

ABSTRACT

THE SOCIAL TURN IN THE MIX: ŽIŽEK, ELECTRONIC DANCE MUSIC, AND CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF PARTIALITY

The purpose of this thesis is to reconsider the role of critical ethnography in the field of composition and rhetoric. I accomplished this task by drawing on my fieldwork as both participant/observer and activist during two electronic dance music events in Southern California. My study amplifies the ways aural practices help manifest an uncharted horizon of possibility for composition and rhetoric scholars to talk, theorize, and practice ethnography in energetic and inventive ways. This is brought out concretely in a review of recent neo-Lacanian, continental philosophy, postcritical ethnography, and media studies scholarship in order to explore the ways in which our bias toward textual practices ossifies current ethnographic scholarship and thereby hinders us from enlarging the possibilities of conceptual invention far beyond current ethnographic resources. By critically addressing the intersection of aurality and critical ethnography, my study suspends the current structure governing our predilections toward textuality and thus shows how aural practices manifest new objects of study that have heretofore been unrecognizable within current critical ethnography discourse.

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