a spoof of a woman's magazine quiz which determined whether you were a 'Sad Susan' who doesn't know a thing about dance culture, a 'Techno Tracy' who raves all the time but indiscriminately, or a 'Vicky Volante' (the name of the author of the mock quiz) who has the right attitude and knows how to have fun with style. Significantly, these fanzine articles by female writers are careful to distance themselves from dancing around handbags, Sharon and Tracy (Techno or otherwise).

While the rave fanzines are certainly outlets for clubber debate, they are not, as is often assumed, necessarily emergent. Most of the rave fanzines appeared in the aftermath of the tabloid 'moral panic' and did little to contribute to the early evolution of Acid House. NME tried to explain the absence of fanzines by the fact that the music did not revolve around artists: 'That there isn't already a massive Acid House fanzine is partly down to the anonymity of the idiom. It's rarely performed live, which is why the DJs who play the sounds in clubs have a higher profile than the musicians who make them'. (NME July 16, 1988) But the early fanzines could have focussed on DJs as did the later ones which were full of hagiographic articles with titles like '17 Things You Never Knew About Danny Rampling'. (Herb Garden 2)

All but one fanzine appeared long after British Acid House had been converted into a 'scene' by the subcultural consumer press because before the niche media baptism, the culture consisted of little more than a dozen tracks, a few clubs

and DJs. Moreover, even when the numbers of people involved swelled through the summer of 1988, it was not long before the tabloids were on the case. Professional media are generally faster off the mark, working to monthly, weekly and daily deadlines rather than the slow productions and erratic schedules of amateur media. Even after their proliferation, then, the fanzines tended to write about things that happened months prior to their publication and were well behind the consumer press.

Free from the constraints of maintaining readerships, fanzines don't have to worry about being identified with a scene that has become passé. Much fanzine copy therefore wallows in nostalgia. Their writers reminisce about the legendary raves and hanker after the initial 'vibe'. Conscious of lying in the wake of a historic youth movement, even when they try to avoid sentimental longing, it often prevails. For example:

My purpose is not to describe the pre-Fall idyll, some sonic paradise which we should wander as do unreconstructed hippies to Glastonbury [but] rather to lament the way clubland has so quickly become self-conscious and unspecial. Acid House was not the be-all and end-all, but it was a beginning, and something that was stamped out before it was allowed to develop. (Boy's Own spring 1990)

To have attended any event which was given notoriety by the tabloids has its own subcultural capital. Certainly many wished they had been there - contributing to the news and taking part in youth cultural history. One of the bigger club organisations, who obtained more tabloid front pages than any other, was banking on such nostalgia when they released videos of their 'Sunrise' and 'Back to the Future' parties. Their advertisement asked, 'Do you remember the raves of 88 and 89? Capture your cherished memories on VHS video cassettes, from the days we travelled the orbital and no town, field or warehouse was safe.' (Clubland

December 1991/January 1992)

Word-of-mouth and fanzines are likely to be residual as much as emergent means of communications. The idea that subcultural scenes are seeded with micro-media, cultivated by niche media and harvested by mass media describes the exception as much as the rule. There is no *natural* order to cultural development. In competitive capitalist economies where sundry media work simultaneously, where global industries are local businesses and 'all that is solid melts into air' (cf Berman 1983), organic metaphors about 'grassroots' and 'growth' eclipse as much as they explain. They are too unitary to make sense of the complex teleologies of contemporary popular culture. Culture emerges from above and below, from within and without media, from under and overground.

22. LEGAL 'RADICAL' RADIO

Until 1990, dance radio was illegal. The only stations to offer 100% dance programming with club tie-ins and advertising were the 'pirates'. From sharing the same DJ staff through reciprocal promotions to overlapping audiences, pirate stations and dance clubs had been entangled in a web of financial and ideological affiliations that go back to the sixties. Before founding Radio Caroline in March 1964, for instance, Ronan O'Rahilly ran the Scene, a fashionable Mod hang-out in Soho, and through the 1970s and 80s, Reggae, Soul then House music pirates organised 'blues parties', 'shabeens' and raves. (cf Chapman 1990)

Pirate radio stations have been positioned as the antithesis of the official, government-funded Radio One. Despite being for-profit narrowcasters, they are cloaked in the romance of the underground. Like fanzines, they are supposed to be the active voice of subcultures and like graffiti or sampling, their acts of unauthorised appropriation are deemed 'hip'. To a large degree, the stations did indeed cater to those culturally disenfranchised by age and race. The black music press, in particular, championed the pirates; they published listings of their frequencies (even after it had been criminalised), recounted tricks for dodging the police and berated the D.T.I. (Department of Trade and Industry, responsible for licensing the airwaves) as the 'Department of Total Idiots'. (Touch October 1991; Touch March 1991) Moreover, pirate radio was celebrated as 'the bush telegraph of Acid House - [it] keeps the revolutionaries informed'. (Soul Underground December 1989-January 1990)

The Broadcasting Act of 1990, however, changed a long-standing state of affairs and propelled the pirates in one of two directions. By making it a criminal offense to advertise on pirate radio, many stations were driven from partial to total dependence on revenue generated by advertising clubs and raves. As one pirate DJ explained, 'club nights have always been our biggest money maker and they can still be advertised - they can't hold the owners responsible and they have no way of finding the promoter.' (Touch March 1991) The ties between clubs and pirates tightened to the extent that many stations became little more than communication units of the larger club organisations. The stations even took on the names of club nights like 'Future' 'Fantasy', 'Friends', 'Obsession', 'Lightning', 'Rave' and 'Sunrise'.¹³⁶

The course for a few other pirates, however, was legalisation. In London, Manchester and Bristol, for example, pirates with sizable listenerships and sufficient legal and financial backing won licenses from the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA).¹³⁷ London's KISS FM was the largest and most celebrated instance of a pirate going legal and consideration of their transition illuminates the subcultural logic which distinguishes between the thrill of the illicit and the banality of the condoned.

