Tension of Exclusion

On Death Grips and the Californian Ideology

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California Light, 1969

The Pirelli calendar shoot of 1969 can be read as exemplifying the use of the light of California. Each photograph is presented as mounted above the car number plate CALIFORNIA PIR 1969, stamping the slightly washed-out aesthetic of the beach images, which draws on sunlight and the colors of illuminated sand and sea, with location, brand and date. Blondes in bikinis were Pirelli's stock in trade but for the 1969 shoot (on Big Sur), photographer Harri Peccinotti, designer Derek Birdsall and Art Director Derek Forsyth crudely calibrated and synchronized a number of themes. In this portfolio, oral sex and orality (the celebration of the year of '69; the first image is the numerical figure on the t-shirt of a jumping blonde, and subsequent shots feature open mouths, or mouths with bottles, ice pops or cigarettes), as a relatively "sophisticated" sense and pastime of pleasure, is writ large across the presentation of California and its beach-dwelling, sun-kissed denizens.[1] The late 1960s light is seen to gloss the State of California and warm the images of pleasure and freedom. And the wealth and well-being needed for pleasure and freedom, that seem intrinsic to the idea of California more generally, are often presented as intimately connected to Californian sunshine.

To darken this sense of California is to consider those excluded from this vision of a secular utopia—those not illuminated by or luxuriating in Californian beach sunshine—and a darkened California is the concern of this essay: not in respect to those who failed to party across the late 1960s (although that legacy also figures here), but those who proclaim themselves excluded and dispossessed, and living in a state of exile, and so dwell unseen,

as if in the dark. The group Death Grips are read in this way, and the exclusion is considered in relation to a later flowering of the legacy of late 1960s California: neoliberalism and virtuality.

The Californian Ideology

Virtuality—as theorized through now quaint terms such as "the information age," "hypermedia," "the digital future," "virtual reality" and "the information superhighway"—is read as the coming condition by Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron, writing in August 1995. And with a state of virtuality, for a "virtual class," comes the radical transformation of modes of work and life: the merging of social and professional spheres.[2] It is not clear why this turn is referred to as "The Californian Ideology." The authors identify what seems to be a coined term, but without attributing authorship to any one element of that "loose alliance of writers, hackers, capitalists and artists from the West Coast of the USA [who] have succeeded in defining a heterogeneous orthodoxy for the coming information age: the Californian Ideology" (Barbrook and Cameron). However, in any intellectual history of Californian culture, two parallel tracks are held as dominant: the counterculture, particularly around the Summer of Love of 1967, and its utopian and communal concepts and ideals of freedom; and a venture capitalist/information technology culture, as originating in part in that counterculture (the Homebrew Computer Club of the mid–1970s, for example), with its utopian and communal concepts, and libertarian ideals. In the Californian Ideology, these two tracks entwine: countercultural positions meet anti-statist positions.

Thus, one could think of moving to a situation of historically unprecedented levels of personal freedoms for individuals (through progressive legislative elements of decriminalization, the "rolling back" of state control, freedoms of movement, speech, thought and choice, and so on), but as coexisting with a regime of near total surveillance of the individual. For those who once baulked at Ronald Reagan's position as governor of California (1967–1975), especially in respect of Reagan's strategic attempts to gain political traction, as achieved via attacks on the countercultures around Berkeley campus (see Kahn), the Californian Ideology is a placating combination of radical and conservative perspectives (Barbrook and Cameron, n.p.). The common denominator or foundation for this new alliance, and one that Reagan articulated when he chastised academics and students on the grounds of their lack of responsibility, was taken to be individual agency.

What the Californian Ideology considers in respect to the coming state of virtuality is the way in which such agency is to be computer-facilitated. To put it in very vulgar terms, this agency is not the freedom granted to slaves

once their chains have been removed: freedom of movement, freedom of choice, freedom to work for, in part, their own financial gain (and freedoms which seem to resonate across the myths of California in the late 1960s). Rather, this agency is the freedom that is possible for those who remain enslaved or choose enslavement—that is, surrendering their lives to the forensic and archived surveillance of the computer-city. "Freedom is slavery" write Barbrook and Cameron (n. p.). And insurrection, for those "off the grid," is not merely just a matter of (as many 1970s science fictions had it) destroying or shutting down the central computer. Rather, the physical focus or target of insurrection is itself lost: there is no central computer, but an infinitely interconnected grid with no center. That "central command" "thing" has, in a neoliberal maneuver, vanished.

