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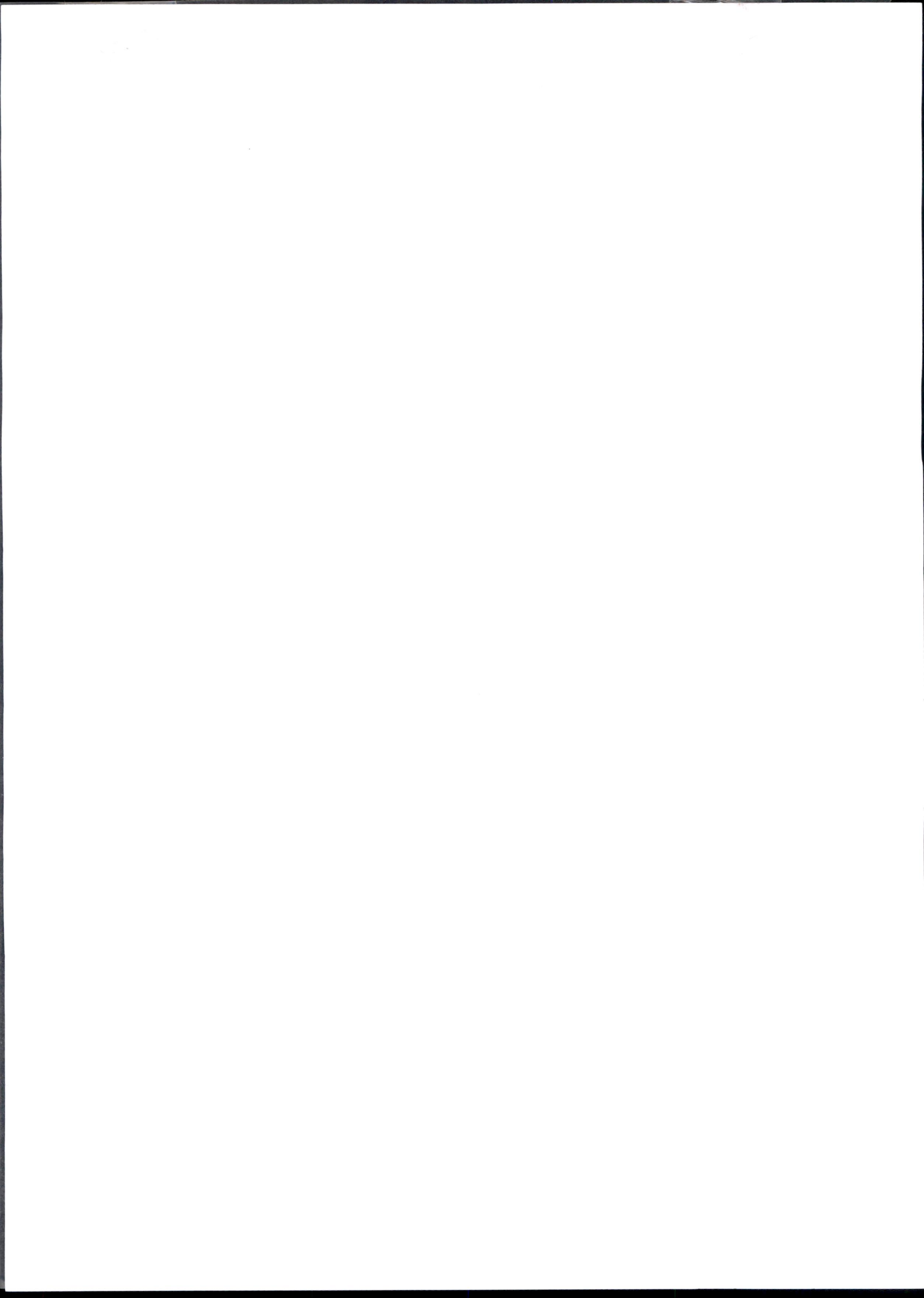
"RAVE CULTURE"

A SYNAESTHETIC CULT, ART MOVEMENT

BY

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SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN AND
COMPLIMENTARY STUDIES IN THE CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF B.A. IN
FINE ART, SCULPTURE 1994



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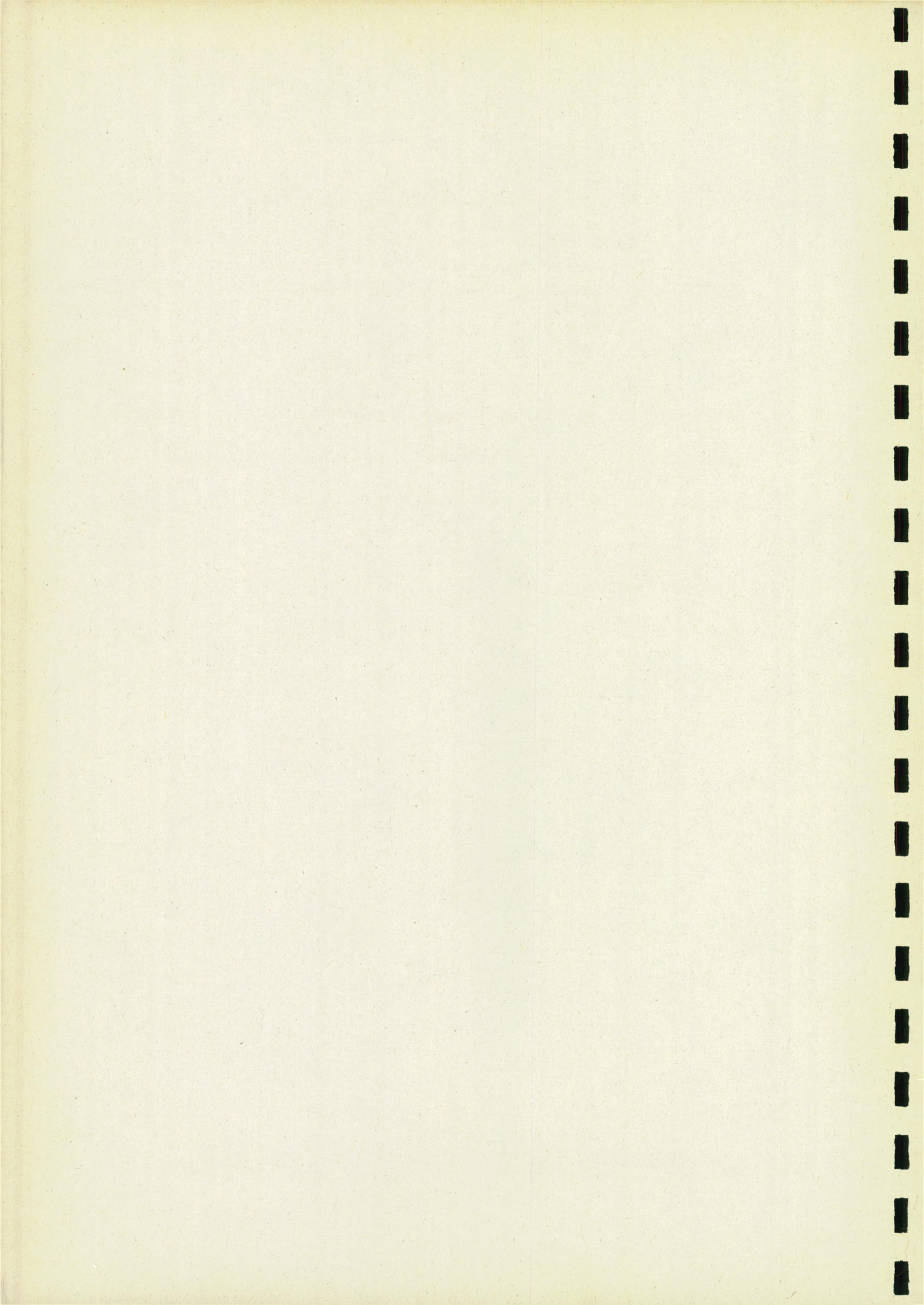
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There is an accompanying audio cassette containing sound samples which are indicated in the thesis with the symbol; (S).

One definition of 'rave' in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (New Edition), is to "enjoy oneself freely". The definition of 'raver' in the same volume is "an uninhibited, pleasure loving person". These descriptions are quite accurate, with regard to those involved in the 'Rave Culture'.

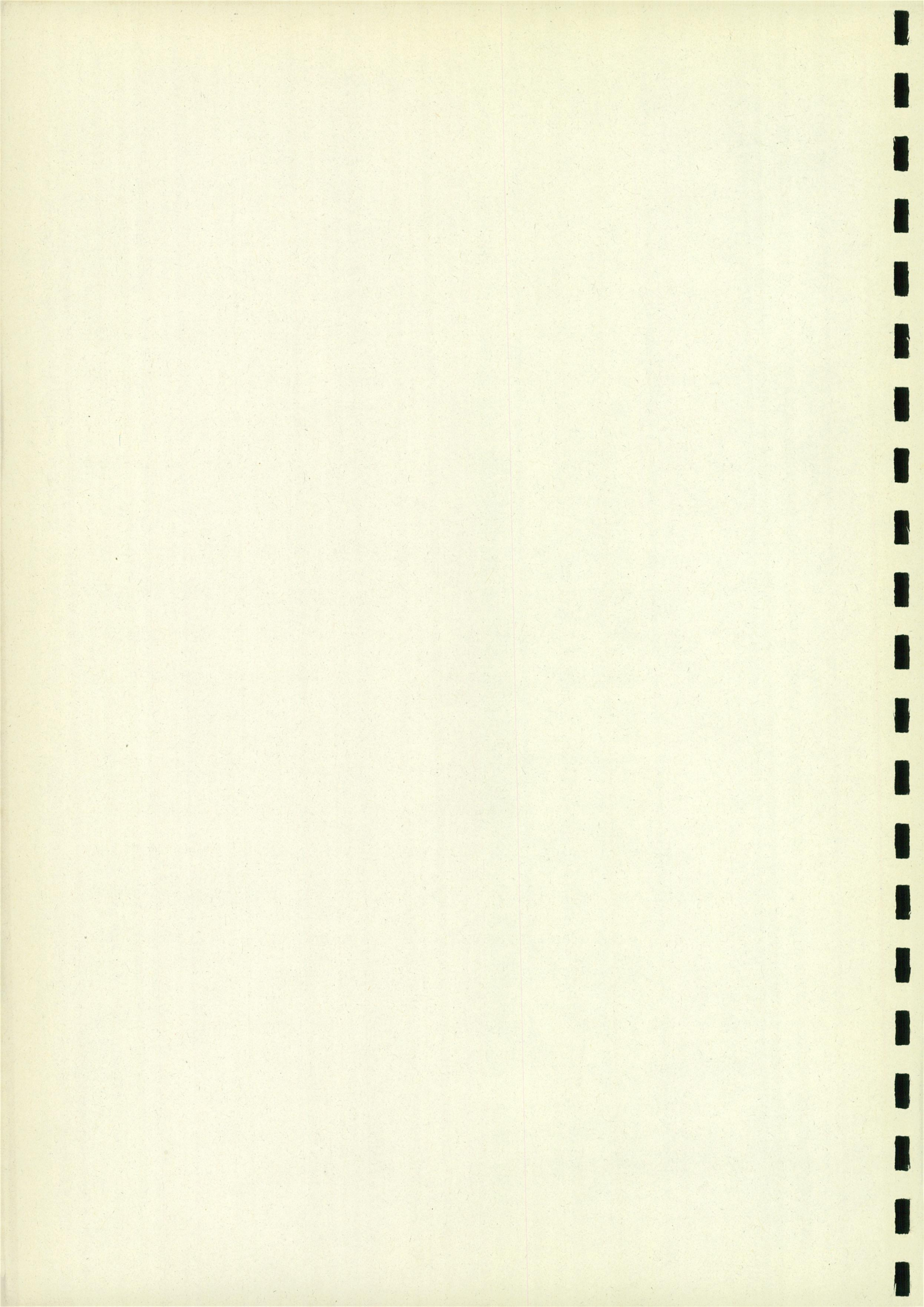
The Shorter Oxford Dictionary defines 'the act of raving' as; "frenzy, great excitement", and 'rave' as; "to be mad, to show signs of madness or delirium; hence, to talk or declaim wildly or furiously in consequence of madness or some violent passion". I submit to both of these accusations as may be revealed as this thesis develops, due to over exposure of 'House Music'. (S.1)