¹³⁶ All these stations were on air in the London area in September 1990.

¹³⁷ Changes in government policy have generally been forced by the popularity of illegal radio. Radio One was established in 1967 as a reaction to the off-shore pirates, Radio Caroline and Radio London. While the 1990 Broadcasting Act intended de-regulation, the IBA was reluctant to licence a dance music station, refusing KISS FM's first bid in favour of a jazz station to which few people tuned in. For a detailed account of the politics of Greater London FM radio licensing, cf Barbrook 1990.

Founded in 1985, the pirate KISS was ranked in 1987 as London's second most popular radio station, after Capital FM and ahead of Radio One, by a poll in the Evening Standard. With the million pound launch of KISS's legal version in 1990, Rogers and Cowan, its public relations firm, and BBDO, its advertising agency, tried to build on this audience by maintaining what they understood to be the station's appeal - its underground credibility and 'street' feel. They issued six marketing statements including 'KISS FM reflects the sound of the street' and three slogans which declared that KISS was 'Radical Radio', 'The Station on Everyone's Lips' and 'The Voice of the Underground'. While the trade weeklies had no problem accepting that 'KISS has deliberately kept its pirate station feel', most of the youth-oriented press were sure a combination of IBA restriction and business pressure would compromise KISS. (Music Week 17 November, 1990) Even amid the positive reviews, they repeatedly expressed doubt that the station could 'walk the fine line between credit and credibility'. (City Limits Aug 30 - Sept 6, 1990) KISS had always been 'commercial' but with licence fees, taxes and corporate backers, it would need to make more. Contrary to assumptions about the conservative role of bureaucratic bodies like the IBA, however, KISS FM's 'Promise of Performance' contract went some way toward insisting that KISS maintain its underground feel. For their license stipulated that at least 50% of their play-list be new material, that is, pre-chart, on general release but not in the Top 40, pre-release or unreleased in the UK at the time of broadcast. (IBA 1990)

Nevertheless, Lindsay Wesker, KISS's head of music and main spokesman, spent much of the station's first year in legal operation juggling the

ideological contradictions between subcultures and commerce. He repeatedly told the press that KISS both maintained its subcultural feel and offered a substantial target audience attractive to advertisers, that they were both uncompromising in their search for authentic dance sounds and unswerving in their accumulation of socially active 15-24 year old listeners. Previously, legal radio stations hadn't bothered with 'hip' subcultural trappings because they enjoyed monopoly or duopoly markets. With KISS (and other incremental dance stations around the country), British radio had to confront the discursive inconsistencies for the first time. As the record and publishing industries had been successfully negotiating the knotted problems of youth niches and subcultural capital since the sixties, it is not surprisingly that KISS FM's main financial backers were three publishers and a leisure group which grew out of a record company.¹³⁸ Moreover, their main advertisers were American, notably Coca Cola who had faith in the youth niches delivered by radio and whose main rival, Pepsi, had an exclusive contract with KISS's main competitor, Capital FM.

KISS FM continues to promote a series of successful events, including two weekly club nights. They have club listings each morning and several times throughout the day, club advertisements at night and on the weekend when rates are cheaper, plus presenters who are club DJs and promote their own nights. KISS represents a sizable section of the London dance scene - giving key club DJs like Norman Jay, Danny Rampling and Paul Oakenfold their own evening shows - and

¹³⁸ KISS FM's founding shareholders were Centurion Press (20%), Cradley Group Holding plc (5%) and EMAP Radio Ltd (20%), sister company to the publisher of *Q*, *Select*, *Kerrang* and *Smash Hits*. Virgin Broadcasting, which until early 1992 was a sister company to Virgin Records, owns 15%. The management team also held shares and a number were unsold at the time of the launch.

has a substantial portion of clubbers and ravers among its listeners. To talk about London dance subcultures without reference to KISS would be to omit a main point of reference, source of information, assimilator of sounds and distributor of underground ideology. Although there are definitely those who see themselves as further underground than this 'voice of the underground', it is worth noting the way in which a station with a weekly reach of a million 15-24 year olds employs the rhetoric of subculture and maintains so many club culture links.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ This was the case until autumn 1992, when KISS underwent changes in staff, play-list and mode of address and began to sound more like Radio One and less 'street credible'. Subcultural youth markets also feel the bite of flagging ad sales during a recession. Nevertheless, of the six new incremental radio stations in London, KISS was the only one to report a profit in the first half of 1993.

23. THE EDITORIAL DISCOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUBCULTURES

Britain saw a remarkable 73% increase in consumer magazine titles in the 1980s - the result of more detailed market research, tighter target marketing and new technologies like computer mailing and desk top publishing. (Marketing 13 August 1992)¹⁴⁰ By the end of the decade, about thirty magazines addressed youth, featured music and style editorial and drew advertising from the record, fashion, beverage and tobacco industries. While flyers and listings tend to deal in the corporeal world of *crowds*, and tabloids handle the sweeping and scandalous impact of *movements*, consumer magazines operate in *subcultures*. They categorize social groups, arrange sounds, itemize attire and label everything. They baptise scenes and generate the self-consciousness required to maintain cultural distinctions. They give definition to vague cultural formations, pull together and reify the disparate materials which become subcultural homologies.

