INTRODUCTION

The Long 1989

THIS IS NOT A HISTORY BOOK. How could it be, when history famously ended in the year in which the book is largely set? Perversely, the events that magnetize the present study—the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, for which the fall is absolute metonymy—are the very events said to have secured the end of history.

That last phrase, with a terminal but convictionless question mark ("The End of History?"), is the title of Francis Fukuyama's essay first published in the *National Interest* in the summer of 1989, wherein is declared "the triumph of the West, of the Western *idea*."[1] If there was any doubt of the answer at that moment, while the Wall still stood and the border remained closed, it would not survive through the bestselling volume that followed, *The End of History and the Last Man*. In this account, the line from the French Revolution to the end of communism is the line from Hegel to Fukuyama himself.[2] Hegel's vision of the Grande Armée's victory at Jena in 1806 as heralding "a new era of the spirit" is realized in 1989's global apotheosis of liberal democracy—after which, per Fukuyama, "we have trouble imagining a world that is radically better than our own, or a future that is not essentially democratic and capitalist."[3]

That history didn't end is by now not worth remarking. There is nonetheless a specter of actuality in Fukuyama's analysis, and it wants reckoning as something more than a straw man. *We have trouble imagining.* The participle

Figure 1. The building of the Berlin Wall, 1962. (Photo Popperfoto/Getty Images)

is everything. For if we understand Fukuyama to have been making the more modest if still tragic claim that 1989 witnessed the end of *historical thought,* that the public imagination of the West had abandoned a conception of ongoing historical process, of alternative arrangements of daily life—then his suggestion is considerably less laughable. If Fukuyama's description is fixed not to historical truth but to a condition of consciousness arising in a new situation, it swiftly reveals itself as worthy of discussion.

Implicit in this is the significance of popular culture: the great marketplace of the public imagination, and indeed the place where market and imagination struggle over consciousness, over what's thought and what's thinkable. "Pop music" is always at least two facts: the cultural artifact of the song and all that it communicates; and its popularity, its having been claimed by enough people to enter into mass culture. A song may communicate historical experience—including the experience of the end of history—in several different ways. But pop's thinking is always also the thought of the audience, the choice of some songs over others, of selecting *this* and not *that* by way of trying to grab hold of the moment: what it means, how it feels.

RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW

Looking across the career of the London band Jesus Jones throws into exacting relief one of the great mysteries: how it is that undistinguished figures can, in a given instant, leap beyond the possible and make something entirely true. Recorded in spring of 1990 but not released until 1991, "Right Here, Right Now" is one of the two songs most identified with the Fall of the Wall, at least in the Anglophone West.[4] It is, more or less, perfect. It was as if they had been waiting for the moment all their lives.

That is what the song is about, of course: "I was alive and I waited, waited," sings Mike Edwards, reaching for an exultant, befuddled falsetto. "I was alive and I waited for this." *This* is the events of 1989, the sudden collapse of the global arrangements and antagonisms known as the Cold War. Behind the lead vocal, in the push-pull of instruments and microchips that organizes the musical track, a fanfare swells as it follows the melody into the chorus, the uplift of "Right here, right now, there is no other place I wanna be / right here, right now, watching the world wake up from history." Apparently Edwards and Fukuyama had been reading the same books, though the singer has perhaps dog-eared as well a page of Joyce's *Ulysses*.

It's a compact track, almost exactly the fabled three minutes that define the classic pop song; two brief verses, lots of chorus. The mix of analog and digital sounds is itself a mini-essay on the state of Anglo pop just then, the balance of rock tradition and the insurgent forms of hip-hop and electronic dance musics. Appropriately, the lyric takes the world-historical convulsion not as a general wonderment, but as a specific problem for pop music. "Woman on the radio talks about a revolution," begins the vocal, "but it's already passed her by." The line targets Tracy Chapman, the folk singer whose self-titled debut had reached number one in both the U.S. and U.K. in 1988—and particularly sets its sights on "Talkin' 'bout a Revolution," which encapsulated Chapman's plaintive blend of progressive liberalism and acoustic guitar that would launch eight million discs.[5] The second verse in its entirety aims its charge at Prince's 1987 single "Sign '☮' the Times" and that song's catalog of hints that the end times are near. In "Right Here, Right Now," Prince's social Armageddon, like Chapman's "revolution," is a visionary leap lacking a real occasion, and so disingenuous. "I saw the decade end when it seemed the world could change at the blink of an eye," runs the Jesus Jones report from 1990, "and if anything, then there's your sign—of the times."

That accounts for almost the whole of the song's two verses, but not quite. If

Edwards seemingly hasn't the chutzpah to name names as he fires shots across the bow of political pop, he screws his courage to the sticking place in the only remaining line of the song, the end of the first verse: "Bob Dylan didn't have this to sing about / you know it feels good to be alive." Fanfare, chorus.