BACKGROUND

House (or, as the tabloid press persist in labelling it, 'Acid House') is a genre of electronic popular music developed in Britain in the late 1980's ^(S.2) and arose from black American dance music, but was equally influenced by the vibrant electronic club scene of the Balearic Islands, ^(S>3) where many young British spend summer holidays. Early London 'House' clubs such as Phuture and Schoom were run by DJ's who had returned from working in Ibiza, and sought to re-create some of the atmosphere of the Mediterranean club scene. The existing black, gay and 'Northern Soul' club cultures of the UK also contributed to the ethos and sound of House, as did 'Dub' reggae ^(S.4) and the legacy of experimentation with electronics in some styles of Continental European popular music. ^(S.5)

All these influences, combined with the introduction of new 'user-friendly' drugs such 'Ecstasy' (Methylenedioxymethamphetamine), led to a transformation of the British dance scene. 'Raves', originally small and secretive, rapidly grew larger than existing clubs and dance halls were able and willing to accommodate, eventually exploding into media visibility in 1988 ('The Summer of Love'); vast events were staged, many in illegal or rural locations - to the concern of parents, the authorities and local residents.

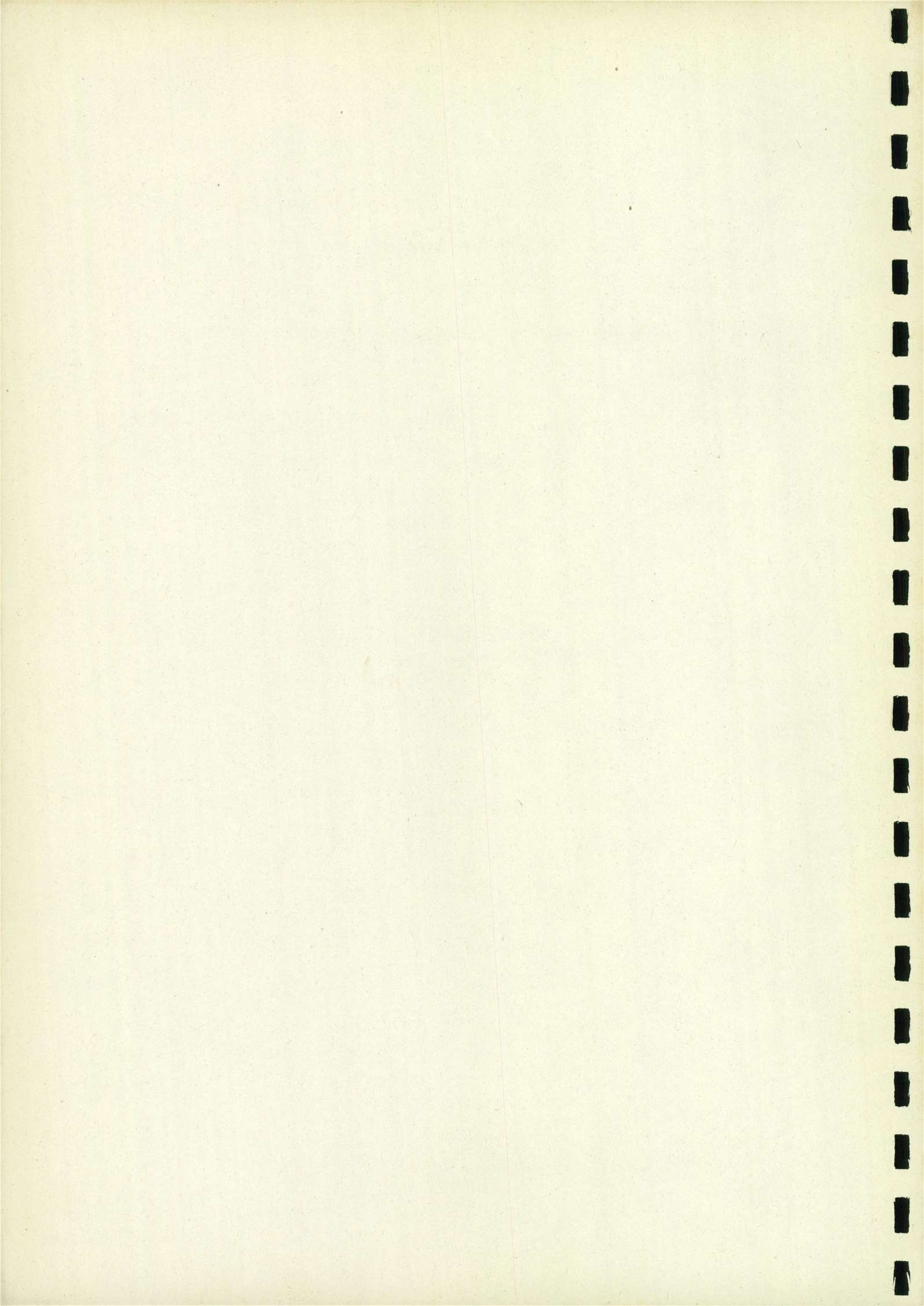


Such raves are characterised by their long duration, high-volume music ^(S.6) and a particular dream-like ambience created by special effects, lighting and music. Until curtailing legislation made them unprofitable, raves catered for up to tens of thousands of dancers, often in premises unlicensed for dancing, including warehouses, disused airfields and agricultural land. Local authorities and the police, concerned about safety and the illegal use of such premises, the nuisance caused by 'noise' and traffic, and the alleged widespread use of drugs, acted to make them extremely difficult to hold.

Large-scale raves are now rare, although the House 'scene' currently thrives in numerous clubs and at smaller, legal events, and the dance music associated with it has a large increasing influence on popular music forms worldwide. ^(S.7)

In this thesis, with the aid of an accompanying audio tape of selected sound works, I will discuss the widespread, cultural developments and implications of rave as a 'New Cult', and in the context of youth movements and contemporary ceremonies. I will also explore 'Rave Culture' as an art movement of the present and the future, defining it's broad contemporary and historical influences, from the Arts and the world of 'high technology'.

As rave music's influences and component styles are so broad and diverse, and because important (mostly unnamed) contributors and emphasis on significant sounds and events are quite regional and vary, depending on location and community; it would be impossible to pin-point a precise development in this genre of underground youth culture. It is also difficult to discuss the formal qualities of the music in detail, therefore, I will keep such descriptions as general as possible, with sample analysis, to avoid a lengthy technical and formal discussion.



When the first Acid House ^(S.8) records arrived from Chicago, they looked as innocent as the first rabbit probably did landing in Australia. The effects on club culture have been just as speedy and devastating. House music was a 'cultural virus' that found optimum conditions: general discontent with archaic licensing laws that closed all venues at 3am, ^(S.9) the shallow sterility of 'youth style' and a breaking-down of the traditional divisions between black, white, suburban and cosmopolitan nightlife. But the most essential catalyst of all was the arrival of MDMA / Ecstasy / E. ^{(S.10) (I.1)}

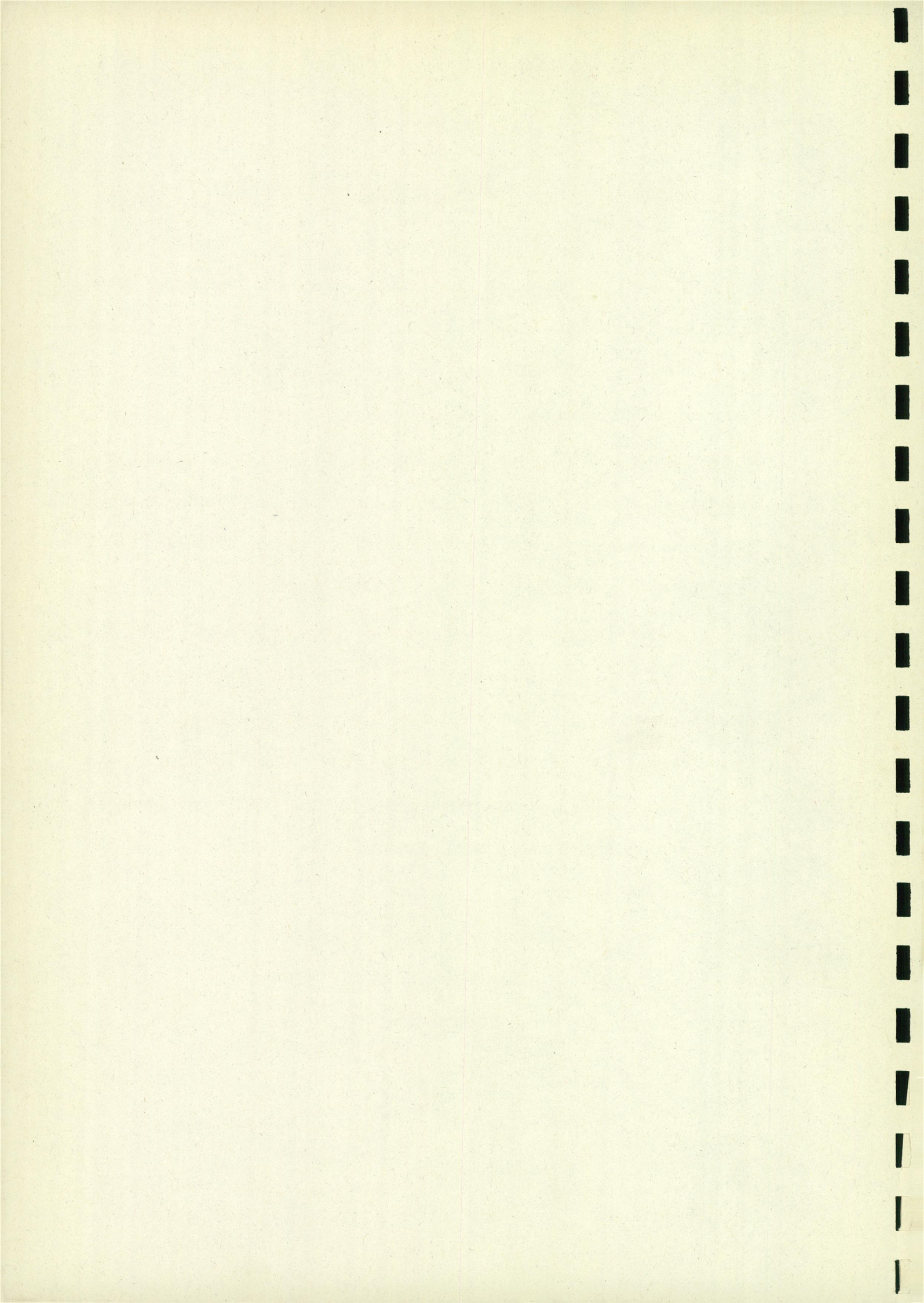
The revolution went totally unreported by the media, barely warranting a mention, even in the youth press outside publications such as 'ID Magazine'. After-the-fact mythologising by police and press further obscured the reality. This is particularly sad, although utterly predictable, because it masks the fact that something precious, new and very special had emerged - in fact nothing less than a blueprint for entertainment in the 21st Century. Acid House, in effect has "become the focus of a techno-shamanic ritual of deep power and purpose". ^(S.11) (Heley, M. 1992)