One is tempted to pick an argument with this continuum: libertarian positions often tend to center on individual freedom, whereas the counterculture's concept of freedom was often communal. Indeed, the counterculture was to a far degree about communing: happenings, orgies, music festivals, squats, communal living, communes.[3] But the erosion of that sense of the mass or (to use a later term) multitude,[4] can be seen as occurring during the dying days of 1960s. This shift is often imagined, in a clichéd and journalistic way, as the ending of the Summer of Love, or death of the counterculture, around an eruption of violence associated with Charles Manson and his followers in August 1969, with five members of the Bel Air/Hollywood set seemingly ritually murdered. More arrestingly, this cliché is understood to have resonated in a changed or changing cultural sensibility of the time, for the perceptions around the music festival, and the entire "culture" of culture itself, as argued by Wright, or sexual subcultures, as argued by Halligan and Wilson. Here, communalism comes across as vulnerability, and the heightened potential for things going wrong rather than a joyous coming together. One immediate solution to such danger was the social apartheid of the Californian gated community, which is often traced to the intrusion of Manson's associates; or the refashioning of recreation to the individual him or herself—"bowling alone," as Robert Putnam put it. And, beyond this, comes communalism-in-isolation: something achieved via the interconnection of isolated individuals via virtuality, and institutionalized via social media.

Of course these protective tendencies refer pretty much exclusively to the upper strata of class and wealth. Barbrook and Cameron remain aware that the coming neoliberal city of the Global North is one that contains the Global South at its borders, or within it—in its public spaces (the homeless and destitute), or in its business spaces (a service industry of precariat or grey collar works, from cleaners to sex industry workers). And the Californian Ideology is also exclusionary. Those "techno-booster" ideologues and evangelists "are at the same time reproducing some of the most atavistic features

of American society, especially those derived from the bitter legacy of slavery. Their utopian vision of California depends upon a wilful blindness towards the other—much less positive—features of life on the West Coast: racism, poverty and environmental degradation" (Barbrook and Cameron).

Barbrook and Cameron footnote this comment with a reference to West Coast rap, and list a number of figures who, since their gangsta rap early/mid-90s heydays, have all gone on to become pillars of the entertainment establishment (even specifically extolling the hedonistic virtues of the State of California).[5] But the point is usefully made, and makes for a cultural critique of the unenviable situation of the excluded majority. A mid-point in this downward trajectory in respect to gangsta rap, or a text indicative of the way in which criminal routes out of racism and poverty are then subsumed into bourgeoisie culture, can be found in Tupac's "California Love."[6] The first verse lists the benefits of the titular new Wild West: a city characterized by eroticism, with good quality marijuana, full nightclubs, efficient pimps focused on making money, and endemic bling as emblematic of new and crass wealth.

Unlike Tupac, Ice-T is listed by Barbrook and Cameron. His 1989 album *The Iceberg (Freedom of Speech ... Just Watch What You Say)*—the very subtitle of which points to the paradox mentioned above of freedom and surveillance—opens with the track "Shut Up, Be Happy": a millennial, dystopian vision consisting of doom metal chords under a shouted monologue by Jello Biafra, formerly of the hardcore punk group Dead Kennedys. Biafra adopts the position of a threatening newsreader declaring martial law for reasons of national security: all rights have been suspended, a curfew is being enforced, gatherings are prohibited, and DNA material will be collected from everyone. Instructions not to think (which risks depression), and to remain calm, and to continue to take prescribed medications, are repeated throughout. Biafra's satirical twist, as per the track's name, is that this then is the coming state of happiness where, finally, all needs are catered for by unnamed external agencies. One surmises that the material that follows, on *The Iceberg*, then represents the mindset of the rebels against this state—but the cultural critique one derives from this is often reactionary and trivial.[7]

