Nocturnal Transgressions:

Nighttime Stories from Berlin, the New European Nightlife Capital

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I declare that the work presented in this doctoral thesis is my own.

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All German texts have been translated by me unless stated otherwise in the bibliography.

Abstract

Throughout history, nighttime has been considered by many to be antithetical to daytime; it has been regarded as a notorious interval, enabling and characterized by transgression. With the birth of the metropolis and the commercialization of nocturnal activities, nighttime – no longer considered daytime's complete negation but rather rendered partially heterogeneous and acceptably infamous – has been blessed with its own economy and politics as well as its unique social and cultural dynamics. The urban night, as it were, has a life of its own. Indeed, nightlife is marked by the promise of seduction and eventfulness as well as by the pursuit of ecstatic fraternity with likeminded strangers resulting in self-loss and rediscovery. Therein lies its potential for transgression retained by urbanity. But therein also lies the potential for spectacle as well as the incentive for institutionalizing transgression, thereby taming it and generating profit. Using the city of Berlin as a case example, the thesis explores how this nocturnal duality manifests itself in the late capitalist metropolis. As Berlin has recently become the number one nightlife destination in Europe as well as a neo-bohemia harboring numerous privileged migrants (in terms of various types of capital as well as the right to mobility) linked with the creative industries and the arts; various historical, cultural, economic and socio-political factors have come into play in generating Berlin's nocturnal libertarianism which is perceived by many to be exceptional in its aptness for (institutionalized) transgression. The thesis reveals by way of ethnographic evidence how these factors have come into play in creating the relatively exceptional and debatably trangressive realm that constitutes the Berlin night. This is supplemented by the additional ethnographic goal of critically assessing the subversive potential – or the lack thereof – pertaining to these nocturnal events. Within this context, the repercussions and politics of the Berlin night are further explored. Finally, the dissertation seeks to employ continental philosophy and critical theory to make sense of the self-loss and ecstatic fraternity associated with certain instances of (institutionalized) nocturnal transgression as well as to explore the nightly potential for resisting the spectacle.

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Introduction: Notes from Weichselstraße

Perhaps the biggest reason why it was so difficult to write this thesis and why it took me so long to finish it is the feeling of alienation and homelessness which has come to define the lives of many migrants in our globalized day and age. In my case, chronic bouts of melancholia and doubt as well as pangs of despair and worthlessness with respect not only to the research project itself but also to what I'm doing with my life in general have been caused by the fact that I can no longer feel at home either where I grew up (Istanbul) or where I've spent the better part of the last decade (Berlin). In my mind, I tend to reduce this double-ended curse to a horrid and disabling state of limbo, or rather to an oscillation between heaviness and lightness. I can be, as it were, neither completely light nor properly heavy. As it might already have become evident from these opening sentences, I believe this Dostoevskian gesture of putting in some initial lines of confession (if not outright self-flagellation), which might seem needlessly long and not at all germane, is unfortunately necessary so that I can make visible this contrast between heaviness and lightness, thus better explain my critical stance regarding the German capital. So dear reader, please bear with me because just as the self-professed "sick, spiteful and unattractive" underground man begins his rhetorical assault on Saint Petersburg, so too will I commence my account of Berlin by talking about myself.

Well, one part of the problem seems to be that every time I go back to Istanbul I have the urge to leave just after a few days. This is not so easy to admit or to accept because in a country with relatively low wealth and massive income inequality,[1] extensive Westernization at the price of being alienated from one's loved ones and surroundings, and the privilege of a private education at the country's top schools as well as the privilege of being able to afford British (overseas) tuition fees come with a sense of shame and guilt. Given the unfair visa requirements that drastically curtail my compatriots' entitlement to global mobility, being able to reside in the much lusted after "developed world" is a further privilege that weighs heavy on my conscience. Having said that, I must also add – without disregarding the post-structuralist critique of the

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[1] In 2005 Turkey was the second poorest OECD country after Mexico as almost a fifth of Turkish citizens earned less than half the average national income. Moreover, Turkey had the second largest gap between the rich and the poor as the well-to-do 10% were almost 18 times richer than the poorest 10% – for Mexico this was 25 times while the OECD average was 8.9 times. See the 2008 OECD report called "Are We Growing Unequal? – New Evidence on Changes in Poverty and Incomes over the Past 20 Years."

Orient-Occident binary and the post-colonialist critique of essentialism – that due to my secular, upper-middle-class upbringing as the single child of two university professors, from an early age onwards I have identified more with Western values and norms as well as Western art and culture.

Today, I feel like I can't breathe in Istanbul and have the urge to flee not only because I'm intimidated as I'm exposed more directly to the privileges afforded to me by capital and class which in turn make me feel incriminated, and because I'm suffocated by what I perceive to be my loved ones' unquestioning careerism, apolitical escapism, and conspicuous consumerism; but also because from the perspective of my new home ("Europe") certain aspects of Istanbul's everyday reality and the unresolved socio-political issues I'm confronted there with seem infuriatingly outdated and depressingly alien. After all, despite its current (and perhaps doomed) EU candidacy and recent economic good fortune thanks to unjust neoliberal policies, Turkey is a deeply phallocentric, heteronormative and militarist country where conservative values and (ultra)nationalist sentiments reign supreme while the wound of civil war still bleeds after more than 30 years. Add to this the lack of an internalized culture of democracy and respect for human rights which also entails the common acceptance of violence as a constantly legitimate means of solving disputes, the rising trend of authoritarianism and paternalism, the latest of wave of "KCK" arrests and detentions targeting this time around not only politicians, lawyers and journalists but also academics, publishers and translators; plus chronic corruption and nepotism coupled with a generalized attitude of saving the day which means the same old problems keep haunting the country for decades: for example, the Kurdish issue and minority rights; the de facto division of Cyprus; the denial of the Armenian genocide; constitutional and electoral reform (especially the 10% threshold); the barriers against unionization and freedom of expression; the persistence of illiteracy, domestic violence, blood feuds, honor killings, hate crimes, torture, deaths in custody, assassinations and state-sponsored paramilitary activities; mandatory conscription and the systematic punishment of conscientious objection (repeated incarceration, verbal and physical abuse, civil death); the army's disproportionate might as well as its perennial lust for interfering with politics and taking over. Indeed, having already carried out three coup d'états between 1960-80 and effectively pressured the government into dissolution in 1997 thereby giving the constitutional court the necessary boost to outlaw the governing party and ban its top officials from politics; the Turkish military issued an ultimatum to dissuade the current

president from running for office as recently as 2007. At the smaller, individual level this culture of saving the day further restricts one's freedom as it entails the habit of constantly taking steps or making life-altering decisions not according to what one really wants to do with one's life but rather according to what one wants to avoid. For instance, I began doing a PhD not necessarily because I wanted to become an academic but rather because it enabled me to delay joining the army.

To clarify, this is not an attempt to gain sympathy by over-exaggerating the misfortune associated with being a Turkish national through overplaying the elements of persecution and constriction and the cliché of "being stuck between the East and West." Obviously, there are numerous individuals on the planet who are much worse off than the majority of the people living in a G20 nation-state. And of course, despite this general atmosphere of heaviness that haunts the country, lightness still persists microcosmically as both the traditional elites and the new, rising bourgeoisie manage to conjure the necessary blindness and autonomy – if not utter apathy – which enables the guilt-free enjoyment of the latest and most exquisite earthly delights that consumerism can offer whilst leading a charmed existence within the safe confines of gated communities and million-dollar villas as well as posh shopping malls and exclusive nightclubs on the Bosphorus which have come to rival those found in Ibiza and Mykonos. Neither is this an unquestioning approval or adoration of what goes today under the name of "democracy" in the West. Rather, it is an emphasis on the macro-political minimums set by liberalism over the course of recent history which we now tend to take for granted in Europe but which crucially comprise the prerequisite for being able to start talking of a micro-politics of daily (or nightly) transgressions and interventions in the first place. Even in Istanbul which is the most "progressive" hence least representative of all places in the country (the Istanbul reality is very distant from the rest of Turkey just as New York's liberal cosmopolitanism or L.A.'s wealth, splendor and licentiousness seem extraterrestrial when viewed from the American heartland) one can't help feeling sometimes that the "gains" made in the West after '68 especially in the fields of sexual liberation, identity politics and individual rights have by and large not made their way to Turkey yet. The fact that in the early 2000s almost the same actors [2] managed to impose and

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[2] Faced with a major banking and liquidity crisis triggered by a political strife between the ultra-secularist President (representing the traditional Kemalist bourgeoisie) and the Islamist Prime Minister (representing the new Anatolian bourgeoisie) which had suddenly led to a sharp drop in Turkey's international credit rating followed by the rapid flight of most foreign capital as well as the overnight devaluation of the currency by 50%, the coalition

implement without any major opposition from the Turkish public the very same neoliberal austerity measures and privatization packages which have recently caused massive protests and strikes in Greece, as well as the fact that the recent global wave of anti-capitalism and alter-mundialism has only virtual rather than actual followers in Turkey – so hourly updates from Zucotti Park or Finsbury Square have been closely watched by some but there has never been an "Occupy Istanbul" – are good indicators of this sad gap. Nevertheless, this second example also shows ironically that in some respects Turkey is perfectly up to date with the current *zeitgeist*. After all, although social media has been reshaping and improving civil disobedience and organized protest significantly, pretty much everywhere around the world Facebook and Twitter still remain vastly more popular than activism whilst often being used solely for apolitical self-expression/marketing and interaction/networking.[3]

The city of Berlin has had its fair share of tragedy; its recent history is probably more difficult and dramatic than any other major European city. WWI brought defeat, destruction and humiliation to Prussia resulting in the stab-in-the-back myth (*Dochstolßlegende*) which deludedly maintained that the war had not been lost on the battlefield but instead that the war effort had been sabotaged by the "money-grubbing Jews" who had exploited the war economy and the "wannabe Bolsheviks" who had not only disrupted the arms industry through strikes but also abdicated the monarchy in order to engineer what was perceived to be a demeaning armistice. Then the spark of hope which the November Revolution kindled and the subsequent Spartacist uprising ignited was extinguished violently by the proto-fascist, paramilitary *Freikorps* thanks to the complicity of the Social Democrats, especially Chancellor Friedrich Ebert and his Defense Minister Gustav Noske. Although this gloomy environment bred the decadence, licentious freedoms and creativity of the Weimar days as Berlin became the cultural capital of Europe during the 20s,[4] this was soon to be replaced first by the politics of repression

government capitulated to the IMF and the World Bank who in turn demanded a cabinet change and the appointment of technocrats to implement neoliberal reforms and deregulations.

[3] Although the Arab Spring is hailed by many in the West as the world's first Facebook generated political revolution, a very informative *New Left Review* interview reveals how social media has played a crucial yet marginal role in Tahrir Square. See Kandil, 2011.

[4] While Berlin's golden days are considered to be between 1924 and 1929, the hyperinflation of the early post-war days also contributed greatly to the birth of a culture of decadence as many speculators adopted the habit of spending on one night the entirety of that day's profits for fear of waking up to a reality in which their banknotes were almost worthless. While the economy gained stability and unemployment decreased after the introduction of a new currency (the *Rentenmark*) on 15 November 1923 which amounted to a monetary reset, the subsequent influx of American loans generated the business boom and the sufficient disposable income in the latter half of the

under the Nazis, then the devastation and horrors of WWII (almost 40% of the city was destroyed), and finally the literal division of the city during the Cold War which not only meant that hundreds of lives were lost while attempting to flee from the repression of the East but also that many families were broken and many loves were shattered. So for the better part of last hundred years, the city of Berlin has been marked by grief, agony and despair. Yet, for many young people around the (Western) world, Berlin in the 21st century has the image and charm of an exceptionally liberal, happy-go-lucky town waiting with open arms to accommodate their neo-bohemian sensibility, artistic aspirations and creative dreams. Indeed, Berlin is perceived by many to be tailor-made for the unique lifestyle they long or fantasize to lead and the cultural projects they want to pursue. Today, the first picture that springs to mind when one hears or thinks of the German capital is no longer the melancholy image of a snow-covered beech forest surrounding Wannsee, the scene of Kleist's romantic suicide as well Nazım Hikmet's winter strolls in exile. Neither is it a picture of the Landwehr canal, crimson, half-frozen and quietly carrying Rosa Luxemburg's corpse; or of tormented Jews and "degenerates" being squeezed into train carriages departing from Platform 17 at Grünewald juxtaposed by the image of Unter den Linden rejoicing during a massive Nazi parade. It isn't an image of East German defectors being chased by guards with dogs either. Or for that matter, neither is it the iconic picture of the Wall being dismantled from both sides. Even the mega-kitschy portrait of David Hasselhoff at the no man's land that used to be Postdamer-Platz or the stereotypical image of über-orderly and ultra-uptight Germans in impeccable business attire driving their BMW or Mercedes to their state-of the-art office towers have been pushed aside. Nowadays these images are being overhauled on the autobahn of collective imagination by the libertarian image of decadent artists and ecstatic clubbers dancing with their hands up in the air at dawn – lost in sound, indeed lost all sense of place, time and restraint.

To most tourists and newcomers as well as to many of its youthful inhabitants, Berlin currently seems and feels like a left-leaning metropolis due to its healthy disdain for the work

decade to recreate Berlin as a world-famous center of nightlife. In fact, the consequent coming into being of a new breed of white-collar workers preoccupied with nocturnal entertainment has been analyzed in detail by Siegfried Kracauer in his Weimar essays (1995 and 1998). Nevertheless, this flimsy façade of stability and hedonistic celebration sustained by imported finance capital collapsed rapidly after the Wall Street crash in 1929. Of course, this new misfortune and the resulting scarcity of nocturnal distractions made things drastically easier for the already burgeoning Nazi ideology since many members of the new petty bourgeoisie described by Kracauer were quick to side with the fascists.

ethic, the absence of the global jet-set and international celebrities, and the relatively small number of rich businessmen and financiers residing in the city. In fact, there is growing consensus among the middle-class youth from the Western world – especially among those visa-exempt/globetrotting party animals with "creative" aspirations who are after the freelance mix of work and play – that due to its relative inexpensiveness, considerable big-business deprivation, growing cosmopolitanism, artistic affluence, variety and plenitude of nocturnal seductions, vibrant afterhours, live-and-let-live attitude, and general sweetness of life Berlin has become a post-industrial paradise on earth. This also means that the materialism and conspicuous consumption which characterize rival cities such as London or Paris are by and large replaced in Berlin by what is perceived and glorified to be a more "alternative" (i.e. politically correct, ecology friendly, alter-mundialist, culture and arts related, etc.) mode of (middle class) consumption and lifestyle choices; perhaps we can even speak of a Berliner notion of "alternative-conspicuous-consumption." Nevertheless, here we must utilize the distinction Boltanski & Chiapello (2007) make between the social and artistic critique of capitalism. The social critique has tended to focus on the socio-economic injustices, inequalities, oppression and exploitation suffered under and because of the capitalist mode of production and its perpetual craving for surplus extraction which also leads inevitably to systemic internal contradictions. As such, it has been the defining characteristic of typical politics, attitudes and interests associated with workers' movements since at least the end of the 18th century. The artistic critique, on the other hand, has emphasized man's alienation from his true and inherent creativity due to capitalist production whilst concentrating its critical energy on the routinization, banalization and atomization of the everyday as well as on the perceived inauthenticity and money-grubbing ugliness of life in the commercial and industrial society. At least since the Romantic period, this is an attitude traditionally associated with the dandies, bohemians, artists, aesthetes and their cultural intermediaries. As Jeremy Gilbert points out, Boltanksi and Chiapello assert that "these two different modes of anti-capitalist critique may at times coincide in the attitudes of a single movement, but it is by no means normal for them to do so. Despite honorable exceptions to both of these rules, it is not historically normal for bohemians and libertines to have any interest in organized politics, while the cultural attitudes of workers' organizations have tended to be at best conservative, at worst authoritarian and reactionary" (2008[a]: 38).

Here it must be noted then that although Berlin seems at first glance to be an enthusiastically leftist metropolis; in truth, the abundance of artistic anti-capitalism and its libertarian demands in the city is not matched by the social critique of capitalism and the traditionally leftist politics resulting from it. In all fairness, compared to many other major cities there is indeed an abundance and high variety of left-wing activism and interventions in Berlin. Nevertheless, the success and popularity of artistic critique seems, perhaps unknowingly, to help depopularize social critique as this latter category is accused of being passé, somewhat derided and pushed to the margins. We do indeed live at a time when ideals such as human rights and democracy have become central both politically and ethically while a great deal of energy is being put into promoting, protecting and articulating the significance of such ideals for the construction of a better world. Nevertheless, no matter how egalitarian or libertarian such claims and demands are, for the most part the circulating concepts are property-based and individualistic, and as such remain at the level of middle-class identity politics which do not do much to challenge hegemonic (neo)liberal market logics as well as modes of legality and state action. Berlin is in a part of the world, after all, where the thrill of consumerism and the kick gotten out of instances of institutionalized (controlled, tamed & commodified) transgression reign supreme and the rights of private property and the profit rate trump all other notions of rights one can think of. Moreover, we witness an immense concentration of wealth, privilege, and consumerism in almost all of our planet's metropolises in the midst of an exploding "planet of slums." Here, we can follow David Harvey (2008) who wants to focus on a specific form of collective right, namely "the right to the city" because changing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization and it must have as its aim gaining control over the uses of the surplus (if not over the conditions of its production). Moreover, the urban is now the point of massive collision and class struggle between "accumulation by dispossession" being visited upon the slums and the developmental drive that seeks to colonize more and more of urban space for the affluent to take their urbane and cosmopolitan pleasures. As far as Harvey is concerned the freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities is one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights: "the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what style of daily life we desire, what kinds of technologies we deem appropriate, what

aesthetic values we hold. The right to the city is, therefore, far more than a right of individual access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city more after our heart's desire" (2008: 23). That's why the ongoing project of tuning Berlin into a creative world city and the processes of urban gentrification that come along with it, as well as the socio-political alliances and struggles against this rising trend constitute one of the major themes in this written work.

The intensification of culture industry in Berlin means that there are more and more young people whose profession and casual lifestyle enable them to party not only in the weekend but also during the week. After all, they don't have to get up early as they have flexible working hours and since they do their freelance jobs from home, pleasantly shabby café-bars or trendy "co-working spaces" they effectively have no supervisors to check whether they are sober or not. This in turn creates or contributes to the unique vitality and excess that characterizes Berlin's nightlife. As detailed demographics will illustrate, when one fifth of a city's population consists of "creatives" whose "network sociality" (Wittel, 2001) requires that partying is part of one's job, how much steam is allowed to be blown off at night is no longer determined by the prerequisite that the partygoers join the ranks of workers – whether white or blue collar – the next morning. In other words, nightlife as a realm of leisure, recreation and consumption is no longer contingent on the smooth functioning and maintenance of next day's routine of production, whether in the office or in the factory. "Creatives" are able, as long as their health and wealth allow it, to drink, smoke, snort and swallow as well as stay up, dance, flirt and fuck with no restraint.

The fact that Berlin is home to many students further increases the number of potential clients during weeknights. Consequently, this excess of nocturnal options and this constant availability to party renders the night-time economy more profitable and there is incentive for opening up new bars and clubs. Indeed, as there has been talk of economic hardship and financial crisis, this has not stopped the arrival, among others, of numerous cafes, bars, clubs and gourmet restaurants in Neukölln within the last five years. Paradoxical for an economy which supposedly is/was in recession, most of these commercial establishments are full both during the week and in the weekend, both during the day and at night. The resurgence in the number of clubs and bars in turn creates more employment opportunities for aspiring DJs which also results in the creation of new musical scenes or the evolution of existing ones. Moreover, due to the abundance of cheap

flights famous DJs can now be flown in from other places in Europe which makes Berlin's nightlife even more attractive especially for the connoisseurs of electronic dance music. In the 90s, one had to be a really established or famous DJ in order play outside one's hometown or country since it was only then that the club owners or events organizers would agree to cover travel expenses. Now, it's a financially sound decision to bring in "middle-class DJs of the club circuit" (i.e. those who get around €500 per gig) from other parts of Europe. This also means one no longer has to live where one plays records. This has allowed many DJs who earn their money elsewhere to be based in Berlin. And to live in Berlin is not only cheap; it also has the advantage of being at the center of things as far as electronic dance music is concerned. Moreover, for some DJs, the fact that they come from Berlin has increased their market value. If you are "based in Berlin," you are already perceived abroad to be cutting edge. And those who have not relocated to the German capital yet have at least a bed somewhere in the city; either their friends have a spare couch/mattress or they book a bed in one of the inexpensive yet chic accommodation facilities which have sprouted like mushrooms within the last few years. On the average, an ensuite double room in a boutique hostel will set you back €89 per night in Berlin whereas in Barcelona you'll be paying €124 and in New York €191 (Hildebrandt, 2011). So it's not only cheaper to stay or live in Berlin, it's also cheap to come to the German capital and then to fly away. The arrival of novelties such as inexpensive flights and accommodation as well as the existence of such a dynamic club scene and such famous venues consequently attract masses of tourists which not only ensures that venues are always full even on weeknights but also perpetuates Berlin's unique reputation as techno capital and exceptional party city with no closing hours and no restraint. After all, one must admit that tourists, especially those who have come for the main purpose of going out, have a different attitude towards entertainment and partying than the locals. As they have left their home cities and their inhibitions temporarily behind, they tend to strive to take things to the extreme so they party as though there is going to be no tomorrow.

In fact, this excess associated with the night transforms it into an immense realm of production itself. Nightlife and its nocturnal leisure services are a huge source of revenue for Berliners. Nevertheless, Berlin's nocturnal boom remains to be the exception in the country. Despite the fact that the number of pubs and bars has almost doubled (+95.8%) in Berlin within the last ten years, Germany's nighttime economy has been shrinking so that the number of night

locales has decreased by 25% nationwide. For example, Hamburg, Berlin's biggest rival in terms of nightlife, has lost almost half of its nighttime establishments (–48.4%) within the same period (Tillmann, 2012). And this exceptional success story concerning the nighttime economy is something that Berlin's local government officials and city planners are encouraging and financially supporting.

Regarding my uneasiness with Berlin, since I have a much more personal connection to and a greater familiarity with the heaviness of life on the "Other" side; the lightness of Berlin's libertarianism and neo-bohemian hedonism, which is extraordinary even for European standards and is made possible by the abovementioned '68 legacy and its permissive, allegedly "alternative" consumerist ethos, seems to me at times to be not only oddly overjoyed but also exasperatingly spoiled, narcissistic and detached from the "real world." Moreover, given the city's painful history, the current environment of amnesia and happy-go-lucky partying seems even more frustrating. About a year and a half ago, I was on a demonstration held in the recently gentrified migrant district of north Neukölln to mark the 20th anniversary of the latest military takeover in Turkey and to condemn the atrocities committed by the junta thereafter. It was a warm, bright day in September and the procession passing through the main street happened to stop right next to a popular bar (*Ankerklause*) which overlooks the canal and is frequented by many a hipster. So there I was standing in the midst of middle-aged, bitter, angry and rather unglamorous exiles some of whom had been tortured and most of whom had still not revisited their homeland for fear of persecution. Then I turned my head and saw how the so-typically-Berlin "creative types" (healthy, cheerful, attractive, self-confident and fashion-conscious people in the prime of their youth) who were basking in the sun and gulping their ice cold beer reached for their cameras almost as a reflex to shoot what to them must have seemed like an exotic spectacle – they'd probably share the images on social media later on. Somehow that bitter contrast between what to me seemed like heaviness and lightness stuck in my mind, and it haunts me ever still. I am at once critical and envious of the First World youth who have the luxury of regarding such tragedies as mere exotica; as I've already confessed I can manage neither to be deservingly light nor heavy, I can neither be as homesick and secluded as the majority of the Turkish migrants nor as cheerful and celebratory as the majority of the Westerners who have recently relocated to where I've been living on and off for almost the last nine years. As my love story with Berlin dates back to a time when the city had yet to be globally branded "poor but

sexy," I sometimes have trouble sharing the euphoric appreciation and admiration currently shown by its visitors and new inhabitants alike which views the city as a blissful state of exception marked by nonchalance, pleasant scruffiness and the absence of last orders. Nevertheless, such a nostalgia-ridden and resentful attitude as mine which finds the blame elsewhere has by now become the defining characteristic of being a Berliner so even if you ask someone who has moved to the city just a few months ago they immediately start complaining about the newcomers and boastfully reminiscing about the good old "hipster-free" days. Anyhow, due to my liminal position I find it hard at times to sympathize with and take seriously what to many (new-)Berliners seem like very grave predicaments (to me they just seem like luxury problems) and to feel completely at home in the hedonists' Mecca that the German capital has become. Since this dissertation treats some of those problems and issues seriously as it puts them center stage, the insights and frustration caused by this feeling of alienation and homelessness are integral to it, and this dialectic between lightness and heaviness is one of its recurrent themes. Perhaps it's also necessary to note here in passing that while my use of these concepts is influenced by and begins with Kundera's (1999) formulation based on Nietzsche's (2003[a]) eternal recurrence, they will be further explicated along the way. For now it should suffice to reveal that what I lust after and detest at once as lightness is a sensibility manifested wonderfully by Boris Vian's decadent escapism; in the foreword to his novel *Froth on the Daydream* (1967) the jazz aficionado who used to mentor young Serge Gainsbourg adamantly maintains that only two things matter in life: Duke Ellington's music and making love to all the beautiful girls in every possible position...

I've recently read a piece by Diedrich Diederichsen in an online art journal published by some acquaintances of mine. In the article the famous culture/music critic riffs on a popular melody (Deleuze's disciplinary vs. control society, Foucault's subjugation vs. governmentality, Boltanksi & Chiappello's social vs. artistic anti-capitalist critique, the immaterialization of labor *à la* Lazzarato, Virno, Hardt & Negri, etc.) and suggests now that our lives are defined by the transition into post-Fordism and its affective labor which has replaced previous disciplinary mechanisms based on repression with the narcissism of forced stimulation, what radical critique needs today might no longer be anti-Oedipus (protest and patricide) but rather an engagement with the posing and posture of the yet incomplete figure of Narcissus (2011). Nevertheless, by suggesting that disciplinary mechanisms have now been rendered totally ineffective so that we

need a critical recuperation of lightness, Diederichsen makes the common mistake of projecting the conditions of (his) life in Berlin onto the whole world, thereby making a dangerous and arguably faulty generalization which ignores the persistence of heaviness elsewhere – let alone right outside his doorstep in the German capital. Luckily, another piece published in the same journal a few issues back by yet another Berliner who has had the enlightening experience of leaving Europe and living in Mumbai for a while provides us with some sense of lucidity. Drawing on the very Eurocentricity of such a position, Sebastian Lütgert suggests the post-Fordist age has arrived, at least for holders of European passports, with the privilege of being offered some occasions to temporarily decenter one's most general perception of things. This is something positive as far as he is concerned since he deems the most hopeless aspect of European politics is the point of view (not the political orientation, but the perspective on the world) of its protagonists: "If you are a citizen of the Schengen subcontinent, you can do two things, both of which involve making use of the one bio-political weapon you have been equipped with: your passport. Either get married so that someone else can get in, even if it's just for a temporary change of perspective; or quit and desert your compatriots, as their biological clocks keep ticking in fearful but eager anticipation of the detonation of the demographic bomb. Collective suicide is not an option." This second alternative is getting increasingly popular as Istanbul has become a hotspot for creative types so numerous artists and curators from the West are moving to the Bosphorus nowadays – at least for as long as their residency programs last. Yet Lütgert reminds us, "Still, if you set out to be done with Europe, there is an imminent danger that you will remain caught within the schizophrenic logic of a post-capitalist self, and doomed to relive the farce of European subjectivity, its quest for an exit, as yet another Greek tragedy. What you might need most urgently, in order to complement the anti-Oedipus, would be the anti-Midas, since wherever you're going to end up, you won't want to forever remain a member of the classes that turn everything they touch into shopping districts (2010).

Well, thanks for bearing with me and I hope you enjoy the read!

November 2011, Istanbul – August 2012, Berlin

Chapter 1

The Dark Night: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

"Everyone has a special place in mind, a site which they consider to be charged with actuality the most. Negotiations take place in this setting concerning the things that are actually important, things that truly matter. One feels like a vital part of the world there because one makes an ideal contact with likeminded people. This is the site that serves as a benchmark for all other places. For me and for many others whom I've met in Berlin during the last 20 years this site has been the nightclub. The club is where history is made, where one has the feeling that one's own insignificant feats are part of a bigger Now. Of course, when one reflects back on this feeling from the sobriety of daylight it seems very dubious if not totally ridiculous. Nevertheless, the feeling doesn't lose its influence as it still drives thousands of people to go out and party every night. And this really has much less to do with politics than we euphorically believed to have in the 90s. It has something to do with the conditions that make this dancefloor bliss possible. This ecstasy is elusive and unforeseeable. One knows which DJ one likes or which type of music one fancies but whether a night is destined to bring about this moment of utter delight can never be known in advance. It may happen or it may not. That's why one stays and waits in the club until halfway through the next day."

Tobias Rapp (2009:15)

"The music brings you deeper into your body with each step. It causes each atom to splutter. You carry on and fly, you radiate from each cell, you are enthralled. You move your limbs, everything fits, and you can only smile. You can just look around and wish you could hold on to this feeling forever: you are like a fish in water. The purest laughter you have chuckled since your days of childhood…If all that we've experienced at those parties was nothing but juvenile frivolity, if our only achievement has been to fuck things up, if all those kisses and hugs added up to nothing, if those sweaty smiles were not sincere, if all that was sheer stupidity, just a couple of sins on the side; then I say yes to stupidity, yes to frivolity, then only those kisses mattered, only those smiles were heartfelt, only there have I really lived."

Airen (2010:145)

2 February 2004 – Kaffee Burger, Torstr. 58-60, Sunday Night/Monday Morning 04:30 am

I'm not high on any drugs and am about to take the last sip from only the third pint of the night, yet I clearly and distinctly see before me a human-sized bunny swaying to the rhythm of a garage song. I have to admit the whole place looks a bit weird, sort of surreal I must say. It's as if I've been put into a capsule and sent forty years back in time right into the center of an East Berlin living room; the music, the wall paper, the lamps and the furniture all seem to point in that direction. But this can't be the case because I know for sure that this is the-year-of-our-lord-two-thousand-and-four and the GDR is no more. I'm at Kaffee Burger, the place is packed although it's Sunday night, and I'm having fun. On closer examination I realize that the white rabbit dancing in front of me – unfortunately the Jefferson Airplane song is not playing at this moment – is actually a man dressed up in a bunny costume. For the record, this is a regular clubnight not a theme party. But then again, there aren't any dresscoded nights at Kaffee Burger which isn't a clandestine club tucked away safely in a back-courtyard. It's a street-level bar with big windows overlooking the pavement. Indeed, apart from our zeal to lose ourselves, the only

things that separate us from the busy street outside are two ancient GDR curtains; everyone is free to come and go as they please since on weeknights there is neither a bouncer nor an entrance fee.

With the exception of the short intervals during which his chin and mouth are revealed as he lifts up his head-piece to sip his beer, I don't get a chance to see the bunny-man's facial features. He seems to be deliberately hiding his eyes from the gaze of others and not letting anyone see his "true" identity; he wishes to wallow in and be totally taken up by this "bunny" role he has put on, and wants everyone else to acknowledge him as such. I take a look around and notice some other interesting characters – my friends and I have come to believe that the dancefloor of this particular bar is actually a theater stage on which the local "freaks" are allowed to temporarily act like rock stars. In fact, besides the theater professionals from the Volksbühne which is around the corner, Kaffee Burger is frequented by what to us seem like international celebrities' Berliner doubles: for example, there's the splitting-image of Nick Cave, a guy who bears an uncanny resemblance to Brian Molko, and a melancholy type who reminds us of Lars von Trier. In addition to the regulars such as Bruno who always wears a black suit and a fedora hat, usually lurks in the corner next to the DJ booth and descends upon the dancefloor every once in a while to swirl around as he leans his glass of red wine firmly against his chest; Comet the elderly punk with his long, snow-white hair and braided beard who keeps on stamping his feet clad with heavy-duty army boots on the ground; that guy who resembles Jack Black and keeps on changing his place on the dance floor very rapidly, always managing to not make physical contact with anybody; and that cute girl I sort of fancy who seems to lead a solitary life in her personal parallel universe; there are two other spectacles that catch my attention tonight: three carpenters in their traditional apprentice attire clinking their beer glasses and a middle-aged couple tangoing rather successfully to a song that obviously is not a tango. I smell the pungent scent of weed; a bunch of African guys are passing around a joint. [5]

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[5] Even back then, their presence in a popular night locale was an anomaly as refugees and ethnic minorities are usually absent from – if not unwelcome in – most bars and clubs. As early as summer 2005, the popular YUKI hang-out *An einem Sonntag im August* on the touristy Kastanienallee in Prenzlauerberg foreshadowed the massively gentrified days to come: the bar management instructed their staff not to let in any "black people" since they were all "dealing drugs and scaring away the customers." When some employees refused to comply and were consequently let go, the issue became public and Antifa organized a demonstration. In an attempt to thwart the protests and prove that they were indeed in favor of multiculturalism the bar owners hosted an event on the same day with some leading members of the Green Party. Soon the issue was forgotten and the bar has remained ever popular.

Suddenly, I find the lady who had been exhibiting her tango skills on the dancefloor three seconds ago now sitting on my lap; she gives me a big, wet kiss on the cheek and darts off back to her partner.

I finally find the adjective I was looking for to describe this place: the atmosphere at Kaffee Burger tonight is non-rational. I take another look around. It feels as though everyone and everything is in harmony; the room seems to have conspired with the people and objects that fill it up to create a hybrid, magical creature of its own kind. I get up from my chair, walk to the dancefloor, start moving my limbs and slowly recover from that greatest malady of all: self-consciousness. Gradually, I find myself swimming in euphoria; gone is that evil subject-object/mind-body dichotomy, absent is the devastating motive to dominate and possess, vanished is the insatiable desire that allegedly is rooted in lack, and broken are those damned power/knowledge structures. I know this is not revolutionary at all, I know that once the lights go on and the party is over, most of us will become detached strangers once again and all the evils of late capitalist life will go on as if nothing has happened. Yet, I also know for sure that no politician or ideologue can make these people of different generations and backgrounds hate and fight each other at this very moment. As the night reaches its climax I melt into the magma that indiscriminately sweeps everything away – the people, the music, the smoke in the air...For a split second we all become that magma; this warm and comforting sensation blows me away. There's no way I can describe this further because at that instant there no longer exists an "I", there's only "we". Surely, that character in Sartre's play must be wrong; hell is not other people. On the contrary, all I can manage to think at this instant is that being surrounded by these strangers is matchless; heaven must surely feel this way. How wonderful it is to know that life is potent of such blissful and meaningful moments and how sad to know that these nocturnal epiphanies seldom take place. And if I'm allowed to be naïve and optimistic, might the "secret omnipresence of resistance" not be lurking behind magical moments like this?

One: A Nocturnal Journey through History

Perhaps as a precursor to Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents* (2002), in Stevenson's (1991) classic 19th century novella the well-respected and industrious Dr. Jekyll's uncivilized and insatiable self, to which he gives the symbolic name Hyde, comes into being as the catastrophic result of an experiment. The scientist, who is unknowingly on an irrational quest for

power, foolishly endeavors to master his own nature in order to decisively separate the human from the beast (or good from evil) in the name of Reason, thereby symbolizing the Enlightenment's dark side – a menace that would be empasized later on by the likes of Adorno & Horkheimer (1997). But his transformation remains incomplete and Hyde emerges at night to walk the streets of London in order to shamelessly indulge in the appetites which cannot be assimilated into the propriety of everyday Victorian life. Furthermore, as what may be considered a recurrence of Nietzsche's (1967) binary that has given rise to ancient Greek tragedy; the perfect Victorian gentleman, who identifies with his reputable ego which obeys the Apollonian superego, tragically commits the folly of regarding his doppelganger who is at the service of the riotous Dionysian id as merely an addiction: he believes Hyde is just like alcohol, nicotine or opium. "The moment I choose," he declares, "I can be rid of him." But just as narcotics are extremely hard to kick and addiction often accompanies one for a lifetime with bouts of relapse and recovery, so it is impossible to stop the sun from setting and the dark alleys of the metropolis prove to be too fertile a ground for the seduction of transgression. That's why Hyde, addicted to the high of delinquency, perseveres and continues to leave Jekyll's townhouse from a side door night after night which finally leads to the scientist's ruin and demise.

In this narrative we see a reflection of the role traditionally assigned to the night: throughout history nighttime has been considered by many to be antithetical to daytime; it has been regarded as a dangerous and notorious interval, enabling and characterized by transgression. Yet, its fears are counterbalanced by the freedoms it offers. Night provides escape from the drudgeries of the day, from the routines that define humanity in specific duties, obligations and tasks. As such it is less an opposition between occupations (what is done to live) – although there are more and more strictly nocturnal vocations – and more between preoccupations (what is felt, thought and embraced against the necessities of daytime's needs). These separations, whatever their historical context or rootedness in time and space, hint at larger continuities: "the night has always been the time for daylight's dispossessed – the deviant, the dissident, the different – and there is something of a bond among those who have chosen or been forced to adapt to the pleasures and dangers of the dark, a space that exists *through* as well as *in* time and space" (Palmer, 2000: 9). Here, we can come up with a rough genealogy of nocturnal transgression from medieval to modern times. Such a genealogy would include the likes of peasant dissidents, religious heretics and witches in the moment of feudalism's dissolution;

pirates and runaway slaves in the ascendancy of mercantile capitalism; prostitutes and pornographers, libertines and Jacobin conspirators in the Age of Revolution; debased trades and dishonorable work, the sociality of the tavern and of the fraternal lodge, dangerous urban classes and the traumas of Third World proletarianization in the global reach of Industrial Revolution; revolutions of the right and left with their respective uses of the night, plus the cultures of erotic, musical, cinematic and poetic disaffection (e.g. blues, jazz and the beatniks) many of which consolidate in capitalism's mid-twentieth century epic relating the success of conformity; and the ravages of race in the inner cities of late capitalism's material and cultural chaos (Palmer, 2000).

It seems the binary of day vs. night which signifies the opposition between light and darkness, good and evil, safety and danger, reason and chaos, etc. is deeply engrained into Western culture and history. For instance, in Hesiod's *Theogony* (2008) which dates back to 8th century BC, the night is personified by the primordial goddess Nyx while it is identified as an original violence (the first act of violence) exercised by depriving the offspring of the light of day, that is, by inflicting blindness: "night keeps the human race from light, shrouding it in the gloomy darkness of an abyss, creating the dispersion and uncollectedness that terrifies and remains a mystery even to the gods. Night is the region of imagination that produces both the dream of transgressiveness (crime) and the gods that answer to transgression (guilt, shame), creating both love and strife. The grim house of Night presides over the heart of darkness" (Blum, 2003: 145-6). Similarly, Plato's (2007) allegory of the cave is famous for pointing out the enslaving deceptiveness of darkness and shadows against the liberation offered by broad daylight. And of course, the Old Testament begins with these famous words: "And God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night." Perhaps part of the reason why the night feels uncanny and makes us uneasy is the fact that the world turns away from the comfort, familiarity and safety of the sun. For what we fear the most is the unfamiliar, the unexplainable, and above all the unknown and invisible lurking in the dark. That's why light is integral to our sense of security and street lanterns strive to simulate sunlight. Moreover, the blue heavens and puffy clouds shrouding what lies beyond the earth's atmosphere vanish as the sun descends below the horizon, and the night sky confronts us with the vastness of the universe. We are reminded each night of how our existence, which we take for granted and treat with utmost gravity, is as significant for the cosmos as a tiny speck of dust is for us.

Moreover, we are confronted each night as we gaze upon the heavens and must come to grips with the fact that what we see is not the cosmic present but an image of the past – the light reaching us from the distant stars reflects how the state of things used to be many light years ago – with how little we know about where we live as well as where we came from and where we are headed.

Carrying on with history, as the medieval epoch in the West was aptly named the Age of Darkness since it was characterized by the Catholic fear of the prince of darkness; the creepy darkness of the night was recuperated during the Baroque era by the monarchs and their pompous courts to exhibit their prestige and distinction. Although as a rule festivities were carried out before sun-down during the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance; during the Baroque, with the exuberant use of luxuries such as artificial illumination and fireworks, the night became a realm of celebration and entertainment for a select few who didn't have to go to sleep to get ready for the approaching day of arduous labor: there was dinner at sundown, theater or musical banquets around nine, supper at midnight, and then ballroom dancing until dawn. And when the coaches finally set out to carry home the aristocrats exhausted from a full night of partying, the townsfolk on their way to work had to step aside to make way for the courtly passengers getting ready for their beauty sleep. But nocturnal leisure activities were not the monopoly of the aristocracy; while the peasants and artisans gathered in taverns to drink their woes away, the mercantile class and the rising bourgeoisie mimicked aristocratic festive practices to set themselves apart from the common folk: various pleasure gardens and amusement parks (such as Raleigh and Vauxhall in England) were set up to provide those who could afford the entrance fee with food and alcohol as well as nocturnal delights such as concerts, stage shows, fireworks and other sorts of exotica. Here, the latest bourgeois trend quickly became arriving as late as possible to diminish the likelihood of being forced to rub shoulders with the "riff raff" who were wealthy enough to afford the luxury of going out but who also had to go home relatively early to rest for work. Indeed, it can be argued that the modern notion of "democratic" metropolitan nightlife where nocturnal activities are available to everyone and most pubs are principally accessible to all social-classes, and consequently where more intricate mechanisms of exclusion such as strict door polices or VIP lounges come to the fore has its roots in the baroque night culture. For example, current practices in Berlin such as arriving very late (often at dawn) to elude the tourists as well as lusting after the (subcultural

[Thornton, 1995]) distinction and benefits of being on the guest list have their roots in the 17th century.

Going back to history, the Baroque era was followed by the Enlightenment which strove to disperse darkness once and for all in order to illuminate all mysteries both in heaven and on earth. Nevertheless, when Foucault writes about the classical conception of unreason as dazzlement he draws attention to how the so-called Age of Reason had in fact retained the perennial and not-so-rational binary of day vs. night: the madman is believed to see the darkness of night in broad daylight. As far as the rational, "normal" onlooker is concerned the insane man effectively sees nothing. Yet "in the madman's gaze, drunk on the light that is night, images rise up and multiply, beyond any possible self-criticism." He believes he does see something; he allows "the fantasies of his imagination and the people of his nights come to him as realities…In that sense, the Cartesian progression of doubt is clearly the great exorcism of madness. Descartes closes his eyes and ears the better to see the true light of the essential day, thereby ensuring that he will not suffer the dazzlement of the mad*" (2006: 244). So Foucault suggests Enlightenment as a whole can be boiled down to this analogy: unreason is to reason as dazzlement is to daylight. That's why Descartes, in the uniform clarity of his closed senses, has broken with all possible fascination, and if he sees, he knows he really sees what he is seeing. Foucault goes on to add:

> What the classical age retained of the 'world', its premonition of what was to be 'nature', was an extremely abstract law that nevertheless engendered the most vivid and concrete of oppositions, that between *day and night*… The age was that of the universal, but absolutely divided time, divided between darkness and light. This form is totally mastered by thought within a mathematical science – Cartesian physics is like a mathesis of light – but it simultaneously traces the great tragic caesura within human existence…The circle of day and night is the law of the classical world: the most restricted but most demanding of the necessities of the world, the most inevitable but the simplest of the legislations of nature. This was a law that excluded all dialectics and all reconciliation, consequently laying the foundations for the smooth unity of knowledge as well as the uncompromising division of tragic existence. It reigns on a world without darkness, which knows neither effusiveness nor the gentle charms of lyricism. All is waking or dreams, truth or error, the light of being or the nothingness of shadow. It prescribes an inevitable order, a serene division as the necessary condition for truth, on which it definitively places its seal (2006: 244-245).

As a response to the somber order of calculation logic and panopticism imposed by the Enlightenment ideals of science and progress endeavoring to master everything under the sun, the Romantic reactionaries called for a return to nature and were fascinated by the dark and mysterious kingdom of the night. 18th and 19th century Romanticism emphasizes the advantages of blindness and bat-vision: the limitations that increase as darkness descends upon the earth for making sense of phenomena through sight are not treated as a handicap but rather as an

opportunity to make sense of the world differently; the Romantics cling on to sensuality with the haptic, the olfactory, the gustatory and the acoustic as their guide. Moreover, while darkness undermines the visualist bias and its claim to objectivity as planted by Descartes and cultivated by Newton, one has to pay more heed to intuitions, emotions and longings than to reason and ambitions so that subjectivity and introspection play a crucial role in experiencing the world at night. For the Romantics this essentially amounts to making more sense of the world, indeed making better sense of it. Thoughts and memories run wild as tastes, smells, songs and caresses transport us momentarily into the past when for example the fears of our childhood resurface as we mistake a dark silhouette around the corner for the boogeyman. Hopes and fantasies are equally activated for far from being a threatening figure, the approaching dark silhouette can just as easily signal the long awaited arrival of the lover of one's dreams. Compared to the cold scientificity of an Enlightened high-noon, the mode of comprehension made possible at midnight is a warmer, more poetic, gay science as Nietzsche would have it. Today, the growing trend of dark restaurants (e.g. *Nocti Vagus* and *unsicht-Bar* in Berlin) where dinner is served in pitch-black so that Western ocularcentrism may be transgressed is a descendant of such Romanticism. Moreover, the metropolis abounds with Romantic ideals at night since nightlife is considered by many to be a much more fulfilling, aesthetic and pleasant way of being in the world than well-structured and routinized daylife.

This is indeed a Romantic perspective. In fact, what distinguishes a great night out is its Romanticism. The inherent carpe noctem attitude that marks such nights expresses the intensity of fleeting emotional contacts as well as the recognition of the experience's inevitably temporary quality. At its core, it is an acceptance of loss which can be considered as tragic in the Nietzschean sense of the word. As Richard Dyer puts it in his seminal "In Defense of Disco" originally published in 1979:

> Romanticism is a particularly paradoxical quality of art to come to terms with. Its passion and intensity embody or create an experience that negates the dreariness of the mundane and everyday. It gives us a glimpse of what it means to live at the height of our emotional and experiential capacities – not dragged down by the banality of organized routine life. Given that everyday banality, work, domesticity, ordinary sexism, and racism are rooted in the structures of class and gender of this society, the flight from that banality can be seen as a flight from capitalism and patriarchy as lived experiences (2006: 107).

Dyer goes on to suggests what makes nocturnal romanticism more complicated is the actual situation within which it occurs; it is part of the wider to and fro between work and leisure, alienation and escape, boredom and enjoyment we are so accustomed to:

> Now this to and fro is partly the mechanism by which we keep going, at work, at home – the respite of leisure gives us the energy to work, and anyway we are still largely brought up to think of leisure as a 'reward' for work. This circle locks us into it. But what happens in that space of leisure can be profoundly significant; it is there that we may learn about an alternative to work and to society as it is. Romanticism is one of the major modes of leisure in which this sense of an alternative is kept alive. Romanticism asserts that the limits of work and domesticity are not the limits of experience (ibid: 107).

Dyer clarifies his position by conceding that romanticism, with its passion and intensity, is not a political ideal we could strive for since he doubts it is humanly possible to play permanently and especially with such passion and intensity. "What I do believe is that the movement between banality and something 'other' than banality is an essential dialectic of society, a constant keeping open of a gap between what is and what could or should be." Here Dyer refers to Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (2002) to suggest that our society tries to close that gap, to assert that what is all that there could be, is what should be. Yet, as far as he is concerned, in spite of all its commercialism and containment within the to and fro between work and leisure, nocturnal romanticism is one of the things that can keep the gap open, that can allow the experience of contradiction to continue. "Here a moment of community can be achieved, often in circle dances or simply in the sense of knowing people as people, not anonymous bodies. Fashion is less important, and sociability correspondingly more so" (ibid: 107).

What the historical continuity or meta-narrative of nocturnal transgression indicates is that whatever its epoch-specific contents and either narrowly understood as a time or broadly perceived as a space the night has rarely been welcomed by the rulers of the day who have simultaneously been the rulers of daytime. Since the night is deemed a challenge it has been legislated against, moreover because nighttime is perceived to be a cloak behind which deviance and delinquency thrive it has been historically assailed by the intrusion of light. As we move forward in the history of nocturnal transgression we witness a proliferation of technologies of illuminating the night's dark corners and opening it up to the glare, potential stare, and threatening intervention of the custodial powers of midday (Palmer, 2000). Here, we can remember Louis XIV's introduction of street lamps in order to surveil the Parisian night's dim spots and to shine the rays of his sovereignty on his subjects – after all he was called the Sun King – in order to deter them from engaging in unlawful activities, thereby paving the way for the French capital's metamorphosis into the "city of light." Often, the night's transgression does not produce an ominous or deadly clash of politically uncompromising agents. Instead, it is sustained quietly in clandestine histories: "times, places, spaces where human expression was not

as easily subjected to the surveillance of high-noon or blinded by the light of day. For much of humanity, the nighttime has been the right time, a fleeting but regular period of modest but cherished freedoms from the constraints and cares of daily life" (Palmer, 2000: 19). What has been crucial throughout history is that in order for nocturnal transgression (either as instances of alternative socio-cultural life or of withdrawal from society and the body politic) to go beyond temporary and individual emancipation, thereby to facilitate real social transformation; the dialogues and detours of its makings, which are often forged in the possibilities of the night, need to undergo the difficult yet necessary translation which can restructure the day. Unfortunately, this has rarely been the case. Palmer suggests one exceptional historical moment reflecting the night's victory over the day, as it were, is the storming of the Bastille which has led to the revolution of 1789. In fact, he rightfully points out that "revolution is often presented in the contrasting metaphors of darkness and light, as a movement from the long night of oppression and exploitation into a new day of dawning possibility – even though the repressive onslaught of authority's vengeance is usually present as well" (2000: 302). Moreover, the shielding darkness of the night has been welcomed by triumphant and failed revolutionaries alike. For example, many accounts suggest that the Parisian nights during the merry month of May in 1968 were like a festival of revolt; the stench of tear gas, torched cars and uncollected garbage hung in the air while barricades, banners, posters, graffiti and slogans conquered the Latin Quarter whose cafes and streets were overflowing with hopeful and celebratory youths busy with chanting or discussing when not clashing with the riot police. This key and arguably glorious role played by the night at the time is reflected in the title of William Klein's naturalist documentary shot during the events: *Big Nights and Small Mornings* (*Grands soirs et petits matins).*

Similarly, the provisional victory of the Paris Commune, a short-lived and brutally crushed liminal order full of revolutionary potential, could be listed here as another example of nocturnal transgression coming close but failing to generate social transformation.[6] After all, as David Harvey suggests in "The Political Economy of Public Space" the transgression of the Commune was a result of the suburban night's proletarianization along with the

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[6] Badiou (2010), on the other hand, claims the Commune did have a transforming effect since it is a special Event which has created a rupture within the Left (the workers directly constituted themselves against any allegiance to the parliamentary Left so what was destroyed in the end was not the dominant group and its politicians but rather the political subordination of workers and the people) and gave rise to a paradigm shift as well as to a very specific revolutionary subjectivity which has acted in fidelity to this Event and has generated revolutionary politics in the centuries to come.

bourgeoisification of the city center and the spectacularization of its nocturnal activities: the underprivileged were excluded from the spectacles and the consumer frenzy of Haussmann's well-lit boulevards which were the result of a grand-scale project of debt-financed urbanization and regeneration aimed at overcoming capitalism's internal limits and contradictions (i.e. the perpetual problem of capital surplus absorption) as well avoiding the looming economic crisis. The boulevards were used to penetrate and then colonize unfriendly territory in a generalized attempt to create spaces subservient to empire in both military and politico-economic terms. And if the boulevards could not penetrate unfriendly zones then at least they could surround them. But the mass of workers, condemned for the most part to live on miserable wages and faced with notoriously insecure and often seasonally episodic employment, had to live somewhere. Like night crawlers and bats they fled to the dark suburbs where lanterns were still scarce and housing – no matter how dismal– was still affordable. After working their dreary shifts in factories or tanneries, the dark forces, the threats to capitalist bourgeois bliss assembled in these dim, dodgy neighborhoods and mingled with each other. This was a predominantly male and heavily immigrant population crammed into overcrowded boarding houses in insalubrious conditions. As they had limited cooking facilities, they were forced either to depend on meals provided collectively in house or more often to venture out into the streets in order to find a spot in one of the innumerable small eating and drinking establishments which became, as a result, centers of sociality and politics. While this working class population relied heavily on dance halls, cabarets and drinking dens to take their pleasures and forget their troubles, these locales proved adept at relieving them of any surplus money they had when times were good.

> More fortunate workers, usually those with craft skills or occupying that peculiar mixed status of independent artisan or employee could, of course, construct for themselves a different kind of life. Concentrated largely in the central districts, they nevertheless relied heavily upon small scale commercial establishments as centers of sociality and pleasure (often to excess, if many commentators at the time are to be believed). The dingy private and commercial spaces in these areas cast a shadow rather than a luster upon the public spaces of the street while the roiling turbulence and animation of street life in working class Paris, where the eyes of the poor were everywhere, could do little to reassure anyone with bourgeois pretensions that this was a secure world. Such spaces were to be feared and most bourgeois steadfastly avoided them apart, that is, from the shopkeepers and small employers who dwelt within their midst (ibid: 12).

Harvey suggests this is an all-too-familiar and dismal story of ghettoization and segregation yet in this instance it is almost entirely according to class interests and sentiments. Nevertheless, the rambunctiousness of working class Paris during the night provided a seedbed for the growth and expression of a wide range of oppositional political sentiments that later underpinned the

complex politics of the Paris Commune of 1871. He goes on to add that it was a radically different kind of spectacle that held sway here: "a complex mix of what Marx termed 'animal spirits' and street theater where intensity of local contacts and confusions masked all manner of plots, including those with political and revolutionary aims. As the dance halls and cabarets became the loci of public meetings on political topics after the liberalization of Empire in 1868 and as political meetings proliferated throughout working class Paris, so bourgeois hegemony over the right to the rest of the city was challenged" (ibid: 12). Finally, this challenge found its expression in the Commune.

On the flipside, the sinister prospect of commodification seems to have been present from the start as well. While the image of hordes of workers descending from Belleville and pouring out onto the public spaces of the city, even, on one occasion in 1869 getting as far as the new Opera house, struck political fear into the hearts of the Parisian bourgeoisie as Harvey depicts the situation; the nightly endeavors and transgressions of the poor were also a source of fascination and entertainment for the rich across the Chunnel. At the time when Robert Louis Stevenson was penning his novella, the London night was being considered as one of the finest Victorian inventions. Those were the days when Jack the Ripper terrorized and fascinated the general public at once, Charles Dickens strolled around in the City of London after midnight to overcome his insomnia and in turn got an "education in a fair amateur experience of homelessness" (2010: 1), and Thomas De Quincey (2003) got high on opium, wandered in Soho and made friends with prostitutes. In earlier epochs the onset of darkness had spelled an end to the day and represented its outer limits, its polar extremes; the night had been the last frontier. It was seen as "lawless, foreign territory teeming with rogues and banditos who took advantage of what Shakespeare called its 'vast, sin-concealing chaos' to revel in an orgy of depravity and pestilence. It snuffed out the civility and social etiquettes of daytime and brought back trace memories of an older dense London with eldritch forestry" (Sandhu, 2007: 10). But gas lighting opened up the night; it made the dark city navigable. In fact, it made the darkness itself visible. Etchers and penny-dreadful illustrators were inspired by it to set about delivering chiaroscuric variations on the theme of shadow, gloaming and umbrage to their patrons and editors:

> London, fat on imperial wealth, was booming and expanding as never before: shops stayed open later, a newly-established police force was able to patrol its streets, under- and overground trains connected the residents of its previously fragmented boroughs. Brimming with confidence, full of self-love, the capital developed an appetite for stories, both triumphant and harrowing, about the picturesque characters who populated its nocturnal by-ways and crevices. The London night was a

homegrown Africa that on-the-make writers scrambled to map and colonize. Off they trooped: chin-whiskered moral reformers hoping to edify and save the wretched poor huddled in freezing coal sheds in Shadwell; antsy investigative journos-turned-urban mythopoets snouting for florid stories by moving between the masked ball-goers and theatrical aristocracy of the West End and, Hyde to its Jekyll, the East End of lantern-jawed street fighters, idiosyncratic music-hall performers and white lassies hunkered up in Limehouse opium dens run by their slant-eyed Celestial husbands (ibid: 10-11).

What this indicates is that the illumination of the city in the first half of the 19th century has brought about a new relationship to the night: this marks the point at which the perception of ferocity and rowdiness has been dropped as the seductive idea of "nightlife" has come into fashion along with its promise of leisure, pleasure, secrecy, and escape from the everyday as well as from the norms imposed by daytime and its strenuous labor. With the birth of the metropolis and the commercialization of nocturnal activities then, nighttime – no longer considered daytime's complete negation but rather rendered partially heterogeneous and acceptably infamous – has been blessed with its very own economy and politics as well as its unique social and cultural dynamics. The urban night, as it were, has a life of its own. Indeed, nightlife is marked by the promise of seduction and eventfulness as well as by the pursuit of ecstatic fraternity with likeminded strangers resulting in self-loss and rediscovery. Therein lies its potential for transgression retained by urbanity. But therein also lies the potential for spectacle as well as the incentive for institutionalizing transgression, thereby taming it and generating profit. Well, since the urban night is a complex and relatively novel phenomenon, we can pose some questions here. Have cities emancipated the night from its shackles? Or is it the other way around, has the night liberated the city from its chains? Maybe it's a little of both. One thing we know for sure is that "cities change as nights come into their own to create opportunities for the lived experience of public space. We might say that night expands the possibilities of life in the city in a variety of ways. Reciprocally, the city helps night achieve a kind of independence or autonomy, by bringing people out into it, the city empowers people to enjoy the night in perhaps unprecedented ways. We might speak of justice here: does the city do justice by its night or does it kill night by making it banal or through excessive management of its unruliness" (Blum, 2003:149)?

Two: Nighttime in the Metropolis

With the rise of the capitalist metropolis nocturnally lit by electricity, a rousing nightlife has come to be considered as an essential amenity of a modern city, so much so that nowadays a 24-hour city is often thought to be the defining characteristic of cosmopolitanism and a vibrant party scene is listed among the criteria for becoming a major world city. In Berlin for instance, policy makers are willing to make life easier for cultural entrepreneurs investing into the nighttime economy as they seem to buy into Florida's (2002) and likeminded academics' contention that an exciting nightlife is a must for attracting the "creative class" and its capital. In fact already in mid-19th century, Baudelaire, drunk on absinth procured at brothels and cabaret houses and high on phantasmagorias offered by the well-lit boulevards, had identified great cities as "capitals of the civilized world." The 24-hour city indeed exemplifies, as Blum (2003) points out, the dual function of the city as capital: first as the center capable of making capitalism shine at night, the center at which capitalism is illuminated and made brilliant, and secondly as the center where capital is made into a quality of value, for example where the extension of spending at night is made into an object of need and desire commensurate with the ideal and lifestyle of "sweetness of living" and with the expanded and intimate interpretative connection of commerce and cultivation.

Having a busy nightlife also means young people in the big cities are in an unprecedented position to conceive of themselves as modern, upscale and upmarket. Unlike their parents or grandparents they are a generation blessed with the opportunity and the means to spend rather than sleep; to utilize the night to expand and intensify sociality. When the development of urban nightlife is represented as a story, a matter of history, a course of action tied to the fate of progress from the point of view of the bourgeoisie, it is typically discussed as an emancipation from the fetters of the provincial past, a progressive movement linked to the awakening of each generation to its powers. Hence, this development is always narrated in the amusement activities of the upscale and upmarket at any modern movement. But as we have seen, the night is also simultaneously represented as the concerted coming-to-view of marginality, of alternative lifestyles, of the underground. Within this context, alcohol, tobacco, narcotics, sexuality, licensing hours, and the question of the indisputable right to stay up late are each and all in their way interpretative sites at which the desire to pacify night collides with the aspiration to maintain

its unruliness as a feature of the struggle between different voices to control the means of interpretation of the city (Blum, 2003). Some cities become famous in regard to how their days and nights differ from each other so that their inhabitants have access to opportunities at night which they are denied during the day. But then again, the more business-friendly, 24-hour city model favored increasingly by city planners and policy makers alike dictates that urban nights must become indistinct from days so that the same opportunities and amenities exist in ways that do not permit us to distinguish one from the other; the city must open-up at night to make it possible for people to live sleepless nights by spending their disposable income. The question here is: "do the great cities of the world make their nights similar to their days or do they enable their days and nights to respectively hold something in reserve from one another?" In other words, "does the identity or difference of the day to night split the city into two (city by day, city by night), or does it enforce a unity that dissolves the discreteness of these moments" (ibid: 160)? If it is the latter case as the 24-hour model suggests, then how can or do day and night remain seductive objects of desire? Certainly in major financial centers like London or New York the aim is to adopt the open-all-hours model in which the night remains inimitable (bars and nightclubs do have closing times in this arrangement but you can go to the gym or get a decent cup of coffee and Chinese takeaway 24/7); in this way the transgression it offers can be tamed and commodified (posted in events listings as safe and conventional pastime activities) whilst the day remains reserved for work and production. Here, the urban night is made safer not only through intensified surveillance (CCTV) and policing but also via regulation and standardization which in turn render nocturnal activities more generic and calculable. The night is reduced to being *predictably eventful* so that people know more or less what to expect from a night out while leisure activities and the transgressions resulting from them are contained within secure enclaves characterized by what Featherstone (2007) calls "controlled de-control," i.e. rational and law abiding customers are allowed to blow off steam by acting irrationally without getting into trouble within the confines of the night locale for a limited period of time. On the other hand, when we turn our attention to a city like Berlin whose economy relies not mainly on traditional forms of big business and finance but rather on services, culture, leisure and tourism; and consequently where the city officials tolerate – if not promote – libertarianism while many jobs within the creative economy provide not only sufficient disposable income but also the necessary flexibility and informality for weekday partying, and where both the city's inhabitants

and visitors show a constant willingness to paint the town red whilst being offered an immense number of venues and parties to choose from, the so-called "underground" party culture as well as the growing afterhours scene suggests that perhaps there is a bit more nocturnal space for *unpredictable eventfulness* while the traditional distinction between daytime and nighttime activities seems to get blurred.

Let us note here that day and night seem to anticipate each other as relationships to life. Commonly, day is considered to begin after awakening and to end with the completion of work, whereas night is perceived to begin after work and to end at the time we usually wake up. On the surface, day appears to wait for night or for what-comes-after-work while night appears to wait for day or for what-comes-after-sleep. This interpretation takes the nature of night and day for granted, formulating their relation by implication of the opposition between the ruling metaphors of work and sleep. Here, what they each anticipate in the other would simply be the relief of the present. Moreover, this model treats awakening as if it solely belongs to day. Instead, Blum (2003) suggests we can think of the night also as an awakening; just as the dawn is the awakening of day, twilight is the awaking of night. Hence, dawn and dusk are two different shapes of the same problem of awakening as a matter which is worked out in different ways for day and night, ways which contribute to our thinking of the difference between the two because sun-down and sun-up invite different phenomenological relations to the time of the present and its power to break through lethargy. That is to say the defining characteristic of night might be its struggle against sleep, its struggle to live the life of sleeplessness. In that sense, it is possible to treat night not simply as an escape from sleep but rather as a struggle with the meaning of sleeplessness itself: a great urban night has to struggle with the question of what to do after midnight. Therefore, the decision it demands is no longer whether or not to go sleep, but rather how to live. In that respect, the fact that night locales do not have closing-hours in Berlin (the law doesn't demand it so bar owners do as they please) as well as the fact that most Berliners show up at clubs not before 2:00am (in many cities that's already closing-time) speaks volumes about the German capital's look on life and its established culture of nocturnal vibrancy. The question then is, to what extent are the activities pertaining to this second awakening after sun-down unique and limited to the night as well as to what extent are they targeted exclusively at a special breed of nocturnal customer? After all, one seldom spends money whilst sleeping. This means rather than readily buying into the "nocturnal liberation" discourse which suggests our

(re)awakening at night is completely oppositional and preferable to that of daytime, we should explore what kinds of reawakening or rebirth pertain to daytime and nighttime respectively. If we do so, night and day might no longer be treated as an unresolved binary opposition but rather seen as both uniquely participating in the notion of awakening marked by what Blum identifies as Jean-Luc Nancy's (1993) notion of existence as a continuous "birth to presence." Well, it is true that there are a great number of cities in which nights are special only in relation to drab days, in a way standing as the exception to the rule, the transgressive to the mundane. But other cities such as Berlin have wonderful nights the anticipation of which actually intensifies the day. Blum argues in such cities night does not live off its difference from day but rather enhances its fullness; day and night do not prosper at the expense of one another. Moreover, transgression is possible in such cities at daytime as well instead of being exclusive to the domain of night. Here, we can perhaps talk of a "dialectic of awakening" suggesting that both day and night are differently yet in both cases desirably eventful so that we could apply Hegel's formula for sublation – of course once we sever it from its idealist, ontological roots and turn it into an argumentative metaphor – in the form of a hypothesis: cities become more exceptional and consequently more desirable by virtue of making it more likely that the opposition between day and night is cancelled whilst their difference is preserved. That is, in what counts as major world cities the difference between day and night must continue to exist yet no longer as an opposition. What is also crucial here is that unlike the homogenizing, 24-hour business model, the metropolitan night's dissimilarity to daytime is secured in such major cities through "descriptions of the activities that are done at times and places, activities designed to induce people to forgo sleep and make the effort to join the circulating mix, to spend money, and to be among others in lighted spaces within a dark landscape. The methodology of the city, joining activities and spaces at selected times, is guided by the promise that coming out at night will make a difference, that the extension of sleeplessness and the experience of insomnia will lead to its own awakening worth the price paid" (Blum, 2003: 154). Of course, the price being paid is not only fiscal but also physical and emotive.

This collective practice of going out suggests naturally that nightlife is public life. In other words, it is part of the complex machinery whose function is to attract and mobilize people; to draw them out into the open and make them visible both to themselves and to alterity as the nocturnal horde that has renounced sleep for the life of insomnia. As such nightlife begs the

question of diversity and hospitality. How open and accessible is a city's nighttime activities to outsiders as well as to the underprivileged? Here, the upmarket meets the underground as nocturnal scenes are linked to economic, social and (sub)cultural capital so they remain elitist and clandestine. At the same time commercial success and rise in mainstream popularity usually come with the perception and accusation of being no longer at the cutting-edge. Consequently, the initial avant-garde clientele gets irritated by the newcomers and gradually sets up shop elsewhere to recreate exclusivity and re-enjoy distinction. Within this context, nightlife which is now perceived as a sign of cosmopolitanism as we have noted becomes paradoxically xenophobic in order to remain attractive. This in turn brings the question of ownership, who owns the night in the big city? How do nocturnal activities set-up capital intensive zones and invisible borders within the metropolis?

Here we can also ask: how does the night treat the lonely? The anonymity and atomization of city life is hard, especially for those who don't have loved ones to rely on. Yet, the very ruthlessness of a city towards those who are alone must not always make being alone dreary and repetitive. Loneliness in the midst of the public can also be a moment of excitation. In Baudelaire's poetry (1986) and prose (1964), for example, the *flâneur* manages to be touched by his very isolation in the crowd; to cherish his solitary confinement as such as creative inspiration and existential meaning. For those who succeed to be inspired by the anonymity of nighttime vulnerability then, the night offers an alternative perspective on life – a perspective which can reconcile immersive enjoyment with the distantiation of critique as Benjamin (1983) points out vis-à-vis Baudelaire. So even though the night in the city is often identified with a public life where groups inhabit and transverse spaces together, it is also an opportunity to be private in more creative ways; to extend and reinvent solitude in accentuated forms that can sometimes take pleasure in being alone with others. Yet speaking of the *flâneur* immediately begs the question of phallocentricism because this charming 19th century man has been often accused by feminist scholars of being the navel-gazing agent of leisured patriarchy. Indeed, one must acknowledge the fact that there usually is a difference between the male and female attitude towards the night. As the typical male considers the urban night as a fairly secure garden filled with the promise of earthly delights and adventures – both sexual and otherwise – females tend to pay more attention to the very close distance between the attractive nocturnal promise of entertainment and the imminent dangers that fill the night which reflects the fear of verbal and/or

sexual assault. After all, (and understandably) almost no one wants to be approached or seduced by all sorts of people. In fact, even the equal participation of women to nightlife is a relatively new phenomenon. As recently as the beginning of the 20th century, women who were alone in public at night were under the suspicion of prostitution. For example, a "women's protection initiative" was introduced in Berlin in 1903 which required police officers to make sure that women standing or walking alone in the street at night were not loitering or "selling their bodies;" the cops had to escort them to their doorsteps (Bretthauer, 1999). Here we can emphasize the fact that as a result of the ongoing process of emancipation since the 60s, women in the West largely do play the game of seduction freely and to the same extent as male partygoers today. Hence, in an occidental metropolis like Berlin, it is by and large no longer considered a transgression (at least from the society's point of view rather than the individual's or her family's/husband's) that women are out and about at night and they are promiscuous. Yet, in other cities or parts of the world the fact that women go out to party at night and play the game of seduction openly might be considered by some to be an instance of transgression if not as an act of blasphemy.

Speaking of nocturnal dangers, it is also important to notice that the unruliness traditionally associated with night has also something to do with how the latter has been equated with free time, or to be more precise with how this equation has declared and treated nocturnal subjects as vulnerable and threatened creatures by virtue of this freedom. For those who have daytime jobs (i.e. the majority of the wage laborers on this planet) night is usually something positive because its free time indicates being temporarily free from the obligation to bring home the bacon. In fact, it is exactly this freedom that young Marx and Engels want to extend to the entirety of day, thereby making it permanent. In the *German Ideology* (2004), penned not long after they had begun their friendship, the duo famously describe how in the communist society of abundance based on the common ownership of the means of production, the capitalist division and specialization of labor would be replaced by a utopian mode of production which would abolish the exploitation and alienation resulting from wage labor and instead allow amateurship and multiple vocations in life as well as multiple preoccupations during the day, e.g. not only doing one thing today and another tomorrow but also hunting in the morning, fishing in the afternoon, rearing cattle in the evening, and criticizing after dinner without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic. When work is no longer synonymous with wage labor but

instead designates any sort of value production springing from humanity's inherent creativity and labor power, the traditional distinction between free and non-free time also disappears as a new definition of freedom comes to the fore. It is within this context that Marx and Engels youthfully reserve the night for intellectual activities. The citizens in Thomas More's *Utopia* (2004), on the other hand, are expected to go the bed at 8pm and sleep soundly for eight hours so that they can tank up energy for the next day of *useful* activity. Although More's utopian vision is similar to that of Marx and Engels in the sense that he also advocates the common ownership of land and the abolition of private property, in light of the obligatory nocturnal rest he prescribes for his utopian islanders and the fact that they are banned from "wasting their time" since they are free to do whatever they want if and only if this constitutes a congenial activity, it becomes evident that he adamantly stresses the importance of discipline and hard work, and consequently considers idleness and self-indulgence as degenerate. As far as More is concerned it is the moderate use of free time that is a virtue. Moreover, such moderation is the mark of a model, self-governing citizen rather than a self-indulgent one. The problem and challenge that the night poses is that the abundance of free time it offers begins to test this prescribed moderation because destructive temptations are released as idleness provokes people's *natural* vulnerabilities, exposing them to conditions which bring out the worst in them. Therefore, it is not the night itself that More fears but rather its promise of free time as well as the seductions that this promise entails. In other words, the temptations of night are not particular to it per se but to free time. Moreover, if day and night were reversed in terms of work schedules, day would be as forceful a temptation as night. This negative view of free time and the temptations resulting from it also constitute the link between night and transgression for it is the possibility of transgression that is feared in free time. Nevertheless, the transgressiveness of self-indulgence resulting from idleness could also be the awakening and rebirth imagined by Jean-Luc Nancy and promoted by Blum. Then we could suggest in contrast to More's utopian inflection, that the opportunity of free time can be imagined as a temptation that is creative by virtue of being transgressive. In fact, a great figure who has turned idleness into creative production is Baudelaire, while Bataille (1991 and 1993) also underlines the usefulness of wastefulness. Just as Marx is willing, despite the age-old phrase *Carmina non dant panem*, to spend his nights doing intellectual and artistic work; so does Blum propose to resist the maladies of free time by making one's nights productive. For instance, Machiavelli writes in *The Prince* that each evening

he takes of his day clothes covered with mud and dust, and puts on "regal and courtly" garments to enter his study to read, thereby "conversing with ancient men" and feasting on their wisdom: "for hours of time I do not feel boredom, I forget every trouble, I do not fear poverty; I am not frightened by death; I entirely give myself over to them (1961: 142). As far as Blum is concerned such nocturnal productivity is transgressive in two senses: it reshapes the Greek view of the darkness of night which we have already seen in Hesiod's poetry, and it renews worldly versions of the industrious use of free time. "Machiavelli's solution encounters Hesiod's 'dark and gloomy' forces (the ugliness of night) by imagining a social relation of good faith, and it resists More's ascetic condemnation of the use of night as 'self-indulgent' and 'idle by actually luxuriating in 'real robes' and food which is 'only mine' in order to renew the present moment as voluptuous." So in one gesture, Machiavelli resists the fear of the abyss by flaunting the very self-absorption excluded by More. "We could say that Machiavelli travesties the collective representation of night by making over transgression into a ceremonial action. Here we begin to glimpse the ritualized reinvention of night" (2003: 148).

Three: Dionysian Rituals of Transgression – The Importance of Lived-Experience and Profane Illumination

Indeed, it might be argued that modernity has reinvented the night and filled it up with immersive rituals. Nevertheless, these are not necessarily related to intellectual or artistic production as Marx or Machiavelli would have it. It is the pursuit of pleasure that nocturnal rituals of transgression are increasingly concerned with; that's why they have been accused of indecency by the moralists whilst being cherished by the libertines. During the 20th century, transgression as such has been endorsed by the likes of avant-garde artists (e.g. the Surrealists, especially Bataille who was loosely connected to the group) and psychoanalysts (especially Lacan and his followers the most famous of which is without doubt Žižek) as it is believed to reveal the deepest truths concerning the human condition whose darkest commandments it obeys, namely that deep below there exists a death drive whose convulsive repetition seeks to create the excess of *jouissance*. According to this, it is the Freudian pleasure principle (which Lacan reformulates into a principle of unpleasure or least suffering in his seminar on ethics [2008]) that the death drive transgresses, thereby creating existential meaning and sovereignty

for the otherwise subdued subject who is believed to be impelled by the everlasting yet impossible longing to reach fullness via the limited solution of possessing desired objects. Whereas for some proponents of the Frankfurt School/Western Marxism – for example, definitely more for Adorno or Marcuse than for Benjamin – hedonistic nocturnal rituals pertaining to the realm of popular/mass culture reflect this cult of the object of desire and in turn fuel the consumer society thereby emanating a mass-produced "false consciousness" which ensures that they function solely as diversions serving the status quo, the tradition of cultural studies inaugurated by the Birmingham School has typically had more trust in human agency and attributed more creativity to the consumer so that nocturnal leisure practices such as club cultures have been proposed to constitute rituals of subcultural resistance.[7] Post-structuralists such as Deleuze and Guattari, on the other hand, maintain that it is the temporary suspension of the capital-friendly Oedipal edifice with its promised *jouissance* (subjectivity, Lacanian/phallocentric desire, *objet petit a*, Law of the Father, etc.) as well as the consequent enjoyment of desexualized corporeality/subjectless individuation which goes beyond signification that constitutes the real transgression. Either way, the centrality of pleasure – whether the aim is to pursue, defer or bypass it – suggests that the capitalist metropolis with its vibrant nightlife is the capital of Western civilization precisely because it can make the dissemination of the question of worldly desire its capital concern. This is a concern of such capital importance that "it can become theatricalized at night as an expanded public stage in which all participants are reciprocally performers and audience, two-in-one, seeing each other and being seen in an environment enlarged through lighting to illuminate its varied choices. This capital illuminates the abundance and diversity of desire in ways central to the civilization of which it is part (Blum, 2003: 163). On the one hand then, the growing nighttime economy turns the night itself into a realm of service production and entrepreneurial activities, on the other hand it fills it up with rituals of consumption and intoxication – perhaps an obvious and rather unspectacular example that combines both types of ritual is the customary visit to the kebab stand after boozing up.