THE RAVE CULT

Throughout the world, during the progression / regression of the social creature;- 'homosapien', religion has formed the base for man's existence. The realisation of our vulnerability and the microscopic part we play in the natural evolution of the universe, has built a foundation for the essential belief in a higher power and a reason for existence, which varies from location and period, but all, more or less exist on unquestionable faith; internal certainty, free of supporting evidence. These faiths, in various ways have progressed through former creeds into hybrids and offsprings; each reassessing the beliefs of their parent religion, thus creating new ones.

This is relevant to the current, 'Rave Scene', although the criteria varies slightly. There is no clearly defined creed. The 'Higher Power' is abstract and depersonified. ^(S.12) The seduction level is high however, and the cult itself does not promise anything it does not intend to deliver. ^(1.2)

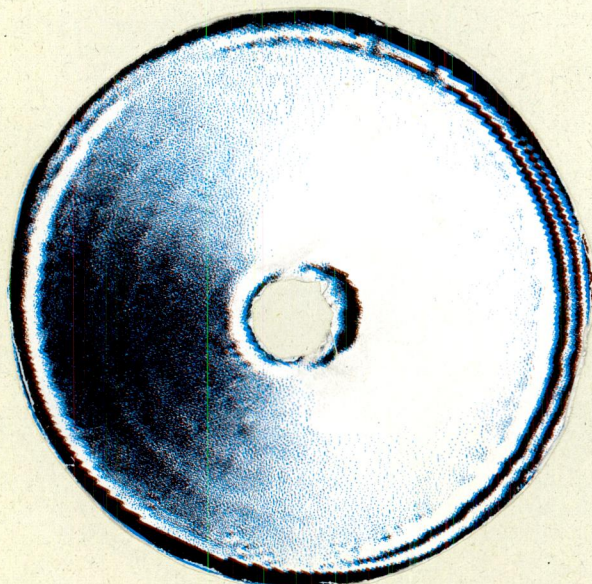
There are many aspects of religion and cults paralleled by Rave culture, but it is the creation by the 'participants' of a sense of wonder that destroys the limits to expression but maintains the identity, and not the quest for meaning.



Although the role of 'performer' overlaps with that of 'spectator', they are the two basic, active components of the Rave scene. Both rely on each other. Both contribute to and are co-operatively vital to the system. Collectively, these 'Ravers' depend on each other to maintain the 'Community'. ^(S.13)

The identity of this community, never the less, also depends on other outside factors, both closely related contemporaries in related cultural movements, and the conservative society which forms the need for revolution. "And revolution is certainly not too strong a word".¹

It is the former that puts the Rave scene into context more than the later. The counter-cultural landscape of a 'Techno Generation' who grew up with political, highly potent TV, manipulated technology, rapidly progressive and self destructive entertainment industries, and global access information systems, a generation who, while still anti-conformist have lost faith in the revolutionaries and failed, subversive activist movements.



THE TECHNO-CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF RAVE

Advanced technology is the new medium of this new generation, ^(S.14) with the will and technical ability to manipulate the social-political powers which seem so 'untouchable'. To 'hack' into information systems and to regenerate chosen information systems into 'art forms' of entertainment and culture is a 'mission'. Art forms which Jim Pomeroy describes in his essay on Hi-Tech Art ('Black Box S-Thetix' 'Techno Culture', ED. Penley, C. and Ross, A., Minnesota, 1991, Minnesota Press, Mineapolis.) as ones which are dependant on:

"The spin off utility generated by solutions to such artful problems as target acquisition (infrared and ultra-sonic sensing, thermal imaging, radar, sonar, and microwave, stroboscopic photography, gyro stabilized target designators or steadycams, sound analysis by acoustic signature, signal processing, and image intensification), covert penetration (high strength fibre laminates, terrain-following mapping, and inertial guidance), secure battlefield communications and management (cellular phones, FM synthesis, voice recognition, heads-up display, expert systems), pinpoint delivery of nuclear payloads (silicon chips, micro computers, software and telecommunications, new metallurgy and ceramics), smart bombs and surveillance drones (robotics, lasers, high resolution, low light video), high-altitude reconnaissance (enhanced photographic emulsions and optics) and combat simulators (3D modelling, ray-traced animation, visual data bases, and virtual space), to name but a few."

The ongoing manipulation and exploration of these technologies results in an environment so potentially explosive and intense, that it is no wonder that the generation that 'mediates' Rave culture, is one of insomniacs and hyperactive paranoids.

The 'Cultural Landscape', built by their contemporaries and their predecessors has a tradition of computer 'hackers', the analytical surveillance installations of Dan Graham, the mass-media statements of Jenny Holzer and Barbara Kruger, ^(1.3) frantic TV sculpture of Nam June Paik, ^(1.4) fractiles of the Chaos Laboratory, ^(1.5) laser shows of Pink Floyd and Jean Michelle Jarre, multi-media events of U2 and Peter Gabriel, virtual reality, computer animation, the interactive 'Techno-toys' ² of Simon Biggs, holograms, morphing, the anti-censorship gestures of Robert Maplethorp and Jeff Koons, the probing of the forbidden, the unquestionable, and the taboo by Cindy Sherman, Serano, and Salman Rushdie, satellites, freedom of speech and MTV.

This provides an inspiring environment with a vast palette of sources and a tool box as limiting only as their own imagination. On the lines which lead to the end of the millennium. The future stalks the technology that will make it real. With Rave, the circuit nears completion.

The contemporary society, however, is viewed as one of repression, angst and frustration with: multi-million dollar corporations and famine, maximum utilised resources and global warming, and extinction, authoritative communications networks and media manipulation, and conservative politics and inevitable rock music.

The 'sub-community' of Ravers, bound together by Utopian sounds, positive feeling and unifying social drugs, acts as an alternative to the persistently alienating outside forces. As StepZZ (the black rapper from the London duo called 'Company 2') states in the appropriately entitled 'Paradise' column in The New Music Express: Alienation is

exactly what the current rave scene is an antidote to, with it's enfolding, warm sense of community, that keeps out the chill realities of despair.

- Hewitt, P. 1989. 'It's my record (and I'll cry if I want to)',
in New Music Express, 21 Oct, P 55.

Contemporary 'dance music' (especially 'techno'), is "music of the present"³ and of the future where it's main influences and 'quotations' are drawn from it's incestuous self, building canyons between the generations. This generation gap is supported by religious traditions of society.

The writing on popular music and post-modernism, has been dominated by two interrelated preoccupations: the threat to previously stable categories, and the sense of an 'end of history' as manifested in the collapse of rock music's meta-project of youth and rebellion and subsequent "dispersion into a proliferation of genres and styles". (Bradby. 1993, P. 156)

Rave denies heritage of society, creating only a contemporary history for itself. The attraction to this radical movement therefore is quite understandable. It is constantly renewing itself in total modernity. Combined with it's utopian nature this results in something quite addictive. ^(S.16)

