Neapolitan nights: from Vesuvian blues to planetary vibes

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Key words

Culture and power - local musicalities - black music – post colonialism - European historicism - heterotopias – narratives and counter narratives.

Culturally speaking Naples can be considered in a space that extends both from southern Europe and from North Africa. This is not simply a geographical location, but also a political and cultural premise. Here one can consider Naples in a Mediterranean-centred perspective where the city appears as a strategic hub located in the midst of many commercial, cultural and historical routes. This is rather obvious, but when considered in musical terms it provokes a suggestive counter-narrative. At this point, a local political and cultural consensus that considers itself in exclusively Occidental and European terms falls apart. Historical evidence and contemporary cultural arrangements actually propose a city that co-exists in a multiplicity of circuits orbiting around diverse nuclei, not all of them either local or European in their constitution. Against the prevailing narrative of modernity that has consistently located Naples in the European periphery, Neapolitan sounds and visual culture propose a diverse space, a form of heterotopia in which the city re-composes its centrality through the rhythms and reasoning of musical rituals. This is a crucial element in understanding the centrality of music in shaping Neapolitan cultural identity and its affective public economy.

Alongside this it is important to register the particular historical and cultural context of post-1945 Italy in which the music we discuss profoundly shifted the sonorial and cultural landscapes of the city. To the foreign observer, Italy is a country soaked in Catholicism. This is profoundly marked in the south with shrines on every street corner, in the niches of walls: talismanic icons drawing upon even older, pagan, sentiments. Italy is also a country that hosted the biggest Communist party in Western Europe. As a mass party, often close to taking political power, despite the opposition of the United States and the orchestrated politics of tension sustained by public bombings and terrorism, the PCI pursued a series of historical compromises with 'family values' and Catholicism leading to profound political caution over the civil rights involved in divorce, abortion and the public funding of private, religious schools.

The profanity of secular sounds and irreverent bodies has had to insist on their presence in this milieu, where the desire for local and national continuities, rather than breaks and confrontation, have characterised modern Italy. As a friend once put it: punk could never have been invented in Italy. In the same vein, one of the authors vividly remember comrades in Lotta Contiua who, after hours of heated debate, marches and occupations, would expect the pasta to be ready on the table once they returned from the 'struggle'. Structures and their accompanying sentiments run deep. This is also the context characterised by a popular music that sought to maintain both the tradition of 'bel canto' and the institutionalised sentimentality of family values that were reaffirmed each year on public television in the San Remo song festival.

The 1960s and 1970s, as elsewhere, were moments of rebellion and revolt in both form and content. It was probably one of the most significantt periods of Italian pop music. In 1958 Domenico Modugno won the San Remo Festival with "Nel Blu dipinto di Blu (Volare)", from that moment everything changed. It was during this period that the "Cantautori" (singer-songwriters writing and performing their own material) became the voice of political and cultural transformation. These singers linked their identities to stylistic schools, usually associated with a city. The "Cantautori" were urban storytellers and most of them quickly became political activists, with their words and music representing a specific historical and cultural space. Among the most famous schools were those of Genoa, Milan, Bologna and Rome. In the 60s the Naples was famous for artists such as Peppino De Capri and his Rockers, nothing comparable to the main scene of such singer-songwriters as De Andrè, Jannacci, Guccini and De Gregori. Another significant dimension was that of a more pop-oriented music proposed by Lucio Dalla and the markedly original Lucio Battisti, later followed by the altogether more explicitly rock sound of Vasco Rosso. It is only later, towards the end of that decade and the beginning of the 1970s that artists such as Eduardo Bennato started to open up a unique path towards the Neapolitan Folk Revival. Here artists revitalized the traditional Neapolitan sounds from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries via the addition of contemporary and provocative verses. They also opened up the space for the subsequnet Mediterranean blues of such artists such as Pino Daniele and the subsequent Neapolitan Power scene. These are the first real Neapolitan "Cantautori", with their musical style and sentiments deeply connected to the city, unique in their radical manner of re-framing Naples as a new site of meanings.

Objectives and methodologies

This article explores the reformulation of the public sphere under the impact of local subcultures and musical affiliations commencing in the 1960s and continuing down to the present. We have decided to adopt an inter-disciplinary or 'cultural studies' approach in order to focus on the political dynamics of contemporary Neapolitan club culture and its historical foundations, conflicts and defining traits. We are interested in understanding how the forms and contents of the sounds contributed to shaping political ideologies, cultural formations, social class structures, and urban, ethnic, gendered and sexualised identities.

We consider club cultures – their spatialities, practices and proposals – in terms of what Foucault once referred to as heterotopias (Foucault 1984). Parallel to the institutional organization of consensual understandings, the heterotopic provides a parallel counter-space. It promotes a 'time out' from institutional rhythms, even an interruption, certainly an interrogation, of the hegemonic framing of bodies held in a uniform and unilateral time.

Lived space can be defined in terms of both relations and dislocations. Here we encounter particular relations of proximity and distance, of interactions and separation. Such relations contribute to the creation of both transitional places and established ones designed to host institutions with specific functions (schools, offices, prisons, churches, etc.). They also lead to the production of 'counter spaces'. The latter are real places in which culture is represented, contested and subverted at the same time (Foucault 1984). In this precisely this manner we consider clubs as heterotopias. They provide spaces in which the culture that sustains them is both

legitimated and subverted. In our opinion, it is music that creates the processes that sustain such heterotopic spaces.

So we are arguing that there cannot exist cultural formations that are not at the same time sites of heterotopias with their specific functional and dysfunctional structures and dynamics. This suggests that in order to understand the reshaping of the public sphere under the impact of subcultures and musical affiliations we need to understand the structures and dynamics of Neapolitan club heterotopias. Our intention then is to explore these heterotopias in order to re-map the archive of musical memories imbricated in the history of Naples and understand how such memories impact on understandings of the present.