The music and style press are crucial to our conceptions of youth; they do not just cover subcultures, they help construct them. Birmingham scholarship

¹⁴⁰ Simon Frith examines the significance of the music press to the meaning of youth culture. In Sound Effects, he discusses rock writers as 'professional rock fans' and examines their development of an 'alternative music ideology'. (Frith 1981: 165-177)

In his book One Chord Wonders, Dave Laing theorizes the media's relation to punk as 'framing', i.e. the process by which a description or definition of punk was established but, as the metaphor suggests, the media's function is depicted as confining and restraining rather than enabling. (Laing 1985: 99-105)

ignored the *development* of subcultures, considering them only when they were fully mediated and ripe for critical interpretation. They did not investigate the process by which sounds, styles, argot and rituals congealed into clusters which seemed to perfectly reflect the social structure (a.k.a. 'socio-symbolic homologies'). This was an admitted shortcoming of the methodology:

Homological analysis of a cultural relation is synchronic. It is not equipped to account for changes over time, or to account for the creation or disintegration, of homologies: it records the complex qualitative state of a cultural relation as it is observed in one quantum of time. (Willis 1978: 191)

But the process by which subcultures crystallise is crucial to understanding their meaning and function. Having already discussed some of the means by which crowds come together and put forth some necessary conditions for a movement, this section examines two moments in the formation of Acid House subculture. Firstly, it outlines the process by which Acid House became a music brand with a distinct sound, ideology and preferred mode of consumption. It therefore contrasts with the many cultural studies that take the existence of genres for granted (as if music organically evolved into kinds and categories).¹⁴¹ Secondly, it identifies some means by which disparate cultural materials and specific crowds were appended to the genre. It considers the niche media's role in assembling Acid House into a full-fledged subculture.

Before considering these cases, it is worth asking why consumer magazines are involved in subcultures at all. One reason is that the aficionados that

¹⁴¹ Sociological work on music genres also tends to overlook the process of their coining and circulation. (cf Frith 1981a & 1987d, Fabbri 1982a & 1982b, Lewis 1992)

become the writers, editors and photographers of the subcultural consumer press have at one time or another been participants in subcultures and still espouse versions and variations of underground ideology. There is a fraternity of interest between the staff *and* readers of these magazines, not only because they are of the same sex,¹⁴² but because they share subcultural capital investments.

Another reason for the editorial interest in subcultures relates to the magazines' need to target and maintain readerships. The fortunes of the youth press have tended to fluctuate with the popularity of the scenes with which they're affiliated¹⁴³, so the monitoring of subcultures has become a financial necessity. For instance, New Musical Express peaked in circulation in 1980 when Punk and post-Punk Rock held sway, then experienced steady decline until 1989 when its association with, and promotion of, the Manchester scene gave it a new lease on life (by pulling its circulation back above 100,000).

Similarly, the Face was an integral part of the New Romantics/New Wave London club scene in the early eighties. Its contributors roamed around 'clubland', celebrated posing and masquerading and elaborated a subcultural

¹⁴² The music weeklies (like NME, Melody Maker, Record Mirror, now incorporated into Music Week) and the music monthlies (like Q, Select, Vox), so called because most of their copy relates to current record industry product, have readerships which are 70-85% male. The style monthlies (e.e. the Face, i-D, Sky) which have broader remits and cover clothes are more balanced with readerships that are only 50-65% male. The 'clubzines' (e.g. Touch, Clubland and the defunct Rave), while not subject to omnibus market surveys like JICNARS, can be safely said to lean toward male readerships.

¹⁴³ Of course, other factors which contribute to shifts in circulation include the general state of the economy and rates of consumer spending as well as competition from other magazines in the same market.

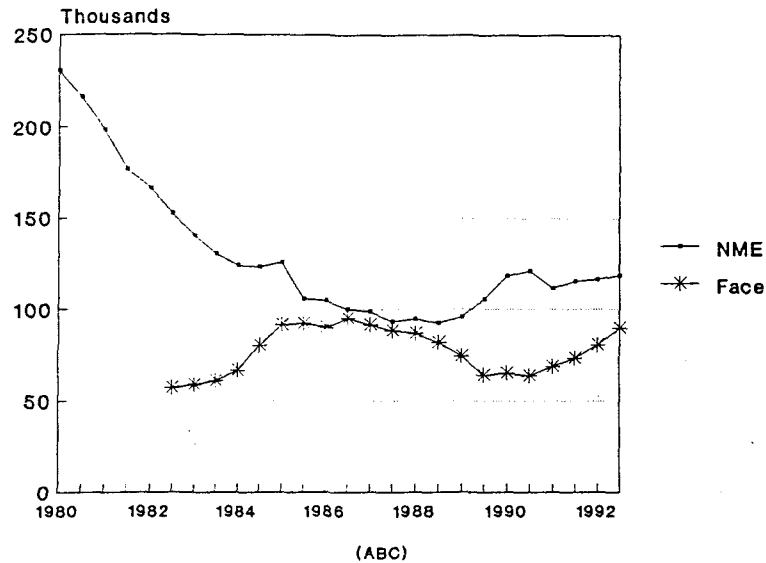
ideology. By early 1988, the magazine had lost touch with club culture: it no longer contained its stock-in-trade club column and chose covers depicting established film stars (like Steve Martin and Woody Allen) rather than the budding dance acts of its past. Even when Acid House started getting media attention elsewhere, the Face opted for Rare Groove and Hiphop as if Acid House were a fad too fleeting for their attention. They ran the odd blurb and put the House-oriented headline 'DJs are the New Stars' on the cover in October 1988, but the magazine really only wrote 'House Post-Acid' and 'Clubland after Acid' stories. (Face December 1988; Face December 1990) The Face ignored the phenomenon either because Acid House distanced itself from the posing championed in their early issues or because anonymous rave crowds were of little interest to the star-gazing which characterised their later issues. In a retrospective feature, the publication implicitly acknowledged being the rearguard:

When acid first arrived, it seemed to be just another passing phase... As the scene continued and expanded, the complaints got louder: this was a suburban crowd, not real clubbers, sneered the old guard. They weren't there for the music, they just wanted the high. They couldn't even dance. As it turned out, these were the grumblings of a generation who were being replaced: those who didn't want to go with the flow were in the end, run over by it. (Face December 1990)

This realisation and the magazine's subsequent re-positioning, along with sympathetic publicity acquired in the process of being sued for libelling a Stock/Aitken/Waterman-produced teen idol, have arrested the Face's decline in circulation which began in 1986.