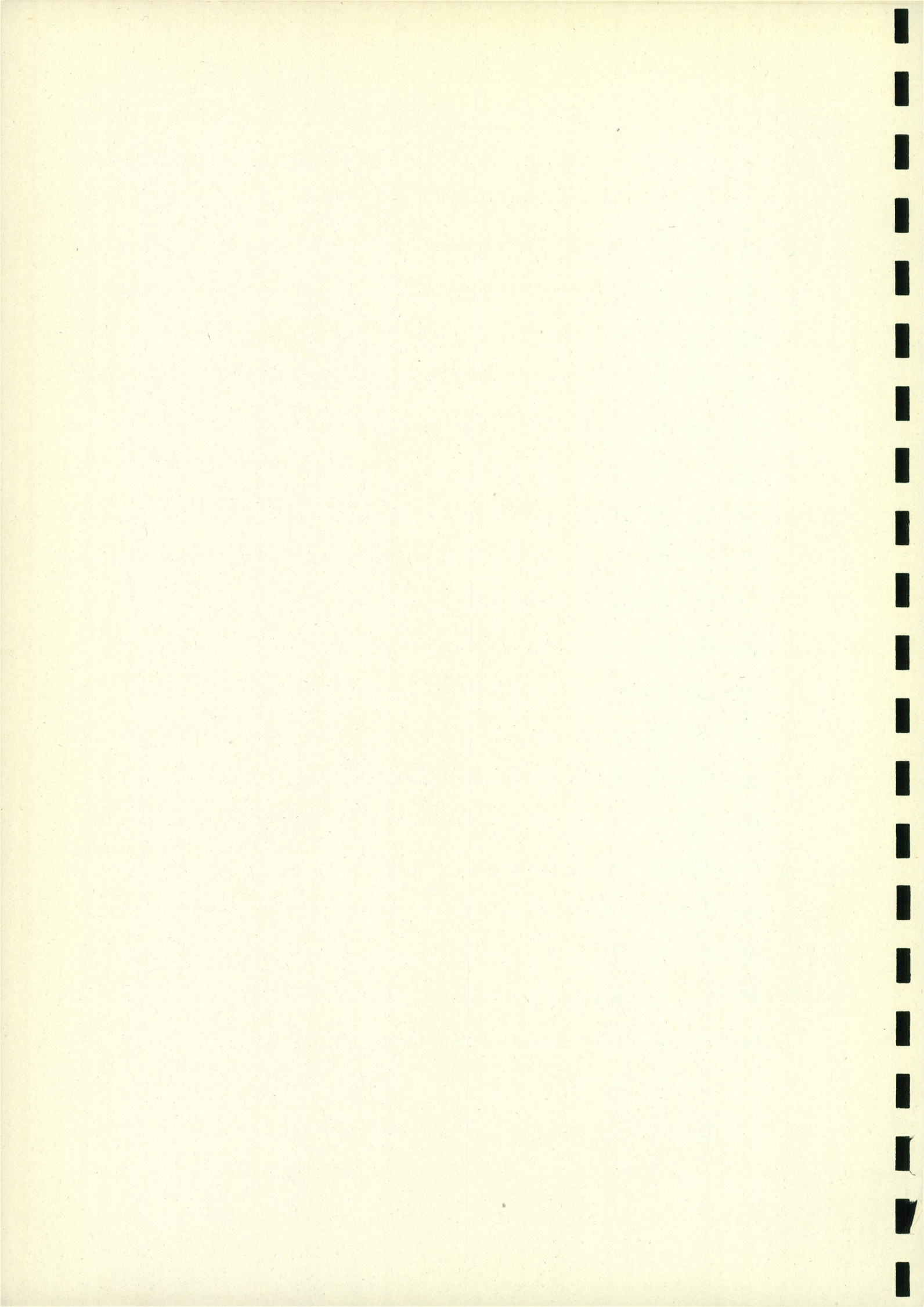
A CULTURAL VIRUS

Richard Dawkins' thesis on 'Social Viruses'; "The Selfish Gene", compares the spread of social orders to that of bacterial viruses. He declares that a "virus of the mind" like a biological virus is an almost intelligent mechanism, duplicating itself like a computer virus with "pointless utility".

He draws upon the transfer of culture from one generation to the next through speech, for example, as imitation in children and refers to school crazes and fads as programmes in which the only information is "duplicate me". (Dawkins, 1989)

This theory is also applicable to religion and cults, where basic regional beliefs are based on faith, when they may often contradict universal truths. With a 'media virus', the mass media (fax, computers, music samplers, TV etc.) is a promiscuous system spreading "copy me" programmes easily. With the advanced progression of advanced information systems.

This virus theory is supportive of negative attitudes towards youth culture, rendering the opinions on movements like Rave culture as "deep and meaningless". This promotes images of mindless behaviour on the part of its'



participants giving the impression of a void of seductive ritual and ceremony, swallowing the vulnerable youth into a state of helplessness.

The rhythmic nature of rave music has primitive influences which relate to tribal music. ^(S.17) Analogies of rituals and ceremonies are therefore quite appropriate. Minimal abstracted 'worship' is dominant within this context. Worship in the form of basic appreciation of music, 'praise' for unity of the community, 'rejoice' of the 'communion' through stimulants and amphetamines, and excitement of the alternative reality created during the 'ceremony'.

Ceremonies and rituals play the most important part of most religions and cults, the one component which identifies the particular communities. The communal event which is central to the faith.

In the case of Rave culture, the dance event, whether in the form of a nightclub, house party or Rave venue, is the 'ceremony' which although differs in structure and chronology of components, has similar functions. One may talk of the 'worship' of life through 'witnesses' and 'adoration' of the music. The music is often 'divine' through the ability to sample almost anything from a majestic or overpowering in the 1812 overture, *Carmina Burana* ^(S.18) and nuclear explosions to the contrasting microscopic sounds of nature, whispers and even the drop of a

pin, all within the same heartbeat.

The 'creators' of the sounds and images are represented in the 'Temple' by MC's, DJ's and VJ's broadcasting the 'Sermon' to the 'congregation'. The response to these manifestations and anthem 'Psalms' are expressed through dance and vocal and gestural exclamation, recognizing the individual identity and expression of appreciation. 'Communion' of 'Mass' is through social drugs which are respected and promote the concern between 'worshippers'. Image can be a form of identification of the mass tribes.

The makers remain nameless and faceless and the current productions are remixed, re-sampled and discarded to make room for the next creations. This contributes to the anti-traditionalist factor of Rave culture, giving no foundation on which to pinpoint history. "Ignorance is strength" for the techno dance scene. For Rave culture is a celebration of the future, ^(S.19) through the ideas of the congregation and the futurist music which is produced.

Hypnotic, addictive sound through rhythm patterns and tempo have a ritual trance effect, as participators are seduced and manipulated into the ceremonies. With most rituals and ceremonies there are sacrifices, although in this case they are not so clearly defined. Perhaps the sacrifice is the price of the drug or the admission

fee, or the aching bones or horse voices, but most likely, it's the coming down: the back to reality after the event or the side effects of the drugs.

The influence of pagan ceremonies has had quite an effect on Rave culture and events. In Mark Heley's article on 'House Music' in Mondo 2000, references are made to the community as a congregation which is unified in "a massive underground network dedicated to utter hedonism". Summer of love analogy has been applied to a period which marked the birth of the Rave scene in Britain from August to October. Events have coincided with pagan festivals such as the summer solstice, the pagan new year etc. Primitive Religion is a theme which runs through a lot of the music, referring to the jungle and tribal dance, ^(S.20) and Shamanistic theories with the rantings of the British group 'The Shamen' ^(1.6) and their adoption of the Californian Shamanic leader Terence McKenna. ^(S.21) "Acid house became the focus of a techno shamanic ritual of deep power and purpose". (Heley, M. 1992) Shamanism is a belief which was lost from popular youth culture when the hippie movement moved over for the rock era in the late sixties / early seventies. It is one that needed a new medium with which to apply it's doctrine.

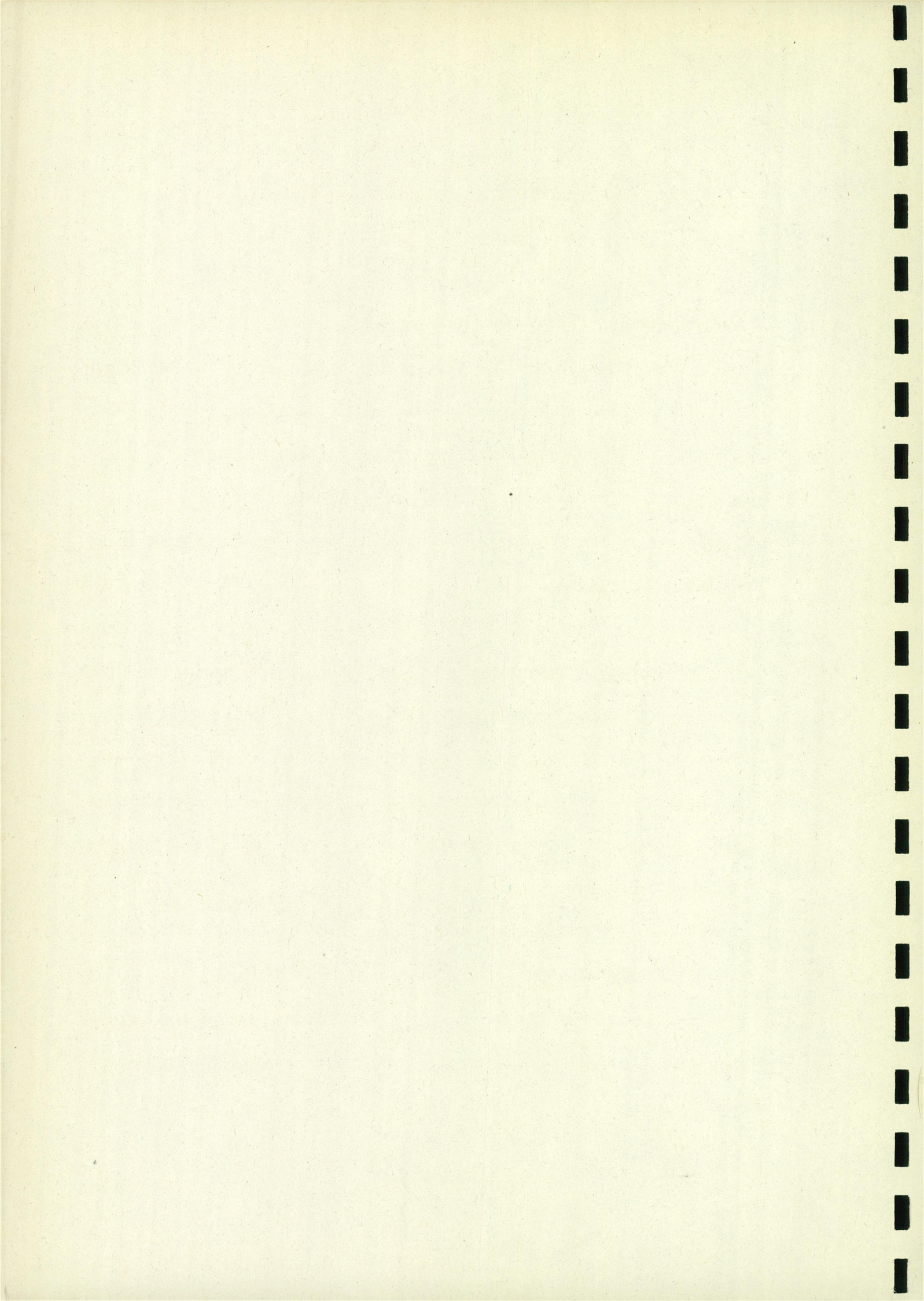
'The Death of Rock' (Frith, S. 1988) is one of the main contributing counter active factors to the Rave manifesto and within the context of Rave as a cult, the 'triumph over evil' is an appropriate analogy. There's something essentially tedious about

that 4:4 beat and the hoarse cries of freedom.

Rock's concepts of authorship (originality, art) and of authenticity (the real performance) developed around this use of technology and not in opposition to it. And while the 'new' technologies promised to render these concepts of authorship redundant, they have been reconstituted around figures such as 'the producer' and around new ways of demonstrating mastery of technology in 'live' acts. Within the rave scene this technology has been used contrary to the briefs laid down by the rock industry.