Here, we can return to the issue of controlled de-control, i.e. to the problem of spectacularizing (Debord, 1987) and institutionalizing transgression with the incentive of taming

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[7] For example, see Hall and Jefferson eds. (1976), Hebdige (1979), Redhead et al. eds. (1997), Bennett (1999), Malbon (1999) and Jackson (2004).

it and generating financial as well as other types of gain. After all, one must concede that by and large the urban night is a stage on which the circulation of commodities takes place and the capitalist mode of production is reproduced as laid out by Marx in *Capital Vol.2*. But reducing what's going on at night solely to the consumption of spectacles and to profit-oriented exchanges in an exploitative market misses the big picture; it is what actually gets consumed that makes the thing intriguing. The night's experience economy contains "experiential consumption" (Jackson, 2004) which introduces, through its focus on affectivity, a sense of production back into the game as goods are partially recuperated so that they may engender different symbolic and/or corporeal experiences than the branded ones their producers and marketers had in mind. For example, partygoers walk away from a clubnight with only their experiences, memories, stories and hangovers to show for all the money they've spent. "In the last instance, it is the clubbers themselves who have created these experiences, they must produce the club experience and make the night happen while they are being forced to pay through their noses for that privilege. Paying a great deal of money to get into a club or dressing up in no way guarantees a good time; in fact it simply increases the chance that you'll walk away feeling ripped off because you expect too much from the club and too little from yourself and the people surrounding you" (Jackson, 2004: 171). Surely, the problem of commodification and subcultural distinction is an integral part of the nocturnal experience but nightlife is not solely about the late capitalist consumption/utilization of distinctive signs; meaning is created through the investment of money and energy to make the night happen, to have a good time, to create a good club atmosphere. This points towards another option that seems to resist the overloading and subsequent disintegration of the sign world through practice:

> It is the body, rather than the world of signs, which becomes the final site of individual and group authenticity as people attempt to inscribe a socio-sensual narrative into their flesh. Rather than defining themselves through signs they define themselves through actions, moments, memories, stories and experiences, which make up the actual practice of inhabiting the world at a corporeal level. Consumption is at least partially rejected in favor of production as people's devotion to that little Versace number is replaced by an allegiance to what they actually got up to while wearing it. 'Experiential consumption' is a growing feature of our consumer world because shopping for symbolic capital simply isn't a potent and rewarding enough experience to allow people to embody their own culture in a meaningful way (ibid: 159-160).

Here we can also underline John Hutnyk's reminder vis-à-vis Bataille that orthodox interpretations of Marx which diabolize consumption as a whole often "forget that Marx wanted to take production and exchange, consumption, circulation, etc. together, so as to overturn the

process of exploitation (*aufheben*) and emancipate creative life from exactly those restrictions" (2004:171).

So within this context, it's not solely the brand of your cigarette and how much you've paid for it that matters but also what you get to do and experience whilst consuming it within the conviviality of the night locale. Whereas the commodity implies imposed equivalence and substitutability since it exists as a mass-produced, exchangeable unit with a market price; for the partygoer who happens to undergo some sort of dancefloor euphoria with his lungs full of cigarette smoke this unique experience which the commodity contributes to might be matchless and priceless. Here what's being meant by this exceptional euphoric sensation of utter bliss and ecstatic fraternity is the customary "oceanic feeling" (Freud, 2002) associated with club cultures during which everything seems beautiful, one's existence feels utterly meaningful and there's a sense of total harmony with one's surroundings. Call this affect which is grounded in lived-experience and which combines sensation with mostly non-linguistic practices and sociality what you may: existential meaning, universal harmony, intensive belonging, pure ecstasy, social divine, secular sacredness, profane illumination, immanent transcendence, collective epiphany – one of my panelists had even called it rainbow kitsch. One could even argue that this unique sensation of happiness and joy resulting from a sense of gratification as well as from being surrounded by likeminded people and no longer feeling alone thus momentarily fleeing the isolation and constriction which always accompany embodied subjectivity (i.e. the predicament of being) is the provisional achievement of some sort of utopia: the communal exercise of the freedom to create existential meaning which in turn liberates the individual. Here, it's important to note that this is not external affirmation in the traditional sense of the word since the subject is not affirmed as an object by other subjects. Rather, it is a collective and reciprocal experience of self-affirmation. The common perception of this phenomenon also has it that during such instances the capacity to say "I" melts away temporarily along with antagonistic and hierarchic distinctions such as class, gender or racial difference. As Lawrence (2006) puts it, partygoers are preoccupied with the experience of bodily release, temporary escape as well as the ephemeral and affective community of the nightclub; they are a model of diversity and inclusivity while the dancefloor is experienced as a space of sonic rather than visual dominance in which the sound system underpins a dynamic of integration, experimentation and release.

Many theoretical concepts have been used over the years to explain the existence and conditions of this phenomenon. Among others Bloch's "concrete utopia" (2000), Hakim Bey's "temporary autonomous zone" (2003), Maffesoli's "ethics of aesthetics" (1991), Foucault's "ethico-aesthetic subjectivation – relation to others via relation to self" (1990), Bataille's "non-knowledge of inner experience" (2001) and Bakhtin's "carnivalesque dialogism" (1984) spring to mind. Since we are talking of subtle yet somewhat life-altering epiphanies, maybe Badiou's conceptualization of the event can just as well be applied here with a bit of theoretical juggling. According to the model proposed in *Being and Event* (2005), the event has an extra-ontological nature and arrives unbidden from an "elsewhere" impacting on a given situation and in turn producing a subject who seeks to transform the situation according to what the event has disclosed. Here, the situation pertains to the realm of being and the event to the realm of extra-being while the subject is to whom an event happens and who critically recognizes the value and significance of this event, and consequently organizes his/her life differently and in fidelity to it. In his later *Logics of Worlds* (2009) Badiou clarifies his model by suggesting while a site whose intensity of existence is not maximal can be deemed a "fact," a site whose existential intensity is maximal is a "singularity." According to this, only a strong singularity comprises an "event." Although Badiou reserves the highly esteemed title of eventhood for occurrences as significant as the Paris Commune or May '68; therefore, he would categorize a great night out at best as a (weak) singularity, one could deliberately dilute and extend his framework to fit the nocturnal oceanic feeling. That a bunch of people come together in a certain room (bar, nightclub, etc.) at a certain time thereby socializing, getting high, listening to music, dancing, etc. is a "fact." But the "singularity" if not "event" of epiphany is not caused simply and automatically by that situation of gathering and the activities associated with it, it arrives from an "elsewhere." Moreover, you as the subject are crucial for noticing that something out of the ordinary is taking place; you witness, partake in and acknowledge the event, you recognize its meaning and importance (its exceptionality) and you remain loyal to its singularity thereafter (fidelity). Phil Jackson's (2004) assertion that rave culture has not only had nocturnal and immediate repercussions but also has transformed partygoers' *habitus* so that the way they deal with their corporeality and socialize in their everyday lives has been altered is a prime example of this. Similarly, Rainer Schmidt's (2009) account of how in the early 90s numerous new-Berliners gradually felt compelled, thanks to their nocturnal experience of utter bliss and existential meaning, to desert their old lives

(education, social security, stable corporate job, etc.) and instead devote themselves to a lifestyle of minimal subsistence which allowed for perpetual partying suits well with such a conceptualization of the event.

The key difference here between the example given above, namely the smoker experiencing the oceanic feeling inside the nightspot and advertising slogans which strive to capitalize on the sense of liberty and fulfillment that nightlife is perceived to provide – hence tobacco companies are keen to endorse bars and sponsor clubnights – is that the smoker knows it is not solely the enjoyment of the cigarette that has led to the unique experience of bliss; the real cause is the intimate interaction between embodied subjectivity and its surroundings. In other words, what creates the euphoric sensation is how the body and soul react to the whole constellation made up of strangers and friends on the dancefloor as well as sensations, sounds, smells, textures and sights (the music, smoke in the air, lighting, colors, decoration, etc.) which happen to fill up that certain space at that specific instant. Moreover, the night's affective relations may also cause goods to leave their commodity state (Appadurai, 1986) altogether since the night allows Bataillean wastefulness and excessiveness so that market relations and commodity exchange are momentarily disrupted: gifts are given at night as narcotics are shared with, drinks are bought for, cigarettes are given away to, and no-strings-attached sex and/or tenderness is offered by strangers; and the repeated excess of intoxication squanders one's health. In fact, this "social life of things" approach can be adopted on purpose so that gift-giving can be tactically utilized with the hope of temporarily disrupting the structures built around private property.[8] For repeated intervals, I walked Berlin's streets at night with no real sense of

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[8] Of course, whether such gift giving can briefly yet truly transgress the instrumental rationality and calculation logic which sustain commodity exchange is debatable. For example, Derrida (1994) criticizes Mauss' notion of potlatch/gift (which Bataille also makes use of) when he suggests what the gift gives is time, that is, time for repayment as it automatically creates a cycle of debt and credit by virtue of being perceived as gift. Therefore, the true gift resulting from *agape* (pure love and benevolence) must not be given or received as gift in order to discard any utility and break the cycle of material and/or symbolic exchange. The parties involved must forget that gift giving ever occurred, even before it has taken place. But, this has to be a forgetting more absolute than the modes of forgetting psychoanalysis allows; the act of giving must not be repressed into the unconscious. Instead, it must be obliterated without obliterating the gift itself. So Derrida concludes to be a gift the gift must not be a gift; it is the Impossible. Because of his opposition to interest and utility, and his consequent formulation of the true gift's impossibility, Derrida creates a discourse of obligation: the obligation to not be obliged. Derrida does not deny the realism of ethnological descriptions concerning gift exchange. Instead, he claims the objects the exchange of which are described in such ethnographies are falsely identified with the term "gift." Nevertheless, Caillé (2001) suggests this linguistic critique can be turned against itself: Derrida pleads us to entrust ourselves to the semantic precomprehension of the word "gift" in his (in this case French) language or in a few other occidental languages. Yet, why would language, the French or the English language not lie? Is it because it would be assured of a direct

destination, relying on the "dream logic" of the night to show me the way as I gave away bottled beer to strangers. During these nightly drifts, gift-giving was conceptualized as a challenge both to me as the giver since I had to transgress the norms of blasé urban anonymity which meant that I had to open myself up to alterity, thus run the risk of rejection and ridicule; and to the receivers since the received gift was hoped to put into question their assumptions about ownership and interpersonal relations; assumptions taught and imposed by the capitalist mode of production and consumption. But this was not a challenge to reciprocate the gift. Instead, it was a (k)nightly challenge to a duel of conversation and intimacy. The field notes that open the next section are derived from this very experience.

So it is this emphasis on lived-experience that is crucial. If we reduce the drama of the night solely to entertainment and amenities, in other words if we just focus on the production and consumption of goods and services whilst looking only for rational calculation and profit-oriented behavior, we risk overlooking the subject's encounter with the space of the present; we disregard the affects of sociality as well as the temporary suspension or alteration of subjectivity facilitated by the exposure to art (especially music) and alterity as well as by the utilization of corporeality and/or intoxicants. So there exists an arguably Nietzschean point of view which values what goes on *during* the party instead of focusing on what happens or usually doesn't happen *after* or as a *result* of the party since it considers the lived-experience of nighttime sociality and affectivity as still important and meaningful. Here we can evoke Walter Benjamin's (1999) insistence on the critical value of *Erlebnis* over *Erfahung*. The latter is rational; it implies accumulating knowledge, getting experienced in something. *Erlebnis,* on the other hand, is immersive; it suggests experiencing something first-hand, personally testing something out. Roughly speaking, *Erfahrung* is gathered-experience whereas *Erlebnis* is lived-experience. As

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access to Being? Can that access, even if French were the most superior language we have today, be ever so direct? Here we can remember Walter Benjamin's (1996) musing that theoretically only the Godly language spoken in Eden has had direct access to Being since the word and the object-concept it corresponded to were one and the same; the signifier was attached to only one referent and one signified. With the fall from grace however, this direct access to transcendence via language has been lost. The multiplicity of manly languages makes it impossible for signifiers to always point towards the same signified and the same referent. Moreover, is it really possible to bracket the fact that our and Derrida's spontaneous notion of the gift and unconditional love have been fashioned by two thousand years of Christianity and theology, and it is this that the language Derrida speaks and writes in expresses? Caillé argues Derrida, under the guise of linguistic criticism and eidetic propriety, is actually raising the Western, modern, and monotheistic notion of the gift to the standard and ethical norm of universal value (2001: 30).

far as the Dionysian view is concerned, what is being referred to as transgression in nocturnal lightness is exactly that, i.e. transgression. Nobody is talking about revolution here, we are just looking at the temporary suspension of norms which at the same time announces and sustains the existence of those norms. And transgression as such takes place solely for its own sake; it's not part of any grand plan to transform society no matter how to its intoxicated nocturnal crusaders things tend to seem otherwise. It's about creating personal existential meaning via temporarily creating and sharing collective existential meaning usually through affects and corporeal/non-significatory communication (often to the backdrop of music and in the midst of the dancefloor) which transgresses rationalist norms and expectations so it's mainly about immersive ethico-aesthetics. This also marks the distinction between the micro-politics of self-transformation and the macro-politics of socio-cultural transformation; or if we are willing to dabble in reductionism between Nietzsche and Marx – or rather orthodox interpretations of Marx. Arguably, this also marks the distinction between May '68's lighthearted heaviness and a heaviness that detests lightness – for one of the biggest achievements of Debord & co.'s theory and praxis has been to show how laughter and joy could be valid categories of critique, how lightness and frivolity could be subversive and politically significant. For example, in Turkey where '68 has not had political and socio-cultural implications to the extent that it has in the West, and especially outside the big cities; nightlife and club cultures were dismissed in the 70s and 80s within leftist circles as mere "bourgeois entertainment" which supposedly diverted the youth from the righteous revolutionary path. In fact, this attitude has not completely disappeared even today. This outlook is the result of a strict, anti-lightness morality which dictates the revolutionist must never lose sight of his true aim to transform society; therefore, he must never lose control and by implication neither get intoxicated (either by alcohol/narcotics or erotic pleasure) nor fall head-over-heels in love. Moreover, he is not allowed to enjoy himself as long as society is marked by exploitation and the oppression of class inequality. Perhaps this extremely grave morality that calls for total devotion to the revolutionary lifestyle is epitomized by the militant asceticism of Sergei Nechayev's *Catechism of the Revolutionist* (1989) penned in 1869 (not to be confused with Bakunin's eponymous text) which even Marx had criticized for its extreme nihilism but which nevertheless was influential in the formation of leftist armed insurgency in the West during the late 60s and 70s, especially the Black Panthers and the Red Brigades.

As a proponent of the Nietzschean position which values lightness and considers it politically significant, Maffesoli (who sounds like but never cites Deleuze [9]) claims nightlife, due to its Dionysian nature, is "immediate life; a life which is non-theorized, non-rationalized, with no finality or aim, entirely invested in the present. This sort of life calls for love and intensity. This intensive life no longer tends towards something (ex-tendre) but tends towards itself (in-tendre)." As far as he is concerned it is this intensive investment in the present that ties an individual to others sharing and living this mutual investment. So Maffesoli's debatably overoptimistic approach contends we need to focus on eclectic and cosmopolitan networks characterized by fluidity rather than rigid and traditional markers such as class and ethnicity, and although this brings Zygmunt Bauman's (2000) "liquid modernity" thesis to mind, his version remains far less celebratory and far more critical than Maffesoli's postmodernist vitalism. Maffesoli's emphasis on fluidity is rooted in his conviction that "the modus operandi of postmodernity seems to emphasize intention or artistic will as the deep source of energy of the various aggregations now composing society" (1991: 8). According to this, homogenized mass-culture created by globalization and consumerism still gives rise to heterogeneous socio-groupings in the form of ephemeral and situational constellations materialized around shared life-worlds and micro-values, especially those pertaining to aesthetics and the body – here bio-power and the techniques of self-fashioning also come into play. The claim is that the aestheticization of everyday minutiae causes social life in its entirety to become a work of art; furthermore, as a result of such aestheticization cultural capital overhauls socio-economic capital in driving sociality as taste becomes the primary organizing principle around which collectivities are formed. Unlike Bourdieu (1984), Maffesoli is uncritical of this phenomenon which he dubs "neo-tribalism" (1996). As far as he is concerned, neo-tribalism indicates the increasing prevalence of a carpe diem culture of sensation (*Gefühlskultur*) characterized by hedonism and collective narcissism as it replaces the strict Apollonian morality of modernism (duty, telos, *pouvoir*) and its emphasis on unity as well as its "logic of stable identity" with a Dionysian ethics of aesthetics which highlights "unicity" and is marked by the flexibility afforded by the "logic of identification" based on attraction and repulsion (constantly reassessed lifestyle and self-in-the-making). Maffesoli maintains this is an immanentist ethics focusing on the collective force

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[9] For instance, he writes the present is an *assemblage* whose *force* (*puissance*) is characterized by a philosophy of *becoming* rather than an anthropology of being. Moreover, just like Deleuze, Maffesoli lists Nietzsche and Bergson among his major influences while resorting to Foucault in order to announce the age of *homo aestheticus*.

(*puissance*) that artistically creates all social life; there is no obligation apart from coming together and being a member of the collective body, and no sanction apart from being excluded should the interest which has brought one into the group comes to an end. "This is precisely the ethics of the aesthetic: experiencing something together is a factor of socialization…The individual, then, ends up by being absorbed into a more differentiated ensemble. This is probably the essential lesson of the aesthetic paradigm" (Maffesoli, 1991: 15-16). Here we get standard postmodernist arguments concerning the pitfalls of grand meta-narratives, the failure of ideologies and the loss of macro-political ideals, as well as the Lyotardian figural/haptic (as opposed to discursive) aspect of existence according to which the social body becomes an extension of the personal body in interaction; rubbing against other bodies.

Drawing on Nietzsche, Maffesoli rejects the dramatic temporality of modernism and celebrates instead the tragic "non-time" of living in the present within a medium of communal images and (bodily) practices. Here, drama is designated as the organizing principle of every teleological meta-project characterized by the perpetual possibility of improvement; drama is always about the future. Tragedy, on the other hand, is invested in the here and now so Maffesoli claims it is nothing but a series of *poiesis*: passions, thoughts and creations actualize and exhaust themselves in action, in acts of instantaneous expenditure, without reserve. Time stands still to allow each individual or person to give its best – here the Dionysian affinity to Bataille and Baudrillard is obvious. In tragedy, life is regarded as a succession of such intensive moments whose concatenation constitutes the vital flow. By using Bergsonian terminology Maffesoli maintains that one remembers the *duration* of such moments more than their *historical connection*: "presentism and its incarnation in everyday life tends to give rise to a kind of intensity that, conscious or quasi-conscious of the ephemeral nature of all things, chooses to enjoy them to the fullest, at full speed, here and now. Consequently, the linear time of modern calculation, the mechanical time of industrial production and the time clock, the empty and homogenous time of drama, make way for the discontinuities of lived time – the time of duration. The powerful moments or the banal events of the everyday are all that matter. One might say only the banal is eventful. Thus the *kairos* of ancient philosophy meets up with a sense of opportunity, a generalized *savoir vivre*, a 'situationism' for all those events that occur along the path of one's existence" (2003: 208). Basically, it is a question of whether one lives for the future or lives for and in the present. Moreover, the immediacy or immanentism the tragedy of

living in the present entails is an immersion that is beyond complete rationalization, theorization and signification. What counts is lived-experience and what matters is the feeling of belonging together. That's why Maffesoli maintains the ethics of reveling in aesthetics facilitates sociality and keeps society together. Moreover, it leads to a secular notion of sacredness along the lines of Durkheim's "social divine:" such an "immanent transcendence" melts away the "I" of traditional subjectivity and brings about a quasi-mythical sense of correspondence to one's surroundings. Consequently, it is no longer the universal that counts, but the particular in all its carnality, affectiveness and essentially symbolic properties. This is what enables self-knowledge as well as knowledge and acknowledgement of others – but not as purely rational, autonomous, and abstract entities. Maffesoli is not interested in how one becomes the modern individual who internalizes and functions according to the Cartesian split, i.e. an autonomous, rational subject who separates himself from nature (objects) and distinguishes himself from his neighbors, thereby making this separation and distinction the basis of a logic of domination and mastery. Rather, Maffesoli's sense of "immanent transcendence" implies a "knowledge and acknowledgement lived by someone in a community framework: that of a group, a tribe, of elective affinities, all things of which tradition speaks, and which seem to be coming back before our very eyes. It is this very feeling that lends the present moment all of its tragic intensity" and brings about a novel notion of affective tribalism rooted in everyday trifles (2004: 210). He insists on the "poetics of banality" and asserts living in the present adamantly is simply another way of affirming one's own acceptance of death. In a rather Bataillean gesture he writes: "to live in the present is to live one's death in the everyday, to confront it, and to assume it. The terms intensity and tragedy convey exactly this: the only things that matter are those that one knows will cease" (2003: 207).

Similarly, both Goetz' (1998 and 2004) drug induced musings about the rave experience and Malbon's (1999) treatise on the "high" of clubbing regard the lived party experience as transgressive. Here, while the euphoric sensation is achieved through dancing and the use of the body in crowd interactions and personal expression, this sensation can also be prolonged and/or intensified through the use of recreational drugs which provide an additional layer of emotional and sensational action – it's important to note that what drugs provide is not an alternative route but solely enhancement. Narcotics help the clubbers attain the form of oceanic experience Malbon names (after the pill) ecstatic; the feeling of being at one with the world, and feeling an

extreme sense of intimacy and closeness to others, being overcome by a sensation of love and belonging. Like Malbon, Jackson (2004) focuses on the role of narcotics in bringing about carnal and socio-sensual moments of collective existential affirmation. He pursues the argument that ecstasy has changed the clubbing experience dramatically: before the heyday of MDMA clubs were not much different from pubs; they were male-oriented spaces where macho binge-drinkers picked up fights instead of dancing. The asexuality of ecstasy (it temporarily decreases the libido so its high leads more often to hugging and cuddling than to coitus) rendered the clubs more female-friendly. It also helped the males (re)discover their corporeality so they began to dance. With more and more women attending the parties and the guys dancing next to the ladies there was demand for a new sort of music so gradually the rave scene was born. Jeremy Gilbert makes a similar point by suggesting what the rave culture amounted to was a generalized de-eroticization of the dancefloor and while people clearly continued to meet sexual partners in dance clubs, a key element of the rave structure of feeling was the sense that this was no longer the main purpose. Yet, he also asserts:

> It's important to dispense with one of the frequent chimeras of discourse on dance culture. Contrary to the assumptions of many commentators in the 1990s, MDMA ('ecstasy') does not automatically produce feelings of de-sexualized communality. In many contexts – including the British gay clubs throughout the period in question – ecstasy has been used and understood as a substance tending to encourage inter-personal intimacy of either a verbal or sexual nature. Any casual survey of the available evidence, anecdotal or empirical, demonstrates that the socio-behavioral effects of ecstasy, like any 'drug' are almost entirely dependent on the techno-cultural context in which they are used. This is important because commentary on the changing sexual politics of the UK dancefloors has too-often relied on casual assumptions about the effects of ecstasy and too-little paid any attention to the complex dynamics between musical forms and modes of behavior" (Gilbert 2006[b]: 124-125).

Aside from this reservation, Gilbert maintains it is true that the initial emergence of "dance culture" and the popularization of ecstasy were widely perceived as producing an important shift in the culture of social dancing marked by an ethos of tactile, non-violent, egalitarian and emotionally-affirmative friendliness informing the dancefloor etiquette, and this was seen, and often genuinely experienced, as producing a profound transformation in gendered norms of behavior: "while the sight of straight men dancing together was not quite the radical departure which some commentators seemed to believe (this had happened in rock and soul clubs for years), the spectacle of them doing so with a degree of exuberance traditionally only associated with gay discos was. More importantly, what became unacceptable in many of these spaces were the traditionally predatory and/or voyeuristic modes by which men had related to women in such

spaces, a situation which led dance music venues to be frequently understood as places where a utopian sexual egalitarianism was being enacted." But as time passed and rave culture gained mainstream popularity, dancefloor antics became increasingly glamorized and commodified so that a fairly conventional sexual ethics – notwithstanding the fact these ethics had been modified by the enormous social impact of liberal feminism on a generation of sexually-confident young women and the men to whom they related – and a culture of anti-political hedonism came to inform the mainstream of UK dance culture during the second-half of the 1990s:

> The affective experience on offer here was one of euphoric collectivity punctuated by fairly conventional – if relatively egalitarian – episodes of heterosexual flirtation. In gay clubs the story was mostly the same: there was more sex available and more amyl nitrate on the dancefloor, but the soundtrack was dominated by 'hands in the air' trance and house music…In those clubs and party spaces in which a self-consciously bohemian or oppositional identity was sustained, the music remained similarly conservative: faster, harder, noisier, but tending to engender much the same type of physical response. At the radical fringe, drum'n'bass maintained its avant-garde commitments, but in a largely joyless and decidedly masculinist style: combat fatigues and furrowed brows being the favored uniform of its devotees" (ibid: 125-126).

In his analysis of nocturnal intoxication habits Tutenges (2004) makes similar points to Malbon and Jackson. Drawing on Maffesoli (1991) and Bataille (1991) he argues intoxication involves an "ethics of the instant," a total immersion and investment in the present with no regard for the past or the future. Intoxication as such is also excessive and most of the time self-destructive. He claims his informants inebriate themselves solely for the sake of doing so because it allows them to create existential stands that are significantly different from what is constantly being imposed on them. They feel oppressed by societal as well as materialist norms and values but instead of explicitly fighting against such structures and creating concrete change, they take it out on themselves by getting "shit-faced." Via intoxication they temporarily suspend the norms of civility and at the same time acknowledge the existence of those very norms, which signals Bataille's conceptualization of transgression. They waste a huge amount of money, time and energy in getting wasted, yet it somehow makes sense: when you are pleasantly drunk, drinking one more pint or lighting up one more cigarette seems to make the moment more meaningful and worth living although you know your hangover will make you regret having done so the next day. You neither care about what's left of your money nor your liver/lungs at that point. It is exactly the romantic escapism of such a nocturnal ethics of the instant that George Orwell draws attention to when he writes of Parisian nights (succeeding days of squalor and arduous labor) he spent by excessively drinking and smoking, clumsily dancing, merrily conversing and loudly singing along:

With thirty francs to spend on drinks I could take part in the social life of the quarter. We had some jolly evenings, on Saturdays, in the little *bistro* at the foot of the Hôtel des Trois Moineaux…Everyone was very happy, overwhelmingly certain that the world was a good place and we a notable set of people…By half past one the last drop of pleasure had evaporated, leaving nothing but headaches. We perceived that we were not splendid inhabitants of a splendid world, but a crew of underpaid workmen grown squalidly and dismally drunk. We went on swallowing the wine, but it was only from habit, and the stuff suddenly seemed nauseating. One's head had swollen up like a balloon, the floor rocked, one's tongue and lips were stained purple. At last it was no use keeping it up any longer. Several men went out into the yard behind the *bistro* and were sick. We crawled up to bed, tumbled down half dressed, and stayed there ten hours. Most of my Saturday nights went in this way. On the whole, the two hours when one was perfectly and wildly happy seemed worth the subsequent headache. For many men in the quarter, unmarried and with no future to think of, the weekly drinking bout was the one thing that made life worth living (2001: 97-101)

In a similar vein, Rapp (2009) writes of the special sense of solidarity that characterizes the afterhours experience in Berlin nowadays. The regular nocturnal hours are characterized by fleeting fraternities which come into existence usually for the duration of the party and are mainly based on drug (induced) solidarity – both the camaraderie associated with rituals of collective consumption as well as the euphoric effects that boosts up individuals' trust in and love for the people surrounding them. With afterhours things are a bit different. The party that comes after the main party is not focused as much on intoxication. The afterhours is mainly about not collapsing, not coming down. It's about keeping the high minimal but steady until the body regains its energy and intensive partying can resume after sundown. Rapp argues the afterhours community is made up of a very committed group of partygoers who share the beautiful illusion that they somehow belong together. Hence, one also shares one's belongings with each other: what's left of narcotics is rationed, money, cigarettes and joints are given away, drinks are passed around. When one goes to the get something to eat one brings back something for everyone, if one goes to the cash machine one withdraws an extra €10 just in case someone has gone skint. Or if someone disappears for some time, strangers go looking for him to make sure that everything is all right. But this feeling of bliss and security among equals also has its dark underside: the fear that it can and will all end. The narcotics might run out or someone might decide to finally go home, thereby bursting the bubble of camaraderie, warmth and intimacy one is feeling so secure in. Luckily, writes Rapp, this angst is fairly weak and easily overshadowed by euphoric instillations. And those who succumb to this fear or who begin worrying about the chores they have to carry out the next day are usually already on their way back home.

This common Dionysian theme of total investment in the present with no deliberate aim beyond immersion prevalent in various accounts of clubbing experience listed above resembles Huizinga's notion of play. In *Homo Ludens* (1955) the Dutch sociologist argues play is older than culture; indeed, it is the very stuff of which culture, that human mode of being-in-the-world, has been and goes on being molded. Being which is "at play" is a being that goes beyond reproducing itself; it does not have its perpetuation as its only goal. One does not play "in order to," play has no other aim but itself. Play is irrational, it eludes being rationally formulated; it refuses to be part of any binary system: play is not simply the opposite of seriousness, it's not simply folly, or funny or comic. In that sense, play is not purely light, there is a heaviness to its frivolity. For Huizinga, play is first of all an act of freedom; nobody can be forced to play. It's also make-believe; it constitutes a stepping out of "real" life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own. Moreover, play is bounded; it is limited by time and space. In other words, play takes place in a well defined territory, namely the playground; and for certain, usually pre-determined, durations of time. Building on Huizinga's work, Caillois (1961) argues play has these three additional characteristics: it is *uncertain* (neither its course can be determined nor its result can be attained beforehand; some latitude for innovation is left to the player's initiative), *unproductive* (play creates neither goods nor wealth for the playing community as a whole, and except for the exchange of property among the players, ends in a situation identical to that prevailing at the beginning of the game) and *governed by rules* (under conventions that suspend ordinary laws, and for the moment establish new legislation which alone counts). In a previous book Caillois (1959) writes about the parallels between the sacred and play; they both seem to interrupt mundane reality yet play is not sacred, it is rather "profanely sacred."

Inside the profanely sacred playground an absolute and peculiar order reigns. Huizinga writes play creates order, play *is* order. Into an imperfect world and into the confusion of life it brings a temporary and limited perfection in the form of the rules of playing. By establishing its existence as a secret that is available only to a select few, it sets up its borders of inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion, us and them. Since play creates an outside Other the players want to distinguish themselves from the excluded through various means such as dressing up. "Here the 'extraordinary' nature of play reaches perfection. The disguised or masked individual "plays" another part, another being. He *is* another being. The terrors of childhood, open hearted

gaiety, mystic fantasy and sacred awe are all inextricably entangled in this strange business of masks and disguises" (1955: 13). The party location has the potential of becoming such a playground, especially hosting the two kinds of play Caillois (1961) calls *mimicry* (the subject makes himself and/or others believe that he is someone other than himself; he forgets, disguises, or temporarily sheds his personality in order to feign another) and *ilinx* (the pursuit of vertigo and an attempt to momentarily destroy the stability of perception). So partygoers, intoxicated and dressed up – either in costumes or in what they perceive to be flattering attire – do freely and willingly step out of "real" life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition of its own. Not only is nightlife play but its two key aspects, namely music and dance are also play forms according to Huizinga's conception. Being playgrounds, party venues do function on the basis of an inside/outside divide and do create distinctions through various means among which counts the dissemination of (sub)cultural capital. Nevertheless, being playgrounds, they also allow – even if temporarily – arguably more meaningful modes of being in the world.

As we have seen, most of the authors see nightlife as an alternative to the ennui of daily urban life which is governed by instrumental rationality and characterized by the lack of intersubjectivity. The Tube is the perfect example: as people regard you as an extended object taking up space in their field of vision and fail to acknowledge you as a fellow human being – that unwritten rule of not making eye contact with strangers, not smiling and saying hello, not even saying "bless you" when they sneeze – they increasingly make sense of the world through sight and sound rather than touching, tasting or smelling. When you do accidentally touch (i.e. bump into) them their internalized civility makes them automatically say they are "sorry" and get it over with without even meaning it, without even thinking about what has just happened, without even really acknowledging your existence as a fellow human being. Such a mode of daytime existence might be transgressed during the night in two levels. The first level concerns the individual. The internalization of modern, Western (Cartesian and/or Kantian) subjectivity implies that we are symbolically divorced from our own body; we are alienated from some aspects of our corporeality such as our feces, our foul odor, our unaesthetic physical traits, etc. Moreover, the vulgarity, aggression and bestial copulation of the medieval peasant have been discursively replaced by the violence and eroticism of the metrosexual. The combination of the civilizing project (Elias, 2000), the post-Enlightenment institutionalization of discursive sexuality and bio-power (Foucault, 1998), and capitalist aestheticization of everyday life results

in the fact that we want to identify increasingly with what we perceive (or learn through mass-mediated fantasy) to be our glamorous self/body or we despise ourselves for not being attractive or glamorous enough. Yet, this predicament might be transgressed as one immerses in play within the confines of the nightspot and reconnects with the "dark side" of his/her corporeality – when the ass becomes the head as Bakhtin (1984) would have it – through intoxication, excess, dance, movement; when the subject is temporarily put to rest as Bataille prescribes. Doesn't the excessive inebriation of Britain's binge-drinking culture transform well-respected and respectful, civilized and hard-working, rational and sane citizens of the First World into Bakhtin's – or Shakespeare's for that matter – vulgar mob during the night when they fly over to Berlin and do the "pub crawl" on Oranienburgerstr.? Don't we witness in London, after the bells chime for the last orders, how impeccable businessmen begin farting, pissing, puking and even shitting on the streets in their drunken stupor – and don't we sometimes join their ranks? Similarly, doesn't the aggression – not violence – of the pogo dancers remind one of Bakhtin's carnival as bodies crush into each other and produce some sort of existential meaning, some sort of expression of presence? Of course, there will be violent – not aggressive – people among that swarming mass of bodies. Not every pogo dancer tries to create communal/carnal meaning, some get in there to be able to show how strong and "manly" they are; through the domination of other objects the subject seeks its distinction. One has to be careful here, this is a slippery ground and it's hard to draw the line where transgression ends and domination begins.

Pogo dancing also points towards the second and communal level of transgression which follows the first one. Once the mind is reunited with the body, some sort of alternative embodied socio-sensual meaning can be created together with other reunited subjects-objects. The lack of empathy and sympathy between fellow human beings associated with wallowing in individualism can be temporarily suspended whilst having a good time together inside the night club. Such a "nomadic" suspension of the subject along with its desire to attain distinction through (symbolic or real) domination points towards a Deleuzian/late Foucauldian notion of non-Fascist vitality which we will be examining shortly. A crucial point here is that this second level of transgression can only take place after the first one does; only after the immateriality of the mind reconnects with the material in the form of the body. Isn't this exactly the point about Nietzsche's conception of the Apollonian and the Dionysian? The Dionysian can only flourish

and fulfill its true potential if it is given form by the Apollonian; Dionysus laughs at but at the same time needs Apollo.

Nevertheless, what motivates the Dionysian prophet's (Zarathrusta) narrative marked by the acceptance of "the eternal recurrence of the same" is the longing to find out how one is to attain the lonely summit. Nietzsche's final embracement of life is tragic: not only has he suffered from syphilis and unrequited love for Lou Salomé who had chosen their common friend Paul Rée as her lover (this rejection perhaps explains Nietzsche's subsequent renouncement of "slave morality"), but also his deteriorating mental status meant that he was increasingly alienated from social life. Nietzsche's isolation and suffering is epitomized by that famous incident in Turin during the winter of 1889: upon witnessing how a coachman ferociously whips his horse for being overburdened and slipping on ice, the philosopher throws his arms around the animal and sobs helplessly. Nietzsche's alienation and the frustration resulting from it are also reflected in the character of Zarathustra; the townsfolk laugh at the *untimely* thinker. Just as Nietzsche felt increasingly unappreciated and misunderstood (or not understood at all), the laughter response constitutes what he perceives to be the wall between the visionary philosopher and the common folk. Such laughter is crippling and infuriating. The townsfolk's laughter devastates Zarathustra and sends him back into isolation. Nietzsche contends such ridicule is not simply directed against the thinker but against the very defining element of philosophical quest in general: the attempt to embrace life and consequently the future in the face of existential absurdity. Weeks argues Nietzsche comes up with a breathtaking rhetorical gambit as a response to ridicule and alienation: rather than attack laughter, he challenges his readers, through Zarathustra, to will a new kind of laughter, one that will not collapse the temporality of becoming and the will to redeem time through the narrative of special advancement. This new kind of laughter is the Overman's tragic laughter marked by the acceptance of eternal return. It should be emphasized here that this superhuman laughter is experienced only by Zarathustra, and that Zarathustra is a fictional character. With this narrative, Nietzsche has imaginatively conceived a futuristic laughter, a laughter that not only supports the future tense (and tension) but is actually located in that same future and so cannot be challenged in the present. To counter laughter's real threat to futurity, absolute desire and will, Nietzsche has projected a transcendental laughter that becomes a driving force of the will. So Nietzsche challenges his readers to learn to laugh themselves away in order to reach the elevation that awaits them. There are two kinds of laughter in Zarathustra,

the "laughter of the height" and the "laughter of the herd;" Nietzsche challenges us to pose and answer the question of how the former can be achieved (Weeks, 2004). Here we can call the former, tragic one *heavy laughter* while the second is *light laughter*.[10]

Interestingly, we can read the ecstatic Bakhtinian narrative as a kind of reverse, as a mirror image of this. Where Nietzsche had promoted a potential individual over the contemporary masses, Bakhtin would rejoice about a potentially revolutionary community over the supposed inertia of the authoritarian or bourgeois individual. For both, the critical division is between a present reality and a potential future; and for both, the shifting of the image of laughter from one temporal position to the other through the projection of what Weeks deems "superlaughter" is absolutely crucial. From the late 1960s onwards Bakhtin's evocative return to Rabelais and the ancient carnival as a model of comic destruction of social hierarchy and liberation of communal energies swept through literature departments and across academic boundaries in the West. But by the end of the millennium, the libidinal ecstasy had spent itself, perhaps because humanities departments themselves were under attack or perhaps because Bakhtin's imagery of comic revolution, born under Stalinist oppression, was less readily deployed in opposition to the already highly motile, playfully libidinal capitalist hegemony of postmodernity. More fundamentally, however, there was the gradual revelation of the willed blindness inhabiting the Bakhtinian miracle, the suppression of the temporal limitations of both the comic and the carnival (Weeks, 2004).[11]

Weeks argues while Nietzsche's Dionysianism has been reappropriated by postmodernist images of play, energy and movement that seek to ceaselessly and joyfully throw into crisis our faith in the permanence of structures; the fascination with and enthusiasm about post-structuralist notions of laughter as the privileged signifier of unruly libidinal or otherwise subjective

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[10] Bataille finds this tragic Nietzschean laughter which he calls "laughter as nonknowledge," subversive since such serious laughter offers the possibility of undoing the homogeneity caused by the "system of knowledge: when we laugh we pass from the sphere of the known, from the anticipated sphere, to the sphere of the unknown and of the unforeseeable" (2001: 135). Bataille underlines the transgressive potential (breaking the rule whilst revealing and reproducing the limit) of laughter as nonknowledge: "in fact, someone who laughs, in principle, does not abandon his science, but he refuses to accept it for a while, a limited time, he lets himself pass beyond it through the movement of laughter, so that what he knows is destroyed, but in his depths he preserves the conviction that, just the same, it isn't destroyed. Someone who laughs preserves, deep within him, what laughter suppresses, but that it only suppressed artificially, if you will; likewise, laughter has the ability to suspend a very closed logic. In fact, when we are in this domain, we are just as able to preserve our beliefs without believing in them, and reciprocally we can know that which we simultaneously destroy as known" (2001: 144).

[11] For example, Bakhtin's formulation of transgression has been criticized for its "nostalgic populism" and "simplistic romanticism" by Stallybrass & White (1986).

energies/forces overlook the fact that Nietzsche's work is consistent in revealing an anxiety towards laughter. In other words, it is as though *light* laughter is being increasingly mistaken for *heavy* laughter. Moreover, tragic, painful-joy is being increasingly conflated with pleasure. This is more so evident in a place like Berlin where there seems to be a general consensus (and a self-glorification resulting from it) that the constant state of partying which has come to characterize the city (no closing hours, no restraints) is exceptional and subversive. This branded image of transgressive non-utilitarianism, of no work just fun ("poor but sexy"), this advertised carnivalesque laughter that fills up the Berlin night (and afterhours) and is perceived to ridicule capitalist work ethics and mock corporate mentality is itself paradoxically pro-business: Berlin's carefully crafted and marketed reputation as *the* nonconformist party capital renders it with the necessary attractiveness that brings in the tourists and the investors.

Moreover, the ever-popular Dionysian celebration of play, the triumph of endless desiring and *jouissance* as well as the academic reaction to Bakhtin's trust in the subversive potential of festive laughter conflate the category of laughter with those of play and pleasure. This celebration of *jouissance* overlooks the fact that laughter should not be conflated or confused with the texts and emotions that may proceed it. Laughter is not pleasure, "and as Freud himself had observed, it is not sexual excitation. Perhaps most important, especially with regard to the strange predicament of laughter in postmodernity, it is not play. In each case it is the collapsing of the tensions that inhabit these conditions and propel our movements through them. Laughter is an end" (Weeks, 2004: 6). Nonetheless, the prevalence of this postmodernist conflation which succeeds various modernist attempts to willfully incorporate laughter suggests that it has finally become possible to force laughter to be whatever we want it to be. At the onset of the Bakhtinian and Dionysian celebration in academia, perhaps "it felt intuitively right that laughter, once it was mistakenly conflated with play, should itself be viewed as a free-floating signifier. Ironically, we can see, in retrospect, that as the concept of play grew in currency with the ascendancy of the postmodern in thought, art, and economic culture; laughter became a privileged signifier of playful energies, and as such a fetishized object of desire. Unfortunately, this elevation and manipulation of laughter as a signifier, whether in academia or in popular culture and advertising, has disguised both its real positive effects and its marginalization in social reality" (ibid: 15). As a result, laughter, as a momentary subversion of time, desire, and signifying force, and consequently as a way of reasserting the satiable body, has been run over

by an economically driven culture of endless desire and intensifying hyperactivity that is increasingly intolerant of interruptions and dismissive of the existential importance of a genuine possibility of satisfaction. The dominant economic logic of consumption, expansion, and acceleration dictates that this is a marketplace carnival that must never end. That Nietzsche might have contributed in some small way to this suppression of laughter's function as a potentially liberating temporal collapse and subversion of an increasingly insatiable desire is itself ironic.

Four: The Post-Structural Turn – Nietzsche meets Deleuze

Although the common reception of Nietzsche's (1989 and 2003[b]) attack on the *ressentiment* of slave morality entails that he denounces such outreach politics since they are rooted in a Christian notion of charity and that he prefers instead the supposedly egocentric will to power associated with master morality, his general and unfinished project of going beyond good and evil, of transvaluating all values had actually been aimed at correcting the inconsistencies or flaws of both moralities. Nietzsche's Dionysian Overman would be neither a master nor a slave. Hence, far from being the philosopher of the nobleman who seeks personal gain and advancement at the expense of others while turning a blind eye on the misfortunes of the commoners, Nietzsche is on a quest for an "ethics without morality" which still considers all forms of domination, all imposed limitations on potentiality as unethical. The idea of eternal return makes this ethics heavy because the idea that everything recurs ad infinitum creates the obligation to be reflexive: the compulsion to consider or weigh each action and live each moment ethically. Nevertheless, this heavy obligation to be reflexive is by no means a rejection of irrational immersion, Nietzsche is not demanding rational calculation and distantiation at all times; that's why he embraces the life-affirming, Dionysian response to existence. Through its music, dance, intoxication, excess and self-loss the Dionysian spirit aims to uncover the underlying irrational reality concealed by Apollonian rationalism and representation. Furthermore, Dionysus wants to totally immerse in this irrationality.

The fact that Nietzsche seems to have let master morality get away with a lighter sentence and has written more acerbically on slave morality and the politics it engenders must not necessarily mean that he preferred the egocentrism of the former over the collectivity of the

latter but rather that he considered slave morality a more pervasive and imminent danger of modernity. Nietzsche was a *moderne* philosopher, that is, he lived during *modérnite*, a period marked by two specific crystallizations of the Apollonian and Dionysian currents.[12] These two manifestations were resulting from the post-Enlightenment differentiation of the metaphysical, theological, moral, commercial, aesthetic, cultural, etc. realms. On the one hand, there was Foucauldian instrumental rationality that discursively equated knowledge with power (*pouvoir*), created discipline, surveillance, and equivalence (the creation of the market for commodity exchange as well as the birth of the nation-state and its judiciary which reduced citizens to equal, interchangeable units before the law) thereby catalyzing capitalist production and progress. On the other hand were the drunken poetics of Baudelaire's excessive irrationality which was about the enjoyment, celebration, and aestheticization of the everyday. This second sensibility championed symbolic exchange against commodity exchange and advocated carpe diem immersion and consumption. It had complete disregard for the rational, future-oriented discourse of progress and production. On the one hand were the blasé urban crowds with their Victorian sexuality and the calculation logic that characterized their utilitarian philosophy of money (Simmel, 2004) on the other hand were the *flâneurs* – the painters of *modérn* life – with their immersion into the objects and people surrounding them in the metropolises as well as the eccentric bohemians with their promiscuity. In fact, it might be the case that it was because these two currents co-existed in his life time that Nietzsche was able to detect the Apollonian-Dionysian dualism prevalent in ancient Greek culture. Nietzsche regarded all civilization/culture as a product of the will to power. The post-Enlightenment differentiation of socio-cultural life had given rise to the realization that universal morality and metaphysical transcendence were in fact manmade and illusory. Nevertheless, modern culture insisted on retaining moral codes; therefore, the process that had enabled man to see where his true potential lay had also begun to limit that potential. So, Nietzsche decided man had to do away with all morality; all Apollonian norms, values, and institutions had to be abandoned. Man had to transform the will to power over others (strong will to power) to power over oneself (sublimated will to power) in order to become the Overman, i.e. the Dionysian man.

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[12] If we take modernity to be the period starting with the renaissance and continuing until today (or until the 1960s-70s if we follow the postmodernists), then *modernité* takes place at the latter half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. For example, the quintessentially *moderne* poet Charles Baudelaire (1964) famously describes the sensibility of *modernité* as "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent."

What's crucial to realize here is that the Overman does not try to dominate others. This is not so because he believes it is immoral – he is after all beyond traditional morality – but because his ethics require that he must not depend on an external source to be able to affirm his own existence. He finds domination unethical since his will to power is actually a will to sovereignty; the Overman wants to live life in his own terms, that is, with no external restrictions or coercion. In that sense he seeks Isaiah Berlin's (1958) "positive liberty" which defines freedom internally according to what one is capable of achieving. On the other hand, there is also an implication of "negative liberty" which defines freedom externally according to Kant's categorical imperative and designates what one is not permitted to do onto others since the Overman wants to abstain from dominating alterity as he acknowledges others' will to sovereignty as well. Nietzsche contends the struggle between wills to power must not necessarily lead to war, violence or domination but instead to aggression or aggressive competition. That's why he writes the will to power incites one to action yet not the "action of a struggle-to-the-death but the action of the *contest.*" (2006: 96). Nietzsche lauds Homeric competition which is hostile to the winner-take-all sensibility abundant in modernity and which instead incites both parties to flourish. The kernel of the Hellenic idea of competition is that "it loathes a monopoly of predominance and fears the dangers of this, it desires, as *protective measure* against genius – a second genius" (ibid: 98). Hence, this is an unantagonistic notion of competition that drives both rivals to take steps towards realizing their inherent potential. This mode of contest, this rivalry *à la* Lennon-McCartney that incites both sides to improve their skills and actualize their true potential is similar to what Heidegger (1977) has later deemed *poiesis*; a bringing-forth, a revealing of the natural essence of things which gives rise to self-affirmation. The Overman's "sublimated will to power" is a desire for self-affirmation and it entails the embracement of life as a whole with all the suffering involved in it. This non-metaphysical transcendence, this belief that there will never be a better state of things neither in heaven nor on earth (no evolution, no God), this conceptualization of suffering as intrinsic to life and this affirmation of the present is made possible by the acceptance of eternal recurrence. The Overman rejects the Apollonian ideal of betterment to adopt the Dionysian celebration of the moment with all the good and bad involved in it. In that sense, Nietzsche chooses the heaviness of eternal return over lightness.

A clarification is in order here: the English translation of Nietzsche's *der Wille zur Macht* as the will to power is problematic. This is the case because the English language lacks the

distinction between *Macht* and *Kraft*. French commentators have made use of the distinction between *pouvoir* and *puissance* which could be roughly clarified by the distinction between coercive power/strength and force/capability. *Pouvoir* is Foucauldian, it is repressive and authoritarian. It is instrumentally rational; it reduces and classifies things, plus it creates structures to organize the classified items. It is the exertion of power above or over things to dominate and subjugate them. *Puissance*, on the other hand, is like energy or potential, it is a generative force, a driving dynamism. This distinction comes from Latin; *puissance* and *pouvoir* correspond respectively to *potentia* and *potestas*. In fact, Spinoza has made use of this distinction and these concepts have been translated into English as force vs. power, see Hardt's translation of Negri's book on Spinoza (2003). Nevertheless, the distinction in German between *Kraft* (power, force, physical strength) and *Macht* (might, capability) is not so clear-cut. As *Kraft* is more quantitative and used in Newtonian physics, *Macht* is more qualitative and also means political power as in when a ruler comes into power and exercises it, so the power to rule or to govern is also *Macht* rather than *Kraft*. This association of *Macht* with political or coercive power is also evident in German translations of Foucault's works as *pouvoir* is rendered as *Macht*, for example bio-power (*bio-pouvoir*) is *Bio-Macht*. Hence, as *Kraft* means *potestas/pouvoir* exclusively, *Macht* may mean either *potentia/puissance* or *potestas/pouvoir*. This dual nature of *Macht* has meant that Nietzsche's concept is open to interpretation and it may not only be read as the will to *pouvoir* as was the case with the Third Reich but also as the will to *puissance* as was the case with the post-war French thinkers such as Deleuze, Irigaray, and Derrida. When the French philosophers, armed semantically by such a clean-cut distinction between force and power, have interpreted the ambivalent concept of *der Wille zur Macht*, they have downplayed the coercive connotations of *Macht* and instead emphasized its creative/affirmative aspects thereby facilitating a new reading and popularization of Nietzsche as the philosopher of (subversive) vital force which sustains heterogeneity. This second reception has undermined his reputation as the advocate of fascism and suggests that the correct reading should be the will *of* power in the sense that power itself wills; "it is not an intentional pursuit of power by forces deprived of it, but rather the expression of the kind of power that force itself is" (Boundas, 2003: 7). In fact, the culprit behind Nietzsche's re-appropriation by the Nazis was his anti-Semitic sister. Since Elisabeth-Förster Nietzsche wanted more fame and glory for her family, she selectively reordered her deceased brother's notes from his notebooks and produced

the manuscript entitled *The Will to Power*. It was this posthumously published and partially forged monograph that made Nietzsche a star among the National Socialist ideologues (Diethe, 2003). So although there has been a Nietzschean tradition of *pouvior* (power over) whose main proponents are Bataille and Foucault who equate the discursive norms imposed on the subject by culture/civilization/society as well as the modern mechanisms of discipline, subjugation and life-regulation (bio-power) with Nietzsche's slave moralities; a certain vitalist branch of continental philosophy, namely the Spinoza-Leibniz-Bergson tradition has culminated in Deleuze who interprets Nietzsche's will to power as *puissance* (power to) so that the concept of eternal recurrence gets translated into the everlasting repetition of the creation of (virtual) difference/heterogeneity. In fact, for all these 20th century thinkers the common aim is to figure out how to reconcile Nietzsche with Marx. This is especially evident in Deleuze's work with Guattari and more recently in the neo-vitalism of Hardt & Negri.

Going back to nocturnal transgressions; from a Deleuzian perspective the customary dancefloor bliss marked by the loss of self has nothing to do with rational, self-conscious subjects whose deliberate actions have effects on well-defined, external objects in the first place. Rather, such examples of nocturnal ecstasy draw attention to the temporary absence of instrumental rationality and traditional, humanist subjectivity as the oceanic sensation constitutes an Event (actualization by way of virtualization) taking place on the pre-individual and nonrepresentational field of production. As far as this ontology of difference that insists on immanent transcendence is concerned, such instances indicate subjectless individuations which emanate Spinoza's positive passions. These virtual individuations or becomings result from singularities affecting one another during joyous encounters as they are brought together by the vitalism of conatus or by the permanent-flux creating force that Deleuze calls desire. In other words, Deleuze's ontology (especially with Guattari) treats "haecceity" as a process of individuation which does not generate individuals but rather passes through already existing individuals and pulls them back to the pre-individual field of impersonal becomings where assemblages with other singularities are formed and dissolved. Deleuze's work with Guattari is also built on the premise that desire as such is never naturally given but is always assembled/machinized.[13] So in the nightlife context the argument is that bodies which are

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[13] Traditional, Kantian subjectivity and its transcendence-immanence dichotomy is based on the principle that what makes our experienced world of time and space possible is the very existence of a subject with restricted

temporarily liberated from the constraints of humanist subjectivity and corporeality are *becoming* as the dancers joyfully carry out an initial process of woman-becoming – for Deleuze maintains all becomings pass from becoming woman – followed by child-becoming, bunny-becoming, kangaroo-becoming, centipede-becoming, wave-becoming, etc. Or rather, just as Deleuze contends we need to realize that in the spring "the tree greens" rather than saying "the tree has become green" or "the tree is now green" since they both imply a change in the tree's "essence," from the Deleuzian framework's vantage point nightlife enables singularities first to woman, and then to child, to wave, to kangaroo, to centipede, to bunny and so forth.

From the 90s onwards the use of Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts has been especially prevalent in accounts of electronic dance music and rave culture. This entails perceiving and depicting the party or clubnight as a utopian realm with an avowed and manifest ethos of democracy, egalitarianism and community which resists patriarchy and heterosexism and refuses ordinary discourses of fashion and glamour as well as greed and career planning – a nocturnal alternate universe. Here, the focus has been especially on affect and non-significatory forms of cultural and corporeal experience which disrupt and transgress established and oppressive norms of embodied subjectivity (Gilbert, 2006[b]). Moreover, such transgression takes place through the suspension of pleasure (which is a reterritorialization as far as Deleuze & Guattari are concerned) and the use of enjoyment instead. In other words, while pleasure disrupts becoming because it is the means by which the subject re-finds itself in a process of desire that had overwhelmed it, enjoyment brings about a continuous process of desire which lacks nothing and eludes the interruption constituted by the pleasure discharge; for Deleuze courtly love and the masochist assemblage are prime examples. Or perhaps, the ecstatic raver is overcome by Foucault's sense of passion (which is crucial for the ethico-aesthetic project of self-conduct built in his later works) whose surrendering possesses "a quality of pleasure-pain" – yet this is not the same thing as "pleasure in pain" which Lacanian (phallocentric) *jouissance* implies. Passion as

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capabilities who experiences and in turn connects and organizes received impressions into order, a subject of possible experience who creates empirical and *a posteriori* knowledge which comprises an imperfect representation of the *a priori* thing-in-itself. On the other hand, as far as Deleuze's "transcendental empiricism" is concerned there is no subject that connects; instead there are connections which give rise to "larval subjects," that is, points of relative stability resulting from those connections. Deleuze's immanent transcendence is not made up of noumena (which are not directly knowable) accompanied by a limited subject of possible experience (whose activity in turn constitutes the realm of phenomena) but rather of real objects of experience (anonymous, nomadic, impersonal, and pre-individual singularities) which are not directly knowable because they can only be accessed by means of affect and sensation rather than by subjective reasoning. That's why Deleuze wants to replace the mechanism of classical empiricism with the "machinism" of his transcendental empiricism.

such is a state that falls on you out of the blue and takes hold of you so intensely that you yield to it; being yourself no longer makes any sense so passion generates self-loss, it is the "art of not being oneself" (1996: 313). As mentioned before, this loss of self entails temporarily suspending the subjectivity afforded by the pleasure principle but at the same time rejecting the proposed destructive drive that allegedly lies beyond it thus rejecting Lacanian *jouissance* – or at least early Lacan's phallocentric *jouissance*. So with this suspension or bypassing of pleasure on the dancefloor we are referring to something that goes beyond Newtonian atomism as well as Cartesian and Kantian subjectivity; something beyond signification, representation, and discourse hence beyond Foucauldian networks of power-knowledge. Moreover, this nocturnal sensibility is something that goes beyond Bataillean eroticism since it is generated by progressive nightclub politics of sexuality that revolve around de-masculinized and de-heterosexualized identities as well as by the process of desexualization aided by the affects of certain narcotics. For example, while Drew Hemment (1997) has asserted that house is "minor" music in Deleuze & Guattari's sense of the term, commentators such as Tim Jordan (1995), Simon Reynolds (1997 and 1998) and Uli Poschardt (1997) have relied on Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts to designate clubbing as an "immanent" and "rhizomatic" experience. Here, the corporeal experience of dancing is explored through concepts such "assemblages," "desiring machines," and "bodies without organs (BwO)" which challenge and transgress phallocentric and heterosexist norms. As Jeremy Gilbert (2006[b]) points out, the use of such concepts have been compatible with "corporeal feminism" *à la* Grosz (1994) and Braidotti (2002). For Maria Pini (1997) the rave experience is "not sexual but orgasmic" while as far as Reynolds (1997) is concerned rave is a "culture of clitoris envy" because electronic dance music offers the experience of feminine or non-phallic *jouissance* as formulated by Lacan (1999) in has later days. Gilbert suggests by way of Richard Dyer's influential "In Defense of Disco" that the dancefloor can be a positive site where the "phallomorphic" (Irigaray, 1985) assemblage is displaced and a non-phallomorphic experience of corporeality is made possible. He goes on to suggest that a certain experience of clubbing such as the one afforded briefly by disco might be regarded as a "cultural technology which enables an eroticism confined neither to the cock nor to the clit, and in this it holds out the possibility of the dancefloor as a site of liberatory becoming for people of all genders and all sexual orientations." Hence, in Deleuzo-Guattarian terms such nightlife offers the possibility of "poly/a-sexuality" (2006 [b]: 119-20).

On a similar note, it can be suggested that the unique type of difference and repetition that characterizes electronic dance music tracks (gradual melodic variation atop rhythmic constancy) constitutes a form of Deleuzo-Guattarian *ritournelle* which transgresses what techno advocates (or techno fascist/fetishists if you will) deride in rock music as monotonous and constrictive repetition exemplified by the typical intro-verse-chorus-verse-chorus-bridge-verse-chorus-coda procession. Moreover, in our minimal-techno era dance tracks with very little modulation are blessed with the air of subversion as they are upheld against the culture industry standard of verbatim repetition traditionally carried out by the chorus itself; the well-tailored and perfectly replicated refrain is the hook that brings in the money. In fact, Deleuze & Guattari differentiate between such a form of precise musical refrain which they name *rengaine* and subtle yet perpetual modulation brought about by the *ritournelle*. Here it might be worthy to note that Brian Massumi's translation of *ritournelle* as refrain in *A Thousand Plateaus* makes it harder to realize that Deleuze & Guattari have come up with a portmanteau concept which combines the musical notion of ritornello with Nietzsche's eternal return (*retour éternel*). Furthermore, how the rave experience transgresses the Cartesian split and therefore fits the Deleuzian framework is pretty self-evident especially when we think of Deleuze's emphasis on affect and his ultimate aim of eliminating everything that keeps us at a certain distance from our real (virtual) immediate being, i.e. his goal of getting rid of the very notion of traditional self-consciousness, of the self as the mediator of objects, of other selves and of itself. After all, as Hallward (2000) suggests, Deleuze's most general aim is to affirm Creation of Life at a coherence which effectively excludes that of the specific organism, a coherence that is supposed to be achieved ultimately by the BwO. Without doubt nightlife is fertile ground for the BwO, no wonder Deleuze & Guattari describe their concept as "full of gaiety, ecstasy and dance" (2004[b]: 167). Moreover, nocturnal sociality's aptness for such vitalism becomes even more apparent in light of Gilbert's assertion that:

> Deleuze and Guattari's description of the 'rhizome' is arguably the best known description of apolycentric, relatively horizontal set of relations, expressive of the creative potential inherent in sociality as such…we can easily imagine radically democratic modes of interaction which are rhizomatic in character but which do not take the form of market relations and are not limited by the modes of commodity-exchange…The elision of the rhizome with the market is surely one of the traps which Deleuze and Guattari tried to avoid with their more nuanced understanding of the status of the rhizome in the later chapters of *A Thousand Plateaus*; and yet the persistent rhetorical force of their initial valorization surely derives from this powerful insight: the rhizome expresses a certain virtual power of the social, of which the market is only one possible form of actualization (2010: 31).

Indeed, Deleuze's project with Guattari is an attempt to go beyond the humanism and (so-called) liberties of liberal democracy by embracing of a mode of living that can lead to freedoms beyond those enshrined in the *Declaration of the Right of Man and Citizen*: affectability. This also defines the normative stand of their Marxian micro-political project which reinterprets Nietzsche's Dionysian ethics of affirmation (what Deleuze calls "ethics without morality") in light of the positivity of Spinoza's ethical passions: they always favor whatever generates "joyous affect" (Protevi, 2009), i.e. whatever increases the potential power of singularities by enabling them to form new and potentially empowering encounters. That's why "the freedom which Deleuze and Guattari seek is not the freedom of the liberal subject to buy, sell, and vote, but precisely a freedom from the confines of 'individuality' and property: the freedom of 'singularities' (unique elements of experience which do not necessarily coincide with individual human bodies at all); the freedom of flows of affect and materiality which might or might not coincide with flows of population; the freedom to experience the full complexity of human and non-human interactions in the material world" (Gilbert, 2010: 28). Gilbert wisely warns us that "the recognition of this fact is one of the reasons why the collapse of Deleuzian politics into a form of liberalism should be avoided at all costs; though this is clearly the danger which besets Deleuzian philosophy in an era when liberalism remains the default position of academic and journalistic political thought in the West" (ibid: 31).

This danger is indeed great, especially at a time when the century is becoming increasingly Deleuzian – yet not in the sense Foucault had envisioned it in his preface to *Anti-Oedipus*. The problem seems to lie with the fact that the Deleuzo-Guattarian framework's normative preferences correspond well with the set of values which have been recuperated by the post-'68 "permissive society" and lumped under the consumer category of "alternative." In other words, values which are marketably unorthodox, desirably marginal and tamely radical. As a result, current utilizations of their concepts – usually divorced from their crucial ontological fundament and used as mere argumentative metaphors – often carry out an artistic rather than social critique of capitalism as Boltanski & Chiapello (2007) would have it. Unfortunately, this mode of dissent is susceptible to commodification especially because such critique is typically regarded – like one scholarly contributor to Adrian Parr's *Deleuze Dictionary* does – as the basis of a self-transformative micro-politics "of positive individuality and difference, valorizing agency and creative power" (Baugh, 2010: 291). In other words, not only values which have left

the exclusive domain of advertising agencies to enter the daily vocabulary of all sorts of corporations, but also a sensibility that fits exceptionally well the current commandments and jargon of hipsterdom. Indeed, we can talk of a new cult of creativity and pleasure as it seems one of the biggest achievements of the global culture industry has been to recycle the principle of *l'art pour l'art*, thereby convincing a great deal of white, middle-class kids (especially in the Western world) that in our digital epoch being an "artist" or more commonly merely doing "creative work" whilst maintaining a lifestyle that departs from the Weberian work ethic is in itself political. In other words, due to the decline of traditionally leftist ideals and a generalized mistrust in organized political resistance as well as the brutality activists suffer at the hands of "law enforcers" nowadays, art and creative individualism are perceived by many to be the only means of resisting the Establishment. Often, the trope of exodus is utilized to assert that "the empire" can no longer be explicitly fought off; we are told what we can do at best – or at least for now – is to oppose it by partially and/or temporarily eluding it. For example, Scott Lash proposes by way of Guy Debord that in what he calls our "post-hegemonic" epoch the way out is no longer to resist but to drift:

> 'Lines of flight' are the *dérive*...To *dérive* is not exactly to resist. It is to evade. It is an 'exit', not a 'voice' strategy. The *dérive* moves slower than lines of flight. It moves from engagement to engagement. *Dérive* says I don't like your logic: I won't contest in a class-versus-class struggle or through rituals of resistance. Those are voice. Instead *dérive* says: I'll drift. Is dérive at the heart of 21st-century critique? The response to domination through interactivity is the 'interpassivity' of drifting. In the hegemonic order, we challenge power through contesting domination through discursive argument. Or through symbolic struggles. To *dérive* is to do none of the above. It is to slip out" (2007: 67-68).

In other words, since Hardt & Negri's argument is that there is no longer an "outside" to the Empire; strategic opposition is found obsolete which means all that is available is tactics (De Certeau, 1984) which can attack the Empire with equal success at any point. Plus, novel forms of gathering and organization brought about by social media render such tactics of transgression more viable. In turn, this gives rise to theses concerning the positive political implications of the immaterialization of labor, anti-Leninist hopes in the "multitudes" and their "lines of flight," and an arguably overoptimistic belief that "rhizomatically" generated, spontaneous revolt will somehow possess the magical potion to transform society and maintain it thereafter without resorting at all to hierarchy. What all this leads to, as Gilbert (2008[b]) critically points out, is the increasingly popular conviction that we no longer have to worry about whether our actions have any political efficacy. Neither do we have to worry about the question of whether we are

connecting at all with the people outside of our artistic subcultures since every action we take is already making a successful direct hit againt the very heart of the Empire! How very convenient…[14]

Either way, such exodus becomes a growing possibility in a place like Berlin where neo-bohemianism or hipsterdom is increasingly becoming a sustainable and largely acceptable lifestyle choice thanks to developments such as the success of post-'68 identity politics, the growth of creative industries, the perseverence of Keynesianism (the German welfare state has been under attack for a while now but it is still functional and crucial for Berlin's creative workforce) and the arrival of neoliberal models of governance aiming to foster cultural entrepreneurialism, increased mobility and employability (cheap transportation and chic budget accommodation as well as supranational/First World privileges concerning visa/work-permit exemption) and technological innovations resulting in increased communicability and networking. It's not so hard to envision how at some level Deleuzian (or for that matter Certeauian) concepts are being utilized to justify a 24-hour party lifestyle that mixes creative immaterial/affective labor with play: BwO for drug ridden techno events ("minor music"); rhizomatic coming into being for spontaneous and ad hoc free-parties; nomadology for the globe-trotting, Easyjet-set lifestyle of gigs, clubnights, festivals, biennials, photo shoots, fashion shows, exhibition openings, artist-in-residency programs and culturepreneurial travels; Certeauian tactical (as opposed to strategic) resistance for corporate sponsorships, art grants, research funds, etc. Moreover, cynical escapism puts on the mask of capitalist realism in order to recuperate Deleuze's contempt for psychoanalytical desire and fantasy which fuel consumerist hedonism; is this not increasingly the dictum of the neo-bohemian lifestyle aiming at self-transformation rather than changing the society: "The world will never change so instead of political activism I should strive to self-fashion my own libertarian life-world and therein maximize my own pleasure and creativity without caring extensively about inconsistency or

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[14] Gilbert goes on to remind us that to advocate such a post-hegemonic or non-hegemonic conception of politics as Lash does is "to imply that relations of influence never occur between different elements in a political process (or that they should not). In practice, advocates of such a 'posthegemonic' or non-hegemonic position can only logically do so on condition that they regard it as matter of complete indifference whether anyone, anywhere, ever agrees with them or not. If such writers are confi dent that they are never going to suffer because someone somewhere does not agree with them (closing the department that they think should be kept open, refusing to collect the household refuse that they think should be collected, sending them to prison for an act that they do not think should be illegal, etc.), then so be it. Otherwise, this is nonsense" (2008[b]: 220).

about the predicaments that affect those who exist outside my immediate (and often privileged) circle of *Lebenskünstler* friends?" Here, the alleged micro-politics of drinking fair-trade coffee, eating free-range eggs, smoking organic tobacco, using eco-friendly detergent and wearing vintage clothes gets in the way of a macro-politics of collective organization and social transformation. As the "new spirit of capitalism" now manages to channel the anti-consumerist sentiment into the commodity and the commodity experience which allows for "alternative" consumption (I perform my ethico-political duty as a left-leaning individual through my consumption and in turn am allowed to feel good about myself), perhaps the quintessence of this schizophrenic Hegelianism (the consumerist good simultaneously contains its anti-thesis) is the environment-friendly (organic) cotton satchel slung around the shoulder of many a hipster who shuns the pollutive nylon bags when he goes shopping in Prenzlauerberg where the trendy stores introduce their seasonal sale with the following slogan: "shop your pain away."

Nevertheless, the fantasy of bliss and distinction commodities propose in our culturalized economy and economized culture is not that different from what was on offer when Lefebvre and subsequently the Situationists wrote their attacks on everyday consumerism as such. In some sense, spectacularization remains the same; on some subconscious level both old and new types of commodities promise some sort of self-satisfaction and increased glamour or attractiveness by way of signifying difference and Bourdieuian distinction (Baudrillard's sign-value, 1981) but the explicit message is changing: what was on offer before was fulfillment and meaning in an otherwise dubious world; your material possessions were presented as the only means by which you could show to yourself and to others that your toils were rewarded and your life had a purpose whereas what's increasingly being offered by today's politically correct and eco-friendly products is the satisfaction of ethical self-righteousness. The irony that those who buy into these schemes are often those privilegedly nomadic, art-school graduate members of the 21st century workforce who seem to be well-versed in the works of Debord, Deleuze & co. would surely make our "radical" philosophers turn in their graves. Indeed, the current hipness of critical theory among Berlin's creative scenesters is symptomized by the fact that in September 2010 the shop display of Pro Qm (a trendy and fairly posh bookstore specialized in art publications) in the affluent district of Mitte contained these six volumes: *Ontomacht*, a recently published collection of essays and interviews by Brian Massumi, the Invisible Committee's *The Coming Insurrection*, Alain Badiou's *The Communist Hypothesis*, Merlin Coverley's introductory book on the

Situationist practice of psychogeography, Christoph Twickel's book on urban gentrification (*Gentrifidingsbums: Oder eine Stadt für Alle*) and the *Restless Cities Reader* edited by Matthew Beaumont and Gregory Dart. The store had just run out of Jacques Ranciere's *The Future of the Image* so he wasn't able to take his place among his equally fashionable colleagues behind the display window (Image 1).

If we are to talk of (nocturnal) Deleuzian politics – and as far as commentators like Hallward (2006) are concerned this is an oxymoronic notion in the first place – we can list among its great potential strengths "the capacity to offer a robust alternative to liberalism in the pursuit of a philosophical program which is nonetheless libertarian in character, and the ability to express such an alternative in terms which are amenable to a radically collectivist and ecological approach which makes no concession to romanticism or organicism" (Gilbert, 2010: 31). We must note here that these elements gain their strength from Deleuze's as well as Guattari's unfaltering insistence on their unique vision of ontology which at the same time is arguably their ghastly curse. Although some argue their monistic ontology does not allow for politics from the beginning, in the eyes of others it is their reliance on ontology that gives their philosophical project political credibility.[15] Nevertheless, it is also the fundamental interdependence of their

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[15] Obviously, Hallward belongs to the first camp. He argues Deleuze's commitment to writing a philosophy without limits or mediation (i.e. the eternal creation of difference which is indifferent to differed terms) and the consequent dependence of the actual upon the virtual (the pure redundancy of the actual, if you will) leads to his ultimate incoherence. He goes further to suggest that Deleuze's relentless ontological insistence on the value of the singular and the primacy of virtual makes it impossible to conceive of collective action or politics. Probably Žižek (2004) is the most outspoken among these critics. He even claims Deleuze's political turn (i.e. his work with Guattari) is an anomaly in his oeuvre since the ontological emphasis on "static genesis" found in his earlier monographs and later cinema books indicates an elitist intellectual who is indifferent toward politics. Moreover, this "real" Deleuze is accused of being incompatible with his "guattarized" politics of becoming based on "dynamic genesis." Žižek suggests as far as the pre-Guattari Deleuze is concerned, one always already exists as a BwO in the virtual and transcendent field of production located *beneath* the actual. Yet Deleuze with Guattari suggests one should make oneself a BwO, thereby reconnecting with the elusive and fugitive virtual that exists *beside* the actual. The inconsistency seems to be that either the virtual generates the actual so we are constantly becoming and what we perceive to be fascism is in fact a neutral result which need not be opposed, or the virtual paradoxically restricts itself by creating the fascism of the actual – desire coagulates into power – so we are constantly forced to be and to transgress this we must find ways of becoming. Similarly, Frederic Jameson (1999) has observed, Deleuze's drive towards his unconditional monism is paradoxically the source of his latter dualisms: if everything is desire and there is nothing outside desire then this would mean fascism, domination and subjugation, instrumental rationality, bureaucracy, capitalism, the State, in short everything Deleuze was fighting against is constituted by desire as well – and this is something Deleuze & Guattari do not contest, they simply say we need to look at how this negative desiring comes about, how it is made possible. Badiou (2003) also takes issue with Deleuze's monism (univocity) to promote his own "ontology of the multiple" against the former's "ontology of the One." The second camp is significantly larger as there are numerous Deleuzian commentators and academics. Probably, Hardt & Negri who combine schizoanalysis with Marxist autonomism and Lazzarato who tries to locate

politics and ontology that makes their philosophy susceptible to recuperation; when viewed independently of their ontological ground Deleuzo-Guattarian political concepts can be easily incorporated into the above-mentioned consumerist "alternative lifestyle" sensibility. Indeed, the danger is that "Deleuzo-Guattarianism" seems to work well as a normative and arguably Eurocentric (see Spivak [1988]) manual which, given our present privileges and conditions of existence, tells us what constrains us and what we should be critical of, provides us with a non-hierarchic model concerning how we could practice our criticality, and advises us on how to think differently and what we might do to start living more meaningfully. Perhaps that's why Deleuze himself has drawn parallels between his own project and later Foucault's quasi-manual concerning the techniques of the self and ethico-aesthetics as such. But as soon as Deleuze & Guattari's normative prescriptions start to tell us – and here's the crucial detail – *by way of ontology* why we should pay heed to them and how this ontological fundament has shaped human history, we sail into troublesome waters. True, their philosophy is much more materialist compared to say, Hegel's mystical idealism and ontological absolutism – and as Foucault suggests their entire epoch struggled whether through logic or epistemology, or through Marx or Nietzsche to disengage itself from Hegel – but unlike Marx' humanist focus on immanence (which divorces Hegelian dialectics from their idealist roots) their account of history and socio-cultural life is still grounded on an all-encompassing transcendence-immanence dichotomy.[16]

the subversive political implications of the immaterialization of labor are probably the first names to come to mind. Nevertheless, the emphasis on Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology is perhaps not as crucial for them as it is for Colebrook, Braidotti and Thoburn who find Deleuze's "passive" vitalist ontology especially compatible with libertarian, everyday interventions and transgressions which in their option constitute minoritarian micro-politics.