This then draw us into a modernity that is not simply doubled by subaltern actors and forces seeking to contest the hegemonic version of a history that insists on a unique telling. Recognising the intersecting and planetary distribution of difference, location, and singularity there emerges an understanding of the constellation of modernity that is disseminated in shifting rhythms along multiple scales and within the combinations of heterogeneous powers and practices. Against the empty dream of an utopic alternative promoting withdrawal from the seemingly unavoidable impositions of actuality, the instance of heterotopia proposes that we step out of an existing version of time to drop deeper into the folds of the contemporary world; there to assay and acquire its potentialities. Here, time is split from itself to permit the registration of other temporalities; an imposed and seemingly inevitable future is marked by the return of other, unacknowledged times. No longer the victim of a rigid archive, confined to the predictable rhythms of a numbing tradition, the past here becomes a vibrant t/issue that interpellates and interrupts the present. The authorised combination of materials fall apart, the archive is unlocked and its documents, voices, objects and silences scattered over altogether more contingent maps. Set to diverse patterns and imperatives, the past comes to be configured by present urgencies in an emergent critical space. In this sense, the past, present and future are still emerging, still in the making: understandings have not yet docked; they are still under way, open to contestation, redirection and reformulation.

To step sideways, and remove oneself from the implacable logic of a single-minded modernity, is to step out of the cage of an abstract temporality. As a conscious cut, an alternative take, a blue note and deliberate dissonance, this idea of heterotopic thought and practices seeks to burrow below both the topographical logic of Foucault's disciplined spatialities and the eternal dialectic of narratives and counter-narratives. If we could consider remix as a method, just like jazz improvisations on the musical 'standards', or the unhomely melody of the blues or the DJ's timely 'cut', then we can confront the sedimented and striated composition of a modernity that does not move to a single beat or uniform pulse. In this form of historical and cultural mix we are encouraged to think more in terms of subjectivating forces, shifting combinations and unplanned vibrations, rather than remain locked in the power of established positions contesting and dividing the singularity of sense. The historical conjuncture is ultimately a performative space elaborated along multiple planes, diverse trajectories, and unpredictable depths. The *ratio* is neither linear nor transparent.

At this point, it is instructive to return to Foucault's noted radio talk on heterotopia and consider this statement:

> Heterotopias are most linked to slices in time – which is to say that they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry,

> heterochronies. The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time (Foucault 1984)

These are slices in time, intervals in the narratives, interruptions in the machinery of truth. Foucault's arguments suggest far more than simply registering the question of spatiality and acknowledging the unregistered volume of the contemporary world. To cut space up into a heterogamous assemblage is also to multiply time in diverse rhythms and temporal insistences. Neither is homogeneous. The desire to represent modernity as the perfect match of linear time and homogeneous space is thwarted. This teaches us that critical labour is not simply about contesting the imposed temporalities of hegemonic rationalities. Rather, critical labour is also about constructing a space besides us; here the reconfiguration of actualities releases another set of spatio-temporal coordinates, and another manner of reasoning. What now returns to the map is what was excluded by the premises of the previous cartography of power, of knowledge. This operation, like a Deleuzian 'fold', creases and deepens spatiality while rendering diverse temporalities proximate. It produces the interleaving of heterogeneous dimensions that resonate with the circulation of bodies, histories, cultures and capital in what we come to understand as a manifold modernity.

In this sense, as Foucault insisted in his Preface to the 1966 volume *The Order of Things* (2002), the heterotopic breaks through and beyond the homogeneous order of a discourse. The heterotopic proposes the elision of the imposed. Language and space no longer match: the former is unable to contain and control the latter. The map is no longer reality, merely a limited representation. At this point that the epistemological device – the map, the discipline, and institutional knowledge – promotes an ontological rift. For if utopias are the product of language, heterotopias are manufactured and maintained in the mutable materialities of space and exceed the attempts of language seeking to impose its order. If utopias by their very nature do not exist, they are nevertheless cultivated and cared for in language. Heterotopias, on the contrary, even if unregistered and unrecognised, do exist. They, too, require language and are therefore not without their utopic drive, but they sustain diverse experiences of inhabiting history and culture, different practices of time and space. Alternative, subaltern, and subordinated to the rules that occlude their presence, heterotopias exist and persist as counter-spaces beside and outside the dominant syntax of sense. Their presence uproots the premises of the linguistic and discursive order, proposing a flight and a freedom from its imposition. They propose a disturbance, an intimation of the unhomely. If space is produced (Lefebvre 1991) and never simply given, it is not only produced by our language. It is construed, constructed, crossed and signified by many different bodies, pulses and rhythms.

Sounding out the city

Francesco Rosi's famous film characterise post-war Naples as being gripped in the 'hands on the city' of the political paternalism of the ruling Christian Democrat party, the cultural censorship of the Catholic church and the sharp practices of property development and political corruption in the post-war boom. Beneath this conservative veneer, older, almost pagan, popular rites of street culture and associated beliefs have constantly threatened to break through the brittle barrier of institutional rhetoric. It was in this space that the subtle disorientation of the blues – proposed by James

Senese, Napoli Centrale, Pino Daniele, Edoardo Bennato – crossed the street from the post-war port clubs for US servicemen into the urban stronghold of Neapolitan song. The latter sound, notwithstanding all the claims of autochthonous autonomy, was itself the hybrid composition of a mobile Mediterranean musicality (Chambers 2012). Hints of melisma, micro tonalities, *maquams* and the torn and twisted vocalisations that mark rebetiko, fado, flamenco and Arabic song orbit in its vicinity. If the official culture, deeply mired in a historicism that considered continuity and the 'passive revolution' of timeless cultural stasis as the unique guarantee of its veracity, then seemingly 'imported' sounds that became increasingly strident from the 1970s onwards proposed a detour, even a deviation, from the predictable score. Punk, reggae, the New Romantics, dub music, rap and hip hop, found publics and clubs, followers and fans, proposing a series of shifting sound communities that inhabited and cut up the inherited spaces of the city.