The writing on popular music and post-modernism has been dominated by two interrelated preoccupations: the threat to previously stable categories and the sense of an 'end of history' as manifested in the collapse of rock music's meta-project of youth and rebellion and subsequent "dispersion into a proliferation of genres and styles". (Bradby, B. 1993, P.162)

Another debate has focused on the recycling process itself, and its implications for aesthetic and social therapy. While the post-modernists argue that pastiche in modern music represents the collapse of a sense of history into the present, this is severely challenged by evidence that "sampling" of older music is educational



for a younger generation; and nostalgia for the music of previous decades. It is not simply the recycling of their youth by a generation that has lost it's way, but is also the recuperation of the history of postwar popular music by today's youth. But if one looks at sampling in relation to 'House music' it is clear that it is not only, or centrally, rock music that is being recycled. The discovery of a history of soul music, or of seventies disco, are largely alternative to the orthodoxy of 'rock history', although of course they overlap with rock at some points.

The sampling and creation of the different types of music in the Rave scene focuses on the roles of musician and producer which often overlap. One of the characteristics of the music is that given the technological know how, (and they are) the creators of 'techno' depend only on autonomy. Compared to other forms of music these musics are cheap and easy to produce. Bands like the Prodigy, need only some sound generators and sampler sequencers (keyboards, computers) and club standard music can be made in their bedrooms (and it is).

^(S.22) Particularly in Britain, a large proportion of 'techno dance music' is made by teenagers with their own equipment. "We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams". ^(S.23)

The control that these young people have is limitless in the range of sounds, samples and combinations that can be produced on these electronic systems. ^(S.24)

This control of contemporary environment is paralleled with control which our ancestors preoccupied themselves with, when making the first musics; control of nature, by way of limitation, because of fear of the unknown world.

The contemporary scene however is possibly more complex as we live in a world of recycling, cultures which sample the images and sounds of it's counter cultures and predecessors. ^(1.7) Rave begins to reveal the design of a century of cut-ups, remixes, and multi-media experimentation: ^(S.25) the production of spaces in which mutation is possible. 'House music' is the sound of the cultural blender running at warp speed. ^(S.26) (Heley, Mark. 1992)

One important strand of post-modernist theory on popular music has focused on a series of technological practices, running from 'scratching', 'dubbing' and versioning in Caribbean music, through to digital 'sampling' in House music and it's evolution into dance music in the late 1980's. These technologies have seemed to some to have radical democratic potential, subverting accepted ideas of 'the author' and blurring the boundaries between production and consumption.

MUSIC HISTORIES OF THE FUTURE

If the current 'dance music' trends are to be looked upon as Post-modernist and if 'Techno' is the music of the future, about the future, then a history of the future is relevant. Formally, as sound and music, techno is inspired by the scores and sound effects of futuristic science fiction and TV. Techno has drawn upon the sounds and structures borrowed from visions of the future. ^(S.27) Vangelis' soundtrack for 'Blade Runner' ^(S.27) for example and Tangerine Dream's score for 'Thief' ^(S.28) could pass quite appropriately (if accompanied by a heavy bass beat). In the most prestigious of dance venues today. Sound effects from such films and TV programmes like 'Star Trek', 'Blakes Seven' and 'Doctor Who' have been sampled quite often. ^(S.30)

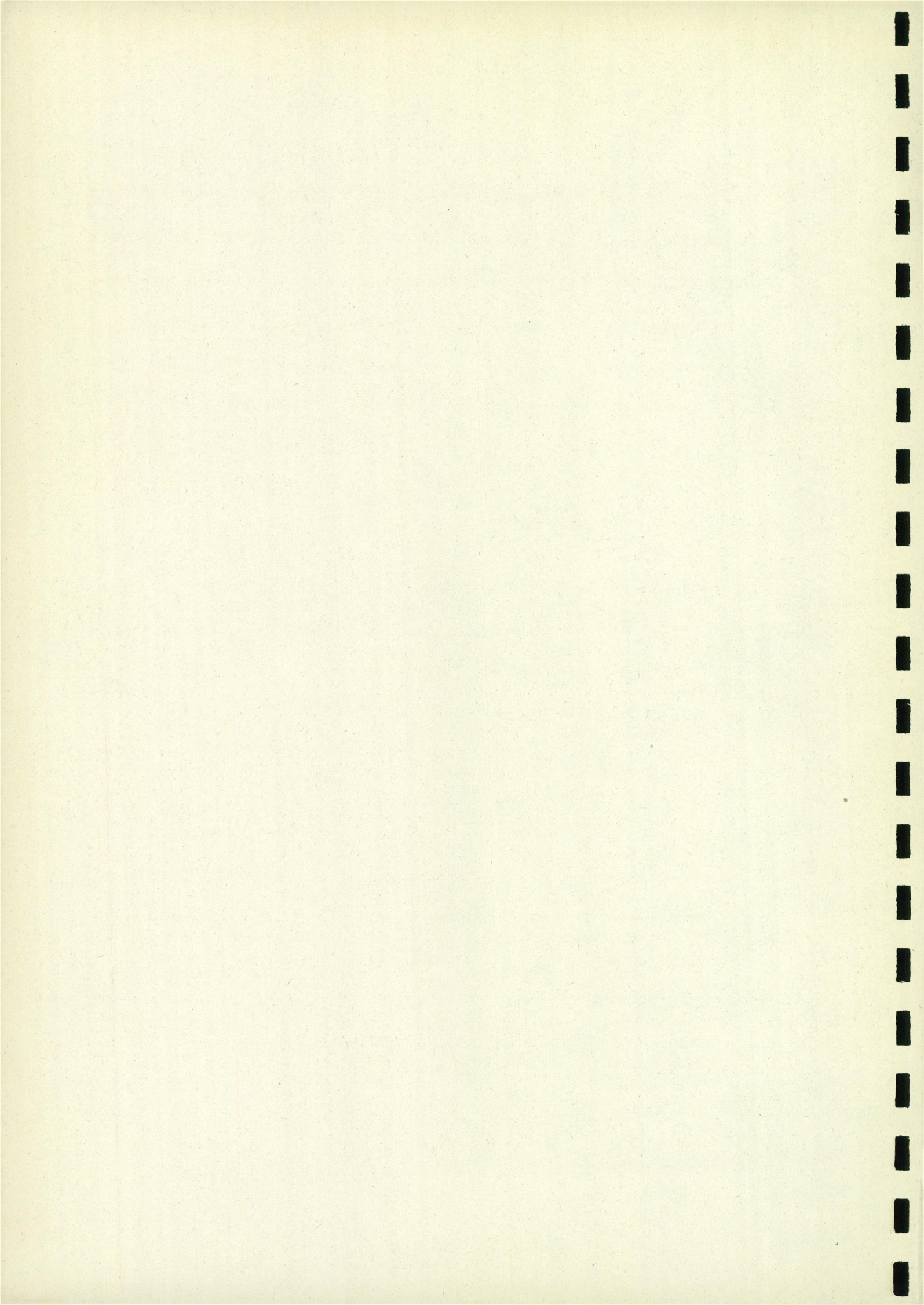
The history of the future has also seeped into the fashion of the clubber, Treckies and Blakes recruits can often be seen in the clubs and at raves. One may be forgiven for drawing comparisons from some night clubs to the cantina in Starwars. ^(S.31)

The club in this instance is a time machine that drifts somewhere between the past of the future and the present, the present and the future themselves and beyond. It is the Temple of Autonomy.

With the concept of a totally new art movement or form, medium provides the primary focus for change. 'Synaesthesia' is the subsequent medium for the Rave culture. The combining of the receptors for experience. The club becomes more than theatre, concert, gallery, cabaret or even discothèque. It completes the fusion of reality and imagination into a 'sensorium', the seat of sensation in the brain. ^(S.32)

INTERMEDIA

Intermedia is the integration of separate forms of art. The Renaissance ideals of the separation of the Arts is reflected in the society with the pigeon holing of styles, classes and expressions. The tendencies which converge in today's club scene are secreted in the history of the twentieth century: it's arts and technologies, it's boundaries and their dissolution. Dada's wartime performance events had already set the tone. In 1916, Cabaret Voltaire ^(1.8) was opened in Zurich. A place for those in flight from an old world; a chance for artists to indulge themselves in nihilistic passion; somewhere for performance to dissolve into chaos, and bourgeois audiences to be outraged. Zurich was a free zone, and so was the Cabaret: poetry crossed with madness, alien music, simultaneous readings of scrambled words and noisy lines performed by artists in strange masks and bizarre costumes. Cabaret Voltaire unleashed a new



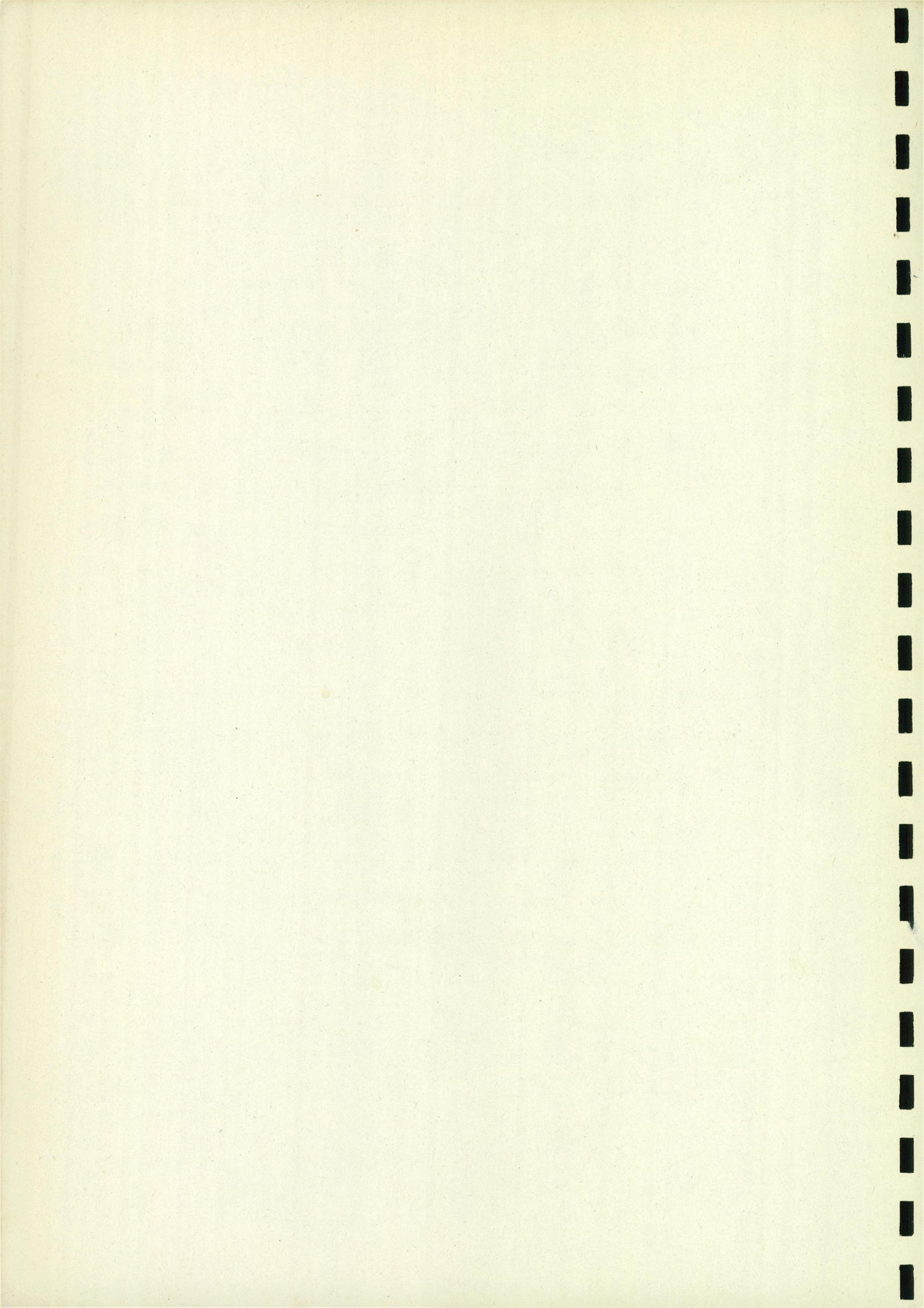
environment on an unsuspecting world. It played on performance but ended the discretion of theatre; it made the pictures but refused the Gallery. It's audiences were provoked and cajoled into participation; invited to smash exhibitions and contribute to the (un) making of art.