It is easy enough to poke fun at the utopian whispers and creeping apocalypticism of the gloomy artistes, and the song doesn't pass the opportunity by. But behind this lies an unspoken question that makes the song finally haunting: What does pop music do when it *does* have this to sing about? Pop music as we understand it: something not much older than the Berlin Wall, something which could be the Soviet Union's granddaughter. Having turned its 200-second attentions on a fairly regular basis to politics, to social change, to *revolution,* what does pop music do when confronted with an overwhelming surfeit of same? The song has no certain answer. It is discomfittingly ambivalent. Is it anticommunist? Maybe. It has no time for cultural liberalism: *take that, you hipsters who came before! You who whistled in the wind tunnel when it was just a test, when the times they weren't a-changin'. Those weren't beautiful epics, they were just . . . pop songs!* And yet it is the absolute victory of the liberal idea that the song is trying to register. It too is a pop song. It has only timing on its side. The idea must be that pop itself—not Mike Edwards, not Bob Dylan—had been waiting for this moment in order to realize itself, waiting for the conditions when pop could be not righteous but true. And it need say nothing, nothing but that this is the moment, *right here, right now,* in which the uncontainable excess of history itself flashes up and vanishes. "Watching the world wake up—" sings Edwards at the very end, stopping the line short so that *from history* precipitates out, all of us having woken up into something else entirely.

STRUCTURES OF FEELING

And it was something else. Misrecognition scene though it may be, Fukuyama's proclamation means nonetheless to register an irruption of international shifts the truth of which can't be conjured away. In 1989, describing a set of policy prescriptions for countries in fiscal crisis, economist John Williamson coined his fateful phrase: the "Washington Consensus." The term resonated beyond the humming offices of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank insofar as it could stand not just for a policy line but for what increasingly appeared a world situation: the United States' reign as a "unipolar power," unvexed even symbolically.[6] If this reign would last only a dozen years, a brief and strife-filled new Pax Americana, the period

still plays a vital role in narrating Western history. From the perspective of the United States, it constitutes a political belle époque that seemed to reverse the country's decline as global hegemon—a descent that starts around 1973 with the final end of the postwar economic boom and the great image-defeat of the Vietnam War.

For the dissolving Soviet bloc, the changes of 1989 were local phenomena before they were geopolitics. The litany of events from that year is by now familiar, from the departure of the last Soviet armored column from Kabul in February to the year-end election of Václav Havel as president of Czechoslovakia, heading their first non-Communist government in forty-one years. Between these, an unbroken series of startling developments, of which two stand forth. The student occupation of Tiananmen Square begins in April and ends in massacre in June. On November 9, audiences worldwide watch images of Eastern Bloc citizens flowing through the suddenly opened border. Shortly after that, even more resonant images of the Wall's destruction—by hand, by pickaxe, and finally by heavy machinery—begin to beam around the globe. These are just the leading instances of disaster and triumph. Not for nothing does Fukuyama title one of his chapters "The Worldwide Liberal Revolution."[7]

These events all belong to 1989, the category—and just as well to "1989," the concept. One, a container into which can be tossed songs and images and newspaper articles and punctual happenings, anything with a date on it (though as we have already seen, even singularly dated objects can have long and varied provenances, and dates moreover are not always to be trusted). And the other, a shorthand for *what happened,* for the experiential dimension of a capacious swath of history: an index that becomes more impacted, more challenging to unpack, with each passing year.

This book, equally, has two parts, category and concept. The first concerns music; this is a music book before anything else. With some notable exceptions, the music in question is "global, yet American," exactly because the date in question is the moment of America's accession to its role as unchallenged world power. In particular, the book considers genre changes within Anglophone pop music in and around 1989. The accounting of these shifts, which occupies the four chapters of Part One, is largely a descriptive matter, considering some exemplary songs and records that fall along these trajectories of change: songs that can stand as last year's models and next big things, in the industrial clichés.

Raymond Williams's conception of "structures of feeling" likely gets at the situation more precisely: his triad of dominant, residual, and emergent

maps elegantly onto culture at various scalar levels, from the breadth of pop music to the vicissitudes of a single subgenre.[8] In these terms, Part One is about emergence in pop music. Specifically, this book begins with a curiosity over an exceptional surplus of emergence from about 1988 to 1991, focused on the *annus mutationis* of the title. Williams's dynamic is always in progress; the occasion of this argument is the way the balance tilted in a certain loaded moment, leaving us with a period characterized by an *emergence of emergence*.