[16] Of course, this is a debatable point. The likes of Hallward, Badiou and Žižek suggest Deleuze's virtual/plane of consistency/field of immanence is itself a transcendent realm in the strict philosophical sense of the term; it describes the *a priori* conditions of possibility of our experience of constituted reality. Although Deleuze himself writes repeatedly of a real transcendent field, he always shies away from using transcendence in the classical sense of the term to define this field since he wants to elude the danger of opposing the virtual and actual as two categorically distinct domains of being. Instead, he maintains what the virtual amounts to is an *immanent transcendence* as it is marked by becoming rather than being. Especially after his collaboration with Guattari, Deleuze has written explicitly about the *antagonism* between the virtual and the actual but many scholarly interpreters (e.g. Boundas, 2010 and Williams, 2010) insist that although the actual and virtual are mutually exclusive, they are also *interdependent*; hence, they do not enter into a relation of transcendence. Similarly, Toscano (2006) insists that Deleuze's virtual is not a causal factor for the actual; the former only constitutes the structure which provides the latter with sufficient reason for actuality. The disjunction of cause and genesis, the crucial dissymmetry between the structure and its incarnations, the asymmetry whereby ontogenesis takes place from pre-individual virtuality to individuated actuality underlines the fact that Deleuzian "static genesis" comprises not the active *creation* of the actual by the virtual but rather a passive *passage* from one kind of multiplicity to another, namely from the bearer of internal difference to the denumerable and classifiable multiplicity of actual beings. Nevertheless, by conceptualizing sense as a "doubling up" and introducing the "quasi-cause" Deleuze

In fact, if we deliberately overlook the fact that Deleuze & Guattari are formulating a philosophy about the nature of being (which suggests our *actual* individuality is a sham as we are in a constant state of *virtual* becoming with which we ought to reconnect) and assume instead that they are writing a self-help guide about how to lead a more "creative" and "fulfilling" existence, i.e. if we were to replace phrases like "the virtual/plane of consistency/field of immanence is…" with something along the lines of "what is good/important/meaningful in life is…" many of their sentences would still make sense. Indeed, as mentioned above such a lifestyle opposing the teleology of traditional as well as corporate careerism marked by rigidity, routine, stable identity, constant money grubbing, dictates of adult life (family, subsistence, discipline, hard/boring work) and so on appeals to many "quirky" middle- and upper-class youths from around the (Western) world who are into "art & culture" and who want to have "rhizomatic" outbursts of creativity whilst living life on their own terms. The proponents of such an "alternative" mode of adulthood want to seize the day; instead of being forced to constantly care about the future or be told what to do or how to live, they want to have fluid, globally mobile lives and "nomadic" lifestyles which must be rescued from the threat of precarity. Given such wishes and the tendency to disavow the ontological fundaments of Deleuze's framework, his political project is susceptible to being reduced to a statement like "the good life is that of the bohemian artist or the beatnik poet" – after all *On the Road* is a hipster favorite. In fact, *On the Road* passport cases imitating the classic Penguin paperback cover are up for grabs in Berlin's hip bric-a-brac stores and gift shops for around €20. I guess as long as you are a First World national the emblem on your passport's cover doesn't make much of a difference during your frequent travels, so there's no harm in covering it.

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manages in his earlier works to come up with what Toscano deems a disjunctive synthesis of a non-causal genesis and a non-genetic causality, thereby ensuring that the virtual as transcendental field remains the source of the actual. In his later collaborations with Guattari, however, Deleuze generalizes the "ontology of anomalous individuation in such a way as to have done with any transcendent determination or sufficiency whatsoever" (Toscano, 2006: 178). I think it's fair to argue that in the "guattarized" texts, this issue of transcendent determination remains not completely resolved: in a rather mind-boggling chicken or egg scenario, desire's virtual plane of consistence is at once given so desire is the underlying vital force and not given so it must be constructed, i.e. actualized by way of virtualization: "Is the plane of consistence something very strange? We would have to say simultaneously: 'You've got it already, you do not feel desire without its being already there, without its being mapped out at the same time as your desire,' but also: 'You haven't got it, and you don't desire it if you can't manage to construct it, if you don't know how to, by finding your places, your assemblages, your particles and your fluxes.' We would have to say simultaneously: 'It is created all alone, but know how to see it,' and also: 'You have to create it, know how to create it, take the right directions at your risk or peril' " (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006: 67).

Without disregarding the original hipster subculture's transgressions in the 40s and the Beat Generation's subversiveness for its times as well as its high literary value, as long as the necessary structural amendments are missing which will render such an unconventional mode of adulthood feasible in the long run, beatnik poets and bohemian artists will continue to be perceived and promoted as political figures. Hence, the increasingly popular and politically charged notion of "the precariat." Without doubt, the casualization of labor – both mental and manual – is a very serious threat and a very real problem which perpetuates exploitation. But as far as Berlin's creative economy is concerned, neo-bohemian individualism's fight against precarity unfortunately comprises not much more than a struggle to incorporate a relatively tame, libertarian lifestyle blessed with the appearance of subversion and subculture into the social democratic welfare state model which is under attack by neoliberalism. In other words, it is largely due to neoliberalism's current prevalence that the political left sees in such self-interested attempts to award income-and-subsistence-security to artsy-skinny-metrosexual-guys and manic-pixie-dream-girls comprising the libertarian, post-industrial petite bourgeoisie an ally fighting a common enemy. Nevertheless, given its middle-class nature and its mistrust in traditionally leftist ideals and categories, the creative precariat typically distances itself from the proletariat to whom it owes part of its name. That's why it seems more appropriate to use another portmanteau word, namely the composite of hipster and bourgeoisie, to refer to this "neo-tribe" as the *hipoisie*. Obviously, one mustn't fall prey to reductionism and assume that this is a homogenous category which must be unequivocally resented since it sits at the top of the socio-cultural hierarchy and all of its members are, by definition, complacent, complicit and better off than regular, temporary or unemployed workers belonging to traditional industries. The divisions that neoliberal policies have created in society also run through the new, liberal professions so that a certain portion of creative workers are surely poorer than proletarians and they live in an even greater state of precarity. So the aim here is not to overlook or belittle the amount of victimization that creative work entails. Rather, it is to draw attention to the fact that unfortunately such victimization doesn't usually get translated into class-consciousness and Marxist macro-politics based on class-struggle.

Within this context, that such an opponent of desire engineering and consumerism as Deleuze has ended up among the pet philosophers of this *hipeois* sensibility is quite depressing. During the time when Deleuze was analyzing the world and asking for a politics of lightness

rooted in heaviness, the socio-cultural environment suggested that most individuals would choose or strive to remain the square company man rather than wish to become the creative schizo-nomad. In our freelance era when flexible individuality, innovation and mobility are imperative this no longer seems to be the case. That's why such "radical" philosophical concepts can now be more easily reappropriated to present and justify neo-bohemian escapism and hedonism as something that is deeply subversive, thereby awarding it the necessary political significance and legitimacy. Through the recuperation of critical theory the hipness of being feather-light is made to appear perfectly in order. Moreover, despite Deleuze & Guattari's prescription to maintain restraint and deterritorialize (become a BwO) only in doses, [17] and in spite of their conviction about the need to replace pleasure with enjoyment; their concepts are being utilized pragmatically as part of a pseudo-Dionysianism devoid of Nietzsche's tragic *amor fati* to propagate the hedonistic urge to let go of all restraint as well as to dictate a "new petit bourgeois morality of pleasure as duty" (Bourdieu, 1984). In short, Deleuze & Guattari are paradoxically made to serve the cult of obligatory *jouissance*. The pitfall then is buying into this bastardized Feel-Good Deleuzianism that over-glorifies the micro-politics of nocturnal transgression whilst presenting the street-fashion blogger who frequents the nightly events as heroic immaterial laborer and casualty of capitalist precarity. It is true that at least in Western liberal "democratic" societies hedonistic neo-tribalism and its culture of sensation can be thought of as a form of subtle resistance, something which doesn't create a giant stir but expresses itself in a thousand little ironies, versatilities and revolts in the everyday. But the question concerning the political significance and implications of this phenomenon remains, especially if we are to

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[17] Against the libertarian temptation of hedonistic self-loss, Deleuze & Guattari call for an "art of caution" that requires mastering the self-conduct of eluding falling into the void of too-sudden de-stratification which they claim is always a given risk (especially with drug addiction) as well as distinguishing the BwOs that comply with the virtual field of immanence/plane of consistency from their cancerous and totalitarian as well as suicidal and demented doubles. This implies the "test of desire" because "the plane of consistency is not simply that which constitutes the sum of all BwOs. There are things it rejects; the BwO chooses, as a function of the abstract machine that draws it. Even within a BwO (the masochist body, the drugged body, etc.) we must distinguish what can be composed on the plane and what cannot. There is a fascist use of drugs, or a suicidal use, but is there also a possible use that would be in conformity with the plane of consistence (2004[b]: 183)?" That's why you have to lose yourself in doses and retain "enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn; and you have to keep small supplies of signifiance and subjectivation, if only to turn them against their own systems when the circumstances demand it, when things, person, even situations, force you to; and you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantity to enable you to respond to dominant reality. Mimic the strata. You don't reach the BwO, and its plane of consistency, by wildly destratifying" (ibid: 178).

talk not solely of micro-politics of transgression but also of macro-politics of social transformation.

And this is also related to the experience of intoxication addressed above. As this account of the significance of lived-experience began with Walter Benjamin, let us now return to him before we draw the curtain. Accompanying Benjamin's high regard for *Erlebnis* is his penchant for intoxicating his senses both figuratively and literally. On the one hand, he falls under the spell of the aestheticized and fetishized world of commodities as the cultural critic who has put on the suit of the *flâneur*; on the other hand, he experiments with hashish and opium as the anthropologist who has put on the robe of the mystic. In his essay on Surrealism he writes intoxication, whether narcotic or aesthetic, "loosens individuality like a bad tooth. This loosening of the self by intoxication is, at the same time, precisely the fruitful, living experience" that allows the critic "to step outside the domain of intoxication" (1985: 227). What Benjamin means by this is that the philosophical immersion afforded by either urban phantasmagorias or narcotics shall not be merely a symbolist derangement of the senses, but a transformation of reason indicating a transformation of the traditional logic of non-contradiction and the traditional principle of stable identity. He goes on to speak of the dialectical nature of intoxication, of a disciplined, illuminated intoxication conducting to a deepened sobriety, at once concentrated and expansive. While speaking of such a high, Benjamin uses the word *rausch,* a Dionysian notion of inebriated knowledge and creativity which he borrows from Nietzsche. *Rausch* is the intoxicated clarification of the mind. Benjamin refers to this state as a "profane illumination," an almost childlike state of waking dream. It signifies a longing to return to a former state of infantile innocence when it was possible for us to believe that the moon, rather than being fixed in the sky, was following us as we lay at the backseat of a car in motion and watched the heavens out of the rear window. In this sense, intoxication is utilized to temporarily unlearn the facts and duties which sustain our adult lucidity; to replace common logic with dream logic. Yet, what is crucial for Benjamin is that this must be a materialistic magic, a secular sacredness, an illuminated intoxication. He is very aware of the danger of over-romanticization and mystification through which various avant-garde movements would later on be recuperated by the culture industry and tells us the creative overcoming of a romanticized notion of illumination certainly does not lie in narcotics but in a materialistic, anthropological inspiration to which hashish, opium, alcohol, or whatever else can give only an introductory lesson. Benjamin then

goes on to ask about the conditions under which such liberated experience can become the basis for political liberation. "To win the energies of intoxication for the revolution' – in other words, poetic politics?" he asks and answers, "we have tried that beverage. Anything, rather than that!" He argues both right and left wing politics emanate a false optimism adorned by poetic metaphors. In the face of such mediocre and disguised conservatism he urges us to remain pessimistic all along the line. "Where are the conditions for revolution," he asks, "in the changing of attitudes or of external circumstances?" It must be not one or the other, but both. Then, if the task of the intelligentsia is to not only challenge and alter bourgeois attitudes and discourses but also to make contact with the proletarian masses; this contact, Benjamin claims, can only be made by expelling metaphor from politics and discovering in political action a sphere reserved one hundred percent for dialectical images; an image sphere to which we are initiated by the profane illumination of intoxication (1985: 237-239).

In other words, if we take Benjamin's advice, the lived-experience of nocturnal trangession must not be regarded as an end in itself but instead as a means to collective political action; one must somehow learn from one's nocturnal deterritorializations (which are strategic since each line of flight ends up in a reterritorialization) to somehow build a collective praxis of concretely undoing daytime's macro-political injustices and atrocities. In short, to be of true political value the tactics of nocturnal transgression must join a broader strategical project of resistance. Whether this is at all possible, and more specifically, whether – as stated above – the Deleuzian framework is suitable for going beyond the micro-politics of self-emancipation to the macro-politics of social-transformation is a valid question on its own; a question which I do take seriously but which this thesis does not try to answer.[18] The argument here is that in a city like Berlin where art, culture and hedonism are highly cherished, promoted and tolerated; and given the current conditions of neoliberal capitalism (the immaterialization of labor, trust in the creative economy and the capital of the "creative class," post-'68 "alternative" lifestyle sensibility which deems creativity itself as political, privileges concerning welfare, mobility, employability and networking, etc.) the city's party culture endorses a middle-class lifestyle that enables this praxis of self-loss *only as an end in itself*; moreover it justifies this position by suggesting hedonism as such is subversive in the micro-political sense of the term. Of course,

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[18] For an exploration of this question see Thoburn (2003), Buchanan and Thoburn eds. (2008), Braidotti (2010) and Gilbert (2010).

within the context of Berlin's nightlife it's not hard to see how a Deleuzian account of nocturnal epiphany is fit for detecting the micro-politics of subversion: as stated before, not only does it transgress Cartesian/Kantian subjectivity and its humanist, patriarchic ethics as well as Newtonian atomism and consequently the instrumental rationality and calculation logic that sustains capitalism (e.g. the economization of the everyday that imposes the principle of equivalence and abstract thinking about labor which permits commodity-exchange, exploitative profit/surplus extraction, etc.) it is also minoritarian thus suitable for identity politics as the emancipatory project of postmodernity is being carried out by modernity's Others.[19] But the

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[19] Nevertheless, it is also crucial to see that the reduction of Deleuze's ethico-aestethic project to the proliferation and success of post-'68 identity politics is itself problematic since as far as Deleuze is concerned, minoritarian lines of flight must not be conflated with minority politics; *minor is not the same thing as minority*. Deleuze & Guattari are adamant that "we must distinguish between the majoritarian as a constant and homogenous system; minorities as subsystems; and the minoritarian as a potential, creative and created, becoming. (2004[b]: 117). In other words, the minor is not a minority subgroup such as homosexuals or environmentalists. Rather, it is a process that pertains to everyone: "everybody is caught, in one way or another, in a minority becoming that would lead them into unknown paths if they opted to follow it through" (Deleuze 1995: 173). The minor is seen in the movement of groups, in their variations, mutations and differences. It has no membership, coherence or consitutency of identity in itself. In fact, it is not minor/molecular but major/molar politics that are premised on identity. So while the majoritarian politics of liberal democracy based on humanist ideals are concerned with representing human individuals, Delueze maintains the true concern of politics must be molecular, i.e. the creation of assemblages made up of human and non-human entities. In other words, in Deleuze's opinion progressive politics must not be concerned with representation, identity and power (*pouvoir*) but rather with interpretation and force (*puissance*) since his materialism declares pre-individiual, virtual singularities (not subjects and objects) do not have a primary form prior to interpretation/arrangement; they are always constituted in particular, varied and mutable relations of force. The world (as seen by Deleuze through the lens of Spinoza and Nietzsche) is an ever-changing and intricately related, monstrous collection of forces and arrangements that is always constituting modes of existence whilst simultenously destroying them. In other words, this vitalist reality that aligns the real with the virtual is at base a primary flux of matter without form or constant while actual things are always a temporary product of a channeling of this flux in assemblages or arrangements. What this indicates is that seemingly progressive minority politics under liberal democracy are in fact *reterritorialized deterritorializations* since they are generated when the lines of flight get captured as movement gets frozen into identity. Of course, postmodern identities are not homogenous, perfectly stable or without contradicting constituents. Nevertheless, they must be treated as constants in order to be representable hence suitable for liberal democracy. Or rather, just as capitalism as an immanent system co-opts the positivity of Deleuzian desire in order to overcome its own fundamental contraditctions and limitations as the complexity and heterogeneity inherent to life is reduced to a single system of exchange since we take one fixed territory, i.e. the unit of capital and imagine all possible movements or deterritorializations as measured through it; the "anything goes" attitude of postmodernity coagulates the eternal recurrence of virtual variation into constant, actual flow so that it "no longer matters what circulates – money, goods, information, even the feel-good messages of environmentalism, feminism, multiculturalism and community – as long as there is constant exchange" (Colebrook, 2002: 65). To be fair, misreading Deleuze & Guattari, thereby mistaking minoritarian politics of flux for minority politics of flow is understandable since the duo themselves strive to locate minoritarian processes and tendencies within the subsystem of minorities: "minorities, of course, are objectively definable states, states of language, ethnicity, or sex with their own ghetto territorialities, but they must also be thought as seeds, crystals of becoming whose value is to trigger uncontrollable movements and deterritorializations of the mean or majority" (2004[b]: 117).

crucial thing to see is that these micro-transgressions can mostly occur because the post-'68 liberal "democratic" environment that is prevalent in Berlin permits them in the first place. In an environment of war, terror, disease, famine, extreme poverty, etc. such hedonism is not only non-existent most of the time, but also it has almost no real political implications. And of course, this points towards the differences between the First World and the Global South, hence to the pitfall of Eurocentricism.[20]

Yes, the political implications and significance of desire finding various hedonistic outlets and giving rise to a sense of transgressive consumption and performativity which leads to alternative subjectivity – or rather alternatives to traditional, unitary-rational subjectivity – and individual emancipation must not be exaggerated. After all, when the escapist privilege of excessive hedonism becomes a widespread sensibility that characterizes a whole city (as it appears to characterize Berlin nowadays), many socio-political problems gradually rise to the surface. Moreover, despite the hope in transgressive lived-experiences of sociality indicating self-transformative encounters with alterity, the individual's exposure to the outside world might just as well lead to the embracement of solitude in the midst of a crowd. "Aloneness within a congested territory, boredom in the face of constant stimulation, separation in the face of togetherness, frustration in the pursuit of satisfactions, typically seeming as negative symptoms of privation, come to appear at night as the definitive manner of being exposing being with and for oneself, the problem of intimacy with oneself as an unanswerable question that must nevertheless be continuously asked" (Blum, 2003: 160). In other words, although the night offers the possibility to transgress the blasé attitude Simmel (1950) associates with urban atomization

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[20] It is true that there are numerous parallels – or indeed a close kinship – between Deleuze's philosophy and the anti-humanism of social and cultural critics within a Western poststructuralist perspective as well as the cosmopolitan neo-humanism of contemporary race, post-colonial or non-Western critics. Nevertheless, at times one can't help cynically pointing out that such feel-good mantras as: "an affirmative ethics for a non-unitary subject proposes an enlarged sense of inter-connection between self and others, including the non-human or 'earth' others. This practice of relating to others requires and is enhanced by the rejection of self-centered individualism. It implies a new way of combining self-interests with the well being of an enlarged sense of community, which includes one's territorial or inhuman, i.e. environmental inter-connections. It is an eco-philosophy of multiple belongings for subjects constituted in and by multiplicity that stands in open disagreement with dominant Kantian morality and its feminist components "(Braidotti, 2010: 47) are not necessarily derived from Deleuze's theories but instead elegantly superimposed on the "guattarized"Deleuzian edifice by the well-meaning and left-leaning First World scholar in order to attach political significance to and intellectually justify her internalized ethical preferences (contra humanist individualism) the incidence of which cannot be properly understood without taking into consideration the history of libertarian political movements in Western Europe and the concrete gains they have achieved during the second half of the 20th century.

and anonymity, especially in a city like Berlin where one is constantly bombarded by the spectacle of "art and creativity" as well as confronted by a growing clan of fashion-conscious and well-groomed "figures of beauty who oppress us" as Leonard Cohen once put it, sometimes it is soothing if not transgressive to do the opposite, that is, to appropriate the blasé attitude in order to be able to pay no heed to the spectacle of hipness.

Five: Nocturnal Eventfulness

The winters in Prussia are harsh; Berlin's streets become frosty, deserted and perhaps even a bit inhospitable. Sometimes being out at night becomes a drudgery, one just wants to drop everything and return to the comfort and safety of one's home. But that's not so easy because the night is highly seductive; in fact it entails more than one type of seduction: the seduction of being seduced is accompanied by the seduction of the thrill of playing the game of seduction as well as the seduction of the affirmation resulting from succeeding to seduce someone. It's hard to resist the night because it is cunning, and after all it deserves to be experienced. Unfamiliar and unknown incidences exist side by side in the big city at night with those that have already been tried and tested. Similarly, fascinating and intriguing experiences may be hiding just behind banal and boring ones, while attractive and arousing encounters might be just inches away from those that are irritating and off-putting. That's why journeying through the urban night requires trespassing some borders and transgressing oneself; one has to put one's guard down and open oneself up to the unknown and the unexpected, one has to let go of one's sense of certainty and take in the stimuli. The night contains many exotic things to be discovered, and there are also things that need to be uncovered. But one has to learn how to find and see them first, that is, one needs to master the art of deliberately alienating oneself from everyday norms and identities. This entails experiencing first-hand the strangeness of strangers and of their life-worlds whilst exploring untypical or unfamiliar facets of one's own personality triggered by those very encounters and situations. Our apparently singular identity is revealed to be a composite as we discover our various personas. Nighttime offers urban dwellers a stage on which they can try out different roles which they are mostly not able or allowed to during the day. And this is not only limited to the ecstatic dancefloor fraternity integral to the clubbing experience, one also gets to meet all sorts of "crazy" types in pubs and bars, on public transport or out in the streets. It is this

exposure to alterity and this pressure into intimacy that pose a challenge to our sense of stable selfhood as well as to our disavowed privileges and prejudices.

The night is one of the oldest metaphors for death in occidental culture. Sleep and death are dubbed the children of the night. In numerous allegorical artworks human beings come from the darkness of night, are born into daylight, and return to the darkness from whence they had arrived when they die. Yet the night in the big city doesn't recall death. On the contrary, it recalls life; or to be more precise, it recalls a different, alternative, more satisfying and pleasant life. Many people tired from and frustrated with the routine of work go out at night to remind themselves that they are indeed alive. As Sloterdijk (1994) puts it, the darkness of nighttime is an existential challenge for meaning and fulfillment as it exposes and questions the traditional cultural logic that has equated Being solely with being-in-daylight. The leisure and revelry of nighttime allows one to think about and negotiate the terms of one's life, to get to know oneself, or rather to get to know another, more preferable version of oneself not defined primarily by one's career or everyday identity with all the monotony and alienation attached to them. Daytime's rigid structures and borders loosen up, the transgressiveness of the night is rooted in the fact that it exists as a realm for temporary wish fulfillment; people are enabled and empowered to act and live as they would have done had they not been constrained by the dictates of adulthood, the necessities of life or sometimes even the obligations of civilization. The night is essentially a time and space for self-exploration and self-realization as well as for making a public appearance, for seeing and being seen (or rather for reciprocal self-exhibiting); in that respect it is both introverted as well as extroverted. Moreover, it is marked by the search for physical affection and/or love; it is filled with the hope of and faith in finding external affirmation or at least being positively surprised. The night carries with it the perceived possibility of a better, much longed for life be it one in which one thinks of oneself as liberated or one in which one no longer feels lonely as he or she finally has a lover or at least a sex partner. Here, the aspect of sociality and conviviality is crucial; a big motive for going out at night is being exposed to other people thereby temporarily eluding the eternal curse of being stuck with ourselves and getting away at least for a while from the ennui of our own life story and the tedium of our own beliefs, ideas, troubles and sorrows, which seem hackneyed if not insufferable only (or hopefully) because they are with us all the time. For many, the night offers the possibility of momentary relief and escape. This comes in the shape of anesthetization via

intoxication, aestheticization and optimism resulting from inebriation (everything seems better), losing oneself in bodily motion and/or intimacy (typically dance and sex), or diverting one's own attention from oneself towards someone else during conversation – a good night out includes a combination of these analgesics. In the final scenario, conversation (or more likely a soliloquy) offers the one who is at the center of attention the additional relief of pouring his/her heart out along with the satisfaction of being listened to and the affirmation of being taken seriously. Besides the fact that we all crave sympathy, this phenomenon also suggests that for those with high self-esteem and self-regard, a nocturnal audience offers not necessarily the delight of escaping from oneself provisionally but on the contrary the pleasure of asserting oneself, and feeling good about and because of it. Or at least, I guess it is safe to say that a memorable night out includes at least one or preferably both of these elements, that is, both flight from oneself and from reality as well as the assertion of one's will and the affirmation of one's being. But this has to be unpacked further; it's not enough if the night is limited to being either an escape route or a pathway leading to uncritical self-satisfaction. It can only be memorably subversive hence indispensible if it facilitates us to rediscover and like ourselves by way of first losing ourselves among friends or likeminded strangers. The much lusted after eventfulness of the night is all about the loss of stability and selfhood, about learning to lose our way and making our familiar notions strange, about returning to ourselves at the end and recovering the basics and fundamentals by exposing and transcending the incidence of routine and productivity, of the day itself, as an event in the world. The transgression that the night offers passes from temporarily becoming other; as argued above the sunset brings about an awakening to an inherent otherness. This has a thrilling element of play, excitement, adventure, and even bravery; a fulfilling and memorable night-out stands out as a Nietzschean challenge: can you dare to become who you really are? Nocturnal self-rediscovery follows the path of self-distantiation by way of immersion. We need to surrender ourselves, cherish our affectability; indeed we need to abandon ourselves to our affectivity. At the end it boils down to external versus self-affirmation (or joyous affirmation as Deleuze would have it), to something akin to sovereignty *à la* Bataille with his penchant for non-knowledge, laughter, inner-experience, and ecstasy.[21] The conviction here as

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[21] Nevertheless, while both Bataille and Deleuze & Foucault draw heavily on Nietzsche and advocate the Dionysianism of ecstatic self-loss, the former upholds immersion in fantasy and eroticism leading to transgressive violence whereas the latter want to suspend fantasy and eroticism thereby achieving non-fascism which may become aggressive but never violent. As Deleuze and Foucault claim fantasy as such is rooted in the discursive

Braidotti (2010) suggests, is that contrary to the Hegelian tradition (which is also strong in psychoanalysis) alterity is not a structural limit. Neither is it the permanent nexus of a constant struggle for power as early Foucault is commonly perceived to suggest. It is rather the condition of expression of positive, i.e. non-reactive alternatives. The other is a threshold of transformative encounters. Here, the formation of the subject is disengaged from the logic of negation and calculation as subjectivity is attached to affirmative otherness, which is reminiscent of Bakhtin's (1984) carnivalesque dialogism, in order to uphold multiplicity and generate the heterogeneity of subjectless individuation, to transgress the homogenizing norm of signification that discursively defines desire and sexuality, fabricates fantasy and equates the subject with unitary rationality, consciousness, as well as moral and cognitive universalism. Within this context, affirmation is located in the exteriority, in the at times cruel, messy, outsideness of Life itself.[22]

Nevertheless, one must only lose oneself only temporarily, that's why this transgressive relation to knowledge and power through the relation to others via the relation to self is strategic. Deleuze writes: "we have to manage to fold the line and establish an endurable zone in which to install ourselves, confront things, take hold, breathe – in short to think. Bending the line so we manage to live upon it, with it: a matter of life and death" (1995: 111). It is this fold, this endurable zone of subjectivation which Deleuze has first introduced in his book an Leibniz (2006[a]) and which is now being created in light of Foucault (2006[b]) via the ethico-aesthetics of self-conduct and self-mastery that in turn makes it possible for one to negotiate one's way through life; one is enabled to replace (briefly yet regularly) a general state of misery with momentary bliss as one strategically oscillates between an overbearing state of imposed homogeneity/fixity (culture-civilization-humanism-signification, in short BEING) and its transgression afforded by the ephemeral sovereignty of heterogeneity (suspension of the habit of pursuing *pouvoir* and of stable identity aka BECOMING) – an "art of not being governed" or "not becoming enamored of power" as Foucault would have it. For Deleuze (and his take on later Foucault) this would be a non-fascist ethics of transgression pursuing the *enjoyment* of becoming

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constitution of sexuality (rather than its repression via norms and taboos) through the exercise of bio-power by post-Enlightenment instrumental rationalism as well as by an extension of this mentality, namely psychoanalysis which has enabled the discourse of sexuality it is based on to diffuse into all minutiae of daily life as a virtual effect, as a signified; they maintain the eroticism such fantasy gives rise to is not only phallocentric but also constrictive as it leads to "anti-production." That's why they want to de-genitalize and de-sexualize sexuality.

[22] Braidotti (2010) notes that such a life-oriented philosophy of becoming is different from Levinas' alterity which inscribes the totality of the Self's reliance on the other as a structural necessity that transcends the "I" but remains internal to it.

against the *pleasure* of being or rather the *pleasure-pain* of passion against the *desire* of carnality. That's why he sees parallels between the desire of his BwO and Foucault's pleasures of the body; they are both directed against the desire of the flesh as formulated by the post-Christian/modern discourse of psychoanalysis and Victorian sexuality. This non-fascist way of life is marked by liberation (from Lacanian pleasure and desire) *à la* Masoch as opposed to Sade's bursts of *jouissance*. This is a call for the nirvana principle as opposed to the pleasure principle and the destructive death drive that lies beyond it. In other words, it's a Dionysian call for a will to *puissance* rather than to *pouvior*.[23] At the end of the day, Deleuze truly believes that the flux of desire can and does flee (at least temporarily) the constraints imposed by Oedipalization and its anti-production (i.e. the production of lack) which cause psychoanalytical desire to join the ranks of labor and finance as the driving force of late capitalism. Here, the capitalist mode of production, or more precisely, capital-money's mix of production and anti-production produces a double alienation: "abstract labor alienated in private property that reproduces the ever wider interior limits and…abstract desire alienated in privatized family that displaces the ever narrower internalized limits" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004[a]: 370).

Well, the utter loss of control and selfhood has not been a role that sane, hard working, career planning, law abiding, taxpaying, optimistically voting, and plentifully consuming citizens

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[23] To clarify, Deleuze rejects the claim that Foucault has returned to the subject in his final works. In Deleuze's opinion, as far as Foucault's oeuvre is concerned, this transformation indicates not a return to the subject but rather a shift of emphasis from power to force, that is, from what Foucault calls the microphysics of power relations (force relating to other forces) to force relating to itself. Hence, the shift of attention from how external and normalizing mechanisms fabricate subjects to how subjects self-constitute themselves as moral agents is neither a rejection of power nor a fundamental inconsistency with Foucault's previous work. In essence, this is a shift of attention from *pouvoir* to *puissance*. As Deleuze reaches this conclusion in light of the final two volumes of *The History of Sexuality* published after Foucault's death, in an earlier piece penned shortly after the first volume came out Deleuze claims power (*pouvoir*) is an affection of desire and systems of power emerge or surface where reterritorializations are operating. Contrary to Foucault's position, he asserts arrangements of power neither motivate nor constitute. Rather, it is desire that is primary and it is assemblages of desire that in turn disseminate power formations according one of their dimensions. So, it is desire that constitutes and gets captured or reappropriated; under certain conditions – and strictly in the non-psychoanalytical sense of the term – power (*pouvoir*) is desired. Again diverging from Foucault, Deleuze asserts systems of power do not normalize and discipline, what they do is to encode and reterritorialize. As such, "their operations continue to have a repressive effect since they stamp out, not desire as a natural given, but the tips of assemblages of desire" (2007: 126). But at the same time, just as these secondary systems of power are components of desire assemblages, such intensive assemblages also constitute points of deterritorialization or lines of flight. In fact, it is these very flight lines which are, far from being revolutionary, tied up, sealed off and co-opted via reterritorialization, e.g. the nomadic war machine captured by the State. This distinction lies behind Deleuze's attack on the politics of molarization and his hopes in the micro-politics of the molecular. This is also crucial for his distinguishing between the majoritarian power of constants (*pouvoir*) and the minoritarian power of variables (*puissance*) exercised by the State and the nomad respectively.

of liberal democracy are expected to play. That's why such a praxis and cultural experience used to be – and hopefully still is – considered a transgression in itself. But under the current cultural logic of capitalism this has become a role people are indeed expected to play, that is, regularly but not constantly. Now individuals are temporarily allowed to play this game of irrational immersion as the current mechanisms for manufacturing and directing desire through mass-mediated fantasy dictate that there is a time and place for everything. As it has been asserted, nocturnal transgression is tamed via regulation, standardization, institutionalization and commercialization resulting in controlled de-control. The night is being stripped of its mystery whilst being allowed to retain its image of seductiveness. Here, as the lightness afforded by nighttime's diversions keeps up the perception or appearance of transgressing daytime's heaviness, such temporary yet futile escapes from one's and/or the world's troubles also serves the function of disguising the fact that the structures which are responsible for those very troubles are not written in stone, that they can be toppled. The underlying message is that the world will never change so the only solution available is to elude its ugly facets as much and as often as possible. Adorno & Horkheimer remind us that "the stronger the positions of the culture industry become, the more summarily it can deal with consumers' needs, producing them, controlling them, disciplining them, and even withdrawing amusement." The trick here is not parading an ideology or disguising the true nature of things but rather removing the thought that there can or needs to be an alternative to the status quo. "Pleasure always means not to think about anything, to forget suffering even when it's shown. Basically it is helplessness. It is flight; not…from a wretched reality, but from the last remaining thought of resistance. The liberation amusement promises is the freedom from thought and from negation" (1997: 144). But all is not lost as the night remains to be fertile ground, not everything is controllable and predictable; self-loss can take unexpected turns. So there is an ongoing struggle between transgression and its capture via commodification, and in spite of all the negative developments, sometimes subtle lived-experiences still point towards – or at least are genuinely perceived to do so by those who undergo them – not "the liquidation of all traces of resistance" but rather "the medium of its secret omnipresence" (Adorno, 2001: 78). [24] But then again we must also bear in mind that the

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[24] Of course, Adorno uses this term a bit differently. This is actually Adorno writing about art, namely "simplified" and standardized art purged of all internal tension and dissonant elements (as opposed to say, Schoenberg's atonality) and mass produced according to tried and tested formulas; what he deems "the liquidation of aesthetic intrication and development." Contrary to the customary accusations of elitism, Adorno is not defending avant-

transgression afforded by ecstatic self-loss and euphoric fraternity with one's immediate surroundings (usually aided by legal and illegal intoxicants as well as immersion into the music) is not and has never been the same thing as revolution. That's why it's healthy to retain Adorno's chronic pessimism – even if one finds it impossible in this day and age to adhere to his contempt for popular culture/music – when using the term "secret omnipresence of resistance" with regard to nightlife and its club cultures marked not only by the egalitarianism and (perceived) subversion of Dionysian self-loss but also by the control of de-control and the exclusivity of subcultural capital.

Well, the fundamentality of self-loss for nocturnal transgression brings us full-circle to the temptation of leaving the public sphere and retreating to the safety of one's home. The desire for self-(re)discovery and its method of immersive self-loss call for an unfaltering commitment to nightlife and a profound faith in the potency of the night for (unpredictable) eventfulness. It is

garde artistic modernism against popular culture here. Rather, he is pointing out that such autonomous, bourgeois art is not innocent in the first place; clashes of interest are its prerequisite while it can only arise fully in a class-based society through the exclusion of the proletariat: modernist art is the quintessence of the division of labor between manual and mental labor in capitalist society. The (often tormented and broke) genius who creates bourgeois masterpieces is a high-skilled worker who can only survive if his material, everyday needs are met by the services and commodities produced by other unskilled workers. In tune with Weber's arguments concerning how art has become an autonomous realm free from external purposes as a result of post-Enlightenment differentiation (*l'art pour l'art*), Adorno maintains the purposelessness of pure works of art, which appears to deny the logic of utility that rules the capitalist world outside of art, is premised on the prevalence of commodity production, i.e. the universality of production for exchange rather than use. Hence, as modernist high culture offers a more meaningful, intellectual and beautiful alternative to the ugliness of life under industrial capitalism, "aesthetic truth" is "bound to the untruth of bourgeois society. Art really exists as long as it is impossible by virtue of the order which it transcends" (2001: 77). Moreover, while modernist art's autonomy and freedom from external purposes are rooted in its being produced privately, secularly and no longer for any particular consumer such as a church, patron or state; such products of labor exist as commodities whilst pretending to be something else since their apparent non-utility and "unsaleability" have rendered them with an alternative yet hypocritical (ersatz) source of value. Adorno admits the internal dissonances and intellectual complexities which he admires so much and which have made works of high art so exceptional have simultaneously acted as "romantic disguises" which have hidden the very external conflict that has made their existence possible: class division. On the other hand, as mass culture exudes the illusory universality of commodity exchange (as opposed to the true universality of autonomous, bourgeois art) whose instrumental rationality subsumes true particularity by treating unlike/unequal things as though they were alike/equal, hence treating them as exchangeable units; it seeks to artificially create a simplified state of internal harmony in art while "lack of conflict within the work of art ensures that it can no longer endure any conflict with the life outside itself because life banishes all conflicts into the deepest hidden places of suffering and keeps them out of sight with pitiless force." Given his adamant critique of culture industry, Adorno still leaves space for the omnipresence of resistance within popular culture since such artificial conflictlessness within art may unknowingly betray its purpose by laying bare the above-mentioned, traditional romantic disguises thereby uncovering the real state of socio-cultural affairs marked by the "most extreme increase of real tension." Therefore, what he perceives to be the simplicity and dullness of mass culture might at times be the very means of exposing alienation and exploitation: "it transfigures the world into one in which conflict is still possible rather than revealing it as one in which the omnipotent power of production is ever more obviously to repress such a possibility" (2001: 78).

this faith and commitment combined with the force of habit that drives people to continue leaving their homes and venturing out into the city at night. As Diederichsen (2010) puts it, everything breathes potentiality: Brecht's "so much might yet happen" rules the night. And of course this pleasant feeling that so much might happen is sustained in the long run only by the things that do actually happen every once in a while: the decisive events, beautiful or disastrous – either one being preferable to the delicate work of the night in. Yet the sense that something must actually happen changes its meaning over the course of a lifetime of nights out. When people are younger (especially from their late teens to early thirties) the drama of going out is mostly defined by the climactic event, namely sex, drugs or both. But this is not something that is easily sustained. Sooner or later, those who cling on to their youthful habit of demanding the climactic event as validation of going out begin to get disappointed or bored with their nocturnal experiences. In fact, many individuals come to feel after some point that they are actually not missing out on much by staying in because as far as they are concerned nothing special is really going on most of the time or on most nights anyway. This belief usually grows with age; it gets harder and harder to convince oneself to go out at night, especially for bar-hopping or clubbing. Most of the time, being in a steady and monogamous relationship perpetuates this effect.

But luckily there is always a new generation of party animals as well a great deal of committed and faithful old-timers who have managed to reform their outlook on nightlife. In the eyes of this latter category, going out becomes an end in itself; any overly targeted attempt at picking someone up begins to seem as though it would disrupt the night's magnificent potentiality. The promise that is sensed as well as the risk that is felt is more important than really having something to fear or to hope for. One needs to realize, and commit to, only as much as is absolutely necessary for maintaining this diffuse mood. The important thing is to enter into brief and dense contact with as many people as possible, people who are as different and distant from one another as possible; realizing in each instance a maximum degree of commitment for a brief moment – and this moment better be as brief as possible to keep the number of encounters high. This number is kept high, while each encounter is perceived as less binding, entailing less commitment, because this strategy maintains the sense of freedom and potential whose fundamental message is that we are all interconnected with each other, or at least with those present – this is crucial for the perception of nocturnal fraternity. In the encounters that last for longer intervals and require real commitment one must act as a responsible and self-aware "I"

whereas in the dense but noncommittal encounters that make up a hyperactive social – and sometimes sexual – promiscuity which characterize a great night out, one can shed one's self-awareness and step outside oneself. It is through this specific, Dionysian practice of self-loss that one playfully learns what Diederichsen names the "Nietzsche economy," in other words what has come to serve as the basis of the phenomenon called networking. That's why he confesses "it is only when I am ecstatic, outside of myself, that I can be with everyone, that I can I float in a sense of potential. A networker must always be ecstatic, must maintain a slightly exaggerated enthusiasm, must get high on the potential of so many contacts that can never be realized or translated into actual collaboration, using this high in turn to leap to the next encounter" (2010: 2).

What seems to be the case in Berlin is that this specific outlook on nightlife which is usually associated with the veterans of the party scene is also being adopted and utilized by the younger partygoers. For the current generation of ravers vitalizing Berlin's nightlife, a certain "network sociality" (Wittel, 2001), which is at once a result and a requirement of their new breed of white-collar jobs, is essentintial – these creative vocations are usually characterized by immaterial/affective labor and the dissolution of work and non-work time. As bars, clubs, galleries and project spaces increasingly become venues in which play is combined with work, casual sensation is always preferable to precise observation while a permanent state of distraction which enables hope and enthusiasm is desired: that promises are made is what matters most, not that they are fulfilled. After all, it does feel good and out of the ordinary when one can regularly enjoy oneself at parties and at the same time increase one's business prospects. And it does feel extraordinary to visit or live in a city where the bars are always full and a large number of parties and clubnights are going on every single night while the absence of closing hours ensures that the festivities go on at least until dawn if not well into the next day. Or rather, it does feel not completely normal that there can be so many (youthful, healthy, good-looking, happy) people residing in or just passing through a city who are willing and somehow available to partake in these activities constantly. That's why Diederichsen writes:

> Coming home after an evening of this type – it is usually very late or already the next morning – we don't need to review anything, there is no need to go over our friends' texts with philological precision; it is enough to take pleasure in the birds singing outside our windows – so early and already so chipper! – signifying a world that is great and wide open, and the word we use to describe the past six or eight hours is: intense. Now that was a pretty intense night. The residents of a metropolis like Berlin leaving home at six in the morning will meet all these smiling faces, satisfied goers-out – sometimes even a newly formed couple, but most are alone – floating

homeward, buoyed by the wealth of potential they have just inhaled. "Anything is possible," they think before falling asleep (2010: 3)

It is this very optimism and this sensibility of lightness that the next chapter addresses as it critically assesses the current state of affairs in Berlin's nightlife and nighttime economy in tandem with the ongoing project of turning the German capital into a creative world city and a center of culture industry while listing the various historical, cultural, economic and socio-political factors which have come into play in generating Berlin's current popularity and nocturnal libertarianism which is perceived by many to be exceptional in its aptness for (institutionalized) transgression. The third chapter starts things off with the theoretical conceptualization of nocturnal "scenes" as units of cultural analysis, dwells upon how things used to be in Berlin in the 90s, and finally arrives at the current situation in the German capital in order to assess the subversive potential as well as the political significance of the state of exception that the Berlin night is perceived to constitute nowadays. But first there'll be an excursus.

Literary Excursion No.1: Lightness and Weight

In *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Milan Kundera (1999) invites us via Nietzsche's idea of eternal return (as the heaviest of burdens) to pose a question concerning human morality, a question initially asked centuries ago by Parmenides: what then shall we choose, weight or lightness?

> If eternal return is the heaviest of burdens, then our lives can stand against it in all their splendid lightness. But is heaviness truly deplorable and lightness splendid? The heaviest of burdens crashes us, we sink beneath it, it pins us to the ground…The heavier the burden, the closer our lives come to the earth, the more real and truthful they become. Conversely, the absolute absence of a burden causes man to be lighter than air, to soar into the heights, take leave of the earth and his earthly being, and become only half real, his movements as free as they are insignificant (1999: 4-5).

On the level of sexual relations, Kundera's lightness seems to be characterized by a striving for the nonchalant sensuality of polyamory and an egocentric and reckless immersion in the present via ecstasy. This immersion seems to be an attempt at escaping from or at least temporarily eluding the sentimentality, fidelity, and compassion Kundera associates with the heaviness of monogamy. If we take these two categories to the extreme, we have on the one hand the lecherous and adulterous figure of the libertine and on the other the almost-too-noble-to-be-human figure of Tristan. But weight also has something to do with the existential responsibility to act morally when faced with the burden constituted by the sober and bitter knowledge that the world is not a merry playground but is instead filled with injustice, oppression, and exploitation. The problems of the world and of social life weigh heavy on the individual and this burden calls at least for political consciousness and critique if not for political involvement and activism. Here, we can talk of heaviness as a form of *weltschmerz* that comes along with the politics of having a comprehensive world-view, a *weltanschauung*. Nevertheless, this is not a romantic notion of *weltschmerz* (which Nietzsche would despise), not some sort of existential angst accompanied by feelings of melancholy, loneliness, lovelornness and helplessness – a romantic concept the quintessential example of which is Goethe's young Werther. But rather, *weltschmerz* as an awareness of the fact that the world does not revolve around me; as the pain felt due to the acidic knowledge that even if I am relatively better off there are still others out there who are suffering from maladies such as poverty, exploitation or political oppression. *Weltschmerz* as such is the precursor of political awareness which leads to criticality and political action. Here,

the light opposite of *weltschmerz's* heaviness would be *weltfremd*, that is, being a stranger to the ways of the world in the sense that one is not aware of and interested in everyday realities that exist beyond one's immediate and often privileged surroundings. Today, the opposite of *Weltanschauung's* political heaviness would be the lightness and apoliticism of reflexively modern, consumerist and hedonistic lifestyles marked with obligatory *jouissance* and the new, post-industrial, middle-class duty to enjoy.

In the novel, the lightness of the protagonist's (Tomas) sexual flings is contrasted with the heaviness of his commitment to his wife; he desires and sleeps *with* many women but the only woman he can sleep *next to* is Tereza, his wife. Kundera comes to the following conclusion: as love is by definition not light but heavy, it does not make itself felt in the desire for copulation (a desire that exceeds to an infinite number of partners) but in the desire for shared sleep (a desire limited to one specific partner). Here, Kundera utilizes (arguably in a patriarchic fashion) two archetypical female characters: Sabina and Tereza**.** The seductively mysterious and desirably adventurous character of Sabina, the emancipated artist, represents lightness as she is running away from all sorts of commitment and insists that her relation with Tomas remain strictly sexual. Hence, we are told Sabina is the woman who understands Tomas the best. In contrast to Sabina's strength, self-confidence, and independence, the heavy character of Tereza constantly craves Tomas' love and attention. She wants to have Tomas exclusively for herself and suffers from fits of jealousy as a result of his endless sleeping around. As she struggles to understand and empathize with the lightness Tomas is after, she herself attempts to become lighter but in the end fails to do so. Nevertheless, Tomas seems to love Tereza deeply and ends up not only marrying her but also sacrificing his career for her as he chooses to follow her from Switzerland back to Czechoslovakia (they had fled Prague shortly after the Soviet invasion in 1968) where he knows he'll be persecuted.

Against the backdrop of Prague Spring's immediate aftermath, Kundera juxtaposes the egoistic or perhaps instinctive (survival) attempt to escape into the safer realm of apolitical lightness to the heaviness of choosing to remain relentlessly critical and dissident. Should Tomas retract his essay criticizing the regime, hence be allowed to carry on performing his profession (he is a highly skilled surgeon) or should he reject opportunism, stick to his principles and face the consequences? He ends up not denouncing his critique, but unlike the traditional figure of the failed-but-proud-revolutionary, this deed is not caused by the heavy moral decision on his part to

become or remain political. He stays true to his word simply out of spite; because he thinks everyone expects him to cave in. Here we witness not the personal and heavy decision to become a political dissident at the expense of being ostracized but paradoxically Tomas' escape into lightness: as he judges the consequences of retracting the essay to be too heavy to bear[25] he opts for the more cynical option of distancing himself from his old social milieu which in turn creates, despite the apparent humiliation of being forced to work as a window cleaner (even within the "classless" society of Czechoslovakia relegation from being a top skilled surgeon and intellectual to being a blue collar worker was considered a fall), the possibility for him to continue leading his light lifestyle full of sexual conquests. After Tereza's own attempt to seek lightness backfires (she has casual sex with a stranger but then begins to fear he was working for the secret police and has taken pictures of her infidelity which can later be used for political blackmail) Tomas distances himself even more from society and politics as they leave the city to become farmers.

As Dostoevsky had come up with his "underground man" stuck in the midst of rationality and irrationality (mirroring Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian binary), Kundera also seems to suggest the tragedy of the modern man lies in his entrapment between two categories, in this case between weight and lightness. As he strives to escape from the weight of making decisions – be it deciding between being monogamous or polygamous, or deciding whether to become politically active or not – the modern man cannot but fail to dedicate his whole existence either to lightness or heaviness. At the end of the day, he spends most of his life in limbo as he continuously shies away from and postpones making decisions and following them through. As he is neither here nor there, he cannot render his existence with meaning (at least from an Existentialist or Nietzschean perspective) since he fails to take his life in his own hands. To some extent he is aware of the structures that give rise to the evils in the world, yet retreating to his own corner and being silently resentful is much easier than joining the struggle which he considers to be futile anyway. Nevertheless, in his distanced lightness he will occasionally be tortured by pangs of remorse and guilt. Similarly, those who join the struggle on the ranks of

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[25] He doesn't want to be reminded day after day by the expression on people's faces that he has served them all in one way or another: The ones who have already retracted something would be glad because "by inflating cowardice he would make their actions look commonplace and thereby give them back their lost honor." The people who have been persecuted and refused to compromise would also be glad because as they have "come to consider their honor a special privilege never to be yielded," they nurture "a secret love for the cowards, for without them their courage would soon erode into a trivial, monotonous grind admired by no one" (Kundera, 1999: 178).

heaviness are faced sooner or later with a doubt that eats away at their heart: would they not have been better off had they chosen to lead a lighter, more happy-go-lucky existence? On the level of personal/amorous relations, Kundera demonstrates this vicious cycle by Tomas' dilemma. He loves and needs Tereza as well as what she represents, i.e. the weak female whom he possesses, controls and takes care of; and who in return gives him unconditional love and affection. Tereza is the mother-substitute who enables him to replace the phallus and become the Father. But he also needs and desires the seductive and freewheeling Sabina whom he can't wholly control or possess. Here Sabina is that obscure and charming object of desire which is expected to fill some unknown gap or lack in Tomas' being and which at the same time never completely does so. Sabina also represents the elements of novelty, adventure, and thrill as well as the freedom and pleasure associated with Tomas' no-strings-attached sexual pursuits.[26]

It is the impossibility of having both Tereza and Sabrina at the same time and at all times that troubles Tomas deeply, it is the discontent of being forced to settle for only one of them that causes his restlessness. He simply can't have his cake and eat it. Neither are we offered a Hegelian solution to this dilemma. Kundera seems not to believe in the existence of a female character that could embody both Tereza and Sabrina whilst preserving their difference, a female-synthesis who could sublate the dialectic. Shortly after the point at which Tomas seems to resolve his internal tension by settling for Tereza, everything comes to an end very abruptly. We find out indirectly that soon after they had settled down in the countryside they were killed in a car accident as they were driving back to their farm after spending a pleasant and seemingly blissful night at the village inn. It all ends suddenly on a nihilistic note. We are not offered any explanation or any existential ground for the characters' lives or for their unexpected deaths. There's no poetic justice, no reward for what some might consider Tomas' political heroism, no resolution, no closure. Yet, faced with the apparent meaninglessness of his existence, we are left with the feeling that Tomas would make exactly the same choices and live exactly the same life if he were to be given a second, third or fourth chance to start all over again. After all, in Nietzsche's world of eternal return the weight of unbearable responsibility lies heavy on every move or decision we make as they will be repeated infinitely. Paradoxically then, as he is

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[26] Kundera writes Tomas' obsession with women is not lyrical; unlike most skirt-chasers, he does not seek the same fantasy-image of ultimate womanhood in every female he pursues. Rather his obsession is epic as he is "prompted by the desire to possess the endless variety of the objective female world" (1999: 197). He is constantly in search of novelty; he wants to experience the dissimilarity of one female from the rest of her sex which he hopes will be revealed during intercourse. In that sense, Tomas is in a patriarchic and heterosexist quest for knowledge.

motivated by his desire for lightness, Tomas has simultaneously led a heavy existence. The ever-present longing for lightness, the continuous striving to escape from heaviness then is itself a burden; this escape attempt itself is heavy, hence the unbearability of lightness.

Indeed, the night in the big city is marked by such a burdensome venture to temporarily escape from heaviness, to momentarily flee from the troubles of the working day, from the dictates and responsibilities of adult life, or from the unpleasantries and injustices of life on earth in general. The night provides us with the opportunity for a deliberate and interim loss of memory; a momentary forgetting of our troubles. In that sense the night is filled with joy and laughter, happiness and pleasure, with conviviality and hedonism, jokes and friendly conversations. This nocturnal lightness, this temporary amnesia has something to do with drugs, with substance (ab)use; we can drown our sorrows in alcohol, boost our euphoric self-confidence with cocaine, or enhance our trust in humanity with pills. The night functions according to the pleasure principle. But the impermanence of this nocturnal state of exception also has a dark, heavy side to it: the inevitable return of memory – for the problems of the world and of adult life remain unaltered and confront us once again when we sober up. The harsh and not properly mastered reality of life on earth filled with injustice, disappointment, heartbreak and trauma lies beyond the pleasure principle, hence the convulsive return of its remembrance (Freud, 2001[a]). The temporary nature of nocturnal lightness has sinister consequences; nightly bliss is followed by physical exhaustion and hangover, the come-down has its melancholy just as the post-party depression has its bitter alienation and self-contempt. The night, with its promise of sensual eventfulness, self discovery and discovery of likeminded strangers, with its seduction of flirtation and one night stands, is filled with Kundera's sexual lightness. As we try to forget our day of work and enjoy ourselves whilst immersing in or building up to sexual encounters, while we attempt to rejoice in our being; the night offers employment to the likes of the street walker and the call girl, the stripping pole dancer and the burlesque performer. The night is libidinal, we go out in general with the hope of desiring and being desired. But above all we go out because we believe the urban night will unexpectedly throw in our way occasions that make life worth living. This belief that "something" might happen, this faith in the night is exactly what makes the thought of staying in unbearable. Yet, the unbearability of this thought turns going out into a duty so that it itself becomes a burden. Once again we witness how this constant seeking of lightness becomes a heavy obligation. Moreover, the unbearability of staying in for fear of

missing out on "something" turns this "thing", this obscure object of desire, this elusive and much sought after experience of existential meaning into something commodifiable. From then on we are oppressed by the "experience economy" or the *Erlebnisgesellschaft* (experience-driven society) as they oblige us to go out at night and seek pleasure

Chapter 2

The Unbearable Hipness of Being Light: Nighttime in Creative World City Berlin

"The idiocy of the guitars keeps resounding, and the children keep dancing, flirtatiously throwing their bellies forward, and she feels the nausea that emanates from weightless things. That hollowness in her stomach is exactly that unbearable absence of weight. And just as an extreme can at any moment turn into its opposite, so lightness brought to its maximum becomes the terrifying *weight of lightness*."

Milan Kundera (1996: 259)

"It rather pains me to say this, as Berlin – with its healthy contempt for the work ethic, and its still extant left activism – is a far, far saner city than London, and by several leagues more pleasant, more rewarding a place to live. And yet, when – as seems largely to have happened in much of Mitte, Kreuzberg, Friedrichshain, Prenzlauerberg – an entire chunk of a formerly working city becomes a playground for an international of 'creatives,' something odd happens. One often got the sense in Berlin that whatever was happening, it didn't really matter, nothing was at stake: pure pleasure becomes boring after a while, as does the constant low-level tick-tock of a techno designed seemingly for little else than just rolling along. German techno seems fastidious, but not glamorous. An executive music for people who can make a living off DJing or curating here and there is a bizarre phenomenon, as is a futurist cottage industry. The restraint of the music is the effect of a culture with no restraints."

Owen Hatherley ("Existence Minimal," 2008)

23 May 2009 – Bürknerstr. 4, Saturday Evening 07:30 pm

Something uncanny happened to me last night, something better suited for a Paul Auster novel than for real life. It was around 04:00 am and I had only one last bottle of beer in my bag. I had begun my drift around midnight on the Hobrecht bridge which separates the recently gentrified northern tip of Neukölln from the historically "rebellious & alternative" section of Kreuzberg. Walking northwards, I had gradually made my way across the Spree, across the specter of the East-West border to Ostbahnhof…There she was, standing alone in front of the train station; smoking and staring at the horizon in silence, expectantly. I approached her and asked if she would like a beer. She was taken aback but accepted the gift. We sat down, started chatting. She was waiting for her friends who would pick her up soon to go around the corner to Berghain, considered by many to be the holiest of all nocturnal temples in our Prussian techno capital of the world. She asked me who I was, where I came from, and why I was handing out free beers to strangers after midnight. She was delighted to hear about my "research" and that I had grown up in Istanbul. She told me she used to live there; used to work at the German consulate. Then she asked my name and when she found it out she screamed with delight: "I

remember you," she yelled, "your case was such a pain in the ass!" It turned out that she was the immigration officer who had issued my very first German visa years ago. This was a time when the consulate had still not dropped its first-come, first-served policy to switch over to the outsourced visa appointment service scheme so the only way to apply for a leave to enter the EU was to go in person and queue, hoping to be let in before they stopped admitting people at noon. Back then it had been a very unpleasant experience for me. Freshly out of college, I had received a scholarship to study philosophy in a private liberal arts school in Berlin. It had taken me five consequent days of torture (queuing under the scorching August sun whilst being pushed around by consulate guards as well as two nights of camping out in front of the consulate in order to ensure being at the head of the line in the morning) to get to apply for a visa. During this demeaning experience which effectively made me feel like a second tier human being, I had witnessed the informal economy built around the First World border: rich people hiring the poor to stand in line on their behalf, wealthy businessmen hiring tourism agency employees to bribe the consulate clerks so that their wives can go on shopping sprees in Milan, London or Paris, small time crooks belonging to Istanbul's "parking lot mafia" forcing the applicants-to-be camping in front of the consulate at night to "hire" them so that their place on the non-existent queue would be "protected" against intrusions from members of other gangs, and owners of rundown coffee houses in close vicinity of the consulate capitalizing on the absence of rival establishments, hence benefiting from their monopoly by overcharging the drowsy, prospective visa applicants for a variety of consumer goods and services: from lukewarm tea to stale sandwiches, from bottled drinking water to filthy toilets…It had taken the consulate officials more than a month to process my application and issue my visa. In the meantime, classes had already started in Berlin and the college administration was calling the consulate everyday to inquire about the status of my application. That's why she could remember my case so clearly; she was being told off by her supervisor on a daily basis, directly after the customary phone call from Berlin. They had sent my application to Germany and it had to be approved there before they could issue me the visa. But the immigration officials in Berlin kept stalling the decision and her supervisor suspected she had messed things up; perhaps sent over an unacceptable application or an application in an unacceptable condition. In the end, with almost six weeks delay, the powers-that-be decided to grant me access to their promised land of plenty, and that's how my toils and adventures in Berlin began.

That was many years ago. Since then I've been exposed to various visa regimes and been treated almost like a leper in various consulates as well as by a number of passport controllers at the First World border. But even with the less confrontational – but therefore more sinister – customer service (designed only for those who can afford it) that the privatized visa application procedure has recently become under, among others, the new British points-based-immigration-policy one thing had remained constant: I had always regarded the visa clerk, be it the elderly public servant working at the German Ausländerbehörde (Foreigner's Office) who reeked of alcohol but scolded me just the same or the polite but ignorant WorldBridge employee, as bullies. Last night this conviction of mine was challenged and altered. As my ex-visa officer gave me insider information about the scope of victimization caused by the international immigration/border regime, I found out it is only half of the problem that visa applicants are dehumanized as their whole personality and accomplishments are reduced to a few digits (the amount of money they have in their bank account and an application number) so that whether they are eligible to enter the First World and remain there (albeit temporarily) depends by and large on capital and class. There is also the additional element constituted by the fact that the consulate workers themselves are being crushed under the pressure of profit maximization: they have to meet efficiency standards (a certain number applications must be processed without fail within a certain amount of time) and each applicant exists as a potential liability for the immigration officer since once she issues someone a visa, she automatically becomes responsible for covering the legal fees and deportation costs if the "legal alien" overstays his welcome or breaks the law. Moreover, rather than having the freedom to choose whether or not to work in the visa section – which she said was highly unpopular – the public servants at the beginning of their foreign-service career are appointed to work there due to the system of rotation. So the immigration officer could also be seen as a victim, a wage laborer, an immaterial worker being exploited and oppressed by the capitalist mechanism of surplus extraction. Nonetheless, the amount of victimization that a career in the foreign-service of a First World nation-state involves is not the same as the one working in a call center in the Global South entails. The visa clerk is not only blessed (or cursed) with a significant amount of hierarchical power that deeply affects others' lives on a daily basis (he or she decides, or at least is part of the unjust and oppressive mechanism that decides where certain individuals may or may not spend their lives) but also buying into the ideology (or idiocy) of a nation-building project so that one identifies with one's

"motherland" to the extent that one chooses to represent it abroad is also problematic as far as I'm concerned. Neither do I find it all right to implement one's government's restrictive border policies. Apparently, neither did she. Faced and disgusted with all this, she had quit the foreign-service and was now studying politics in Berlin.

Soon after she told me these things, her friends arrived (one girl and a guy) and after the customary introductions we were on our way to Berghain. As we walked up the path leading to the old power station now housing the legendary nightclub, we could already see a long queue ahead of us. As we took our places at the back of the line the absurdity of the situation hit me: there I was waiting in line hoping to be found worthy of admittance to the exclusive land of promises (what's being promised is existential meaning and ecstasy as well as the transgression comprised by the provisional suspension of inhibitions) that Berghain is commonly perceived to be whilst standing next to the very person who had permitted me to enter the exclusive land of promises that the First World presents itself to be in the first place – here the promise is the wealth of its capitalist free market economy and the health of its consumerist liberties. In fact, although queues, bouncers and sieving at the door had been pretty much non-existent in Berlin during the first half of the 00s, now the increasingly present lines outside the city's world famous venues being guarded by intimidating door personnel are functioning according to the same model of discrimination and corruption that I had witnessed years ago while waiting in line to apply for my visa. As nightclubs' international cult following and increased popularity (thanks to the proliferation of low-end, party-tourism) have led to much stricter door policies (growing demand and limited supply causes inflation), there is also an increasing number of scenesters who know someone who knows someone who is friends with the club management/door staff/that night's DJ, etc; hence, they end up on the guest list ("+1") and can go in for free without waiting and without any hassle. As far as Berghain is concerned, the level of nepotism seems to be lower since compared to other venues the guest list is minimal and being admitted once or regularly guarantees by no means that you will be admitted next time. Hence, even the regulars feel the same terror and fear of rejection each time they want to access their techno temple. In that sense, the door policy seems to be fairly egalitarian. Nevertheless, groups of young male adolescents, lumpenproletarians and its subcategory of Turkish or Arab youngsters, overtly straight couples, tourists who are deemed to be too touristy as well as people who are already drunk are usually turned down. In fact, it seems nowadays everyone who regularly ventures into

the Berlin night has a Berghain story of rejection. After all, the club's promise of transgression and euphoria is not for everyone, only the right mix of people (those with the right kind and amount of capital) is deemed to give rise to the blissful parallel universe that comes into being in the exclusive, concrete confines of the ex-power plant. In fact, waiting in line outside Berghain or Bar 25 with the anticipation of being admitted while secretly fearing rejection is probably one of the very few times in the lives of most First World nationals when they feel something akin to the angst and stress (and the consequent humiliation and embitterment) that I feel every time I wait in the passport line designated for the "Others" at the border of Fortress Europe.

Since many years, the fabulous job of deciding who is Berghain-worthy and who isn't has been given to Sven Marquardt, also know and feared as the Iron Man. I know this because he now counts among Berlin's biggest celebrities: regardless of whether they have been to Berghain or not, many people can provide you with the generic information that he is a middle-aged photographer from East Berlin with long black hair and with lots of piercings and tattoos on his face. This is the case because all major events listings magazines as well as the periodicals targeting the hipster niche market are publishing interviews and printing the photographs taken by him. Given the fact that Berlin's nightlife is being applauded by many for its egalitarianism and anonymity, the fact that the bouncer of one of the most lusted after clubs in town (if not in the whole world) has become a feared and respected figure of prominence is quite paradoxical. In essence, we expect people to get famous for the stuff that they have produced or at least something exceptional that they have done or gone through. Sven Marquardt is famous solely because he has been given the right and might to decide whether one belongs to the "happy few" or not. Here, it is important to underline the fact that this hierarchic power is being afforded to him by us, i.e. the potential club-goers. It's only because we fetishize the nightclub – there is a whole mythology being built around Berghain – as a magical world of delight that its gatekeeper can have the stature he currently enjoys. At this point we can remember Kafka's famous parable from The Trial: a peasant wants to access the Law, but the gatekeeper tells him he must not trespass thereby announcing the Law. And as the peasant cannot access the Law via breaking it (entering through the doorway by transgressing the commandment) he is left there paralyzed. He does not try to go in but waits there years on end and tries to bribe the gatekeeper to no avail. At the end, he dies of old age next to the gate and upon announcing that no one but the peasant could have passed through since the gate was built only for him, the gatekeeper

shuts the door. Paradoxically, it is the peasant who has given the gatekeeper the power and the authority to deny him access because it was he who wanted to access to Law in the first place. The real solution would have been desertion…

In the case of international border control, it is being born at the "wrong" part of the globe that leads to one's misery; the discrimination of the immigration regime is against that predicament. EU citizens can come and live in Berlin without any restrictions, citizens of "developed nations" from across the Atlantic and the Pacific are welcome to arrive and stay for three months with no questions asked and as many times as they please, whereas I still need permission to be able to spend one legal minute in Europe despite arriving from the within the continent. You can't choose your birthplace yet you won't be denied a visa simply because you are not "cool" enough as the case is with the permission to enter the nightclub. In fact, the more cultivated and richer you are, the likelier you will be given the leave to enter the land of the rich and remain there temporarily. So there is discrimination according to nationality, and then further discrimination according to capital and class. Although you can't choose the class into which you are born either, you still have the agency to become a desirable migrant by accumulating various sorts of capital so what you have done with your life still counts up to an extent. Similarly, the organizing principle of nocturnal filtering seems to be that although one cannot choose how one is born physically, one can show agency in improving one's situation by accruing (sub)cultural capital, thereby making the right contacts to reap the benefits of favoritism as well as grooming oneself to achieve the outward appearance that exudes confidence and fits the club's aesthetic sensibility. Hence, if you are not on the guest list and if you behave yourself in line (i.e. if you are not totally inebriated) the doorman has no choice but to assess your club-worthiness solely according to your aura and your outward appearance. With the nightclub then, the main criterion for inclusion is not how much money you have as the case is with the First World border but rather what you do with your money, i.e. how you spend it to create your image and identity. The international border regime has a more realist discourse which takes the unjust state of the world as given while the nocturnal border regime has a liberal discourse similar to the "American Dream;" it emphasizes the responsibility of the individual to make an effort, to do "whatever it takes" to improve one's situation. Furthermore, although the international border regime openly discriminates against nationality, in our "politically correct" multicultural days the bouncer may no longer turn you down explicitly

because of your ethnicity. Hence, even if the real reason for the rejection is racism, it has to be disguised so the official reason why no "typically Turkish or Arab" youths are allowed inside is that they are either too drunk and too aggressive or too macho and too many...

As all of these things were going through my head the queue had proceeded and I suddenly found myself staring at Marquardt's tattoo-covered face. He looked at us from head to toe and decreed it was all right for the two girls and their camp friend to go in but yours truly had to stay outside. The nocturnal solidarity my new, accidental friends felt for me ended right then and there. As their angst had been replaced by joy, they wished me better luck next time and went, ecstatic like rewarded puppies, into that magical land of promises. The night is a peculiar thing; on the one hand it has the potential to topple borders down as it brings my ex-visa officer and me together as equals, on the other hand it has a dark side that creates new borders and mechanisms of exclusion...

Bitter and angry at the world, I got myself a bottle of beer and started to walk homewards along the Spree. As I was passing in front of the newly built and hideous O₂ World, I saw the monstrous figure of a giant plastic O₂ branded stool standing on the embankment. With the corner of my eye I registered the two people standing in front of it; a lumpenproletarian adolescent and a middle-aged man taking his picture with his camera phone. In my rejected and intoxicated frame of mind, that advertising ploy rejoicing in and announcing the arrival of Capital became the symbol of everything that was wrong with the world that night. I furiously hurled my bottle at it; the glass hit the plastic and shattered to pieces. Somewhat satisfied, I nonchalantly carried off. A few seconds later I heard footsteps rushing from behind and someone fiercely grabbed my arm. I turned around and registered the eyes of the same youngster whose picture was being taken now staring at me with disgust. He took out his mobile phone and threatened to call the police unless I went back and cleaned up after myself, that is, picked out the shards one by one. I wanted to tell him to go fuck himself but I had no other choice, involving the cops would have been too risky: since I belong to the unwished migrant category by nationality such a public offence (causing unrest and damaging property) lowers one's chance of being able to renew one's residence permit drastically. Well, the night has a very peculiar sense of humor; as I had already tasted the bitter-sweet tang of running into my ex-visa officer just a few hours ago, it had to be on this same night of all nights that I get humiliated and bear it all with a smile for fear of losing my visa...After I was done cleaning up, I asked him why he had

forced me to do this. "Because," he said with pride and utmost conviction, "advertising is important!" I was at a loss for words; the sun was already going up, so I went home and passed out.

One: Berghain, Vatican of the Techno Faith

I'll start things off with *Berghain* (Image 2) because together with the likes of *Bar 25* and *KitKatClub*, this peculiar "techno cathedral" has been the symbol and symptom of Berlin's claim to nocturnal transgression for the last few years. Opened in the autumn of 2004 by the same guys who used to manage the "legendary" techno club *Ostgut*, *Berghain* has become internationally famous for its "unique sound" and "relentless partying" (Waltz, 2009). Having existed between 1998 and 2003, *Ostgut* is typically considered to be the origin of the model on which Berlin's current club culture is based. According to Tobias Rapp, techno veteran, *Der Spiegel*'s popular music editor and author of the acclaimed *Lost and Sound: Berlin, Techno und der Easyjetset*; at the end of the 90s both *E-Werk* and *WMF* (catering mostly to elitist and stylish middle-class youth from West Germany who had taken over Mitte) had lost their glamour. *Tresor* (popular among bare-chested and camouflage-pant wearing working-class men from East Germany) on the other hand, had lost its credibility. In such an environment *Ostgut* emerged as the hottest new club in town and revitalized the Berlin night. Getting its dynamism mainly from its gay crowd who were always ready to party "uncompromisingly," *Ostgut* slowly became popular among heterosexuals who were bored with Berlin's nocturnal holy trinity (*E-Werk, WMF, Tresor*). Apparently, the parties at *Ostgut* were so immersive that "no one went there to be able to brag about it the next morning in their advertising agency. The only thing that counted was what was happening inside the club right then and there" (Waltz, 2009: 126). This unique cocktail of gay dynamism and straight party-willingness is also evident in *Berghain*. In fact, the main hall is populated more often by gay men dancing to techno while upstairs at the *Panorama Bar* a greater number of straight party-goers dance to minimal and house. Part of the "Berghain Sound" phenomenon is caused by the edifice itself, the beats resound in a special way in the old power station and bounce off the concrete pillars supporting the main hall. Also, the sets are extremely long; some last up to eight hours which gives the resident DJs the chance to improvise and experiment. Moreover, the sound is characterized by a slower and more "meditative" tempo

compared to that of the 90s; resident DJ Ben Klock says "the slowness did not come about deliberately. When you play the records from the 90s six or eight percent slower they suddenly acquire a sexiness" (quoted in Waltz, 2009: 124).

Rapp argues what makes *Berghain* exceptional is the egalitarianism of its door policy's strictness. This helps elude the negative effects of an extensive guest list: the more people feel like they own the place and take it for granted that they'll be let in, the less emotive investment they make into what happens on the dancefloor; hence, the venue becomes a space for career planning. As it happened to *WMF*, the club is turned by the patrons into a lounge for discussing media projects (2009). Also, the long wait at the door and the following drug search (cleansing) are thought to constitute an initiation into the *Berghain* ritual; the adrenaline built up whilst waiting in line is turned into ecstatic joy and willingness to suspend inhibitions when rewarded by the permission to enter the sacred grounds. What also enables *Berghain* to create a profanely sacred environment for transgression is its total isolation from the outside world; the club seals its patrons off from "real life" and its hang-ups. Moreover, this insulation creates its own temporal reality; although it may be 11:00 am and very sunny outside, inside it is still dark and feels like midnight. In fact, this temporal misperception is utilized by the club management to intensify the perceived feeling of transgression; upstairs at the *Panorama Bar* the shutters are raised briefly and the outside world (with all its normalcy, mediocrity, and sunshine) is momentarily exposed to create a hands-up-in-the-air "oh, man we are fucking awesome; average, boring people are doing their chores outside while us unconventional ones keep partying inside" feeling. This insulation is also secured by the thorough search at the door; no cameras are allowed inside and even using camera phones are strictly forbidden. There are also no mirrors inside the club. As a result, the absence of the fear of being photographed and the absence of mirrors (reflection in the mirror = self-consciousness and inhibition) make it easier for clubbers to live out their sexual fantasies.

Sex, especially gay sex is an integral part of the *Berghain* sacrament which on a full night is attended by a congregation of more than 3000 souls. Although the venue hosts themed gay sex parties (*Lab.Oratory*) in the afternoon or in the evening until the regular party starts at midnight, the main clubnights also feature an array of sexual activities. The two dark rooms on the main floor and the metal coops next to *Panorama Bar* are usually utilized for making out or for coitus. Moreover, it's fairly common that one comes across someone getting a blowjob in a somewhat

dark corner or hears people copulating in the toilet cubicles. There are also stories about people having sex on one of the six bars or on the dancefloor. There are in fact many "tales of ordinary madness" concerning *Berghain* that are being circulated both in Berlin and (thanks to the internet) abroad. There is a myth that shrouds *Berghain* which in return creates a trickle-down effect and attracts tourists from far away. Rapp lists some of the urban legends concerning the club: first of all, there is the story about a gay couple fisting each other in the middle of the dancefloor. Then, there is the story of a bloke who runs into an agitated lady in the toilet who orders him to fuck her right then and there. But he refuses and in return gets punched in the face. And there is the story of a guy approaching a stranger relieving himself at the urinal, cupping his hands and drinking his urine without even asking (2009). In fact, in his autobiographical debut novel about techno and drugs in Berlin, which originally appeared as fragments on his blog and only got published in book form after a high school student called Helene Hegemann plagiarized him to write her own novel, Airen writes about how he urinated inside the mouth of a golden-shower-fetishist in a *Berghain* toilet cubicle (2009).

Toilet cubicles also come into play during rituals of collective drug consumption. Although joints are passed around out in the open, poppers are sniffed on the dancefloor, and pills or liquid ecstasy are taken next to the bar; speed, crack, and cocaine (increasingly mixed with ketamine) are usually consumed behind closed doors. This has less to do with secrecy – after all, everyone knows what's going inside – and more to do with creating the feeling of being part of a ritual. There is also the element of drug sharing; although you get searched at the door, it's still easy to score drugs inside because people manage to smuggle stuff in and there are also dealers whom the club management deliberately turns a blind eye on. After all, the exceptional *Berghain* experience would not be possible without the narcotics. Hence, it is quite commonplace that people go up to strangers and ask for something to swallow or to snort, and it is also quite frequent that people end up sharing their drugs with strangers; they give away pills for free or propose to do a line together in the toilet. And sometimes the gift bearers are paid back by their newly found drug buddies with sexual favors performed in close vicinity of the toilet bowl.

Rapp's book has its fair share of *Berghain* fanaticism or fetishism. He writes the club "confronts one with an existential challenge: it is not only a venue in which one lets off steam after a week of hard work, finds a sex partner, or listens to interesting music. It is also a

liberating space – what one does inside does not have to be consistent with how one lives one's life outside. As the club creates as great an intensity of pleasure and joy as possible, one is compelled to ask oneself the following questions: what do I want? Where do I stand when it comes to social, sexual, and musical enjoyment? *Berghain* is a venue in which one is exposed to and learns about one's own desires" (2009: 132). Well, this trope of having a dual identity (regular, boring day job vs. transgressive nocturnal adventures – like Bataille; librarian by day libertine by night) was especially prevalent in the 90s. Schmidt (2009) writes of many new-Berliners (middle-class youth from West Germany) who used the techno movement and club culture to escape from the dreariness of their office jobs and the dictates of adult life during the days following the Wall's fall. In the end, many of them ended up quitting their jobs and entering the cultural field as entrepreneurs. But today, those professions born out of that attempt to break free from the chains of tradition have become institutionalized; they have become viable lifestyle choices. Therefore, it is questionable to what extent we can apply nowadays this discourse about being a respectable citizen during the day and becoming a heretic at night when a great deal of *Berghain*'s patrons have professions which enable them to have a precarious yet celebratory lifestyle that increasingly mixes work with play so that going out becomes part of one's job and partying during week nights becomes commonplace. In such an environment, it's questionable how much of one's nocturnal *Berghain* identity is a deviation from one's stable daytime identity. If we deliberately take things to the extreme for the sake of argument, while performing fellatio out in the open in *Berghain* could have been disastrous if you were a white collar worker in the traditional sense of the term and one of your co-workers happened to witness your "transgression," in today's culturalized economy with its new breed of white collar professions such a feat could even have positive repercussions; it could be a deal-closer if you were to have in your mouth the member of the guy (given that he gets off on such exhibitionism) whom you had been desperately trying to convince to hire you for his next art project. Of course, such a scenario is a bit over the top even for our post-'68, neoliberal and "permissive" times. But if such an act would take place at all and more importantly if it were to take place not in the protected confines of a specialized sex or swinger club but rather in a somewhat regular nightspot, Berlin, and more specifically clubs like *Berghain* and *KitKatClub*, would surely count among the few places on the planet where it could at the moment. Hence, when talking of transgression we must also take into consideration this moral flexibility or leniency that is arguably shared by a

significant segment of Berlin's population. After all, transgression relies on norms, and norms rely on how "conservative" or "progressive" a society has become. Anyhow, even with the immaterialization of labor and the erosion of the boundary between work and non-work time, this phenomenon of finding one's nocturnal euphoria and drug-enhanced belief in humankind (ecstatic fraternity) more fulfilling and meaningful than any other activity performed during the day is still prevalent.