Death Grips

The music of Death Grips, the Sacramento punk/rap/noise/electronica group,[8] can be read as exemplifying this tension of exclusion. But, rather than boast of strategies of personal resilience, or complain in respect to infringements of liberties, or even simply articulate narratives along these lines, Death Grips seem to prefer to act out the material conditions and resultant mindset of exclusion. In these respects, Death Grips find some common ground with

outsider art—artifacts presented from the psychologically/mentally distressed and damaged, in which avant-garde tendencies seem to be manifest (as a break with the rules of artistic form meets and matches a tendency to break all rules in general, and hence the exclusion of such "madmen"), particularly for connoisseurs of Modernist art. The artifacts are offered as indicative of clinical conditions. For Death Grips, then, their music indicates madness, a turn to cultism, or occultism, or primitivism (as shall be argued), and suicidal tendencies or preoccupations. Death Grips present themselves as victims of the process identified as the Californian Ideology rather than, as with Tupac of "California Love," its outriders and innovators.

And the group, as with Ice-T and David Bowie, introduce themselves into the dystopia with spoken word, albeit via turning up, as it were, with Manson in tow. "Beware," the first track on their first release, the mixtape *Exmilitary* (2011), opens with the sampled audio of an interview with Manson.[9] He talks singingly and charismatically, recalling his thoughts before his imprisonment, and he advances his argument or defense in a way that now sounds like a rapper dissing his detractors—pre-empting criticisms, rising above a fray perceived to be beneath him, bigging himself up, questioning the grounds of others' questioning. Thus, in a one-side dialogue to a "he," Manson claims, seemingly on the subject of his personal and professional connections to the Beach Boys in 1968–1969, to have been in a state reminiscent of imprisonment, even when at his freest, as arising from his interactions with the industries around popular entertainment as they lustily courted him. The "he" seems to refer to a star-making entertainment executive, perhaps keen to further cash-in on the West Coast sound during the Summer of Love, and so seeking to recruit Manson as a folk singer. But the fame offered here seems a trap, and the narrative is reminiscent of the story of the temptation of Christ by Satan in the Judean desert.[10] Like Christ, Manson claims to see through the material riches on offer, understanding that the price for their gain is the loss of his soul. Such an impression is sustained until Manson then notes that fame, or fortune, was in fact unnecessary—not because such promises are hollow but because his needs were already amply catered for: several women, he claims, are available to him (one assumes sexually), the money he has at his disposal, and how this puts him in a primary position in respect to the cultural/political underground, and exerts his control over it.[11] In this respect, Manson seems to blend cult leader with a Lenin-style figure, as if his actions were undertaken during the tumult of a pre-revolutionary situation, and perhaps then with the Bel Air murders configured as an October 1917 moment, or the execution of the Romanov family.

After the sample has run its course, MC Ride flatly intones several verses and choruses that—in their apocalyptic scenarios, self-obsession, and occult references—would seem to suggest an attempted entry into, or recreation of,

Manson's stream of consciousness. After the burning of a house, the promo video mostly consists of a shirtless, bald, bearded, and heavily tattooed MC Ride, in what looks like the Mojave Desert—with the imagery intercut with (seemingly) blurry, 1980s videotape footage, overlaid with 1980s psychedelic computer effects. One could surmise that this would have been the line of flight for the Manson family: destruction of the Bel Air house, and exile, and contemplation. The lyrics swing between what sounds like a psychotic state of mind and a sense of the physical body under extremes of stress or in hostile conditions: a body stripped of skin to reveal the skeleton beneath, hunger, and bones then pulverized, and a reprise that suggests a blind lunge against and an attack on an enemy.[12] This introduction to Death Grips sketches out what would then become a constant theme: the degraded biological and psychological conditions of those excluded from the wealth and well-being envisaged along the Summer of Love/Californian Ideology axis. The oppressed and befuddled subject is then one who is given over to a demagoguery that makes the self-aggrandizement of other MCs seem trivial. And the sense of the rude presence of this individual locks such a subjectivity into, as it were, the "really existing" conditions of California: those way below the upper strata, or outside the virtual bubble/gated communities, that seem to have grown within and around the hippie commune as was.