Table 13

NME & The Face: Circulation Trends



The established magazine closest to clubland in 1988 was i-D. Though often grouped with the Face as a 'style monthly', the two periodicals are significantly different. Whereas the Face had come to specialise in personality profiles and celebrity interviews, i-D concentrated on scouting out talent and detecting early signs of subculture. The divergence is aptly represented by their front covers: the Face displayed familiar faces; i-D opted for enigmatic, winking unknowns. Since its inception, the mission of i-D has been to find and formulate subcultures. Back issues are a catalogue of club cultures - constructed, encapsulated and packaged. 'Club News' and 'DJ of the Month' columns as well as regular features excavate the youth cultural landscape and establish scenes. i-D is self-conscious about the history of youth culture, counter-culture and alternative style

but, compared to the nostalgic fanzines, it is disinterested in origins.¹⁴⁴ The monthly has to be careful to search for what's happening and what's next; it needs to ride the crest of cultural trends.

Not all youth-oriented magazines are in the business of discovering and developing subcultures. Smash Hits is a top selling fortnightly glossy that loves Top of the Pops, publishes poster pin-ups of the younger Radio One DJs and reiterates tabloid gossip with exclamations like 'Really?!!!'. With a target readership of girls aged 12 to 22, Smash Hits covers dance music but rarely discusses club culture or celebrates undergrounds.¹⁴⁵ While not subcultural in any current sense of the word, these magazines certainly cater to niches subject to fad and fashion. This is a problem with the ideology of subculture: the manifold variations within girl culture tend to be overlooked; their distinctions are subsumed by convictions that they're a passive homogeneous mass.

Although the phrase 'subcultural consumer magazines' may at first seem to be a contradiction in terms, it accurately describes the editorial business of sustaining readerships by navigating the underground tributaries (which flow into the 'mainstream') as well as the common interpretative community to which staff and

¹⁴⁴ Many rave fanzines cite i-D as their model. The Duck Call thanks 'i-D for inspiration' while the Herb Garden parodies i-D's special issue format with its 'Very First Issue' and lampoons their 'DJ of the Month' column by featuring Mrs Mills's Top 10 Tunes which include 'Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree'.

¹⁴⁵ Since the rise of acid house and rave culture, Smash Hits's circulation has plummeted from 767,000 in 1988 down to 368,000 in 1992. (ABC January-June 1992) It would seem that the age demographics that aided the rise of Acid House, abetted the fall of Smash Hits and other girl-oriented teen magazines like Big and the defunct Number One now incorporated into Fast Forward.

subcultural members belong. Another reason for the symbiotic relations between subcultures and the music and style press is that subcultures are a means by which consumer magazines create good copy, tell a story and make meaning out of music and clothes. The press envelop music in discourses (often instigated by relevant PR feeds from record companies) which don't reveal exact conditions of production as much as give acts a picturesque context, locate them agreeably underground, authenticate them with a scene.¹⁴⁶

As discussed in Chapter I, authentication by a scene or subculture is particularly important for musics which don't revolve around performing authors and oeuvres. Acid House music was perceived as authentic partly because it was said to come out of Chicago's underground dance clubs. But exactly how did the genre come into being and how did its legend get into general circulation within British dance clubs? The answers to both questions lie with the commercial activities of London Records who coined the genre in process of their importing, compiling and marketing several DJ International tracks on the third volume of their The House Sound of Chicago series, subtitled Acid Tracks. Before the compilation's release in January 1988, all that existed was a technological sounding bleep produced by a Roland TB303 found on the 1987 club hit 'Acid Tracks' by Phuture. In other words, a new noise, not a new category of music, originated in Chicago.

Hundreds of dance genres are coined every year. While most fail, Acid House prospered; it got into circulation, gained currency and started drawing

¹⁴⁶ In other words, consumer magazines accrue credibility by affiliating themselves with subcultures but also contribute to the authentication of cultural forms in the process of covering and constructing subcultures.

lines on people's aural, aesthetic and social maps. The album's sleeve notes effectively set the agenda for the music press; they concentrated on three qualities that might be regarded as decisive for the authentication and promotion of a new dance genre. First, as discussed earlier in relation to moral panics, they emphasised Acid House's drug-orientation and potential to be 'one of the most controversial sounds of 1988'. Second, they gave meaning to identifiable sounds and placed them in a genealogy. This new genre, they argued, took House music 'into an ecstatic, almost transcendental state, where slower rhythms, abstract sounds and expanded lyrics merge together into a kind of phuture funk'. The spelling of '*phutures*' and the use of the subtitle 'Acid tracks' deftly put a gestural genealogy in place, retrospectively claiming the 1987 hit as the origin of the genre. Third, Acid House was positioned as the soundtrack of an American subculture with firm roots in Chicago: it had an 'underground creed' and 'came out of that city's underground dance studios'.