What is crucial about *Berghain* is that although it has become all the rage, it is still believed to retain most of its marginality and transgressiveness – and to be fair there is some truth to this claim. But this subversive potential comes with a price; the club is extremely hard to get in. Indeed, this exclusivity is a growing feature of the Berlin night in general. Faced with vast popularization and soaring demand, many parties are being advertised solely via word-of-mouth – or its digital equivalent – nowadays. In fact, what has been said about *Berghain* can be extended to the Berlin night in general; on the one hand, Berlin's nightlife has become mainstream in the sense that it has become immensely popular while the city has become *the* European nightlife capital, on the other hand, it retains or is believed to retain its underground character and attitude which in turn attracts the tourists who believe they cannot find or experience anything like it in any other town. Once again, there is some truth to this belief.

Two: A New Metropolis is Born

In a fashion analogous to the phoenix, the city of Berlin has been reborn from its ashes. This is not only so because it has been a constant construction site since its destruction during WWII but also because for the second time after the fall of the Wall it has become *the* party city in Europe. Having lost its distinctive charm as the popularity of techno withered away towards the end of the 90s – many argue that it became commercial and mainstream – with the recent rise of electro (house) and minimal (techno) as well as the liberalization of the European flight market, Berlin has now regained its status as the number one nightlife destination in Europe. At the same time, having surpassed such continental rivals as Paris and Barcelona, Berlin is on the fast track to overhaul London and become the new European center of culture/creative industry. The main idea here is that these two phenomena are interrelated.

Already famous in the "roaring 20s" for its bohemian decadence that existed alongside the squalor and fury which led to the rise of National Socialism, Berlin has a long-standing tradition of avant-garde/artistic/(sub)cultural activity. The degeneracy of those pre-war days, immortalized in prose by the likes of Christopher Isherwood and Alfred Döblin, was taken up in the decades after the war by the likes of *Kommune 1* in the late 60s, West Berlin's squat/Antifa movement in the 70s, Kreuzberg's *Autonomen* in the 80s, and the underground techno scene flourishing in the then freshly deserted and squatted ex-GDR neighborhoods in the 90s. One reason for this legacy of decadence is the special status Berlin used to have during the Cold War. As West Berlin was a small island of "free market and democracy" in the midst of the socialist East, its severance from the West German mainland meant for many West Germans that it was not a very desirable place to live. Hence, it was a refuge for the more marginal, artistic types who not only found West Berlin's reduced-tax economy easier to survive in, but also benefitted from residing there by becoming exempt from the otherwise mandatory military service. Moreover, due to its problematic location, West Berlin was not a suitable place for big business to settle in; so, the economic and financial centers of West Germany became Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich as well as the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan area. As West Berlin was not a center of industry and commerce during the Cold War, the West German state felt obliged to financially support West Berliners in order to maintain the appearance of strength; after all it was crucial for NATO that capitalist West Berlin continued to exist as a haven belonging to the "free world" in the midst of the Soviet bloc. Not only had the finance, services and culture industries (especially media and publishing) had deserted Berlin, most of those who were educated at West Berlin's heavily subsidized *Freie Universität* [27] were also compelled to move to other parts of West Germany if they wanted make use of their engineering degrees or pursue carriers in the services sector. Certainly, this liberal or libertarian legacy and its culture of (relative) tolerance, as well as the fact that living costs and rents in Berlin are still significantly lower than elsewhere in Western Europe (which is a result of the above mentioned fact that Berlin has not been a business-oriented city) have all played major roles in attracting "hipsters" and "creative types" as well as

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[27] The university was named *Freie* since it was supposed to be free from state control and censorship, two evils academics working at East Berlin's Humboldt University were suffering from. West Berlin's new, "free" university which was founded with American funds in 1948 employed many scholars and enrolled many students who had fled from the East – this was still relatively easy as the Wall didn't exist back then. The claim was that those who had been persecuted in the East were allowed to study and carry out research free of political influence in the West which might not have always been the case.

the companies they ground (culturepreneurship) or work for (often freelance) within the last few years. As we shall shortly see, this has been perpetuated by local and federal governments' promise of subsidy and tax reduction or exemption as well as the introduction of new welfare schemes and neoliberal modes of governance dedicated to the promotion of cultural entrepreneurialism.

After the Wall came down, heavy industry situated in the East gradually withered away and 250,000 jobs were lost as there was no way for such enterprises– after having been privatized – to compete with their rich counterparts situated elsewhere in West Germany. This was also in accord with the federal government's plans to return Berlin to its former days of glory and turn it into a business city so that this metropolis which once had been divided into four sectors (American, British, French and Soviet) would now be reunited under the booming services sector and become a center of commerce with Central and Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, West Berliners who were used to living comfortably on government subsidies could not catch up with the changing times and went on (not) doing business as usual. In the meantime, the federal government decided it was more fitting to redistribute the €13 billion worth of subsidies West Berlin used to receive annually among the ex-GDR states which had recently become part of the federal republic. Berlin's Social Democrat ex-finance senator Sarrazin (2009) argues Berliners failed drastically to adapt themselves to the new situation during the first few years following the reunification while 1995 marked the beginning of some half-hearted attempts which only became a full-scale economic project after 2002. Between 1991 and 2003, the rate of unemployment rose from 10% to 19 % while twice as many people started receiving unemployment benefits. At the outset, the dream of rebranding Berlin as the new center of commerce brought along the speculation that there would be a huge demand for offices. As a result, the city center was turned into a construction site as both domestic and international real estate concerns entered the ex-East German market where they received financial aid from the Berlin government. But contrary to the expectations, big business did not move in and many office towers as well as the lodgings built for the members of the parliament remained empty.[28] Already in 1997, the speculative boom had turned into a real estate crisis which was perpetuated

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[28] As the federal parliament was moved from Bonn to Berlin, luxurious apartments were built near the *Bundestag* and allocated to the MPs. Nevertheless, most MPs chose either to live in villas located in richer suburbs or to commute from Bonn. Most of those lodgings remain empty today. According to Krätke (2005) there was still 1.2 million m^2 of empty office space in Berlin in 2005.

by corruption and nepotism within the Berlin Senate. The Senate's clientelistic ties with the Berliner Bank which went insolvent after speculating in the ex-East German real estate market meant the state of Berlin was left with €58 billion of debt (Krätke, 2005).

So within reunited Germany's first ten years, the state of Berlin, which at the outset had less debt than the industrious Bayern, was left with an immense amount of debt as old business went away and new business fell short of the desired levels while the investments made by the regional government could not be reimbursed. In 1990 many shared the optimistic dream of resurrecting Berlin and bringing back the glorious days of the 20s. But in the two decades that followed Berlin has become neither a center of industry nor of banking, and although it is still an intellectual center, it lacks the stature it used to have in the 20s. Back then Berlin's population was around four and a half million, now it's slightly less than three and a half. In the 20s Berlin was Germany's financial center, since the end of WWII banks and other financial institutions are based in Frankfurt. Moreover Berlin used to be the central hub for European air traffic, it has long lost its centrality to the likes of London or Frankfurt. And as it used to be the hub for European freight traffic, now its importance as such is marginal. Moreover, Berlin throve not only on art and culture in the 20s but also on science and research. Yet, in 2005 alone, the city's three major universities have had to deal with budget cuts exceeding €500,000 (Hurtado, 2005). In addition to this, the dream of establishing commercial ties with Eastern Europe hence centering Berlin on the East-West axis also turned out to be a pipe dream: although Berlin is practically next door to Poland while Baden-Wüttenberg is hundreds of kilometers away, Poland had closer economic relations with the latter in the 90s than it had with the former since Berlin lacked what the Polish needed, namely machinery. The central commercial role imagined for Berlin at the time has been taken up in the following decades by Vienna. Contrary to Berlin's state controlled and subsidized economy, Austria had been competing in the capitalist free market since the mid-40s so the Viennese had more experience and expertise, and were able to react faster to the new post-Cold War situation. Today, as Austrian banks and companies are all over Central and Eastern Europe, the Viennese have regained access to the *"kaiserlich und königlich"* (imperial and royal) territories as they have close cultural ties with the new Central European nation-states which they had ruled for centuries in the past. Hence, the inhabitants of Budapest or Prague, who still have some way to go before their home cities fully become

consumerist heavens like their West European counterparts, travel every year to Vienna instead of Berlin to do their Christmas shopping.

According to a recent study carried out by Roland Berger Strategy Consultants and published in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (*FAZ*), Berlin ranks fifth behind Munich, Stuttgart, Hamburg and Frankfurt on Germany's creative cities index. The cities have been evaluated according to three variables based on Florida's (2002) "creative class" hypothesis: technology, talent and tolerance. In terms of technology Berlin comes second to last (9th place) while in terms of talent it comes third to last (7th place). But the fact that it is number one on the tolerance index moves it up to fifth place on the general list. As Berlin's strength is its bohemian charm, its economic weakness due to lack of traditional commerce and industry is reflected in the GDP disparity between Berlin and the other creative cities. The top five cities' GDP per capita are as follows: Munich: €83,381, Frankfurt: €75,341, Stuttgart: €55,147, Hamburg: €47,681, Berlin: €23,251. *FAZ* editor Rainer Hank argues Berlin's lower rank is due to the fact that "since the fall of the Wall, the new-old capital has failed to generate enough commercial power and attract technical intelligence. And despite its high number of universities, Berlin has still not caught up with the performance of southwest Germany in the fields of research and teaching. But Berlin has made a name for itself as the city of *bobos*, art galleries, design studios and nightclubs...Culturally, Berlin is a world metropolis, economically it is still provincial" (2008). A similar point has been made by Krätke (2005) as his study shows Berlin to be an "Alpha World Media City" but only a "Gamma World City" which indicates the city has a large "creative economy" but as a whole it is not a global center of commerce and finance.

Hence, despite federal and local governments' continuous attempts to counter-balance the situation after the reunification, traditional forms of big business and industry are still relatively absent in Berlin which remains exceptionally to be the only West European capital without a proper financial district.[29] This in turn creates the exceptional urban experience that one seldom

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[29] Likewise, Berlin is/was the only West European capital without either an Apple Store or an Urban Outfitters. Until recently and outside the cocoon constituted by Mitte and Prenzlauerberg, being the proud owner of a smartphone or any i-prefixed gadget for that matter was being frowned upon by many young Berliners. Nevertheless, thanks to the increasing prevalence of digital social networking as well as to the influx of already "converted" Scandinavian, Anglo-American and South German migrants whose "creative" vocations rely heavily on a unique network sociality afforded by such gadgets, word has it that Berlin will finally be blessed with its very own Apple Store. Similarly, the ongoing hipsterification of the city has finally attracted Urban Outfitters as they have opened their first store in Mitte in January 2012 followed shortly by a second one in Kurfürstendamm. Apparently, both Apple's and Urban Outfitters' market research had concluded a few years ago that there was a demand

comes across people in business attire as one travels through the city during working hours. Of course, this also has a lot to do with which part of the city one is in; it is much more likely that business people will be around if one is near Potsdamer-Platz or Kurfürstendamm than near Boxhaganer-Platz or Kotbusser-Tor. Nevertheless, the number of traditional white collar workers in Berlin is miniscule compared to the likes of Paris, New York or Frankfurt, so the "march of the penguins" that characterizes the City of London during lunch hour could never take place in the German capital. In fact, especially in the warmer months of the year when the streets are constantly bustling with energy, and chiefly in the trendy and gentrified parts of the city such as Mitte, Prenzlauerberg, Friedrichshain (East Berlin), Schöneberg, Kreuzberg, and the up-and-coming north Neukölln (West Berlin) where the multitude of cafes and bars are full throughout the working day and there is an overwhelming abundance of youthful, healthy, cheerful and attractive people donning tasteful clothes and basking in middle-class self-confidence, one easily gets the impression that no one really works (to survive) in Berlin. This view seems to be shared by Tobias Rapp who writes "this new Berlin, attracting thousands of nightlife tourists every weekend, is the party capital of the Western world. It is a city in which rents are cheap and the city officials are extremely liberal. It's a place where other cities' reality principle has been replaced by a comprehensive pleasure principle. Apart from working on some art or music project, no one really has to work here. New clubs are constantly opening up, and one finds oneself constantly at parties" (2009: 34).

Indeed, as a biased outsider, as someone who has extensive first-hand experience of the hectic and taxing urban reality that characterizes both Istanbul and London, I can't help feeling even after so many years in Berlin as though the lightness and joyful vitality as well as the aesthetics and laid-backness of the whole urban scenery is surreal. People are not rushing about with stressed faces – always too late for an appointment, always with a destination to go to or with some business to take care of – but instead are laughing and chilling-out in cafes, bars and restaurants all of which are decorated with second-hand items and left partially un-refurbished according to the dictates of the new Berliner chic (intricately calculated to create the effect of nonchalance, i.e. as though the deliberately created environment of pleasant scruffiness has come into being by pure chance rather than by carefully applied formula) as they sit in front of their

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deficiency in Berlin as the city was judged to be too poor and too backwards in hipster related matters, so they had chosen Munich and Hamburg instead to launch their flagship stores.

Macbooks, puff away on their cigarettes and savor their *bionade*.[30] Indeed, around such "yuki" (young urban creative internationals) neighborhoods one feels as though one is worlds apart from the problematic reality constituted by predicaments not only confronting the residents of poorer and "backwards" parts of the globe on a daily basis but also troubling some of Berlin's less fortunate and poorer inhabitants living in (or forced to relocate to) less desirable parts of town. In fact, one almost feels as though one has walked into the blissful alternate reality of a TV spot. Yet, this is not an in-your-face type of exclusive bourgeois bliss and conspicuous consumption like in London or Paris which is prone to incite class hatred and conflict. Although being anti-gentrification is becoming increasingly trendy and the term has now become part of everyday vernacular – e.g. a recent graffiti reads: "*Hipsterbashing ist so out, dass es schon wieder Retro ist!*" (hipster-bashing is so out that it has come back into fashion as retro!) and some pranksters have lately begun altering road signs to warn pedestrians that they are entering a trendy district (Image 3) – the class division that is integral to the project of Creative World City Berlin still remains by and large unacknowledged and unchallenged. The charm of Berlin's *bionade bourgeoisie* then is that its members generally manage to keep up the appearance or arguably the (self)deception of being losers or victims persecuted and prosecuted by corporate types; after all, they are still relatively poor (but sexy) hence they can still perceive and present themselves to be the natural ally of the (unsexy) underprivileged. Even major club and restaurant owners such as Heinz Gundillis (owner of posh techno club *Cookies* as well as an upscale vegetarian restaurant chain), Marcus Trojan (owner of *Weekend* as well as the recently opened *Pigalle*) or Conny Opper (creator of defunct underground joints such as *Rio* and *Scala* and the newly opened *Flamingo* as well as co-owner of COOP which organizes the Berlin Festival) appear to stay loyal to their 90s squatter roots and maintain "humble" or "down to earth" ideals: instead of striving to acquire Michelin stars or to get their hands on much-lusted-after vintages, they declare their sole motivation for recently opening up two new bars – *Trust* (co-owned by Gundillis & Trojan) and

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[30] Bionade is an organic soft drink which became quite popular in the last few years as it has been branded through successful methods of viral advertising as *the* refreshing accompaniment to the creative lifestyle. The Hamburg based microbrewery behind Bionade has painstakingly created an appealing image by emphasizing how the commodity they are offering is not produced by a multinational corporation and comes with the right aesthetic sensibility as well as the right ideology (Anti-Americanism, Eco-Awareness, and Anti-Globalization). Here, it is crucial to point out that this particular soft drink is a prime example of Žižek's (2009[a]) assertion (by way of Boltanski & Chiapello, 2007) that the new, post-'68 spirit of capitalism increasingly includes within the consumerist product a whole array of antithetical leftist values, e.g. Starbucks fair-trade coffee. For a sarcastic yet accurate analysis of the Bionade phenomenon see Echte, 2010.

King Size (Opper has teamed up with Boris Radczun of *Grill Royal* fame) – on Torstr. in Mitte is to artificially recreate a fairly more upscale (the cheapest drink sold at *Trust* costs €22 in a city where a pint of lager usually costs around €2.50 in the pub) version of the exclusivity traditionally associated with the makeshift 90s back-courtyard illegality where it all began. An article that recently appeared in the expat monthly listings magazine *Exberliner* describes the phenomenon with these words: "while making money brings a certain security, these party-makers are still restless. It's Berlin that made them this way. No one really needs to 'grow up' here, in a city where it is cooler to wear the right vintage shirt to the right underground party than to park your Porsche outside a martini bar. Success has different coordinates in Berlin. It hardly ever means a nine-to-five job, but rather networking and socializing – at a party with the right guest list" (Mösken, 2011[b]: 18). Berlin then has somehow surpassed all of its European rivals in terms of cool laid-backness, pleasant scruffiness, urban idyll and carpe diem/noctem. That's why it's so popular with creative types who want to live and work here and with the tourists who want to party here; everyone wants to be here, to experience the scene, to get a piece of the action.

It seems with the disappearance of heavy industry and traditional big business' incapability or unwillingness to replace it, now it is up the creative/cultural economy of *light* industry to save the day. Nevertheless, despite both the federal and the local governments' attempts to attract such business sectors with promises of tax exemption and other sorts of financial assistance, many multinationals have not moved their European headquarters to Berlin. In that respect, Berlin has not become a center of creative industry in the traditional sense of the term. Nevertheless, it has become of central importance since a great number of individuals employed by such enterprises choose to live in Berlin – or they are "based in Berlin" as the catch-phrase which hints at their mobility goes. This situation is made possible by the phenomenon of freelancing; liberated by the developments in communications technologies and the new media, the new breed of young urban professionals (digitally) selling their immaterial labor can now sit or "co-work" in a Berlin flat/café/loft/hip-ground-floor-shared-office and carry out tasks for companies that exist elsewhere.

Moreover, not only does the Berlin Senate encourage and financially support numerous local and small-scale creative business ventures and start-up companies, the city's current centrality for the international art world and market makes sure that a great deal of galleries and

other art related institutions as well as a very high number of artists and curators choose, for the moment, to have a foothold in Berlin. This desire on the part of the "creatives" to reside in the German capital is perpetuated by abovementioned factors such as the city's tradition of libertarianism, its avant-garde/artistic legacy, its world-famous nightlife, its exceptionally cheap rents and living costs, the introduction of generously funded artist-in- residence programs as well as Germany's increasingly undermined yet relatively well-functioning welfare system which is available not only to German citizens but to all EU nationals in general.[31] The social democrats' Hartz welfare reforms which came into effect in the early 2000s are accused quite rightly of being unjust and of dismantling the welfare state. Of course, demanding from welfare recipients that they apply for at least five jobs a month is a nuisance, and of course, Germany as one of the richest countries in the world should be able to provide much better welfare to all of its citizens. Moreover, the Merkel government's proposed austerity package will put those on the dole in even a worse situation as they will no longer be eligible to receive *Elterngeld* (the short-term new-born child benefit which supplements the long-term *Kindergeld* [around €200 per month and per child] received by all parents until the children turn 25), and the state will stop paying their *Rentenversicherungsbeitrag* (pension fund contribution) as well as discontinue handing out extra money in the winter for heating. There might also be truth to Lütger's claim that assuming things are always more miserable elsewhere is wrong and "even though German welfare comes with drinking water and a separate pipe for the toilet, it also comes with a thoroughly perfected form of sensory deprivation that the majority of Bombay's eight million slum dwellers would not want to endure for very long" (2010). But then again, all of these criticisms are coming from an established culture of social democracy that takes welfare for granted. After all, Germany is a country where at one point even the introduction of basic income guarantee, i.e. unconditional citizenship salary seemed like a possibility. Although the liberals (FDP) were categorically against the scheme, even some Christian Democrat MPs were in favor of the *Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen* (unconditional basic income) proposal before the credit crunch. For example, Thüringen's Christian Democrat ex-minister-president Dieter Althaus had proposed to replace the current unemployment benefit system with a scheme that pays every citizen (adults as well as children) €600 per month regardless of their employment status provided that they have an annual income below €18,000. In return, each beneficiary would be expected to pay €200 to the

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[31]In fact, non-EU nationals may also become eligible for welfare if they marry a German citizen.

state health insurance fund every month. Althaus claimed this would be more cost effective than the traditional welfare system and would cost the German state €800 billion annually which he proposed to finance by taxing the rich: those who earn more than €18,000 annually would have to pay a single level income tax of 40% (applicable also to rent from property and land as well as to capital investments) while both value added tax and payroll tax would be 18%. What was striking about such proposals was that basic income guarantee had become a part of everyday discourse which meant that a significant portion of the society no longer regarded it as an outrageous or eccentric demand. Of course, such debates have come to an abrupt end with the arrival of the financial crisis. The current environment of bankruptcy and bailouts makes it unlikely that the discussion will resume on such a large scale in the near future. Nevertheless, there are still some NGO initiated campaigns going on.

So one must also look at the matter from a non-Eurocentric perspective: the fact that the very concept of welfare is virtually non-existent in many parts of the globe, as well as the fact that Berlin – as opposed to richer and much more expensive parts of Germany – is full of "creatives" who manage to live precariously yet reasonably well with the aid of their "network sociality" and by combining state grants and income from the dole with additional side-jobs, underlines the fact that Keynesian economics remain crucial for the creative yet non-financial world city of Berlin which has not been hit as hard by the recent financial crises as London or New York have been. Or at least, we are witnessing in Berlin a "roll-out neoliberalism" during which the earlier phase of dismantlement of Keynesian-welfarist and social-collectivist institutions is stabilized through the construction of neoliberal state forms and modes of governance dedicated to the promotion of cultural-economic entrepreneurialism (Van Heur, 2009[a]). In fact, the same "creatives" who rightfully criticize Hartz IV – the last reform which has reduced unemployment benefits and made them more conditional – have also benefitted greatly from Harz III which has introduced a grant for entrepreneurs known as the "Ich-AG" (Me, Inc.) as well as new types of employment such as "Minijob" and "Midijob" with zero, lower or gradually rising taxes and insurance payments.

This new Harz scheme, named after a Volkswagen executive who later on went to jail, is officially called *Arbeitslosengeld II*. Unlike the long term *Arbeitslosengeld I*, this new Harz IV benefit is not necessarily dependent on unemployment. People who are employed but earn less than the official subsistence level may also become eligible; this second category is colloquially

called *die Aufstocker* (the top-uppers). Prior to 2005, 12 to 36 months (depending on the claimant's age and work history) of "high unemployment benefit" (60 to 67% of last net salary) was followed by an indefinite period of lower *Arbeitslosenhilfe* (53 to 57% of last net salary). Since 2005, reception of this lower benefit (renamed *Arbeitslosengeld I*) has been restricted to 12 months in general and 18 months for people over 55. This limited period is now followed by the even lower *Arbeitslosengeld II* on the condition that the claimant's savings, life insurance and spouse/partner's income are below a threshold level. Currently, this threshold is €150 for free assets and €250 for fixed retirement assets, both calculated per capita and per lifetime year. Additionally, every employable individual in a household (persons living and depending on the resources of the claimant) may own one car worth €7,500 and an extra self-inhabited dwelling of 130 m^2. As this reform is aimed at bringing people into the labor market, the state also pays for vocational training courses if the unemployment agency is convinced that the training will improve the claimant's chance of securing a job. The state also pays the claimants' rent, health insurance and pension contribution. Currently the monthly *Arbeitslosengeld II* for a single person is €374 plus the cost of "adequate" housing, heating and utilities (excluding telephone/internet). Obviously, this is not enough for a life of luxury but Berlin's considerably cheap rents and living costs make it easier for people to make do with this amount of money. Yet, this is an advantage people living in other major German cities do not have. Moreover, due to rapidly rising rents in the German capital thanks to gentrification trends catalyzed by the "creatives," the official definition of what "adequate" housing is and consequently how much money the state is willing to pay for it on behalf of welfare beneficiaries is changing so that 11,000 Hartz IV recipients are facing forced relocation in the borough of Neukölln alone (Vogel, 2012).

According to a recent study, more than a fifth of Berliners have received unemployment benefits in 2011 which was more than twice the national average (9.8%) – the exact figure in Berlin was 21.1% but this accounts only for Harz IV receivers as *Arbeitslosengeld 1* beneficiaries have been excluded from the research. According to the same study, 19.2% of Berliners were threatened in 2010 with relative poverty (60% or below national average income) which corresponded to a monthly net income of €826 for a single household and €1735 for a family with two children (Eubel, 2011). Obviously, as far as EU/OECD/G20 standards are concerned this poverty quota is high and these incomes are low. Nevertheless, when viewed in light of the extensive deprivation characterizing many parts of the globe these figures still

demonstrate how privileged people living in Germany are in terms of welfare. In fact, despite the complaints about rising poverty and in spite of the "precariat" discourse, another study has revealed that in 2010 almost three-fourths of all freelancers/self-employed in Berlin have had a net annual income of €13,200 or more.[32] What this implies is that on the average this "poor" segment of society still earns more than what people earn elsewhere – according to IMF's 2010 rankings the nominal GDP per capita in 137 (out of 183) countries is less than the average income of most Berlin-based freelancers. In other words, statistically speaking what falls under the category of "average Joe" in three-fourths of the world is in fact poorer than three-fourths of the Berliner "precariat." Or rather, merely a quarter of Berlin's "sexy poor" is in truth poorer than an average earner residing in three-quarters of all nation-states. Of course, this can be contested by suggesting that such comparisons based on nominal figures are not reliable as costs vary from place to place so what really matters is how one can afford to live with a certain amount of income. In other words, one can be confronted with the standard counter-argument that "yes, even most poor Berliners earn more than what people earn on the average in 'less developed' parts of the world, but the Berliners' cost of living is comparatively higher so at the end of the day they are not necessarily better off." Nevertheless, if we turn again to the same IMF rankings this time adjusted for purchasing power parity we still see that 63% of the world's countries (116 out of 183) have a GDP per capita which is lower than the average annual net income of a Berlin-based freelancer. So the argument is somewhat weakened but it still holds. Yet one must also concede here that the same findings concerning freelancers' net income also support the worries about rising precarity as they have revealed the percentage of freelancers/self-employed who receive benefits in order to top-up their income to the designated subsistence level has increased from 1.7 to 2.9 within the last 5 years (Sailer, 2011).

Before the Hartz reforms there used to be two different welfare schemes available to two different social classes. Those who had lost their long-term/stable, middle-class jobs would receive the higher *Arbeitslosengeld* for an indefinite amount of time (theoretically until the end of their lives if they remained unemployed). Those who received such benefits would still have to reduce their life standards yet the money was enough, especially in cheaper Berlin, for them to maintain their middle-class lifestyles. Many travelled the world, discovered their artistic talents

[32] In fact, the precariat discourse is so strong that both mainstream and left-leaning newspapers have deliberately chosen to report the results of the same study with sensational headlines along the lines of "the poverty of self-employment: a quarter of freelancers earn less than €13,200 a year!"

or wrote books. On the other hand, members of the underclass who were not in the habit of keeping stable, legal (with income tax and social security) jobs would receive *Sozialhilfe*. The general public was not at all interested in this second category; they were regarded as antisocial losers and were largely ignored. Every now and then news reports would appear about *Sozialhilfe* receivers who had to work €1 per hour jobs or who couldn't afford notebooks for their children. Yet, the general (middle-class) public regarded this not as part of average, everyday reality; such reports were received in awe and quickly forgotten as though these people were not living in Germany but somewhere else in the Global South. Now, with the arrival of Harz IV it has become extremely hard for middle-class dole receivers to maintain their customary lifestyles. Hence, they are under the threat of being pushed down to the position of the underclass. As mentioned above, regardless of one's employment history, now one may only receive the higher rate of unemployment benefit for a year or for a year and a half at most (depends on age). Afterwards, one must start receiving the reduced and conditional Hartz IV rate. This fear of suddenly being forced to lose one's middle-class privileges lies at the heart of the public outcry against welfare reform. Suddenly, the underclass has become relevant for the rest of society. Yet not because the middle-classes have decided to fight against the structural injustices the poor have always had to suffer under neoliberalism. What lies behind the outcry is that they themselves are under the threat of becoming poorer and having to consume less.

Two: Rave Tourists of All Countries, Unite! Brave New Germania Welcomes You with Open Arms!

Myth or no myth, recent developments have partially turned Berlin's claim of world cityhood into a self-fulfilling prophecy at least as far as tourism, leisure, entertainment and creative industries are concerned. Within the last 20 years, Berlin has become a post-industrial services metropolis yet this is not due to the gradual relocation of production to the Global South as the case has been with other Western metropolises. As we have noted, both West and East Berlin had eluded this trend in the 70s and 80s due to their heavily subsidized economies. The critical point for the commencement of industrial decay came with the fall of the Wall and the subsequent reunification. As West Berlin never had much heavy industry, East Berlin's industrial complex was privatized and relocated leaving many empty factories and plants in the city center

which have been crucial for Berlin's nightlife ever since thanks to the phenomenon of interim use (*Zwischennutzung*) which will be explored in detail later on. As mentioned above, Berlin has become a creative world city and center of culture industry in its own unique way; the major multinational actors are relatively absent although their freelancing and highly mobile employees are increasingly present. According to EU's Creative Metropoles 2010 report, the share of people in Berlin working in creative industries is 10.3% while the share of companies in creative industries is 18.7%. The scholars who have written the report argue:

> There are more than 24,000 companies with 170,000 employees working in this still fast growing sector…Creatives from around the globe are attracted to Berlin because of its special atmosphere. It is known as a cosmopolitan, tolerant, open-minded and exciting capital in which life is still affordable. Especially the 477,000 foreign inhabitants from 195 different nations contribute a lot to the city's great diversity and cultural richness. Furthermore, Berlin has a very young population with 23.2% of all inhabitants being under 25. This plays an important part in Berlin always reinventing itself and being full of new ideas and leading innovation…As the creative industries are vital for Berlin's economy, the city government has been developing strategies, master plans, and tailor-made support programs jointly with other regional parties for many years now: under the lead of the Senate Department for Economics, Technology and Women's Issues, various sector-specific networks, platforms and projects have been set up to maintain and further develop the city's leading role in the sector. The creative industries are one of the key target fields in Berlin's innovation strategy and widely supported also on national level. An extensive range of consulting, networking, funding, incubation and support opportunities in Berlin encourages the further disclosure of the creative industry's great economic potential. With the time and money invested in this sector and the city's attractiveness to creatives and business leaders alike, we are sure that Berlin will be able to hold and even strengthen its position as a creative capital in the future ("Creative Metropoles: Situation Analysis of 11 Cities – Final Report")

According to Berlin Senate's *2008 Kulturwirtschaft in Berlin: Entwicklungen und Potenziale* (Culture industry in Berlin: Developments and Potentials) report published in May 2009, the percentage of freelancers/self-employed in Berlin's economy is 17.1%. The amount of freelancers within the creative economy (creative workers plus artists/art practitioners) is 52.9 % while 64.5% of all creative workers and 50.1% of all artists are freelance and/or self-employed. Nevertheless, the report does not include academics and other educational employees. According to *Berlin in Zahlen 2010* (Berlin in Figures) published by the Senate 22,215 individuals are employed by institutions of higher education (students working as teaching assistants not included) while there are 140,070 university students. Also there are 52,296 vocational trainees and 29,671 high school teachers as well as 415,822 secondary school students. The *2008 Kulturwirtschaft in Berlin* report claims the number of creative workers in Berlin has increased from 1998 to 2006 by 35% and their income has grown almost 50%. Within the same time interval, the number of artists in the city has increased by 60% while their income has grown

about 30%. From 1998 to 2006 the average monthly income of self-employed artists has risen from €1200 to €1400 while the average monthly income of artists on the payroll has gone from €1800 to €2000. For the self-employed creative workers this number has gone from €1600 to €1900 while the formally employed creative workers have increased their average monthly income from €1600 to €1700. The number of people in Berlin who are insured by *Künstlersozialkasse* (artists' social welfare fund) is four times higher than the German average. Also there are 252,320 (about 8% of the city's population) creative workers and artists who are receiving unemployment benefits from the state. According to the senate's *Berlin in Zahlen 2010* report, the unemployment rate for the whole city is 14.1% while the German average is around 7%. So all in all, about one fifth (employed, self-employed and unemployed) of the city's population is linked with creative industries which are the second biggest contributor to the city's GDP after tourism.

Indeed, the tourism industry has been constantly growing since 1992. In 1993, 7.5 million overnight stays had been registered in Berlin; by 2010 this number had increased by 160% to exceed 20 million. As Berlin was the third most visited place in Europe after London and Paris in 2004, in 2009 it had risen to number one and maintained its leading position in 2010 and 2011. In 2002, when the tourism industry was relatively smaller, such enterprises paid €590 million worth of taxes while they had in total an annual income of €5 billion which corresponded to 4.3 % of the city's GDP. As such, tourism was the fifth biggest sector in the city's economy (Hurtado, 2005). According to Tanja Mühlhans, coordinator of the creative industries initiative for film, media, music and design under the Berlin Senate for Economics, Technology and Women's Issues, as of 2010 tourism industry has grown to become the largest sector (€9 billion revenue) with creative industries coming in second place and comprising almost 20% of the city's economy. Nowadays, 480,000 visitors are roaming the streets of Berlin on an average day whilst spending €51.10 each (Hildebrandt, 2011). What has made the crucial difference for the tourism industry, especially nightlife or party tourism, has been the liberalization of the European flight market. With the arrival of cheap airlines, Berlin's Schönefeld Airport has increased its passenger output by 241% within four years: from 1.7 million passengers in 2003 to 6.3 million passengers in 2007. In 2008, EasyJet boasted of transporting 330,000 passengers to Berlin in the month of July alone. While a recent survey suggests 35% of the tourists travel to

Berlin for the main purpose of clubbing (Davis, 2012), it is assumed that the city's night locales are visited by 10,000 cheap-flight-tourists each weekend (Rapp, 2009).

According to Andreas Becker, co-owner of the now highly popular Circus Hostel in Weinbergsweg (Mitte), which has been among the forerunners of the Berliner IKEA/flea market chic adopted by the ever-increasing number of low-budget accommodation services (boutique hostels as well as holiday apartments) in the city, only 400 cheap beds were to be found in Berlin at the end of the 90s. In 2008, this number had gone up to 18,000 (quoted in Rapp, 2009). Similarly, there were only 75,000 hotel beds available at the turn of the millennium whereas now this number has exceeded 110,000. Moreover, around 10,000 flats have been taken out of the real estate market to serve as vacation rentals which in turn diminishes the supply of apartments available for long-term contracts (especially in popular districts) and due to high demand this process drives up the rents (Garcia, 2010). Plus, many Berliners are in the habit of subletting their flats or rooms to visitors even when they are away for only a few days. Becker himself has profited immensely from the rise in low-end tourism: not only has he and his colleagues opened up a second hostel in Rosa-Luxemburgstr. in 2001 as well as refurbished and expanded the original Weinbergsweg location in 2006 (to coincide with the FIFA World Cup held in Germany), they have also bought a building across the square (Rosanthaler-Platz) and turned it into the higher-end Circus Hotel in October 2008. According to Becker, rave tourists, the majority of which are Brits and Spaniards, are extremely well informed about and up to date with Berlin's nightlife since they either have friends who live in Berlin or they receive tips from friends who have recently been to Berlin. Moreover, many of them belong to certain digital social networks such as *Facebook* groups, *Resident Advisor* or *Restrealitaet*, and follow the ever-increasing number of blogs such as *berlin.unlike: the definitive city guide for the mobile generation, iHeartBerlin, glamcanyon* or *Les Mads* (these last two are also specialized in fashion/street style) which advertise and report (photos of ecstatic partygoers from last night's party) nocturnal events, clubnights and venues some of which are not listed in the mainstream city guides or events listings. And it takes only a few months before newly opened and deliberately hidden venues end up in the EasyJet onboard magazine anyway; the airline hires scene insiders to write for their city guides. So the rave tourists know exactly which DJs are playing and when or where the most promising parties take place, even some of the underground locations. Moreover, each night's highlights are being announced at the reception desk since

offering such niche services ensures brand loyalty and returning customers. Becker says *Berghain* has a cult status among the hostel's guests so that about 1500 people are flying into Berlin each weekend for the sole purpose of partying there. And some of them don't even book a hostel bed; with the aid of narcotics and afterhours parties which have become incredibly popular during the last few years, they spend the whole weekend in clubs. The rave begins on Friday night and goes uninterrupted until Sunday afternoon when they leave the clubs and go directly to the airport. Of course, for those who live or stay in Berlin the party continues until the early hours of Tuesday.

As some Berliners are upset that nightlife gets polluted by loud and staggering EasyJet "pub crawlers" – some even refer to drunken Brits at the threshold of violence (they lose control since they are not used to an urban reality without last orders or closing hours where alcohol can be bought from off-licenses or fast-food joints 24/7) as "human cattle" – most of the DJs and club owners are rejoicing about the tourists' arrival. For instance, DJ Ellen Allien, founder of the famous *BPitch Control* label, claims in an interview that by early 2000s the first generation of ravers had grown older, become parents and gotten full-time jobs, so they couldn't or wouldn't go out as often anymore. In addition to this, although there still was a big demand for Berliner DJs abroad (they enjoyed the city's reputation as the capital of techno) in Berlin the popularity of electronic dance music diminished around that time. This meant the clubs were always half-full and many had to close shop. But the arrival of the tourists in the second half of the decade has saved the day as rekindled interest in electronic dance music has turned record label and club management as well as DJing, events planning, booking and promoting into lucrative vocations once again (Winkler, 2010). In other words, after the success and subsequent mainstreamization that marked the 90s, the "techno elite" returned to the underground whilst being replaced by the "indie crowd." This was a time when the culture industry cashed in on the renewed interest in upbeat, danceable rock music (as opposed to the depression of grunge and indie-rock in the 90s) and made sure that Pete Doherty (of the Libertines) or Alex Kapranos (of Franz Ferdinand) became household names. As indie peaked slightly after mid-decade, EasyJet and its competitors began bringing in an increased number of weekend tourists. Hence began the repopularization of electronic dance music in its current incarnations of minimal-techno and electro-house. Today, rave tourists are an increasingly important source of revenue not only for the nighttime economy, but also for many neighboring sectors since such visitors pay for food, accommodation, public

transport and shopping, and those who manage to sober up also pay for sightseeing and museums. Nevertheless, the *Lunaland* minimal techno festival crisis that ensued in summer 2010 demonstrates the nocturnal scene's ambivalent approach to tourism. As the internationally famous open-air/afterhours venue *Bar 25* was about to be evicted and the owners were looking for a new location, they had publicly announced that they were very interested in relocating to a deserted theme park in East Berlin. But before they could make an offer, a New York based events company called *Minimoo* appeared out of nowhere and announced they would be organizing a three day minimal techno festival at the same location. As a result, many scene veterans and especially *Bar 25* loyalists launched a hate and sabotage campaign against the overseas organizers whom they perceived to be intruders whose presence would further destabilize the already fragile state of affairs; after all their sanctuary was closing down and the future looked precarious – there'll be more on this in the next chapter.

"2009 will go down in the annals of party history as the year in which Berlin's second invasion came to an end" predicted Jan Joswig in one of Berlin's two major fortnightly listings magazines at the end of 2008. He was wrong, but his reasoning was right: he believed the EasyJet Revolution was over; with the ticket prices going up and the credit crunch looming large the rave tourists would stay at home and save their money instead. But the flights remained cheap and the tourists kept coming. "After the Second World War it was the allies who enriched the divided city's nightlife" continued the article, "after the bombs came jazz and rock'n roll, dance replaced hunger among the ruins. In our cheap flight epoch it's the Americans and the English, the Spanish and the Scandinavians who are blowing off steam away from home in amusement park Berlin." Hence, whether back then in the *Badewanne* or now at the afterhours craze at *Golden Gate* or *Ritter Butzke*, the readiness to abandon all reason and restraint as well as the willingness to temporarily defer being a civilized individual and a model citizen increase proportionally to the number of people who manage to remain guilt-free and even feel somewhat liberated after puking, urinating, defecating or bleeding on the streets of a city in which they do not live.

> This is what has been spicing up Berlin's nightlife ever since EasyJet's maiden flight. Naturally, the locals have joined the frenzy as they abhor being left behind. The new migrant class of international party animals not only creates the critical mass which enables Berlin's overwhelming nightlife variety, it also brings along its own demands and expectations. This leads to creative frictions which would astound every melting pot fetishist regardless of whether they come from London, New York or Peking. Berlin is like Manhattan in John Carpenter's *Escape from New York*: sealed off, barbed wire all around – 'Do as you please. We don't give a shit as long as you

stay inside!' It seems Berliners want things to remain this way as well, at least according to the results of the Media Spree referendum.[33] Whether Oskar Melzer (owner of *Weekend*, *Badlands*, and *Restaurant Privee*), Heinz Cookie Gundillis (*Cookies*, *Crush*, *Crackers*, and *Restaurant Cream*) or Falk Walter (*Arena*, *Admiralspalast*) is the equivalent of Isaac Hayes' Duke is beside the point. What matters is that one can glide through Berlin's party sectors as skillfully as Snake Plissken moves through New York: the bottle always at aiming position, and the vintage leather jacket worn over the flannels (Joswig, 2008).

What is also crucial for the tourism industry in Berlin is that with the end of the Cold War, the no-longer-divided city lost its state of exception. Its comparative attractiveness which had facilitated "Wall tourism" during the previous decades and peaked for a short while immediately after the Wall came down was no longer there to secure the constant influx of tourists. Back then, the city officials recognized this danger and saw the need for a new, attractive city image. As a result two limited liability companies were established in 1992 and 1994: *Berliner Tourismus Marketing* (BTM) and *Partner für Berlin Gesellschaft für Haupstadt-Marketing* (PfB). Today, these marketing companies are only two among many local government initiatives aiming to reactivate and transform urban economic processes and to raise Berlin's position in the international market of key cities so that tourists and creative workers as well as other forms of capital are attracted.

As BTM and PfB are forms of public-private-partnership, both include only small amounts of state capital, hence they are living examples of the privatization and professionalization of city marketing. In such an environment, decision makers are no longer elected representatives but instead highly paid advertising experts. Such privatization and professionalization entails not only depoliticization but also commodification as the city is treated just like any other branded consumer product and advertised, marketed and sold as such. As Berlin's hip branding strategy aims to combine the standard of world city (everything found in other competing world cities can also be found here) with Berlin's unique local flair, it reappropriates the city's legacy of underground (sub)cultural production and libertarianism, and benefits from its world famous nightlife and party culture. In the last few years, such branding schemes under private-public-partnership have utilized slogans such as "poor but sexy" or more recently "be berlin" in order to attract cutting edge, creative types and industries thereby not only attracting capital but also creating comparative advantage and building an international image as creative city. The state officials' own vision and representation of Berlin as such was perfectly

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[33]See next chapter.

exemplified by the *Be Berlin* open-air exhibition put on by the local government behind the central train station (*Hauptbahnhof*) in autumn 2009 to commemorate and celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Wall's fall (Image 4). Here's what was written in German and English on a placard titled *Kreative Stadt/ A Creative City*:

> Today Berlin has once again become an internationally recognized cultural and creative location, thus reviving old traditions. The 'creative Berlin' is still focused on developing new qualities. Creativity uses the niches and fractures of a city, the dialogue of its cultures, the stimulus of its transition. Since the fall of the Wall, Berlin has offered all this more than ever, which accounts for the fascination it inspires. Through their multifunctionality, its urban inner-city districts are a hotbed of creativity. This unique atmosphere plays a key role in the decisions of companies involved in the music, publishing, advertising, fashion, architecture, software and art markets to choose Berlin as a location.

According to Berlin's new, branded image proposed by PfB, Berlin as the current reincarnation of its glamorous and decadent 1920s soul, is a 21st century cultural capital that lies at the heart of a newly constituted Europe. What's crucial about this "new Berlin" is that it takes 1989 (the fall of the Wall) as its starting point which symbolically dissociates Berlin from its hurtful past and orients it towards an unknown yet optimistic future. Although we'll explore this distantiation in detail further along the way, it is important to note here that the currently fetishized image of the "roaring 20s," marked by the revival of burlesque and celebrated through extravagant costume parties such as *Bohème Sauvage* and *Salon Obscur*, largely forgets the fact that such cherished past days of decadence and licentiousness were built on top of many corpses including those of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. The current tendency to consider Berlin as *tabula rasa* is also underscored by Rapp when he writes about the city's second biggest fashion, art and nightlife magazine in English: "take *Bang Bang Berlin*, for instance, a wonderful and crazy magazine created by the artist Paul Snow. Probably one has to be an EasyJet raver to be able to really understand and appreciate its writers who, given the abundance of exclamation marks, seem to be astounded by how cool Berlin is." What differentiates such magazines and their depiction of Berlin from the city guides published in previous decades is that the importance of German history increasingly fades away – slowly the last few bullet holes remaining in some deserted courtyard are being filled up:

> For the makers of *Bang Bang Berlin*, Berlin is a blank page on which one may paint with one's own brush. In self-confident ignorance which celebrates the techno culture of the 90s as the 'first cool German popular culture ever,' they follow a cultural program hackneyed by generations of East and West German wanderers: they find *Plattenbauten* (socialist-realist prefabricated public housing) fascinating, discover Friedrichshain, tell everyone how cheap life in Berlin is. They travel to the suburbs and then come back to the center to be impressed by the architectural wonders of Marzahn or Märkisches Viertel. And they all wear Wasted German Youth t-shirts –

Snowden's logo, which has been one of Berlin's cultural exports for a while now, is parading around the globe: people donning such t-shirts have been spotted even in Buenos Aires" (2009: 99-100).

For the "ahistorical hipsters" who flock to Berlin and vitalize its nighttime economy, such alternative-city-guide/art/fashion/nightlife magazines have become, along with social media, clothing (promoted by magazines such as *Vice* and *Daze & Confused*), accessories & trinkets (e.g. nerdy glasses or various "I heart Berlin" souvenirs bought or worn sarcastically – "it's so kitschy that it becomes cool again"), gadgets (e.g. *iPhone* and *iPad*), music (promoted by *Pitchfork*, *Wire*, *Spex*, *De:Bug*, *Last fm*) and contemporary art ("everything goes") the main medium of communication, self expression and identification. A "freezine" somebody handed me in a bar during the summer of 2011 to advertise the arrival of a Swedish clothing company's flagship store in a state of the art building in Friedrichstr. demonstrates this beautifully. Before quoting the text let me note that the new building's construction has forced the famous concert venue *Tränenpalast* (palace of tears) to close down. The name comes from the fact that the venue used to function as a border station between the East and the West where many people had to leave their loved ones behind without the hope of ever seeing them again. *Tränenpalast*'s planned demolition will ensure that one more reminder of Berlin's problematic past is made to disappear and replaced by *AllSaints* and *Weekday*. The latter's viral-advertisement is reproduced below with my italics to emphasize its uncritical and overjoyed discourse as well as its hipster themes and paraphernalia:

> Weekday started off as a small store in the outskirts of Stockholm. Since then we have grown and along the way we have met many *fun* and *creative* individuals. These individuals are the sole reason for creating this freezine. This is the *people we love to work with*, the *music we can't live without* and of course the *clothes that bring us together*. The following pages feature interviews with the *fantastic* people that we *collaborate* with at the moment. To involve them in the *project* we sent out *disposable cameras* and asked everyone to take pictures of their everyday life. To tell their own story in pictures. In addition to this we asked some of our favorite photographers to create a few *inspiring* fashion spreads. This freezine is a snapshot of what Weekday is today. We hope that you will like it.

McRobbie suggests such magazines reflect the kind of upbeat business-minded euphoria characteristic of the creative sector. Far from being critical or reflexive, "magazines like *The Face*, *i-D* and *Dazed & Confused* demonstrate themselves to be remarkably disengaged and complicit with the changes affecting the industry" such as the casualization of immaterial labor. "These changes come from the increased presence of the big brands. The large companies need to innovate and to develop a more experimental youth-driven image and this is provided

by…young cultural entrepreneurs hiring out their services on a contractual basis. But what is squeezed out in this process is independence and socially engaged, critical creativity" (2002: 525).

We must note two things about the arrival of hip (sub)cultures as part of the ongoing Berlin = Creative World City project here. Firstly, it must be pointed out that both the optimistic economic policies treating Berlin as a "large incubator," as a city of the future with diasporic and often transient populations, substantial numbers of young people, and a focus towards the arts, culture and media (McRobbie, 2004); and the attempts to create an "edge" that sets Berlin apart from other world cities, are devised in close collaboration with city planners and academics according to models such as Hawkins' (2002) "creative economy," Florida's (2002) "creative class," Landry's (2000) "creative city," Scott's (2001) "cultural production" and Pine II & Gilmore's (1999) "experience economy" (see "EU Creative Metropoles Mapping Report 2010"). Many narrative themes are enrolled in this attempt to discursively position the creative industries at the forefront of economic development: from repeatedly stating that the number of so-called "creatives" is likely to grow, to celebrating the entrepreneurial character of cultural workers or by emphasizing that the goals of social inclusion and cultural diversity are fully compatible with and achievable through economic development (Van Heur, 2009[b]). As we have noted, this comparative advantage is currently being sought by emphasizing Berlin's importance within the contemporary art world as well as praising the city's vibrant nightlife, especially its electronic dance music and clubbing culture. Hence, Tanja Mühlhans, who works for the Senate for Economics, Technology and Women's Issues and who until recently had been responsible for dealing with nightclubs and record labels, can argue that it's in the interests of the Senate that Berlin's clubs retain their world-famous "alternative and underground" character instead of becoming too mainstream: "everything that becomes too commercial loses its appeal. It is no longer able to differentiate itself from what's going on in other cities" (quoted in Rapp, 2009: 55). In fact, as Müller (2009) suggests the Senate had taken notice of Kreuzberg's "alternative scene" and its appeal and economic potential already in the 80s so that they had assigned a public servant responsible for rock music. Even the fact that night-clubs and popular music come under the jurisdiction of the Senate for Economics rather than the Senate for Culture (which takes care of operas, orchestras, and choirs) speaks volumes about how crucial Berlin's night-time economy has become for the policy makers and the business elite.

According to the *Studie über das wirtschaftliche Potenzialder Club- und Veranstalterszene in Berlin* (Study about the Economic Potential of Nightclubs and Events Planning in Berlin) commissioned by the Senate in 2008 as part of the *Projekt Zukunft* (Project Future) initiative which aims to attract creative industries, in 2004 the average annual turnover for each club and events company was €544,000. The next year it had increased by 4% to reach €567,000. It is safe to assume given the boom in Berlin's nighttime economy that this number has gone up significantly during the following years. In 2005, the total turnover for clubs, bookers and events-planning agencies added up to €170 million. At the time this sector provided jobs to 7300 individuals 3500 of which were fully employed while 3800 were freelance or project based – but the real number must be higher as many venues employ people informally and some of them are not officially registered themselves. Plus, let us not forget that many new locales have opened up since then. Likewise, Rapp (2009) suggests Berlin's nightclubs employ around 8000 people and although the figure seems small, they are indeed major actors in the city's economy since the number of Deutsche Post or Deutsche Telekom employees in Berlin is about the same. Carrying on with figures, in 2007 concert organizers have earned €76 million while concert venues made €140 million. In 2011, the total turnover for Berlin's music industry (labels, publishers, artists, recording studios, etc.) was €1 billion (Davis, 2012). Actually, the only ones to directly benefit from the recent boom in Berlin's nighttime economy are not bar and club owners and their employees, DJs and musicians as well as bookers and events organizers. Other business actors such as beverage manufacturers and deliverers, tobacco and security companies, sound and lighting crews, graphics and web designers as well as advertising agencies are all involved. Plus, there is a symbiosis between the nighttime economy and the city's growing arts and fashion industries: the more art openings, fashion shows and industry related events take place in Berlin (e.g. Biennale, Transmediale, Berlinale, Porn Film Festival, PopKomm, Fashion Week, Bread & Butter, etc.) the more after-show parties and clubnights are organized in the city in liaison with these happenings.

What makes the clubnights especially lucrative – or if you ask the events organizers what makes most parties possible in the first place – is the trick of capitalizing on a legal ambiguity in order to pay only 7% of the money collected at the door as VAT instead of the customary 19%. As current legislation suggests the lower tax rate is applicable if clubnights include concerts, the party organizers act as though the live DJ gig qualifies as such. Nevertheless, the financial

authorities are not always willing to accept this claim. Another option is to open your own events space and throw your own parties whilst officially presenting them as happenings organized by a members-only club for cultural activities (*Kulturförderverein*) so that the cover charge can be treated as a donation. Alternatively, you can officially register your events space as an art gallery and hope the taxman will never find out that it functions most of the time as a bar. These schemes have the advantage of eluding high tax rates and bypassing licensing regulations but the downside is that if customers do not show up there is no separate party organizer to take the fall – in the traditional model the organizers make their profit from the entrance fee while the club owners make most of their revenue from the drinks sold at the bar. Given the presence of such dilemmas, increasing trouble with the *Finanzamt* (Revenue Service) as well as the rapid growth of the sector, major nightclubs as well as independent record labels have formed commissions in order to deal more effectively with the business side of things. Berliner Club Commission and Berliner Label Commission cooperate and do business with the above mentioned governmental body (Senate for Economics, etc.) represented until recently by Tanja Mühlhans. In fact, as part of the new "Visit Berlin" initiative, the Berlin Senate and the Club Commission have launched a website and a smartphone application called Club Matcher which, as the name suggests, aims to match potential nightlife tourists with the most suitable nightclubs and local musicians.

During her tenure as governmental contact person and nighttime economy consultant, Mühlhans has advised clubs and other music related enterprises about the possibilities of state funding such as start-up assistance, assessed licensing requests, resolved conflicts between landlords and venue owners, and helped clubs find new locations for interim use. In an interview she argues, in perfect tune with the "creative class" discourse, that night locales are an integral part of Berlin's economy not only because musicians and DJs need venues to perform in but also because the city's vibrant nightlife attracts many creative migrants which in turn draws – gradually yet certainly – many new business opportunities. Moreover, due to the relative scarcity of funding and difficulty of obtaining venture capital, she has the impression that financial institutions and private investors have still not fully realized the fact that Berlin's future lies in creative industries. She goes on to demand that universities offer more know-how and teach more business administration courses as most culturepreneurs are clueless about how to run a business. As Mühlhans finds the idea of "art for art's sake" nonsensical and considers the ongoing culturalization of the economy and commercialization of the arts as good signs

suggesting that the "creatives" are finally growing up and becoming realistic; she also argues, as mentioned above, that total mainstreamization and commercialization must also be avoided at all costs since this would diminish Berlin's attractiveness and undermine its comparative advantage. Therefore, a healthy dose of "subcultural" activity must be tolerated and even promoted by the policy makers. As a closing remark Mühlhans concedes that not all nightclubs or record labels are represented by their respective commissions and that they have to compete amongst each other for funds and government subsidies; nevertheless, in her opinion Berlin's music industry, especially the electronic music branch, is still characterized more by networking and cooperation than by fierce competition (quoted in Scharanberg & Bader, 2005). Hence, the culturalization of the economy goes hand in hand with the administrative view of seeing the creative city as a cultural ensemble. According to this, not only are various (sub)cultural entrepreneurs no longer bitter rivals, but also city officials and (sub)cultural actors are no longer adversaries. Instead, under the "culture-oriented govermentality" of the "self-culturizing creative city" (Reckwitz, 2009) politicians and culturepreneurs are potential business partners. Moreover, this cultural ensemble also includes the likes of city planners, real estate developers, major financial institutions and big corporations.[34]

And this brings us to the second point concerning the arrival of hip (sub)cultures and their contribution to Berlin's branded image. In fact, there are huge discrepancies between the market image of harmonious, creative and cosmopolitan Berlin as advertised product and branded experience, and the actual and daily Berlin reality and lived-experience. Such discrepancies are exemplified by Berlin's stagnant economy and high unemployment rate, as well as the fact that investments have not reached the desired levels. Moreover, as we shall shortly see while the capital intensive zone is expanding, working-class districts with a high concentration of ethnic minorities such as Neukölln and Wedding are deemed by city officials and the general (white, middle-class) public as "problem neighborhoods" so there is a systematical and rather successful attempt to "regenerate" such places. Also, there are clear

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[34] Perhaps the quintessence of this new vision is the recent opening of "BMW Guggenheim Lab" in the gentrified district of Prenzlauerberg. According to its curators, the BMW sponsored and heavily advertised arts and project space is "a mobile laboratory traveling to nine major cities worldwide over six years. Led by international, interdisciplinary teams of emerging talents in the areas of urbanism, architecture, art, design, science, technology, education, and sustainability, the Lab addresses issues of contemporary urban life through programs and public discourse. Its goal is the exploration of new ideas, experimentation, and ultimately the creation of forward-thinking solutions for city life" (http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/what-is-the-lab).

inequalities between the targeted group of privileged and creative First World migrants who are increasingly settling in these recently gentrified areas and the "guest worker" families who have been living there for decades but who are now being forced to relocate due to rising rents. This branded image of harmony is further disturbed in everyday reality by the existence of wide-spread socio-political struggles against rising rents, relocation and gentrification. The ongoing struggle against Mediaspree, which will be examined later on is an example of this.

Four: The Benefits of Being Creative

Angela McRobbie (2002 and 2004) underlines the element of victimization that marks the lives of London's creative immaterial laborers: their existence is precarious as they can no longer rely on old working patterns associated with art worlds and have to find new ways of working in the new cultural economy which usually forces them to hold down three or four projects simultaneously in order to make ends meet. Moreover, since these projects are usually short term, there have to be other jobs to cover the short-fall when a project ends. Hence, as they are self-exploited, overstressed and overworked, they have almost no time for leisure or fun. The fact that the new breed of creative vocations mixes work with play is counterbalanced by the dullness of the additional non-creative jobs they have to do in order to support their creative passions. In Berlin, where life is much cheaper and competition is less fierce, "creatives" have it much better, or at least they keep up the appearance of things being so. Rather than desperately trying to make ends meet, hence having no time to enjoy themselves; Berlin's "creatives" (blessed with welfare benefits, various sorts of state or private funding, or parents' sponsorship) seem to be constantly out and about. Moreover, they seldom pay at the cultural events and parties which are increasingly marked by brand presence and corporate sponsorship (e.g. *Vice Magazine*, *Smirnoff*, etc.) and which they are invited to and *must* attend (for "professional" reasons) on a daily basis. After all, what better place is there for discussing new media projects or making business contacts than a *vernissage* (standing in front of "art works" with a glass of bubbly in one hand, business card in the other) or a bar/night club (half-dancing-half-chatting against the monotonous backdrop of minimal techno with a glass of branded vodka in one's hand and coke in one's bloodstream to boost self-confidence)? Indeed, the endlessness of minimal techno's anti-climactic beats – hence it's the sonic accompaniment to never-ending nights and afterhours parties – corresponds well with the creative lifestyle and its immaterial labor which

blurs the distinction between work time and non-work time, thereby extending the work of day infinitely to fill all of life. It seems the "creatives" are never fully at work and never fully at leisure. So, for these agents of "network sociality" going to gallery openings and fashion shows or clubbing are not mere acts of leisure but also constitute environments and opportunities for finding new prospects. This consequently turns going out into part of one's job if not into a vocation in its own right. Moreover, now that the party is spread over the week and work is mixed with leisure, the weekend no longer constitutes the sole intensive opportunity for letting off steam. Hence, as the climactic role of the weekend has been replaced by a continuous state of chilled out celebration throughout the week, this lessening of intensity and emotive investment is reflected in minimal's anti-climactic beats. On a similar note, Mark Fisher (2008[a]) points out the link between hedonism and minimal (techno) which nowadays rarely plays off against anything else as it has become the *main event*. He goes on to add elsewhere:

> On the face of it, minimal is an extremely unlikely candidate to be considered a pleasure seekers' music. It's worth noting at this juncture, that…there is very little 'tasteful' about a Villalobos, Luciano or Hawtin set – what appears tasteful at normal volume becomes something different when put through a club PA. Nevertheless, even at high volume, there is a certain restraint at work here – or perhaps it is better construed as an avoidance (of hooks, big riffs etc.) It could be that this avoidance of the hedonic spikes, the pleasure peaks, of music is the libidinal cost of distending pleasure over the course of a twelve hour party. Berlin has in many ways become a capital of deterritorialized culture, a base for DJs and curators whose jetsetting lifestyle is indeed a 'bizarre phenomenon'. If *hauntology* depends upon the way that very specific places …are stained with particular times, then the affect that underlies minimal might be characterized as *nomadalgia*: a lack of sense of place, a drift through club or salon spaces that, like franchise coffee bars, could be anywhere (2008 [b]).

Similarly in his follow-up novel to the controversial *Strobo*, Airen describes the rise of minimal with these words:

> "2009 Fête de la musique: On the Schilling Bridge, across from the once legendary Maria (am Ostbahnhof), minimal resounds over thousands of heads. Hundreds are dancing next to the sound system at the front, at the back people sit and get stoned. It's the usual mix: stylish posers, fashionista bimbos, losers, creative directors, latin-lovers and homosexuals…Dapper, precise clicks warm the atmosphere, tame beats cause bodies to shake lightly, a harmonious crest, a consensus about shaking your ass. 'Something like this only exists in Berlin' I say to Bomec from whom I've just bummed a fag, 'you can count on that.' Then I take a sip of beer. But once techno possessed an existential meaning, it filled the emptiness in me. It created solidarity around a feeling of 'man-I'm-too-high-to-do-anything' and abandonment of all restraint, with which we paid our respects to the music. Flyers were holy messengers: Acid Maria would come and announce the joyous news. Back then it was a roar, a merciless dictatorship of sound. We were all foot soldiers on the way to 4/4 paradise. Now minimal. Exact beats, smooth production, a hypnotic yawn in between two long-drinks. Coolness everywhere. People stand in groups, clink glasses, dance while talking, mind their hairdo. At this instant Schilling Bridge is probably the hippest spot on the planet. Berlin is transmitting but my receiver is broken. And I'm suffocating because something inside of me still needs to inhale techno" (Airen, 2010: 160).

What has also become common practice recently is that professional photographers or street-fashion scouts who belong to the creative scene and thus are ever-present in Berlin's nocturnal highlights will upload the pictures of last night's events and parties on their blogs (e.g. *iHeartBerlin*, *Glamcanyon*, *Stil in Berlin*, etc.) not only as a fashion statement and a manifestation of the scene's common aesthetic sensibility but also as a proof how "cool" and "decadent" they all are, and how much fun they have out of living as well as of making a living whilst having fun. In fact, it is this constant and mutual reinforcement of self-perceptions regarding shared sensibilities and "anti-careerism" that sustains the "creative" identity and its claim to transgression. The photo set also acts as an indirect advertisement for the party organizers and the sponsoring brand: it's a hip event with good looking partygoers who seem to be enjoying themselves splendidly so those who happen to see the pictures may want to experience and be part of that scene; they might be willing to go the organizers' next party and fork out their money (and hopefully their job offers too) provided that they have the right contacts (or at least know how to get hold of them) to gain access to the exclusive event in the first place – sometimes this is as simple as subscribing to a mailing list or becoming "friends" on Facebook, at other times it requires more intimate relations and personal acquaintance. Similarly, by financing or hosting hip openings and clubnights thus acquiring a reputation for being arts-friendly, both major corporations and local start-up companies aim to amass some sort of symbolic coolness capital so that the commodities, services and branded experiences they insert into the (niche) market become more attractive and desirably marginal by virtue of seeming indispensable for the creative lifestyle. Moreover, such nocturnal events are sometimes utilized for market research. Lange (2005) relates an anecdote about three graphic-designers who regularly turn their office in Prenzlauerberg into an art and party space at night in order not only to network with other "creatives" and establish new strategic partnerships, but also to utilize nightlife both as a breeding and a testing ground for the cultural goods, symbols, styles, aesthetic markers, etc. that they intend to promote and market to a wider general public later on. While the rent is cheap (€500 for 120 m^2) they further maximize their funds through a scam: two of the three partners are officially listed as unemployed. As these two receive welfare benefits, the third partner's name appears on all bills. Moreover, since they seem unemployed, both have also become eligible for and began receiving start-up capital from the state. Lange claims this is a

very common trick – some might be tempted to call it a tactic *à la* Certeau (1984) – among culturepreneurs in Berlin.

Carrying on with why Berlin's "creatives" seem to be better off compared to their counterparts in say, London or New York, one has to point out that Berlin is a very bike-friendly metropolis: the "creatives" elude paying for transportation by riding their bikes as the nocturnal events or parties they are compelled to attend are usually taking place in neighboring (gentrified) districts. That is, of course, unless they are too inebriated to ride their bikes back home at the end of the night. But in such cases they can share the relatively low cab fare (since they tend to live close to each other as they all live in the hippest of districts) or benefit from Berlin's 24-hour public transportation system[35] which effectively is free of charge during the early hours of the morning as there are no turnstiles and the ticket inspectors are warmly tucked away in their beds. In nightclubs they jump the queue as they are on the guest list and they don't pay at the door or at the bar since they know the organizers or the management. When they cook at home they buy the ingredients from an organic chain so they pay more; after all, they tend to be self-proclaimed "lefties" (by virtue of tree-hugging and being pro-multiculturalism) and "aesthetes" so world food, local produce and fair trade is all the rage along with haute cuisine and healthy nutrition yet when they eat out they pay less, if at all, since they are often invited for dinner to friends'/colleagues' homes, event spaces, or gastro-pubs. To give an example, a "soup kitchen for hipsters" was opened in Prenzlauerberg recently: located at Prenzlauer Allee 242 and formerly known as *Pampero*, "the *Appartement* is a hidden bar and art space that offers a serving of free food in several courses. It's located in an old industrial building and therefore has the fucked-up charm of abandonment so typical for Berlin. A young creative crowd comes together here every Tuesday and enjoys the free meal either on a long neatly set table or in a small cozy lounge. Open irregularly, this space hosts a slew of events, from jazz concerts to disco DJs, photo shoots to exhibitions" (Frank, 2009). An "artist" named Sven Hausherr has made the following comment on the ever-more-popular *berlin.unlike: the definitive guide for a mobile generation* blog which exemplifies the generally euphoric and often uncritical stance "creatives" have towards Berlin: "a friend took me to the *Pampero Dinner* the first week I arrived to Berlin. This made a big impact. I knew straight away: I've moved to the right city—an open, friendly

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[35] All busses, trams, U-Bahn and S-Bahn lines work 24 hours during the weekend. During the week regular services stop around 01:00 and resume from 04:00 onwards. In the meantime, the workload is handled by regular night bus services.

crowd in a beautiful factory building, and the whole thing for free. More than two years later, the *Appartement* crew is still doing it without losing a bit of its fascination. For me, that's Berlin. Most people living in Berlin tell me that they're sick of the hipsters, particularly 'Mitte-hipsters.' But I have a different understanding of the word 'hip': Berlin is definitely not a hipster place compared to the world's major cities. The only thing that would make me sick in Berlin is the lack of sun. But I have such lovely people around me, I just forget about the sun …" (2010). What's crucial about *Appartement* is that although the food is for free, it is only available to those with the right contacts as one has to be invited to get in. So it's not only a celebratory place where food and art are savored free of charge, it is also an exclusive space of "synergy" where "creatives" keep the necessary elbow distance with old acquaintances or build up their (sub)cultural capital as they get to know likeminded people which then will hopefully get translated into economic capital in the shape of new collaborations and creative business partnerships. Similarly, in November 2009 the famous electronic music venue *Maria am Ostbahnhof* began hosting an event called Jesus Club on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday nights. The event's organizers claim: "the combination of music, dance, performance, visual art and food makes Jesus Club more than an ordinary night out. The organizers' goals are to engender an open network of creatives who work in different fields, to provide a place for encounters and exchange, and to be a collision point between art and life. It stresses the club's challenging intention to eliminate the boundary between artists and viewers. Jesus Club are looking for new presentation forms beyond that of 'stage-and-stalls', and want to bring back the fun, risk-taking element of the artistic process" (http://www.clubjesus.de).

As Berlin's remaining and constantly threatened squats continue the practice of *Volxküche* (People's Kitchen) – soup kitchens offering vegetarian or vegan food made with self grown ingredients or more often made with local produce bought directly from the farmers in Brandenburg as well as with canned items discarded by supermarkets due to expiration – the nocturnal practice of serving food for free has been bastardized by cultural entrepreneurs and turned into lucrative business ventures. Jürgen Stumpf und Phillip Gross have moved to Berlin in the early 90s and settled in the then freshly deserted eastern districts of the city like many young people from West Germany did at the time. The duo opened up a wine store in Mitte in 1996 before opening up their first wine-bar at Veteranenstr.14 in 1999. The bar, which serves no alcoholic beverages apart from wine and is colloquially referred to as the *Weinerei* (wine shop)

due to the absence of a name shield, operates according to the following pay-as-much-as-you-want principle: as you arrive you pay €1 upon which you are given an empty wine glass. Then you fill your glass from one of the numerous bottles of red, white and rosé wine located at the bar and are allowed to help yourself to as many refills from as many different bottles as you please. Everything is self-service as there are no waiters to keep track of how many drinks you have had, neither are there any prices. At 20:00 an open buffet dinner is served. Again, you may eat as much as you want. As you are leaving you are expected to self assess how much you have consumed and leave the amount of money you esteem to be sufficient in a big glass bowl at the exit. Of course, such a self-regulated system is prone to abuse. As the establishment was founded before the recent boom in nightlife tourism which has been facilitated by cheap flights and budget accommodation, it was based on the premise that it would be attended mainly by regulars: since one comes to the bar frequently, one may pay less than enough when one is short on cash, but the next time one pays generously in order to compensate for the previous shortcoming. Nevertheless, now that the main patrons have become one-timers, i.e. EasyJet tourists who aren't used to not paying in advance or to not being monitored, they drink and eat without restraint and tend to pay not accordingly. Hence, not only has the admission price gone up since a couple of years, the regulation has also become more strict: now the barkeepers count how many refills one has had and the drunken patrons who are assessed to not have paid enough are increasingly being scolded or harassed by the staff members guarding the glass bowl at the exit. Moreover, an exclusive room which offers a more upscale selection of wines has been created in the basement to cater to the regular patrons belonging to Berlin's "creative class" who may enter the room only if they know that night's password. In an article that appeared in the *Tagesspiegel* in 2007, one of *Weinerei*'s two owners claims his biggest nightmare is that the bar would appear in the EasyJet onboard magazine – this nightmare has later on become a reality. Moreover, he admits he is extremely worried about well-informed tourists who want to spend a cheap night out and the Erasmus students who report in their blogs how one can drink the maximum amount of booze for the minimum amount of dough in Berlin (Krahe, 2007). Nevertheless, this has not prevented him and his business partner from making profits and capitalizing on the increase in demand so that they have opened up three more wine bars in Mitte and Prenzlauerberg in 2002 and 2003 all operating according to the same payment principle. The author of the above-mentioned newspaper article ignores the existing examples of *Volxküche* in

Berlin and instead represents the *Weinerei* as a transgressive institution which "successfully applies Marxism since everyone drinks according to their needs and pays according to their abilities." Marx' often misquoted (as in this case) formulation of "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs" was part of his attack on the Social Democrats' Gotha Program which marked the merger between Lasalle's General German Workers' Association (ADAV) and Bebel & Liebknecht's Social Democratic Workers' Party (SDAP) in 1875. As Marx underlined the slavery of wage labor and criticized the newly formed SAPD's (Socialist Workers' Party of Germany) equal wage proposal since he believed it amounted to complicity with the capitalists and therefore would decelerate the revolutionary process, he wrote:

> In a higher phase of communist society, after the subjection of individuals to the division of labor, and thereby the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has disappeared; after labor has become not merely a means to live but the foremost need in life; after the multifarious development of individuals has grown along with their productive powers, and all the springs of cooperative wealth flow more abundantly – only then can the limited horizon of bourgeois right be wholly transcended, and society can inscribe on its banner: from each according to his abilities to each according to his needs! (1996: 214-15).

The *Weinerei* and its siblings appear to be transgressive when Marx' formulation is taken out of context. Nevertheless, the bar's owners and patrons are not necessarily fighting against wage labor or claiming that labor (without wage, hence freed from the capitalist mode of production) must become the purpose and joy of meaningful existence as Marx would have it. The wine bars' practice of not attaching fixed prices to commodities is indeed a deviation from the standard practice of contractual exchange within the capitalist free market. Nevertheless, at the end of the day they are still commercial establishments operating within a niche market and selling consumer goods and services with a rate of profit to those with the right subcultural capital. Moreover, when compared to the autonomous left's practice of giving away food to those in need, the above-mentioned examples of linking self-valorized (*Weinerei*) or free (*Appartement*, Jesus Club) food to the exclusivity of (subcultural) capital suggests that such practices adopted by the cultural entrepreneurs remain to be problematic as far as their subversive potential is concerned. But the increasing presence of such locales – or for that matter of a growing number of more upscale and artisanal pop-up restaurants or supper clubs (around €50 "donation" for a multicourse dinner) which are perceived to challenge the traditional definition and customs of

haute cuisine and in turn branded as the "underground dining scene"[36] – in the trendy parts of town, the aesthetic standards such nightspots have set up (i.e. the abovementioned Berliner chic of pleasant scruffiness), the anti-stasis and anti-rigidity sensibility they have come to stand for, and their consequent *appearance* of avant-gardism and marginality attract to the city many likeminded nightlife tourists, "creatives," "neo-bohemians" or "hipsters" which in turn intensifies and accelerates new trends of urban regeneration.

Indeed, the city has attracted a large number of high-skilled and/or creative workers from abroad during the last few years. As the current neoliberal discourse of cosmopolitanism and/or multiculturalism dictates high regard for (diversity of) "art & culture" and the market mechanisms seize the economic potential in such high regard, immigration is made easier for creative or high-skilled non-EU nationals than it is for their non-creative or unskilled compatriots. But as usual, such easy-to-acquire artist's visas or capital oriented high-skilled work permits are much easier to obtain for those non-EU citizens who come from "developed" parts of the world rather than from "developing" or "underdeveloped" ones. This has resulted in the "happenstance" that certain parts of Berlin such as Mitte, Prenzlauerberg, Friedrichshain, Kreuzberg and recently north Neukölln have become a "cosmopolitan playground" for both the "creatives" who come from EU lands and mostly have the privilege of having the supranational right to live and work in Berlin without any restrictions as well as for those hip (upper) middle-class urbanites who come from rich and industrious places such as USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, Israel, etc. Those who come from these last four countries – as well as from Lichtenstein if there are any around – have the right to reside and work in Germany just like any EU citizen while others may enter the Schengen area visa-free and stay for 90 days. Once the official "short term stay" period of 90 days are up, such nationals may re-enter and stay for another three months visa-free as many times as they please provided that they leave the Schengen area physically and come back after 24 hours. Hence, regular travels (every 3 months) back home or to the closest non-Schengen border (e.g. the UK) enables the lucky owners of such passports to have a full-time and indefinite (yet quarterly interrupted) residence in Berlin. Although a visa-waiver is not the same thing as a work permit, many privileged migrants are employed informally (e.g. in galleries, cafes or clubs) or work for

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[36] E.g. *Pret a Diner*, *Loteria*, *Good Stuff*, *Travels with my Fork*, *Metti una sera a cena*, *The Owling*, *Fortuna's Feast*, *Thyme*, *Pheobe in Berlin*, *Fisk & Gröönsaken*, *Hand in Mouth*, *Palisaden*, *The Shy Chef*, *Zuhause*, *Zagreus Projekt*, etc.

companies that are based not in Germany (e.g. a translator working for a publishing house based in New York). Even though the law states that residence/work permits may only be issued in cases where the job in question cannot be carried out by an EU national, those who have English as their mother tongue end up acquiring such permits relatively hassle free as they officially seek employment which involves native command of the English language, e.g. aspiring American (Canadian/Aussie/Kiwi) video artist working on the side as a translator or language instructor. And as creative work is usually temporary or project based, many nomadic freelancers who come visa-free leave after a few months only to be replaced by new ones. What this circulation entails is that there is a constant influx of privileged migrants from abroad and overseas as well as from richer parts of Germany so that Berlin becomes an intense site of temporal cultural activity. As McRobbie (2004) points out, this not only has consequences for urban spaces in terms of local (sub)cultures' deterritorialization and reterritorialization but also relation to space and attachments to neighborhood are attenuated and instrumental, and subject to the logic of speeded-up and deterritorialized cultural economy.