In this respect, the group attempt a framing of Manson and his family's activities that seems to seek to account for such behaviors—without condemning Manson or reacting with revulsion (which then spurred, as noted, perceptions of the "ending" of the countercultural 1960s, and an architectural/urban planning reaction), or indeed the pulpy modish recreation of the narrative against a montage of civil strife and Vietnam footage, as with Sonic Youth's "Death Valley '69" or in various faked Mondo and "snuff" films from the 1970s.[13] The framing offers the kind of correction that the above-quoted proviso from Barbrook and Cameron invites: the tracking of the continuum from the dispossessed then to the dispossessed of the present, rather than from the hippies to the techno-boosters. These dispossessed, in a literal sense, make for that hinterland of the homeless and the poor, the excluded and the broken, whose hunger and limited life expectancy are somehow beyond solution for Californian capitalism. But such precarious conditions seem to creep upward too, so that dispossession becomes, in a psychological sense, a background fear for those only a few disasters away from the street, or those whose security is tenuous. The dispossessed, for Death Grips, offer a counter-narrative, or altermodernity, to the modernity, and postmodernity, of the aspirational end of the Californian Ideology: the jumble of occult and dark psychedelic ideas aping, or holding a dark mirror to, the techno- and psycho-babble of high digital capitalism. And while the modernity of the Californian Ideology is one of disappearance and virtuality (the centerless network, the

"hollowing out" of civil and state institutions in the name of neoliberal outsourcing), this altermodernity is one of an unavoidable materialism: the sense of the actualité or presence of the body under stress. What more need be said, or what further metaphorical elaboration is required, in respect of a straightforward statement of need and deprivation?

This particularly physical stress is to be found in MC Ride's shouting-strained voice and his gasps for breath. And one senses that the paranoia of his lyrics is physically manifest too: pushing the body into a state of high agitation.[14] And indeed the voice contrasts sharply with the actualization of technobabble in the electronic soundscapes, which sounds like computer crashes or information overloads, or will break with a certain groove without warning, or "jump cut" to shards of found sound or noise, or seem to be so rough as to be first or spontaneous or even autopilot mixes. The result could push weary listeners away, or could be configured as a test of willingness to rise to the challenges of such expanded sounds (or just evidential material for those who wish it to be noted by their peers that they have risen to such challenges). This is in sharp contrast to the disco-era utilization of machine music, which often found a lulling smoothness in repetition, merged with the human voice and, at its most suggestive, sought to link body and computer together—as if the latter melding was a near-future erotic technology.[15] The human/computer dynamic here is one of difference and disparity, if not a form of mutual sonic warfare. And Death Grips make a virtue of such material presentness too; the way in which, for the "No Love" (2014) promo video, Zach Hill pounds his drums with his fists and hands—a flattened thump from his skin impacting on drum skin—negates access to his musical skills for this extraordinary drummer. And Hill's blood-gorged flesh reputedly features again on the cover of *No Love Deep Web*: it is a shot of his erect penis, with the album title scrawled along it in black marker pen. For a section of "No Love," Hill lugs a loudspeaker around on his shoulder in a way which, iconographically (and not least in terms of Hill's appearance and pained expressions), mimics images of Christ shouldering the cross on his journey to Calvary.

Such material presentness has been much in evidence in live performance. Live, the trio or duo of Death Grips is hyper-energetic—even to the extent of, as with thrash metal groups, needing to radically curtail standard set lengths. Their Manchester concert of 6 November 2012, in Sound Control, began gradually. Hill arrived alone, and proceeded to set up and tune his drum kit, and change aspects of his clothing, and footwear, as if oblivious to the crowd packed into this small venue. It was only with the gradual assembly of the full "band" (drums, laptop/keyboard, video screens), and the belated arrival of MC Ride, that the concert proper started. The laptop/keyboard-generated sounds and samples were constant and maximal—a battery of noise—and Hill's athletic drumming can be described as very apparently

indebted to math's rock: constant beats (that is, filling all beats in the bar) and minimal cymbal work, delivered with click-track precision despite the speed, and with Hill almost doubled-over his kit, as if crouched into himself, rather than the grandstanding of some drummers.