Neapolitans are unable to embrace the new without re-calling and re-framing the past. In order to justify a legitimate desire of freedom they have constantly connected it to the assumed autonomy of what we will later define as *Napoletanità*. In Naples it is always a matter of roots: everything has to be appropriated and authenticated as Neapolitan in order to gain entry to the institutional story of the city and be accepted by its intelligentsia. Meanwhile, sounds from elsewhere – North America, the Caribbean, North Africa and northern Europe – and from other port cities (New York, Kingston, Liverpool, London), had already entered the Neapolitan soundscape. They left their traces while simultaneously being transformed into local topographies of sense. Sounds, youth and subcultures emerged that were not simply the poor copy of an 'original' template located in Kingston or London. By the Mediterranean sea and under Vesuvius, dub and punk have both connected to such 'sources' while at the same time translating and transforming such signs and sounds into life in the bay. 'Dark was the night' (1927) simultaneously recalls the bottleneck blues lament on Blind Willie Johnson's guitar and the volcanic paving stones of the dimly-lit baroque streets of this Mediterranean metropolis: drawing both from afar and the ambiguous insistency of the uncertain present, music reconfigures the cultural and historical score. It proposes another mix, another chance, even a new ontology. It is in this manner that it becomes possible to consider a further political economy of meaning, suspended and sustained in sound.

Of course, this is also where the abstract and academic understanding of the public sphere is taken for a ride, and eventually gets lost. The presumption that the modern *agora* of public democracy emerges in transparent communication between rational individuals *à la Habermas* becomes altogether more confused once caught, slowed down and decomposed between the bass and the fumes of marijuana or else seized in electric treble and amphetamine fast-forward. The modification of time and space in a mix of sounds pushes the categories of public and private out of their formal distinctions. In the flux, the city acquires psychic contours in a trip that is ultimately impossible to reduce to a common tale. As we have seen in Danilo Capasso's article on the history of Neapolitan club culture, communities of sound provide a very different sound track to the more predictable routines of urban life. A cultural and historical inheritance, despite the identitarian self-referentiality of *napoletanità*, can be cut up, remixed and reassembled. Gaps are exposed, jumps occur. Nothing is cancelled but everything is rearranged. Tradition becomes translation. Youth and musical cultures provoke a counter-space. In providing a foucauldian *heterotopia* there is no utopic alternative, but rather a set of parallel spaces and practices sustained

in sound. These refute and subvert the rationality of a public sphere which believes the world can be represented and reasoned in transparent exchange and conventional order.

Perhaps, as Jacques Derrida once suggested, it is the embedded, lived-in, place of the city, rather than the abstract space of the nation or the trans-national space called Europe, which provides the laboratory for the more extensive and constantly negotiated becoming of democracy (Derrida 2000). This hypothesis is confirmed by our investigation on how Neapolitan heterotopias change according to the needs of embedded lives rather than those of an abstract Europe which is increasingly loosing its economic and cultural appeal In the city the blocking mechanisms of state and European legislation often come to be blunted and diverted in the textures and issues of daily urban life. If the law exercises the unilateral procedures of power, the realities of street life and cultural proximities often lead to gaps, negotiations and compromise. It is precisely here that the capitalist organisation and disarticulation of the 'social' is most effectively challenged. It is here that the structural and structuring logic of the neo-liberal political economy, seeking to colonise not simply the present but also the future and the past, is most sharply exposed in its quotidian details and dangers. It is also here that alternative counter-narratives, refusals, revolts and deviations acquire substance, a life, and flesh. And it is here that the historical and cultural interruption proposed by what official culture has chosen to refuse, to expel and negate – the urban underclass, the 'illegal' migrant, youth revolt, gendered and racialised discrimination – acquires critical force, reminding us of a mutable and multivalent modernity that is never merely 'ours' to administer and define. In this cultivation of social space, where the public and private are increasingly entangled in emerging and unsuspected configurations, the subordinate cultures of the city proposes more extensive and significant historical and cultural perspectives than the narrow prospects offered by the existing political machine. In the interstices of this framework, the city hosts a re-thinking of the existing political order and its public sphere.

From the club to the squat

Between the 1980s and the end of the 1990s there emerged a set of heterotopic situations that can be mapped in our cartography of broken histories. Music created new spatialities and these were fundamental to identify. These spatialties were not necessarily places of the counter culture. They were not necessarily political spaces consciously questioning the status quo. Rather, they proposed alternative spaces in alternative registers of time and place. As such, they broke with existing understandings of Neapolitan club culture by creating new categories and genres in which emerging values were consciously and unconsciously translated and transmitted.

This transmission took place within a corporeal/non-verbal dimension, therefore the only way of stopping or interfering with it was/is to shut it down, to make it illegal, to persecute the believers by attacking their places of worship. At this stage it is the sites of transmission, the physical places themselves that become the real protagonist of the scene. As Danilo Capasso makes clear, it was the new cultural leaders of the club culture who wanted the community itself, its codes and aesthetics to be the principal star. This emerging cyber culture had its own spiritual leaders and gurus, but very few superstars. The network, that is the new relationship between humans, machines and new sexual identities, and the interaction of this shifting assemblage within a specific

space, became the real mobile subject. The '80s destroyed the pre-existing public spheres to open up new possibilities for the '90s. During these two decades the wilder reasoning of the new public sphere, and its interrogation by official public spaces and practices, generated the current discussion about contemporary Neapolitan club culture and its links with the historical past of the city.