Having said this, there is also something that skips away in Williams's dynamic, increasingly so as a moment under consideration retreats into the past. Moments of emergence are interstices when an old dominant is losing its power to magnetize the field, when formal and social possibilities—even in the overdetermined zones of massively profitable markets—are just a bit more up for grabs than usual. Inevitably, they are likely to host any number of one-offs, nonce styles, goofs, and odd bids at the main chance: curios that sneak in past the doorkeepers in the confusion. One of these will turn out to be the dominant, and will be retrospectively recognized as having been *the* emergent style. Every genre enters the popular imagination as a novelty song that is later seen to be a manifesto, a discourse on new form. Consider how strange "Rapper's Delight" once seemed—or "Rock Around the Clock." To turn matters on their head, one might say that there are no novelty songs, only failed genres; this is perhaps to say that there are no insurrections, only failed revolutions.

The other songs, those that do not found genres, will retain only the honor of their idiosyncrasy and a diminishing revenue stream for whoever owns the publishing—but they too want describing, bearing as they do the traces of the possibilities that pool in the fissures of such tectonic shifts.

This book is largely indifferent to the distinction between genres and subgenres, which seems beyond contextual. To paraphrase Max Weinreich on languages and dialects, the difference between a genre and a subgenre is an army and a navy. Moreover, much music is necessarily missing from this book, including some that a reader might reasonably expect to find here: there is no Pink Floyd, despite their having named an entire album *The Wall* (which their lead singer, Roger Waters, would perform in full at the site of the Berlin Wall in 1990). Neither is there the music of Plastic People of the Universe, the band that took its name from Frank Zappa and became the crux of Czech dissident culture that would unfold into Charter 77 and the Velvet Revolution (nor is there any Zappa himself, despite his role as unofficial attaché to Václav Havel's government, and despite the memorial

statue of Zappa to be found in Vilnius, Lithuania).[9] The fundamental question concerns how popular music understood the world in this moment, and how it was being used to understand the world—and it is thus the popular music of this moment that concerns us, particularly when it seems to register change in some significant degree.

THE REAL OF HISTORY

This question summons the argument of the book's second part: the possibility that this constellation of changes in pop music around 1989 might be tied to changes in the world at large—that is, might provide ways of thinking about the historical situation of "1989." This is historicization in reverse, one might say, deriving real conditions from "the mental conceptions that flow from them."[10] From the perspective of a history of music, the matter might also be framed as an attempt to use the world situation—social change and spectacle both—as an occasion to periodize the pop music of that time.

There is something counterintuitive about this. Theodor Adorno, one of the twentieth century's great historicizers, suggests that pop music is a poor candidate for bearing historical particularity. "The whole structure of popular music is standardized," Adorno declared in 1941.[11] "A song-hit" (now a charmingly awkward-sounding translation) "must have at least one feature by which it can be distinguished from any other, and yet possess the complete conventionality and triviality of all others." As is well discussed elsewhere, Adorno's contempt for popular music (jazz, most famously) has problematic social implications, particularly along the axes of both class and race. But if these limitations leave Adorno's critique inadequate to the pleasures of popular music, his account of the market conditions that survive in this music as a kind of form is hard to dispute.

Moreover, pop music does not itself aspire much to history or historicity. Contrarily, it hangs quite a bit on the hook of timelessness—on making time disappear for three or four minutes, a brief shelter from the wind of change. Evanescence is near the heart of the pleasure for a million songs.

For all that, one proceeds on the faith that the seeds of time somehow lodge in these abjected artifacts, like otherwise unknowable neutrinos striking chlorine atoms in a subterranean swimming pool, turning a few to argon, in the famous, beautiful experiment. The belief is that pop songs too come out of actual conditions, and bear their imprint.[12]

This is a different matter altogether from proposing that pop music somehow intervenes in history—that it is a site of resistance or even of insight,

of new political awareness. Said optimism would require imagining that it retained some autonomy from the determining powers of the economy, or from the organizing power of ideology. Such a belief was already implausible in 1989; more so now. As Fredric Jameson put the matter in 1984 in his influential essay on postmodernism, "Distance in general (including 'critical distance' in particular) has very precisely been abolished in the new space of postmodernism."[13] In 2002, he put things even more succinctly: "Culture has become the economic, and economics has become cultural."[14] In this reasoning he worries the collapse of various spheres into a single congealed mass of social existence dominated by appearance and most famously described by Guy Debord as "the spectacle."

The argument in Part Two is thus not simply about affixing 1989 pop to "1989" the historical idea, in the manner of cultural studies as it is currently practiced in the university; it is an opportunity to wonder over the possibility of such a connection in the first place. That is to say, it is about the possibilities of culture at that moment. It is a meditation on the rather crude but not yet resolved question of whether pop music has much to tell us about what Jameson calls "the Real of History"—and if so, how so? To what, by the late twentieth century, could popular culture testify?