To be credible, new genres must be more than nominal; they must come across as genuine, seemingly natural, generations of sound. Only one, arguably two, of the compilation's eight tracks and less than a dozen singles in general circulation were Acid House as the album's own sleeve notes defined and described it. Moreover, the DJ-artists featured on the album contradicted each other about what was and wasn't 'Acid House'. Given this, the success of the genre was no mean feat. Routinely suspicious of new genres, the music press believed in Acid House because the existence of a Chicago scene had already been well established by London Records' two previous volumes of The House Sound of Chicago. When

the company launched the first volume in the summer 1986, they promoted it by taking journalists to the windy city. Eugene Manzi, London's Head of Press, explained the strategy to me:

When something is not hype, when something real is going on, then you have to show them. We definitely had a story in Chicago. We introduced a pile of British journalists to the artists, producers and lawyers who were all characters - creative but amateurish - and we generated a lot of good press. (Interview: 24 August 1992)

Here Manzi partly effaces the record company's active role, for one can always find 'something real', but the compilations and the guided tours constructed a particular kind of scene for British consumption. As Stuart Cosgrove, who went on that and other trips to Chicago and wrote the sleeve notes to the Acid Tracks compilation, admitted: 'commercial enterprise constructs as much as it discovers genres and sub-genres'. (Interview: 25 August, 1992)¹⁴⁷

London Records formulated a genre which played into underground ideology and framed the sound as authentic, psychedelic and transgressive. Features on a new genre called 'Acid House' in New Musical Express, Melody Maker, Record Mirror and Soul Underground repeated the sleeve's three themes: it was a new generation of music with authentic subcultural roots and a potential for moral panic.¹⁴⁸ Later, when telling the story of Acid House-cum-Rave, however, these

¹⁴⁷ People in the culture industries usually deny their ability to change, influence or direct culture, suggesting that they simply respond to market demand. However, with a PhD in Theatre History and academic articles on youth style and moral panic, Stuart Cosgrove offers an atypical perspective. (cf Cosgrove 1988)

¹⁴⁸ cf John McCready 'New Acid Daze' NME 6 February 1988; Scott Summers 'Acid Daze' Record Mirror 20 February 1988; Simon Reynolds and Paul Oldfield 'Acid Daze' Melody Maker 27 February 1988; Darren Reynolds 'Acid House' Soul Underground April 1988.

same periodicals excluded record company involvement from the early history, positioning them as 'bandwagon jumpers' producing last minute acid remixes and pop singles with applied acid hook-lines. Contrary to the ideologies of both the underground and the Birmingham tradition, culture industries do not just co-opt and incorporate, but generate ideas and incite culture.

Both the publishing and record industries have sectors which specialise in the manufacture and promotion of 'anti-commercial' culture. This is not to say that Acid House-cum-Rave culture was not vibrant, nor that its youth were cultural dupes. On the contrary, business involvement does not make young people any less active or creative in their leisure. The argument here is that subcultural gestures are less grand and more contingent than subculturalists have argued. When appropriation is an industrial objective, it is whimsical to regard young people's use of cultural goods as 'profane' or 'subversive'. (cf Willis 1978; Hebdige 1979) Subcultural studies often overstate the homogeneity and conformity of cultural industry output and, as a consequence, exaggerate the presence of subcultural resistance.¹⁴⁹

In early 1988, Acid House was little more than an imported type of music with drug associations. It didn't have a definite crowd, a tell-tale wardrobe or a unique blend of dance styles. With the exception of one club called Delirium, 'the only place... which accurately re-creates the authentic Chicago setting of Acid

¹⁴⁹ According to Willis, for example, youth subcultures have 'the essential, rare irreverent gift of profanity' which transforms the 'shit of capitalist production' into something of value. (Willis 1978: 170) Does this adequately describe the way the Beatles' Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band was bought and listened to by the Hippies?

House', it had few British sites. (Record Mirror 20 February 1988) Acid House did not yet have a suitable British origin. When the music eventually found a home at Shoom, it was not because the club had any special affiliation to the sound, rather the club associated with the hallucinogenic discourses in which the music was enveloped. Shoom was said to 'capture the free spirit of the 60s more than any other'. (Soul Underground no 7: April 1988) Rather than being an organic part of the scene, then, Acid House 'simply gave them a musical identity that... these particular hippies could relate to, man.' (i-D June 1988) So admitted the article that conclusively united the music with a club, drug and crowd and fixed the parameters of Acid House as a London subculture.

Although many listings and consumer magazines contributed to the construction of the subculture, i-D was most productive. Throughout the early months of 1988, i-D ran stories on aspects of what would come to be clustered under the rubric of Acid House. On the cover of its first issue of the year, i-D sported a winking Smiley face (the insignia which would be banned from high street shops that autumn because of its associations with drug-taking). Inside, a feature described the new penchant for Smiley T-shirts, purple turtle necks, mutton chop sideburns, floppy fedoras and platform boots. These were the beginnings of the Acid House wardrobe, but the garb was associated with Rare Groove (that is, original and re-mixed 1970s American funk music) and the crowd was emphatically urban and mixed race. (cf i-D December 1987/January 1988)

In the ensuing months, i-D ran many articles about neo-hippie social types and subcultures. In a parodic manner that admits their creative writing and

avoids any 'uncool' earnestness, the magazine portrayed the 'Yappy' or 'Young Artistic Previously Professional Yippy' who was said to fuse the materialism of yuppies with the rebellion of yippies and 'The Baldrics' (named after Blackadder's acne-faced side-kick) were described as the 'psychedelic miscreants... of Manchester's latest surreal youth cult' and said to wear long-hair and flares and 'roam the Hacienda in packs'. (*i-D* February 1988; *i-D* April 1988)¹⁵⁰ Twenty years after 1968, hippie attitudes and attire were in revival among many disparate groups of youth, to diverse soundtracks, with different ideologies - and *i-D* was busy picking scenes out of the cultural morass and labelling them as subcultures.