At the beginning of the 1980s the Neapolitan scene was identified with 'Neapolitan Power', an extremely popular genre that mixed blues, jazz and local music: James Senses, Pino Daniele, Rino Zurzolo, Tullio De Piscopo. This sound was the result of a historical process in which Naples experienced an important transition from the end of the Second World War to the conclusion of the so-called *anni di piombo* (years of lead, or years of the bullet) of terrorism. During the 1970s and into the early1980s the country was sucked into an intense and violent conflict between the Italian state and extra-parliamentary organisations such as the Red Brigades and other armed political groups. In 1980 a bomb exploded in Piazza Fontana in Bologna killing 125 people and this further amplified the 'politics of tension'. The government of the day approved a series of laws giving more power to the police. Within a few years these armed left wing organisations was dismantled and youth culture initiated a path towards other horizons.

It was in this period that the punk movement arrived in Naples and brought with its music the creation of new spaces, new values and new perspectives. In this historical moment, previous ideologies began to loose their capacity to attract youth and avant-garde initiatives. A new place in downtown Naples was opened by a group of young people who wanted to break with the local 'Neapolitan Power' tradition. This space, and the way people clubbed there, had all the characteristics of a heterotopic situation in which an emerging sense of cultural identity was being built. Diamond Dogs opened in 1984 and its explicit manifesto was to distance itself from local politics and to exit from the *anni di piombo* and associated insurrecttionary values. Here underground culture separated itself from its immediate past and connected to what was happening elsewhere, abroad. It was a place in which novel encounters between different scenes could occur. Before Diamond Dogs there were basically three scenes: Italian pop and disco, native singer-songwriters, and the blues, rock, jazz constellation from the 1970s.

Now there existed a space were Neapolitan youth could listen to new sounds and trace in them innovative scenarios that were not necessarily tied into an immediate political and cultural past. Here the aesthetical and cultural boundary between this internal space and an external *napoletanità* was what really counted. The organization of events was altogether more spontaneous than in the consolidated and institutionalised music scene. Within the organisation of the club's programme there was much debate and discussion as Danilo Capasso has illustrated. Some people were coming from the pop scene and were advocating a more pop-like programme. Others were proposing more extreme reasons and rhythms. Left wing intellectuals, middle class kids and punks co-existed. They met to dance and debate a different future, a new trajectory, outside the existing scenarios promoted by the previous generation.

Diamond Dogs was an alternative rather than a counter-space: political and ideological values were not necessarily questioned or rendered explicit. The real rationale behind the creation of Diamond Dogs lay in the necessity to create a space able to accommodate a wide spectrum of new musical tendencies, largely coming from the UK, together with a local emergent scene known as the Vesuwave. It was a

place in which a DJ could play Wall of Voodoo, Echo & the Bunnymen, The Clash, Psychedelic Furs, Iggy Pop, along with the first live artists using synthesisers, and even dance music on Saturday nights. This multifarious musical mix produced new sonorial spatialities where corporeal configurations and non-verbal extensions through sound and dance, and simply being in those space, produced a diverse sense of cultural possibilities that did not exist in the already established pop clubs, or in the rock, blues and jazz circuit.

There were also other places in which such musical and cultural mixes were being experimented. There were the squats or *centri sociali*. The process in which a new wave of music became part of Neapolitan squat culture takes us into another heterotopic moment. The squatting movement emerged at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, and it left an irrevocable signature on the subsequent soundscape. In particular it was in two squats in Naples in this period that emerging rhythms were translated into physical and conceptual spaces leading to the production of two very different heterotopic formations.

The first is Tien'a Ment, occupied in 1989. In Neapolitan the name means 'Don't forget'. It clearly alludes in homophonic fashion to what was happening in China in this period. The squat was located in the northern part of the metropolitan periphery. It was occupied by a group of people who declared that they had no political affiliation and were largely related to punk and the squat scene in London. During an interview with one of the protagonists of this period it emerged that the first Tien'a Ment concert had been a fundraising event organised to collect money for the release of 'Collega': a friend who had been arrested during the Poll Tax protests in London.

This place and the community of people involved broke totally with the previous scene. The Tien'a Ment community publically declared that it did not want to be politically affiliated. This clearly led to a re-shuffling of inherited ideological positions and the earlier rigid identification of specific sounds with precise political attitudes. Significantly, the community was organized around music rather than political ideologies. It was not politics choosing the music, but rather sound proposing a very different understanding of what constituted the 'political'. It was a different space in which diverse groups came together under one roof: from hard-core punk to the new techno heads, again as Danilo points out. Here punk became post-punk, and groups such as Contropotere and others experimented at the punk extremes and its various mutations into cyberpunk, hard-core, noise and trash, pioneering an abrasive path towards electronic music.

The other squat was Officina99. It was occupied in 1991. This squat has a clear left wing orientation. There is a group – Officina99 – that takes its name from the squat, which it popularized by creating a song about it. The track became a hit and an integral part of the soundtrack of a specific historical period characterized by a series of massive anti-globalisation protests that took part in different parts of the Western world, from Seattle to Genoa. Squats were no longer marginalized places but focal points for the reshaping of urban areas and culture. Naples symbolically led this urban and political phenomenon through the songs and music from Officina99. Here in the squat the new musicalities that had emerged elsewhere were embedded in a leftist discourse. Officina99 was the antagonistic and profoundly anti-institutional response of the left wing movement to what has happening elsewhere in such places as Tien'a Ment. In this sense, Officina99 did not break with existing politics, but rather with its cultural order. The music of the Neapolitan left no longer remained the same. New

sounds were approved and popularized: dub, hip hop, and in some occasions even techno began to be played. This opening had a huge influence on the manner in which white Neapolitan youth began to relate to black world music, especially reggae, ragamuffin and rap. It was in this period that illegal African immigration became a political issue as part of the wider anti-globalisation movement. In the squat, African immigrants were hosted and supported. The squats played, and in some cases are still playing, an important role in providing legal, educational and health services to illegal immigrants. Once again, there was the emergence of different contact zones in which Neapolitan culture commences an engagement with creolisation. It was out of this process that the sounds of the group Almamegretta emerged.