Andrew Rasse has moved to Berlin from St. Louis in 2007, he is a producer, DJ, and record label owner. His label is called Alphahouse, and Butane is the pseudonym under which he releases his minimal techno albums. When asked about why he has chosen to live in Berlin he lists five reasons:

> First of all, Berlin is the techno capital of the world. That's why people from all around the world have come here. There is a regular techno scene and there are lots of likeminded people to help the newcomers. As I arrived I already had the phone numbers of hundreds of Berliners whom I could ask for help. No other city in the world has such an extensive safety net. Secondly, Berlin is a hub. I have my studio, my office and my label here. There are major airports so I constantly fly in and out. It's cheap and the people are nice, one can live here pleasantly without any commitment. Thirdly, it's a city where one can get by on a daily basis without speaking the local language. I can take care of everything in English, even taxes. Moreover, Berlin is one of the nicest cities in the world – especially in the summer. I don't know any other metropolis that is so relaxed. And lastly, I enjoy the dance culture here; it's much different than the one in the US. All of the gigs which bring in money are in Europe anyway. Interestingly, one has to first make it big in Europe so that one gets to play America. When one lives in Berlin and works as a DJ one suddenly gets more respect back home.

 As Rapp points out, such privileged migrants have a foreign relation to the city, they live in Berlin, but they don't know much about the city and its everyday reality apart from its nightclubs, the street in which they live, and a few cafes, bars and restaurants around the area. "Most of the people they interact with are exactly in the same situation as themselves; they have grown up in other cities or countries and travel elsewhere on the weekend to earn money by

playing records or making music. Only a few bother to learn German; after all, they speak in English among themselves, and the Germans speak English anyway" (2009: 91-93). Indeed, such distantiation from the locals and such lack of urban identification and sense of belonging make it easier for these 21st century nomads to conveniently overlook the contribution they themselves make to new trends of gentrification and feel less – or not at all – guilty about the underprivileged locals who lose their homes as a result.

The "creatives" bring along their own aesthetic sensibility which manifests itself in the decoration of the fashion boutiques, art galleries, record stores, yoga centers, beauty salons, organic bakeries/groceries, vegan ice cream parlors, gourmet restaurants, cafes, bars, shared offices (usually in old shops with street level display windows) and so on that they set up in the next cheap-rent-neighborhood they move into. The phenomenon of informal, shared office or "co-working space" has been taken up a notch by *Betahaus: Coworking for entrepreneurs, technologists and creatives* (Image 5) whose first branch was opened in Kreuzberg in 2009. The creators of *Betahaus* claim they are offering 1000 m^2 for "innovation, creativity, and professional work." They are doing this because they claim "the traditional office can no longer answer to the requirements of creative work" so now they are offering a fully equipped work place, a café, and an occasional party space all in one. Since its inception "around 80 freelancers working for the creative industry" have been paying rent to be a part of the *Betahaus* experience. Among these individuals are: "graphic designers, computer programmers, photographers, architects, startup companies, a concert organizer, accountants, scholars, lawyers, NGOs, translators, video artists, journalists, and bloggers" (http://www.betahaus.de/). Likewise, *Wostel: Workspace und mehr* (Image 6), an even more hipster specimen, opened up in late 2010. They explain their "concept" with these words: "Wostel evolved from a need to create a place where friends, friends of friends and freelancers from all over the world could meet, connect and work in a comfortable and professional environment. The timeless ambiance is an important part of our concept. Our furnishing mainly originated from the 30s through the 60s. That way, our coworkers can work and create comfortably" (http://www.wostel.de/).

This new aesthetic sensibility is especially evident around "Kreuzkölln" where *Wostel* is located. Situated at the northern tip of a historically working-class area also home to ethnic minorities (mainly Turks and Arabs) since the 1960s, this neighborhood has gone through an unprecedented process of rapid gentrification within the last five years – in fact the whole

borough is booming. "Kreuzkölln" is a composite of Kreuzberg and Neukölln; this portmanteau name was created at the onset of gentrification to convey the message that this Neukölln neighborhood, which had been mostly a no-go area for the trendy youth until then, was in fact characterized by neighboring Kreuzberg's hipness (therefore it was perfectly habitable for "creatives" and lucrative for investors) rather than living up to its perceived image of scary migrant ghetto. In fact, this branding strategy has been extremely successful as it seems the neighborhood's fame has now reached the other side of the Chunnel. Here's an excerpt from a recent article entitled "Let's Move to Kreuzkölln, Berlin – It's the Epicenter of Cool" published in *The Guardian*:

> For 15 years, Berlin has been the choice for British émigrés who fancy themselves as poets/artists/alternatives, or yukis (young urban kreative internationals, allegedly). Or, as my gran might have said, layabouts. For the price of an alcove in Nuneaton, you could get an apartment of vast proportions, thereby negating the need to work like a robot, UK-stylee, with Berlin's Cabaret-cum-cold-war cool thrown in for free. Yet a city that in the 90s had 100,000 empty flats has since filled up to such an extent that rents have risen to astronomical heights (but still cheap compared with here), and devilish gentrification has got a grip. 'In' neighborhoods change with the seasons. Now Kreuzkölln – in the south, between Kreuzberg and Neukölln (see what they did there?) – is the epicenter of cool. Which means by the time you read this it probably isn't. Still, if you can bear being sooo last week, Kreuzkölln is nice, if nice equals 'just-gritty enough' apartment blocks, the canal for Sunday walks, streets filled with intimidatingly laid-back, artfully scruffy cafes and bars, and hordes of hipsters (Dyckoff, 2011).[37]

Indeed, such a shared aesthetic sensibility can be witnessed in many of the recently opened generic bars (*Szenekneipe*): half-torn, retro wall paper, flea market (often GDR) furniture, vintage lamps with orange lights (Image 7 & 8). A conversation I had with the owner of such an establishment (*Kachel 54*) demonstrates this well. Having emigrated from Turkey about twenty years ago, until quite recently this individual had been managing a second hand furniture store housed in an old butcher's shop. About two years ago he decided to turn the place into a bar (Image 9). Here's what he had to say: "I don't know anything thing about bar management or music, and I don't particularly approve the lifestyles of the Germans" – German here is the generic name he used for non-Turkish or Arab customers – "who come to this place; some of them are gay, others smoke weed outside on the pavement before coming in, but business is great. I have decorated my place just like the other bars and what is exceptional about mine is that it has vintage tiles on the wall left over from the butcher's shop. I don't have to do anything special; the decoration alone attracts the customers. And I especially don't want Turkish or Arab

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[37] The article appeared in the newspaper's *Money* section and went on to advise and encourage British investors to buy real estate in the fairly cheap Berlin market.

youths to come in here because they would destroy the nice atmosphere." While a very similarly decorated bar/project/art space called *O.T. Prokejtraum* opened its doors for business right next door in March 2011 and another is getting ready to open next to in August 2012, the Turkish bar owner whose rivals increase by the day is not the only one who wants to keep his night locale free from "riff raff." *Fuchs & Elster*, a relatively new daytime café/wine merchant and nighttime basement club in Weserstr. (the district's new pub mile) has become the first and so far only establishment in the neighborhood to employ a professional, uniform-wearing and walkie-talkie carrying bouncer team (a phenomenon that is for the most part still rare in Berlin) which keeps the *prolls* [38] out and lets the hipsters in. In fact, the recent arrival of semi-legal and partially clandestine basement parties in north Neukölln has given rise to comparisons between Berlin and New York: yesterday's "problem neighborhood" aka "the German Bronx" has now been rebranded as an "avant-garde playground" since "Kreuzkölln" is now being regarded as Berlin's answer to the Lower East Side from 30 years ago (Slasky, 2010). Yet, such "cool & exciting" locales do not manage to remain secret for long as those with the right "Facebook friends" (social capital) or those who follow the right blogs (subcultural capital) find out about them pretty fast.

As the common scenario of urban gentrification unfolds, the aesthetic transformation of the district's façade is followed by a rise in demand which results in higher rents. As more and more people who share the pioneers' tastes (subcultural capital) decide they can no longer make do with solely visiting the flourishing neighborhood's galleries and bars but instead must – lest they miss out on something – live and work there, realtors capitalize on the rise in demand as they gradually take over the district by renovating old buildings only to rent them out for much higher prices. In some cases old tenants are offered money to willingly move out so that their flats can be renovated and rendered more lucrative. At other times rents are raised drastically prior to refurbishment so that preexisting yet undesired (i.e. poor and disorderly) tenants can be legally evicted. In general, the elderly and the underprivileged, especially pensioners and working-class ethnic minorities, are being replaced by creative migrants from abroad (mainly

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[38] "Proll" which is slang for "Prolet" is analogous to the British "chav" or the American "white trash." In essence, it designates the lumpenproletariat without using the Marxist terminology and values. In Berlin, the lumpenproletarians and pensioners usually live in East German districts such as Marzahn, Hohenschönhausen, Köpenick and Schöneweide as well as in Western migrant districts such as Wedding and Neukölln. Berlin's lumpenproletarian (post)migrant youth is largely absent from both the indie as well as the techno scene. Nevertheless, Rapp (2009) suggests this seems to be not the case in Frankfurt and Mannheim.

from the EU and the rest of the Western world) or from much wealthier parts of Germany (the cliché is that they all come from Swabia and Bavaria) who find the raised prices relatively cheap since they are used to paying even higher rents in their hometowns. According to a recent news article, some rents in the neighborhood have gone up by almost 80% since the mid-2000s while in the year 2010 alone they have gone up by 14% (Mösken[a], 2011). Moreover, although preexisting tenants with old leases (5-10 years or more) are relatively protected from sharp rent increases, people who sign new contracts or move in after the refurbishment are expected to pay on the average 40% more than what the previous occupants used to pay. Actually, current legislation prevents property owners from increasing the rent beyond a certain threshold which is calculated separately for each borough; this rent index (*Mietspiegel*) is established annually by taking the average monthly rent per square meter charged in a certain district. Yet, as this legal barrier is not applicable to new leases (in most cases new, post-refurbishment contracts are way above the index) and as more and more property owners demand increased monthly payments from their preexisting tenants within legal limits, the average rent; hence, the legal threshold increases annually which permits continuous inflation. Although there is growing public demand that the state government should amend the law in order to better regulate rent increases and protect the tenants' interests instead of filling the property owners' pockets; the Berlin Senate's official position on the matter, which is based on a study it has commissioned and made public in March 2012, is that perhaps with the exception of Reuterkietz there is no real threat of gentrification in Neukölln. As far as this study carried out by the *Topos Stadtplannung* agency is concerned, the term "gentrification" must be reserved for cases where a neighborhood's transformation – actually bourgeoisification would be a more fitting term – is complete so that its refurbished tenements and sanitized streets are overtaken by young financiers and luxury vehicles. Therefore, the Senate reassures Berliners that there is no reason to worry as what Neukölln's recent "artistic and subcultural boom" amounts to is simply the replacement of "inhabitants who are at the lowest end of the income spectrum" by "slightly richer individuals mostly working within the creative economy," i.e. the replacement of the *unsexy poor* by the *poor but sexy*. In fact, this is something positive as far as the Senate is concerned. That's why the state government has joined forces with the borough of Neukölln to create seven new "neighborhood management" bureaus (*Quartiersmanagement*) between 2003 and 2009.[39] The

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[39] QM Reuterkiez (2003), QM Körnerpark (2005), QM Flughafenstr. (2005), QM Richardplatz –Süd (2005), QM

function of these special administrative units, which also receive funding from the federal government and the EU, is to regenerate the "problem-ridden" district's "backward economy" and to pacify its "dangerous and criminal" ethnic elements through social projects and cultural events. In fact, in a recent newspaper interview the borough's cultural affairs secretary Dorothea Kolland[40] justifies her decision to live in the historically affluent district of Charlottenburg instead of up-and-coming Neukölln by claiming she once seriously considered relocating to the area and even began flat hunting around Schillerpromenade, but in the end decided otherwise because her teenager son who had arrived on his bike for a flat viewing appointment was assaulted by a group of Arab youths (Itzek, 2012).

Six of Neukölln's seven new "neighborhood management" bureaus fall under the category of *Stark Intervention I* (strong intervention) which means they each receive €1,2 million from the state of Berlin annually. The seventh one, namely Quartiersmanagement Reuterkiez, is in the *Stark Intervention II* category as the "regeneraton" under its jurisdiction is already advanced so it receives €400,000. One of the major cultural events promoted by these bureaus to foster integration and improve the borough's non-business-friendly, ghetto image is called *48 Stunden Neukölln* (48 Hours Neukölln) during which galleries, bars, restaurants and various shops host numerous artistic happenings and stage shows on a weekend in June. In 2012 the festival took place in 340 venues and offered 700 exhibitions, concerts, plays and parties within a 48-hour period. As most of these venues have opened up within the last five years, this boom in the district's creative and nighttime economies is reflected in the fact that the festival organizers proudly report the number of venues and events have both doubled since 2008. What's important to realize here, as Kosnick (2009) points out, is that with such schemes the liberal cosmopolitanism discourse is utilized both by public and private actors to brand the city as innovative, tolerant and diverse as well as to market it to prospective migrants who belong to the desired category of global business elites and globally mobile, creative, and culturally eclectic "world citizens." On the other hand, Berlin's already existing ethnic minority/post-migrant cultures are viewed through the lens of official multiculturalism and treated as elements to be tamed and regulated via the project of cultural integration. Moreover, this is done by disavowing the class difference between the creative cosmopolitan urbanite and the post-migrant, thereby

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Lipschitzallee/Gropiusstadt (2005), QM Dammwegsiedlung/Weiße Siedlung 2005, QM Donaustr.-Nord (2009) and QM Ganghoferstr. (2009).

[40] Kolland retired in May 2012. She had been the head of *Neuköllner Kulturamt* since 1981.

essentializing the latter's culture as culprit in most urban conflicts. Here, instead of viewing urban "unpleasantries" associated with post-migrant culture and everyday practices as belonging to a broader lumpenproletarian culture and *habitus*, the project of integration is based upon the assumption that the challenge posited by the Other is caused by an essentially homogenous culture rooted in ethnicity and religion. Of course, it goes without saying that the presence of the lumpenproletariat (be it German or post-migrant) in the city center is not desired by the actors and market forces behind the Berlin = Creative World City project either.

Funnily enough, the process of gentrification is being supplemented by a process of deliberate exodus: many young, creative parents are moving out of ethically mixed districts so that their children can go to school with the "German" kids. In trendy Kreuzberg, for example, there are 20 public primary schools in which 90% of the students come from migrant and often Muslim families. There are only 4 schools in which this rate is below 40%. Many white, middle class parents claim their children suffer from "mobbing" so they are moving to more affluent and non-Muslim neighborhoods. Others fake their address so that their children may attend public schools in other districts. Another rising trend is the establishment of private schools which until recently were very few in number (Brakebusch, 2010). This seems to point in the direction of a deep paradox: many creative workers whose "alternative," post-industrial middle-class lifestyle enables them to be part of and contribute to Berlin's vibrant nightlife perceive or define themselves to be dissidents or leftists in the sense that they do not vote for the Christian Democrats or the ultranationalists. As they vote instead for the pro-big business policies of the Social Democrats or more often for the environment and capital friendly policies of the Greens – *die Linke* is usually dismissed as the reincarnation of the East German Communist Party – many complain about and are critical of welfare reform and favor minimum wage (which is nonexistent in Germany) or basic income guarantee, whilst being pro-environment, gay/animal rights and multiculturalism. Nevertheless, the commercial exchange the "creatives" have with the *döner* (kebab) seller, the *spätie* (off-license) shop keeper, or the fruit and vegetable vendor in Neukölln's' recently rebranded "bioriental"[41] street market at Maybachufer remains to be the only personal interaction they have with the working-class ethnic minorities whose lack of rights

[41] Word play with "bio" as in organic and "oriental" as in Orientalism. It is not surprising that the recently installed name shield features the camel, an exotic creature traditionally associated with the Orient. But snake charmers as well as dark skinned men wearing the fez and sitting on a flying carpet seem to be missing from the picture on the shield.

as "legal aliens" tends to escape their attention and whom they are indirectly forcing to move out of their homes. As there seems to be little self-critique concerning the role they themselves play in starting new trends of urban gentrification, the neo-bohemian entrepreneurs and cultural workers seem to largely reflect the current *zeitgeist* as they are more interested in buying into the latest installment of the Apple-Macintosh saga and at best in embracing the populism of "we are the 99%" (to be fair this has its own virtues as well) than engaging in non-superficial and overtly Marxist critique which emphasizes class-struggle.[42] And there are also a great deal of individuals who are interested in cashing in on reactionary sentiments by reappropriating critical theory with the aid of sympathetic academics in order to legitimate their production as "art" or indeed "political art" and attaching to it the credibility of dissidence.

Indeed, the superficiality of the creatives' dissidence as well as their ignorance concerning the matters mentioned above have become evident (once again) in November 2009 during the *Check Point DreamYourTopia* happening/party organized by the Dutch "artist" Dadara to commemorate the Wall's fall at an old public bath/swimming pool (*Stadtbad Wedding*) located in the migrant and working-class district of Wedding. Initially realized in the summer of 2009 at the Burning Man Festival in Nevada and co-theorized by an American academic named Charissa N. Terranova via the reappropriation of Agamben, Althusser, and Žižek, the project entailed the construction of a pink "Border Check Point to Enter Your Own Dreams" by the "Department of Dreamland Security." Those who wanted to partake in the project had to fill out an online immigration form in which the absurdities and injustices of the international immigration regime were partially parodied, and the applicants subsequently received a Land of Dreams passport. Of course, in real (not dream) life passports are issued by nation-states (your home country not the country you will be visiting), and the fact that you are a citizen of a nation-state (the poorer, "less developed" ones to be exact) puts you in the tragic situation of needing a visa to travel in the first place. The interactive part of the project entailed

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[42] The schism between the traditional left and the new anti-finance-capitalism/alterglobalization movement became especially evident on 15 January 2012 when the annual Luxemburg-Liebknecht memorial parade (which had already become a symbol and means of dissidence in the GDR) coincided with the final demonstration of Occupy Berlin whose camp had been evicted earlier in the week. Although one demonstration took place before noon and the other in the afternoon so there was sufficient time to attend both, the two events remained mutually exclusive with the exception of a few small groups from the autonomous left who were present in both. The generational difference between these two distinct sets of protesters as well as the difference between their identity constructions, means of self-expression, and solution proposals drew attention to a deeper schism between two different *zeitgeists* and their consequent *weltanschauungs*.

prospective travelers/art-lovers being pushed around by border patrols and immigration officers, and not being let in into the Land of Dreams hassle free. Throughout the Saturday night the checkpoint was going to be attacked by "street art" and in the end the whole thing would culminate in the collective destruction of the border to the backdrop of techno. The event turned out to be a partial failure since many attendees who had the privilege of coming from "developed" nations were unfamiliar with the mind-broadening experience of being harassed by consulate officials or of being humiliated and treated as second rate human beings at the First World border, so they could not make sense of or tolerate the mistreatment they suffered at the hands of the border guards. After all, as already noted, probably the only time in their lives that they had experienced something similar to the anxiety customarily felt at the border of Fortress Europe by people coming from the Global South was when they stood in line and anxiously awaited the bouncer's inspection outside *Berghain* or *Bar 25*. As a result, many people were infuriated and most of them left early – perhaps to go see if they could get in to one of those clubs. Organized and participated mostly by those who actually do not require a visa to live and work or at least travel to anywhere in Europe, this satire of immigration regimes still did not target those who actually need permission to be in Berlin. Despite the fact that this "happening" took place in Wedding which is a migrant neighborhood, neither the now elderly "guest workers" nor their working-class children and grandchildren managed to enter the glamorous world of the First World/middle-class "artists" and hipsters in order to dream and party the borders away with them. So at the end of the day was it really about rebelling against the immigration regime and making a political statement through the metaphor of liberating the dreams, or mental masturbation disguised as art and yet another excuse for creative types to party? Perhaps both. Either way, the comments of some attendees in a discussion on *iHeartBerlin* (a popular street fashion, art and nightlife blog) hinted at the fact that the whole point of the event had been missed by those who partook in it:

> Still Dreaming Says:
> November 8th, 2009 at 22:50h
>
> The DreamYourTopia concept was absolutely shit! After spending more than an hour being bossed and pushed around by a bunch of losers wearing hideous pink outfit I realized how the whole project was not devised and created for the people but for the those who organized it, took part in it as guards and cashed on the large amount of money they probably earned from tickets sales and from whoever funded the whole pile of bullshit. Dreams are for free you arty farty assholes. Your concept missed the point, the people working on the project were not friendly, interesting, funny, entertaining, inspiring and stimulating. You were not properly organized and you lack creativity. You might sell this shit to people in the US but here in Europe we don't buy

this farce! Dreams are for free and we don't need a fancy passport to believe you are the good mediator of such a world.

Barbara Says:
November 9th, 2009 at 12:11h

I agree with Still Dreaming. I left this stressful situation after one hour of waiting in several lines explaining my dreams to these "guards". It was more a nightmare than DreamYourTopia. They stole two precious hours of my life!

Horst Says:
November 10th, 2009 at 10:15h

I was waiting for four hours! I am open-minded and enjoy being silly but this was like an oppressive regime (close-minded) run by people lacking humor (not silly). I played the "game" all the way to be eventually taken to the Stattbad party that wasn't even fun. Everyone was tired because of the waiting. There was lots of waiting NOT because Berlin has many dreamers (they did this checkpoint installation in Burning Man Festival where there are thousands of people) BUT because they were not organized properly and we were constantly being taken from one queue to the next or sent away for NO reason. When I asked why, do you know what they said? It's ART.

Oh Dear Says:
November 17th, 2009 at 15:11h

Get a life people. Dreams are not for sale! We can philosophize endlessly and jerk off the sound of existentialism bullshit but it all comes down to one fact (or three):
A) dreams are not for sale
B) going through the checkpoint was a meaningless experience
C) pink is a hideous color[43]

On the one hand, as the new breed of wanderers currently haunting the fashionable parts of Berlin manage to lead an adult life that is not traditionally adult like – this has become socially and financially viable – their tenure in Berlin seems to be aimed at and characterized by Bourdieu's (1984) new petite bourgeois "morality of pleasure as duty" and the celebration of their lightness of being. In part, this lightness owes its existence to the increasing collapse of borders between work and leisure under the new economy as well as the precarity of (immaterial) labor that is associated with economy as such: despite its popularity and mid-term feasibility, this non-adult-like-adult-life is considered by many as an intermezzo, as a pause from real life, as one last stretch of enjoyment and adventure before one settles down, before families are grounded and financial stability and social security become a must. For this reason Berlin has now become an exceptional refuge, a place of temporary residence for many creative, middle-class twenty- or thirty-somethings who are currently taking a break from the inhibitions

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[43] The whole sequence of comments as well as my own contribution to the discussion (with the alias Vera) can be found at http://www.iheartberlin.de/2009/11/03/checkpoint-dreamyourtopiacheckpoint-dreamyourtopia/

of their real, properly-adult-lives which they have left behind in their home cities or countries. Berlin's increasing popularity abroad is well reflected in the words of an American "artist" whom I have met in a bar in the currently fashionable part of Neukölln: "you know man, there aren't so many cool places to live in the US. You either go to cities like New York or Portland or you just move to Berlin. That's why so many of us are here." Rapp argues there are two main reasons why Berlin has attracted so many musicians and DJs from across the pond lately. Firstly, the electronic music scene used to have many centers around the world in the 90s such as Chicago, New York, London, Manchester, Sheffield, Paris, Frankfurt and Cologne whereas now Berlin seems to be the only major center. Secondly, the collapse of the US rave scene and the conservatism of the Bush administration have driven many Americans away (2009). Obviously, we must add to this European immigration policy's relative favoritism when it comes to First World nationals. But it would be wrong to accuse all privileged creative migrants of having an "ignorance is bliss" attitude. There are also people like DJ Andrew Rasse who are self-reflexive about the precarity of their situation and worry about the hardships of maintaining such a hedonistic existence. The music scene is characterized by fad and fashion so one is only as good the most recent album one has released:

> Maybe one day no one will be interested in my music anymore. What will happen then? Will I still live here? Where will I go? Everyone who has moved here has also mechanisms in their lives which prevent them from feeling too much at home here. This life can come to an end very easily and rapidly. After all, how long does a DJing career last? How sustainable is a job which requires one to go to *Panorama Bar/Berghain* at 9:00 on Sunday morning and get shit faced when one wants to meet one's colleagues?

Dave Turov who arrived from New York in 2003 with a "backpack and 70 records" and has been organizing the "M-Parties" (in clubs such as *WMF*, *Watergate* and *Weekend*) since 2004 has a similar opinion:

> Compared to other cities, one needs much less money to get by in Berlin. That's why so many painters, designers and other creative types move here. But this is also a problem. Many people believe Berlin is this creative utopia, but it actually isn't. You have to be really disciplined if you want to make something here. It's very hard to be productive in Berlin. Many people are simply not doing anything. They are just hanging around and leading a life which has not been available to any previous generation. To be able to chill-out like that, not to be forced to fight for anything is a huge privilege. I know exactly what I'm talking about because I myself have wasted lots of time since I used to believe in this 'I'm so creative and I've just moved to Berlin' myth. In New York things are different, you either swim or drown. Here it's easier. If you have no money at the moment, you pay your rent later, or you go live with your friends. After all, the apartments are huge and there's room for everyone. But this freedom can be very deceptive. If you are not disciplined enough, you can easily get lost in Berlin" (both quoted in Rapp 2009: 93-98).

What this indicates is that, the above mentioned lightness is counterbalanced by some sort of heaviness in the sense that these privileged migrant-workers of the cultural sector have to worry about the precarity of their happenstance and seem to take themselves and their activities quite seriously so that "professed 'pleasure in work', indeed passionate attachment to something called 'my own work', where there is the possibility of the maximization of self expressiveness," e.g. their art, their events, their projects, the vocations built around their fashionably aesthetic sensibility, the customer services they provide for niche markets, etc. "provides a compelling status justification (and also a disciplinary mechanism) for tolerating not just uncertainty and self-exploitation but also staying (unprofitably) within the cultural sector and not abandoning it altogether" (McRobbie, 2004). Here, such pleasure and self-expression enabled by living and working "alternatively" is valued over and preferred to climbing up the traditional corporate ladder and the work ethos it requires. This is taking place as the public (especially young people belonging to post-industrial middle-classes) are "presented with endless accounts of the seemingly inherent rewards of creative labor. The flamboyantly *auteur* relation to creative work that has long been the mark of being a writer, artist, film director or fashion designer is now being extended to much wider section of a highly 'individuated' workforce" (McRobbie, 2002: 517). Living and working as such, which is perceived to enable self-actualization and independence, must then be taken seriously; one must be committed in order to justify the insecurity that accompanies not pursuing traditional and safer modes of careerism. Moreover, getting to know the right people, mastering the delicacies and intricacies of networking as well as going out and partying are taken seriously to the extent that they come to be regarded by many as full-time jobs themselves. Here, it is noteworthy to point out that this specific mode of commitment is drastically different from one that demands if not political engagement and labor organization then at least some sort of political and critical awareness as well as self-distancing from the above-mentioned celebration of lightness and the lightness of celebration.

Four: Macht (immaterialle) Arbeit wirklich frei in dieser materiallen Welt?[44]

There indeed is an absence of labor organization across the terrain of creative industries with the effect, as McRobbie suggests that a now expanded labor market in the cultural sector takes the lead not from unionized actors and actresses but instead from a blend of the bohemian individualism of artists and the business ethos of the commercial art director. The small scale independent company (of perhaps two or three people) and the nonorganized casualized freelancer come to represent the dominant units of cultural production. In recent years with the exponential growth of freelance work replacing contract work, with the end of the "closed shop" in television and in print journalism, with the streamlining of big organizations, and with a vast population of new entrants wishing to join this labor market, union organization along traditional lines is either seen as irrelevant or simply by-passed. In any case labor relations comprise less frequently or rarely of a standard contract between employers and employees. The interface of power becomes both more fluid and opaque. But the displacement of power in this kind of work away from the conventional oppositions of manager and workforce along with the absence of union representation only makes antagonisms acutely felt but undirected and often inner-directed. Inequities, injustices and malpractices are widely recognized, almost normative, but rarely confronted. The demands of the network (bars, clubs, galleries, hanging out) are frequently such that various categories of persons (e.g. single mothers) or those without the necessary subcultural capital are precluded, or only gain access with difficulty. Thus there are new barriers to entrance to replace the old closed shop (McRobbie, 2004).

Recently, the lack of labor organization in Berlin's creative industries against causalization and precarity has been challenged by the anarcho-syndicalist trade union federation *Freie Arbeiterinnen-und Arbeiter- Union* (Free Workers' Union). As a result of this challenge, FAU has been banned by Berlin's higher regional court from calling itself a union. The circumstances under which this ban came about are both absurd and indicative of the state of

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[44] "Does (immaterial) labor really make one free in this material world?" Due to its tragic and unforgettable connotations, the phrase "Arbeit macht Frei" is understandably a taboo in Germany. By no means is it being used here with the intention of disrespecting the Holocaust victims or belittling the significance of Nazi atrocities. Neither is it being used cynically or provokingly to attack the liberal democratic cult of political correctness or to deliberately offend the readers. Rather, the aim is to criticize the so-called freedoms which are promoted as an integral part of the "creative" lifestyle made possible by the post-Fordist immaterialization of labor and the culturalization of economy.

labor rights in Germany where the union landscape is bleak. First of all, there's the biggest union which sees itself as simply a service provider, namely the DGB where workers take part vicariously for the most part, where those who become active are looked upon with suspicion and where workers in small companies often fall by the way side. Then there are various forms of "yellow" unions, organizations that the bosses control. For good reason, these are often prevented from signing contracts by the courts as they are openly funded by big business. The few other trade unions that have managed to get a foothold in Germany remain bastions of highly skilled workers, such as railway engineers, pilots and doctors. In November 2008, the staff of Babylon Cinema in Mitte decided to rise up against precarious job conditions which prevailed despite the major government funding the cinema receives every year. In a first act of defiance, they formed a shop council, one of the few instruments employees have to force bosses to recognize labor laws. Through the shop council's actions they were finally granted basic rights such as sick leave and vacation pay. However, they found out soon enough that if they wanted to force their bosses to increase their wages they would have to join a union since only these can take job action and negotiate collective agreements in Germany. As they couldn't form their own union because unions are required by law to have a structure that goes beyond a single company, and after calls to Ver.di (a branch of DGB) remained unanswered they decided to join FAU-Berlin. Together with the majority of Babylon's employees FAU presented a contract proposal to the cinema management in June 2009. But the managers refused to negotiate. Consequently, FAU started job action and called for a boycott which was banned by labor courts in October 2009. But this tactic seemed to bring results: the Berlin Senate approved even more funding for Babylon, Ver.di finally took notice and appeared on the scene and subsequently negotiated a contract with the cinema management without consulting the staff. Unfortunately, having been prevented from taking job action, FAU wasn't able to influence the negotiations Actually, FAU theoretically fulfills all of the requirements to legally take job action according to German laws. Yet laws are up for interpretation and it would have taken a very brave judge to entrust a labor dispute in the hands of the workers. Not surprisingly, without the support of the union the negotiations ended in a victory for the bosses. But this wasn't the end of things to come. As the cinema management, their lawyers and the judiciary teamed up, their definition of what a union is prevailed over that of the workers. As a result, FAU was ordered to stop calling itself a (grassroots) union by the Berlin regional court in January 2010. Moreover, in April 2010 they

were fined €200 for insisting on retaining the name. What's more dangerous about this ruling is that it provides a legal template for illegitimating and illegalizing the work of all grassroots unions in Germany; it's an attempt to discredit a movement, to ban it from the realm of labor struggle and belittle its significance by presenting it as merely an agitprop group.

As the neo-liberal model increasingly characterizes creative work, governed by the values of entrepreneurialism, individualization and reliance on commercial sponsorship, independent work finds itself squeezed, compromised or brokered by the venture capitalists of culture as governments encourage the "freedom" allowed by this kind of labor (McRobbie, 2002). Despite Hardt & Negri's (2005) optimism and trust in the "multitude" and the new subjectivities immaterial labor creates, given McRobbie's assertion that the accelerated speed of cultural working within "new soft capitalism" marks an intensification of individuation, a more determined looking out for the self; it is hard to envisage the possibility of a revived, perhaps re-invented, radical democratic politics that might usefully de-individuate and re-socialize the world of creative work. In the new cultural economy, where social structures are increasingly illegible or opaque, self-monitoring (as an indication of reflexive modernization *à la* Giddens et al., 1994), self-exploitation and self-blame serve the interests of this "new soft capitalism" well, ensuring the absence of social critique (McRobbie, 2002). But the appearance of social critique remains and is built into the creative lifestyle.

As noted before, cheap rents, low living costs and undermined yet still functional Keynesian economics are currently sustaining Creative World City Berlin's post-industrial middle-classes. Nevertheless, no one really knows for how long this exceptional situation can linger on. While Hardt & Negri (2005) consider Keynes' New Deal as a rare example in the history of economics when an effort was made to free political economy from the reactionary apparatus that supports it by opening up the system to social forces and political subjects in order to mediate between antagonistic and social tensions, they also claim today's immaterialization of the capitalist mode of production has been enabled by Friedman and the Chicago School's complete undermining of Keynesianism. What, on the other hand, seems to be unique about Berlin and its creative *bionade bourgeoisie* is that immaterial labor and Keynesian economics go hand in hand.

As Marx & Engels (2002) had predicted the dissolution of class since the opposition between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat would be sublated with the arrival of communism's

classless society following the initial dictatorship of the proletariat, Lefebvre (2008) suggests Marx' drafts for *Capital* show he intended not to stick extensively to the working-class vs. capitalist-class binary but instead wished to reinstate a triadic quality to his analysis: his inclusion of land, ground rent, and the agrarian question pointed to a three term totality: land-capital-labor. Moreover, Marx felt obliged to reinstate the bureaucracy and trade the functions of realization and distribution of surplus-value. Hence with Marx, argues Lefebvre, society as we perceive it appears in all its complexity minus obviously the modalities of social and political practice such as the welfare state that he could not possibly have foreseen in his day. So, as the rise of the middle-class has completed this trinity, Keynesianism with its networks of redistribution, income transfers, direct or disguised subsidies has come to the rescue of the middle-classes. Thus, in the 20th century it has been the middle-class that has provided the site where the everyday and its models take shape. Not only that, but the middle-class also has been the main location and source of protest and contestation as well as of rather naïve attempts to transform and transfigure things that were becoming established. It is within the middle-classes – in the middle of the middle – that modern daily life is constituted and established. This is where it becomes a model; starting from this site, it is diffused upwards and downwards. It is here that the notion of "lifestyle" with its unique mode of consumerism comes to the fore (Lefebvre , 2008). As Žižek (2009[a]) suggests, capitalism has responded to the protests and demands of '68 by putting on the appearance of becoming more cultural, humane, ethical, globally aware, environment friendly, etc. by bringing consumerism and anti-consumerism together in the same gesture and in the same commodity experience. He argues what we seem to be doing is to strive to create "global capitalism with a human face:" we have the basic neoliberal rules of the game, we take them for granted and then we want to make the whole thing a bit more humane, tolerant, environment friendly, globally aware, etc. and we do this by sustaining and expanding the middle-class with tools such as welfare. If we consider what has been going on in Europe for the last decades this seems to work; after all, never before in history has such a fairly high percentage of the population lived with so much relative freedom, welfare, and security as is the case in Western Europe and Scandinavia today. Nevertheless, Žižek considers these cherished liberal values and modes of middle-class life to be increasingly under threat as we are gradually approaching a zero point ecologically, socially, biogenetically, etc. since this environment of wellness and liberty increasingly gets translated into merely a *simulation* of democracy and

critique. This is consistent with Lefebvre's suggestion that "the predominance of the middle-classes has repercussions in what is called culture – that is to say, ethics and aesthetics. Incapable of creating new values, the middle-classes create the opposition between conformism and non-conformism. Ethics is confused with conformism, while aesthetics is inflected towards non-conformism" (2008: 161). That's exactly what enables creative vocations and post-industrial middle-class lifestyles that accompany them to be characterized by a euphoric sense of "by-passing tradition, pre-empting conscription into the dullness of 9-5 and evading the constraints of institutional processes. There is a utopian thread embedded in this wholehearted attempt to make over the world of work into something closer to a life of enthusiasm and enjoyment" (McRobbie, 2002: 521). The creative vocations and lifestyles offered by the global culture industry appear, at least to their practitioners, to be the relative triumph of adolescence's nonchalance against the responsibilities of adult life. Doing creative work and thereby leading non-traditional lives are seen as feasible and realistic options in which the dullness and dreariness of adult life proper (characterized by the obligation to earn money, the banalization of everyday tasks and routinization of everyday life, the alienation from one's own true creative potential as one's labor is sold for wages and utilized to create things not willed by the laborer but demanded by the bosses, etc.) are eluded or at least minimized. Moreover, people who can't get by solely on their own artistic production (either because they are not artistically gifted enough to go beyond mediocrity and produce outstanding cultural products and/or because the mediocrity or exceptionality of cultural goods are determined by and large according to standards set by the culture industry as well as their market appeal in the first place) prefer the flexibility of creative vocations to the routine of 9 to 5. Here, creative industries offer them satisfaction as they must come up with *innovative* ways of bringing cultural goods produced by *others* to their prospective consumers/connoisseurs.

With the immaterialization of labor argue Hardt & Negri (2005) something drastic happens: immaterial production creates social life itself rather than the means of social life as material production does. That's why they consider immaterial production to be "bio-political." And their optimism lies in their belief that life cannot be wholly captured by capital, that there will always be surplus. As they base their notion of "immaterial production of social life" to Marx' concept of "living labor" (i.e. the form giving fire of our creative capacities, the fundamental human faculty; the ability to engage the world actively and create social life) they

argue "living labor can be corralled by capital and pared down to the labor power that is bought and sold and that produces commodities and capital, but living labor always exceeds that. Our innovative and creative capacities are always greater than our productive labor – productive, that is, of capital. At this point we can recognize that this bio-political production is on the one hand *immeasurable*, because it cannot be quantified in fixed units of time, and, on the other hand, always excessive with respect to the value that capital can extract from it because capital can never capture all of life" (2005: 146). Nevertheless, the rising immaterialization of labor not only enables the production of the "common" and facilitates new forms and networks of resistance as Hardt & Negri want to see things, it also brings along a corporate and technocratic notion of creativity and a new middle-class duty to be creative. Perhaps what we have nowadays is no longer the "tormented genius" who is divorced from the masses and relies exclusively on cultural intermediaries for translating and disseminating his avant-garde "masterpieces." With the popularization of culture and the culturalization of economy, a great number of Berlin-based individuals who somehow think of themselves as true artists but arguably are mere art enthusiasts or mediocre art practitioners are officially announced to be genuine artists and consequently enabled to make a living with the aid of curators, funding bodies, residence programs, galleries, etc. which institutionally legitimate their products of labor as art. Moreover, such galleries make huge amounts of money as a recent study reveals: their total turnover in 2010 was €193 million which was 22.7% more than the previous year. Combined with the revenue from the temporary exhibitions held in Berlin's museums this sum reached €263.2 million ("Wenn Künstler Arbeitsplätze schaffen," 2012).

Perhaps here the notion of culturalized economy must be supplemented with the economization of culture. With the culturalization of economy, creativity becomes imperative in two distinct ways: the commandment "be creative!" applies to both one's leisure/consumption and production. The first has something to do with the type of commodity fetishism that Debord (1987) calls spectacularization marked by the aestheticization of everyday minutiae which has traditionally been a trait of the aristocracy and has become more accessible to the middle-classes first with the onset of dandyism and then with the rise of Fordism as well as to the lower-middle and working classes with the advent of post-Fordism: as consumers we are expected and encouraged to be "creative" in say, decorating our rooms so that banal, everyday objects suddenly become the means with which we express our individuality and aesthetic sensibility. So

it's no longer just about the car or the wrist watch, now the color of the napkins that I buy in the supermarket is also of high importance for my sense of beauty as well as for my own self-image as well as for the image I strive/perceive to give off to the outside world. In fact, as far as the Berlin version of this "creative" sensibility seems to be concerned, such trinkets are much more important than traditional markers of distinction vis-à-vis glamour; hence the claim to subvert conspicuous consumption and the consumerism of elder generations which sustains the over-optimistic claim about being "alternative" and "subcultural." In other words, desire and fantasy become the leading actors as traditional use- and exchange-value are joined by a secondary use-value (Adorno calls this ersatz use-value while Baudrillard refers to it as sign-value) resulting in the fact that commodities become instruments for expressing one's distinction in Bourdieu's sense of the term. Of course, the paradox is that one strives to assert one's unique individuality through the use of mass-produced goods and experiences – even in our post-Fordist days of "flexible accumulation" (Harvey, 1990) the customization of goods and services is still not the norm but a privilege afforded to the relatively rich while the niche markets which have become of central importance are still more often targeted at customer groups rather than single individuals, and the fact that commodities have been mass produced does not change when you buy them from a thrift-store, flea market or a vintage garment boutique – so we can talk of an ongoing homogenization of ways and means of being different. And this goes hand in hand with branded experience: a commodity's relative expensiveness is justified not necessarily (or only) by its high utility/quality but by the perceived/branded value of what it means to own/consume it, what sort of lifestyle it signals. As Lash & Lury (2007) suggest, use-value and the commodity are qualities of products whereas sign-value and the brands are qualities of experience. In other words, commodities work through a mechanistic principle of identity whereas brands work through the animated production of difference. This difference is generated by a brand and the consumer's relation to it; the brand functions as a sign-value through its and the consumer's difference. Probably, the quintessence of this phenomenon today is the overpriced gadgets sold to millions of people around the globe by Apple Inc. via symbolically attaching their manufactured goods to the fantasy-image of a casual and creative lifestyle.[45]

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[45] Lash & Lury (2007) argue that the difference between our current/global culture industry and earlier versions of culture industry attacked at the time first by Adorno & Horkheimer and later on by the Birmingham School is that in our branded universe, the culture industry/informational capitalism is less a matter of the base determining the superstructure than the cultural superstructure collapsing, as it were, into the material base. As a result, traditional

This process of commodification via "creative consumerism" is accompanied by the second culturalized economic imperative that we (college-graduate, middle-class kids) all turn into "original, fun, interesting and innovative" individuals who make their living most preferably in the creative economy. Yet, to be creative in this sense is not necessarily a matter of aesthetics but rather the conundrum of a corporate language thriving on modes of production and productivity which have traditionally been attributed to art. Here we can talk perhaps of a technocratic variant of bohemian sentimentality and sensibility. And now that we all strive to be creative wage-earners, this brings us to the economization of culture whose neoliberal logic demands, as Lazzarato (2011) argues, that we go through a transformative process of "capitalization" in order to become "human capital." In other words, this Foucauldian bio-power approach suggests that every creative worker must become the entrepreneur of him/herself. I as my own entrepreneur must make investments (in education and training, mobility, communicability, affectivity, etc.) and join the necessary socio-economic networks in order to optimize my performance and maximize my gain. I am personally responsible for the education, development, growth, accumulation, improvement and valorization of my "self" in its capacity as "capital." This is achieved by managing all my relationships, choices, behaviors according to the logic of a cost/investment ratio and in line with the law of supply and demand. Capitalization must help me turn myself as creative worker into a kind of permanent, multipurpose business. Lazzarato goes on to argue that within this context, individuals are no longer expected to deliver the productivity of labor but instead the profitability of a capital investment, namely of their own (social and cultural) capital; a capital that is inseparable from their own selves. One has to regard oneself as a fragment or a molecular fraction of capital. This novel notion of the individual as an entrepreneur of him/herself is the culmination of capital as a machine of subjectivation since it produces the schizophrenic, post-Fordist case in which the entrepreneur is at once the capitalist and the proletarian.

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goods become informational, work becomes affective, property becomes intellectual and the economy becomes more cultural. Moreover, in classical culture industry – both in terms of domination and resistance – the main means of mediation had been representation. Today, they claim, culture becomes *thingified* and the global culture industry entails the *mediation of things*. Nevertheless, this cosmology of difference and invention epitomized by the brand and branded experience is at the same time the source of a reassembled system of domination. Hence, in their opinion "global culture industry's emergent regime of power results in inequalities, disparities and deception rarely encountered in Horkheimer and Adorno's classical age" (Lash & Lury, 2007:7).

As Lütger (2010) suggests, while half of the Western European middle-class under the age of 35 seems to be roaming the streets of Berlin, busy figuring out if they are on holiday or staying, renting or buying, joining the creative industries or just spending money; many Berliner intellectuals only have a rather discontinuous presence in the city since the infamous Berlin economy has made them take on jobs or teaching positions in the exact same places on the European periphery from which the exodus to Berlin is originating. "Still, friends who come to Berlin from faraway places keep on insisting that anything cultural here still attracts the best audiences in the world, and, in fact, it can be astounding to return to a city where one may still occasionally encounter, at 2 am and in the most unlikely locations, hundreds of people with enough time on their hands to be discussing art or politics, without necessarily having any personal investment in either." Most of these cultural networks however, would have to be described as either private or professional rather than political no matter how politicized this semi-public privacy or half-amateurish professionalism may appear to its respective protagonists. Lütger writes he is relatively sure that "this is a common problem, and that the root cause of most people's existential panic when they reflect on their own biographies is that they have zero friends with whom they would have entered binding agreements to abolish the capitalist mode of production." Yet in a very practical sense, being relatively unattached to the state and its organs, while still being thrown cultural funding in varying quantities and irregular intervals, makes one surprisingly mobile especially if one is exempt from visa restrictions. Nevertheless, the problematic privilege of infrastructure that allows for escape, and of institutions that provide the requisite seductive qualities, still remains. In Berlin, since radical political movements and what they maintain as their culture are judged to have lost their momentum, many (both mainstream and subcultural) hopes seem to rest on the arts. At the same time there exists (especially among non-artist, left wing intellectuals) a well-established hatred of the arts, profound enough to remain relatively constant through the recent cycles of boom and bust. Lütgert suggests there may be various reasons for this:

> Maybe the last thing in art history they took notice of were the Situationists, and they're stuck with an unqueered Hegelian notion of the arts and their abolishment, such that their continuation must be majorly irritating. Or they might perceive contemporary art as just another hostile business, the sister sector of real estate and mass tourism, at the forefront of "global cultural asset management," which wouldn't be all that wrong. If it turned out to be mere resentment of its escapist tendencies, the mildly decadent reality of international flights, free dinners, and surplus value created out of thin air, then we might have a problem. What I personally resent, as it marks an irreversible political shift, much like the fall of the Wall, is the transition from music to art as the core cultural coordinate system of German society. Music, as Leitkultur, was democratic. The

arts are feudal. If you dropped out of school in a provincial town, you still had access to the system of music. The system of the arts doesn't even grant access to the majority of Berlin art students. And while the rapidly changing macroeconomic conditions make it increasingly attractive to seek refuge among the entourage of kings, collectors, and gallerists, rather than to depend on the state, or its abolishment, it's even obvious to most of its secret admirers that feudalism doesn't scale very well (2010).

On the other hand suggests Lütgert, the system of the arts, within its limited scope, has provided a series of openings over the last decade through which it was able to not only attract a large number of people, but also successfully absorb extensive slices of neighboring fields, most notably in the former educational sector. Today, one still does not need a PhD to participate in a biennial, but biennials are getting into the business of granting PhDs. And as more and more art or art related departments are opening up while philosophy departments are being shut down, many contemporary artists depend on critical theory as well as institutionally recognized authorities on critical theory to legitimate their production as artistic and/or subversive. On the other hand, the academic/cultural-critic needs the artist's "work of art" to put his cultural capital into use and transform it into economic capital. Of course, there is also the increasingly popular option of combining both, i.e. the scholar who is also an artist or the artist who produces academic texts. Within this context, there also seems to be "an increasing pressure to produce less art and undertake more curatorial activities. Since what makes the figure of the curator so attractive (as a role model, it has long surpassed the figure of the artist in desirability) is the fact that while the work of the artist, as much as it has been reduced to communication (the establishment and maintenance of a continuous presence on *Gmail* and *Skype*), still has to include the occasional production of art, the work of the curator promises to consist of nothing but communication" (Lütgert, 2010). And this widespread desire and possibility to produce less and less, and the accompanying desire to carry out culturepreneurial activities by networking while/via partying more and more are increasingly evident in the hedonistic and creative city of Berlin.

To close this chapter let me borrow a passage from Tobias Rapp's book which successfully captures the current Berliner sensibility of nocturnal lightness and its ties with the creative economy:

Only a small number of DJs consider playing records as strictly business. It's always also about having fun, about the party, about enjoying the records one wants to play, and testing the reaction of the crowd to new music. One doesn't only practice one's hobby, one turns one's nightlife into a profession. Those who have regular slots at clubnights can improve themselves, try out new things, broaden their capabilities. To tour around the world is one thing. It's wonderful and glamorous. To have a residency at a local club is another. One grows that way. 'My My &

Friends' takes place once a month (Wednesday nights in *Watergate*) and only one of the dancefloors is open yet 200-300 guests come regularly. But who the hell are these people who don't have to get up early in the morning to go to work? What comprises this social subject referred to by many – for lack of a better word – as a 'scene'? The most easily and immediately recognizable: a group of musicians and DJs. On Wednesdays there's not that much going on, the DJs are usually not booked to play outside the city so it's an opportunity for them to party privately. Some of the DJs have a small entourage with them: their girlfriends, bookers or label representatives. Then there are the guests from abroad; those who have heard of Berlin's reputation as nightlife capital and have come consequently. For example the Japanese couple who ask the DJ for his autograph. Or a group of Italians who look like corporate employees on a business trip: two gentlemen and a lady in their mid-fifties, three gentlemen in their thirties, and two ladies in their twenties. They are amusing themselves splendidly. Also: the 'scene tourists,' especially the English, the Scandinavians and the Spanish whom one cannot distinguish from the locals without paying extra attention. They wear similar clothes and have similar cultural preferences to the students and freelancers who live in Berlin – yet most of the time those students and freelancers are not originally from Berlin in the first place. And in between: a couple of real Berliners. One recognizes this not in their clothes but in their conversation topics: two guys on the dole joke about how they seem to be the only ones present who have to worry about what will happen once the morning comes and the party is over. In their opinion all the other clubbers are being financed by their parents. But actually both of these guys are doing fine; otherwise they wouldn't be here, dancing around merrily. One of them is an artist, the other gets by with informal jobs. The artist has an appointment in the early afternoon which he mustn't miss: a seminar about how to start a business (2009: 21-23).

Chapter 3

Nocturnal Recurrence: Lightness, Heaviness and the Night

"The new *heavy weight: the eternal recurrence of the same*. Infinite importance of our knowing, erring, our habits, ways of living for all that is to come. What shall we do with the rest of our lives – we who have spent the majority of our lives in the most profound ignorance? We shall *teach the doctrine* – it is the most powerful means of *incorporating* it in ourselves. Our kind of blessedness, as teachers of the greatest doctrine."

Friedrich Nietzsche (2006: 238)

"I went to the worst of bars hoping to get killed. But all I could do was to get drunk again."

Charles Bukowski ("The Suicide Kid," 2006)

21 January 2009 – outside Bang Bang Club, Neue Promenade 10, Tuesday Night/Wednesday Morning 03:15 am

As my friend and I went into the Bang Bang Club at the touristy heart of Hackescher Markt, Barrack Obama was busy with celebrating his inauguration as the first non-white US president. It surely was a day of euphoria and joy, a middle finger waved in the general direction of racists worldwide. So how on earth can it be that now, just a few hours into the new day, I'm crawling on the pavement, spitting blood on the curb, knocked down by a fascist punch? Well, I guess it started like any other bar fight: there was a group of hot-blooded and boozed-up youngsters from Madrid who had just flown into town on EasyJet – welcome boys to the new European capital of nightlife, don't forget to check out the onboard magazine to find out about the hottest parties in town! – and one of them simply couldn't handle being given the cold shoulder by my female friend visiting from Istanbul who had been flirting with him. Well, her cussing as retaliation to his groping didn't help the situation either. Not being able to control his rage, but at the same time being well-mannered enough to not hit a lady, the Spaniard's bruised-ego sought and found an outlet in the next male available; yours truly. Well, anyone who knows anything about me knows that I'm a pacifist at heart, and not very brave when it comes to such demonstrations of masculinity. Normally, I would have just shrugged the insults off, denying the aggressor the excuse to pick a fight; leaving him there to boil in his own blood. But unfortunately I had drunk a few pints too many myself. So when the Spaniard began tantalizing me, telling me how all Turks were retarded barbarians, and how we were a pest that had to be swept off the

shores of Europe, I could no longer restrain myself and shoved the guy. I have to admit in hindsight that this course of action turned out to be unwise. But at the time it seemed like the right thing to do. I actually didn't expect the whole thing to erupt into a full scale fist fight. After all, what used to happen in primary school under such circumstances was that we kept shoving each other back and forth until our friends intervened and the escalation fizzled out. So the tourist's unhesitant blow took me quite by surprise. But I have to hand it to the guy, he landed a perfect punch smack in my face; splitting my lower lip open. I fell to the ground, my friend became hysterical, the bouncer yelled he'd call the cops, and General Franco's townsmen fled the scene.

Well, this ain't a Henry Chinasky tale or a Californication episode; one doesn't necessarily give the conventions of adulthood or the capitalist work ethic the middle finger when one (i.e. a drunkard idler, a barfly) picks up a fight with a bully in a club. Getting punched in the face isn't half as decadent as it is made out to be and a blow to the mouth hurts like hell. Neither is this is a Hollywood flick where the hero emerges from a fist fight without a scratch. As I found out, a lip gets split when punched hard and blood gushes out. To be frank, it's much more exhilarating to read about such inebriated regressions and consequent altercations in Bukowski's novels than to be at the receiving end of an uppercut…So here I am, angry and hurting. Nietzsche says suffering is all right, what doesn't kill us makes us stronger. The Dionysian Overman must embrace the suffering inherent in life. Bataille takes this a step further, he sees in the excesses of violence and eroticism, where the Subject is close to its obliteration (or when the Subject is momentarily annihilated as Lacan would have it since each orgasm is a "petit-mort") the only true instances of sovereignty. I realize now as I sit on the curb trembling with rage and pain, blood dripping down my chin that in a city like Berlin where economic hopes rest mainly on becoming the next big creative world metropolis, where the city officials are fairly liberal or libertarian since they want to attract the creative industries, where the cosmopolitan hipoisie comprises an international Facebook-group of culture industry scenesters who consider their "decadent" selves and their precariously "hedonistic" lifestyles as independent from class or history, and where the rock star's way of life has been appropriated by the techno DJ, the visual artist and the culturepreneur (along with their "creative and dissident" entourage), it seems like these 24 hour party people (my bleeding self included) are just a bit too hasty to accept, too eager to adopt, and too high to give up these philosophies. We are able to embrace

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suffering only because we are not suffering; because we don't have much of a clue about what suffering really entails. We can only seek the thrills of an excessive and self-abusive party lifestyle which cherishes the night's potential for eventfulness and sensuality because we are still fairly healthy, wealthy and free enough (thanks to the consumerist liberties and promises of liberal democracy) to do so. Because our art grants, research bursaries, parents' sponsorship or our freelance jobs combined with the dole are somehow sufficient in this exceptional capital of curiously cheap rents and living costs to sustain our part-time creativity and full-time idleness. This is the capital of "creatives" and welfare beneficiaries where a wasteful way of life based on the unproductive principles of a "general economy" (as Bataille would have it) paradoxically gets "transvaluated" (as Nietzsche would have it) to become not only a form of creative work but also a model of productivity. At the end of the night though, our Dionysian lightness and laughter, and our Bataillean excesses are just another fad and fashion we use to replace our complicity with complacency; to make our capital-friendly lifestyles look meaningfully oppositional. And the problem is that some of us truly believe in this illusion; we think we are really "sticking to the man" as we pop yet another pill, snort yet another line, crack open yet another bottle, penetrate yet another orifice, live through yet another hangover…Don't get me wrong, of course there is more to Berlin than this. This is, after all, a city with its fair share of political awareness and left wing activism. Plus, I still think there might be some crumble of transgression in the excessive self-abuse in search of enjoyment, in the sensualistic crusade for "alternative ways of living." But for the most part, the crusaders seem to have little grasp of the tragic aspect in what Nietzsche was really trying to tell them...

But what about those who do get his message and urge us to follow it through? I remember listening to a lecture given by Rosi Braidotti at Goldsmiths a few years ago. She was calling for a neo-vitalist ethics of affirmation based on embracing one's vulnerability and pain. Yet isn't this once again much easier said than done? Isn't the First World intellectual's mature readiness to accept suffering contingent once again on the very absence of pain in her life, on the presence of health and wealth in the first place? Maybe I'm being too harsh or cynical at the moment; normally I'm fairly impressed and convinced by this Nietzschean "ethics without morality," by this acceptance and embracement of one's own shortcomings, vulnerability and mortality in order to move forwards towards self-affirmation. But I can't help it at the moment. I'm hurting and bleeding, and the wounded animal inside of me rejects the intellectual's

soothing reassurances; the very presence of pain makes all vitalist promises sound like fairy tales right now. As I'm waiting in rage and agony for my friend to find a cab so that we can go get my lip stitched up, I'm haunted by Berlin's distinct flavor of laidback coolness and pleasant scruffiness; by its version of petit bourgeois lightheartedness. Indeed, I'm crushed tonight under the unbearable weight of Berlin's unique lightness…

One: Hedonism Replaces Tragedy

Well, these feelings of embitterment and disillusionment stayed with me throughout my convalescence. Apparently, the blow I took to the face was so hefty that not only did I need sutures and my lips swelled up like balloons, but also the inside of my mouth was full of wounds which effectively meant that I couldn't really laugh or eat anything solid for the next ten days or so. It's funny how we (perhaps without realizing) take such simple yet vital things as being able to laugh or chew (and savor) food for granted when we philosophize about hedonistic excess, sensualist transgression, or a vitalist ethics of affirmation based on the embracement of shortcomings, suffering and pain. Writing from the confines of a prestigious educational institution at the heart of the relatively protected realm that is the "developed world," the well-meaning intellectual can propose:

> This is the defining moment for the process of becoming-ethical: the move across and beyond pain, loss, and negative passions. Taking suffering into account is the starting point; the real aim of the process, however, is the quest for ways of overcoming the stultifying effects of passivity, brought about by pain. The internal disarray, fracture, and pain are the conditions of possibility for ethical transformation. Clearly, this is an antithesis of the Kantian moral imperative to avoid pain or to view pain as the obstacle to moral behavior. Nomadic ethics is not about the avoidance of pain; rather it is about transcending the resignation and passivity that ensue from being hurt, lost, and dispossessed. One has to become ethical, as opposed to applying moral rules and protocols as a form of self-protection. Transformations express the affirmative power of Life as the vitalism of bios-zoe, which is the opposite of morality as a form of life insurance (Braidotti, 2009: 150).

So we are told this "nomadic" view of ethics replaces the traditional self-other distinction and liberal individualism's expectation of mutual reciprocity with a bio-centered egalitarianism that views subjects as modes of individuation within a common flow of zoe which is not an intrinsically harmonious process but rather entails conflicts and clashes. This ethical project which requires a painful self-transformation or self-transgression is not about the avoidance of pain but rather about overcoming the effects of pain. Therefore, it's an ethics of affirmation, not of vulnerability. Braidotti assures us that all types of ethical transformation and conscience-

raising are painful but the beneficial side effects as well as the final outcome compensate for the initial loss and pain. Nevertheless, as her ethics can address *enduring* pain (she tells us not to live our lives with the sole aim of eluding pain but rather to come to grips with our suffering and in the end to rise above like the phoenix) she practically can say nothing about the flip side of the coin; she doesn't give us a clue about how this vitalist philosophy can come to terms with the ethics of *inflicting* pain upon others except conceding that hurting humans as well as non-humans is inevitable since it is intrinsic to the flux of life just like suffering is. Moreover, does this Nietzschean proposal by way of Spinoza and Leibniz not come from a position of privilege and is contingent on the relative absence of pain and suffering in one's life-world in the first place? For example, as far as Braidotti is concerned there is nothing problematic about proposing:

> Let's talk about pain for a moment. Pain in our culture is associated with suffering by force of habit and tradition and is given negative connotations accordingly. Supposing we look a bit more critically into this associative link, however: what does pain, or suffering, tell us? That our subjectivity consists of affectivity, inter-relationality and forces. The core of the subject is affect and the capacity for interrelations to affect and to be affected. Let us agree to de-psychologize this discussion from this moment on, not in order to deny the pain, but rather to find ways of working through it. If we assume the affective core of subjectivity, for instance with Spinoza's theory of conatus or active desire for empowerment, then the aim of ethics becomes the expression of the active or productive nature of desire. It then follows that affirmative politics is not about an oppositional strategy; it is not another discourse about storming the Bastille of phallocentrism, or undoing the winter palace of gender (Lenin meets Butler there in a metaphorical delirium). Politics becomes multiple micro-political practices of daily activism or interventions in and on the world we inhabit…My point is that we need to de-link pain from suffering and re-think its role in constituting ethical relations (2010: 52)

But is it not considerably easier to believe in and write such things in Rotterdam, London or Berlin than for instance in Istanbul or Diyarbakır? Is it not too naïve to expect from Turkish and Kurdish families who have (recently) lost their relatives to civil war to find such intellectual words adequately comforting and convincing, and to consequently accept and adopt such a stand regarding mourning, pain, rage and hate, thereby changing their outlook on politics? Similarly, is it not much easier in Paris than it is in Yerevan, Johannesburg or Ramallah (of for that matter in Jerusalem) to pay heed to Lyotard (1988) who prescribes us to accept the impossibility of adequate retribution as well as to endorse Derrida (2005) who urges us to forgive the unforgivable? [46] After all, it is Braidotti herself who admits "a certain amount of pain, the knowledge about vulnerability and pain, is actually useful. It forces one to think about the actual material conditions of being interconnected and thus being in the world. It frees one from the

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[46] Nevertheless, this neither means that they have no experience of pain since where they live is devoid of suffering nor that what they are advocating is necessarily wrong and must be ignored.

stupidity of perfect health, and the full-blown sense of existential entitlement that comes with it" (2009: 15). Well of course she is right here; it is indeed those who have already cracked up a bit, those who have suffered pain and endured injury that are better placed to take the lead in the process of ethical transformation while it is much likelier for the fortunate and the unscathed to wallow in ivory tower ignorance. But the point is, it is also those privileged few who are in perfect health that usually end up committing the folly of undervaluing what they have and arrogantly dismissing something as fundamental as their wellness as mere stupidity whilst romantically yearning for the exotica of trauma, pain and illness as well as (political) stigma and strife thanks to the ignorant belief that they are well equipped both intellectually and emotionally to cope with these things and to achieve ethical transformation. Similarly, without disregarding the fact that Felix Guattari himself was a clinician who had firsthand experience of what is deemed mental disease, it is still valid to ask the numerous scholars, artists and curators who endorse "schizoanalysis" today whether they do actually have loved ones who suffer from what is commonly diagnosed as schizophrenia; and if they do, whether they really follow their Deleuzo-Guattarianism through by encouraging their loved ones to stop taking their anti-psychotic medication in order to liberate their distinct sense of creativity and cherish their alternate subjectivity instead. Or for that matter, one could ask how many self-professed Deleuzians are anorexics or are willing to become anorexics since the radical philosopher decrees "anorexia is a political system, a micro-politics: to escape from the norms of consumption in order to not be an object of consumption oneself. It is a feminine protest, from a woman who wants to have a functioning of the body and not simply organic and social functions which make her dependent" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2006: 82).[47]

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[47] In all fairness, Deleuze himself admits in his later days that he shares Foucault's "horror regarding those who claim to be on the margins of society: I am less and less able to tolerate romanticizing madness, delinquency, perversion or drugs. But flight lines, that is, assemblages of desire, are not, in my view, created by marginal characters. Rather, these are objective lines that cut across society, where marginal figures are located here and there, making a loop, a swirl, a recoding" (2007: 129). Also to be fair on Braidotti, when she prescribes us to displace our pain by de-personalizing the traumatic event (which she holds up to be the ultimate ethical challenge) and to see the senselessness of our ill fate as well as of the injury or injustice we have suffered ("'Why me?' is the refrain most commonly heard in situations of extreme distress…The answer is plain: for no reason at all…Reason has nothing to do with it. That is precisely the point."), she suggests this is not fatalism or resignation but *amor fati*: "This is a crucial difference: we have to be worthy of what happens to us and rework it within an ethics of relation. Of course, repugnant and unbearable events do happen. Ethics consists, however, in reworking these events in the direction of positive relations. This is not carelessness or lack of compassion, but rather a form of lucidity that acknowledges the impossibility of finding an adequate answer to the question about the source, the

Well, these qualms about the possibility of putting one's money where one's mouth is and about naïve over-confidence in the effectiveness of critical theory, or to be more precise, about the extent to which such radical and minoritarian but also Eurocentric philosophies which are being readily and fervently adopted by the new, young, libertarian middle-classes in the First World can be successfully applied to the rest of the planet, bring us to the issue at hand: as mentioned in the first chapter, Nietzsche's Dyonisian Overman is a tragic character; Zarathustra rejects the Apollonian ideal of betterment to adopt the Dionysian celebration of the moment with all the good and bad involved in it. In that sense, Nietzsche chooses the heaviness of eternal return over lightness. This choice has important implications. First of all, as already noted, to accept suffering is much easier said than done. Many self-professed 21st century Dionysians or "digital bohemians" (Friebe and Lobo, 2008) such as *bobo* artists, pill-popping ravers, hipster culturepreneurs, freelancing street-fashion bloggers, libertarian welfare recipients, or even sympathetic humanities scholars who consider the feats of such characters to be "subversive;" who in good health and relatively privileged material conditions readily accept this Nietzschean dictum to affirm life by embracing its essential pain as well its intrinsic joy (perhaps mistaking the solitude of the Overman for some novel, *Wi-Fi* individualism that incorporates decadent hedonism and conviviality) may realize later on – once they themselves suffer injustices or become underprivileged, or once their excessive party lifestyle takes its toll on their health – how such a readiness to accept suffering had been utterly contingent on the very *absence of pain* in their lives in the first place.

More importantly, the fact that Dionysian embracement and celebration of life is heavy (*weltschmerz* and *weltanschauung*) rather than light (reflexively modern, consumerist and hedonistic *lifestyle*) arguably allows the coming into being and significance of festive or carnivalesque politics. In other words, politics which are resulting from heaviness may be carried out in a light or Dionysian fashion. In fact, without disregarding the general danger of over-exaggerating and retrospective over-glorifying and without forgetting the fact that compared to today violence was more acceptable as a political means in the eyes of the educated Western middle-classes back then, the '68 movement could be interpreted in some ways as the rebellion of lightness exemplified by the youth's sexual liberation, intoxication, excess, and revolt against

origin, the cause of the ill fate, the painful event, the violence suffered. Acknowledging the futility of even trying to answer that question is a starting point" (2009: 14).

the heaviness of their parents' generation. Nevertheless, Kundera maintains that the Czech and French Springs should not be conflated. In *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* he argues contrary to Paris where the youth rebelled against the older generation, in Prague the older generation rebelled against themselves, that is, they rebelled against the choices they had made when they were younger (1996). Similarly, in a much more recent piece Kundera compares the French and Czech Springs and argues that whereas Paris '68 was an unexpected explosion, the Prague Spring was a culmination of a long process rooted in the Stalinist Terror of the early years after 1948. Paris's May, brought about primarily by the initiative of the young, was marked by revolutionary lyricism while the Prague Spring was caused by the post-revolutionary skepticism of the adults. As the Parisian Spring triumphed in its international character, the Prague Spring sought to give a small nation back its particularity and its independence. "Paris's May was a high spirited challenge to a European culture, viewed as deadening, tedious, official, sclerotic." The Prague Spring, on the other hand, was "an homage to that same European culture, so long smothered beneath ideological idiocy; it was a defense of Christian belief as well as of libertine unbelief, and of course of modern art (I stress 'modern,' not 'postmodern')…But by 'marvelous chance' those two Springs – out of synch, the two coming out of different historical experiences – met on the "dissection table" of the same year" (2010: 117-18).

In either case, we can still argue that May '68 was the rebellion of lightness against heaviness. The heaviness attacked by the Parisian youth was indeed associated with their parents' generation, the guardians of the post-war Gaullist establishment; while what the Czech intelligentsia attempted to do was to unburden themselves, to lighten the weight they had amassed over the years. Hence, the commonly detested burden was to be found in those days not only in the graveness of capitalism's Fordist work ethos as well as in the traditionalism, paternalism and conservatism of De Gaulle's France – or for that matter in the novel consumerist duties which were invading the everyday thanks to the ongoing transition into post-Fordism as detected at the time by Lefebvre and the Situationist International – but also in the emphasis on conformity, discipline, hard work, production and progress that characterized official versions of Marxism-Leninism. In France the youth sought to redeem socialism from Stalin by turning to culture and Mao while in Czechoslovakia the middle-aged tried to do the same by turning to folklore and Jesus. Also, Czech authors like Hrabal and Škvorecký turned to satyr and to an earlier generation of writers like Kafka and Hašek; humor and irony were used tactically to

criticize the lifestyle imported from and imposed by Russia. In fact, Kundera writes the start of the road to Prague Spring is marked in his own memory by "Škvorecký's first novel, *The Cowards* published in 1956 and greeted by the glorious fireworks of official hatred." Not because the book contained anti-communist sentiments but because it was perceived to have a "profoundly unpolitical attitude: free, light, impolitely nonideological" (2010: 118). Indeed, Kundera's own first novel *The Joke*, written in 1965 and published in 1967 after struggling against censorship, is itself a testament to the political significance of humor. Hence, despite its differences from Paris, the Prague Spring was still marked by lightness since it was characterized by libertine disbelief in the Soviet system and sounded like the joyful dissonance of a carnival against the stern monotonousness of the Party anthem. Within the special context of the 60s then, the lightness constituted by the mere acts of enjoying oneself and having fun, of not taking life and oneself so seriously, of approaching gravity with humor and irony had somehow become subversive. This was so, as Debord (1987) wrote at the time, because the state had no sense of humor since it was the unjust institutional site of law and order in the service of the corruptly wealthy and powerful. It may be argued that '68 created what Jean Cocteau had said he had tried to achieve with his *Les Enfants Terribles*: "to make heaviness light and lightness heavy." In fact, in a television interview held to commemorate the 40th anniversary of May '68 Daniel Cohn-Bendit refers to the famous photograph showing him cheekily smiling at the towering figure of a policeman during the Sorbonne occupation, which was also used during the events as a stencil-graffiti with the slogan "*Nous sommes tous indésirables*" (we are all outcasts) in response to the Pompidou government's attempt to deport Cohn-Bendit on the grounds that he was of German birth, as a symbol of "the bearable lightness of revolt" (*Revolution! Das Jahr 1968*. Dir. Stefan Aust and Lutz Hachmeister). Perhaps with May '68 there was a *sublation* of lightness and heaviness which reduced the graveness and seriousness of politics but at the same time made laughter, play and carnivalesque revolt serious in the sense that such joyful transgressions were given political significance and consequences. Or, it made adult life more childlike and childishness more credible and adultlike so that "arrested development" became a way of life that was taken seriously. This is similar to Susan Sontag's definition of camp: "the whole point of Camp is to dethrone the serious. Camp is playful, anti-serious. More precisely, Camp involves a new, more complex relation to 'the serious.' One can be serious about the frivolous, frivolous about the serious" (1978: 288). As the youthful transgressors took their sexual liberation and

authority defying acts seriously, the ensuing generational conflict had already been foreseen by Truffaut in his *400 Blows* shot in 1959: the distressed school teacher who is faced with what he perceives to be the moral degradation of twelve year old Antoine Doinel (played by Jean-Pierre Leaud) and his class mates declares: "France will be in sad shape in 10 years!" Later on, this 60s legacy of sexual liberation and politics of lightness would be adopted by left-wing movements and armed insurgents in the 70s. Another filmic example would be a scene from a recent movie about the Red Army Faction (*The Baader Meinhof Complex* directed by Uli Edel, 2008) in which Andreas Baader (played by Moritz Bleibtreu) tells his Palestinian combat-trainers who are ogling the half-naked female RAF guerillas sunbathing out in the desert that "fucking and shooting are the same thing!"

In Philip Kaufman's film adaptation of Kundera's novel there's a scene in which Tereza, Sabina, Tomas and two colleagues from the hospital go out at night to celebrate the recent publication of Tereza's photographs in a magazine. While they sit and chat around a table, many couples are dancing along to pop tunes played by a small orchestra. One of Tomas' colleagues remarks that Tereza's photographs capture the spirit of the times perfectly as they show the change of atmosphere brought along by the Prague Spring. Tomas replies that not everything is changing and points to a group of Czech party officials entertaining their Russian counterparts. While they observe the politicians and judge them unanimously to be "scoundrels," a Czech politician approaches the stage and asks the band to play a tune in order to please his Russian guests. As the band plays the opening notes of "The Internationale" in a *pianissimo* fashion the atmosphere in the ball room becomes heavy and tense, and the dancers leave the dancefloor in protest. The Czech bureaucrats, on the other hand, have flatteringly stood up and are now raising their glasses to the Russians who are solemnly singing along. Tomas compares them to King Oedipus: instead of plucking their eyes out like Oedipus did for crimes he had committed unknowingly, they have no qualms about staying in power since they claim they have been misled and manipulated; they allege they were completely unaware of the Stalinist regime's atrocities. But suddenly, the band starts playing the anthem in a more rapid and upbeat fashion turning it into a cheerful pop song. Unexpectedly, the tune is robbed of its solemnity as it escapes from the clasp of gravity. Its cheeky lightness mocks the party officials who seem to take themselves and their politics way too seriously. As lightness replaces heaviness, the whole event is transformed symbolically into a carnivalesque protest of the Soviets and their Czech

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henchmen. In response, the young people flood the dancefloor as they kiss and dance crazily. Faced with the insolence of youthful laughter and joy, now it's the Russians' turn to leave the room as they find the whole ordeal outrageously disrespectful.

Arguably, this is what the '68 movement was partly about; disrespecting and challenging the solemnity and authority of the parents/guardians and the gravity of their politics.[48] It was this anti-authoritarian lightness the '68ers possessed and championed that was subversive at the time. Also within this context, seeking and embodying this lightness, which was political and transgressive, was dictated by the ethics of heaviness which required becoming an active agent in a problem-ridden and unjust world. Heaviness paradoxically forced the youth to seek lightness; and funnily enough to do so by becoming political, that is entering and appropriating a sphere traditionally reserved for weighty matters. Against the gloomy backdrop of Vietnam, police brutality and political assassinations (Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King in the US, Benno Ohnesorg and Rudi Dutschke in Berlin, etc.) feeling the *weltschmerz* of heaviness, i.e. caring deeply about injustices, inequalities, exploitations, oppressions, persecutions, etc. taking place daily in the world motivated many people to cultivate a leftist *weltanschauung* and rebel through celebration. The *zeitgeist* of the era considered carnivalesque and playful rebellion a duty.