MC Ride, upon arrival, both in Manchester and for a concert some months later for the Primavera Sound festival (in Barcelona, for the night of 23 May 2013), appeared as if a cult leader, adopting a Messianic pose, as if in a trance-like state: expressionless, motionless for jarringly long periods, despite the growing crescendo of the electronic soundscape, the storm of lighting and smoke, and the cheers and whooping of the expectant audiences. His motionlessness seemed to whip those audiences into a frenzy, placing on them the need to create a kinetic energy, or to yell loudly enough to rouse MC Ride from his passage-into-trance and, state now altered, to begin the performance. It is a technique that is particularly reminiscent of Artaud-derived ideas in operation in the 1960s theater, both in terms of trance-like states (the Living Theater would experiment with performers staring at the audience for indefinite periods), and in terms of frantic, dervish-like activity, with the performer seeking to channel the psychic energy of the massed crowd into the performance (as with Jim Morrison of The Doors).[16] And, again, this is in sharp contrast to the majority norm of vamping an entrance and beginning with a bang—and straight into a hit song, and so winning over an audience, rather than risking their alienation and irritation. The demand is that the audience communicate to the presence in the same space, and find a shared wavelength, independent of or cutting through the soundscape chaos and samples and looped digital visual displays. The hand reaches out to the hand, metaphorically speaking: human contact is needed to activate the performance. Or, for a concert at the Manchester Academy some years later (on 16 October 2016), for the audience to act as midwife, and "birth" the start of the show: MC Ride began with utterances of basic sounds, as if learning a language for the first time, and so needing to repeatedly articulate the guttural tones of parts of words. The effect was akin to a slow-motion stammer, or listening to someone attempting to speak again, as can be the case with those who suffer from aphasia after a stroke. That concert offered no support act but, rather, an electronic buzzing around the darkened concert hall, lasting an hour and a half.

MC Ride's sweat-drenched naked torso, his undulating and convulsive movements, his barked, chanted and intoned lyrics, running between shouting and glossolalia, and staccato-delivery in the manner of a military drill instructor, his rolling around on the floor and lolling head, seem to suggest explosive demonic possession—as if he were in the throes of some kind of occult ceremony. The substantial pentagram tattoo on his chest directly invites such a connection. And the propensity of Death Grips live for very

low lighting levels (typically blues and purples, and no spotlight on MC Ride), denying the audience the ability to watch a performer perform (in the sense of facial expressions, and to be seen singing or rapping) ensures that the performance is about this shadowy, sinuous figure (seen in silhouette, or on occasion flash-illuminated for milliseconds by bursts of white light). As a stage presence strategy, MC Ride at times recalls Public Enemy's Flavor Flav, who renders an almost pantomime-like racist grotesque of the drink-crazed or drug-addled African American hobo. The implications are troubling, especially as performed for, one would surmise (at least from the three concerts discussed here), the predominantly educated and seemingly white audiences: as if an African-American who, pushed to and then beyond his limits, returned to some sort of "savage" state, blathering incomprehensibly, squinting or glowering, dancing "tribally."[17] What kind of performance has been activated? One that seems to implicate the prejudices of the audience? That performs an Uncle Tom–esque victimhood? That critically undermines the ways in which famed African-American artists obscure their otherwise demeaning performances with ideas of empowerment, individuality and "fierceness"? If so, then the condition of this victimhood is one of self-abasement—as if he were "forced" to dance and entertain in ways that reinforce the existing structures of exclusion. Shortly after the first period under discussion here (2012–2013), Death Grips went through a brief phase of failing to turn up to scheduled concerts (Bychawski n. p.), as if moving to the next stage of their "unacceptable" live strategy and dramaturgy. Touring again in 2016, on the other side of considerable critical acclaim, their rebarbativeness was somewhat tempered: something of a "greatest hits" set was delivered, albeit buried in the uninterrupted 80 minutes of constant noise, for which MC Ride would at times orchestrate or conduct the audience as it chanted or shouted along. Elsewhere, the harsh electronic soundscapes that interjected shards of beats into distorted samples, and with no discernible hook or time-signature to allow for an easy access into the music, left that audience (perhaps curious as to the source of the critical acclaim) immobile, or exiting, and seemingly baffled, or bored. In this context, a track such as "Bubbles Buried in This Jungle" from *Bottomless Pit* (2016)—which was the second song of the 2016 concert—works to marshal the freeform noise chaos into a discernible structure for finite periods by imposing a shouted punctuation of words across it for each chorus.

