

## Negotiating Rapture: Tekno, Teknival and T. A. Z.: the Temporary Autonomous Zone

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The teknival (a portmanteau of tekno and festival) is a liminal space that perfectly fits the descriptor Temporary Autonomous Zone (Hakim Bey, 1985). A large subculture is involved in this type of TAZ as both a group and personal experience (although the genre is constantly changing and is difficult to historicize). Often aided by the utilization of illicit narcotics, the zone becomes a 'safe space' for divesting one of self and of negotiating personal rapture. Providing a unique double disengagement with normality, the TAZ operates outside the boundaries of criminal justice, and, through music and drugs, the person operates outside normal representation of self.

In this paper I posit that music is not incidental but rather a key feature of the teknival TAZ. Music helps the individual reconstruct self out of the ontological anarchy (another term from Bey) provided by the teknival. Sketching the history of terminology and technique, and using specific examples from an outdoor teknival (dance party) in Australia, I demonstrate that the teknival is antithetical to the humanist tradition and explore those ways in which, freed from convention and regulation, it requires a different kind of experiential engagement with sound and with listening. Sensory alteration through narcotics and the disengagement from self and from circumstance necessitates an even broader basis for musicological research that is sociological, psychological, neurological, and metaphysical.

Engaging in group identity in a TAZ permits suppression of conventional personal identity. Music remains the principal tether to the mundane and the significant stimulus to exploration of an ecstatic state and the transformation of self. What then are the key ideologies for music in the teknival TAZ? Using comparative examples of free tekno from across the globe, I demonstrate that rather than being variations on a repetitive and relentless kick-drum beat at a certain pulse, this music embraces an enormous sonic range filled with color, subtlety and variation (much of which can be appreciated without chemical sensory alteration). Although composers and performers of tekno work in a culture and aesthetic that favors anonymity, and much of the music is spontaneous and evanescent, I explore issues of national identity using Goa trance (India), and CzechTek and highlight the specific associations with this music and dance forms such as the Melbourne Shuffle and Glowsticking. Ultimately this paper presents a reevaluation and reengagement with a popular music that has been dismissed as facile and undistinguished but which actually invites innovation and inspiration from its creators and a different mode of perceiving sound from its listeners.

(432 words total)