In their June issue, they ran an article by John Godfrey, a diligent architect of subcultural categories, who wove these disparate hippie themes through an account of Shoom and effectively transformed a club crowd into a full-fledged subculture. Called 'The Amnesiacs', the article reiterated the much vaunted 'realignment of club attitudes' - the 'return to fun', the pursuit of the 'non-stop party' and introduction of 'happiness into club consciousness'. (*i-D* June 1988) It combined this discourse, however, with the revelation of subculture - the 'core crowd had adopted its own language and fashion codes'. Rendered fully newsworthy, the article then proceeded to tabulate the clothing, sounds sites and argot of the club crowd. It concluded with four top ten lists. 'Happy Fashion' included anything two sizes too big, Smiley or Boy's Own T-shirts, dungarees,

¹⁵⁰ As the journalist had been 'assured that the Happy Mondays encapsulate the spirit' of the Baldrics, the article included an interview with the then unknown Shaun Ryder. A year later, 'the Baldrics' would be designated 'Madchester' by the Mondays and the 'Manchester scene' by Factory Records and *NME*.

headscarves, black baggy trousers, patched jeans and sweatshirts (clothing that by previous accounts would not count as subcultural). 'Happy Trax' was non-generic in a way usually considered mainstream, but 'alternative' insofar as it eccentrically included Mory Kante, Mandy Smith, the Woodentops and a few Acid House singles. 'Happy Places' catalogued six London and four conveniently remote Ibiza clubs. Finally, the most novel and noteworthy list, 'Happy Talk', consisted of drug-oriented argot 'translated' into innocent party speech. An amusing dictionary for those 'in the know', it read:

Acieed!!: the shout at the height of the dance ecstasy
Shoom: the rush of dance ecstasy
Get on one: get into the groove
Matey: a term of greeting
A Top one: the ultimate compliment

The subcultural consumer press compile what subculturalists turn around and interpret as revealing homologies. But, while not random, the distinct combination of rituals that came to be Acid House was certainly not an unmediated reflection of the social structure. Magazines like *i-D* produced Acid House subculture as much as the participating dancers and drug-takers insofar as labelling and dissemination within a niche is crucial to subcultural formation. Like genres, subcultures are constructed in the process of being 'discovered'. Journalists and photographers do not invent subcultures, but shape them, mark their core and reify their borders. Media and other culture industries are integral to the processes by which we 'create groups with words'. (Bourdieu 1990: 139) Although it would be difficult to argue without further historical research, I suspect that youth-oriented

niche media and youth subcultures have proliferated in tandem.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ In the early 1960s, a 'scene' was 'the newest thing in musical journalism.' (Melody Maker 10 March 1962) Since then, 'scenes' and subcultures have authenticated music, placed it within newsworthy narratives and secured loyal readerships.

24. CONCLUSION

Although Acid House and Rave are unique phenomena, a few general lessons about music subcultures and the media can be gathered from their case study. Firstly, communications media are inextricably involved in the meaning and organisation of youth subcultures. Youth subcultures are not organic, unmediated social formations, nor are they autonomous, grassroots cultures which only meet the media upon recuperative 'selling out' or 'moral panic'. On the contrary, the media do not just re-present but participate in the assembly, demarcation and development of music cultures.

Secondly, the reason for an absolute and essentialist ideological opposition between subcultures and media is, in one sense, simple. The stories that subcultural youth tell about media and commerce are not meant to give accurate accounts of media production processes, but to negotiate issues of cultural capital and social structure. '*The media*' stand in for the masses - discursive distance from which is a measure of their cultural worth. After a decade of extensive analysis into the divide between high and popular culture and the resistances of popular to dominant culture, the many echelons *within* popular culture now require further research.

Finally, the stratifications of popular culture operate in symbiotic relation to the media. This is one way Bourdieu's Distinction, researched in the 1960s, is antiquated. It ignores television and radio and positions films and newspapers as markers of distinction. But the media are more than symbolic goods,

they are an institution. Their channels of communication are crucial to the creation, classification and distribution of cultural knowledge.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has dealt with issues normally associated with cultural studies in a manner typically identified with media sociology. In so doing, it is indebted to and implicitly critical of both. Cultural studies has brought to light issues, particularly around the consumption of media, which were not previously considered worthy of serious attention. Moreover, it has greatly expanded our understanding of the popular, the cultural and the media in everyday life. But cultural studies has often lacked discipline, so to speak. It has had a cavalier attitude to questions of method and routinely made a fetish of theory. Moreover, its findings too often fall into one of three categories: criticisms of 'dominant ideologies', celebrations of 'resistant readings' or appreciations of complex texts.¹⁵²

Media sociology, on the other hand, is thoroughly a discipline. It has developed rigorous methodological traditions and a solid body of knowledge. It has excelled, in particular, at investigating the production of media: the economics and politics of institutions, the organisational structures and professional ideologies of multifarious media. But media sociology has sometimes been conservative in its choice of object of study, timid in its combination of methods and hesitant to engage with theory.

This thesis has attempted to draw from the strengths of both traditions. It explores novel subject matter but is concerned with means of empirical research.

¹⁵² For criticisms of cultural studies, cf Cohen 1980, Curran and Sparks 1991, Frith 1980 & 1991b, McGuigan 1992, Morris 1988b.

It concentrates on consumption, but explores issues of production. It employs and appraises and comes up with its own theories without being preoccupied by them. Finally, it weaves cultural analysis with institutional analysis in search of a more holistic picture.

Notwithstanding its interdisciplinarity and multiple methodological perspectives, I hope that my argument is clear. Cultural worth would seem to be a universal concern; even 'low' cultures have hierarchies of value. These values relate to both the perceived authenticity (or truth) and distinction (or prestige) of the music, media and crowd in question. Britain is not a classless society, but a society of proliferating classes and diversifying gradations. And, these intricate systems of social stratification are entangled (in theory) and inseparable (in practice) from systems of cultural differentiation. In other words, 'embodied social structures' make sense of the world through cultural comparison and contrast.