Subjectivity and Radical Refusal

In such ways, the live performances very directly suggest that Death Grips seek to illustrate, rather than critically comment on, the condition that

is here read in terms of the divisive nature of the Californian Ideology. As Corrigan notes, the band are adept at expressing the alienating conditions of contemporary life, but without being able to advance any concrete reading of such conditions or their amelioration, or effective resistance to them. And the illustration, embodied live and in their recorded material, can be read as the materialization of the effects of contemporary social conditions in respect to presenting the body under stress, and a besieged and desperate subjectivity within it. The title *Exmilitary* itself suggests, for the post–9/11 period, homeless war veterans, suffering post-traumatic stress disorder, self-medication via drink and drugs, and the fatal consequences of blowback from those on "our" side. Such materialization of the effects of social conditions is one that drags with it a sense of where power resides: institutions of the Californian Ideology still physically exist. "All motherfuckers have addresses," as The Invisible Committee note (76) in respect to anti-capitalist activism. The later album, *The Powers That B*, suggests an engagement with, as the cliché of the title has it, the self-determined authorities. These lyrics are not confessional so much as accusatory: it is the deracinated "I" (of MC Ride) which is positioned in respect to the effects of oppression. And yet this positioning, as if an end in itself, occurs again and again: one scans the lyrics sheet of *No Love Deep Web* and notes the endless, obsessive "I's."

The limit of this approach, in Death Grips, resides in the sense of an individual subjectivity, and with their avant-garde tendencies tied, in a Modernist way, to an exploration of that individual subjectivity. Hardt and Negri note that individual refusal to the demands of contemporary capital may be taken as an "absolute purity": to decry and reject the impossible demands made on one, and so to track and chart "lines of flight from authority." Refusal has determined the relation of Death Grips to the conventions of the dissemination of music, record company allegiance, and performance. But refusal is, in itself, effectively a dangerous position for Hardt and Negri: to "continuously tread" (in the literary examples they chose, from Herman Melville and J. M. Coetzee) "on the verge of suicide." Radical refusal, in political terms, is "a kind of social suicide": isolating, disempowering and immiserating (Hardt and Negri 204). "Come Up and Get Me," which opens *No Love Deep Web*, dramatizes just such a dynamic: the protagonist seems physically isolated and surrounded by hostile forces, lingering on the verge of self-destruction or death. Death Grips excel, perhaps uniquely in recent years, and certainly to enormously disconcerting effect, in presenting such a precarious position, and mining its tensions in and for their work.

Notes

1. The portfolio is reproduced in Pirelli.
2. "Virtuality" is typically defined as a condition arising from an immersion into technologically enabled simulations of life that then come to replace non-virtual (i.e., "real") life

itself: events, emotions and courses of actions as all increasingly determined and informed by life-simulators—as with, to turn to a typical example, one whose social interactions with the world are mostly via (and feel more authentic or real or manageable via) online social media. Such a state, where life is diminished by being mediated through or by the media of technology, is seen as a movement from human interactions and communications to that of "excommunication" (see Galloway, Thacker and Wark). For an extensive definition of virtuality in respect to music, see Whiteley and Rambarran 1–3.

3. Most famously in the film *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper 1969); see also sociological / investigative writing from the time, and after; Roberts and Miller 327–51, respectively.

4. On the use of "multitude" in respect to subcultural movements, see Mueller 65–78.

5. Barbrook and Cameron also see in this the circumstances for new forms of artistic expression, of a "new machine aesthetic," and briefly question what such forms have to tell us about the coming condition. For my discussion of this aspect of their writing in respect to electronic dance music, see Halligan 529–50.

6. The single, which features Dr. Dre and Roger Troutman, was released in 1995 and appeared, in a different mix, on the 1996 Tupac LP *All Eyez on Me*.

7. David Bowie's *Diamond Dogs* (1974), which also opened with a spoken monologue concerning the future dystopia of "Hunger City" (at least for the album's original vinyl version: the monologue was removed at the point of the reissuing of the album), made for a much more progressive case, in terms of difference (along gender rather than "gangsta" lines) and rebellion.

8. I would not immediately or predominantly associate the group with rap, despite the use of rhythmically delivered spoken word; this association, typically made for Death Grips in journalistic writing, seems more to do with the presence of their African American frontman, MC Ride. Similarities, in terms of music styles, seem closer to The Last Poets (sometimes claimed as proto-rap) or, in terms of fractured, polyrhythmic soundbeds, soundscapes or sound collages, and a strained vocal delivery that often obliterates comprehension, to the Salford post-punk group The Fall.