The cross overs of professionals is a key contributing element to movement such as the Dadaists and the Futurists; philosophers making art, artists making music, musicians making theatre. This role exchange promotes a fresh approach to every medium, applying disciplines from one area into another.

The Fluxus movement in the sixties brought these developments a step further by completely discarding the definitions of the separate arts, creating music with no sound, painting with no paint etc. The result is a chaotic blend of gestures, jokes and impossibilities. John Cage asks us, in a lecture given at Rutgers University in New Jersey, 1958, "is a truck passing by music?..... is music just sounds?"^{(1.9) 6} The unexpected of the blackmountain and Dada is supported by Cage's 'element of chance'. The use of moving sound is presented as a means of defining space with the 'sound architecture' of Bernhard Leitner in 1971. Concrete poetry is proclaimed by poets such as Ernst Gomringer with poems like 'Silencio'^(1.10) 1953, for example, consisting of only one (or perhaps two) words (Hardison, OB Jr, 1989). The development of 3D and Surround Sound anema is a significant marker of a mass culture progression in this area.

CONTEMPORARY TRADITIONS FOR A NEW ART FORM

Developments like these have contributed to the synaesthetic foundations which like 'Rave World' is built on: A twilight zone of the multi-sensory activity. With this 'Intermedia' curiously stimulating the senses the word of 'Interaction' connects the onlooker to the art, bringing a new dimension to the Multi-Media. The spectator takes on a new role, that of a participator. Dan Graham's TV camera and monitor installations present the participator as a subject of the art, where the art relies on the actions and reactions of its audience.^(1.11) Berlin based Australian computer artist, Simon Bigg's "Interactive Video Projections" offer an element of unexpected reality to an already excitingly complex medium.^(1.12) In his installation in the Newcastle Multi-Media Festival in late 1993, audiences were confronted by a life-size projection of naked figures standing in a disorganized line chatting amongst each other. This was projected on the wall facing the viewer. With the projector behind them, the viewer's shadow is cast (same size) onto the projection. A camera on the back wall acknowledged this information and when the shadows of the spectators overlapped on the figures; "The figures instantly reacted through seamless calculations and adjustments by the computer, moving away from the shadow and sometimes as if they were actually pushed moved completely off the screen, counted to ten and resumed their original position." ⁷ These events never occurred in the same sequence and reactions varied.



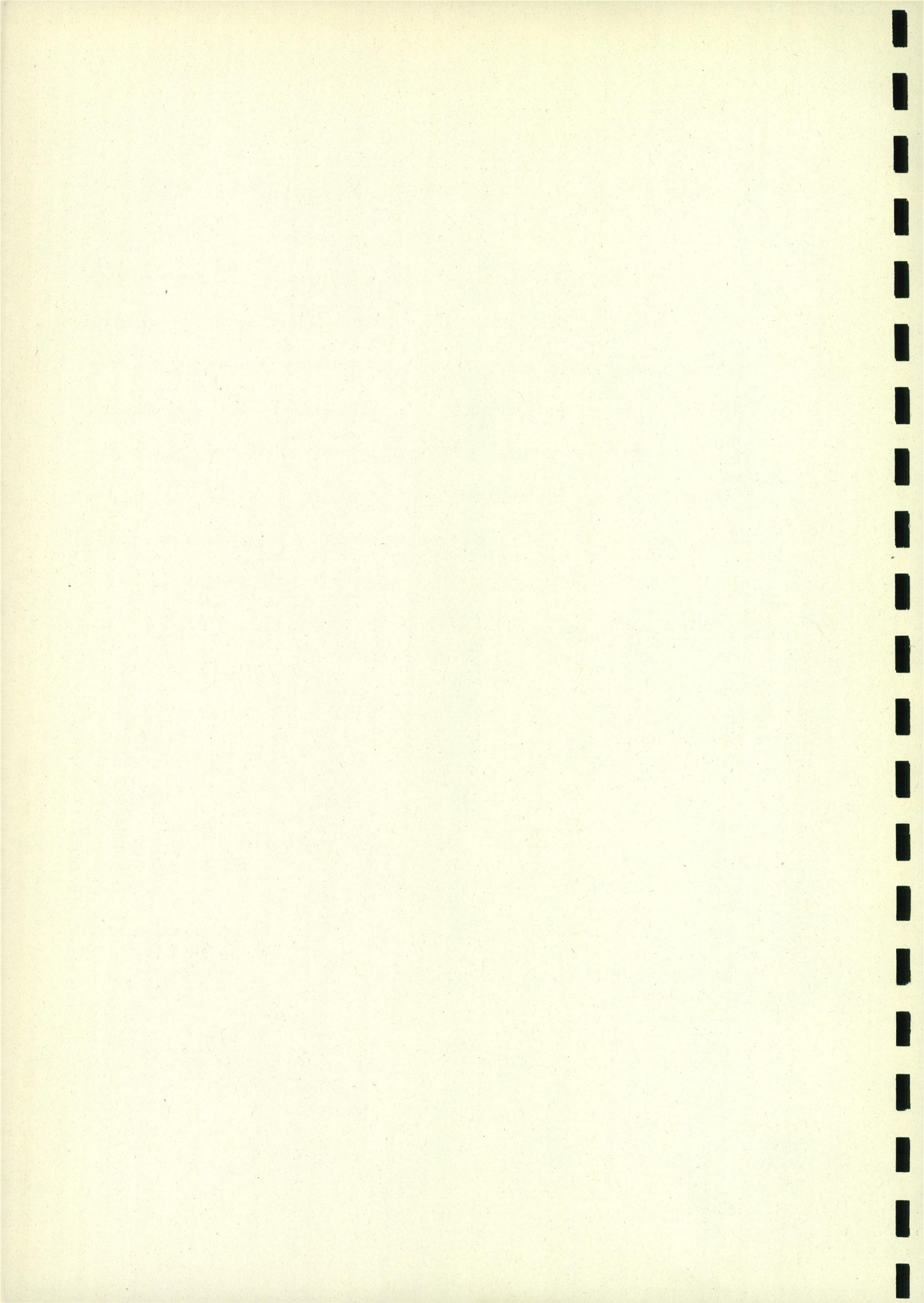
The Acid Tests - of rather the Electric Kool-Aid - made everyone pay attention to the importance of set and setting. For Tom Wolfe, the Pranksters' 1966 Trip Festival was a key moment in the development of "a new Night-Club and Dance-hall Genre"⁸ marked by unprecedented combinations of visuals and sound woven into a new "mixed media" entertainment. This was one beginning of the Rave Scene.

The broad expansion of experiments in interactive media, like those of Badges and Graham have moved beyond the gallery to more accessible platforms in the form of 'Scratch 'n' Sniff Opera', or: 'Interactive Cinema' where the audiences are given the chance to make decisions on how the film develops as a story. Through multiple choices given by the actors on the screen, the participators vote through a control panel on the arm of each theatre seat. Interactive audio and video programmes present 'kids' with the opportunity to produce and edit their favourite pop music and videos. Over the last decade Virtual Reality has developed into a commercial commodity. The possible prospects of VR in the home has caught the imaginations of the masses and proved the demand for escapist Utopia through electronic simulation which bridges the gaps between Scientist/artist and consumer/spectator.

INTERACTION, MULTIMEDIA AND RAVE

These technological advances open the gates of an adventure playground for those involved in the Rave Scene, but the essential elements of Interaction have already been set up, through the relationship of "Maestro" and Punter. The introduction of multimedia completes the interface between Spectator and Spectacle. Interaction in the Night Club is becoming increasingly popular. The turn of the last decade marked an explosion in Night Club activity with elaborate laser and video shows with chaotic computer graphics, performers, fun and game activities including Bungy Racing, Body Gyroscopes, Velcro walls, fairground rides and blow-up castles.

It was apparent that interaction was a 'wave of the future' for night clubs, and still is in most cases for the technology is scarce and expensive but hardware companies are beginning to recognize this. 1993 was the year of virtual reality particularly in the Rave. Across Britain, Clubbers cued up for hours to experience this great wonder, like McDonald's in Moscow. Even in Dublin's Elevator Club, software jockies scan the dance floor with spontaneous 'Cyborg' exclamations and manic computer programmes creating virtual worlds in space. 1992 saw an anonymous posse of computer pirates transforming the House Parties into Interactive Dream Machines. Digital Sound Samplers stole the



vocal exclamations, the referee whistles and the bread beat claps of the congregation and through them back at them in quadro-surround sound, shaping them into pitched, musical phrases and sweeping backward energy rushes, sequenced to the valour beats of Berlin's Avant Garde. Similarly, video walls transfixed the clubber when suddenly he/she would glance at a gesture they made five minutes ago and watch themselves in repetition surrounded by Techno Sea Creatures and Cosmic Intergalactic Starbursts. (Biggs, 1993) Virtual clubbing "offers the luxuries and excitement of the night club, in the convenience of an interactive computer programme bringing clubbing home with you". (Jones, 1994)

(l.13)

THE FOURTH DIMENSION

There are conflicting opinions about the origins of Rave, or 'Acid House'. One belief which is shared by the media, is that Acid House is the product of a new Psychedelia based around the taking of certain elicit substances and ushered by the sudden mass production of MDMA. More reliable sources would claim that Acid House was born in the mid to late 80's in Chicago of pioneers such as 'Was Not Was'. It was a pastiche of various styles which went under the name of 'House Music'. ^(S.33) It's main trait of identification was it's heavy beat that resounded at 120 beats per minute in synchronicity with regular heartbeat.