Britain has a complex cultural structure in which age (in addition to factors like occupation, ethnicity and gender) is meaningful. Not only does age affect occupation and accumulated cultural capital, but youth cultures have developed their own sub-systems of distinctions which I've sought to make sense of in terms of 'subcultural capital'. I think the concept is useful in prising open the hierarchies of 'hipness' and the disparagement of the 'mainstream' and the mass media which pervades youth's club cultures.

The main way that subcultural capitals are rendered 'natural' or legitimate is through authentication. Youth's dance culture, like older music cultures, relies on some sort of establishment or enculturation. But unlike previous

music cultures, close to a whole generation have 'found' authenticity in and through the medium of recording, in reproduction and mediation. This is just one of the cultural ramifications of the supremacy of recording and the development of disc cultures. Despite increasing integration of communication technologies into daily life, authenticity is not in decline. On the contrary, I have difficulty imagining a future British culture - no matter how high-tech - in which some version of authenticity is not a key value. The discourses and definitions of authenticity will undoubtedly continue to mutate, but concern for credibility and the 'real' is unlikely to fade. And, the role played by diverse media (from records to the subcultural consumer press) in the construction of community is likely to expand.

APPENDIX

NOTES ON METHOD

This research was mainly carried out between 1988 and 1992. It uses a mixture of methods including participant observation, interviews, letters, market research and textual analysis of archival documents.

(1) Participant Observation.

In the course of my research, I acted as a participant observer at approximately 200 discos, clubs and raves.¹⁵³ In other words, I personally participated in the events being studied, informally observed and interviewed the club organisers and venue staff, the DJs and crowd. Certain clubbers and organisers became more regular informants and fostered more detailed case studies. I never settled down to do an ethnography of a single club, for the main reason that it would have pulled me away from my interest in painting a bigger picture of the discotheque as a technological and social institution caught within a web of local and national media.

As a result of this method of 'ethnographic survey', however, representativeness was a problem. A properly representative sample was near impossible to attain for the main reason that dance clubs remain an unknown quantity. BEDA, the trade organisation of the larger dance club chains, is not a reliable source nor, for that matter, is market research useful for more than the most

¹⁵³ During the period in question, I also attended over twenty 'live' gigs for comparative purposes.

general of facts on the nightclub industry. (And there are no government statistics of the number and kind of clubs.) I therefore did the best I could to distribute my participant observation, seeking a balance of black and white, gay and straight, middle and working class clubs, as well as a balance of musical styles, from World Music clubs and Rock'n'Roll revival clubs through 'Classic' Disco, Reggae and Rare Groove clubs to Hip-hop, House, Techno and mixed genre pop music clubs.

Nevertheless, my survey had an obvious urban bias. Most of my research was carried out in London, with substantial preliminary research conducted in Glasgow. Although I visited clubs around the country, from the Caribbean in Norwich to the Hacienda in Manchester, this work was complementary rather than core research. While this sample has little effect on my argument in Chapter I, it is relevant to Chapter II (as indicated in the text) insofar as the London club scene is probably more socially segmented than the rest of the country. It is also relevant to my argument in Chapter III insofar as media presence and intervention is more intensive in London.

Although I had extensive first-hand experience of dance clubs in North America (principally in Montreal and Los Angeles), I was an outsider to British dance culture. Being North American had its research advantages and disadvantages. It made it easier to talk to strangers. People were more likely to explain the obvious. With my foreign accent, I was able to slip through the cracks of British class and region. Moreover and most importantly, British ideologies about the mainstream and the media puzzled me where they might have been taken for granted by a British researcher. I think the main drawback of being foreign was that it

slowed down my research. It took me a long time to get a grip on the British social structure, particularly systems of class and cultural capital, as well as to understand the complex workings of the British media.

Age is a significant methodological factor in researching youth culture. I began research at age 23 and slowly aged out of the peer group I was studying. This was unexpected as North American 'youth' starts later and ends later than British 'youth'. (This relates to the age at which people leave education, legally drink and couple up - all of which are generally later in North America.) I left Montreal at the height of my youth to arrive in Britain at the end of it. Being older than the bulk of clubbers and ravers worked both for and against my research. On the one hand, I found it increasingly difficult to fit in and fully participate; on the other, the annual increases in age afforded an increasingly detached view.

The methodological problems involved in being a woman researcher of metropolitan nightlife were numerous. Sexual harassment was a routine occurrence. Most of it took the form of very persistent 'chatting up' and refusing to take 'no' for an answer. On two occasions, I was physically accosted - once by a very drunk woman in a lesbian club and once by a man who was obviously 'tripping' in a Hip-hop club. On some occasions, making my way home in the early hours of the morning was a frightening experience, sometimes because I was alone on the street or on public transport, other times because, towards the end of the night, dynamics would change and it would dawn on me that I couldn't trust my informant. My advice to women (and men) planning to do ethnographic work of this nature is, first, take a self-defense course before you start and, second, consider

doing it as part of a team.

2) Interviews

As a supplement to my participant observation activities, I conducted between twenty and thirty unstructured interviews outside dance clubs. These were free-floating conversations which were meant to check and develop issues that had come up in other areas of research. About a third of the interviews were with club organisers and media workers (these were more formal, though only some were recorded), the other two thirds were with avid clubbers and ravers. About half the interviews were face to face and half were over the telephone.

3) Letters

I received 35 letters in response to letters I published in the summer of 1990 in the monthly style magazines, i-D and The Face, and in the London listings magazines, City Limits and Time Out. (cf Table A) I used these letters from clubbers and ravers (some of which are quoted in Chapter II) as a means of making contact with informants. Many letters were revealing about the values and appeals of dance club culture. In the end, however, I only went clubbing with two respondents - one of which was 'Kate', my guide in the ethnographic account of the Introduction. About a quarter of my respondents were students who were planning on or already writing their BA Honours thesis on clubs and in search of some help.