Almamegretta was founded in 1988. It was also during this period that the student protest movement known as the *Pantera* or Panther began. The latter commenced with the occupation of the University of Palermo in 1989, immediately followed by occupations in Naples. Southern Italy was guiding a youth rebellion not only with its university students but also in terms of sounds. Almamegretta and 99Posse instantly became the soundtrack of the political wave that subsequently flowed into the Anti-Globalisation movement in Europe. Naples, and Italy in general, acquired a new centrality.

The networks of sound that rendered the Caribbean proximate to the Mediterranean, or London to Naples, also transformed a peripheral European city into an unsuspected centre. Moving from the cultural and historical edge of southern Europe, Naples opts for a new centrality. The dub sound of Almamegretta, for example, reopens the local archive of repressed memories and negated histories, to set in play other coordinates, other maps. A southern European history of subordination and oppression is connected to the contemporary injustice of neo-liberal globalisation. African ancestry is evoked in redemptive rhythms, sounds and sentiments in order to denounce the hypocrisies of the present in which goods and capital, but not human beings, freely circulate. This was one of the principal arguments of the Anti-Globalisation movement. This is a new narrative that emerges in the sounds and sentiments of diverse musical genres. It is a political statement. In *Children of Hannibal* (1992), Gennaro Della Volpe, aka Raiz, the singer of Almamegretta, recounts the story of Hannibal coming from Africa with elephants, crossing the Alps and conquering Italy. As Raiz sings: 'This is why many Italians have dark skin. This is why many Italians have dark eyes'. A fragmentary re-membering of the past is symbolically reconstituted within a contemporary context to query the present. It provokes an interrogation and proposes other identities and ontologies. It induces a cultural crisis. The present is interrupted, cut-up and reassembled in the light of the histories and possibilities it has structurally repressed and studiously avoided. These musicians are self-consciously at work here, remixing historical provocations, crossing them with transformed sounds, to promote other spaces, narratives and identities.

An emerging and heterogeneous modernity that does not merely mirror an imagined life in New York or Berlin, hosts the return of ghosts and their proposal to creolise both the past and the present. Over a heavy bass riddim Hannibal once again conquers Italy – 'Africa… Africa… Africa…' – and a negated *Black Athena* reverberates in the *Sud* of Italy and Europe where once we were all wops and without papers (Raiz, 'W.O.P.', 2004). This is obviously not simply about records, recordings and commercial success. It is, above all, about the elaboration of an affective cartography, a new and diverse mapping of the city that cuts into the earlier corpus of understanding. It leaves a wound, it bleeds, it festers, and it is incurable. In the same

key, the periphery of the city's official culture sends a message downtown to the administrative and commercial centre. Like the graffiti covered subway coaches rattling out of the Bronx into Manhattan, the sounds of Co'sang and A67 from the ghettoised housing estate of Scampia (rendered notorious in the novel and film *Gomorrah*) rework a trans-national metropolitan mix of sounds and subcultures into a precise semantics. They give shape to another cultural horizon, one that lies far beyond the provincial gaze of local power.

If the heterotopic moment generated during the Tien'a Ment period was able to question the cultural ontologies of the Left, Officina99 developed a new cultural style organized around music rather than traditional political activities. Despite radical differences in terms of ideologies, common practices emerged. *It was music that defined the spaces*. These two principal squats continued to co-exist until Tien'a Ment was forcibly cleared and has never since been re-occupied. Unlike Officina99, the post punk Tien'a Ment movement never had a clear political plan or organized structure. At the same time, diverse singularities that formed part of a multitude, wrongly defined by some as a movement, were subsequently to transform sounds and lives into techno and electronic fragments. The Tien'a Ment scene was eventually to come under the influence of electronic and techno music and a new generation of clubbers developing elsewhere in Naples during the first half of the 1990s.

A new ontology had now emerged from Neapolitan club culture. It led to the rise of new forms of social, cultural and political existence. In this conjuncture, Tien'a Ment and Officina99 were undoubtedly the local protagonists in the formation of new and significant heterotopic situations. In the same period, further cultural forces were also coming into play. The general rise of club culture in Europe and worldwide from the late 1980s onwards had promoted a completely new scene in Naples by the early 1990s. Left wing political movements were no longer the unique point of reference for alternative perspectives. An earlier oppositional rhetoric and aesthetics was now queried by the existence of these emerging spaces and their practices. Many walls were coming down, and something new was happening in town. By the early 1990s, in the wake of the heterotopic fallout that had cancelled an earlier musical and cultural order, the Neapolitan club scene, based on electronic dance music in the form of house, progressive or techno, was producing a series of fragmented and temporary autonomous zones or TAZ (Bey 1991). Condensed in diverse spaces – from nightclubs and private villas to camping sites and warehouses – sounds came together in a radical dance floor reconfiguration of cultural and musical semantics. Here middle class youth would mingle with others from different social classes. House music was putting politics under erasure while transforming the dance floor into an unadulterated contact zone. This emerging configuration transformed a mix of musicalities into a new physical and conceptual space destined to alter irreversibly the Neapolitan club scene, its ecosystem and associated public sphere.

Amongst these sounds and spaces influences were neither discussed nor celebrated. There was no apparent need to establish genealogies. Earlier developments were now decanted into new scenes and sounds. It was an emergent third space. It promoted encounters without the baggage of too many prejudices. It was precisely here in 1994 that post-punk, dub and reggae were able to meet house music and propel the Neapolitan club scene into its golden age. The new and the old were remixed in a manner to accommodate the now emerging sounds of the city. It was in this period that the United Tribes were organizing parties in which Almamegretta, Zion Train and Paul Daley (Leftfield) were sharing the same stage.