With the added effects of sequenced light and harmonic repetition would induce a trace-like state of euphoria similar to that of the 'dream machine' of the sixties.

The witnessing of such stimulation results in multi-sensory experience of eurythmics and with the use of pre-mentioned technologies and seductive ultra-rhythms; may declare Sir Thomas More's Utopia as an official Free State on the dance floor, transforming music into the tactile.

Although the involvement of drugs in the initialisation of these musics may be over-emphasised by some parties, certain narcotics such as MDMA play an important role in the rave scene today. As an addition to the multi-sensory experience, Rave, 'Ecstasy' has introduced the final element, defining the sixth sense, the fourth dimension which is indicated by sensoria. Through the use of 'E', this total synaesthesia is the synthesis of life as art. The motives for Wagner's 'Gesamtkunstwerk' (Total Art Work) of Opera have travelled beyond the possession of their twentieth century hier cinema and have manifested themselves in a contemporary youth culture, in the making, since Dada made the colours run - poetry, painting, sculpture, music, rhythm, film, theatre, photography leaking into each other.

POST POP POLITICS FOR POST POLITICAL POP

The synthesis of raw energies and smooth rhythms have brought today's dance music a long way. The true ecstasy is in the utopianism of all the combined elements, along with the unity, respect and perfection of environment induced by the drug, weaving pleasures and technologies into atmospheres worth living in. The environment promoted by the use of Ecstasy is well beyond it's contemporaries in popular youth culture; although MDMA has a reputation as the love drug. It is much more likely to enhance a desire for platonic love and friendship than for sex. One of the main reasons young ravers are so proud of their club culture is because House clubs are not sexual cattle markets like so many night clubs where alcohol dominates.

With the technologies of drugs and music functioning as "Cultural makers of Difference" (Bradby, 1993, pp 165) rather than ways of determining changing social practices, it is interesting to observe the shift for example from the allowable public sexual 'snogging' and 'heavy petting' to the sight of a young couple at a rave today delighting publicly in reciprocal massage, or the shift from racial sameness to equality. At Raves attitude is more important than appearance. Friendliness, sensuality and "body language" are valued more than trendiness, sexual displays or long conversations.

The politically correct ideals of the community seem to me to be less of a component of the motives of Rave and more a result of aesthetic and technological vehicles of the scene, like the cross-section of social categories attracted to a dominantly musical movement.

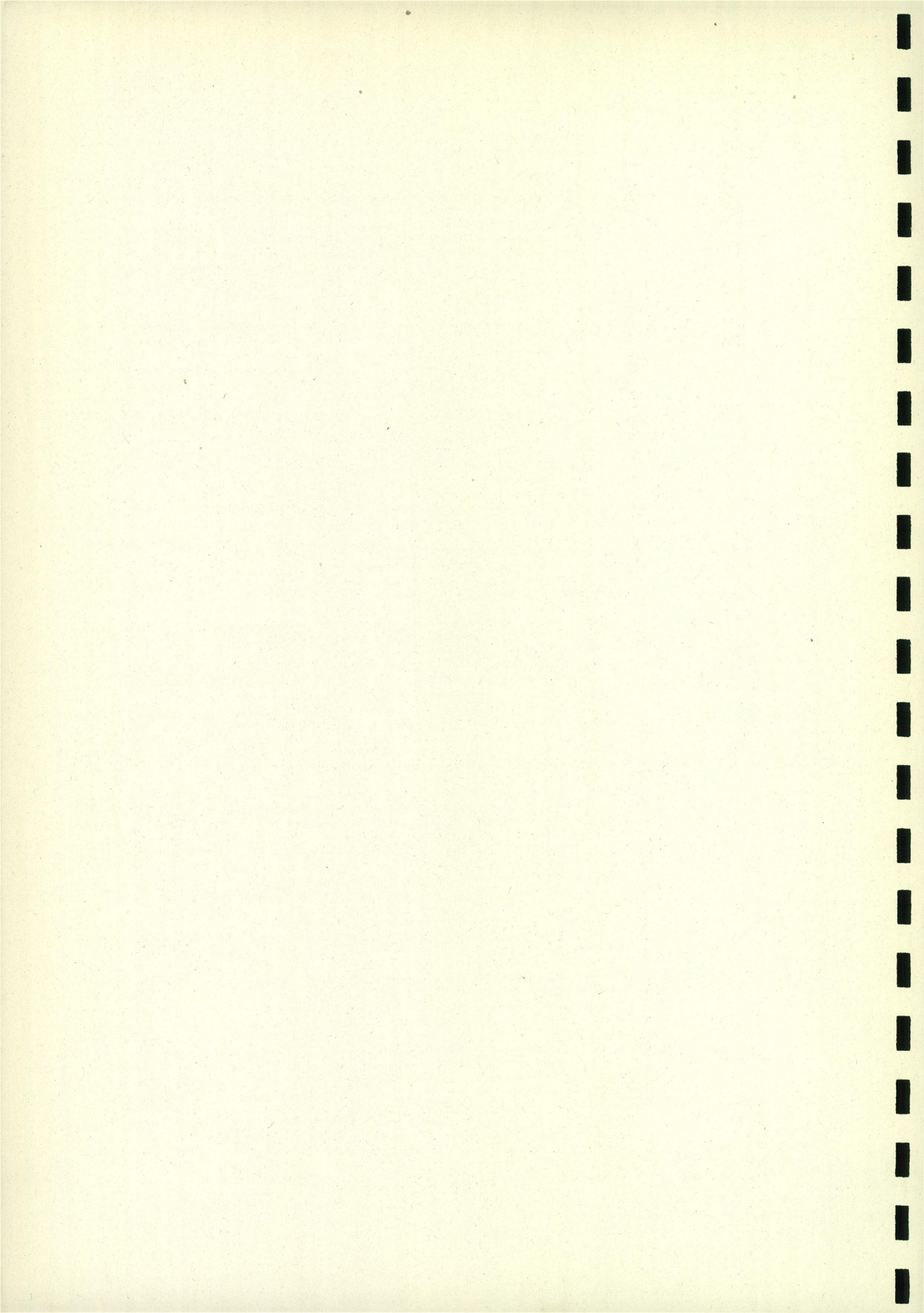
Unfortunately, this reality is virtual or at least confined. However it is part of an alternative reality, sometimes attractive as escapism; in many forms it is already the virtual reality of the culture in which it emerges and like 'Sega TV' it is also an extension of Cyberspace to plug into and out of because of the technologies of it's drugs and music. The transformation into cyberspace starts to take place when the first sign of the machine entering the body is noticed. (Reich, S, 1972)

With 'Techno-Rave' perfection of design is the spice. This is post-human, it's shape and texture is divine. ^(S.34) Electronic 'Eurhythmy' is the ultimate aesthetic for Ravers. The design is pure, it exists only for itself. Rejoice is for not only beauty but for sublime which itself is heavenly. It is science for Art's sake. These purest ideals are borrowed from the Futurist Manifesto in the new age of the machine and of war. Interaction between man and machine is the basic drive. Technological control generates in a lot of Techno which is responded to by the body and mind. All are active in the one form with Public Enemy for example who use their regulated machinery samples as a foundation for their confrontational Attitude Rapping which in return works off the digital rhythm. (Marlowe, A, 1992)
(S.35)

THE ATMOSPHERE AND ENVIRONMENTS OF RAVE'S ALTERNATIVE REALITIES

Rave music works on many different levels with a broad range of influences from musical history. 'Ambience' plays an important part in the synaesthetic art form of Rave. The atmosphere which is enhanced through the setting in clubs and the use of 'E' is only complimentary to that of the sounds transmitted. Technically, clarity of sound supported by surround sound systems and acoustics is essential when simulating the levels of environment in the Rave. (Toop, D. 1994) The use of 'sub-bass' adds a new dimension to the frequencies of music and contrasts the range of combinations of tones accessible. Found sounds sampled from life combine the representational with the abstract nature of music. In Luigi Russolo's Futurist Music Manifesto "The Art of Noises" juxtaposition of real sounds becomes the subject of music through the recreation of situations and the rhythmic and melodic organisation of these 'Noises' adopted and explored by Techno. ^(S.36)

Variety of emphasis is a large contributing factor also, with confrontational sublime sounds, rhythms, and melody which take the foreground; the 'Ambient' music and bass line rhythms and generators that drift from the "background" ⁹ to other levels and back. Such continuous atmospheres that Brian Eno



describes, ^(S.37) in an interview with John Hutchinson, Venice 1985, as emotional situations that "held steady for quite a long time a 'steady-skate' kind of music" and repetition that shifts in meaning through persistence and concentrate on subtle fluctuations, a style pioneered by Steve Reich ^(S.38) in his early works and developed by artists such as Philip Glass ^(S.39) with his modular symphonies. Such repetition can also be found in a variety of ethnic musics as in Laraaji's 'Day of Radiance'. ^(S.40)

These Technologies of Ambience have subsequently developed into a sub-movement of 'Ambient House' or 'Ambient Rave' which explores the concentrated realm or rhythmic and non-rhythmic environments. This has created a new scene of stimulating 'Ambient Clubs' or 'Ambient Rooms', where by entering the club is now to be engulfed in alien ambience, wrapped in the scenery, immersed in new levels of sensory overload. (Benson, R. 1993) In effect what is being recreated here is described by R Murray Schafer in an essay taken from 'Sound by Artists' as 'Radical Radio' and supported by John Cage. This suggests the emphasis of the musical qualities of life enhanced by the digital systems of the musicians and DJ's broadcasting into a space where environment grabs the attention of the audience. In comparison it is a modest activity. ^(S.41)

THE ARTISTS AND CONNOISSEURS SEDUCED

Modestly extends further than the Ambient Music of today though. The anonymous characteristic of the whole Rave Scene is a selfless trait which promotes the importance of the music, anybody's music. It is the first time that a massive musical movement has come along where the people into the sounds and dancing are not idolised in this scene. The fact that it is totally underground is one of the reasons why the authorities and media cannot deal with it. It is outside their comprehension.

Pure sampled tracks eliminate the need for egotistical musicians and stress the insignificance of status. With few exceptions, Club Culture is a "Starless Void".