9. The album is a mixtape in the sense that the sonic foundation mostly consists of samples; original contributions seem to consist of MC Ride's rapping and Zach Hill's drumming, and with Andy Morin credited with keyboards and programming. "Beware" is reminiscent of "Punk Rock," the opening track of Mogwai's LP *Come On, Die Young* (1999). This also presents or reproduces a found speech from Iggy Pop (in fact, supposedly extracted from a 1977 television interview: the band claimed this audio originated from a video cassette found on sale in a garage). Manson and Pop are presented as iconoclasts, defining their times, and talking passionately, and on a roll. This suggests the essential context for understanding the newer music about to come: as a continuum with the spirit of the iconoclasts of yesteryear. I am unable to ascertain the origins of the Manson interview, but his physical appearance in the video clip from which this audio is sourced suggests 1980s or 1990s footage, seemingly made for legal reasons—perhaps as part of a failed bid for parole.

10. The biblical verses for this story are Luke 4:1–13 but it is also mentioned in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

11. The particularity of the metaphors deployed here, and the ways in which the dialogue seems structured around imaginary questions or interjections, are available with reference to the lyrics of the track.

12. The minimalism, fragmented state and earthiness of the lyrics recall at times something of the poems of Sam Shepard of the 1970s.

13. The single, which featured and was co-written and co-produced by the New York punk figure Lydia Lunch, was released in 1984 and again in 1985, and was included on the album *Bad Moon Rising* (1985). The video, directed by Judith Barry and Richard Kern (associated with the New York-based "Cinema of Transgression"), includes a re-enactment or recreation of the moments immediately following the Bel Air murders.

14. This is not to say that the group are, like the outsider music associated with Wild Man Fischer, somehow genuinely outside the entertainment market and the material benefits that affords. Their second album, *The Money Store* (2012) was released by one of Sony's main record labels, Epic, and *The Powers That B* (2014) and *Bottomless Pit* (2016) by Harvest. Epic dropped the group after they leaked *No Love Deep Web* (2012) online, seemingly frustrated by the label's negative reaction to it and unwillingness to release it. As with many groups of their cultural and critical cache around these years, Death Grips were pictured with A-list stars, and yet their record label's name, and website's URL—thirdworlds.net—hubristically appropriates such an insulting term in striving for, one assumes, a sense of difference from the mainstream.

15. For a fuller discussion, particularly around the pioneering disco production of Giorgio Moroder, see Halligan. It should be noted too that Death Grips have also released instrumental collections: *Fashion Week* (2014) and *Instrumental 2016* (2016).

16. For a discussion of connections between Morrison and The Living Theater, and the shared interest in Artaud's theories of performance, see Milton.

17. For a straightforward use of such an horrendously racist stereotype, see the film *Predator* (John McTiernan 1987).

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PART II: CALIFORNIAN MONSTERS

"Wolf howls and the roar of police sirens"

Fractured Identities, Lycanthropy and the Streets of Los Angeles in Toby Barlow's Sharp Teeth

CARYS CROSSEN

The city of Los Angeles is almost literally a fractured one. Built on the San Andreas fault-line, and subject to numerous earthquakes, it is an unstable city. Located in California, at the very edge of the United States, bordered by the Pacific on one side and the U.S.-Mexican border on the other, it is a liminal city. These boundaries are geographic, but also metaphorical: L.A. is synonymous with Hollywood and its numerous movie studios, a fantasy land where the line between reality and the imaginary can blur with disconcerting ease. Divisions occur among its population also: the infamous 1992 race riots and the notorious street gangs such as the Bloods and the Crips ensure that violence is indelibly associated with the mean streets of L.A. Despite the borrowed glamour of the film industry, L.A. has a darker side. As Richard Lehan observes: "Probably no city in the Western world has a more negative image: one vast freeway system, enshrouded in smog, carrying thousands of dreamers to a kind of spiritual and physical dead end. In this world, we shift easily from a sense of promise to the grotesque, the violent and the apocalyptic" (257).

From the fairy dust of movie stars and Hollywood to gangs, drugs and drive-by shootings, L.A. has always been a two-faced city. Such a location would be a perfect habitat for the most two-faced of monsters, the werewolf, and recent novels such as John Farris's *High Bloods* (2009), Kirk Lynn's *Rules for Werewolves* (2015) and most particularly Toby Barlow's *Sharp Teeth* (2007)