White Neapolitan youth began to listen and play with Afro sounds, transforming and transmitting them through their own codes and spaces. While the post punk movement was bringing dub music into electronic and house sounds, the Posse scene from Officina99 was promoting reggae, ragamuffin and hip hop as the sound of the anti-globalisation movement. At the close of the 1990s and the beginning of the new century reggae became extremely popular. The Kinky Bar, a bar and club in the old town proposed black music outside the squats. The place became a contact zone between illegal immigrants who wanted to socialize and white middle class kids. Reggae was everywhere. Southern Italian youth began to renegotiate their own identity by relating to Africa and the sounds of the black diaspora. From Lecce, another southern Italian city in Puglia, Sud Sound System became the first reggae group to sing in local dialect. In Naples, artists such as Marcello Coleman were singing raggamuffin style in Neapolitan. Southern roots now stretched rhizomatically out of Italy, across the Mediterranean into Africa and along the routes traced all around the black Atlantic. This, in turn, becomes a counter-cultural narrative against current European immigration policies and the neo-liberal global order.

New aesthetics required new spaces, producing another heterotopic situation. A multitude of diverse singularities (white middle class and leftist, creole kids and illegal immigrants, white Rastas, non-politicized youth) gathered in massive beach parties to listen to reggae and dance hall. These beach parties were not organized by squats such as Officina99. They are now commercial events. You bought a ticket to hear the music and have fun. It is also a place where it is possible to meet African youth and where an emerging creole generation can proudly display the colour of their skin. To be dark becomes an advantage, not because of paternalistic political slogans defending African immigrants, but because it is cool to be African, and even cooler to be a black Neapolitan. Once again, something has changed in town; a new ontology is under construction. The Neapolitan public sphere is passing into a further phase of creolisation. The Afro sound has left the squats to be played in the clubs and on the beach. Mario Balotelli, the black Italian soccer player born in Palermo, is listening to R&B, and 50Cent is now a global leader. Black music is no longer esclusively the sound of the anti-globalisation movement. Reggae, raggamuffin, reggaeton R&B are now part of a new cultural formation and soundscape

Clubbing culture nostalgia and creolisation

It is in this context that the spaces of club culture reveal themselves as heterotopias. According to Foucault, parallel to the spatial and institutional organization of consensual understandings, heterotopic spaces provide a counter-space. They promote a 'time out' from institutional rhythms. If the prevailing social organization of the public sphere is here sometimes deepened and confirmed, it is simultaneously also contested and subverted. In the continual crossings between authorized and heterotopic variations of cultural and social life that mix and confute simple distinctions between public and private, there emerge temporary communities sustained by a 'citizenship' in sound. This possibility acquires further pertinence when it accommodates the recent ingression of music and cultures, of bodies and histories, that have literally migrated from elsewhere to take up residence in the city's soundscape and its daily life. It marks a profound historical shift, exposing the cultural concerns of Naples to radically more extensive coordinates as the local and

the global are increasingly intertwined in each other's trajectories. Here music promotes an emergent and differentiated commons.

It is the end of the 1990s and the beginning of a new century; the cyber culture revolution has accomplished its mission. There is no longer the need to preach about the power of the net anymore. Internet is a mass media, and no longer a frontier. Youth is now discussing its political beliefs on-line, flash mobs are becoming the paradigm of the new protests, dating and sex have expanded into hybrid relationships that involve the use of social networks and on-line porno communities, DJs have begun to create their own MySpace pages to advertise their production and communicate with their fans, and suddenly the star system is back again. The network itself, the club, is no longer the main protagonist, it has become merely the infrastructure for the building of a new industry. Facebook has taken the place of the "Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace" (Barlow 1996).

Such shifts have been interpreted as a form of decadence by a disenchanted generation. This included part of the Neapolitan electronic club scene, mainly populated by white Neapolitans. They feel that Naples is loosing something in this moment, while for the creole and black Neapolitans, there emerges no obvious need to connect musically with the Neapolitan past: their roots are elsewhere, their contemporary symbolical and cultural routes are different. While a part of the city buys into the general feeling of the decline of the West, and considers the present and the future to be darker then the past, another part, peopled by migrants and black people, is developing a different scenario. For this latter group the present and the future become critical horizons in the Neapolitan public sphere where there is no need to embrace fully a local *napoletanità* and its melancholy aesthetics of 'decadence'. Between these two poles there is also another 'discourse', developed mostly by white middle class Neapolitans, and in general southern Italians, who feel closer to the black music scene and its cultures. They seek to connect contemporary black music to their local music past and believe that southern Italy has played a major role in developing such forms of cultural appropriation due to its historical and cultural proximity to Africa. However, they also believe that such processes are part of a global trend and that many other European cities are also developing their own styles and scenes in a similar manner. Their vision is far closer to the politics of creolisation, altogether more focused on the present and the future and less on the centrality of Neapolitan tradition as providing the premises of musical identification and belonging.

These differences also emerged in a series of interviews we undertook in order to understand the meaning of local *napoletanità* when connected to different music scenes. One of these is related to the so-called electronic scene that includes house and techno, and the other to black music including reggae, drum 'n' bass, hip-hop, R&B and reggaeton. The idea here was to understand how different Neapolitans use diverse musical genres, and how club scenes create distinct spaces and heterotopias. We interviewed people who are all in their thirties to compare their perspective on a shared time frame that runs from the end of the last century until the present.