Table A

TimeOut

Club culture Writing a thesis on dance clubs is not as ridiculous, nor as easy as it may sound. So I was wondering whether FACE readers would write to me to help me with my research. The question I'm puzzling over, which perhaps proves that sociology is the study of the bleeding obvious, is why do you, or don't you go to clubs? What is their appeal? The music, the crowd, dancing, drinking, drugs, hiding out, watching or being seen? What has been your best club or warehouse experience? Please rave, review and write to me at the address below.

SARAH THORNTON
15 NORTH GARDNER ST
GLASGOW G11 5BU

THE FACE
JUNE 1990

Dirt On Dancing

I'm writing a PhD thesis on dance clubs and was wondering whether your readers would write to me to help me with my research. The question I'm puzzling over, which may prove that sociology is the study of the obvious, is why do you (or don't you) go to clubs? What is their appeal? What combination of music and crowd, drink and drugs, dancing, watching and being seen make for the fun? What do the sexual and racial politics of particular clubs have to do with it?

SARAH THORNTON,
229 BRECKNOCK RD, N19 5AA

AUG 9 - AUG 16 1990 CITY LIMITS

club appeal

Clubs are not something people expect to study at university. But, for better or worse, I'm writing a thesis on dance clubs and was wondering whether i-D readers would write to me to help me with this research.

The question is simple, at least at first: WHY DO YOU GO TO CLUBS? What is their appeal? Is it the music, crowds, dancing, drinking, watching or being seen? What are your best and worst club (or warehouse) experiences?

Many thanks,

Sarah Thornton
15 North Gardner St
Glasgow G11 5BU

i-D

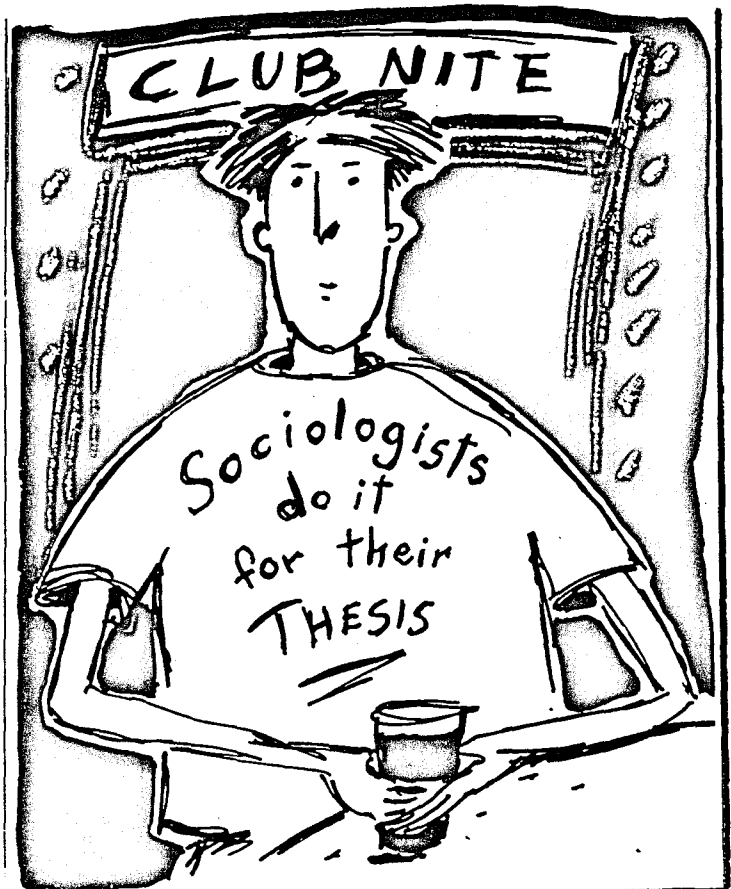
The Politics Of Dancing

I'm writing a PhD thesis on dance clubs and was wondering whether your readers would write to me to help with my research. The question I'm puzzling over, which may prove that sociology is the study of the obvious, is why do you (or don't you) go to clubs? What is their appeal? What combination of music and crowd, drink and drugs, dancing and watching make for the fun? What was your best club or warehouse experience?

Please write, rave or complain.

Sarah Thornton, 229
Brecknock Rd, N19 5AA

TIME OUT AUGUST 8-15 1990



4) Market Research

I outline the methodological strengths and limits of this quantitative resource in Chapter II and, with the exception of some confidential research on market segmentation and individual artists, I list the documents considered in the bibliography. (cf BBC Broadcasting Research, EMAP Metro, Euromonitor, Henley Centre for Forecasting, Hunter, Kinsman, Mintel and Scaping.) Market research complements participant observation and interviews insofar as it offers a larger statistical perspective on their qualitative case studies.

5) Historical and Textual Analysis

This method was central to the historical research written up in Chapter I and the intertextual mapping of 'moral panics' and media in Chapter III. The method was archival and, with respect to early periods, positively archeological, as I had to dig out material without the help of indexes nor much prior scholarship. Once uncovered, these mostly published documents were subject to referential reading (rather than more literary methods). Nevertheless, I was careful to take into account the diverse agendas and audiences of these documents, treating them as opaque representations rather than transparent windows on the world. (For a discussion of the difficulties of doing historical research on popular music, cf Thornton 1990.) I examined the following:

UNPUBLISHED SOURCES:

Musicians' Union Conference Reports

CONSUMER AND TRADE MAGAZINES:

Billboard 1963-67, 1988-93

Black Music 1973-1978

The Face 1980-1993

i-D 1982-1993

New Musical Express 1988-1993

Marketing 1990-1993

Melody Maker 1988-1993

Musicians' Union Report, The Musician, Musician 1946-1992

Q 1988-1993

Queen 1964-67

Record Retailer, Record and Tape Retailer, Music Week 1960-1993

Time Out 1988-1993

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