But what about today? Can frivolity and lightness still be considered as politically significant and subversive at a time when the post-industrial middle-class duty to seek pleasure is increasingly replacing this duty to be political? The unique lifestyle of constant (yet precarious) partying associated with Berlin's "Dionysian neo-tribes" made up of a new breed of white collar culture industry workers seems indeed to be mostly an apolitical materialization of lightness. Nevertheless, our current neo-conservative *zeitgeist* renders such light lifestyles characterized by

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[48] Nevertheless, Badiou also reminds us that May '68 in Paris was "by no means a unitary festival" and this anti-authoritarian and libertarian aspect was only one of the four heterogeneous elements the movement had incorporated. Badiou identifies these four components as 1- The revolt of the university students and school pupils which at the time were still a minority (in the 60s only 10-15% of the age group did their A-levels) who were very cut off from the broad masses of working class youth. 2- The general strike initiated by the "wildcat strikes" of young workers outside the big union organizations which then rallied to it, partially in a bid to control it. Badiou suggests this temporal and historical link between a movement organized by educated young people and a workers' movement is quite unique. 3- The above mentioned libertarian and anti-authoritarian element characterized by emphases on sexual liberation, individual freedom, women's and homosexuals' rights, emancipation, etc. "These three components were represented by great symbolic sites: the occupied Sorbonne for students, the big car plants (and especially Billancourt) for workers, and the occupation of the Odéon Theatre for the libertarian May." 4- The events' long-term effects beyond the merry month of May, their impact on the political culture and climate in the next ten "red years." Badiou suggests it's better to speak of a " '68 decade" than 'May '68. According to him, this fourth May '68 has undermined the traditional left as well its mechanisms and discourse, and has sought to find what may exist beyond classic revolutionism (2010: 46-57).

hedonistic excess with the *appearance* of nonconformity: their adherents stand out from the rest of society solely by virtue of living at a time when the Christian Democrat call for restraint, hard work and discipline has become the dominant discourse. So there actually is no need to be political in the May '68 sense of the term; the creative lifestyle package already comes with the official stamp of dissidence. The "creatives" dancing on the streets of Prenzlauerberg, Mitte or "Kreuzkölln" and raving about what an insanely marvelous state of exception the party-city of Berlin is seem to be under the illusion that their digital social networking and their version of arrested development are the current counterparts – if not descendents – of '68ers' political organization and childlike adultness. Indeed, such simulation of dissent enabled by the lack of (self-) critique and the creation of fashionably decadent and hedonistic lifestyles based on symbolic identifications with branded experiences and consumer goods is underlined by Haddow in his *Adbusters* article in which he announces the figure of the "hipster" to be the dead end of Western civilization:

> Ever since the Allies bombed the Axis into submission, Western civilization has had a succession of counter-culture movements that have energetically challenged the status quo. Each successive decade of the post-war era has seen it smash social standards, riot and fight to revolutionize every aspect of music, art, government and civil society. But after punk was plasticized and hip hop lost its impetus for social change, all of the formerly dominant streams of 'counter-culture' have merged together. Now, one mutating, trans-Atlantic melting pot of styles, tastes and behavior has come to define the generally indefinable idea of the "Hipster." An artificial appropriation of different styles from different eras, the hipster represents the end of Western civilization – a culture lost in the superficiality of its past and unable to create any new meaning (2008).

As far as Haddow is concerned, while previous youth movements have challenged the dysfunction and fatalism of their elders, hipsterdom mirrors the doomed shallowness of mainstream society. "Lovers of apathy and irony hipsters are connected through a global network of blogs and shops that push forth a global vision of fashion-informed aesthetics. Loosely associated with some form of creative output, they attend art parties, take lo-fi pictures with analog cameras, ride their bikes to night clubs and sweat it up at nouveau disco-coke parties." The hipster tends to religiously blog about his or her daily exploits, "usually while leafing through generation-defining magazines like *Vice*, *Another Magazine* and *Wallpaper*. This cursory and stylized lifestyle has made the hipster almost universally loathed." Nevertheless, argues Haddow, this ironic lack of authenticity has also allowed hipsterdom to grow into a global phenomenon that is set to consume the very core of Western counterculture.

> Most critics make a point of attacking the hipster's lack of individuality, but it is this stubborn obfuscation that distinguishes them from their predecessors, while allowing hipsterdom to easily blend in and mutate other social movements, sub-cultures and lifestyles…The dancefloor at a hipster party looks like it should be surrounded by quotation marks. While punk, disco and hip hop all had immersive, intimate and energetic dance styles that liberated the dancer from his/her mental states – be it the head-spinning b-boy or violent thrashings of a live punk show – the hipster has more of a joke dance. A faux shrug shuffle that mocks the very idea of dancing or, at its best, illustrates a non-committal fear of expression typified in a weird twitch/ironic twist. The dancers are too self-aware to let themselves feel any form of liberation; they shuffle along, shrugging themselves into oblivion (2008).

Haddow considers the lifestyle promoted by hipsterdom to be in many ways highly ritualized. Many of the party-goers who are subject to the photoblogger's snapshots crawl out of bed the next afternoon and immediately re-experience the previous night's debauchery.

> Red-eyed and bleary, they sit hunched over their laptops, wading through a sea of similarity to find their own (momentarily) thrilling instant of perfected hipster-ness. What they may or may not know is that 'cool-hunters' will also be skulking the same sites, taking note of how they dress and what they consume. These marketers and party-promoters get paid to co-opt youth culture and then re-sell it back at a profit. In the end, hipsters are sold what they think they invent and are spoon-fed their pre-packaged cultural livelihood. Hipsterdom is the first 'counterculture' to be born under the advertising industry's microscope, leaving it open to constant manipulation but also forcing its participants to continually shift their interests and affiliations (2008).

In this fashion Haddow asserts hipsters comprise not a subculture but a consumer group which uses its capital to purchase empty authenticity and rebellion. Nevertheless, the moment a trend, band, sound, style or feeling gains too much exposure, it is suddenly looked upon with disdain. What is enjoyed and embraced today suddenly becomes lame tomorrow: "Hipsters cannot afford to maintain any cultural loyalties or affiliations for fear they will lose relevance. An amalgamation of its own history, the youth of the West are left with consuming cool rather that creating it. The cultural zeitgeists of the past have always been sparked by furious indignation and are reactionary movements. But the hipster's self-involved and isolated maintenance does nothing to feed cultural evolution" (Haddow, 2008).

Here we could see the similarity to the "jitterbug" sensibility that Adorno identifies with fervent listeners of popular (as opposed to "serious") music who just like today's hipsters feel compelled to mock rapidly changing fashions by accusing them of being lame and outdated, and to constantly shift cultural alliances since mainstream exposure is perceived to turn the cultural experience into something phony. As far as Adorno is concerned since the dullness and standardization of the commodified experience is no longer completely mystified and imperceptible while the individuals are not totally clueless about the fact that they are buying into consumerism ("the veneer veiling the control mechanisms has become so thin") they are

forced to make a tremendous effort to be able to accept what's being imposed on them. That's why they have to utilize spite, ironic humor, and self-mockery to set up a love-hate relationship with "corniness" in order to be able to exonerate their guilty pleasures, i.e. "the fraud they commit against themselves" by playing along by the rules of consumerism: when you suddenly announce today that the tune you were enthralled by and played over and over yesterday is corny, you are automatically admitting your own (past) corniness. And this desire to remain constantly "cool" rather than feel and appear corny is reflected in the self-conscious, non-immersive half-dance that accompanies minimal techno. Adorno writes the jitterbug, i.e. adherent of pop music "mocks himself as if he were secretly hoping for the day of judgment…His sense of humor makes everything so shifty that he cannot be put – or rather, put himself – on the spot for any of his reactions. His bad taste, his fury, his hidden resistance, his insincerity, his latent contempt for himself, everything is cloaked by 'humor' and therewith neutralized" (Adorno, 1941: 46). But the very existence of this convulsion to mock suggests that the imposition of commodified culture on society "does not imply absolute elimination of resistance." Resistance "is driven into deeper and deeper strata of the psychological structure." In fact, "psychological energy must be directly invested in order to overcome resistance. For resistance does not wholly disappear in yielding to external forces, but remains alive within the individual and still survives even at the very moment of acceptance" (ibid: 44). The current "it's so kitschy that it's cool again" sensibility adopted by many a hipster and young urban creative is a prime example of this. That you are capable of recognizing without difficulty the fact the commodity or commodified experience is corny points towards the possibility of resistance. That you have to force yourself to resort to sarcasm in order to accept and cherish its tastelessness and lack of sophistication points towards the omnipresence of this resistance. But in final analysis, that the culture industry still succeeds somehow to get you to consume that kitschy commodity or branded experience is an indisputable fact, hence Adorno's customary pessimism.

Commenting on the discussion ignited by Haddow's article in the summer of 2008, one blogger/academic has pointed out it is very telling that many discussions, both online and offline, concerning the *Adbusters* article are petty turf wars over specific objects like the fixed-gear bike. He goes on to suggest the crucial distinction between the bohemia of generations past and present is that, although some genuine sacrifice of comfort and entitlement was required to live down on the street before (which doesn't mean that your daddy wouldn't come to your rescue if

you called him) now there exists an infrastructure, social and physical, to comfortably accommodate any and all who can afford to exile themselves from the straight world. "Contemporary *boho* inharmony has apparently little to do with dialectical self-critique. Rather, it's the sound of a corrosive boredom, of deracinated dilettantes whose ennui has metastasized into cannibalism. Make no mistake, their complaints emanate from the elevated strata of society. Whenever *Pitchfork* is derided as a Cliff Notes of Cool for dumb kids in Des Moines" or when Momus dismisses the rest of society as " 'the general population, which schleps about in jeans and listens to shapeless, floppy music and sleepwalks through shapeless, floppy jobs' - there is no disguising the sneering, priggish contempt for the lower & working-classes" (Seb, 2008). Indeed, the Danish artist Momus, who had worked for *Wired* and *Vice Magazine* in the past, had derided Haddow's article and looked down upon the critics by claiming hip subcultures have come into existence, "mostly for the purpose of creating art, and of getting the more creative kids in any generation laid (the geeky ones tend to be the ones who need to rely on culture rather than mere nature when it comes to luring attractive partners into bed)...The disdain of hip subculture tends to come from chubby bloggers who aren't getting laid, people who are just so mad at these young kids for going out and getting wasted and having fun and being fashionable" (2008).

This typically cynical trope of dismissing critique by ignoring class difference and instead accusing the accusers of being prey to envy by way of accusing them of being physically unattractive hence sexually frustrated inadvertently gives away the underlying secret that class is integral to the social logic of subcultural capital: "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). What hipsterdom also suggests is that perhaps mimetic desire alone is not enough to explain current subcultural phenomena: as far as Thornton (1995) is concerned the social logic of subcultural capital dictates that everyone desires what everyone else desires; an object becomes desirable simply because it's desired by others. What's hip today is hip merely by virtue of being hip and ignoring what's hip means running the risk of becoming undesirable. But such a formulation addresses only part of the issue; today's consumer society is not only about the desire to be desired, it is also about the desire to be the desiring subject. It is marked by the desire for the capability (or illusion) of making desire itself visible to others so

that it becomes a collective feeling which in turn generates collectivities. Although classical bourgeois ideologies were rather successful in organizing desire and creating collective identities during the early phases of industrial capitalism so that the liberal principles of laissez-faire and laissez-passer became prevalent and a widespread nation-building project via the artifice of "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983) ensued, arguably these ideologies had lost most of their power in the aftermath of fascism and Stalinism so that what had remained of the social world's traditionally bourgeois structuring during the 1960s was merely its core: family, competitiveness, services, duties, discipline. As the '68 rebellion was against this very Fordist core, the neo-conservative consensus which began with the Thatcher-Reagan hegemony and has continued until today with brief intervals of "neoliberalism with a friendlier face" (Clinton, early Blair, Obama) has led to the replacement of comprehensive world-views and their politicization with apolitical and aestheticized ways of living so that *weltanschauung* has been replaced with *lifestyle*. This also entails the neo-tribalist delusion that traditional organizing principles and identity construction mechanisms such as class have lost their importance. What hipsterdom signals is that in such an environment only art and beauty are perceived to be useful against dominant ideology, and one ends up believing lifestyle choices can be resisted only by other lifestyle choices. One comes to believe one can oppose the symbolic structuring of everyday life only as classical cultural studies' "semiotic guerilla." But desire as such always relies on perpetual movement afforded by deferral and dissolution. One is enabled to move smoothly between lifestyles which are not necessarily consistent with each other because they are all blessed with the appearance of being unconventional; for instance, one can move from art to yoga to drugs. One can combine Occidental aesthetics and Oriental mysticism or play them against one another. One can also relocate; when what is desirably "alternative" here loses its edge one follows the trail of the next underground movement taking place in the next run-down neighborhood or given the Western middle-classes' privilege of global mobility to the next big creative world city – for example from London to Berlin to Istanbul. What probably drives this trajectory is the belief in carrying on, the practice of riding the wave until the next one arrives so what motivates things is the faith in perennial movement since one no longer believes in concrete destinations or goals to be reached: neither the silence of Zen nor the bliss of classless society. The hipster shows us that all that has remained is irony and all that counts is right now – the song I'm listening to is "cool" right at this moment but yesterday it was lame so today it's cool by

virtue of being too kitchy and there's no guarantee that it won't be lame again tomorrow. Here, the desire for transgression functions via two different negations facing two different directions: on the one hand there is the "Establishment" that must be somehow opposed, on the other there is the immediate past that must be immediately left behind due to mainstream exposure.

As far as Waltz (2001) is concerned, this implies something other than mimetic desire because the desire that fuels the motion of hipness needs no recognizable objects or achievable objectives; any blurry object or place appearing on the horizon can become a goal or destination. The only thing that matters is the *collective* belief in the *next step*. Identities and movements are created by the production of such belief, and this is what creates lifestyles and the scenes built around them. Moreover, this process relies not only on "avant-garde" hipsters but also on hip "intellectuals" such as Momus who idealize the hipster, who legitimate the hipster's hipness. This is not only about the mimetic desire for commodities but also about a desire for desire and identification. Popular culture is not like traditional bourgeois culture, it leaves neither offspring nor an estate behind. It reproduces itself externally by satisfying petit bourgeois kids' desire to desire. But there is also an inner element at work here: the joy of the capacity to envisage the next step and believe in it makes this desire desirable. Within this context, and given Marxism' arguably ill-deserved negative image and lack of credibility thanks to the Stalinism of *Realsozialismus*; the libertarian post-industrial middle-classes do largely ignore what they perceive to be banal political issues and passé ideals; one does turn away from class-based approaches and traditional left-wing goals so one ponders no longer about how to reach them. The boredom and faithlessness of the petite bourgeoisie, its fundamental desire to desire is what popular culture's desire producing apparatus is built upon, after all as Tolstoy writes in *Anna Karenina* boredom is the desire for desires.

Two: Check Out the Scene

Although the word "scene" belongs to our everyday vocabulary as we read or talk about gay scenes, drug scenes, goth scenes, indie scenes, techno scenes, etc. the term has neither been extensively conceptualized as a social category nor used frequently as a unit of cultural analysis. The vernacular use of the word makes things sound "as if scenes, like commodities, circulate in ways that might bring them to some cities rather than others or to all cities in varying degrees. In

such usages the specific and erotic character of the scene seems to dissolve under the universalistic gaze that finds the same scenes in every city or varying degrees of a scene in each and every city as if the scene is a universal function which is put into practice in diverse cities in ways that differ only in degree." Yet, the everyday sense of the term also seems weighted with a specific and local meaning that grounds its intimate appeal and seductiveness for those under its spell, leading much of its discourse to appear to be produced by one who has actually not tasted its pleasures. Indeed, "the scene suggests an element of secrecy or, at least, an esoteric aura connected with any scene which often makes knowledge of its whereabouts a problem for outsiders or for those new to the city." The fact that the location of the scene is problematic "is linked not only to the specialized knowledge required of those who orient to it, but (also) to the idea that the delicacy of such knowledge requires a degree of insulation from profane influences." Here we see a mixture of lightness and heaviness as "the scene often appears sacred because the practices it cultivates could be interrupted by interests that do not engage it with the gravity it thinks it requires" (Blum, 2003: 166-7).

Moreover, although there is a tendency to want to move away from or at least revise the class-based approach of classical (sub)cultural studies so that more eclectic, fluid and situational collectivities may be envisaged, most engagements with the urban scene downplay or overlook the complexities brought about by both the specific emplacement/locality of the scene as well as the shared element of lived-experience essential to its sociality. As far as Blum is concerned approaches rooted in classical Western Marxism (perhaps with the exception of Walter Benjamin) largely dismiss scenes by treating them externally as nothing but occasions of exploitation, false-needs and false-consciousness, that is, as markets and nothing more. Alternatively, while there has been some commentary on scenes as sets of regular occasions marked by ecstatic outbursts of tribal consciousness as in the case of Maffesoli (1996) and Bennett (1999), there has been little attempt to theorize the scene as a social formation; instead, there has been a tendency either to criticize its pretentiousness or celebrate its liminality. Certainly, the scene's claim to exclusiveness "is saturated with pretension, and its fervor often appears to celebrate passion at the cost of discipline. Yet, the complexity of the scene as a collective problem always seems to exceed such characterizations. Finally, the recent explosion of interest in the public space of cities glosses these complexities by treating scene either as dialogical opportunity in ways that intellectualize and diminish its sensuality (as if the scene is a

pedagogical moment in the career of democracy) or as an unformulated vision of shared space that leaves everything interesting to be developed (as if the scene is best understood as a mode of inhibiting space by strangers whose co-presence forces common problems upon them)" (Blum, 2003: 164).

The scene is occasioned, ceremonial and performative; it is where one sees and is seen, or to be more precise, the scene is where one is publicly *seen seeing*. Blum suggests the scene is a combination of voyeurism and exhibitionism; a performance of self-exhibitionism. It is built on the tension between Bataille's (1991 and 1993) restricted and general economy; it tries to sort out the relation between instrumental and ceremonial elements in its doing of seeing and being seen. Regular membership to the scene requires sacrifice and commitment to this performance as lifestyle. The scene is exclusive but what is special about it is the fact that instead of withdrawing from the world in a gesture of collective privatization, it chooses to do its business in public – even its business of making itself exclusive. It provides for concerted enjoyment of discrimination, that is, it provides a place for the collective in some special sense – for the collective engaged by the special pursuit and practice of quality and qualification for some matter. The scene situates the city as a site of communicative energy where private affinities are collectivized as a shared practice that is enjoyable simply by virtue of being shared. The scene makes sharing enjoyable as if it is a private experience, and it makes the very private orientation to quality and discrimination something to be shared. In that sense, the scene makes a place for intimacy and its sharing as something creative. And this intimacy creates incalculable situations which have the potential of self-loss as Bataille has sought them. One way to think about this pleasure of being private in public is to recover Baudelaire's (1964) notion of solitude which is accentuated as enjoyment in the crowd. The *flâneur's* solitude is accentuated at the moment it is experienced as solidarity with alterity, as the thrill of being both part of and apart from the crowd. Indeed, the performance of self-exhibitionism demands a distinctive form of solidarity as one not only sees and is seen by those *inside* the scene, i.e. the performance of scenic life for the scene itself; the scene also collectively performs itself and its self-exhibitionism for the rest of the city that lies *outside* (Blum, 2003). The scene only exists; it is only meaningful if there are excluded others who perceive it as a scene. In that sense it is always also a spectacle and the accusations about the scene being marked by privilege or false-consciousness are not entirely ungrounded. This solidarity and commitment to the scene's ideals is so crucial that the makers or

regulars of the scene set themselves apart from passive or parasitic consumers or idle onlookers who want a piece of the action; there is an unwritten moral duty that one must contribute to the scene, produce something, organize its gatherings. This resentment of the free-rider, the fan, the groupie, and this commandment of the scene's "Spirit" that all members must concretely contribute are recurring motifs in Anja Schwanhäußer's (2010) interviews with the members of Berlin's underground techno scene.

With nocturnal scenes, this commitment is pretty evident as many a "professional party animal" claims going out is a vocation in its own right. It requires emotional, physical, social and financial investment from each serious partygoer. The right contacts have to be made – increasingly the right "friends" have to be "added" on MySpace or Facebook, the right "subscriptions" must be made on Twitter, or the latest posts must be read on Resident Advisor or Restrealiteat – so that secret parties and locations are discovered, entrance fees evaded, drugs procured, drinks gotten for free. As in the case of DJs, musicians, bookers, club owners, etc. some scenesters have managed to turn their nocturnal hobbies into commercially viable jobs. With others (especially with the scenes made up of creative workers) day life is becoming subservient to nightlife; the daytime activities/vocations are not only getting flexible enough to accommodate irregular work/sleeping hours whilst continuing to generate sufficient capital to sustain nocturnal pleasures; the work being done also needs to accommodate the reduced level of efficiency caused by regular hangovers as well as the informality and demands of network sociality so that one always remains in the picture and the necessary elbow distance is maintained to reap the benefits at night. Moreover, one must go through the trouble of informing oneself about everything going on that night so that one makes an informed choice about where to go and with whom to party (and also formulates a Plan B and Plan C in case the first choice turns out be below expectations) so that one doesn't run the risk of missing something, of being left out. Nevertheless, despite all this preparation and all these precautions there is always the anxiety of being at the wrong place at the wrong time; fulfillment is always partial as there is a sneaking suspicion that somewhere else there might be a better party with better looking and more interesting people who are having more fun. And it is exactly this angst about missing out on something plus a well or ill-grounded trust (depends on the city as well as on personal history/experience) in the potency of the night, in the nocturnal promise of eventfulness that

makes the thought of staying at home unbearable. Yet one suspects deep down inside that one probably wouldn't miss much if anything at all.

In fact, it is exactly the "morality of pleasure as duty" underlined by Bourdieu in his analysis of the new petit bourgeoisie that, despite this knowledge, still compels many people to go out night after night. As Schwanhäußer (2010) suggests, even though the actors of Berlin's techno underground strive to create a more "fulfilling" life by aestheticizing their everyday world, on a deeper level there is also the paradoxical awareness that *something is missing*, that parties and hedonism are not the *real answer*, that there has to be *something else.* But this absent thing remains undefined and eludes them, all they know is that it is beyond the reach of their scenic existence and must be reached via another route. Most of them suffer occasionally from identity crises or lack of external affirmation, or they can't deal with the financial precarity of their existence. But all of these worries have to be covered up as the "duty to enjoy" or "obligatory *jouissance"* dictates. Nevertheless, the scene's culture of enjoyment can't always hide these facts; given these psychological strains the actors also speak critically of the scene at times and accuse its gaiety of being superficial. In fact, the feeling that something is missing in this otherwise seemingly wonderful scene-world becomes adamantly graspable at the end of each party when all the drugs are gone and the come-down depression sets in, when bodies exhausted from dancing collapse on the dancefloor or on a sofa, when the sun sends it rays unmercifully upon the ravers and all that is left from the ecstasy of the night are the rings around their eyes, their splitting, alcohol-induced headaches, and the pile of garbage. Arguably, it is the very wish to avoid or at least defer being confronted by this gloomy reality that drives Berlin's growing afterhours culture.

Blum suggests the concept of scene, in a Hegelian manner, has cancelled the opposition between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* as formulated by Ferdinand Tönnies (2001) whilst preserving their difference so it constitutes a sublation of these two forms of human association favored by classical sociology. As we have seen this is pretty evident in the network sociality of Berlin's creative workers who create the nocturnal scenes: on the one hand one has informal, intimate, and fraternal relationships with other "creatives" as life becomes the celebration of a special mix of work and play, on the other hand, the same people who exist as one's party buddies are also one's potential colleagues or rivals since networking via partying aims to secure future alliances, projects and contracts. So this lifestyle reconciles *Gemeinschaft*'s fraternal and

irrational immersions with *Gesellschaft'*s rational and contractual associations aimed at capital accumulation. In that sense, the scene destroys some of the subject's relation to utility as Bataille would have it, thereby revitalizing the connection to intimacy and wastefulness that the focus of utility always imperils. This interpretation retains yet diminishes the status of the scene as itself a commodity which in turn intensifies the subject's immersion in and access to a system of desire as well the subject's interest in enlarging social networks and access to information

> The scene's fusion of art and commodity, of pleasure and function, reaffirms the two-sided nature of its engagement, as both a way of doing business and as an exciting departure from the routines of doing business, making pleasure functional and functional relationships pleasurable. In this way, the scene imitates the economy of the city through its functional methods of association and classification while *at the very same time* travestying this functionality by investing togetherness with the excitement of its contagiousness. The scene – never a community in the sense of finality – is a work in progress where being with or among others is a constantly evolving and open question that brings to view the intimacy of social life as an unending problem to solve (Blum, 2003:188).

Another issue related with the scene is the extent to which it is removed from or integral to the city, how accessible it is to the general public. Does the extensiveness of the scene go as far as taking over the whole city so that a point is reached where the city and the scene are indistinguishable, as Las Vegas is the gambling capital, San Francisco is the gay capital, and Berlin is the new European nightlife capital? On the other hand, does exclusiveness resonate so intimately with the character of the scene that its hospitality to all tastes and visitors can rob it of its vigor and distinctive character as far as the insiders of the scene are concerned? Concerning Berlin's nightlife, here we can think of the bi-polar stand the locals have taken regarding the recent flock of EasyJet rave tourists: as we have seen, some claim they have rescued bars and clubs from financial ruin, created many new job opportunities, and rendered Berlin's nightlife with the unique flair and edge that makes it so distinctive; others claim since tourists have a specific approach to having fun ("Here we are now, entertain us!" as Kurt Cobain had so eloquently put it many years ago) the fact that nocturnal scenes have become accessible to low-end tourism not only means such scenes have become mainstream and commercial, they have also lost their edge and are no longer special or fun. And this brings us to the mortality of the scene.

As scenes tend to come into being, evolve and gradually wither away to be replaced by new ones (they are linked to fad and fashion, and follow the stages of birth, flourish, popularization, commercialization, decline and demise) their mortality puts into play the question of spurious versus real commitment; is one prepared to sacrifice for the scene and its

persistence as a social form or not? This begins to open up the realm of scenic politics, when push comes to shove do I simply learn to live without my favorite bar which is forcefully evicted or am I prepared to sacrifice for it, to show solidarity and mobilize into political action? And also, is the persistence of the scene as social form treated as integral to the perpetuity of the city so that engagement with the problem of a scene's persistence becomes part of the question of the common urban good and its inevitable struggle against privatization? This is also related to how the scene deals with its own charm as its vitality always runs the risk of becoming a commodity; it exists as an object of desire in collective life. That's why scenes are calculated and reconfigured as opportune occasions for investment and the creation of consumers. Moreover, scenes have the potential to lead to processes of gentrification as they promise to become the nucleus of bohemian activity, or of a practice that in some way dramatizes the aesthetic, leisurely, and playful character of a mundane sphere. In the city bohemias are created and then they are not only transformed into opportunities for consumption, but often tamed and made over into domesticated activities. The notorious hang-outs are transformed into spectacles by their very success, the notoriety of their transgressive clientele and scintillating conduct becomes a source of attraction for visitors whose presence drives the originals away (Blum, 2003). In fact, what happens, as we have seen in the previous chapter, when city planners and government officials such as Tanja Müllhans want the urban scenes to remain sufficiently and desirably underground in order to retain the indigenous edge which attracts tourists and draws capital in the form of investments, business ventures, creative workers, cultural entrepreneurship, etc. all lumped together under the heading of "creative class" *à la* Florida (2002)? Indeed, the new urban middle-classes and prospective rave tourists seem no longer to be looking for standardized mass culture. Instead, they are interested in Berlin's local offerings: electronic dance music, small and innovative labels as well as run-down living-room-bars and half-secret, semi-legal clubs. Consequently, the culture industry strives to flexibly incorporate the local structures of musical production and the spaces belonging to this young and resourceful nocturnal scene by overplaying their "alternative" or "underground" qualities and branding them as "subcultural" thereby creating yet another niche market for the neo-bohemian party tourists who want to experience the non-touristy aspects of Berlin's nightlife which paradoxically makes such supposedly "well kept secrets" increasingly touristy.

Three: Back to the Nineties – The Beginnings of Techno Fetishism

In order to answer the questions concerning the politics of the scene (commitment, commodification, gentrification) let us now return to the birth of Berlin's techno underground. Although West Berlin already had its electronic music pioneers as well as an established gay disco scene based in Schöneberg in the 80s, electronic dance music gained popularity and achieved its mass appeal only after the fall of the Wall. Techno and house, imported from Detroit and Chicago and hybridized in Berlin, became the soundtrack of the post-Wall euphoria. The collective experience of physically dismantling the Wall with one's own hands was intensified by techno and the underground clubbing scene burgeoning in the recently deserted and freshly squatted ex-GDR neighborhoods. In such a context, nightlife engendered the optimistic feeling of having the possibility to transform one's life-world right then and there. After all, suddenly everything seemed possible after 28 years of separation had unexpectedly ended within a few hours. Techno offered the possibility to extend the feeling of liberation (from Cold War politics) to one's own body during those exceptional days. What was crucial about the 90s was that atomization and pleasure-seeking replaced the political activism and collective organization of the 80s. Ingo Bader (2005) claims the fact that hedonism would soon replace the heavily politicized and "depressive" atmosphere of the 80s was already evident in the slogan of the first Love Parade which took place just a few months before the Wall came down: "*Friede, Freude, Eierkuchen*" (Peace, Joy, Pancakes). Similarly, in her recently published ethnography on Berlin's second generation (i.e. early 2000s) underground techno scenesters Anja Schwanhäußer (2010) explains how her informants from the *Pyonen* collective, who had belonged to the squat movement in the 80s and who have been organizing "illegal" parties since the 90s, consider anti-capitalist idealism to be unsustainable and regard commercialization as liberation from the "dogmas" of 80s-style political ethics. Schwanhäußer describes in detail how the *Pyonen* have gone through professionalization and achieved commercial success whilst managing to retain their credibility as dissidents within the scene. Similarly, Christiane Rösinger, a Kreuzberg

veteran and one of *Fischbüro's* founders,[49] claims the 90s had arrived with a ban on melancholy (2008). So the spirit of the times had endorsed lightness yet what became popular was a version that was different from the '68 sensibility and its 80s echo as lightness was alienated from its roots in heaviness. Having said that, the passage from the rebellion of the 80s sonically expressed via new wave and post-punk to the hedonism of 90s techno had not been so smooth. Both Rösinger and Schmidt (2009) write about how conflicts arose during impromptu parties at "weekday-bars" in Mitte's basements and how friendships ended since the "conservative" punks and rockers, who found electronic dance music apolitical and demanded live acts instead, failed to settle their differences with the "progressive" techno lovers who wanted to leave behind the politics of Kruezberg's autonomous-left which had been hugely influential during the 80s. In the end, what has prevailed is a sensibility that I will be calling techno fetishism: an overoptimistic trust in techno's cultural and macro-political significance as well as an overglorification of its promise of sensual ecstasy via the liberation of the body – here unlike the academic commentators listed in the opening chapter who use Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts with accuracy and competence to explain rave culture, adopting the duo's BwO and often divorcing it from its crucial ontological roots thus turning into mere analogy has usually been the intellectual tool used for justification by non-scholarly partygoers. In fact, Lütgert (2010) reminds us that "a popular misreading of Deleuze & Guattari had led to the abolishment of all stages" in Mitte's make-shift and clandestine bars and nightclubs in the 90s which has meant that despite Deleuze & Guattari's wish to use nocturnal transgression as a strategic means to a macro-political end, a specific hedonistic lifestyle has come to be seen – simply by virtue of the (often over-exaggerated) perception that it is micro-politically subversive – as an end in itself. From now on, I'll be using the terms "electronic dance music" and "techno" interchangeably. Of course, this is reductionist as there are numerous nuances between electronic dance music's sub-genres but as Rapp (2009) suggests there seems to be no consensus in Berlin at moment among the clubgoers whether to call the currently popular music minimal, house, electro, or simply techno.

　　　Such techno fetishism, or techno fascism if you will, born in the 90s is still evident today in Berlin, a city heralded by many to be the electronic dance music capital of the world where the

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[49] Dimitri Hegemann, another founder of *DaDA-Café Fischbüro* would go on to open the legendary techno club *Tresor* in 1991. *Tresor* (meaning treasury) founded in and around the ex-vault of Wertheimbank remained in its original location at Leipzigerstraße near Postdamer-Platz, which used to be no man's land at the time, until 2005. It has been reopened in 2007 at a new location and is still popular especially for its old-school 90s techno parties.

number of venues playing non-electronic dance music is diminishing by the day while he city abounds with temples such as *Berghain/Panorama Bar, Watergate, Tresor, Maria, Weekend, Cookies, Bar 25* (recently replaced by *Kater Holzig* right across the river)*, arenaclub, Club der Visionäre, Suicide Circus, Golden Gate, Picknick, Tape, Ritter Butzke, Salon zur Wilden Renate, Villa* (now defunct)*, Rechenzentrum*, *Mädcheninternat*, *.HBC, Scala* (recently replaced by *Prince Charles* and *Flamingo*)*, Zurmöbelfabrik, Brunnen70,* *Violet*, *Relais*, *Backyard*, *Kleine Reise*, *Farbfernseher*, *Horst Krzbrg*, *://about blank*, *Icon* (closed in January 2012)*,* the newly opened *Gretchen*, *My Name is Barbarella, Loftus Hall, Damen Salon* and dozens of others as well as numerous clandestine spots – the popular techno party guide Resident Advisor currently lists around 300 nightclubs. Moreover, many bars and pubs (*Szenekneipe*) where one is supposed to sit and chat rather than immerse in dance have also adopted the habit of playing loud, minimal techno beats in the background – it seems it's getting increasingly hard to escape from electronic music if one want's to go out. Such fetishism or cultural fascism not only claims that this specific sort of music is the Western musical form that appeals most to our animal instincts and corporeality as its drum beats are to be consumed loud and collectively (i.e. it is best experienced not at home but in a club environment) it also maintains that techno is the most intellectual popular musical genre we have today, if not ever. What I consider to be a claim to intellectuality especially evident in magazines such as *De:Bug*, *Spex* or *Wire* is due to electronic dance music's specific sensual calculation logic: in order to reach the desired euphoric affect the DJ must intuit/sense/calculate things like how deep the bass drum should be and which frequency it should have, in which order the different melodic elements should be introduced and added on top, how the whole structure should build up to the climax as the melody mutates, how the climax should be deferred as well as how the transition to the next track should take place. All of this happens interactively as the DJ observes the dancers and receives/feels their feedback. Hence, Steffan Hack, the owner of *Watergate* (one of Berlin's internationally famous clubs – this one is especially famous for its minimal parties) can say he and his colleagues have "at some point realized playing techno and house is not only the best way to make lots of money, but also that this music attracts the most *intelligent,* pleasant and fun-loving audience" (my italics, quoted in Rapp, 2009: 37). Here the argument is that since the desired affects of electronic dance music are somehow calculated or prearranged, they require exceptional human agency; thus we have the cult of the star DJ. But we can also argue, by the same token, that since clubbing is a

premeditated method of immersion, of temporarily losing oneself (in the music, in the moment, in the scene) within the relatively safe confines of an institution be it a nightclub or the outdoor rave, it still fits by and large to the broader scheme of consumerist controlled de-control. Indeed, Rainald Goetz, the prize winning author of *Rave* (1998) famous for his involvement in and glorification of the techno movement, points out that techno culture and its unique lifestyle have managed to reconcile the dictates of functioning properly in everyday life (working, earning money) with deviant practices of total immersion and excess, with physical exhaustion. Without explicitly referring to Hegel, Goetz calls this practice the "sublation (*aufhebung*) of excess/exhaustion and function." Swings between partying and recovering from the consequent physical fatigue, oscillating between immersion and distantiation has become an acceptably "alternative" and feasible way of life (2004: 59)

Moreover, there seems to be a belief that techno is intellectual because its special mixture of corporeality and sensual calculation follows in the revolutionary footsteps of Schoenberg, Varèse, Xenakis, etc. For example, Goetz argues "techno is the departure from the terror of tonality, escape from the prison of chord progression in cadence; this old dream of early modernity which jazz also strived to achieve." He maintains only techno has made this dream really plausible and popular. "Techno is the music that started again from scratch and re-invented each new element. That is, of course, nonsensical, lackluster, naïve, anonymous, megalomaniac – but at the same time really massive" (2004: 120-121). Or he contends listening to techno engages the whole brain and this is the biggest advance this genre has made over older forms of non-electronic, manual music. And it is this distinction that makes electronic dance music "holy and dangerous. The world of previous musical forms was filled with abstraction in the shape of ideas, concepts, opinions, ideology. But this new purely spiritual music is made only for the body: the body of the dancer/raver. But not only for a single dancer. Rather for dancers as a collectivity, the music is for the corporeality of the whole party. And when everything is in its right place, techno music is tragic: it's the sound(track) of people's lives in this world" (Goetz, 2004: 58-59). In response DJ Westbam, one of Berlin's stars in the 90s, argues there is some element of intellectuality in what the DJ does since he is more of a participant observer than pure participant (i.e. dancer). But there is also a significant corporeal element so he shies away from using the word intellectual. He rather feels the euphoria and ecstasy associated with techno is beyond the intellect (Goetz, 2004: 114-115).

Goetz optimistically equates the popularization of techno and its rave culture with democratization: "people from different backgrounds and nationalities party together which creates a sense of belonging and identity that wouldn't have been possible otherwise" (2004: 22-23). Hence, he sort of echoes Bakhtin's carnivalesque when he discusses with DJ Westbam the transgressive potential of this "electronic folk music" and defends the Love Parade against its critics (2004: 125). But even if we were to buy into Goetz' optimism, there is still a dark side to this popularization lurking in the background: such intellectualization has been used a marketing strategy by the culture industry. Techno is not only consumed within the club, it must also be distributed and sold to be consumed privately. This is where the record label enters the picture; the club and the label are interdependent, some clubs even have their own label. The club can't attract enough patrons if the music is not popularized and marketed via the label and the label can't convince people to buy its records without the unique lived-experience the club offers. *Tresor*'s founder Dimitri Hegemann argues "the development of electronic dance music has reached a point where no one can claim to make groundbreaking discoveries. The intensity is different, perhaps also the tempo. But this music still can't function on its own, it's hardly comprehensible without the party. It remains the soundtrack of the club night" (2005: 140). Nevertheless, from the late 80s onwards an electronic dance music costumer identity has been gradually created. DJ Westbam who grounded Low Spirit Records in 1986 retells how he was compelled to do so because at least in Germany there were no independent labels willing to release electronic dance tracks at the time: "there were no dance-indies. Independent music was rock'n roll, and the indie types were the people who said, 'disco music, that's just crap!' So we decided to ground our own label" (quoted in Goetz, 2004: 105). Not surprisingly, one of Low Spirit's reactionary slogans was "No more fucking rock'n roll." Sven Väth, another famous Berliner DJ from the 90s, finds such indie dance records not necessarily intellectual but he concedes slogans such as "Electronic Mind Music" or "Artificial Intelligent Music" have been instrumental in boosting up sales and branding the music because they help the record sellers and buyers to construct a mental image of the label's concept. Although Väth himself finds such brands or slogans kitschy he also admits their necessity, "the buyer feels personally addressed. He constructs his identity in the following fashion: I read *Spex* so I'm an intellectual and that's the music I want to or should listen to" (quoted in Goetz, 2004: 21). In this manner, techno is

believed and presented to be vastly superior to the "superficiality and stupidity" of pop or rock music.

Indeed, Stefan Waltz (2001) appropriates Lacan to argue techno's superiority lies in the fact that unlike pop music it eludes signification, transgresses the Symbolic and appeals to the Real by virtue of its immersive corporeality. As he refers to Goetz' (2001) stream-of-consciousness technique which is supposed to represent to the best of its ability the author's essentially "unrepresentable" rave experiences in the 90s, Waltz seems to be over-enthusiastic – just like Goetz (2004) is when he is writing retrospectively about the first "commercial" (mass marketed and live broadcast) Love Parade through Tiergarten which took place in 1997 – about the "life-altering" and "revolutionary" aspects of techno's mass appeal. As Waltz contrasts pop and techno cultures, he claims the former has been a result of the boredom caused by the early modern dissolution of traditional societal affiliations and mechanisms of identification, and the commercialization of the avant-garde's rejection of high culture, whereas the latter is engendered by the late modern destabilization brought about by reflexive modernization *à la* Giddens et al (1994) which has given rise to a paradigm shift and to new collectivities. Waltz' specific kind of techno fetishism claims that Lacanian desire is absent from techno culture because desire as such is metonymy; it lives in the dimension of signification. Electronic dance music, on the other hand, is all about the enjoyment of the present beyond signification. As the subject of pop culture longs to rebel (but this longing is never fully satisfied) with a "principle of duty" (a duty not to conform, not to sell out, not to become like one's elders) with techno there is neither duty nor longing anymore. Pop and techno are two distinct worlds that are fundamentally different in terms of structure. "Pop culture is a closed world with its own time and space, its own identifications and relations. The hipster and the pop singer, essential to classical counter-culture (which is constantly being recuperated in case it has not been complicit from the very start) can only be desirable because these structures enable them to incarnate this whole pop-world-paradigm in their personality cult. But with techno there are no such stars, the DJs are stars not because they belong to such a cult but because the best way to establish presence is intensity and the DJ has mastered the art of uniting a collectivity in a shared intensity" (Waltz, 2001, 225-27). Rapp makes a similar point when he argues what differentiates today's Berlin from New York in the 80s (some people claim there are similarities) is the fact that the stars of the German capital are not individuals but a collective subject, namely Berlin's nightclubs and clubbers as a totality.

The clubs are world famous and unique, people travel from great distances and queue up at the door to be able to see and experience these venues, in order to celebrate both the clubs' and their own existence. And this has its own tradition. Since the 60s Berlin has been a place where such outstanding things have been taking place continuously. But this fact is often ignored or denied. Or it is presented as a weakness in order to compensate for other things and to import other cities' sense of normality and banality to Berlin. Nevertheless, the relative anonymity of Berlin's techno scene is an accomplishment one cannot emphasize enough. In times like these when a great portion of the stories a culture tells to itself and to others are about famous people, when the whole society is caught up in a celebrity cult, it's good to know that at least one cultural segment still exist which takes celebrity as what it really is: a waste of time (Rapp 2009: 12).

Nevertheless, despite such attempts to render techno with street credibility through this politically correct, sufficiently alternative and adequately left-leaning discourse about how most DJs are anonymous, low-paid music enthusiasts who, in their hunger to search out new sounds and put on parties solely for the benefit of their friends, accidentally become conduits for musical novelties, genre-specific nuances or inter-genre cross-fertilizations; and how despite the often-adoring reception they receive from the dancefloor only the most deluded among them can imagine that they are a star or celebrity outside of their cocooned mini-universe, the current existence of star Berliner DJs with international cult following such as Ricardo Villalobos, Richie Hawtin and especially Paul Van Dyck who for quite a long time has had his very own public-relations office in affluent Charlottenburg seems to undermine techno enthusiasts' claims to freedom from distinction or celebrity and from desire or commodification. Or for that matter, we can repeat here that in a city which used to be characterized by the absence of bouncers and door policies, the very fact that *Berghain'*s doorman now counts among Berlin's biggest celebrities demonstrates how overoptimistic such claims are.

Moreover, although there might be some truth to Waltz's claim that techno is the opposite of pop since it negates identification and desire as well as dispels speech and certainty since it dissolves the distance between people as well as the distance between individuals and their corporeality, the fact that most techno clubs in Berlin are filled to the brim every night with locals and tourists alike suggests that even if the music itself is devoid of desire, there still exists an overwhelming desire to live such "transgressive" experiences engendered by the music. There is also the desire to have the necessary lifestyle that makes such experiences possible both in terms of (sub)cultural and economic capital. And desire as such is sustained by the fantasy that such experiences and such lifestyles are better and more meaningful since they constitute a feasible "alternative" – hence we go back to pop culture's anti-establishment ethos and principle of duty. And now, as we have already noted, this goes hand in hand with the new petit bourgeois

"duty to pleasure" or "obligatory *jouissance.*" Also, even if electronic music itself makes no references to cultural symbols – this may be true of the music itself but the culture built around it definitely has its own codes and symbols – then such references are sought elsewhere. As Schwanhäußer (2010) points out, techno underlines and affirms the carpe noctem attitude of Berlin's party scene. It does not convey some sort of subcultural message, neither is it an intellectual engagement with societal problems. It only aims to beautify the moment and intensify reality perception. Techno begins and ends with the *here and now* of the *Erlebnisgesselschaft.* It stands for a comforting corporeal feeling and puts one in a joyful mood either through ecstatic dance or through feelings of belonging and togetherness that accompany relaxed conviviality. There is no transcendental goal that calls from beyond and demands its realization, one has already reached the destination; one has arrived in the present. The ideals that cannot be expressed via this music of presence/the present are projected elsewhere so that techno helps the praxis of transgression actualize into concrete forms while these acts which are perceived to be transgressive acquire their symbolic value from the rebellion of rock music. Hence, the hippiesque ideals which characterize Berlin's underground techno scene culminate not in techno but in rock'n roll which Schwanhäußer considers as an expression of protest against current societal relations as well as an expression of the longing to find a way out, to reach a better life in a better world. As rock music opens up a space for imagining an improved state of existence it is not limited to/by the present, to the moment of listening like techno is. So while the latter operates as a concrete and corporeal means of transgression, the former's tradition of opposition is used as a form of reflexive sense making. While techno provokes and underlines concrete action, the rock'n roll attitude is used to legitimate those actions (2010). Hence, many connoisseurs as well as purveyors of rock music also haunt techno locales and find the situation not contradictory at all. After all, having a mop-top hair cut and nerdy glasses, and donning skinny jeans while jumping up and down to the latest tune by the Arctic Monkeys or Franz Ferdinand – or their current equivalent imported from across the Chunnel or across the pond – prohibits one, by no means, from relocating to the *Panorama Bar* a few hours later and going crazy with Villalobos or Hawtin. Moreover, while these hedonistic lifestyles based on de-control (leisure, consumption, excess, etc.) serve the purpose of providing the individuals with a sense of control over their lives and a sense of certainty in the shape of self-identity in an otherwise dubious world; within the symbolic order of postmodernity these controlled lifestyles

of de-control do not have to be internally coherent, i.e. with the termination of fixed values, inconsistent elements are now free to form the totality of an externally consistent lifestyle. So indie-pop may be consumed right after, right before or together with techno. Moreover, such instances of de-control are actually restrained or controlled (mainly through commercialization) as they offer the prospect of institutionalized transgression which constitutes little or no threat to the status quo. Of course, whether there is any truth to this rebellion which rock'n roll is perceived to epitomize is a question on its own. It's hard to say how much of this rock rebellion cult is really based on actual revolt and how much of it is culture industry's marketing strategy. Has rock'n roll ever been totally, uncompromisingly oppositional? Take the Rolling Stones for instance: Mick, Keith & co. famous for their sympathy for the devil had already been flirting with him at the beginning of their career; in 1964 they composed and performed the jingle for Kellogg's Rice Krispies commercial (Hutnyk, 2006). Another ironic fun fact here is that the breakfast cereal, which had already become part of the American staple diet in the 60s when it apparently tried to appropriate the "emancipatory" spirit of rock'n roll, had been created at the turn of the century by the overzealous Dr. Kellog to replace the hearty English breakfast in order to curb good Christian's sexual appetite, especially to stop them from masturbating.

If we further pursue the argument that pop/rock music works through representation (lyrics/symbols) and pertains to the Symbolic whereas electronic dance music with its beats/loops/samples/rhythm pertains to the Real, we may still argue that what creates this affect is not electronic dance music per se but rather the collective situation of listening and dancing to music in general. Of course, a rock concert is a spectacle and the lyrics, symbols, stage-show, etc. are as important for the spectators as the music's corporeal appeal, namely its rhythm and melody. But when people are dancing to a rock anthem in a club the rhythm and melody come first, the lyrics are of less importance if at all. In Berlin many people do speak English, but for most of them the music played at indie parties is not in their native tongue so most dancers can't or don't sing along to the tunes; perhaps they don't know them by heart or can't understand the lyrics when they are listening to the song in such a setting – probably at home with full concentration and earphones they do. But the intensive affect that makes the Real shine through via dance, via corporeality is there. So music that is danced to, danceable music appeals to the Real, it's not actually genre-specific. The affect of the music comes not necessarily from its form

(although this obviously is a factor) but from what you are doing, where you are doing it, and most importantly whom you are surrounded by while listening and dancing to the music.

In fact, we can trace the roots of the this elitist argument about how techno's corporeality makes it more enticing and liberating; therefore, arguably more transgressive than the rock act back to Richard Dyer's influential "In Defense of Disco" in which the claim is that whereas rock music's eroticism is phallocentric – its "repeated phrases trap you in their relentless push" and its rhythm is contained and tame ("closed off") which results in "that mixture of awkwardness and thrust so dismally characteristic of dancing to rock" – disco (which arguably is the precursor to house) is marked by a non-phallic "whole body eroticism" which "takes from black music the insistent beat that makes it even more driving" and releases you "in an open-ended succession of repetitions" resulting in the "expressive, sinuous movement of disco dancing." So while rock music "confines sexuality to the cock" disco "restores eroticism to the whole of the body, and for both sexes, not just confining it to the penis." As a result, within the discotheque the body can be experienced in dance as polymorphous entity which transgresses traditional conceptions of gender roles; disco's "eroticism allows us to rediscover our bodies as part of this experience of materiality and the possibility of change" (Dyer, 2006: 104-108). Well, Dyer's assessment of disco's exceptionality is probably not ill-grounded or false per se, and his choice of method, namely explaining the brief period of subversion associated with the disco "sensibility" by emphasizing both its historical context and its unique musical form is still valid and important. It is his dismissal of rock that seems today to be a bit too hasty. Dyer's arguments makes sense for the kind of rock music produced around 1979 and especially for the kind of audience it was produced for (mainly occidental, white, male and heterosexist) be it mainstream and apolitical or leftist and subcultural – what Jeremy Gilbert describes as "the macho and puritanical universe of post-punk avant-gardism" (2006[a]: 99). But it seems the gains made in the West by liberal/libertarian identity politics over the next decades as well as the increasing prevalence of the bio-power approach have ensured that currently a significant number of well-read rock or pop aficionados, who are aware of how subjectivity and corporeality are (re)produced/constrained by discourse and how constructed gender roles play into this process, are perfectly capable of experiencing such non-phallic "whole body" eroticism. Moreover, as argued in the opening chapter, there is no reason why pogo dancing associated with punk-rock cannot also be regarded as a transgression of traditional and constraining modes of embodied

subjectivity as it too is an affective, non-significatory and desexualized cultural experience if we are willing to accept aggression (bodies crashing into each other) as a genuine and meaningful way of being in the world and of experiencing corporeality – what's crucial here is that aggression must not be conflated with violence and machismo. Given the genealogical ties between disco, the birth of DJ culture and more recent forms of electronic dance music – nevertheless a problematic genealogy susceptible to commercialization, recuperation and historical revisionism as Tim Lawrence (2006) explicates in detail – writing recently Alexis Waltz is able to reproduce the techno-is-liberating-rock-is-constraining binary by likening the techno sets at *Berghain* with their "sparkling instants of euphoria" to a "Buddhist ritual with which one purges oneself of pop music's sentimentality and nostalgia that characterize everyday life" (2009: 122). Perhaps what we urgently need today, especially in a place like Berlin, is a new pamphlet entitled "In Defense of Not Buying into Minimal Fascism and Fetishism."

As Lawrence (2006) points out, the aspect of disco musicality that has proved to be the most enduring in terms of aesthetic innovation and global influence is the role of the DJ. Disco music's spinners have functioned as engineers of collage since they blended found objects (vinyl records) that originated as distinct entities (works of art) into an improvised aural canvas, and consequently challenged traditional notions of musicianship. Developing their craft, 70s DJs have introduced innovative mixing techniques, and they also learnt how to read and respond to the mood of their crowds while mapping out a journey that would extend across an entire night. In this manner the dancefloor arguably became an "incubator for a new form of collective, democratic, improvised, non-repeatable, synergistic music" listening or indeed music making if the succession of tracks that make up a DJ set can be considered as one big piece of unique and partially improvised music it its own right (2006: 143). That famous scene from *24 Hour Party People* (Dir: Michael Winterbottom, 2002) where there is a paradigm shift as the dancers suddenly start applauding the DJ at the *Haçienda* demonstrates this well. In the scene, Tony Wilson (portrayed by Steve Coogan) quotes Wordsworth to equate being at the *Haçienda* to being at the French Revolution: "bliss it was in that dawn to be alive, but to be young was very heaven." With the birth of rave culture, he adds, the dancers began to applaud "not the music, not the musician, not the creator; but the medium." From then on we witness the "beatification of the beat and the DJ becomes the main act, the DJ is the star." Moreover, what's unique about club cultures is that with all previous subcultures one got hooked via the music, i.e. one heard it on

the radio or saw it on TV, one came across it at the store or at a friend's place, and then since one liked the music one ended up buying the record and listening to it at home. People first indentified with the music's affects and symbolism which then led to expanded forms of fashion and consumption associated with that specific subcultural identity. In effect, music came first, appearance and constructed identity came afterwards. But both with 90s techno and with the current versions of electronic dance music it's the lightness of a liberating and hedonistic lifestyle attached to the party experience that is primarily attractive. Music, rather than being the main attractor and primary identity constituent, is only an element. Moreover, the lightness of the techno scene is such that its members refuse to be pinned down and attached to a single musical genre. Rather, the scene is preconditional on a state of permanent liminality. Schwanhäußer's (2010) informants constantly refuse to be externally categorized as Berlin's underground "techno scene" since they perceive the term to have negative connotations such as commercialization, niche market, kitsch (e.g. Love Parade), etc. That's why it's not the music but the party as well as a lifestyle (which Schwanhäußer describes as "permanently under construction") giving rise to the party that defines their identity. On the other hand, Schwanhäußer notes that although class-consciousness and class-struggle are not defining factors for her informants' self-perception, they also shy away from declaring both to themselves and to the outside world that they are *not* a subculture or that they are *not* political. As some sort of a middle-way path one member of the *Pyonen* collective defines the scene's insiders as critical (i.e. opposed to mass culture) and committed (to having fun, to celebrating their existence, to rejoice in being) partygoers (2010).

As we have seen, "no more fucking rock'n roll" was one of the popular slogans chanted by Berlin's techno elite in the 90s. It was utilized to optimistically announce that techno had inherited the rock'n roll attitude; techno was supposedly more rock'n roll than rock music itself. At the time it sounded right. After all, Berlin was all about techno during 90s and it seems many Berliners did not pay much attention to the US indie-rock/early grunge scene at the time. Hamburgers, on the other hand, seem to have had much more curiosity for and contact with what was going on in the indie rock'n roll universe across the pond. So Berlin's techno enthusiasts seem to have assessed the then current state of rock'n roll only according to what was being produced by the likes of Guns'n Roses at the time. Compared with that kind of music, techno was indeed a thousand times more rock'n roll. As we have seen, the political ethics of the previous decades were replaced by hedonism during the 90s and much hope was attached to its

potential of subversion. Although Love Parade (which in the meantime has had to relocate from Berlin and has finally come to a tragic end on 24 July 2010 when 21 people were killed and over 500 were injured) was criticized heavily for becoming commercial and mainstream towards the end of the decade, its advocates claimed its mass appeal and immense popularity signaled the general acceptance that a different, more wasteful (*à la* Bataille) mode of life tied to a more meaningful, profanely sacred existence was possible. In a way, the techno movement in general was being regarded as an extension or a logical continuation of the peaceful "velvet" revolutions shaking the world and changing the map of Europe. Yet from the start, Berlin's techno movement was not as overtly political as Reclaim the Streets (RTS) had been across the Chunnel around the same time. The RTS movement began with the "No M111" anti-road campaign in 1995 and then occupied the M41 in 1996, effectively closing the West London motorway to traffic via partying. As one participant recalls "eight thousand protesters partied for nine hours and jack hammers dug up the road. Later that year, RTS took a different direction and adopted a more overtly anti-capitalist stance. We teamed up with the Liverpool Dockers, closing down the docks to support their fight against casualization. Two years later, in 1998, there was the Birmingham Global street party against the G8 summit and worldwide street parties started taking place from New York to Australia. In 1999, fifteen thousand demonstrators took to the city as a part of an international day of action under the banner of anti-capitalism" (Meaden, 2009: 82). In comparison to the major police crack-down and brutality RTS was the target of, Love Parade was more like a rendition of the hippiesque "make love not war."

While (sub)cultural studies have tended to argue that youth subcultures are subversive until the very moment they are represented by the mass media (Hebdige, 1979), Thornton suggests the kind of taste culture Love Parade or techno represents (not to be confused with activist organizations) becomes politically relevant only when it is framed as such. "In other words, derogatory media coverage is not the verdict but the essence of their resistance" (1995: 137). Hence, the initial negative media coverage during the 90s as well as the accusation coming from within the scene about selling out and becoming mainstream might have driven the pioneers and later members of Berlin's techno movement to believe their actions were more subversive than in reality. Either way, this liberating yet ephemeral celebration which is turned into a lifestyle package and played out in temporary venues, has led in the long run to the establishment of stable economic structures; 90s techno culture has strongly influenced the

entrepreneurial character of Berlin's current creative industries (Vogt, 2005). And as we shall shortly see, this negative reputation still performs the same function today as the hedonism represented by spots like *Bar 25* is defamed by the neo-conservative consensus. Hence, through negation such hedonism acquires the *appearance* of nonconformity or transgressiveness. Furthermore, as far as Schwanhäußer (2010) is concerned, Berlin's current techno scene follows Love Parade's hippiesque legacy and practices a "culture of fluidity" that differentiates it from traditional subcultures in the sense that no clear-cut boundaries between *us* and *them*, between underground and mainstream can be made externally. Moreover, instead of trying to transform society and trying to establish a new and improved order; the post-'68 hedonism of the scene's members detests the idea of long-term or permanent order and instead propagates the principle of permanent change. So as they shy away from rules, variation itself becomes a rule. Although from the outside the scenesters' reactionary identity looks like a contradiction to this principle of uncertainty and fluidity as well as to this abandonment of traditional leftist discourse and ideals, Schwanhäußer notes the middle-class scenesters reappropriate romantic notions such as the working-class underdog, the reclusive hippie or the agitated punk in order to construct their identities against the "Establishment," thereby adhering to the common identification mechanism of creating myths and consequently inventing a common external enemy. Therefore, the ex-squatters now turned into culturepreneurs fill their lifestyle with the desired charm, thrill and transgressiveness through the pretense of opposition although government officials, city planners and financial investors have long become their business partners. Of course, there are cultural and ideological differences between the scenesters and the capitalists, and their relations are still antagonistic at times but still their co-existence is marked by mutual interest most of the time.

What was crucial for Berlin's nightlife in the 90s and what still has its major repercussions today was the abundance of empty space within the city center. As the historical center had been left within the borders of East Berlin, many of the buildings damaged in WWII remained empty and/or were left in a desolate state during the GDR days. This was the case not only because it was cheaper to create new settlements outside the center through the use of prefabricated concrete slabs (*Plattenbau*), but also the East German city planners considered the old, damaged buildings as products of bourgeois aesthetics from which the new socialist state strove to distance itself. Hence, the new settlements served the additional purpose of conveying socialist realism's aesthetic message. It was only after the reunification that the slow but steady

process of regeneration began. According to a report published by the Berlin Senate in 2009, 73% of all buildings within the city center had been renovated by 2005 ("Kulturwirtschaft in Berlin: Entwicklungen und Potenziale 2008"). Today, this number is closer to 90% (Image 10). The desertion of the city center was initially perpetuated by the fall of the Wall as many East Berliners living in those damaged, half empty buildings hurried to West Germany since they feared the border would be reestablished after a while. As an initiative began in 1993 to return the buildings confiscated by the Nazis to their original Jewish owners, 312 buildings around Hackescher Markt remained empty since their owners were nowhere to be found. In 1994, there were still around 2200 empty flats in Mitte alone (Schwanhäßer, 2010).

Another factor contributing to the abundance of empty or deserted urban spaces has been the city's de-industrialization after the reunification. As West Berlin's heavily subsidized economy never had much heavy industry, the East German industrial complex was dismantled via relocations and privatizations. This meant the city of Berlin was left with numerous derelict factory buildings and warehouses or run-down breweries which were either squatted or rented out by the city officials and property owners for interim use (*Zwischennutzung*): until the state succeeded to find prospective developers or the private owners managed to attract the investors thereby gathering the sufficient funds to begin the process of demolition or refurbishment, such spaces were rented out to various cultural entrepreneurs such as artist collectives and nightclub owners. Since this practice is still in use and as this interim period lasts for many years, some bars and clubs which had started out as obscure nightspots have since then prospered and become internationally famous. This in turn not only attracts hordes of rave tourists but also, as we shall shortly see, causes unrest when the time of eviction finally arrives. On the other hand, some much beloved night locales have disappeared without a trace. Either way, this practice of interim use and the cycle of nightspot birth and death it engenders are essential for the world famous dynamism of Berlin's nightlife.

Bader (2005) claims during the mid-90s there were around 140 squats and many empty flats in Mitte while clandestine nightspots akin to Hakim Bey's (2003) "temporary autonomous zone" were popping up all over the place. At the time, the only door policy was managing to find the door. Although these semi-legal and make-shift bars and clubs were constantly under the threat of eviction it actually took the authorities much longer than expected to take things under control. In fact, due to abundance of free space and lack of strict regulation one didn't need to

invest much in order to open up a club. This meant one did not run the risk of losing much either. Hence, such cultural entrepreneurship was relatively widespread and with the aid of interim use contracts a group of friends could easily open up an art gallery in a deserted basement or courtyard which would function as a nightclub most of the time. In fact, Mitte seems to have been full of such short-lived and semi-underground events spaces and clubs some of which didn't even have proper names but were christened instead after the day on which they hosted events, e.g. *Mittwochsbar* (Wednesday-bar). As there seems to have been new places opening up and others closing down almost on a daily basis, the inability at the time to leave Berlin for a long interval for fear of missing out on stuff is a common theme in many retrospective accounts, e.g. Schmidt (2009), Rösinger (2008) and Lütgert (2010).

As tax exemptions and state grants further helped cultural entrepreneurs achieve the ideals of autonomous life and work during those days, Schwanhäußer (2010) suggests the initial financial feasibility of this novel, improvised and self-assembled entrepreneurial model (based mostly on temporary projects) gradually led to Berlin's widespread image as "concrete utopia" (Bloch, 2000) which in turn attracted many young people from West Germany. According to Lütgert, the general mood at the time was "decidedly pre-capitalist, and it was a widely held belief that what Berlin was experiencing was not gentrification, but gentrification envy" (2010). But these optimal conditions were only temporary. While city officials finally managed to solve ownership disputes concerning previously state-owned real estate so that squatters could finally be evicted and there was no more need to renew certain interim use leases, the avant-garde pioneers also found themselves in the position of having to compete with the newcomers who had followed in their footsteps and whose arrival in large numbers also marked the beginning of a process of urban regeneration. Faced with increasing competition, the original culturepreneurs who were now a few years older and with kids & family had two options: relocate or professionalize. Many, especially those with children, opted for the financial security and stability of professionalization instead of seeking new adventures in other parts of the city or in other cities. As they gradually turned their club culture and leisure activities into lucrative occupations based on the model provided by their nocturnal sociality, the actors of this "creative milieu" ended up establishing a new and semi-independent culture industry in Berlin's old working-class districts (Vogt, 2005). While East German culture and everyday reality were becoming increasingly absent from these neighborhoods, the "utopian" middle-class kids who

had freshly arrived from West Germany and were now living and partying "anti-commercially" in Mitte, Prenzlauerberg and Friedrichshain seemed to show no interest in the districts' previous or elderly residents and their version of anti-commercialism. So "as the task of building retirement homes or shopping malls in ex-GDR territories fell to their parents, these youths were busy with gentrifying Berlin and they couldn't care less about what had happened to the shopkeepers whose stores they were now turning into bars and galleries" (Waltz & Weskott, 2005: 154).

Vogt (2005) argues whilst reunified Berlin's first generation of cultural practitioners created new micro-structures as they used or shared the same space to live, work, create art and party; the socio-economical networks born out of their intermingled life-worlds provided the loosely organized base-structure for their social, cultural and economical interactions. Following professionalization the actors of this "creative milieu" began to consider themselves no longer as only artists or creative workers but also as small-scale business owners and entrepreneurs. Moreover, they were no longer bounded by the borders of Berlin or Germany as they now belonged or had access to a global network of cultural intermediaries with distinctive lifestyles based on subcultural capital. Vogt evokes the neo-tribalism approach when she claims what she refers to as Berlin's "creative milieu" is different from subculture in the Birmingham School sense of the term since its organizing principle is not social class but lifestyle. She goes on to suggest these reflexively modern lifestyles adopted by the creative actors have created a unique model of sociality built around Berlin's clubbing scene which then has become a successful business model. In fact, what has been born out of the squat movement has now crystallized into established professions. For instance, some scenesters have become professional party and event organizers (e.g. COOP) who do not shy away from corporate sponsorship and state involvement, or they have adopted the role of location scouts who now mediate between other cultural entrepreneurs, property owners, local municipalities and the Berlin Senate for a substantial fee. For example, the realtor agency owned by *Zurmöbelfabrik* which had entered the scene in the 90s by organizing illegal parties in a coal cellar and now owns two very popular techno clubs in Brunnenstr. in Mitte. Here we can also mention the *Zwischennutzungsagentur* (Interim Use Agency) founded by Stefanie Raab which has singlehandedly helped artists and culturepreneurs rent almost half of the empty stores in "Kreuzkölln" (59 out of 130) between 2005 and the end of 2007.

McRobbie (2002) argues via Thornton (1995) that a similar phenomenon has taken place in Britain in the sense that dance/rave culture which came into being in the late 1980s as a mass phenomenon has strongly influenced the shaping and contouring, the energizing and entrepreneurial character of the new culture industries:

> The scale and spread of this youth culture meant that it was more widely available than its more clandestine, rebellious, 'underground' and style-driven predecessors, including punk. The level of self-generated economic activity that 'dance-party-rave' organizations entailed, served as a model for many of the activities that were a recurrent feature of 'creative Britain' in the 1990s. Find a cheap space, provide music, drinks, video, art installations, charge friends and others on the door, learn how to negotiate with police and local authorities and in the process become a club promoter and cultural entrepreneur. This kind of activity was to become a source of revenue for musicians and DJs first, but soon afterwards for artists. It has meant that the job of 'events organizer' is one of the more familiar of new self-designated job titles. The form of club sociality that grew out of the ecstasy-influenced 'friendliness' of the clubbing years gradually evolved into a more hard-nosed networking, so that an informal labor market has come into being which takes as its model the wide web of contacts, 'zines', flyers, 'mates', grapevine and 'word of mouth' socializing that was also a distinctive feature of the 'micro-media' effects of club culture (McRobbie 2002: 520).

McRobbie goes on to argue that the intoxicating pleasures of leisure culture have now, for a sector of the under 35s, provided the template for managing an identity in the world of work. "Apart from the whole symbolic panoply of jargon, clothes, music and identity, the most noted feature of this phenomenon was the extraordinary organizational capacity in the setting up and publicizing of 'parties'. Now that the existence of raves and dance parties has become part of the wider cultural landscape – having secured the interest and investment of major commercial organizations – it is easy to overlook the energy and dynamism involved in making these events happen in the first place. But the formula of organizing music, dance, crowd and space have subsequently proved to give rise to 'transferable skills', which in turn transform the cultural sector as it is also being opened up to a wider, younger and more popular audience." As a result, where patterns of self employment or informal work are the norm, what emerges is a radically different kind of labor market organization. "While the working practices of graphic designers, website designers, events organizers, 'media office' managers and so on inevitably share some features in common with previous models of self-employed or freelance working, we can propose that where in the past the business side of things was an often disregarded aspect of creative identities best looked after by the accountant, now it is perceived as integral and actively incorporated into the artistic identity." To illustrate this point McRobbie draws attention to the

"young British artists" for whom she argues the commercial aspect of the art world is no longer disparaged but is welcomed and even celebrated:

> Mentor and tutor to the Goldsmiths graduates (including Damien Hirst), Professor Michael Craig Martin reputedly encouraged the students to consider the partying and networking they had to do to promote their art as a vital part of the work, not as something separate. He also insisted that artistic values were not incommensurate with entrepreneurial values. To some extent this more openly commercial approach is also part of the logic of breaking down the divide between high and low culture. If, for example, art is not such a special and exceptional activity, if it ought not to see itself as superior to the world of advertising, then what is to stop the artists from expecting the same kind of financial rewards, expense accounts and fees as the art directors inside the big agencies? The new relation between art and economics marks a break with past anti-commercial notions of being creative. Instead young people have exploited opportunities around them, in particular their facilities with new media technology and the experience of 'club culture sociality' with its attendant skills of networking and selling the self and have created for themselves new ways of earning a living in the cultural field (ibid: 520-21).

So, as 90s underground culture industrialized into niche markets and squatters became culturepreneurs within the following decade both in Germany and the UK, what has been unique about Berlin is the hybridization of the Detroit sound, the abundance of post-industrial party locations within the city center as well as the post-Cold War euphoria. But as early as 1997 one could make out a general consensus (among those who had moved to East Berlin in recent years) that the party was soon to be over. The skyscrapers at Potsdamer-Platz were going up, the federal government was coming in, and both "Hamburg and Cologne had given up their resistance, surrendered to their fate, and were relocating their critical infrastructure to Berlin. But while the city stood in awe, anticipating the heavily promoted 'rebirth of a metropolis,' the new millennium announced itself with the burst of the dot-com bubble and the collapse of the New Economy, tightly followed by the disintegration of the old economy, the banking scandal, the city's indefinite bankruptcy and its hasty rebranding as poor but sexy. While the prospect of yet another decade of interim use of empty office buildings, this time equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, sent waves of joy throughout the cultural sector, the rules of the game were slowly beginning to change." Just as it took a Social Democrat/Green federal government to undermine the German welfare state, the city's long-standing planned economy was finally abolished by a Social Democrat/Socialist city senate. As a result, while "the long-bankrupt city sold off massive amounts of formerly affordable housing to soon-to-be-bankrupt pension funds, the economically backward parts of the population began to realize that they were actors in a market too (even though in that market a pension plan had become, essentially, a bet on losing one's own home). And ironically, by officially marketing its poverty as sexiness, Berlin had tapped a gold mine.

The recent explosion of low-end tourism may in fact be the first market-driven boom cycle that any Berliner alive today has ever witnessed" (Lütgert, 2010).

Although Berlin's current techno scene lacks, by and large, the illegality, anarchy and raving optimism (or delusion) of the 90s, and notwithstanding increasing corporate sponsorship and brand presence, Schwanhäußer (2010) still considers it to be "subversive" and partially "underground" for the fact that its actors still exploit interim use for their own benefit, namely for temporarily setting up clandestine clubs and art spaces and organizing parties with the aid of exclusive flyers and word-of-mouth advertising. Although such spaces are usually rented legally, the tenants often lack the necessary permits for organizing clubnights; therefore, the parties are technically illegal. The "squat discourse" from the 80s and 90s is still maintained so that the party becomes a spectacle which pretends to be illegal or stresses out its illegal aspects ("yes, we pay rent but we also show them the middle finger by not asking for their permission to party!") so that it becomes desirably thrilling. Sometimes, the appearance of cops are secretly awaited or hoped for because, in a Bataillean manner, only through the appearance of the law enforcers will the party obtain the necessary legitimacy to illegality and transgression. Schwanhäußer argues while the scene travels from one secret location to the next as clubs come into being and perish, it alters the aesthetics of the urban fabric – she likens both the use of graphics/imagery on the flyers as well as the re-decoration/transformation of the party space to the Situationist *détournement* – whilst briefly enabling "alternative" ways of being and living in the city. In order to demonstrate this she has constructed psychogeographic maps which show the flyers' journey through the city; the next secret party is advertised not only in the clandestine club as the partygoers are handed out flyers, but also such flyers are left at various (and often exclusive) locations central to the scene and its actors, e.g. an obscure record store, a vintage clothes shop, the trendy bar in which they all hang out, etc. As Schwanhäußer classifies such fleeting and transformative party sites to be prime examples of "temporary autonomous zone (Bey, 2003) or "concrete utopia" (Bloch, 2000) and reconceptualizes Goffman's (1961) concept of "focused gathering" to argue that such techno events are "meaningfully meaningless, unfocused gatherings;" she assigns to what she calls "the party as life form" the chaotic and improvised task of creating existential meaning for its participants. In that sense, such clandestine (i.e. exclusive) and ephemeral techno events are made analogous to Debord's (1987) playfully constructed situations while the scene's nomadic existence or its long-term journey through the urban

underground, during which such situations materialize and dissolve, is argued to be a contemporary example of the *dérive*. Only this time, the urban drift is taking place on a much larger time scale.

Although Schwanhäußer's is a refreshing take on the *dérive*, the biggest problem with this formulation is that she seems to read too much into the actions of her subjects. While she classifies the phenomena she has experienced as an insider during her fieldwork as examples of *dérive* and temporary autonomous zone, we never gather from the interviews she has carried out with some of the scene's major actors that they are consciously using such theories to define and legitimate their actions. On the contrary, unlike the cultural critic who retrospectively writes the ethnography, its subjects seem to be mostly unaware of such critical theories and practices; none of them says anything to indicate that they consciously model their actions after such concepts. Although the general danger of over-theorizing by reading too much into the subjects' actions as well as of distorting praxis to make everything fit the theory exist for any ethnography, Schwanhäußer's sleight of hand becomes even more evident when we consider the fact that both Debord and Bey are adamant on the condition that the *dérive* and the t.a.z. require conscious and purposeful action in order to come into being. This is so because for both thinkers such praxis must serve revolutionary purposes. Of course, Schwanhäußer's informants do consider their actions and their lifestyles to be subversive and they are motivated, up to an extent, by the desire not to conform. Nevertheless, there is no acknowledgement on their part that their hedonistic feats are part of a political project consciously based on and carried out according to Debord's or Bey's instructions. In fact, as we have already seen Schwanhäußer informs us that her subjects have deliberately replaced the collectivism and political activism of the 70s and 80s (which they find dogmatic) with individualism and hedonism from the 90s onwards. Moreover, the theorists' insistence on class struggle is largely ignored by the informants as members of the proletariat are excluded from the underground scene. Nevertheless, especially in the case of *Wagenburg* (laager) parties, the figure of the working class under-dog is romanticized and symbolically adopted by the scenesters, who as Schwanhäußer points out largely come from petit-bourgeois backgrounds and whose tastes/ habitus/lifestyles are consistent with those of the new post-industrial middle classes; hedonism, intoxication, excess, consumption, joy, narcissistic play and relationship building as well as "alternative" modes of life which are largely compatible with

commerce and culture industry. Moreover, such scenes' catalytic contribution to urban gentrification is not disputed by Schwanhäußer.

Four: Urban Gentrification, Bar 25 & co. under Threat and Carnivalesque Dissent

As we have noted above, May '68 indicates that politics incited by heaviness may be carried out lightly, that is, in a Dionysian fashion. Nevertheless, the Dionysian rejection of the Apollonian prospect of betterment and change as well as the debatable individualism of Nietzsche's final solution (i.e. acceptance of eternal return) do not always sit well with the categorization of heaviness as the precursor to political consciousness, especially when Marxist politics are concerned. Without disregarding anarchist, post-anarchist or libertarian-socialist homages to Nietzsche [50] and despite attempts made by Bataille, Foucault, and Deleuze & Guattari as well as more recent vitalist syntheses made by thinkers such as Virno, Lazzarato, and Hardt & Negri; reconciling Nietzsche with Marx (and with Marxist critical theory and praxis) and grounding concrete, progressive politics on such a synthesis remains a challenge.

Although officially sanctioned forms of political carnival (ritualized and institutionalized transgression for political purposes) disappeared during the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th – the epoch of *heavy* (serious and bloody) revolutions – it may be argued that the post-structuralist/postmodernist celebration of Bakhtin's folkloric populism and the reemergence of carnivalesque tactics as exemplified by recent alter-globalization movements (especially the protests in Seattle, Genoa or Davos carried out by members of diverse groups such as Carnival against Capitalism, Art and Revolution, the Ruckus Society or Reclaim the Streets) as well as the trust in the autonomous multitude and its bio-political production of the common (Hardt & Negri, 2005 and 2009) signal an increasing focus on and hope in *light*, Dionysian politics. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that laughter and joy are (still) as subversive or significant as the political actors wish or present them to be. In fact, as mentioned above, the current celebration of laughter and joy as transgressive political categories seems more often than not to confuse *light* laughter with the *heavy* one; being seems to rejoice in being *without the crucial tragic aspect*. Moreover, what distinguishes the heavy lightness of May '68 from light

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[50] See *I am not a Man, I am Dynamite! Friedrich Nietzsche and the Anarchist Tradition* (Ed. Moore and Sunshine, 2004).

politics today is that back then the dissidents' carnivalesque humor was complemented by an acceptance (both by the educated youth as well as by the workers) of violence as legitimate means to a political end – this violence may have been defensive or anti-repressive but it was still violence. Today, violent (re)action is reserved for more traditional leftist groups such as autonomous anti-fascist or anarchist formations while Dionysian pranksters strive under normal circumstances (i.e. when not attacked by the riot squad) to demonstrate their dissidence solely through carnivalesque and non-violent humor. Nevertheless, as overarching and pressing issues such as financial crisis, neoliberal austerity, military involvement, data protection, nuclear power or urban gentrification result in the fact that demonstrations attract various political groups across the leftist spectrum situationally united against the common adversary, this heterogeneity ensures the potential of aggression even in mainly carnivalesque events. In some cases, the autonomous Black Bloc, notorious for its "direct action" as well as its eagerness to retaliate or provoke the cops, marches side by side with pranksters such as the Pirate Party or the Hedonist International clad in frivolous costumes and dancing to the rhythm of techno blasting out of the sound system.