According to Diana, a Neapolitan party organizer since the 1990s, Neapolitans have been the precursors of house and techno music, first with the famous party organizers 'Angels of Love', then with DJs such as Marco Carola, Gaetano Parisio, Rino Cerrone, Markantonio, Davide Squillace and Danilo Vigorito. Diana suggests that at the time there was no need for special guests to come from abroad because these DJs were all internationally recognized. During this period the scene was extremely

vibrant, while today Diana thinks that her club followers are considered outsiders. According to Diana, despite the lack of infrastructure and the absence of institutional support, Naples remains among the most significant house, techno and electro scenes in the world '*arrivare a Napoli voleva dire e vuol dire ancora oggi aver raggiunto un traguardo*': to be invited to play in Naples was and remains a goal. Diana also suggests that the house and techno scenes are now merging and becoming more commercial; not necessarily a bad thing in her opinion. She continues to believe that Naples still plays a major role in the club scene '*sanno che arrivare qui significa avere una vetrina importante*', they know that this is an important place to be showcased. Diana also told us that when she was partying during the golden period at the end of the 1990s the audiences were incredible: everybody knew the tracks that the DJs were playing even before the Internet revolution; everyone was savvy about the technical equipment. The people who attended these parties were experts in the music genres they listened to. She concluded by saying in English that this was 'real Club culture'. Diana belongs to a scene that emerged after the post punk encounter with house when techno was becoming increasingly white and European and losing its creolisation connotations. It turn out to have been the final act before the black music scene that has subsequently taken over.

Augusto, another famous promoter of the electro music club scene in Naples, makes a similar argument. In his opinion, Naples played a key role in the Italian and European club scene. Augusto talked of the glorious past of the house music scene that brought to Naples, prior to any other Italian city, artists such as Knuckles, Morales, Vega. He also stressed that international artists at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the following decade sought to play in Naples, and cited the techno scene at the beginning of the 1990s when artists such as Mills, Hawtin, Aquaviva, Darren Emerson and Paul Daley were in town.

However Augusto also thought that the avant-garde scene began to decline at the end of the 1990s when Barcelona, London and Berlin took over. It is interesting that Augusto compares the club scene of Naples with other club scenes such as London and Berlin. Naples is not a capital, and of course does not have the same economical or political role in Europe as these other cities. Through making such comparisons he elevates Naples to their level through the powers ascribed to the music made available by the club scene.

Mattia is a Neapolitan creole. His mother is from Cabo Verde and his father is from Naples. He told us that Capoverdians are totally integrated into Neapolitan society, however in terms of music and social gathering they have very different habits. When they go out they choose the black music scene, very few of them are into the house, techno or electro scene, most of them like to go to the Arenile a beach club in the ex-industrial part of the city where they play mostly R&B, drum 'n' bass, and regaeton, or the Kinky Bar, a place in old historical centre where they play reggae.

According to Mattia the fact that Naples is considered an important place for house, techno and electronic music does not interest the creole population. They do not share the same 'heterotopia': they are not interested in connecting Naples to the glories of a previous local club scene. They are altogether more focused on the present scene that is quite active but very fragmented. Talking of his personal experiences, Mattia looks to possible future scenarios rather than the past. He is aware of the cultural and musical past of Naples but thinks that in the future the black scene will add to the city even more energy, especially with the beach parties that are taking over the Arenile

beach club. Finally, he told us that Naples does not have such a strong identity as Salento (an area in Puglia in southern Italy) because in Naples you can listen to a bit of everything in black music while Salento has become exclusively famous for its reggae music scene.

Stefano is a Neapolitan who moved to Salento about eight years ago. He was into the reggae music scene when the Kinky Bar was at the very peak of its popularity at the end of the Nineties. During this period black music in Naples, especially reggae attracted much of its audience from those who did not identify with the house or techno scene. During this transitional period the so-called black music world was not a totally separate scene. Often the same people were listening to rock and other types of music while they were also into reggae. This is when Stefano, originally from a middle class neighbourhood in Naples, began to identify with the Rastafarian movement. When the black musical scene in the city began to evolve into something else he decided to move to Salento.

In Stefano's opinion, the Neapolitan musical past is profoundly connected to an African one. He spoke of traditional trance music, practised in southern rural communities and investigated by the famous anthropologist Ernesto De Martino, such as the Tammurriata and the Tarantella. He made the connection between these phenomena and the popularity of the contemporary black music scene in southern Italy. He believes that this is the reason why both Naples and Lecce (the capital of Salento) have played a major role in the development of the Italian black music scene. However he thinks that they are no longer central, as black music is now highly popular all over Italy. He cited the case of Oliver Skardi, a Venetian artist who plays and sings reggae in a local Venetian dialect.

Charting the configurations of these heterotopic moments it becomes possible to understand how existing cultural (and political) meanings have been consistently challenged by the irruption of new sounds: from Diamond Dogs to Tien'a Ment and Officina99, arriving at the Kinky Bar and the beach parties. In all of these places, previous ontologies were challenged and new categories emerged without fully cancelling or destroying what previously existed. In this fashion, a new complexity began to characterize the city's fragmented public sphere. A nostalgic vision of the city is today like a white flag waving an unconditional surrender to a historicist perspective rooted in the memory of the 1990s. Locked in the past, it is unable to dialogue with the present and is destined for melancholy. Elsewhere collective memories routed through Euro-Mediterranean cultures have emerged to interrupt (and interrogate) Eurocentric nostalgia and to project futures on another cartography. Meanwhile, those of African and non-European descent, their children and offspring, are in Europe to stay. This is also now their place. This is where they were born. They are neither simply African nor European. Their existence radically questions existing understandings of citizenship, the public sphere and national culture and identity.

Moving from here and learning from the south

From the 1980s until the present there is a common thread that unites the different heterotopias produced by white Neapolitan artists, clubbers and event organizers. This is a shared 'Neapolitan-centric' counter-narrative that is not necessarily shared by other ethnic groups who are now contributing to the fragmentary dis-assembling and

re-assembling of the musical and cultural landscapes of new heterotopias. The latter are adding novel layers of planetary impulses and interpretations to the city.