¹⁰ A scene produced by everyone in general and no one in particular. With Rave, it's music "advances not through the innovations of auteurs but rather evolves through mutation: inspired errors and random fucking about produces new riffs and noises that succeed in the dance floor eco-system and then enter the gene pool." ¹¹ The audience performs for itself; art disappears with its own articulation; the show shows only itself, dancing on the integrated circuit. Syntheses emerges as viral contagions spreading overnight, rapid response to redesigned desires and accelerating technologies with plenty of room to indulge.



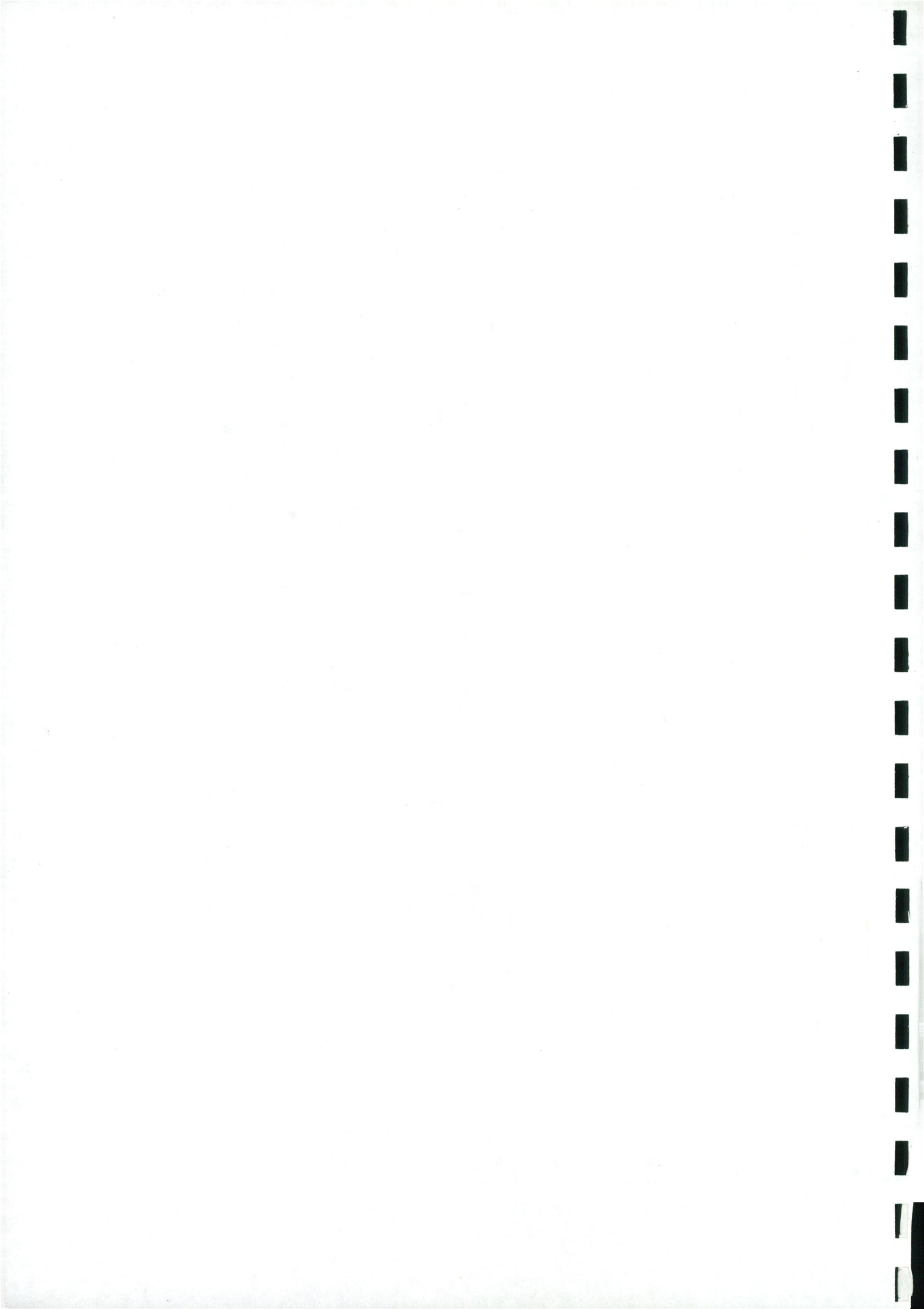
Indulgence is a sub-title for the 'Rave Culture'. In fact if there was a concise written manifesto 'indulge' would be the only relevant word, seduction makes it very easy for both participants (music-maker and listener) to be swallowed up by the temptator that is the Rave scene for participation is less an effort than an addiction. No one needs to be provoked and state of the art is always ahead of the times.

I bet you feel like you don't know what's going on: The messages run through the music of a remixed world, bodies brush through swimming airs, washed up in the slow panic of techno tracks. What should have remained the impossible experiences of a mythical future are becoming real; a dissolution which should be known only as death becomes weekend routine. Techno explores the frequencies, picks up the messages, synthesises it's own future. Take me into insanity. Cybernetic Psychosis. ^(1.14) Let the rhythm take control. Too much to take in: You have to be taken.

The addictive art form takes control on the dance floor, not to mention the studio. Over the last few years, clubs have been integral to the development of performance, installation and new music, providing an 'Other' place for a diverse history of radical artwork. Club circuits become complex networks of promoters, performers, producers, programmers, DJ's, singers, musicians, dancers, dealers,

artists and technicians operating in an environment of continual transformation. (Plant, S. 1993) Slides flash on the dripping walls, digital images mutate on the screens, strobes and lasers split the light. Beyond hybridity, the club becomes fertile culture, in which synaesthetic pleasures and extra-sensory adventure can grow. ^(1.15)

(I15) DJ's and VJ's



The addition of a creedless faith in the Counter-Cultural Society of Techno-Culture forms the basis for social development through a non-literal, abstract post-political manifesto. This fast progression and versatility of an analytical, independent and anonymous cult and community induces a highly reproductive sub-society.

Rave is an Art Movement based on indulgence and modesty, which is dismissed as a 'deep and meaningless' youth fashion, by society, because of fear of the unknown and reductive analysis of a fast-moving underground revolution which has developed and repressed exciting seductive club culture. With it's won high technologies, the organised disorder of dance floors spread across fields and pulsing through industrial zones, not yet comprehensible by the 'authorities' set out to condemn it. ^(1.16)

Most of all Rave travels on a fast plane and bounces randomly off it's surrounding 'worlds', rendering the critic (myself) always inaccurate and misinformed, and out of date, left behind by an uncritiqueable culture.

Rave as a music extends further than the ear, or even the senses with it's slow lifts and speed breakers, perfect orchestration, transient design. Nothing to be grasped, too much to be seen, nothing else but to go with the flow, drift with the tide, caught up in the tracks, taken, transported, hooked into the moment. With the Rave scene, we lose the plot, but crave the design, even of chaos. ^(S.42)

END NOTES

1. Mark Heley, 'House Music', Mondo 2000
2. This and other references and quotations relating to Simon Biggs:
Conversations with the Artist, 1993.
3. Brian Cross, Lecture on 'Hip-Hop', Dublin, NCAD, 1994.
4. McClellan, 'The Shamen', 1992, The Face. No 51. December, P.35 - 40.
5. This, less obvious than the current 'Ambient'; 'House' and 'Trance' that has begun to accelerate over the last couple of years.
6. From: Cage, John. London, 1971. Marion Boyers Publishers.
7. Taken from conversations with Simon Biggs, March 1993.
8. From: Tom Wolfe, 'The Purple Decades'. Great Britain, 1983. Jonathon Cape Ltd.
9. John Hutchinson, Interview with Brian Eno, Venice, June, 1985.
10. Jim McClennan in The Face, December 1992, P.38.
11. Simon Reynolds, 'Technical Ecstasy', Wire, November, 1992, P.39.

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- SideA S1. "Hey Music Lover" by S'Xpress. London, 1989. Rhythm King Records.
- S2. "We Call It Acieed" by DMob. 1988. FFRR Records.
- S3. "Voyage Voyage" by Desireless. 1986. Rivat Music.
- S4. Alpha Omega.
- S5. From "The Telephone Call" by Kraftwerk. 1986. Germany EMI Recordings.
- S6. "Mega Blast" by Bomb The Bass". London, 1988. Mute Records.
- S7. Deep Forest.
- SideB S8. "Paid In Full" by Eric B and Rakim. 1987. Island Records.
- S9. "3AM Eternal" by KLF. 1991. KLF Communications.
- S10. From "Energy Flash" by Beltram. Belgium. R&S Records.
- S11. The Shamen
- S12. From "Aqua Drive" by CJ Bolland. 1993. Gent. R&S Records.
- S.13 From "Adrenalin" by N-Joi. 1991. UK. BMG Records.
- S14. "Mindfuck 2000" by PSI Devision. 1991. Hard Tunes.
- S15. "An Accident in Paradise" by Sven Vath. Germany.
- SideC S16. "Mind War" by CJ Bolland. Gent. R&S Records.
- S17. African mBira Music.
- S18. Rave. Paris. 1992.
- S19. From "The Wave of the Future" by Quadraphonia. 1991. Italy. ARS Productions.

- S20. Ritual Music of Ghana.
- S21. The Shamen with Terence McKenna.
- S22. From "Indian Giver" 1992. Boston.
- S23. From "Nephatiti" 808 State. 1991. UK. 2TT.
- S24. 3 from "Satyricon" Meat Beat Manifesto. 1992. Play It Again Sam.
- S25. "James Brown" Rave. Paris. 1992.
- S26. Hard Core Techno.
- SideD S27. From "Satyricon" Meat Beat Manifesto. 1992. Play It Again Sam.
- S28. "Blade Runner" End Title. 1982. Vangelis. WEA.
- S29. "Scrapyard" Tangerine Dream. 1981. Berlin. Virgin Music.
- S30. "Original Control" Meat Beat Manifesto. 1992. Play It Again Sam.
- S31. "Cantina Band" 1977. MECO.
- S32. "Mind, Body & Soul".
- S33. From "Slam" Humanoid. 1989. Westside Records.
- S34. "Thrust" CJ Bolland. Gent. 1993. R&S Records.
- S35. From "Burn Hollywood" Public Enemy.
- S36. From "Silence" Pete Namlook. 1993.
- S37. From "Music For Airports" Brian Eno. 1978. EG Records.
- S38. From "It's Gonna Rain" Steve Reich. 1965.
- S39. From "Rubic" Philip Glass. 1982.
- S.40. From "The Dance" #1. Laraaji. 1980.
- S.41. From "The Ambient Collection" Art of Noise. 1990.
- S42. Unknown.

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