Bruner (2005) suggests carnivalesque forms of protest become prevalent to counteract repressive regimes especially when those benefitting from rampant political corruption lose their sense of humor, become ridiculous in their seriousness, and are still incapable for one reason or another of silencing their prankster publics. According to this, a state's sense of humor is proportionate to the strength of citizens' rights and freedoms against the state, the general openness of government deliberations, the breadth and depth of political dialogue, and the degree to which officials are legally constrained to tolerate public criticism. The main reason carnivalesque protest (e.g. Orange Alternative in Poland, John Lennon Peace Club or the Society for a Merrier Present in Czechoslovakia) has been successful in undermining the Soviet regime in Eastern Europe is that the dissidents had been facing "sick and humorless" states ruled by actors who repressed critical citizenship and populated by strict conservatives who craved certainty and discouraged dissensus; states which had anemic and passive public spheres as well as bland and diverting forms of public entertainment. On the contrary, Western (neo)liberal market democracies present themselves to be "healthy and fun" states as far as Bruner is concerned: they have leaders who seem to somewhat tolerate if not encourage critical citizenship, citizens capable of considerable irony, institutional means to manage ambiguity and

dissensus, rich and actively turbulent public spheres, as well as flourishing forms of parodic and/or critical public entertainment. In such an environment, individualism, identity and private property is secured by the consumerist, negative liberties (Berlin, 1958) of parliamentary democracy which ensures a *simulation* of freedom, equality and heterogeneity while the effectiveness of carnivalesque dissent is significantly reduced. Similarly, Žižek argues via Jean-Claude Milner that by now the establishment has succeeded in undoing all threatening consequences of 1968 by way of incorporating the so-called "spirit of '68" thereby turning it against the real core of the revolt.

> The demands for new rights (which would have meant a true redistribution of power) were granted, but merely in the guise of 'permissions – the 'permissive society' being precisely one which broadens the scope of what subjects are allowed to do without actually giving them any additional power: Those who hold power know very well the difference between a right and a permission…A right in a strict sense of the term gives access to the exercise of a power, at the expense of another power. A permission doesn't diminish the power of the one who gives it; it doesn't augment the power of the one who gets it. It makes his life easier, which is not nothing (2009[a]: 59).

Žižek goes on to argue that this is the case with identity politics and the right to divorce, abortion, gay marriage, and so on and so forth. As far as he is concerned these are all permissions masked as rights; they do not change in any way the distribution of powers.

> Such was the effect of the 'spirit of '68': it 'effectively contributed to making life easier. This is a lot, but it is not everything. Because it didn't encroach upon powers.' Therein resides 'the secret of the tranquility which has ruled in France over the last forty years': the spirit of '68 made itself the best ally of the restoration. Here is the secret of the violence increasingly produced on the margins of the cities: the spirit of '68 now persists only with those who are installed in the cities. The impoverished youth doesn't know what to do with it. While May '68 aimed at total (and totally politicized) activity, the 'spirit of '68' transposed this into a depoliticized pseudo-activity (new lifestyles, etc.), the very form of social passivity. One consequence has been the recent outbursts of violence in the suburbs, deprived of any utopian or libertarian content" (ibid: 60).

Nevertheless, perhaps we shouldn't be too hasty in dismissing the *banlieu* uprising in 2005 or the looting in London during the summer of 2011 simply as "mindless, consumerist riots" completely devoid of any political agenda or hope for social transformation.

Within this context, carnivalesque dissent (both in the sense of self-indulgent and complacent identity with reflexively constructed Epicurean lifestyle that is supposedly oppositional to the neo-conservative/neoliberal consensus and in the more formal sense of organized political demonstration) usually adds up to not much more than *performing* one's citizenship by exercising one's right to civil disobedience and to party without immediate or

concrete achievements.[51] Hence, such performances – there is after all an element of theatricality – unfortunately morph into controlled de-control most of the time. In fact, Brunner argues carnivalesque protest can only succeed in generating concrete political change under unique conditions which create windows of opportunity. As far as he is concerned, the ambiguity of the *glasnost* and *perestroika* environment in the Soviet satellite states which engendered the "velvet revolutions" as well as the temporary erosion of confidence in the "Washington Consensus" (i.e. the belief on the part of both Democrats and Republicans that free markets are good and big government is bad) during the Clinton administration which led to the carnivalesque anti-WTO protests in Seattle were two such windows of opportunity. Some may argue that the current neo-conservative governments and their ferocious austerity and privatization agenda might also signal such a window of opportunity in Western Europe since the neoliberal rulers subservient to free market and high finance are getting increasingly serious and intolerant. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the environment in Cameron's Britain, Sarkozy's France and Merkel's Germany, and despite being the seat of the German government; the city of Berlin, for cultural, historical and economic reasons which have been listed in the previous chapter, is not affected greatly by this neo-conservative discourse of traditional moral values and the virtues of hard work, discipline and productivity. In fact, as noted, Berlin is being accused by the German industrial complex of being a free-rider; a capital of *bobo* idlers and welfare beneficiaries (so neoliberalism hasn't taken its toll on the welfare state as much as it has done elsewhere) whose sole contribution to the national economy comes from its entertainment, services, tourism and creative sectors. And as we have also seen, nightlife and the creative workers it attracts to the city play a very significant role in that GDP contribution. With the ongoing processes of gentrification in Berlin thanks to the arrival of the "creative class," key nightlife venues have come under the threat of eviction. Here one can list the likes of *Bar 25* (which was finally closed in September 2010 and reincarnated on the other side of the river as *Kater Holzig* in the summer of 2011), *Maria am Ostbahnhof* (which hosted its final clubnight on 21 May 2011 yet is still active at the same location with a different name –now it's called *ADS*), *Kiki Blofeld* (which was foreclosed at the end of summer 2011), *Watergate* and *YAAM*. This threat caused by urban

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[51] But then again, some advocates of such carnivalesque forms of dissent argue that the *event* (e.g. free-party) itself is an achievement or transgression on its own, it is the means and the end. For the tension between concrete and long-term political goals and alignments, and short term aims and ethics/aesthetics of the event see the discussion below about Reclaim the Streets, Hedonist International, Reclaim the Sparkasse, etc.

regeneration has given rise to carnivalesque modes of dissent in the form of revolting via partying which will be examined shortly.

As noted above, Berlin's history of gentrification is an odd and unique one since even in the first half of the 90s Berlin seems to have suffered not from gentrification but from gentrification envy. As the Wall had discouraged migration into the city and kept property values down until the late 80s, the entire process of gentrification in Berlin is about"20 years out of step with pretty much rest of the world:

> While new patterns of gentrification have been developing in super-dense cities, rural areas and abandoned First World industrial zones, the gentrification of Berlin neighborhoods like Mitte is a flashback to New York or London in the 80s. During the 70s and 80s, West Berlin developed an urban development policy often called *Behutsame Stadterneuerung* (cautious urban renewal), which mostly arose out of the conflicts and debates about what to do with Kreuzberg, Berlin's most diverse working-class neighborhood. This policy involved giving local residents' associations more than just an advisory role in urban development: they actively participated in project planning and had a say in the approval of these projects" (Garcia, 2010).

This policy placed an emphasis on preserving and renovating existing building stock (classic *Altbau* or *Mietskaserne* buildings characteristic of Berlin and nowadays at a premium) instead of demolishing and replacing it. In fact, this architectural style with its multiple inner courtyard structure has played a very important role in enabling clandestine nightspots and facilitating counter-culture. However, after the reunification many of these policies were dispensed with as dreams of a shiny new German capital overrode any interest in preserving Berlin's distinct urban landscape even though places like Kreuzberg were already an important part of the city's touristy image. Rapid gentrification took place in Mitte and Kreuzberg, spilling over to and subsuming Prenzlauerberg by the mid 2000s. By now it is has crept into most of Friedrichshain and has descended upon Neukölln. As the club mile of the 90s (*E-Werk*, *WMF*, the original *Tresor*) near Potsdamer-Platz has disappeared under shopping malls and office towers, Berlin's new club mile is located along the Spree embankment between two bridges, namely Jannowitzbrücke and Oberbaumbrücke. But this stretch of land, most of which is owned by Berlin's Sanitation Department (BSR) and rented out to club owners and cultural entrepreneurs on interim use basis, lies right in the middle of the development area belonging to the Mediaspree urban regeneration project. MediaSpree Inc., one of Berlin's largest property investment ventures, was founded in 2001 with the aim of uniting the private owners, investors and association representatives who had purchased parts of the former no-man's-land along the river bank after the Wall's fall, and since 2008 it has been operating as a property association and a contact point for investors and

businesses. The project extends along a 3.7 km, 180-hectare space on both sides of the Spree embankment and spans between four districts: Kreuzberg (West Berlin) and Mitte, Friedrichshain and Treptow (East Berlin). As the first large scale construction project in the area took place in 1998 when office towers were built near the Elsenbrücke in Treptow, Universal Music was lured in by the local government (it received €10 million funding from the Senate to build its new headquarters) and relocated from Hamburg to settle in an old cold-storage house next to the Oberbaumbrücke on the ex-GDR side of the river in 2001. MTV followed suit and moved in next doors three years later. This also coincided with the demolition of the old barracks in Mühlenstr. once housing the famous nightclub *Ostgut* as well as another club called *Das Casino*. Since 2008, O$_2$ World (with a 17,000 spectator capacity and €165 million construction cost) is standing where *Ostgut* used to host its famous raves. Interestingly enough, the Mediaspree project mimics the "cautious urban renewal" of the 80s by preserving and updating old (industrial) building stock with the additional twist that it withholds from local residents the kind of bargaining power they once had. According to this architectural vision, the state of the art buildings now housing the likes of Radial System, A-Medialynx GmbH, Fernsehwerft (TV Dockyard), Zigarren Herzog, and Labels 1 (eight fashion houses including Hugo Boss, Tom Tailor and Esprit) combine the new and the old in a manner much akin to the postmodernist pastiche. In essence, the Mediaspree venture is aimed at bringing in capital by luring creative industries (especially telecommunications and media companies) into these renovated industrial sites along the river while many of its development plans include provisions for "cultural" elements like galleries, restaurants, and event spaces which are supposed to preserve the "alternative" allure of the old, undeveloped East Berlin. In fact, Mediaspree has been exploiting the popularity of famous nightspots in its advertising scheme to attract investors and cultural entrepreneurs while it puts those very nightspots under the threat of eviction since the prospect of investment renders interim use no longer necessary.

As a response to the threat of eviction and new office towers, a civic initiative called *Mediaspree Versenken* (Sink Mediaspree) was grounded in 2008. The initiative's protests and activities culminated on 13 July 2008 when a referendum was held against the regeneration project –16,000 signatures were collected in record time to bring this about. Among the demands were a 50m wide strip of free space and the abandonment of the construction of both high-rises and the planned automobile bridge over the river. Although the turnout was very low (19.1%) the

vast majority (86.8%) of the voters (only residents of the borough of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg were allowed to partake in the referendum) were in favor of the alternative plans proposed by *Mediaspree Versenken*. The initiative, which sees itself as a lobbyist for those who want the riverfront to become a green space and a cultural zone with multiple uses, was created by architect Carsten Joost among others and consists of the more pragmatic *AG Spreeufer*, the prankster *Aktionbündnis Mediaspree entern!* and *Bündnis Megaspree* as well as the more utopian and left-leaning *AG SpreepiratInnen* (Spree Pirates). The initiave demands the new edifies to be lower than 22m while the existing buildings are to be integrated into an open-space concept and supplemented by pavilions for public use. The remaining land available for construction is to be parceled out in such a way as to not only reduce the number of large property investors but also to include local and independent entrepreneurs as much as possible, especially non-commercial, cultural actors. The supporters of the initiative also accuse the boroughs and the Senate of privatizing public property (river embankment, open green space, etc.) hence allusions to Marx' (1990) critique of enclosure or to the (bio)politics of the common *à la* Hardt & Negri (2009) are made by a small number of more overtly leftist protestors. Despite the positive outcome of the referendum, the Mediaspree plans have not been canceled or put on hold as expected. Instead, a special committee consisting of the initiative's representatives as well as of land owners and borough officials has been formed. As the committee goes through the proposed construction plans on a case by case basis, new buildings are still going up, old buildings are still being renovated, and the regeneration project is still advancing. For example, protestors argue that the ongoing construction of "Labels 2" is a clear violation of the referendum's outcome.

A major clash of priorities surfaced between the official World City Berlin project which Mediaspree stands for and the "creative class" it has invited and brought to the city when the clouds of eviction hanging over *Bar 25*, an open-air/afterhours techno club and infamous hedonists/hipsters Mecca, finally became a real threat – the club management was in the habit of throwing legendary goodbye parties at the end of each summer from 2007 onwards. In July 2009 a carnivalesque demo-parade was organized by the scene built around *Bar 25* to coincide with the successful yet largely ineffective referendum's anniversary. During the event, around 9000 pranksters clad in frivolous costumes threw confetti, soap bubbles and balloons in the air and danced peacefully within a police cordon to the beat of minimal techno and house blasting out of the sound system in order to stop Mediaspree and to save their temple, an attempt which turned

out to be futile in the end (Image 11 & 12). In order to assess the political and transgressive significance (or the lack thereof) of these protests as well as of what *Bar 25* was and what it used to represent let us go back to its days of infancy.

The official history of *Bar 25* began in 2004 when Christoph Klenzendorf and some friends signed a lease for the deserted riverfront patch at Holzmarktstr. 24-25 in the ex-GDR district of Friedrichshain. This 1000 m^2 plot was part of a larger stretch of land along the river owned by BSR who had been having trouble finding tenants because they wanted to rent out the whole 10,000 m^2 plot for €30,000. So they were happy to let a smaller parcel to Klenzendorf for interim use when he approached them; this meant they would be collecting €3000 rent while continuing to search for investors. But *Bar 25* had already existed before it became a Berlin nightlife institution at its world famous location. Klenzendorf, a photographer and filmmaker by profession as well as a scene-veteran and a devoted lunar eclipse rave tourist, had already been touring around Berlin with an old East German trailer which he used as a bar to organize illegal raves in the 90s and early 2000s. Since the trailer didn't fit the German industry standards and wasn't allowed to go faster than 25 km/h Klenzendorf had named his mobile nightspot *Bar 25*. The trailer-bar made its first appearance at the famous Fusion Festival [52] in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in 2003 and Klenzendorf moved to the plot at Holzmarktstr. with his trailer and a few friends in August 2004 which led to a six-week, nonstop party. Over the winter, they started on plans to create a bar, a hostel for DJs and backpackers (they bought four cabins on the internet – the first cabin which used to belong to a brother in Brandenburg cost only €1 but in the end they ended up spending €5000 to sanitize it), and a gourmet restaurant run by the head-chef from Freidrichstr.'s posh techno club *Cookies*. *Bar 25* finally opened its doors in the spring of 2005 and consisted of the bar itself located in a cowboy-themed log cabin overlooking the Spree along with the restaurant that shared the building, a cluster of hostel cabins hidden behind a wall and another cluster of trailers and cottages behind another wall (Image 13). Over the years more amenities were added. Among these were a spa, a pizza oven, a radio station, a record label, a

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[52] Fusion was created in 1997 with the aim of temporarily creating a "parallel society" based on the principles of "holiday communism" (Ferienkommunismus) and takes place annually at the end of June on an old military air base. The organizers value "heterogeneity, tolerance, freedom from obligation and state control, and lack of commercialism." As a result, big sponsors as well as adverts are absent from the festival grounds which also has its own currency. Fusion is regarded by many as the culmination of Berlin's (underground) techno scene and for many scenesters attending the festival is synonymous to pilgrimage. Although it is mainly an electronic dance music festival, other genres such as rock, ska, polka or reggae are represented by a few select acts. For example, the year I attended (2005) New Model Army, Anne Clark and DAUU were also on the bill.

circus tent for film screenings, stage plays and live gigs, and a costume rental service. Plus, during the FIFA World Cup 2010 held in South Africa an *Adidas* sponsored and "slum" themed public viewing area was created by the artist group Mikado Stopler to resemble an "apartheid township." Nevertheless, this was a VIP slum; under the makeshift corrugated iron roof hung a board encouraging the football lovers, who had paid €3 to get in, to purchase a glass of ice cold champagne for €5. Given *Adidas*' bad track record concerning child labor in Asia as well as the apparent hypocrisy of art-ificially creating an "apartheid" in the heart of a wealthy First World metropolis and collecting €3 cover charge from the wannabe slum dwellers who were jumping to their feet and getting drenched in a shower of champagne and confetti each time Germany scored a goal, *Bar 25*'s overt cooperation with big business created much controversy and undermined its credibility as a nightlife institution symbolizing "alternative" values. Whether it had really deserved this credibility in the first place is a valid question on its own.

The six-week party that started it all set the tone for *Bar 25*'s future feats. The place soon became famous for its "anything goes" hedonism and drugged-out, costume-clad messiness. The 72-hour nonstop party marathon *Bar 25* was world renowned and infamous for began at 00:01am on Friday night/Saturday morning and ended at 00:01am on Monday night/Tuesday morning although the parties often continued well into Tuesday. Especially on Sundays *Bar 25* became a favorite spot for scenesters to collapse or to keep going at the end of a grueling party weekend. A standard nocturnal program during the spring and summer months would consist of starting the weekend off on Friday night at *Bar 25* or *Club der Visionäre* (another open-air techno club built on rafts on the canal) then relocating to one of Berlin's numerous indoor venues and from there to an afterhours party – most preferably at *Berghain/Panorama Bar*. On Saturday afternoon one would head straight from the afterhours back to *Bar 25* and stay there until well past midnight only to move yet to another major venue. This would be followed towards the morning by relocating again to one or more of the numerous afterhours parties and finally one would end up at *Bar 25* around noon or in the afternoon on Sunday to spend hours on end there either dancing and playing or cuddling and sunbathing until sundown when the party would come alive again and continue until the morning – or alternatively one would check out what was going on at other favorite open-air hangouts or semi-secret free-parties. Having spent the Sunday night in this excessive fashion, the scenesters would also spend the Monday morning, which designates the working week's commencement for "normal" people, chilling out and coming down at *Bar*

25 – or delaying coming down and maintaining the post-euphoric high by taking more drugs. Celebratory activities would continue with reduced intensity throughout Monday and finally the party would fizzle out after midnight. So, with the arrival of Tuesday the nightclub would officially close its doors to the outside world until next Friday but the restaurant and other amenities were open throughout the week; in fact the whole management lived in trailers or cabins on site.

Many costume-clad partygoers would spend no less than 12 uninterrupted hours of drug induced bliss and regression in *Bar 25* which was commonly referred to by its regulars as simply "the bar" (*die Bar*) and described frequently both by its management and patrons as a "playground for adults." The special term "*Durchi*" (which comes from *sich durchhalten*, to persevere, to hold on and see something through) was invented to describe the people who would hang out incessantly at the club, refusing to go home even after the drugs were all gone and their effects had worn off. The whole place was characterized by a loss of time and this effect was perpetuated by the monotonous, anti-climactic beats of minimal techno and minimal house which have replaced ambient as the afterhours soundtrack. *Bar 25* resounded with reduced intensity dance music based on ever-lasting repetition. Lakeberg (2009) argues with *Bar 25* minimal became the new reggae: "summer, open-air, free love, liberal consumption." Similarly Rapp (2009) claims with *Bar 25* the concept of afterhours party gained a quality which was normally contradictory to it: glamour. Moreover, for many *Bar 25* loyalists, going out was no longer a weekend pleasure or leisure activity but a full-time job.

Arguably, everyone belonging to Berlin's party scene who has the right contacts and sufficient (sub)cultural capital to have made it inside the gates has a *Bar 25* story of excessive drug use, sexual adventure and/or lost items. Tobias Rapp writes of girls who remember on Tuesday morning that they had given someone a blowjob in the toilet at one point during the weekend but are clueless about exactly when or to whom, or of young guys who walk into a tree or a post as they go to call someone on the phone and are relieved the next day when someone finally explains to them why their bodies are covered in bruises. "And many people would rather not remember what they had been up to inside the 'confession stand' located in the wall next to the entrance" (2009: 163). And of course, there is the urban legend about a spaced-out lady lying on the grass and yelling "vagina dialogue" whilst using her mobile phone as a vibrator.

Bar 25 was also infamous for its elitism, for its stern and often hostile door staff (the main bouncer was nicknamed "Door Hitler") who turned down and humiliated the people waiting in line for reasons that were sometimes implicitly snobbish (class difference, ethnic background, wrong sense of fashion, etc.) but also sometimes for no clear reason at all. In fact, Klenzendorf claims at the beginning there was no filtering at the door and everyone who knew about the nightspot, which was still fairly obscure at the time, was welcome to come in and join the euphoric *Bar 25* experience, thereby losing sense of time and reality, thus momentarily forgetting at this idyllic location on the waterfront with greenery and wooden cabins that they were still in a metropolis. But apparently people were "overtaxed" by this "unrestrained freedom to party and experiment with their bodies and drugs" so that a fist fight ensued after some tripped out "*prolls* (chavs) crapped all over the place" (Klenzendorf quoted in Lakeberg, 2009). Therefore, a strict sense of border from the outside world and an elitist mechanism of filtering were set up. From then on, the club would be welcoming towards avant-garde scenesters, ironic hipsters and innovative fashionistas whilst mainly excluding those who were either too poor to have the right sense of aesthetics, fashion and libertarianism or those who were simply too "square" to fit the club's profile of libertine hedonism. In fact, we learn from Rapp that Klenzendorf, "the guy who would be the club's front man had it been a band," boasts about having altered a poster hung at the bar's entrance by the *Mediaspree Versenken* initiative: in typical fashion the poster read "Spree embankment belongs to everyone!" (*Spreeufer für Alle!*). Next to it Klenzendorf wrote: "only between Tuesday and Saturday!" – as noted above *Bar 25*'s exclusive party marathon was between 00:01am, Saturday and 00:01am, Tuesday. Klenzendorf then went on to justify his action by adding: "we are not offering a space for everyone. We are offering a place only for the people we would like to have here" (quoted in Rapp, 2009: 47-48). Well, this lack of respect and enthusiasm for *crap* (and its subversive potential) as well as this hostility towards the "*prolls*" (the underclass) and the "*touris*" (tourists are also accused of *polluting* the scene) from the creator behind this allegedly excessive and carnivalesque sanctuary is quite disappointing given Bataille's sympathy for defilement or Bakhtin's trust in the carnival's populism and "grotesque body" which makes the head become the ass and the ass become the head. Perhaps what was being performed and celebrated in the costume party that was *Bar 25* was not the populism of the carnival but rather the aristocratic elitism of the masquerade; a sterilized, consumer-friendly and essentially middle-class version of

Bataillean/Bakhtinian antics available for a "creative," globally mobile and unknowingly privileged neo-tribe whose members genuinely believe they are "decadent" and "nonconformist" because they have somehow managed with their kidulthood, hedonism and aestheticism, distinctive sense of fashion, network sociality, and precarious culture industry jobs to reconcile the dictates of adulthood with a celebratory, afterhours lifestyle, thereby succeeding in not climbing up the corporate ladder. Of course, for many people having a profession which not only enables one to subsist – usually with the additional aid of welfare (Hartz IV) – but also affords one the lightness and freedom to go on a 72-hour party marathon is a more desirable and glamorous career option, and a better alternative to ending up with a dull office-job. But does this make it a real alternative to alienation?

The blissful state of exception that characterized *Bar 25* received its first death threat during the summer of 2007 as the interim lease period was going to end in the winter of 2008 and the sanitation department wanted to benefit from Mediaspree's development proposals. So *Bar 25* held a big closing party in September 2007. Yet when BSR gave them an eviction notice at the beginning of 2008, they ignored it and partied for one more summer. When the land owners went to court, they got a settlement which allowed them to stay for the summer of 2009. Nonetheless, they had to return the property in the autumn with everything cleaned out and the trees cut down. How they stayed on for 2010 is anyone's guess. Either way, for four consecutive years *Bar 25* threw extravagant closing parties in the fall, letting everyone think they would never be back again. By the summer of 2010, a lot of Berliners were getting skeptical of these claims and beginning to wonder if it was just a devious marketing ploy. But the tone of things in September 2010 made it seem like they were really closing this time. What seemed to signal the certainty of closure was the management's publicly shown interest in an abandoned GDR theme park as a possible new location for the club. What's peculiar about this is that Klenzendorf had made a big deal about the impermanence of *Bar 25*. In several interviews, he had insisted that the club's exceptionality was due mostly to its light evanescence, from the fact that it would soon cease to exist. He argued the wooden cabins would sooner or later begin to rot, the pieces of concrete that support the trees and the edifices would crumble because of the wild weeds growing in their crevices, and that he'd rather leave the party at the climax thus end it before the whole experience got stale: "at some point, it'll all be over. But it's also beautiful that it's so transitory. It means it will have been an experience for all those who were here. A fantastic time.

A closed chapter. That's how it'll be, and I think that's great" (quoted in Rapp, 2009: 49-50). But by the summer of 2010, the philosophy had shifted. *Bar 25*'s management was considering re-opening in a new location, a website dedicated to saving the club from closure went online, and Klenzendorf & co. teamed up with a group of filmmakers to collect money online in order to create a documentary about the club. "Suddenly, *Bar 25* went from having a Zen-like acceptance of its finality to running in three directions: preserve the magic on film, prevent the closing altogether or start afresh in a new place" (Garcia, 2010). Given its run, two types of distinctive subcultural capital associated with the now defunct *Bar 25* came into being and marked the scene built around the club. The first one had something to do with being one of the pioneers, having been there since the beginning and having experienced those early days which were argued to have been much better, more creative and egalitarian, less commercial and mainstream, etc. In short, the myth of the good old avant-garde days before media attention and the arrival of the tourists. The second one, which would play itself out during the autumn and winter months until the club unexpectedly re-opened for yet another season in the spring, had something to do with having been there at the legendary closing party, being among the happy few who were cool and visionary enough to have been let in to experience the spectacular event that marked the demise of this mythological creature. In general, the nights at *Bar 25*, especially the opening and closing parties, were characterized by conspicuous consumption in the shape of narcotic excess, rivers of booze, confetti rain and foam baths (Image 14). Calling *Bar 25*'s unique mode of squander "hippie deluxe," Rapp reports during a certain closing party half a ton of confetti (costing more than €2000) was thrown in the air. Klenzendorf is reported in Rapp's book to be saying, "We can afford to be idlers. A *Lebenskünstler* (a "life-artist," someone who turns living into an art) is someone who compromises important stuff in life in order to be able to afford trivial things. This is exactly what we're doing here. We are giving up on crucial things in life: there are people here who don't have health insurance but who drink the most expansive champagne. The post-war generation our parents belong to would say to us: 'You are insane. You better pay attention and make sure that you have all your teeth in your mouth and bread on the table. But for us it's all about champagne. We want only the best of things, right here right now. One has to wait and see what life will bring afterwards" (2009: 182). Indeed, why the hedonism of *Bar 25*'s patrons were perceived both by themselves and by the outside world as decadent and transgressive was the fact that this conspicuous consumption and squandering with its immersive Dionysian ethics of

the moment *à la* Bataille stood out against the older generations' parsimony and culture of saving (*Sparkultur*) which, especially when viewed from abroad, seems like a cliché about the Germans – clean and orderly, disciplined and hard working, intensely calculating and frugal, etc. But this cliché is valid up to an extent since the post-war German achievement of rebuilding a totally devastated nation and economy has depended a lot on hard work and a culture of thriftiness, of calculating every cent (or to be more precise every pfennig). On the other hand, the squandering associated with the post-industrial middle-class "duty to enjoy" as well as the post-'68 "obligatory *jouissance*" goes hand in hand with the wealth and plentitude that the neoliberal free market and its consumerism promise and provide. The scenesters are, after all, children of their times. Nevertheless, this wasteful hedonism stands out and *appears* oppositional when viewed in light of the neo-conservative consensus' call for a return to restrained hard work and productivity. That's why the soundtrack of such a lifestyle, namely electronic dance music is perceived to be the contemporary rendition of Cole Porter's "Let's Misbehave" which reflects the anti-careerism, decadence and licentiousness of the creative expats in 1920s Paris.

In fact, the club management itself seems to have been fairly lucid about their complicity to the rules of capital and distinction (in Bourdieu's sense of the term); much of the myth concerning *Bar 25*'s subversiveness has been created not by the club owners but rather by the patrons who make up the scene – although the managers had definitely encouraged and benefitted from this myth. In that sense, the scene has eagerly gloried itself. In various interviews Klenzendorf has called himself an "aesthete" (Rapp, 2009: 163) and a pragmatic "business hippie" (Apin, 2008) while he has referred to their shared interim-use paradise as a "business-hippie commune" (Lakeberg, 2009). On the other hand, Dieziger, the head-chef of *Bar 25*'s restaurant, has called himself a "leftist hippie" and described the club as something alive and organic, as a "village commune" which is a "life project" rather than "just business" (Apin, 2008). The allusion to commune is literal here; around 15 people lived on site, gardened and took care of the plants, they even had their own orchard. Being ecology friendly and striving to create urban idyll was one of *Bar 25*'s central tenets. In fact, in October 2010 Klenzendorf & co. formed the Green Music Initiative and began organizing clandestine and environment friendly free-parties at Treptower Park; the so-called bicycle disco (*Fahrrad Disko*) entailed the use of fixed-bikes to generate the energy for the sound system.

When asked about the commercialization of their hedonism and "anything goes" attitude as well as their ties to big business and fashion industry the *Bar 25* managers replied "everyone who comes here loves beautiful things and high quality stuff: good food, good drinks, good company, good music. It's wonderful to have here on Wednesday the lawyers who fork out €28 for a rump steak" (which is outrageous for Berlin standards) "and on Sunday the crazy party scene. We don't give a shit about whether this is 'hippiesque' or not. The point is that it's fun" (quoted in Lakeberg, 2009). Klenzendorf & co. also claimed they were working in close cooperation with the more "pragmatic and realist" members of *Mediaspree Versenken*. "For example, we took people with horse-carriages to the polling stations during the referendum. But for people like *Spreepiraten* (who had used dinghies twelve days earlier to successfully block the passage of a boat carrying potential investors thereby causing a PR disaster for the Mediaspree people) we are sell-outs who cooperate with brands such as *Adidas* so our club is not worth saving. We are against violence and destruction, against the autonomous left's torching of expensive cars. When the cops finally knock on the door to kick us out we'll throw not paving stones but confetti at them. This is our way of resistance. We are aiming to enjoy life, we live in order to party. Berlin is one of the exceptional places on earth where this is possible. We see the bewilderment and appreciation in the tourists' eyes; we are a magnet, we are iconic for this city and the government also knows this. That's why Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain's Green major supports us" (quoted in Lakeberg, 2009). Well, the endorsement by the Greens is not surprising given this turning away from the autonomous or traditional left, this emphasis on quality of life and the importance of ecology, and this practice of creating one's own liberated zone via playing by the rules of free market economy. After all, the Green Party's campaign slogan for the EU parliamentary election in 2009 was "Business & Environment, Humane & Social" (*Wirtschaft & Umwelt, Menschlich & Sozial*). Indeed, such sentiments strike a chord in Berlin where the creative workers and techno scenesters who consider their hedonism as oppositional to the Christian Democratic values tend to vote Green. As we have noted in the previous chapter they seem to find the Social Democrats too "square" whereas the *die Linke* is either perceived to be too leftist or passé, or simply dismissed as the continuation of the "evil" East German communist party with its *Stasi* (secret service) "dinosaurs" still in power. And not to belittle the importance of ecology or the Green movement, unfortunately a demonstration against nuclear power unites and mobilizes a vast array of people much more easily than an overtly Marxist rally does. Angst

about the ozone layer and global warming, or about animal or copy rights – actually about any issue related to middle-class identity politics in general – is much easier expressed in public and finds much wider support in the German capital whereas issues like institutional racism, Israel's atrocities, class struggle or a systematic critique of capitalism still remain relatively marginal. Nevertheless, one has to be fair here; compared to many other major cities Berlin still has a significant culture and active tradition of left-wing activism.

Faced with recent restrictions such as the proposed (and failed) smoking ban, [53] stricter anti-narcotics policies and thorough searches at the door, world famous minimal DJ and producer Ricardo Villalobos, one of the regulars at *Bar 25*, describes his "noncommercial club of the future" utopia with these words:

> The dancefloor is a primarily democratic way of being together.[54] There are no stars, one buys others drinks, everyone talks to each other, dances with each other. They all dance for the same reason. Of course, one has to collect cover charge to finance the whole thing but in its core it is an anarchic situation. It's like the air molecules which scatter in space. Capitalism wants to collect all air molecules in a corner in order to sell them. But actually things ought to be different: everyone should get what they need, to the smallest detail. Our world functions according to a totally wrong logic. All air molecules are gathered in a corner and those left outside have to find way to get into that corner in order to be able to breathe. Those who don't make it in simply die. And when you advocate exactly the opposite of this order, restrictions are imposed on you so that your example will not be seen and followed by others. That's why it's important not to be political but at the same time to perceive yourself as political (quoted in Rapp, 2009: 118-19).

Without explicitly referring to Deleuze & Guattari, Tobais Rapp suggests when one thinks of Villalobos' "line of flight" concerning the importance of not being explicitly active in politics but simultaneously defining one's identity and lifestyle as politically significant and dissident together with the temporal feeling that makes his productions and DJ sets so "peculiarly borderless, so extensive, so 'I-can't-go-home-just-yet'," one finds oneself close to a political model that is similar to the "exodus of Hardt & Negri's multitude" (2009: 119-20). As this arguably overoptimistic statement is quite symptomatic of Berlin's party scene and its politics, this is a good point to go back to the *Megaspree* demo-parade held on 11 July 2009 to oppose

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[53] The smoking ban came into effect in the federal state of Berlin on 1 January 2008 and demanded from all nightlife establishments to allow indoor smoking only in designated areas with separate ventilation. As this demand was largely ignored and business went on as usual in the trendier parts of town, a local high court overruled the prohibition since it was found to be against the spirit of fair competition: many old, working class pubs (*Eckkniepe*) did not have enough space to set up a smoking room and therefore were rapidly losing their regular clientele. Although the current law insists that restaurants must have a separate smoking lounge, in most bars and clubs the ban is effectively nonexistent.

[54] In the original German text Villalobos uses the word *urdemokratisch* which suggests the egalitarianism of the dancefloor is primal or primordial.

Mediaspree but above all to save *Bar 25*. As stated above, about 9000 scenesters, clad in funky costumes and equipped with novel means of mobilization such as Facebook and Twitter, partied in their usual infantile *Bar 25* manner and demonstrated (pun intended) the resistant potential of confetti, soap bubbles and balloons within a police cordon. At the time, the parade was presented and celebrated in a popular fashion and nightlife blog run by scene insiders with these words:

> The word demo-parade describes very well what the whole thing was about: on the one hand, it was a political demonstration. On the other hand, it was a big, fantastic party on the streets. Berlin's subculture presented itself in the most beautiful way: colorful, crazy, diverse, imaginative and unique. Wherever you looked there was an explosion of creativity: people running around in fanciful and funny costumes, confetti and soap bubbles were flying in the air, and from the *Bachstelzen* float thousands of pillow feathers where whirled in the Berlin air…the atmosphere was marvelous. "Mirror, mirror on the wall, you are still the greatest city in the country", said a banner on the float of Bar 25. In fact, Berlin's subculture might lose a great deal of its freedom and independence by the political controlled gentrification. Berlin's alternative scene needs urban free spaces to develop. The Megaspree parade showed what Berlin would lose if the Mediaspree plans will be realized (Jens, 2009). [55]

This passage seems to be quite telling of how the scene sees itself as "alternative" or "subcultural" thereby glorifying its "creativity" and praising its powers of resistance. Are we to find in this collectivity situationally formed around shared tastes, consumptive habits, lifestyle preferences and Dionysian identities, and enabled by novel forms of social networking a materialization of the multitude which Hardt & Negri expect to carry out revolutionary bio-politics? If so, are they expected to achieve this via the subjectivation engendered by their intoxicated and excessive dance? Is this carnivalesque carrying out of identity politics – for the forced closure of *Bar 25* is perceived as part of a general attack against a whole way of life, against an "alternative" way of living in the First World metropolis, against the "right" to live to party – being linked by the majority of the pranksters to the greater danger of capitalist enclosure of the commons because the river embankment is being privatized? Is this a critique of "accumulation by dispossession" and a call for "the right to the city" as David Harvey (2003 and 2008) would have it? It seems not to be the case because in fact the riverfront is already privatized, *Bar 25* rests on private (i.e. temporarily rented – "interim used") property with strict borders guarded by "Door-Hitler." The scenesters' objection seems to be not against private property per se because as we have seen *Bar 25* wants the river embankment not to be open to everyone; *Others* are welcome only when *they* are not partying. Then the problem lies with the fact that their property is being taken away; that stretch of land on Holzmarkstr. will no longer be

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[55] My contribution to the discussion can be found in the comments section at http://www.iheartberlin.de/2009/07/13/megaspreemegaspree/.

available and exclusive to them. Indeed, it's all about "permission disguised as right"; what the *Bar 25* loyalists demand is to keep benefitting from the permission to party on that "business-hippie-commune" isolated from the outside world as well as to keep benefitting from the permission to have hedonistic lifestyles that somehow sustain the party. So this claim about fighting against gentrification seems unfortunately not to include a deeper understanding and critique of the role they themselves play in bringing about processes of urban regeneration in the first place – the accusation is that evil, rich men in business attire come *out of the blue* and run them out of their urban idyll; they'll cut down the trees and construct ugly buildings while our poor victims will no longer have access to their protected and exclusive "playground for adults." The link between the happenstance that the "creatives" who make up the party scene have come to exist in large numbers in Berlin, and the consequent attraction and official invitation to the city of investors and creative industries is conveniently overlooked. Let's face it, no matter how transgressive the *lived-experience* inside the borders of late *Bar 25* might have been, the club was at the same time an elitist hang-out for the very middle-class 20- and 30-somethings who actually work or freelance for those very media companies which will move into those office buildings once they are built. And it's not only the lack of self-criticism that is problematic. This business friendly yet allegedly subversive hedonism includes, by and large, no engagement with a non-superficial and systematic anti-capitalist critique. If the majority of those 9000 pranksters revolting via peacefully partying within a police cordon had really been so keen on doing something against gentrification as a general socio-economic process affecting the whole city rather than opposing just one of its facets since it affects them personally in the sense that their favorite nightclub faces closure, would they not have joined ranks with some other 4000 protesters just a few weeks ago as these were being attacked by the riot squat whilst trying to squat the then recently closed down and privatized Tempelhof Airport? It seems the scenesters were too high to be bothered and too busy dancing to minimal at *Bar 25* to be able to make an appearance at the Tempelhof demonstration on 20 June 2009 which was much more confrontational compared to *Megaspree* because entering the ex-airport effectively meant trespassing privatized property, hence breaking the law.

Here, parallels drawn to Reclaim the Streets' dissolution at the beginning of the 2000s might be useful. One of the organizers writes many people who initially supported the RTS became critical and distanced after the movement became overtly anti-capitalist and allied with

the sacked Liverpool dockers. "Many of those initially involved were not interested in workers'
struggles thinking them to be regressive, and were concerned that RTS was losing its ability to
appeal to 'normal' people – which of course begs the question of what 'normal' is. They felt that
the movement's strength derided from its ability to mobilize those concerned with the negative
environmental aspects of capitalism, not from linking up with workers who appeared to simply
want better pay conditions" (Meaden 2009: 86). The same can be said for the "creatives" who
comprised the majority at the *Megaspree* demo-parade. They seem to have little or no desire to
make references to class-consciousness or class-struggle and they are absent from all the other
demonstrations (some of which are explicitly against the Mediaspree project) which use Marxist
terminology to clearly expose capitalism as the root of the problem. Yet, this willingness to
network and party more and engage in activism less is also evident in Berlin's autonomous-left
scene. For instance, a demonstration organized around the same time as *Megaspree* with the aim
of increasing public awareness and support for the threatened squat/collective Liebig 14 attracted
only about 50 people who danced/marched with drums and whistles under the afternoon sun. On
the other hand, the Liebig 14 solidarity party organized in *Supamolly* later on that night attracted
close to a 1000 people as the venue was packed and many were left outside. It seems like
donating money to the movement (i.e. paying entrance and buying drinks at the bar) becomes
synonymous with just another absolution service one can buy; thereafter one is permitted to party
guilt-free among likeminded leftists and no longer feel bad about not doing something "more" –
whatever that may be. RTS organizer Sam Meaden carries on:

> All social movements tend to create frames of reference that go beyond specific concrete
> demands. In other words, for a movement to grow it has to see itself in larger terms. To give an
> example: although on the face of it we were obviously anti-car, we were not all that interested in
> traffic calming measures and pollution. In our actions and our theoretical reflections, we tried to
> transcend these limits in order to become something much bigger. The problem with this is that in
> doing so we risked being about everything and nothing. Hence there was a constant tension
> between having very specific concrete demands that could be easily quantified and understood,
> and wider social demands which were difficult to realize; and which indeed could never be
> concretized of finished, because of their very nature 2009: 88).

Here we can repeat the question we posed above: are these techno pranksters constituents of
Hardt & Negri's multitudes? What do the *Megaspree* pranksters demand, Mediaspree's
termination in order to save their nightclubs, class-based lifestyles and "free spaces" or the
abolition of the capitalist structures that give rise to such regeneration projects in the first place?
Is it about post '68 middle-class identity politics contained within a "permissive society" or a

fight against enclosure and real subsumption via the (bio)political production of the common? In fact, *Megaspree* had been praised at the time for being able to bring together and mobilize a vast array of political actors and interest groups. The demo-parade was organized by 50 cultural institutions (both commercial and non-commercial) representing different and sometimes conflicting agendas, e.g. the leftist *Spreepiraten* against the "business-hippies" of *Bar 25,* all united strategically against the common enemy of gentrification under the banner of reclaiming the right/permission to party. Probably Hardt & Negri would consider such situational unity regardless of underlying class conflict as well as such fluidity despite underlying antagonism as progressive. Nevertheless, David Harvey responds to their contention that revolutionary thought and the bio-politics of the multitude "should not shun identity politics but instead must work through it and learn from it, because it is the primary vehicle for struggle within and against the republic of property since identity itself is based on property and sovereignty" with:

> Inspiring though this model of revolution may be in many ways, there are a host of problems with it. To begin with, Hardt and Negri dismiss Slavoj Žižek's contention that there is something far more foundational about class than there is about all the other forms of identity in relation to the perpetuation of capitalism, and in this I think Žižek is right. No matter how important race, gender, and sexual identity may have been in the history of capitalism's development, and no matter how important the struggles waged in their name, it is possible to envisage the perpetuation of capitalism without them - something that is impossible in the case of class (Harvey, Hardt & Negri, 2009).

Harvey goes on to suggest if all identities have to be abolished for the republic of property to be demolished, then the range of identities under consideration is far too conventionally defined by Hardt & Negri:

> As usual, for example, geographic identifications with places and regions, as well as local loyalties (the special relation to the land claimed by indigenous populations), are left out of the picture (except in the case of nationalism, which is simply dismissed as corruption)…While revolution is quite properly opposed to prevailing notions of the republic of property, the presumption that the world's six and a half billion people can be fed, warmed, clothed, housed, and cleaned without any hierarchical form of governance and outside the reach of monetization and markets is dubious in the extreme. This question is far too huge to be left to the horizontal self-organization of autonomous beings. Capitalism, with its hierarchical forms, has made serious progress in feeding the world, albeit unevenly, so one must be careful not to demolish those structures too readily. The lack of specification of any revolutionary transformation in the material foundations of daily life to parallel the revolutionary transformation in class identities is a serious lacuna in the argument" (Harvey, Hardt & Negri, 2009).

This is also related to the issue of utopianism. Meaden writes the RTS movement wanted to replace capitalism with something nicer. But they were not aiming for determinate improvements since their aims were deliberately unlimited, excessive and explosive, and were characterized by the naïve assumption that of course it will all be really great. They appealed to an infinite number

of concrete things, and in that sense held utopian views. "Having said that, if it's a whole social system you are trying to change, then any concrete and achievable demands are going to be isolated and reformist unless you actually bring about a revolution. A future that simply hasn't happened yet cannot serve as a blueprint for a future society, simply because the things we want are themselves determined by and rise from the struggle towards that future. In this sense, it's fairer to say we were experimentalists, i.e. adherents to the belief that answers come out of the mere fact of stirring things up, and that doing so is in itself a worthwhile end" (2009: 88-89).

This stand is quite similar to that of the free-party/art collective Hedonist International involved in, among other things, organizing the *Megaspree* demo-parade. According to its manifesto, Hedonist International "doesn't view hedonism as the engine of a society based on mindless materialist entertainment, but as the chance to overcome present circumstances" and "wants a world where highly developed technologies allow all human beings to live free of the necessity to work and be exploited, hereby allowing humankind to dedicate itself to the arts and the creation of beautiful things." Nevertheless, it "is not an organization, but an idea, whose implementation is the responsibility of every individual. Nobody but the individual is responsible for his or her actions. Hedonists organize themselves in manifold ways to take specific or random action." That's why it "is convinced that political involvement and actions can be fun. Where hierarchy begins, fun ends. Where fun ends, hierarchy begins." So it "creates temporary hedonist zones and situations beneficial to the flourishing of its ideas and realization of its goals and "believes in light-heartedness. Only this will keep us from taking ourselves too seriously." Moreover, Hedonist International "recognizes that the paths to a good life are circuitous and rocky. There is no single, simple solution, but many. Everywhere in peoples' heads, ideas are being born. There is no ideology, master plan, wise president, or leader. There is only a process of gaining consciousness to which every person can contribute with their ideas and actions." Nonetheless, Hedonist International admits that it "doesn't know how these goals can be reached, but knows that something must happen so all people can enjoy freedom and happiness." Therefore, it "concedes that even small advances towards the goals of hedonism represent an improvement over current circumstances. Each step increases the potential for further developments."

Evidently, these scenesters, hipster neo-tribes or singularities comprising the multitude, call them what you will, seem to genuinely believe the excessive consumption of their hedonism,

the intensity of their celebration, the extensiveness of their aestheticism, and the sociality of their networking are politically charged because they transgress the norms of postmodern consumer society, the society of the spectacle, *Erlebnisgesselschaft,* again whatever you may call them. The collective was founded in 2006 in order to initiate a rally against the neo-Nazi groups which were becoming publicly visible in Friedrichshain at the time. This was a time when more and more partygoers (especially gay men) were being attacked by skinheads at night. Rapp (2009) considers the formation of the collective as the first sign in the 2000s that atomized nightlife actors who normally met only on the dancefloor were capable of uniting under a banner other than musical taste or lifestyle preference and of mobilizing beyond the confines of the nightclub. Nevertheless, with the right amount of cynicism the formation of the collective can be subsumed under the general category of identity politics because in essence these clubbers were asking for their right (i.e. permission) to party safely, that is, without the threat of violence. Over a thousand people turned up at the demonstration and since then Hedonist International has been involved in organizing various (free-)parties, parades and demonstrations with libertarian demands such as the legalization of recreational drugs and relaxation of digital piracy laws. Some groups linked to Hedonist International have been organizing illegal raves in parks and derelict buildings, on the historical Oberbaumbrücke or under the Elsenbrücke. Other examples are the now defunct *Sexy Döner* parties held secretly under a kebab shop at Schlesisches Tor or *Reclaim the Waschsalon* parties held in launderettes in Neukölln. The most famous of all are the *Reclaim the Sparkasse* parties which began in cash machine vestibules and then grew into larger parties held at U-Bahn stations. In a recent online documentary DJ Michael Placke, organizer of *Reclaim the Sparkasse* and *Exquisite Berlin*, says it all began in an ATM area for a very banal reason: there was an empty table and an electric socket. And they didn't need much time to set things up. Within five minutes they had their equipment up and running and were playing techno records really loud:

> I think the people who show up at our events want to party at special locations, at unconventional sites. And they are committed to such partying, they start dancing immediately when the music starts and there is a great mood throughout the event until the cops show up. One of the highlights, perhaps in a negative sense, was that on one occasion the police arrived within only 27 minutes. But a good highlight was when we did the party at U-Bhf Jannowitzbrücke and there were more than 800 people so within the first 10 minutes the whole tube station was packed and the escalator broke down" (*After Hours*, dir. Kerstin Herring, 2010).

Rapp (2009) points out however that despite its anti-racist beginnings Hedonist International's identity politics is less reminiscent of Antifa and more reminiscent of a certain Kreuzberg Patriotic Democratic/Revolutionary Center (*Kreuzberger Patriotisches*

Demokraten/Revolutionäres Zentrum) which was active during the late 80s and early 90s. Back then they had organized demonstrations about what they perceived to be very important issues such as the preservation of Kreuzberg's historical postcode (SO36) which had become synonymous with the "alternative" scene. Besides, in a country traumatized by its Nazi heritage where the vast majority of the populace is explicitly against this specific form of fascism, and where subtler or institutionalized forms of racial prejudice are evident in everyday life while Zionist atrocities may seldom be rebuked officially or publicly, it is still absolutely indispensable [56] but not exceptionally courageous or necessarily left-wing to rally against the neo-Nazis. Despising the NPD while endorsing the environment-friendly business policies of the Greens (and voting for them once every five years), promoting a capital oriented notion of cosmopolitanism while competing with local government officials, city planners and investors to highlight the importance and necessity of "art and culture," financing one's drug habit by receiving unemployment benefits whilst precariously making a living on the side by selling one's immaterial labor to the culture industry, mixing work with play so that life becomes a constant state of enjoyment and celebration, and performing one's citizenship in the neoliberal farce-tragedy of democracy by using one's "rights" to publicly make libertarian demands do not necessarily add up to being oppositional. And despite the sense of identity, existential purpose and feeling of belonging such lived-experiences of transgression temporarily offer – life seems more meaningful as long as the drugs are in the blood stream, the music is loud and the party goes on – the fact that they fail or not even try in the first place to offer a feasible, enduring solution to capitalist anonymity, atomization, alienation and exploitation suggests that hedonism as such certainly does not add up to being revolutionary either. It is extremely unlikely that such libertarian demands will be met by the powers that be. The Hedonist International knows this; hence the above mentioned refusal to offer solutions and the concession in its manifesto. It could be argued that apart from the aspect of sensual and momentary pleasure, the achievable goal here is not real, concrete political change but rather some sort of existential and moral satisfaction reached by being political as well as the joy taken out of playing the game of making public

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[56] Especially in light of recent revelations concerning a Zwickau-based neo-Nazi trio suspected of murdering one policewoman and nine shopkeepers of Turkish and Greek origin between 2000 and 2007 as well as allegations of deliberate negligence and spoliation of evidence since the security forces failed to link the murders to the trio for twelve years.

demands in a carnivalesque manner; the simulation of freedom under liberal parliamentary democracy.

Five: The Lightness of Nocturnal Forgetfulness:

Freud thought of the night as a realm for wish fulfillment; it's when we wander into the land of dreams as we are tucked away safely in our beds. But the night in the big city is also a siren; she calls to us from outside, luring us into her bosom with her captivating song. Life promises us the pleasure of sensuality and the seduction of eventfulness at night, so much so that the thought of staying in often becomes unbearable and we are forced to venture outside the safety of our homes. As the night tempts us we are tormented by the fear that we will be missing out on something even if we don't really know what it is. We are just convinced that it will be something which makes life worth living, something that makes us glad we've gone out, something out of the ordinary. Perhaps this expectation will materialize into some stranger who is met, some event that is witnessed, some experience that is had, or even the love of our life who is finally acquainted. We simply have faith in the night and in its dream logic.

Probably one of the best places to look for the night's seductive promise of adventure and promiscuity is *Dream Story*, written by Freud's contemporary and fellow townsman Arthur Schnitzler (1999). The plot begins in the evening when successful and affluent Dr. Frodolin, who is happily married and until recently very sure of his virility, is summoned to a patient's deathbed right after having found out that his wife had been tempted to cheat on him the previous summer. At the patient's house, the deceased's daughter confesses her love to the young physician much to his surprise and dismay. His troubles doubled, our protagonist walks the streets of Vienna at night. First he is tempted by a young prostitute. Then he runs into a long lost friend (Nachtigall) who informs him that he will be playing the piano later on that night at a secret orgy taking place in a villa on the outskirts of town. Desperate to cure his bruised male ego, Frodolin convinces Nachtigall to give him the address and the password, acquires a costume (thereby finding out that the shopkeeper pimps out her teenage daughter to elderly men), and attends the erotic masquerade uninvited. In the villa, a young woman approaches and urges him to leave before it's too late. But the imposture is discovered and the master of ceremonies demands that Frodolin take off his mask. At that point the same young woman comes to his

rescue by requesting his captors to let him go and punish her instead. Frodolin leaves the villa unscathed. But his transgression, constituted both by his attempt to venture out of the norms of bourgeois matrimony as well as his trespassing of the ritual in the villa, has devastating consequences. At daybreak Nachtigall disappears from his lodgings and it seems like he was taken by force while the corpse of a young woman is discovered in the Danube. The young physician suspects it to be the same girl who had sacrificed herself for him and even goes to the morgue to find out. But he can't be sure. He is wracked first with doubt and then with shame and guilt. The night has tempted him, he has transgressed and now he has to be punished. He goes home and confesses everything to his wife.

But this nocturnal seduction of transgression and promise of eventfulness must not be taken for granted. As Blum suggests:

> Some cities have what is called a nightlife (lighting, entertainment, amenities) but not much else, or in Bataille's sense no expectation of 'loss as great as possible'. In many cases such nights are special only in relation to drab days, in a way standing as the exception to the rule, the transgressive to the mundane. Other cities such as New York, Berlin, and Paris have wonderful nights the anticipation of which actually intensifies the day. In these cities, night does not live off its difference from the day but exacerbates the fullness of day. In great cities such as these we do not have to wait for night to relieve us from day because day is eventful in its own way: day and night do not prosper at the expense of one another...Having a nightlife is not enough if it is possessed as if a commodity rather than absorbed into the bloodstream of the city in ways that fertilize and animate its days; having a nightlife is not so wonderful if it excels only by virtue of the mundaneity of day to which it is opposed. This is to say, also, that cities need to have days where transgression is possible instead of leaving transgression to the domain of night (Blum, 2003: 149).

So instead of extending daytime's amenities to nighttime as the 24-hour model of cosmopolitanism proposes, the real challenge is to make daytime more interesting and fulfilling. After all, "if any city can have a nightlife, to paraphrase Socrates, having a nightlife is not so wonderful. Even if having a nightlife is better than not, there are cities cosmopolitan in that sense, whose nights lack any challenge and present no risk, that is, nights with safe and secure reveling that lack any expectation of loss (say nights where at best, we party or get drunk, lose a wallet, have a fight, meet a person, go to a performance, but always within the limited circle of sameness" (ibid: 149). But even in Berlin, this Bataillean loss and re-discovery of self doesn't happen automatically. One has to make an emotive investment in the night; self-loss and eventfulness must be sought with patience and faith, and found with delight. What seems to make Berlin exceptional is the subjective perception that compared to many other cities, it

appears to provide one with more nocturnal freedom and opportunities to seek and find such existentially meaningful instances as well as more likeminded strangers to do this with.

But the night is not only a seductress that incites an intersubjective rediscovery of self by way of losing ourselves. The hours of darkness are also filled up with the lightness of forgetting; nighttime gives us the opportunity to relieve ourselves temporarily from our daily problems. The interim amnesia of the night is a diversion with which we temporarily unburden ourselves through the sociality of conviviality. In that sense, the lived experience of nocturnal lightness allows us to transgress the daily alienation from the potency of collective meaning creation and from the feeling of ecstatic fraternity. But at the same time, the prevalence of this transgression depends somewhat on the alienation from heaviness; a generalized state of lightness is contingent on the suspension of grave ethico-political duties demanded by a leftist *weltanschauung* grounded in *weltschmerz*. The light state of expectation that characterizes the city of Berlin (especially at night) is only possible when a society "develops" to the point of creating basic conditions such as an elevated level of general well-being (wealth, health and perceived freedom) which allows people to devote themselves to "useless" activities; a high degree of social atomization which results in a high level of individualism; and the absence of recent and/or frequent dramatic social changes and turmoil in the nation's internal life. The nocturnal lightness that we witness in the First World city of Berlin is not marked necessarily by naivety and innocence, nor is it necessarily caused by ignorance or indifference. Arguably, it is not even essentially apolitical. It is rather made possible by a lack of trauma, that is, the absence of traumas caused by the harsh realities of life as it currently unfolds in less fortunate parts of the globe. This is not to say that societal problems and traumas are nonexistent in Berlin, after all injustices and inequalities are suffered everywhere, and people all around get sick, hurt and heartbroken as well as lose loved ones to accidents, disease or addiction. It is rather to say that by and large such problems and traumas are neither as grave nor as recent and urgent as those in the "less developed" world, and also that they have been covered up – as we shall shortly see – by the lightness of forgetting. Or as Žižek puts it, "for us, in the developed West, trauma is as a rule experienced as a momentary violent intrusion which disturbs our normal daily lives (a terrorist attack, an earthquake or tornado, being mugged or raped…), for those in a war-torn country like Sudan or Congo trauma is the permanent state of things, a way of life. They have nowhere to retreat to, and cannot even claim to be haunted by the specter of an earlier trauma: what remains

is not the trauma's specter, but the trauma itself" (2011: 293). Of course, suffering the loss of a loved one in Berlin due to years of heavy smoking or a freak accident is a tragedy – and probably the biggest of all tragedies as far as the one who is doing the suffering is concerned – but there seems to be something heavier about losing one's son or lover because he was forced by law to go to the Turkish army (fortunately compulsory military service doesn't exist in most parts the "developed" world anymore[57]) and stepped on a landmine placed by a dubious "enemy" – after all, one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter. When it comes to the possibility of a generalized state of lightness, there is a crucial difference between an environment where differences (of opinion) are crushed by violence as dissenting intellectuals and political activists are incarcerated or even murdered in cold blood on the streets of Istanbul in broad daylight (e.g. the outspokenly leftist Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink was assassinated by fascist cadres as recently as 2007), and one where neoliberal liberties afford *Bar 25* loyalists the safety and self confidence to put on frivolous costumes and dance on the streets of Berlin at night. The extent to which (recent) traumas caused by physical and/or symbolic and often state sponsored violence are part of everyday life also determines the extent to which guilt-free hedonism becomes a generalized possibility. The same can also be said about the vibrancy of nightlife and the richness of nocturnal leisure activities. It seems for all these things to happen with the extent to which they do in Berlin nowadays, the prevalence of a post-'68, neoliberal and "permissive society" is the prerequisite.

The night in Berlin – and pretty much everywhere else on the globe –functions according to the pleasure principle; it aims to temporarily suppress pain and enhance happiness. The night wants us to forget things. But as Freud (2003) suggests, beyond this pleasure principle lurks the more primitive death instinct urging us to remember, compelling us to convulsively return to and confront unmastered traumas with the hope that this renewed encounter will finally lead to an overcoming, thereby canceling out all psychic excitement. The death drive follows the nirvana principle and aims to create the necessary psychic inertia which makes it possible for the pleasure principle to set in. This is Derrida's (1996) archive fever which makes remembrance possible. It is the death instinct that prompts the archive which captures civilization's achievements and starts recorded history, but it is the life instinct that shapes civilization and

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[57] Germany finally annulled mandatory military service on 1 March 2011. But the introduction of civil service as an alternative in 1961 has effectively meant that during the last decades only those who really wished to go to the army ended up getting conscripted.

rewrites history.[58] The new truth which negates the truth of the previous "uncivilized" epoch is imposed on humanity with symbolic violence, thereby creating the Law but at the same time this imposition is concealed by presenting the archive as commencement rather than as commandment. And the death drive with its convulsive remembrance constitutes the very resistance to the repression of this violence through which this shift was made. In that sense, the death drive ensures, in a Hegelian manner, that the archive contains and preserves both the truth as well its contradictory untruth simultaneously. At the end Freud (2002) gets it wrong, death drive has nothing to do with death or destruction. On the contrary, it aims to preserve life, to preserve memory. The death drive is a will to sovereignty. It wants to protect the organism's heterogeneous mode of life from external interference thereby making sure that it will follow its unique path leading to its auto-termination – when left alone, all beings die of internal causes. What the death drive seeks is sustainment in life. The sex drive, on the other hand, wants to prolong life by way of procreation; it wants to follow the pleasure principle by enjoying reproduction. It is the sex drive that seeks lightness and forgetfulness.

But there is no ultimate escape from memory. The problems of the day remain unaltered during our nightly excesses and amnesia. They continue to confront and haunt us when the night is over and when the intoxicants wear off. In that sense going out at night is a futile attempt to escape from ourselves and our daily troubles. The urban night is only a temporary haven of forgetfulness from the dreariness and monotony of day life, from its injustices and disappointments. For many of us, the night is only a provisional realm of play which enables us to forget our loneliness via the intersubjectivity of sociality. In the company of others we (make ourselves believe that we) momentarily suspend the curse of isolation afforded by our subjectivity. This is so because self-consciousness is a form of remembering; one constantly

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[58] For Freud, civilization is based on the myth concerning the Law's origin; it is created by *the* primordial transgression, i.e. the murder of the Father. It is the sex instinct rather than the death instinct that motivates this patricide which then is repressed as the archive/civilization presents itself to be the beginning of history and in this manner excludes the very crime which has created it in the first place. For example, in *Moses and Monotheism* (2001[b]) Freud claims Moses the Egyptian (the politician who wanted to maintain and popularize Akhenaton's monotheistic religion after the pharaoh's death – Lacan writes this Moses was someone who "wanted to create socialism in a single country, except, of course there was in addition no country but just a bunch of men to carry the project through [2008: 213]) was assassinated by his people who then repented their crime and projected his message onto Moses the Midianite, thereby creating Judaism (commandment) which appeared as commencement in order to repress the murder of the first, real Moses. Žižek claims such Freudian myths are in a way "*more real than reality*: they are 'true', although of course, 'they didn't really take place' – their spectral presence sustains the explicit symbolic tradition" (2001: 65).

reminds oneself that he exists as an isolated thinking-subject and as an individual with an extended, observable body (object). This form of remembrance is a limitation; it alienates one from the full potential of his humanness and corporeality as one inhibits himself since he constantly worries about how his actions and movements will be observed and evaluated from the outside. In that sense, self-consciousness is a form of auto-surveillance and auto-control. In nightlife, through the excess of intoxication, uncommitted relations (conversational or sexual, with acquaintances or strangers) and bodily movement (especially dance) one strives to forget this knowledge, one wants to break free from the gravity of self-consciousness. At the same time, self-identity is also a form of remembrance; one constantly reminds oneself of who he is. One recite to oneself his life history, his goals, achievements and principles. Sometimes, in order to be able to totally submerge ourselves in the night and swim in enjoyment one has to transgress his own self, one has to subvert one's own identity and temporarily forget one's own principles. But the intellect and its *weltanschauung* show resistance; this is exactly what standing at the edge of the dancefloor without trusting oneself to join in and being always conscious of one's bodily actions is all about. This self-resistance is the hidden element lying behind the question posed to oneself whilst surveying the dancers drenched in sweat and euphoria from afar: "am I the kind of person who would do this, who would (could) let go of all restraint, wiggle his limbs with grotesqueness, open himself to ridicule and mockery?" This resistance is also the very motivational factor hidden behind the intellectual justification used for making do with watching others perform these feats from a distance instead of stepping onto the dancefloor and experiencing these things personally.

If the night's interim amnesia is aided by intoxication with which one anaesthetizes his pain and aestheticizes his life (everything seems more beautiful and more meaningful), the excess of intoxication is an attempt to unburden ourselves from the heaviness of remorse, that is, an attempt to forgive ourselves for forgetting. Lightness taken to the extreme is forgetting that one has forgotten. It is a striving to overlook one's amnesia and be teleported to a place where "things are as light as the breeze, where things have lost their weight. Where there is no remorse…Where things weigh nothing at all" (Kundera, 2006: 225). But too much lightness is not good either, Kundera writes about the terrifying *weight of lightness*. This is why he calls it the *unbearable* lightness of being. It signals the danger of escapism, of soaring too high up in the sky and not being able to come back down to earth where socio-political/cultural/ethical issues

still matter and have to be confronted as well as fought for or against. It also carries with it the danger of annihilation (or social death) as was the case with Icarus. His excess was too excessive; he flew too high and came too close to the sun, which according to Bataille (1991) gives generously without asking anything in return, and which in this case took Icarus' life because it melted his wings made of wax. Robbed of the power of flight, Icarus fell to his death. It is not a coincidence that the protagonist in *Berlin Calling*, a recent film by Hannes Stöhr about Berlin's techno scene, is a DJ called Icarus (played by real life DJ Paul Kalkbrenner) the lightness of whose excessive lifestyle makes him get too high (on drugs) and causes his downfall (into a psychiatric clinic).

According to Berlin's new, branded image the city as the current reincarnation of its attractively decadent "1920s soul" is a 21st century cultural capital lying at the heart of a newly constituted Europe which has come into being after the EU's expansion and the adoption of its common currency – no matter how shaky those foundations have shown themselves to be during the bailout crisis between Greece and Germany in 2010. Rather than competing for attention and funds within Germany against rival cities such as Hamburg or Munich, the relation to Europe is emphasized so that Berlin is perceived to be existing on an a higher plane inhabited by rival global cities such as London or Paris. What's crucial about this "new Berlin" is that it takes 1989 (the fall of the Wall) as its year zero which symbolically dissociates the city from its hurtful past (the violent suppression of the Spartacist uprising, the destruction of the two World Wars as well as the division during the Cold War) and orients it towards an unknown yet optimistic future. This attractive post-industrial capital of cultural economy is unsurprisingly made possible by the lightness of forgetting: a divided city traumatized by decades of death, wreck and suffering can now discard its past and shake off the heaviness of remembrance as it becomes a united party metropole where life is constantly celebrated, and creativity and hedonism reign supreme.

Faced with the lightness of such forgetting, there seems to be two main stances regarding this aspiration in Berlin to start from scratch. The first one is the depressive attitude of condemning the society as a whole. This option of *cynical masochism* involves living one's life in a constant state of guilt and shame about the "banality of evil" (Arendt, 2006). This would mean blaming the whole German nation (past, present and future) for the Holocaust and WWII as well as the consequent Cold War division; refusing to forgive one's grandparents for letting the atrocities take place and being ever depressed about the fact that average human beings are

capable of such evil acts, and also making sure that such things may never happen again. This belief in collective guilt and responsibility as proposed in the post-war days by the likes of Karl Jaspers (1946) is a loss of trust in and alienation from humanity in general – nevertheless, Jaspers' own position is not so exaggerated or emotional. Although a valid solution in its own right – and definitely an understandable as well as an ethical one – this attitude involves the trauma's constant presence in everyday life and represents by no means a cure or a mastering of the situation. Moreover, sometimes this refusal to forget is only superficial and has solely the appearance of remembrance. In fact, Bernhard Schlink (2007) has pointed out that although the constant attempt to not forget the Nazi crimes has resulted in numerous democratic gains in the 60s and the 70s, the ever-presence of the trauma in daily life has also led to the banalization of Nazi history which then has led to a faulty overcoming of the past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*). Schlink considers this as a false mastering of the situation since it downplays the gravity of the atrocities as the trauma's constant presence diminishes the importance of the crimes for the present. Such remembrance is actually disguised amnesia, hence the soothing lightness of its forgetfulness. Probably, it's the frustration with being forced to feel guilty for fascist crimes which were committed long before they were born as well as the fact that these crimes no longer seem as significant (banalization) that enable people to show so much widespread public support for Berlin's ex-finance senator Sarrazin's recent racist claims. The Social Democrat politician, who was recently compelled to retire from the board of Germany's central bank, has let the cat out of the bag when he published a book in August 2010 in which he claims the Muslim immigrants' "incapability" and "unwillingness" to integrate themselves successfully into German society is due to their "genetically lower intelligence." Moreover, as they "over-reproduce" and "exploit the welfare state rather than contributing to the national economy," Sarrazin predicts/warns/fears Germany is going to go bankrupt in the following decades while the ethnic Germans will die away and let the country be taken over by Muslims. As the publication of the book sparked much debate and controversy,[59] an opinion poll carried out just a few weeks after the book came out revealed almost one in every five constituent would vote for Sarrazin's anti-immigration party if he were to found one. Moreover, contrary to the expectations the majority of the votes would come not from the supporters of the Christian Democrats but

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[59] Although there was word of an ongoing internal investigation, it was decided in April 2010 that Sarrazin would not be expelled from the Social Democratic Party.

paradoxically from those who support the Leftist Alliance. Many people living in ex-GDR states vote for *die Linke*, whom they consider to be the successors of the East German socialist party, yet they are also against foreign workers since they themselves are unemployed.

The other option regarding Berlin's forgetful lightness is to assume the role of victimhood, to create an oppressed self identity thereby externalizing and exorcising the evil. We can call this method *sadistic scapegoating*. To give an example, there is a tendency in Germany to blame Hitler and his high ranking officials for everything, that is, to consider the Nazis as purely evil and to regard Hitler as Satan himself. This entails that they have duped and exploited the innocent and poverty stricken German populace who didn't know anything about what was going on in the concentration camps, and therefore could at best be accused of ignorance. This was one of the main issues in *Historikerstreit* (historians' dispute), a heavily publicized debate at the end of the 80s between right-wing and left-wing intellectuals concerning how the Holocaust should be interpreted and memorialized. The leftist intellectuals, including Habermas, accused the right wing historians and thinkers as well as the Kohl government of trying to "exonerate" the German past. This self invented innocence and total refusal of complicity, this myth of complete distantiation from historical crimes made possible by *sadistic scapegoating* represses the trauma instead of confronting it. Nevertheless, such repression is not totally successful and the specter of (institutional) racism shows its ugly face in micro-power struggles in everyday life. This repression also creates a political environment which contains little room for openly discussing or trying to come to terms with the Nazi ideology. Luckily, Nietzsche has been rescued from his Nazi connotations by the French post-structuralists, yet there seems to be not much possibility in Germany of remaining politically correct whilst examining what drove a philosopher like Heidegger into the delusion of seeing some phenomenological potential for a higher level of human existence in the Nazi project. After having seen a play based on Goebbels' diaries in *Deutsches Theater* (directed by Oliver Reese), I have a sneaking suspicion that the Nazi ideologues were able to intellectually convince and lure the German intelligentsia due to the fact that they themselves suffered from delusions of grandeur as they believed they were acting in accordance with the unstoppable force of history, that is, some of them genuinely thought they would build a new civilization which would be ontologically more advanced and closer to Hegel's end of history. They insanely yet genuinely believed they were moving closer to the ultimate goal; the final stage where human reason becomes one with the Absolute, when

consciousness becomes conscious of itself – Hegel's Spirit dialectically progressing towards self-consciousness (1977). Indeed, Horst Mahler, the ex-RAF militant/lawyer who became a neo-Nazi in prison, claims in a recent documentary (*Die Anwälte: Eine Deutsche Geschichte*, dir. Birgit Schulz, 2009) it was reading Hegel that made him denounce Socialism and convert to National Socialism.

It is not surprising that although both Arendt (2004) and Adorno (2010) were critical of the masochistic option of condemning the German people as a whole since they considered collective guilt being felt or imposed as such was metaphysical rather than political and they stressed the political responsibility of the Nazis for their crimes, they were also perfectly aware of the dangers of scapegoating and the lightness of its forgetting. To give an obvious example, the culture industry has been producing epic WWII films (both German and Hollywood) and generating huge amounts of profit for decades. The pain and suffering of the Holocaust victims have become essential steps in a filmic ritual leading to the ecstatic climax at the end. Contrary to the alienation of Brecht's epic theater (1964), such epic scenarios abundant with torture and bloodshed serve the purpose of emotionally sucking the spectators in and preparing them for the big finale: the artificial euphoria they will feel at the end of the film when the heroic allied troops save the day with the aid of the patriotic anti-Nazi insurgents. Reenactment of victory and rekindling of national pride ("*Viva la resistance*!") as such have become spectacles to be savored in 3D in a multiplex along with popcorn and coca-cola. Similarly, Norman Finkelstein (2003) argues the memory of the Holocaust is being exploited by the American Jewish establishment/Diaspora and the(ir) "Holocaust Industry" for political and financial gain, as well as to further the interests of Israel

Schwanhäußer provides an example of how these two ways of dealing with Germany's problematic past (what we have deemed *cynical masochism* and *sadistic scapegoating*) play out and conflict with each other in Berlin's nightlife: after a party organized by the *Pyonen* collective in Castle Dammsmühle, once home to the Nazi SS, an online discussion has ensued. Some users of the forum have accused the ravers of being blasphemous for even attempting to party and celebrate their existence at such a problematic location ridden with guilt and inscribed with tragedy. On the other hand, the ravers have accused their accusers of being blindly stuck in the past and pointed out that as far as they were concerned it was impossible to find a single spot in Germany that was not soiled by the Nazi atrocities. Hence, adopting the position of their

accusers would effectively mean not being able to have fun in Germany at all. The middle-path solution came from a user named Alex who proposed having a rave at a Nazi site would serve as a "rededication" of the place; the location would be "redeemed" or "purged" of its atrocious past via recuperative partying (2010: 143). This middle position of moving beyond the past through the therapeutic process of celebrating the present seems to be prevalent in Berlin, the new capital of nightlife and perpetual partying. Nevertheless, whether this practice constitutes a real sublation of the dialectic is still contestable.

Creative world city Berlin, seemingly cured of its heaviness and trauma by the lightness of celebration, is indeed a perfect location for festivities. Therefore, it's hardly surprising that Chancellor Merkel, ecstatic about the arrival of capital in the shape of FIFA World Cup, could announce during the summer of 2006 that it was "once again all right for German citizens to be proud of being German." Moreover, the official discourse of presenting the disappearance of *Realsozialismus* and the adoption of "free market democracy" as nothing but a bliss, hence the revisionism of presenting everything that has happened after the reunification – even corruption, scandals and bankruptcy – as being better than and more preferable to what has happened in the past, is exactly what has enabled the transformation of the memorial ceremony on 9 November 2009 into a *spectacular* (Debord, 1987) celebration of capitalism during which the fall of the Wall was reenacted in front of the Brandenburg Gate. As part of the official "Festival of Freedom," Styrofoam stones (which had been prepared and sent by Goethe Institute on a journey to Yemen, Korea, Mexico, China, Cyprus, Palestine and Israel [60] to be turned by local artists into "symbols of freedom") were toppled down like dominoes – here the domino metaphor is especially ironic as the "domino theory" had been used extensively to justify American atrocities in Vietnam and elsewhere during the Cold War. Bono & the lads (i.e. the usual suspects) were kind enough to offer their musical services as they cooked up a sonic feast and a 360 degree stage extravaganza for the ears and eyes of Deutschland fans gathered on both sides of the Brandenburg Gate, cheering in unison despite the looming financial crisis that life was wonderful in brave new Germania with its abundance of wealth, health, and consumerist liberties. Much to the disdain of Benjamin's "angel of history" (1969) the cries of the East German dissidents who

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[60] These countries were selected because they are "places where political divisions existed or still exist." Here, the official position of not openly rebuking Israel is maintained. On the flyer of the "Wall in the World Project" the stature of Israel's towering concrete blocks is downplayed as they are called "security fences" built against "terrorists." http://www.goethe.de/ges/prj/mar/ pro/flyer/flyer _goethe.pdf

had been utterly let down after the reunification by the dog-eat-dog reality of free market capitalism seemed to be completely muffled by the notes blasting out of The Edge's guitar amp.