If we have heterotopias and counter-discourses that seek to re-centre the city in an inherited historical and cultural tradition, we also have other heterotopic practices that take the city on a journey towards altogether wider coordinates, In the latter case, the musical journeys are simultaneously de-provincializing and relocating narratives of the city in a planetary cartography; here both the home-grown and seemingly 'foreign' are constantly being negotiated and reworked. While the counter narratives of Neapolitan-centrism continuously re-produced themselves in different historical moments and music styles, we are now involved in a new scenario. The musical and cultural 'citizens' of non-European descent, and even parts of the white middle class attentive to black sounds, are fragmenting and reworking such heterotopias into new public and private spaces. This phenomenon can be linked to the rise of new modalities of subjectification and identifications, ranging from '*Napoletanità*' to '*Italianità*' and their continual reconfiguration in the contemporary historical scenario.

This is to argue that the music does not represent an isolated object of study or attention, but is rather the instigator of processes that involve the production of cultural and historical identifications. Such processes involve multiple dynamics and powers in which narratives are produced and disseminated to affirm specific discourses and counter-discourses. In this sense, the cultural appropriation that is occurring today is both deeper and more extensive than previously. We are assisting in the rise of a so-called multicultural society in which the historical past is no longer to be located in a unique historical temporality or cultural location. If Europe is in Africa, Africa is also in Europe. The south of the planet is not simply 'down there'; it is significantly also in here, in a colonial past and postcolonial present, in the everyday life of citizens, rather then in the abstract procedures of institutions. Europe is consistently being remade and reworked along networks that connect diverse cities, cultures and continents and their coming together in sounds and club cultures.

Blue veins running through an urban body: these could be the tracks laid down by the Neapolitan dub band Almamegretta and its singer Raiz, just as they had been earlier traced in the extended saxophone soul of James Senese and Napoli Centrale. Today this inheritance – simultaneously local and planetary – reverberates in the hybridising sounds and sentiments that spiral across the beach in the ex-industrial area of the Arenile. Visceral intensities have been folded into the dark recesses of the bass-bearing doubling, dubbing, deepening, and dissemination of subaltern sounds. Born in the Caribbean and on Atlantic shores, subordinate sensibilities have led to unplanned sonorial routes subsequently folded into the concentrated 'dread' of the city under the volcano. Between the Black Atlantic and the blue sonorities of the Mediterranean it becomes possible to chart an ecology of rhythms, beats, and tonalities that produced sonic cartographies where, as Kodwo Eshun and Steve Goodman put it, 'sound comes to the rescue of thought' (Goodman 2010: 82). Drawn from a dissonant archive, there emerges a musical inheritance in which traditions of Arab music making and African-American blues criss-cross, explore and deepen the spaces between the official measures of modernity. Today, Africa returns in the diaspora. A repertoire drawn from the margins and the marginalised – from the subaltern south and urban underclass – bends, repeats and replays the notes of modernity. It gives form to unsuspected sounds and sentiments that cross and creolize the landscape: in the

Caribbean, in the Mediterranean… in the contemporary world. These musical cartographies provoke forms of interference that render hidden histories and negated genealogies audible, sounding them out and rendering them sensible. Not only do such sounds come to matter, they also propose and extend critical matters. They become a narrative force that draws us toward what survives and lives on as a cultural and historical resource able to resist, disturb, interrogate, and fracture the presumed 'unity' of the present (Didi-Huberman 2000).

To think of the Neapolitan music scene in its extended Mediterranean tonalities in terms of the sonorial suspension and the unsuspected deepening and dispersal of the empirical present is to embrace what Gilles Delueze and Félix Guattari would have called a 'minor' history (Deleuze and Guattari 1986). Here sonorial cartographies provoke an interruption, or slash, in the existing, official map. Returning us to what has been overlooked, negated and denied, such indicators permit another story and an unsuspected landscape to emerge. If established powers refuse to listen, as they inevitably do, then these sounds trace another, largely, unrecognized and undisciplined projection that shadows and potentially interrupts the seamless surface of public and consensual understanding. The effects of such sounds push the premises of historical and sociological analysis beyond their explanatory frames. What fails to be represented in such disciplinary terms nevertheless exists and persists as an interrogation, a potential interruption. Here, considering the Mediterranean as 'an infinity of traces without […] an inventory' (Gramsci 1971: 324), and Naples as one of its reverberatory chambers, sonic histories propose a persistent 'noise' that disrupts the institutional silence of the historical register. Such sounds become a source of critical disturbance and the musical archive they sustain 'a question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility, for tomorrow' (Derrida 1998: 36). Like the sea, that once facilitated their passage, sonic processes resist representation and propose an affective economy, 'stripped of consolation and security' (Eshun 2007: 78). Opposed to the stasis secured in officialdom and its version of the public sphere, such sounds are destined to disturb existing configurations of time, space, and belonging in sounding out communities to come.

So, while white Neapolitan are listening to house, techno and electro, contemplating the local past and are occupied with trying to halt what they perceive as a contemporary decadence, elsewhere creolised cultures are proposing new horizons. The latter are altogether less concerned with recovering the city and rather more in re-directing it towards other non-European spaces directly connected to their lives. These processes have significant political implications on the city's public sphere. Counter-discourses embedded in these creolized cultures and lives have the potential to delegitimize the existing shaping of space and power, unbundling their temporalities and narratives. If not always able to withdraw from being captured from the places the city allots them, they nevertheless are able to create liminal spaces in which hegemonic arrangements are consistently contested, confuted and alternatives proposed.

It is precisely here, we would argue, that the musical formation of the public sphere, largely hidden and unobserved by the formal mechanisms of the politics, sustains the heterotopic promise and potential of redrawing the sense imposed by a control culture. Sounding out the edges of everyday life, temporarily transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary, the musical reconfiguration of urban space leaves a trace, disseminates an interrogation, and seeds a discontinuity with the predictable.

Ultimately, it is the postcolonial register of these sonorities, as we have seen in the distinct dislocation of local Neapolitan heterotopias from exclusively autochthonous coordinates to creolised planetary horizons, that usher in a new critical cultural cut with the promise of a world yet to come.

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