In an opinion piece published on the same day in the *New York Times*, Žižek was drawing attention to how the disillusionment of so many dissidents who had catalyzed the "velvet" revolutions in the Soviet bloc was now being explained "in terms of the 'immature' expectations of the people, who simply didn't have a realistic image of capitalism: they wanted to have their cake and eat it, they wanted capitalist-democratic freedom and material abundance without having to adapt to life in a 'risk society' – i.e. without losing the security and stability (more or less) guaranteed by the Communist regimes." He continued:

> Today we observe the explosion of capitalism in China and ask when it will become a democracy. But what if it never does? What if its authoritarian capitalism isn't merely a repetition of the process of capitalist accumulation which, in Europe, went on from the 16th to the 18th century, but a sign of what is to come? What if 'the vicious combination of the Asian knout and the European stock market' (Trotsky's characterization of tsarist Russia) proves economically more efficient than liberal capitalism? What if it shows that democracy, as we understand it, is no longer the condition and engine of economic development, but its obstacle? And if this is the case, maybe post-Communist disappointment should not be dismissed as a sign of 'immature' expectations. When people protested against Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, most of them weren't asking for capitalism. They wanted solidarity and a rough kind of justice; they wanted the freedom to live their own lives outside state control, to come together and talk as they pleased; they wanted to be liberated from primitive ideological indoctrination and hypocrisy. In effect they aspired to something that could best be described as 'socialism with a human face'. Perhaps this sentiment deserves a second chance (2009[b]).

Perhaps this sentiment does deserve a second chance. But in the hedonists' Mecca that the German capital has recently become *socialism with a human face* seems like an unlikely candidate to appear on stage as the spectators can't take their eyes off of the *hipness of being light*.

Yes, 21st century Berlin with its forgetfulness is indeed feather-light. Kundera reminds us that Prague in Kafka's *The Trial* is a city without memory: "the city has even forgotten its name. No one there remembers or recalls anything, and Josef K. even seems to not know anything about his own life previously. No song can be heard there to evoke for us the moment of its birth and link the present to the past. The time of Kafka's novel is the time of humanity that has lost its continuity with humanity, of a humanity that no longer remembers anything and lives in cities without names where the streets are without names or with names different from those they had yesterday, because a name is a continuity with the past and the people without a past are a people without a name." Then Kundera goes on to point out that the names of Prague's streets have been

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altered over and over by the Austria-Hungarians, the Germans, the Soviets and the Czech rulers thereby "brainwashing them into a half-wit. Wandering the streets that do not know their names are the ghosts of monuments torn down" (2006: 216-17). The same can be said of Berlin. Indeed, the names of Berlin's streets have been changed to suit the dominant ideology first by the Weimar leaders, then by the Nazis, later on by the Allies and the Soviets, subsequently by the rulers of the BRD and the GDR, and finally by the post-reunification governments. In tune with this official desire to start from scratch, nowadays a growing and privileged group of creative migrants and celebratory visitors who benefit from Berlin's libertarian legacy yet have no emotional ties with the city's hurtful past roam the renamed streets of its increasingly gentrified neighborhoods visa-free. As multinationals' skyscrapers have crowded the no-man's-land that Postdamer-Platz used to be, Alexander-Platz is being stripped off of its East German architecture (e.g. Galleria Kaufhof, Berolinahaus and Alexanderhaus have all been redone) and expanded via colossal additions such as the recent Alexa shopping mall and the Saturn mega store. Mediaspree, on the other hand, aims to preserve and transform old industrial sites in order to make out of them state-of-the-art creative industry headquarters. A recent spectacle created for the tourists and art-lovers in the ex-GDR neighborhood of Mitte, once the Jewish quarter and the city's financial district, has entailed covering the façade of Brunnenstr. 17 with the following words in block capital: "*MENSCHLICHER WILLE KANN ALLES VERSETZEN – DIESES HAUS STAND FRÜHER IN EINEM ANDEREN LAND*" ("the human will can move everything – this building used to be in another country"). [61] The message is ambiguous though. Are we supposed to rejoice in the fact that *Realsozialismus* doesn't exist anymore so that we are now free to stand before the edifice in this brave new Germany and savor this "work of art" or are we being reminded that human agency is capable of bringing about revolution and that if we are resolute enough we can dethrone Merkel or even put an end to the capitalist's wet-dream that Germany has turned into after the reunification? Either way, even in the midst of the over-gentrified boutique hotel, art gallery and shopping district that Mitte has become, Berlin's left wing legacy refuses to go down without a fight: a few meters down the road at the inner courtyard of Brunnenstr. 7 a banner saying "TOURISTS FUCK OFF, REFUGEES WELCOME!" hangs above the entrance of *Subversiv*, the only remaining squat in the

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[61] The choice of the word "versetzen" comes from the proverb "Berge versetzen können" meaning to be able to move mountains. "Versetzen" belongs to everyday discourse and is not part of the Marxist terminology which uses words like "aufheben" or "abschaffen."

neighborhood. *Ballast der Republik*, another squat run by Polish punks just across the street as well as the *Umsonst Laden*, a shop based on gift exchange where one could get stuff free of charge, have been recently evicted. *Ballast der Republik* is a wordplay evoking the rubble of the late *Palast der Republik* (Palace of the Republic), East Berlin's socialist-realist culture hall which was built across from the Berlin Cathedral at the old site of the *Stadtschloss* (city palace) destroyed during WWII. The building which was finally torn down in 2008 was left there in ruins for many years due to its high asbestos concentration. Since 2001 the city officials have been trying to get hold of millions of Euros in order to rebuild the old city palace which they believe will attract the visitors, that is, the high-end tourists not the ravers. The ravers had preferred the remains of the GDR building as they had become a location for parties. Due to budget cuts in the aftermath of the financial crisis the construction project has been postponed until 2014. Nevertheless, this hasn't stopped Christian Democrats from proposing in the mean time to remove the iconic Marx-Engels statue located nearby since they claim it will not suit the city center's "recreated historical image." As for EasyJet's rave tourists, they can now go to the new *Tresor* which has been carefully recreated in an old power station to resemble the original from the 90s – even with the same safe deposit vault and all – in order to cash in on the nocturnal Berlin hype. Nevertheless, this *Tresor* version 2.0 opened in 2007 is being disparaged by the techno elite for its forgery as well as for being too working-class, that is, for letting in too many *prolls.*

Literary Excursion No.2: Anarchist Evening Entertainment –
The Steppenwolf Learns to Lighten Up

Before finishing things off, let's now turn to Hermann Hesse's *Steppenwolf* which seems to combine many of the issues covered in the thesis. As we are dealing with a work of literature here, the author's style of writing is integral to its message and its beauty so large chunks of text will be quoted verbatim, I do apologize in advance if this practice begins to wear the readers out. Well, although Hesse has returned in his old age to the Apollonian-Dionysian dialectic with *Narcissus and Goldmund* which he penned in 1957, the Nietzschean attack *Steppenwolf* constitutes on the bourgeois way of life or rather on the grave sensibility of the self-loathing and disgruntled bourgeois intellectual who is perennially stuck between *self-contemptuous perfectionism* and *cynical narcissism* (represented in the novel by the protagonist Harry Haller a.k.a. the Steppenwolf) has struck a bigger chord with readers since its publication in 1927. In fact, along with his sympathy for Baudelaire and the Surrealists, it was reading the *Steppenwolf* that had inspired Walter Benjamin to experiment with narcotics and record his experiences. When Hesse penned the book he was 50 years old and suffering from severe depression; he was separated from his young wife and the resulting feeling of isolation as well as his inability at the time to make lasting contact with the outside world had led to despair and suicidal thoughts. The novel itself is teeming with depressive motifs yet it ultimately offers a limited but definitive prescription since Hesse had envisioned it as a cathartic means to cure his suffering. Nevertheless, the general reception of the book has tended to focus more on the gloomy elements, in fact so much so that for the 1961 edition Hesse felt compelled to add a foreword in which he suggests:

> Many readers have recognized themselves in the Steppenwolf, identified themselves within him, suffered his griefs, and dreamed his dreams; but they have overlooked the fact that this book knows and speaks of other things, besides Harry Haller and his difficulties, about a second, higher, indestructible world beyond the Steppenwolf and his problematic life. The 'Treatise' and all those spots in the book dealing with matters of the spirit, of the arts and the 'immortal' men oppose the Steppenwolf's world of suffering with a positive, serene, superpersonal, and timeless world of faith. This book no doubt tells of griefs and needs; still it is not a book of a man despairing, but of a man believing…the story of the Steppenwolf pictures a disease and crisis – but not one leading to death and destruction, on the contrary: to healing (2011: 6).

In fact, Hesse uses the story of Harry Haller to come up with a synthesis of lightness and heaviness: we are to lighten up with the aid of Dionysian enjoyment and nocturnal transgression,

and in turn achieve a lightness rooted in heaviness. Ideally, this *heavy lightness* will be an interim period which will lead to the absolute heaviness of eternal return. In the end, the Steppenwolf fails to become the Dionysian Overman and join the ranks of the "immortals" with their tragic, superhuman laughter yet he is largely cured of his ailment caused by extreme heaviness (as it will become evident here the culprit is not gravity per se but the protagonist's faulty perspective which causes a problematic relation to *weltschmerz* and the outside world) that had given rise to his swings between two poles, namely discontentedness and self-hate/castration on the one end, and flimsy self-esteem at the expense of alienation from alterity on the other.

At the onset of the novel, we are introduced to Haller, a middle-aged and antisocial intellectual who refers to himself as the Steppenwolf and spends his days alone in his lodgings indulging in art, literature and philosophy. When night descends upon the city, Haller wanders the "dark and foggy" streets aimlessly to let the urban scenery inspire his senses and take him down memory lane. He frequents concert houses where he pursues the fleeting epiphany inspired by exceptional music (for example a symphony by Friedemann Bach – the second eldest son of Johann Sebastian – which the audience fails to appreciate and in turn drives him to the despair of alienation) and haunts public houses where he excessively drinks his woes away without speaking to a soul since he believes no one he encounters can understand or care about his troubles, or share his disdain for contemporary society with its populism and consumerism. As he finds his aesthetic and philosophical ideals to be increasingly marginalized, he counts himself among the untimely just as Nietzsche had been. Haller tells us his life is characterized by the monotony of bearable and submissive days on which neither pain nor pleasure cry out; "the moderately pleasant, the wholly bearable and tolerable, lukewarm days of a discontented middle-aged man" followed by "evil days of inward emptiness and despair, when, on this ravaged earth, sucked dry by the vampires of finance, the world of men and of so-called culture" (at the outset he deplores the frivolity of "low culture," i.e. jazz, cabaret and dance halls) "grins back at us with the lying, vulgar, brazen glamour of a Fair and dogs us with the persistence of an emetic." Moreover, Harry confesses those dull days of solitary confinement and relative satisfaction are also a source of pain for him because what he has always "hated and detested and cursed above all things was this contentment, this healthiness and comfort, this carefully preserved optimism of the middle-classes, this fat and prosperous brood of mediocrity." Therefore, such brief periods of contentedness fills him with irrepressible loathing and nausea. In desperation, he has to escape

into other regions, if possible on the road to pleasure, if not and more often, on the road to pain. He is utterly frustrated and he lusts after transgression; "a wild longing for strong emotions and sensations seethes in me, a rage against this toneless, flat, normal and sterile life. I have a mad impulse to smash something, a warehouse perhaps, or a cathedral, or myself, to commit outrages, to pull of the wings of a few revered idols, to provide a few rebellious schoolboys with the longed-for ticket to Hamburg" (famous for its red-light district), "to seduce a little girl, or to stand one or two representatives of the established order on their heads" (2011: 33-35). But he never does so. Instead, he just keeps anesthetizing his pain with alcohol while cursing his fate and taking it all out on himself.

Haller is the typical self-hating bourgeois intellectual: he is enamored in the bourgeoisie and never totally divorced from it, at the same time he is incessantly critical of bourgeois politics and lifestyles, and strives to escape them. He finds the routines of everyday life extremely tedious and instead strives to flee to the isolated realm of "high culture" and philosophy. He is an outspoken opponent of nationalism and war (he has penned an "unpatriotic" opinion piece) and he detests the mightiness of Capital yet neither is he an anti-war activist nor does he suffer from pangs of guilt despite the fact that he hasn't spent a day in his life doing manual labor and lives on "industrial securities lying at the bank." By his own definition Harry belongs to the category of "others," the numerous "outsiders" of the bourgeoisie who by virtue of the extensiveness and elasticity of its ideals it can embrace and co-opt. Although Haller has "developed far beyond the level possible to the bourgeois, he who knows the bliss of meditation no less than the gloomy joys of hatred and self-hatred, he who despises law, virtue, and common sense, is nevertheless captive to the bourgeoisie and cannot escape it. And so all through the mass of the real bourgeoisie are interposed numerous layers of humanity, many thousands of lives and minds, everyone of whom, it is true, would have outgrown it and obeyed the call to unconditioned life, were they not fastened to it by sentiments of their childhood and infected for the most part with its less intense life; and so they are kept lingering, obedient and bound by obligation and service." So we are told these numerous critical pseudo-outsiders at once detest the bourgeoisie and belong to it, adding to its strength and glory, for in the last resort they have to affirm their beliefs in order to live. They are the ones who resign themselves, make compromises. They remain in the fold and from their talents the bourgeoisie reaps much gain; here the analogy to our current day intermediaries of the global culture/creative industry is pretty evident. "The lives of

these infinitely numerous persons make no claim to the tragic" which is reserved for the immortals such as Mozart and Goethe "but they live under an evil star in a quite considerable affliction; and in this hell their talents even ripen and bear fruit" (ibid: 65-66). Harry believes and is perceived by many (which in turn reinforces his belief) to stand outside the world of convention since he has neither family life nor social ambitions. He himself perpetuates this external perception through his "peculiar" acts and habits, and often feels alone and marginal; he deliberately looks down upon "the ordinary man" and is proud that he is not one himself. Nevertheless his life is in many ways thoroughly ordinary, especially in the sense that he shares with many others the common delusion of believing that they are not ordinary. He is secretly attracted to the bourgeois world although it pleases him to set himself outside it with his little vices and extravagances, as a quirky fellow or an unrecognized genius, but he has remained utterly bourgeois all the way through – again the resemblance to the current hipster sensibility must be self-evident here. Nevertheless, Hesse's protagonist is depicted as a real intellectual whose bourgeois elitism despises "low culture" whereas the pseudo-intellectualism of today's *hipoisie* wallows in it. Yet, the way hipsterdom dabbles in avant-gardism and reappropriates counter-cultural elements from history (including the very novel written by Hesse) indicates the elitist gesture of championing only the "highbred" specimens of "low culture." On a similar note, Hesse writes of the simulation of dissent which resembles Boltanski & Chiapello's artistic critique: "Haller was not at ease with the violent and exceptional persons nor with criminals and outlaws, and he took up his abode always with the middle-classes, with whose habits and standards and atmosphere he stood in constant relation, even though it might be one of contrast and revolts…In theory he had nothing against whatever against prostitution; yet in practice it would have been beyond him to take a harlot quiet seriously as his equal. He was capable of loving the political criminal, the revolutionary or intellectual seducer, the outlaw of state and society, as his brother" as long as he kept a safe distance between them and himself, "as for theft and robbery, murder and rape, he would have not known how to deplore them otherwise than in a thoroughly bourgeois manner" (ibid: 62-63).

This is the point at which Haller's life changes. During one of his nocturnal drifts he comes across a door in a dark alley on top of which an evanescent sign announces with bright, dancing letters: MAGIC THEATER – ENTRANCE NOT FOR EVERYBODY – FOR MADMEN ONLY! Harry tries to go in but the door is locked and the sign suddenly disappears.

Baffled, he goes to a tavern to get warm and raise the level of alcohol in his bloodstream. Later on he resumes his stroll and comes across the sign once again, this time it's slightly altered: ANARCHIST EVENING ENTERTAINMENT – MAGIC THEATER – ENTRANCE NOT FOR EVERYBODY. At this point he is handed a pamphlet entitled "Treatise on the Steppenwolf" which is uncannily addressed to him. He rushes home and reads it in one sitting. The text describes and explains in detail Harry's thoughts, feelings, beliefs and troubles. It brings him face to face with his escapism, complacency and mistakes; he is confronted with his relentless self-castration and self-indulgence which seal him off from the outside world: the treatise describes an individual who believes himself to be of two natures; the higher, spiritual nature of man is accompanied by the lower, bestial, solitary nature of the "wolf of the steppes." This short-sighted man is entangled in an irresolvable struggle; he is never content with either nature because he cannot see beyond this self-made concept. In a proto-Derridean fashion the pamphlet deconstructs the constricting logocentrism of this false "Faustian two-fold nature" binary. As a solution, the treatise makes use of Oriental mysticism to explain and uphold in a proto-Deleuzo-Guattarian manner the multifaceted and indefinable nature of every man's soul, it explicates the multiplicity of an individual's personas diabolized as schizophrenia by the logic of unified personality. The pamphlet's anonymous author attacks the fable of the ego. The mind-body dichotomy and its consequent instrumentally rational subjectivity are derided because they deny the underlying truth that personality is a composite and the self is always a self-in-the-making; it is in a constant state of becoming, of egoless individuation. Hesse writes man is by no means a fixed and enduring form but an experiment and a transition; Haller has to multiply his two-fold being many times and complicate his complexities. He, just like all beings, is nothing but the bridge between nature and the totality of the spirit, a bridge on the road to the univocity of Buddha:

> A man who can understand Buddha and has an intuition of the heaven and hell of humanity ought not to live in a world ruled by 'common sense' and democracy and bourgeois standards. It is only from cowardice that he lives in it; and if its dimensions are too cramping for him and the bourgeois parlor too confined, he lays at the wolf's door, and refuses to see that wolf is as often as not the best part of him. All that is wild in him he calls wolf and considers it wicked and dangerous and the bugbear of all decent life. He cannot see, even though he thinks himself an artist and possessed of delicate perceptions, that a great deal else exists in him besides and behind the wolf. He cannot see that not all that bites is wolf and that fox, dragon, tiger, ape and bird of paradise are there also. Yet he allows this whole world, a garden of Eden in which are manifestations of beauty and terror, of greatness and meanness, of strength and tenderness[62] to be

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[62] In other words, both the will to *puissance* and the will to *pouvoir*.

huddled together and shut-away by the wolf-legend, just as is the real man in him by the shams and pretences of a bourgeois existence" (ibid: 78-79).

Nevertheless this is a message Harry is either unable or unwilling to recognize in his current state and present frame of mind. The pamphlet also discusses Harry's suicidal intentions (he seriously considers taking his own life on his approaching 50th birthday), describing him as one of the "suicides": people who know deep down that they will take their own life one day. But this category does not include only those who have killed or will kill themselves, in fact some of those individuals do not actually deserve to be subsumed under this heading. The majority of the "suicides" are by the very nature of their beings those who in fact never lay a hand on themselves; they need not live in a peculiarly close relationship to death. Rather, "the line of fate in the case of these men is marked by the belief they have that suicide is their most probable manner of death." Metaphysically considered, "suicides present themselves as those who are overtaken by the sense of guilt inherent in individuals, those souls that find the aim of life not in the perfecting and molding of the self, but in liberating themselves by going back to the mother, back to God, back to All" – therefore, embracing not the homogenizing bio-power of the sex drive but the difference generating nirvana principle of the death drive that seeks zero intensity. "Many of these natures are wholly incapable of ever having recourse to real suicide, because they have a profound consciousness of the sin of doing so. For us they are suicides none the less; for they see death not life as the releaser. They are ready to cast themselves away in surrender, to be extinguished and go back to the beginning" (ibid: 59-60). In other words, they are willing to shed stable identity, to put traditional embodied subjectivity to rest. To counterbalance Haller's suicidal tendencies and stop him from resorting to actual suicide, the unknown author of the treatise also hails his potential to be great, to become one of the immortals: those who manage to break free from the bourgeoisie thus "seek their reward in the unconditional and go down in splendor. They bear the crown of thorns and their number is small." Here, in a Nietzschean manner Hesse contrasts tragedy with drama and produces a rendition of the *heavy laughter* vs. *light laughter* distinction. The immortals, the untimely geniuses who break free from their chains suffer all the more for it yet at the same time they manage to laugh in the face of their tragedy with a superhuman capacity as they are able to reach self-affirmation:

> For the first time I understood Goethe's laughter, the laughter of the immortals. It was laughter without an object. It was simply light and lucidity. It was that which is leftover when a true man has passed through all the sufferings, vices, mistakes, passions and misunderstandings of men and got through to eternity and the world of space. An eternity was nothing than the redemption of

time, its return to innocence, so to say, and its transformation again into space…The immortals, living their life in timeless space, enraptured, refashioned and immersed in crystalline eternity like ether, and the cool starry brightness and radiant serenity of this world outside the earth – whence was all this so intimately known? As I reflected, passages of Mozart's *Cassations*, of Bach's *Well-tempered Clavier*, came to my mind and it seemed to me that all through this music there was this radiance of this cool starry brightness and the quivering of this clearness of ether. Yes, it was there. In this music there was a feeling as of time frozen into space, and above it there quivered a never-ending and *superhuman* serenity, an eternal, divine laughter. Yes, and how well the aged Goethe of my dreams fitted in, too. And suddenly I head this fathomless laughter around me. I hear the immortals laughing (ibid: 181-82).

The drama of the self-loathing and tangled-up bourgeois intellectuals and artists, on the other hand, is that "they have a third kingdom left open to them, an imaginary yet a sovereign world: humor." The escape into humor provides a way for tormented souls like Haller to reconcile their bourgeois predicament; humor allows and induces transgression:

Humor always has something bourgeois in it, although the true bourgeois is incapable of understanding it. In its imaginary realm the intricate and the many-faceted ideal of all Steppenwolves finds its realization. Here it is possible not only to extol the saint and the profligate in one breath and to make the poles meet, but to include the bourgeois, too, in the same affirmation. Now it is possible to be possessed by God and to affirm the sinner, and vice versa, but it is not possible for either saint or sinner (nor for any other of the unconditioned) to affirm as well that lukewarm mean, the bourgeois. Humor alone, that magnificent discovery of those who are cut short in their calling to the highest endeavor, those who falling short of tragedy are yet as rich in gifts as in affliction, humor alone (perhaps the most inborn and brilliant achievement of the human spirit) attains to the impossible and brings every aspect of human existence within the rays of its prism. To live in the world as though it were not the world, to respect the law and yet to stand above it, to have possession as though 'one possessed nothing,' to renounce as though it were no renunciation, all these favorite and often formulated propositions of an exalted worldly wisdom, it is in the power of humor alone to make efficacious (ibid: 67).

So Harry is told by the "Treatise on the Steppenwolf" that he has the capacity to rise above his bourgeois predicament and aid Mozart in composing his masterpieces or accompany Goethe in his experiments with soap bubbles aimed at theorizing color. But to do so he must lighten up and let laugher reign freely, he must embrace humor and frivolity; he has to savor carnal delights. Only then may he enter the Magic Theater and meet the immortals, thereby being exposed to their tragic, superhuman laughter. Only there and then may he look at and see himself in the magic mirror so that the man and the wolf will be compelled to look one another straight in the eye and recognize each other. When this happens there are two alternative outcomes: "they would either explode and separate forever, and there would be no more Steppenwolf, or else they would come to terms in the dawning light of humor" (ibid: 68). In other words, Harry will either climb to the immortals' mountaintop and let the hills ring with his tragic laughter, or he will finally accept his mediocrity and yield to his bondage to the bourgeois universe so that his shame

and torment will finally be assuaged by comic laughter. He will either choose the heaviest of burdens and suffer alienation but persevere in the end because when heaviness is taken to such an extreme it becomes the *bearable lightness of weight* which allows the Overman to break free from gravity and float up to the superhuman strata; or he will sublate heaviness and lightness to strategically come up with a habitable zone of subjectivation which will allow him to temporarily yet regularly transgress the bourgeois sensibility by means of frivolity. The first option amounts to an individual revolution, a point of no return marked by the tragedy of social death – Nietzsche's extreme alienation from alterity; the paralyzed mad-philosopher wasting away in his chair. The other option is Deleuze and Foucault's ethics without morality; it entails the self-fashioning of a fairly self-emancipatory and ethico-aesthetic praxis created by and enabling transgression. Nevertheless, we shouldn't forget that Foucault ended up dying prematurely from AIDS thanks to his "deviant" sexual practices while Deleuze, suffering from lung cancer, met his fate in mid-air between his Parisian apartment and the paving stones under which there allegedly was a beach. But if we are willing to put aside the mask of the cynic for a while, it is possible to acknowledge both figures as tragic heroes: Foucault constantly striving to embody and live out his philosophy at the expense of alienation as this praxis entails breaking free from established norms to live life in one's own terms, and Deleuze laughing in the face of certain death (awaiting at the end of his terminal illness as well as on the ground at the end of his fall) by constituting one last individuation in mid-air: the phoenix-becoming-of-man.

So in essence, Harry is told by an unknown source that his being is too heavy and that he takes life and himself way too seriously. Taken aback, he tries to rationalize and justify his position to himself and falls into an uneasy sleep. The next day he runs into a former friend with whom he had often discussed Oriental mythology and whom he now, much to his shock and self-contempt, tries to charm with pleasantries. The academic invites Harry home for dinner. During the evening Harry is disgusted by his friend's nationalistic mentality as the latter inadvertently criticizes a newspaper column written by our protagonist under a pseudonym in which he had expressed his anti-war sentiments. Moreover, Harry ends up offending the scholar and his wife by criticizing her portrait of Goethe which he finds too sentimental and insulting to Goethe's true brilliance, reassuring the proposition that he is, and will always be, a stranger to his peers. Trying to delay returning home (where he has planned suicide) he walks around aimlessly, finally stopping to rest at a dance hall where he stumbles upon a young woman who quickly notices his

desperation. In fact, it is not perfectly clear if she really exists or if she is a figment of his imagination because when Harry asks what her name is she turns the question around without giving an answer. When he is challenged to guess her name he tells her that she reminds him of a childhood friend named Hermann; and therefore he concludes her name must be the female form: Hermine. Metaphorically, Harry creates Hermine as if a fragment of his own soul has broken off to form a female counterpart. This turns out to be a crucial detail because Hermine will act as the means by which his transformation will take place, he will learn to individuate through her mediation – here we see a parallel to Deleuze's claim that all becomings begin with becoming woman. During that first encounter Harry and Hermine talk at length; she alternately mocks his self-pity and, to his astonished relief, indulges him in his explanations regarding his view of life. She turns out to be a socialite and promises a second meeting, thereby providing Harry with a reason to live (or at least a substantial excuse that justifies his decision to continue living) which he eagerly embraces.

Under the tutelage of Hermine (who is reminiscent of Kundera's Sabina in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*) Harry, who up until then had been a stranger to the intoxication of dance, drugs, and eroticism and had not experienced the lightheadedness of Dionysian bliss, is initiated into a world of idlers and pleasure-seekers, a frivolous realm which used to be repugnant to him and which he had hitherto carefully avoided and utterly despised; a bohemian underworld of crowded and smoke-filled bars, jazz music, the foxtrot, the quickstep the black bottom, cocaine, opium, flappers, cocottes, sensual delights and the banishment of all restraint. But Harry is very self-conscious at the beginning; he can't let go of his old habits, he clings on to reflexivity and rational analysis. He believes he can't dance since he lacks the essential qualities for dancing, namely gaiety, innocence, frivolity, elasticity. He thinks his clumsy attempt at dancing will be a source of ridicule. Moreover, he is afraid to approach women for fear of being laughed at and rejected, he dreads taking that risk. Haller, the intellectual and eternal critic, is a brooder rather than a go-getter. He admits, "I might have made the most intelligent and penetrating remarks about the ramifications and the causes of my sufferings, my sickness of soul, my general bewilderment of neurosis. The mechanism was transparent to me. But what I needed was not knowledge and understanding. What I longed for in my despair was life and resolution, action and reaction, impulse and impetus" (ibid: 125). Having overcome the initial obstacle of approaching females thanks to Hermine's coaching and encouragement as well as her role as

match-maker (she fixes him up with the free-wheeling Maria who initiates him into the delights of eroticism), in the early phases of his education in lightness Harry fails to dance buoyantly with his partners at the jazz parties; he can't fully respond to sensual seduction with warmth and freedom as he fails to entirely lose himself in abandon. That's why Hermine scolds him by suggesting the spiritual part of his being is highly developed whereas he is very "backward in all the little arts of living," he needs to be taught "the little arts and lighter sides of life." As she puts it, "Harry, the thinker, is a hundred years old, but Harry, the dancer, is scarcely half a day old. It's he we want to bring on, and all his little brothers," i.e. other aspects of Harry's being, his multiple personas, "who are just as little and stupid and stunned as he is" (ibid: 149).

Hermine claims she understands Harry perfectly because despite appearances they are the same:

> It's the same for me as for you because I am alone exactly as you are, because I'm as little fond of life and people and myself as you are and can put up with them as little. There are always a few such people who demand the utmost of life and yet cannot come to terms with its stupidity and crudeness. Do you think I can't understand your horror of the foxtrot, your dislike of bars and dancing floors, your loathing of jazz music and the rest of it? I understand it only too well, and your dislike of politics as well, your despondence over the chatter and irresponsible antics of parties and the press, your despair over the war, the one that has been and the one that is to be, over all that people nowadays think, read and build, over the music they play, the celebrations they hold, the educations they carry on. You are right, Steppenwolf, right a thousand times over, and yet you must perish. You are much too exacting and hungry for this simple, easygoing and easily contended world of today. You have a dimension too many. Whoever wants to live and enjoy his life today must not be like you and me. Whoever wants music instead of noise, joy instead of pleasure, soul instead of gold, creative work instead of business, passion instead of foolery, finds no home in this trivial world of ours (ibid: 177).

"You, you!" cries Henry in deep amazement. "I understand you, my comrade. No one understands you better than I. And yet you are a riddle. You are such a past-master at life. You have wonderful reverence for its little details and enjoyments. You are such an artist in life. How can you suffer at life's hands? How can you despair?" "I don't despair," answers Hermine.

> As to suffering – oh, yes, I know all about that! You are surprised that I should be unhappy when I can dance and am so sure of myself in the superficial things of life. And I, my friend, am surprised that you are so disillusioned with life when you are at home with the deepest and most beautiful things, with spirit, art, and thought! That is why we were drawn to one another and why we are brother and sister. I am going to teach you to dance and play and smile, and still not be happy. And you are going to teach me to think and to know and yet not be happy. (ibid: 148).

At some point Hermine also prophesizes much to Harry's dismay that he will end up killing her. During the following weeks Hermine introduces Harry to a mysterious saxophone player and ladies' man named Pablo who appears to be the very opposite of what Harry considers a serious, thoughtful man. As far as Harry is concerned Pablo is not a musician but just an entertainer who

can play a musical instrument – and of course this is quite similar to Adorno's position concerning popular music. Yet we sense that Pablo's lightness is exactly what Harry needs, Pablo is like Goethe's Mephisto if not Harry's alter-ego. The turning point in the story comes when Haller, after attending a lavish masquerade, finally frees himself from his shackles and experiences a frame-shattering nocturnal epiphany which is worth quoting at lenght:

> An experience fell to my lot this night of the Ball that I had never experienced in my fifty years, though it is known to every flapper and student – the intoxication of a general festivity, the mysterious merging of the personality in the mass, the mystic union of joy. I had often heard it spoken of. It was known, I knew to every servant girl. I had often observed the sparkle in the eye of those who told me of it and I had always treated it with a half-superior, half envious smile. A hundred times in my life I had seen examples of those whom rapture had intoxicated and released from the self, of that smile, that half-crazed absorption, of those whose heads have been turned by a common enthusiasm…But today, on this blessed night, I myself, the Steppenwolf, was radiant with this smile. I myself swam in this deep and childlike happiness of a fairytale. I myself breathed the sweet intoxication of a common dream and of music and rhythm and wine and carnal lust – I, who had in other days so often listened with amusement, or dismal superiority, to its panegyric in the ball-room chatter of some student. I was myself no longer. My personality was dissolved in the intoxication of the festivity like salt in water. I danced with this woman or that, but it was not only the one I had in my arms and whose hair brushed my face that belonged to me. All the other women who were dancing in the same room and the same dance and the same music, and whose radiant faces floated past me like fantastic flowers, belonged to me, and I to them. All of us had a part in one another. And the men too. I was with them also. They, too, were no strangers to me. Their smile was mine, and mine their wooing and theirs mine. A new dance, a foxtrot, with the title *Yearning*, had swept the world that winter. Once we had heard it we could not have enough of it. We were all soaked in it and intoxicated with it and everyone hummed the melody whenever it was played. I danced without stop and with anyone who came my way, with quite young girls, with women in their earlier or latter prime, and with those who had sadly passed them both; and with them all I was enraptured – laughing, happy, radiant. And when Pablo saw me so radiant, me who he had always looked on as a very lamentable poor devil, his eyes beamed blissfully upon me and he was so inspired that he got up from his chair and blowing lustily in his horn climbed on top of it. From this elevation he blew with all his might, while at the same time his whole body, and his instrument with it, swayed to the tune of *Yearning*. I and my partner kissed our hands to him and sang loudly in response. Ah, thought I, meanwhile, let come to me what may, for once at least, I, too, have been happy, radiant, released from myself, a brother of Pablo's child. I had lost sense of time, and I don't know how many hours or moments the intoxication of happiness lasted…There were no thoughts left. I was lost in the maze and whirl of the dance. Scents and tones and sighs and words stirred me. I was greeted and kindled by strange eyes, encircled by strange faces, borne hither and thither in time to the music as though by a wave (ibid: 197-99).

Right after this dawn (both literally and figuratively) Pablo brings Harry to his Magic Theater where they smoke hashish and drink absinth. Afterwards, concerns and notions which had plagued his soul disintegrate while he partakes in the ethereal and the fantastical. The Magic Theater is a place where he experiences the phantasms that exist in his mind and where he is exposed to his multiple personalities. The theater is described as a long horseshoe-shaped corridor with a mirror on one side and a great many doors on the other. Harry enters through five of these doors, each of which symbolizes a fraction of his life. He is shown all the chances at

happiness he has allowed to go to waste from a young age onwards, all that love he has let slip by, all the erotic delights he has missed simply because he was too cowardly to flirt or to take the initiative and expose his desires or emotions, or because he didn't allow himself to pick up the signals interested parties were trying to send; he gets a glimpse of how his life might have turned out had he not enslaved himself inside the man-wolf binary which has also deepened his complicity to the bourgeoisie. At the end of this sequence of visions and after facing his own image in the mirror, he finds himself with a knife in his hand, looking at the naked figures of Pablo and Hermine lying on the floor. Furious that she has "given herself" to Pablo when they were meant to finally consummate their union, he stabs Hermine, thereby fulfilling her prophecy that he would kill her in the end. Upon realizing what he has done, Harry is devastated. He resigns to his fate and awaits punishment at the hands of the immortals. But as he tearfully expects to be hanged because he is found guilty at the tribunal, he suddenly sees Mozart approaching and telling him that he has failed the test but all is not over: "you have heard your sentence…You are uncommonly poor in gifts, a poor blockhead, but by degrees you will come to grasp what is required of you. You have got to learn how to laugh. You must apprehend the humor of life, its gallows-humor. But of course you are ready for everything in the world except what will be required of you. You are ready to stab little girls to death. You are ready to be executed with all solemnity…You are willing to die you coward, but not to live. The devil, but you shall live! It would serve you right if you were condemned to the severest of all penalties." Harry wakes up in a daze, and when he comes to he realizes he is with Pablo in the theater and it seems (although the reader can never be certain) everything has been a drug induced hallucination. But Harry has learned his lesson: "I understood it all. I understood Pablo. I understood Mozart, and somewhere behind me I heard his ghastly laughter. I knew that all the hundred thousand pieces of life's game were in my pocket. A glimpse of its meaning had stirred my reason and I was determined to begin the game afresh. I would sample its tortures once more and shudder again at its senselessness. I would traverse not once more, but often, the hell of my inner being. One day I would be a better hand at the game. One day I would learn how to laugh. Pablo was waiting for me, and Mozart too" (ibid: 250-53).

So in the end, Harry fails to rise up to the immortals' challenge. Instead, he finds himself on the right path that leads to the final solution of accepting the heaviest of burdens: eternal recurrence of the same. In the meantime, the path leads him to the intermediary realm of Deleuze

and Foucault's transgressive micro-politics and ethics of transgression which require not the readiness to die but rather the willingness to dare to truly live right here right now, that is, Nietzsche's challenge to dare to become who you are. By encountering the tragic, superhuman laughter of the immortals and by being exposed to his multiple personas, repressed fantasies and sublimated desires now liberated from the discourse of psychoanalysis and rescued from the straight-jacket of schizophrenia, Harry's relation to the bourgeois world loses its sentimentality both in its love and hatred, and his bondage to it ceases to cause him the continuous torture of shame. He still remains within the sphere of the bourgeoisie yet learns to take life and himself not so seriously. He becomes lighter with the hope of one day managing to break completely free of the bourgeois sensibility. But this lightness doesn't mean that he suddenly forgets the maladies of the human condition which hitherto had ailed him; rather, he learns to accept and look beyond them, he affirms life with all its bliss and misery. Nevertheless, we remain at the end with the call for an individual transgression of stable identity that leads to a life which rejects as much as possible being ruled by common sense, bourgeois standards and liberal democracy all of which are subservient to Capital. Yet, how this self-liberation via self-transformation would or could, or for that matter should lead to a general transformation of society is not addressed. Here, the case seems to be either that Hesse shares the pessimism of his protagonist who declares "the war against the war is quixotic" and finds humanity incapable of mustering the will to change its fate, or in a proto-postmodernist gesture he rejects all grand meta-narratives rooted in instrumental rationality: in a manner akin to the Frankfurt School he rejects the false-consciousness of liberal consumerism while he opposes in a Bataillean gesture the restricted economy of state-capitalism: "it is not a good thing when man overstrains his reason and tries to reduce to rational order matters that are not susceptible of rational treatment. Then there arise ideals such as those of the Americans or of the Bolsheviks. Both are extraordinarily rational, and both lead to a frightful oppression and impoverishment of life, because they simplify it so crudely. The likeness of man, once a high ideal, is in process of becoming a machine-made article" (2011: 219). Perhaps this disregard for mass politics as well as Hesse's outspoken regard for Oriental mysticism accounts for why his novel, which overtly challenges traditionally (as opposed to post-industrial) middle-class ways of living, promotes the use of recreational drugs, and champions erotic emancipation, was cherished by the American counter-culture in the late 60s and early 70s; a movement characterized by the exodus from the body-politic resulting in a

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spiritual retreat to nature within the communes. But the aspects of "low culture" (popular music, dance, intoxication, promiscuity) that aid Harry in his "enlightenment" have long become, at least in the Western world, indispensible characteristics of post-industrial middle-class lifestyles. Today, "Anarchist Evening Entertainment" in no longer "for "madmen only" because the phenomenon of controlled de-control which turns transgression into a lucrative institution makes sure that we can safely and temporarily appear and behave as though we were mad without necessarily being so, while the "madmen" identity is retained both by nocturnal scenes, actors within the nighttime economy, city planners and local officials to create the thrilling perception, attractive image and fulfilling fantasy of underground transgression. Moreover, the name "madmen" no longer solely designates dodgy opium dens and nocturnal delinquents but thanks to the epynomous TV series it is also glamorized and brought over to Madison Avenue whose creative immaterial laborers are busy, when they can spare some time from networking via partying, with branding the city as sexy by capitalizing on and exaggerating its image of transgression. The synthesis that Harry Haller embodies at the end of the novel is incarnated today by figures such as the neo-bohemian *Lebenskünstler*, the avant-garde video-artist/curator/academic, the creative culture industry worker, the minimal techno DJ or the hipster street-fashion blogger.

In fact, since we are to learn how to laugh and be lighthearted I can be a bit cheeky here and propose a 21st century version of Hesse's narrative which takes place in Berlin and is based on some friends and acquaintences of mine – of course the names will be altered. Harry would now be Hayri, a middle-aged intellectual and political refugee who has fled the Turkish military junta after the coup in 1980 and now spends his days bitterly hanging out in smoked-filled, coffeehouses in Kreuzberg where he feels alienated because he fails to empathize with "the Germans" and because his exclusively male surroundings are more interested in gambling and football than in Turkish politics and "high culture." He hopelessly lusts after the blonde (non-Turkish) girls going in and out of the numerous bars and clubs in which he never sets foot for fear of ridicule, but he has neither the courage nor the self-image to approach them. Hermine would be the extraverted Turkophile artist who has just come back from her residency in Istanbul and is at the moment fascinated with all things Turkish. After meeting Hayri by chance she decides to initiate him into the celebratory Berlin experience and art world; she takes on the task of being his "life-coach" and helping the cause of multiculturalism. Maria, the free-wheeling,

fun-loving, emancipated it-girl whom Hermine fixes Hayri up with would probably be the hipster-groupie or the street-fashion editor who works for a very popular and corporate sponsored blog such *Les Mads*. She is always at the center of the scene and never misses the hottest parties, hippest openings, and most lusted after freebees. Although she and Hayri are from completely different life-worlds, she somehow finds him attractive because he is "so different from the other men she knows." Of course, this is a pretty unrealistic match but so is the one in the novel between Harry the hermit and Maria, princess of the burlesque court. Needless to say, today's Pablo, the jazz musician, womanizer and master of ceremonies, would be the techno DJ and record producer who has a residency in a semi-underground club to which he invites Hayri who until then had found electronic dance music and its club culture alien and repugnant…

Notwithstanding the importance of lived-experience as well as the validity and appeal of Harry's nocturnal epiphany, the question is how are we to go beyond this; how are we to achieve the "profane illumination" that will serve revolutionary purposes as Benjamin would have it? The point no longer seems (if it ever really was) to ease the pain caused by our complicity to Capital via humor and lightness but rather to cut off those ties once and for all, to really rise, as it were, to the realm of the immortals, to become the Overman. But this feat, just as it was in Nietzsche's or Hesse's days, is extremely hard and tragic. In the end Harry does not become one of the strongest few who force their way to "break free from the atmosphere of the Bourgeois-Earth to reach the cosmic;" the minority who break free to see their reward in unconditional self-affirmation and go down in splendor as Nietzsche did. Hesse suggests it takes true genius and exceptional talent to achieve this. If you are among those numerous individuals who are just a bit smarter and/or better educated than "average" people, and therefore you perceive yourself as alienated from the "masses," you begin playing in a different league. But then the problem is that you are smart enough to recognize and appreciate true genius or exceptionality while at the same time recognizing your own limitations and mediocrity. For instance, you think you are capable of comprehending and appreciating a great philosopher or a true artistic genius who is being dismissed by the general public for being ridiculously obscure or detached from real life; but this ability also makes you realize that you will never get to be as great as those exceptional individuals. In that sense, within this "smart" and already alienated league you are cursed with the self-awareness of your mediocrity whereas from you elitist perspective it seems as though in

the "average" league mediocrity is cherished and ignorance is bliss. At the end of the day, the synthesis of lightness and heaviness that Hesse proposes is a very personal and in that respect limited solution; the prescription is that you stop taking yourself and (your) life so seriously, you accept your limitations, you make the best of what you've got – "you learn what is to be taken seriously and to laugh at the rest." For example, as one knows one is incapable of rising to the height or delving to the depth of a certain philosopher, one opts instead to become a scholarly expert on that philosopher, thereby substituting original thought with originality in interpretation. In this fashion one manages to transform one's cultural capital into socio-economic capital, thereby making a living as well as acquiring a dose of affirmation, power and authority. Moreover, given Hesse's advocacy for Dionysian adventures which was taken up by the likes of Bataille and Benjamin, one shall neither be an uptight academic interested only in high culture nor an armchair critic divorced from the everyday. Instead, one shall venture out into the world, carry out hedonistic feats, live out one's multiple personas and transgress stable identity. Hesse maintains that the ultimate message of the book is one of hope. Nevertheless, he soberly reminds us that even if we carry out these feats it will be almost impossible for us to escape from the bourgeois world's tethers as most of our transgressions will be tamed one way or another. Nevertheless, we are to go on trying just the same with the undying hope that one day we will have learned, through this intermediary experience of heavy lightness, to reach the eternally bearable lightness of absolute weight.

Conclusion: From Kaffee Burger to Burger King

The first chapter had begun with *Kaffee Burger* (Image15). Well, the transformation this nightspot has gone through over the last few years is symptomatic of the changes that have come to define the city of Berlin and its nightlife within the last decade so it is very fitting to commence the concluding remarks with this locale. The beginnings of *Kaffee Burger*, which used to serve as an intellectuals' and artists' hangout during the GDR, date back to 1890. This was the year when a public house moved into the ground floor of the *Mietskaserne* (tenement building) at Torstraße 60 (back then Lothringerstraße and afterwards Wilhelm-Pieck-Straße) in Mitte. During the 1920s the venue was home to a smoke-filled cabaret club called *Café Lido* which was later on closed down by Nazi officials. The Burger family took over the bar's ownership in 1936 and carried on offering evening entertainment until the "dance ban" (*Tanzverbot*) imposed by the Third Reich during the mid-stages of WWII. Until 1945 the second floor also belonged to *Kaffee Burger* and there was a bakery in the basement. Later on, the upstairs would be used by the East German secret police (*Stasi*) as an observation post overlooking Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz. Thanks to its proximity to the *Volksbühne* the bar became a meeting point for the East German cultural scene during the 70s. Playwrights such as Heiner Müller, Thomas Brasch and Lothar Trolle, writers and poets like Adolf Endler, Klaus Schlesinger, Ulrich Plenzdorf and Frank-Wolf Matthies as well as the actress Katharina Thalbach and singer Bettine Wegner were among the numerous artists, intellectuals and journalists who frequented the bar. Beginning with 1976, the locale also became a hub of activity for political dissidents and prospective deserters. Consequently, the state security officials enforced a temporary closure in 1979 on the pretext that sanitation was deficient. When the bar finally reopened after a lengthy refurbishment process which had been deliberately slowed down by red tape, many dissidents had been deterred, the scene had scattered and the intelligentsia had relocated to the *August Fengler* on Lychnerstaße in Prenzlauerberg. They were never to be seen at *Kaffee Burger* until the end of the 90s when its ownership changed hands once again: Uta Burger, under whose management the bar had faced closure since after the Wall's fall most of the patrons had moved to West Berlin while the creative youth who had taken over Mitte were not interested in what to them seemed like an archaic nightspot, went into retirement and sold the establishment to the culturepreneur trio of Karl-Heinz Heymann, Bert Papenfuß-Gorek and Uwe

Schilling. Apart from installing a new bar-stand, the new owners kept all the original furnishings and preserved the GDR interior. The new *Kaffee Burger* re-opened as a nightclub on 10 November 1999. Soon the locale expanded by annexing the shop next door which led to the birth of *Burger Bar* in 2001. This was also the point when the new management adopted the habit of hosting concerts and clubnights on all seven days of the week with no door staff and no cover charge during weeknights and no door policy but a minimal entrance fee (€2) during weekends. During the early 2000s the club became famous, among others, for the monthly Russian Disco parties hosted by the vodka slurping duo of Yuriy Ghurzy and expat author Vladimir Kaminer, Verbrecher Verlag's regular *Reformbühne Heim & Welt* avant-garde literary readings, the Coney Island indie parties every Wednesday as well as the Karrera Klub night once a month, plus a classy mix of retro sounds on Sundays and Mondays. Gradually, a bunch of talented and versatile DJs began to spin records regularly while a welcoming scene made up of various age groups, genders and socio-economic backgrounds came into being as many regulars began showing up and staying until well past dawn almost every night of the working week while the only further investment the owners went on to make was to buy Russ Meyer flicks which were shown mutedly on two tiny TV sets hanging from the corners in the ceiling.

The first time I stepped through the doors of *Kaffee Burger* was on a frosty Saturday night on 4 October 2003. I was a different person back then; younger, less experienced, more optimistic and naïve. Probably that's why I found the experience of nocturnal epiphany deeply transgressive at the time and was inspired to write this thesis – back then I genuinely believed the road to salvation passed from the Kaffee-Burgerization of the world. That first night in *Kaffee Burger* was also my first night out in Berlin and my second night in the German capital ever. Having freshly arrived from Istanbul I was astonished by and immediately addicted to the blissful sensibility that reigned inside the club. The fun-loving friendliness, abundant joy and affectionate nonchalance that comprised *Kaffee Burger*'s egalitarian live-and-let-live attitude had no trace of arrogant indifference or apathetic tolerance which often accompanies liberal democratic atomization and individualism. Moreover, from that very first night onwards this musical happiness in the air felt like something organic and collective rather than artificial and pretentious – as far as I was concerned each clubnight engendered a close-knit and affective community made up of strangers and acquaintances. This was drastically different from what I had encountered in nightlife back home. Funnily enough, this had something to do among other

things with the very fact that people were dancing! Unlike Berlin or Manchester, Istanbul didn't have a major electronic dance music scene or rave culture in the 90s. In fact, it didn't have a widespread dance culture at all as far as Western popular forms were concerned. Although my parents' generation had been frequenting the discotheques in the 70s and dancing to popular music (both local and imported) was prevalent at least among the upper-middle class youth in the 80s, for some reason dancing had gone out of fashion by the time I had grown old enough to go out. Rich kids with designer clothes and chauffeurs went to exclusive clubs on the Bosphorus where they drank expensive cocktails made with imported liquor and rubbed shoulders with the jet-set on the dancefloor to the backdrop of that summer's cheesy pop hits, chatting and hooking up rather than dancing. Poor kids tipsy on low-quality, state-produced spirits went to rustic and predominantly male nightspots where they joined hands in a circle to perform folk dances. And we, the relatively rich, private-educated and westernized "Generation X" who had grown up watching MTV and listening to grunge and indie went weekend after weekend to the same couple of shabby bars which served the same flat beer; always meeting the same people whilst standing in front of the stage listening to the same crappy cover band play the same alternative rock hits and hoping to get noticed by the same girls whom we didn't dare go talk to. The girls seldom noticed us; that's why refrains like "I'm a freak" (Radiohead) or "I've got no self-esteem" (the Offspring) emanating from the stage stroke a chord among my peers, and no one danced, ever.

As the musical and consumptive habits of the night adhered to such a strict caste system rooted in social class and cultural capital, meeting people at night was further complicated by the fact that one could hardly get acquainted with strangers within one's own caste unless they were friends of friends – strangers in a club simply didn't talk to each other and usually the sole interaction between them consisted of males accusing other males of ogling their female friends and the altercations that ensued as a result. In fact, due to this unfortunate prevalence of machismo as well as of the predatory attitude with which men approach women coupled with extensive patriarchy, conservatism and repressed sexuality justified by certain interpretations of Islamic scripture, most bars and clubs adhered to an ultra strict "no males allowed in unless accompanied by females" policy. This not only meant effectively that many lonely hearts without female contacts were excluded from nighttime sociality as such but also that women were further objectified as those trophy-females who were accompanying males became taboo

for other males. So instead of offering partygoers the chance to have amorous encounters as in most Western societies, nightclubs became places where one had to surveil and restrain oneself while pretending potential sex or love partners were one's brothers and sisters. So in general, the nights of my adolescence were characterized not by the convergence of unacquainted individuals and the erosion of boundaries accompanied by self-loss and immersion but rather by exclusion, distantiation, constant self-consciousness and the potential of assault.[63] Therefore, on that very first night out in Berlin, the egalitarianism and carnivalesque dialogism of *Kaffee Burger* took me quite by surprise and I was like a fish out of water. The nights that followed were life altering. An eclectic mix of upbeat yet non-electronic tracks induced the customary dancefloor bliss which made me realize that the angry and depressive 90s alternative rock sensibility I had come to incorporate was in fact not without an alternative and that rock music was perfectly compatible with liberating and desexualized forms of corporeality despite techno fetishists' contrary claims while drugs were consumed openly in this somewhat mainstream club that was posted in all major events listings: perfect strangers were passing around spliffs, someone carrying a straw basket was giving away home-baked hash brownies, dealers were dancing with law-abiding citizens, and African immigrants were locking arms with elderly East-German alcoholics on welfare…I was indeed used to a much different urban reality which equated the very heavily frowned upon hence guilty pleasure of narcotics with the price of social isolation and paranoia: although most recreational drugs were available in Istanbul, no one dared to consume them out in the public. As there were no techno clubs there was also no "proper" environment to take MDMA or for that matter to drop acid or eat magic mushrooms; cocaine was too expensive, speed was too uncommon, and no one had the guts to light up a joint out in the streets let alone in bars and clubs. So we had all flocked to our mates' flats where endless nights were spent chain-smoking pot (all windows and doors were shut and all cracks and crevices were filled up to prevent the tell-tale smoke/scent from escaping), having "deep" conversations, making music, playing stupid (console) games, experimenting with film-making or watching cult movies. The same flats also constituted the secluded scenery where pills were popped to the backdrop of quiet beats – once some friends of mine who were high on ecstasy had to flee their flat since the neighbors had called the cops as they had refused to turn down the

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[63] I must note here however that since then the nocturnal practices in Istanbul have become much more liberal if not libertarian.

music, so they ended up hiding in the parking lot and subsequently "coming up" locked inside their car, the volume cranked all the way up.

Berlin, the city of constant change, was also a different place back then. In fact, the whole world was a different place. It seems bizarre how rapid and intensive technological advances and their socio-cultural repercussions have become in our digital epoch. Drastic changes in everyday life which take place within the span of a few years now would have taken decades if not centuries in the past. Those were the pre-blog, pre-Yotube, pre-Myspace, pre-Facebook, pre-Twitter, etc. days of wired internet: a liminal, pre-smartphone epoch when novel ways of communication, self-expression and self-presentation had not yet – but were about to – become available for mass consumption while iPods and iPads had still not become household items. Not to deride technology – after all Heidegger (1977) is right in pointing out that technology is mainly neutral and it is what we do with it that matters [64] – but especially the improved availability and prevalent use of digital photography has affected the nightlife experience negatively: as the digital camera has liberated photo enthusiasts from the limitations of film (only 24 to 36 exposures were available before so each shot required certainty and aesthetic commitment, plus to develop the image needed more expertise and cost more money) the possibility to repeat a pose numerous times as well as to take dozens of pictures in one go has casualized photography and meant that many partygoers who are eager to immortalize how much fun they are having (especially tourists and hipster-bloggers) are now irritating other partygoers with their constant posing and flash photography – this has rendered the club experience with a somewhat more staged quality as the pressure to appear as if you're having the time of your life has increased. Anyway, during those early days at *Kaffee Burger* digital cameras were still fairly expensive and uncommon, and camera phones were yet to enter the market. Those were the pre-EasyJet days when the former capital of Prussia had not become the state-sponsored art & culture and nightlife & tourism capital it is now. And if we are to adhere to the official

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[64] Heidegger maintains that in essence technology is "no mere means" but "a way of revealing" (*Entbergen*), of "bringing-forth" inherent potential into being. "And yet the revealing that holds sway throughout modern technology does not unfold into a bringing-forth in the sense of *poiesis*. The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging (*Herausfordern*) which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such" (1977: 14). Modern technology is dangerous because it turns away from the principle of "bring-forth-hither" towards "demand-forth-hither" as it gives rise to the kind of revealing that orders a stand-reserve, e.g. windmill vs. hydroelectric plant. But technology also contains the remedy since it provides mankind with the hierarchical power to order nature in the first place; order is meaningless in the absence of humanity since there is no one to interpret it and benefit from it. So it is up to humanity to use technology positively, i.e. not to challenge nature but instead to create harmony with it and facilitate *poiesis*.

integration discourse, as the city was far less cosmopolitan and far more multicultural back then (there were more Turks and Arabs and less creative migrants from the First World) *Kaffee Burger* used to be a different place as well; this was well before the days when it began hosting *Exberliner*'s Wednesday night powwows for expats.

But things were to change fairly rapidly. Along with the massive boom in party tourism enabled by the liberalization of the European flight market in the mid-00s, the hospitality industry also became extremely lucrative. These developments have had substantial effects on *Kaffee Burger*. Not only have three chic hostels (*St. Christopher's*, *The Wombat* and *Soho House*) set up shop within 2 minute walking distance of the club around Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz – needless to say their guests are largely ignorant of and not interested in who Rosa Luxemburg is and what she stood for – but the *Circus Hostel* at Rosanthaler-Platz (5 minute walking distance from the club) has expanded into the buildings next door while the new *Circus Hotel* has settled right across the street along with *Oberholz* holiday rentals. In addition to this, novel boutique hotels such as *Lux 11*, *Andel's*, *Casa Camper, Amano* and *The Weinmeister* have all appeared around the block. Most tourists who stay around the area end up in *Kaffee Burger* at least once. Not only because bulletin boards in the reception area inform the guests about the club's existence and whereabouts, but also because the reception staff are instructed to direct their customers to nearby venues so that their chance of spending more time and money at the ho(s)tel bar is maximized: if they stay in close vicinity they might return to the bar if the clubnight turns out to be less than satisfactory or alternatively if they won't need to cover a great distance for their ultimate nighttime entertainment they will leave later since the real parties do not start before well past midnight. With increased grapevine advertising (budget-airline onboard magazines, social network postings, friends' recommendations, etc.) *Kaffee Burger* has finally turned into a tourist den while the regulars have been driven away. Having recognized the fact that most tourists are used to paying large cover charges and that they'll be willing to pay entrance even on weeknights since they desperately want to party, the club management has introduced a €2-4 fee between Sunday and Thursday and increased the weekend fee to €6-10 whilst implementing a much stricter door policy. In turn, many of the regulars who have taken it up with the bar management to explicitly demonstrate their resentment concerning the new arrangement have been banned from entering the premises (*Hausverbot*). Moreover, the drink selection has become fancier and more expensive. The most symbolic of all is that *Sternburg*

Export (one of the cheapest beers in town favored by many punks, bums, and students – the supermarket price of a half liter bottle is about 30 cents while in off-licenses they cost around 60 cents) has been replaced with the more upscale and hip *Rothaus* while the local draught beer (*Berliner Pilsner*) has lefts its place to imported *Pilsner Urquell*. Furthermore, the music policy has changed in order to accommodate the tastes and expectations of a crowd comprised mainly of (Anglo-American) tourists. Regular DJs skillfully spinning psychedelic nuggets, garage rarities, rock'n roll b-sides, indie obscurities, neue-deutsche-welle and krautrock classics, French and German chansons as well as new-wave and post-punk tunes have been let go while tourist-friendly entertainers who are keen on playing a mishmash of pop, rap, emo and salsa hits have been hired. This has been followed by the final surrender to the *zeitgeist* of techno fetishism as electro parties have become a regular feature while the ever-popular Russian Disco (now turned into a drunken meat market) has started to take place repeatedly within the same month. As more and more tourists have begun to show up, the atmosphere has gradually gone sour. Nowadays one will hear on a typical *Kaffee Burger* night a blend of techno and electro tunes played in between a Lady Gaga hit and an 80s favorite like that number from Dirty Dancing – this last category somehow incites without fail the female members of the dancefloor community to go bonkers and sing along at the top of their lungs. For a first timer, it would be impossible to imagine that what now feels like a Thai backpacker joint or a sleazy tourist pub in Bodrum or Marmaris in fact used to be a special place with a strong sense a community just a few years ago. As far as I'm concerned *Kaffee Burger* used to be an exceptional nightspot where truly creative people seemed not to be fully aware of their creativity so their humbleness wasn't ostentatious, real artists didn't even have a clue that their skills would soon become much sought after, and disturbed souls were able to temporarily find some empathy, fraternity and solace. As far as my personal *Kaffee Burger* history is concerned the last warning came in March 2007 when I was unfortunate enough to witness how an extremely hammered and staggering youth belonging to a group of British undergrads on their spring break (they were all wearing Burger King birthday crowns and hysterically kept taking flash photos in the middle of the dancefloor to document their fun-packed holiday much to the dismay of other dancers) was blinded by the flashlight and consequently tripped and fell down, thereby knocking over a few strangers. As he went on to puke all over the dancers he had pulled down with him, he responded to the bar staff's request that he leave the premises by picking up a fist fight. But the worst was yet to come: *Kaffee*

Burger's celebrity reached its peak on 12 February 2008 when the club was hired by Madonna for a private function; apparently she wanted to celebrate the world premiere of her directorial debut in Berlin. Since then I've only set foot inside the club a few times: always alone, always drunk, always at dawn, and always with the same romantic hope of re-finding something that simply doesn't exist anymore.

So let us now let *Kaffee Burger* rest in peace and flash-forward to the present. On 19 September 2011 what can be best described as a feel-good piece appeared in *die Tageszeitung*, a Berlin-based left-leaning daily (roughly the German equivalent of *The Guardian*), which on that day also happened to be reporting the regional election results signifying a sensational victory for the Pirates who received 8.9% of the votes and earned the right to enter the Berlin Senate for the first time. The Green Party also increased its share by 4.5% as they collected 17.6% of the votes. This was counterbalanced by the defeat of neoliberal (FDP), conservative (CDU), center-left (SPD) and traditionally leftist (*die Linke*) actors. While both the Social Democrats and the Socialists suffered losses (-2.5% and -1.7% respectively) and Christian Democrats managed to gain 2% yet had no hope from the start to win the election let alone partake in a possible coalition (which did not turn out to be the case in the end as the Greens and the Social Democrats failed to reconcile their differences), the biggest blow was dealt to Merkel's federal government partners: the neoliberal Free Democrats got kicked out of the regional parliament since their votes remained below the 5% threshold as they fell from 7.6% down to 1.8%. Given the outcome of the election the *Tageszeitung* columnist Julia Niemann dubbed the city of Berlin as the "home of the homeless" (*Heimat der Heimatlosen*) and boasted about how exceptional it was and how wonderful it felt to be living in a leftist, creative, international and cosmopolitan metropolis attracting hordes of tourists, students, artists and other creative or marginal types who feel alienated and constricted elsewhere, and in turn simply decide to stay in Berlin, thereby making it their new home. Here, the author joined many a Berlin fetishist in forgetting the fact that not everyone on the planet shares the First World entitlement to residence and mobility, hence falsely assuming that visiting and/or settling in the German capital is merely a matter of personal choice rather than a privilege afforded only to a select few by the international immigration regime. As is customary for the current Berlin hype and its discourse about how the young Berliners are poor but sexy or idle but creative, the journalist went on to point out that the German capital is charmingly un-Teutonic as it is run-down and covered in dog-shit, plus the S-

Bahn doesn't work properly in the winter since most of the train carriages are too old. She then described the typical Berliner as a laid-back and slightly arrogant individual who doesn't care much about pricey goods or fancy clothes. As expected, she went on to make a case for Berlin as an idyllic, less fashion-conscious and more humane alternative to the posh consumerism and rampant ghettoization characterizing cities like London or Paris. Finally, this clichéd and self-glorifying account of a leftist and multicultural heaven on earth ("sushi, currywurst and döner kebab coexist peacefully amidst the S-Bahn chaos") was reinforced by the depiction of an urban scenario in which homeless junkies rub shoulders in the streets with veiled Turkish moms so all lifestyles are tolerated in this creative shelter from the storm of monotony. Of course, there is some truth to these claims since Berlin remains to be different from London and Paris in the sense that one's success or prestige is still rarely measured in the German capital by the make of one's car or the brand of one's accessories. Nevertheless, young Berliners' new favorite sport of being deliberately underdressed and its calculation logic necessitating a constant up-to-datedness with the latest street-fashion trend, or the prevalent phenomenon of gentrification-via-fair-trade-café-and-organic-food-chain-proliferation still indicates a major predisposition with and investment in consumerism, no matter how left-leaning (i.e. alternative, more ecology friendly and politically correct) this mode of consumption appears or pretends to be when compared with what's going on in other major cities. Yes, one still doesn't come across expensive vehicles or deluxe prams in Neukölln but at the same time one hears more English and Scandinavian on its streets nowadays than Turkish or Arabic as the case used to be, and one is increasingly confronted with overpriced vintage clothing, top of the line smartphones and fancy Apple laptops bursting out of trendy leisure spots and the so-called co-working spaces. Consumerism *à la* Berlin constantly tells us we are what we wear and how (well) we look, what we eat and what we drink, what we listen to and what we watch (as well as with which gadget we do so), where and with whom we party (subcultural capital and network sociality) and last but not least whom we manage to seduce. And as far as the disappearing "Orientals" are concerned, the practice of interacting with non-Western "foreigners" (*Ausländer*) solely when they are standing behind a counter as salesmen (usually at a kebab stand or an off-license) instead of befriending them and being guests at their homes hardly counts as true multiculturalism.

Here we must note that the election results are symptomatic of the youthful and libertarian post-industrial middle-class' individualistic priorities and fears about precarity. It is

not surprising that the Pirates and the Greens, both of which stand firmly for middle-class values and identity politics, are especially popular in the young and trendy boroughs of Mitte, Prenzlauerberg, Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain and the recently gentrified Neukölln which has traditionally been a SPD stronghold due to its large number of ethnic minorities. As many "yukis" have relocated to Neukölln at the expense of elderly or "non-German" SPD voters within the last 5 years (i.e. between the two local elections) this change in the borough's social mosaic is reflected in the fact that the Greens have made their biggest gain in Neukölln (they increased their votes by 6.6% while the party's average growth for the whole city is 4.5%) and the Pirates have made their fourth biggest gain in this district (9.6%, city average is 8.9%). Especially in the most intensely "regenerated" northern parts of the district these results are more drastic: around where I live the Greens and Pirates have acquired 54% of the votes (38.9% and 14.1% respectively) followed by the SPD (18.9%). Official figures show that in total the Greens and the Pirates have gotten almost 30% of the votes in West Berlin which has always been a CDU stronghold whereas the Socialists have acquired less than 4%.What this indicates is that *die Linke* wouldn't have been able to reach even the 5% threshold needed to enter the parliament if it weren't for the elderly voters residing in the ex-GDR boroughs. But this crucial electoral support is bound to wither away as these senior constituents will gradually die out. Apparently, only 5% of *die Linke*'s voters are below the age of 35 whereas most Green & Pirate voters are younger than 35 so unless the Socialists come up with novel ways to appeal to the middle-class youth (either from West Germany or elsewhere in Europe – all EU citizens are allowed to vote in the local and the European elections) they are bound for trouble.

Contrary to the rising trend of neo-conservatism in Western Europe, the Green & Pirate dominance in Berlin and the fact that almost 70% of those who showed up to vote (the turnout was only 60.2%) have favored comparatively leftist parties (SPD 28.3%, Green 17.6%, die Linke 11.7%, Pirate 8.9%) are symptoms of what Berlin has recently become: on the one hand the city has gotten as international and cosmopolitan as never before since it has become a neo-bohemia harboring an increasing number of privileged visitors and migrants linked with the creative industries and the arts, on the other hand, it has become such an exceptionally middle-class and libertarian settlement with comparatively little socio-political injustice and economic inequality that it has become increasingly distanced from the grave and problematic reality characterizing the rest of the world (both the exploited and self-destructive Global South as well as the better

off First World wrecked by finance capitalism and neoliberal austerity); Berlin has become increasingly light and *weltfremd*. What's troublesome is that the awareness of this state of exception often gives rise solely to self-glorification and celebration which perpetuates this distantiation so that the "unsexy poor" who are a very real part of the Berliner everyday reality are either largely overlooked by the *hipoisie* or are regarded as a potentially violent threat to their creative bliss and aesthetic sensibility. Moreover, they are being forced out of their homes as a result of the gentrification trends induced and/or catalyzed by this sensibility. The generalized possibility in Berlin of living out the bohemian dream as well as the survival tactics and network sociality that have to be developed in the face of rising competition and precarity increasingly shifts one's priorities from caring about the underprivileged to looking out mostly for oneself and one's immediate circle of *Lebenskünstler* friends. As a result, while the self-perception of counting oneself among the underprivileged or at least considering oneself as their natural ally is increasingly prevalent among the "creatives" who are in the habit of adopting the rhetoric of oppression in their efforts to diabolize the *JobCenter* (unemployment office), attempts at (grass-roots) labor organization and endeavors to reach out to the working-classes who are also suffering from the very same malady and who have a much longer history of being dependent on reduced and conditional welfare remain marginal.

Then the question is: should one consider oneself lucky and take comfort in the fact that one has the good fortune and the privilege to be able to live in an occidental capital in which the number of Christian Democrat (CDU), liberal (FDP) and fascist (NPD) voters remains relatively small despite the growing neoliberal conservatism and ultranationalism in Europe, or should one be depressed because the majority of the allegedly left-leaning Berliners have opted for the political parties which have come to represent mainly (First World) middle-class interests, priorities and identity politics? If we translate this question into the nightlife context: should one be ecstatic about the fact that nocturnal transgression is possible and permitted in Berlin to such an extent that it stands out from the rest of "Who Wants to be a Hub of Creative Class?" contestants, or should one feel cranky because at the end of the day such transgression gets institutionalized via commodification and spectacularization, thereby comprising desirably alternative and tamely marginal instances of controlled de-control? As we have noted, the simulation of transgression not only serves the marketing ploy utilized to attract the "creative class" by way of image-making and branding but also its importance for the macro-politics of

social transformation is limited if not minimal. Nevertheless, such lived-experiences of hedonistic excess and de-control afforded by the "creative lifestyle" and its freelance mix of work, play and welfare do create merriment and existential meaning for those who undergo them and they do signal a micro-politics of self-emancipation which is arguably individualistic and which contributes to the city's self-perception of decadent subversiveness as well as to its attractive international image since this image reflects this perception. From the look of it, most Berliners have adopted the first position so that the much cherished and trusted Creative World City Berlin business project goes full steam ahead while the new European capital of tourism and nightlife wallows in its hip(ster) lightness. But as the neoliberal consensus that is systematically undermining the still functional welfare state has a tight grip on the federal steering wheel (if Merkel loses the next election the victor will most likely be the Social Democrats who are the culprits behind the Hartz reforms in the first place) and as there is only so much demand that a city's economy can muster for cultural supply in the form creative and increasingly casualized immaterial labor, it's anyone's guess how long it will take before this whole edifice built on dole-aided idleness, cheap housing and low living costs, and cemented by cultural funding as well as the relative lack of fierce competition, will crumble under the weight of its hipness because when lightness is taken to the extreme it turns into an unbearable burden. In the meantime, the sun keeps rising over the east (or the East as in no-longer-really-existing-socialism) while the retro-fashion of *Ostalgie* recycles GDR artifacts by reinstating them with a coolness capital. Our benevolent star continues to gracefully illuminate the Berliner happenstance and to gradually disappear beyond the horizon in the west (or the West as in the bountiful land of promises many prisoners of visa put their faith in). The night keeps arriving with its seductive promise of pleasure and eventfulness, and as a 21st century rendition of the last days of Pompeii, the city of Berlin, high on its masturbatory "home of the homeless" self-perception and global image, carries on partying as if there's going to be no tomorrow.

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Images

Image 1: Shop display of *Pro Qm* (September 2010)

Image 2: *Berghain/Panorama Bar*

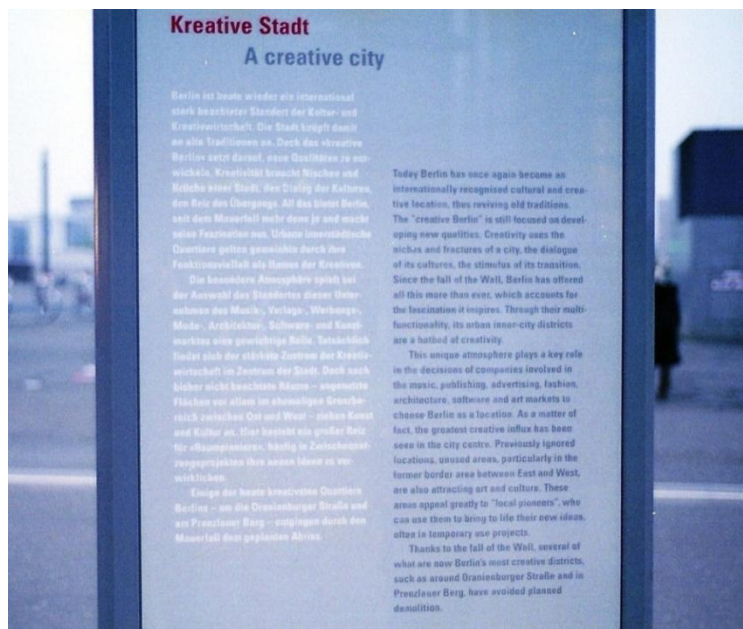Image 3: Altered traffic sign in Kreuzberg

Image 4: *Be Berlin* open-air exhibition (November 2009)

Image 5: *Betahaus: Coworking for Entrepreneurs, Technologists and Creatives*
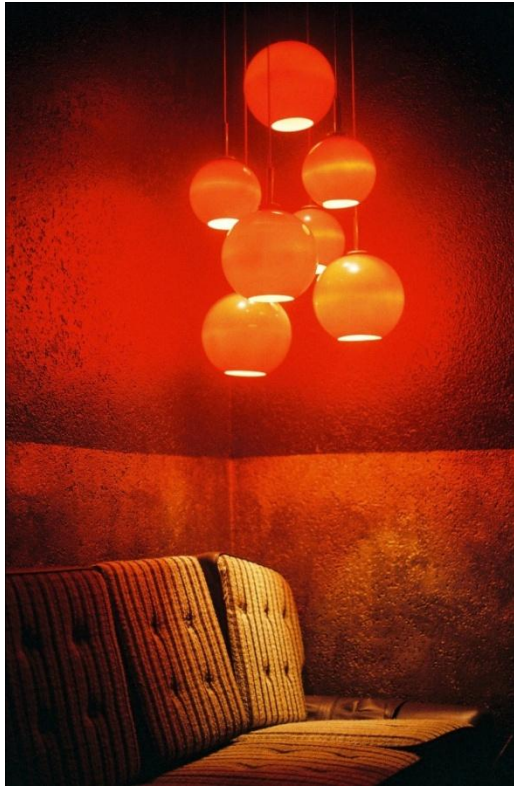

Image 6: *Wostel: Workspace und Mehr*

Image 7: *Ä* (left) and *Mama* (right)

Image 8: *Kuschlowski*

Image 9: *Kachel 54*

Image 10: Old vs. new – gentrification in Prenzlauerberg.
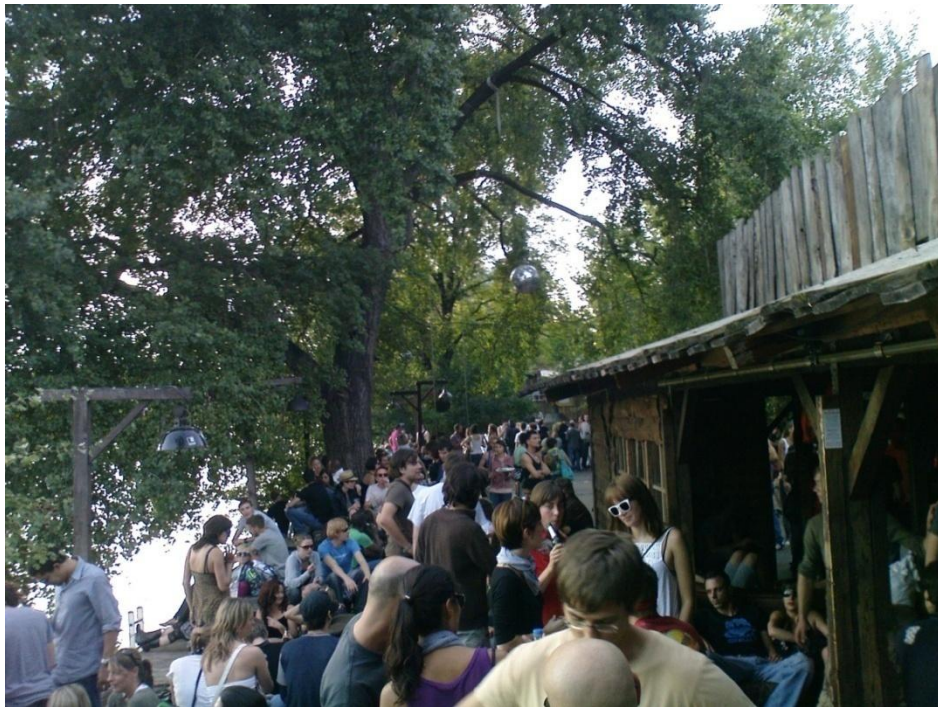
Image 11: Megaspree

Image 12: Megaspree

Image 13: *Bar 25*

Image 14: Annual closing party at *Bar 25*

Image 15: *Kafee Burger*