MORE LIKE A POP SONG

Jameson's own theoretical apparatus allows the pursuit of this testimony—in particular the claims made in *The Political Unconscious* and "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." He seems to have glimpsed in advance the situation of Fukuyama's phantasmatic vision: "Premonitions of the future, catastrophic or redemptive, have been replaced by senses of the end of this or that (the end of ideology, art, or social class; the 'crisis' of Leninism, social democracy, or the welfare state, etc., etc.): taken together, all of these perhaps constitute what is increasingly called postmodernism."[15] Jameson's failure to foresee claims about "the end of history" may indicate only that some hubris is beyond imagination.

Nonetheless, Fukuyama must be taken seriously, not least because of the purchase his narrative and slogan found in culture at large, the arena where pop becomes pop and circulates. Fukuyama's version is more like a pop song, after all: a formula that seems at once to tell a total story and condense it into a slogan, a logo, an image. Is that not what the perfect chorus is for—in which "the end of history" becomes a hook so catchy and memorable, so improbably pleasing to repeat, that it spins around the globe in a blink? It

seems finally a better explanation for the structure of feeling organized by any number of the songs this book measures, songs indexed inextricably to "1989." It's easy enough to believe that the "wind of change" blowing through the song of that title—the most famous pop song of 1989, or rather "1989"—is the last such wind ever, a perfection and culmination. This is a version of what pop music was always trying to convey; perhaps pop had been biding its time until 1989 came along to make sense of its sensibility.

Certainly, Scorpions had been waiting a good while. A perfectly successful concern, they had survived the years with the usual fraternal bickering, substance abuse, personnel changes, and a few international hits (most of them from the 1984 album *Love at First Sting*) since their formation in 1973.[16] As suggested earlier, there is an account of no little interest in which the story of "1989" begins around this moment. Fukuyama tells part of it himself, with his usual focus on the political: "The current crisis of authoritarianism did not begin with Gorbachev's perestroika or the fall of the Berlin Wall. It started over one and a half decades earlier, with the fall of a series of right-wing authoritarian governments in Southern Europe . . . "[17]

Jameson, as it happens, dates postmodernism to around 1973 in his essay, though—working at the crossroads of culture and political economy—his periodizing facts are different. But the grand narrative of 1973 will have to be told elsewhere; only bits and pieces are rifted through the present work. For the moment, suffice to say that after a decade and a half, Scorpions were well positioned to capture what they would call "the magic of the moment." They were from the city of Hanover, in what was the English zone after the Second World War. Lyricist and vocalist Klaus Meine, born in the year of the Berlin Blockade, had long experience writing for the Anglophone global pop audience (might one say "Anglobal"?). The band specialized in keening power ballads, with all the demographic traversal they imply—and they were comfortable, even happy, with clichés like "magic of the moment," that find their best context in the cross-market, transnational pidgin of anglopop.

This pidgin is of course a site of endless compression, homogenization, emulsification of specifics into the sheen of the general—a machine for cliché. But also a machine for slippage, and oddities. It is worth noting the ignored fact that there is no "The" in the band's name. This is only one of the insistent mistakes revolving around the signal song of the events in question; another is the habit of pluralizing the title as "Winds of Change." Apparently, at the moment there was only one wind—this would seem to matter. It rhymes with Fukuyama's account of all changes as part of a single change, a single historical vector leading toward a unified terminus. All news is one news.

Certainly that is the sense of the video for "Wind of Change": all news is one news.

The role of the music video in pop music's imbricated empire around this moment is a profound and puzzling one. Profound because MTV had become in some regard the most crucial venue for pop music; it was inarguably the most powerful marketing instrument. And puzzling for much the same reason, given that the video form requires music to be something in addition to being music—that it pass through a different medium altogether. One can easily see how such a passage could be of use: pictures had been selling pop for generations. But the image's arrival at the absolute core of the pop music market is nonetheless curious.

Many hands have been wrung over this issue, mostly to the effect of bemoaning the allegedly new requirement that bands be visually appealing rather than musically apt. Despite the evident tradition of image-based marketing, this account of a changed circumstance is difficult to resist; there can be no doubt that MTV's ascent shaped marketing plans from Los Angeles to London. This ascent began in earnest in 1983, with the "second launch" and entry into major standard cable markets; it steepened in 1986, when the channel opened itself up to a broader range of music (most markedly along racial lines; before that moment, an obdurate cultural apartheid had obtained) and began engendering exclusive agreements with the major labels.[18] By the end of the decade, the road to number one passed through MTV's studios—and it was there that pop songs did much of their communicating. This must be reckoned with: scarcely a song mentioned in this book did not have a corresponding video clip in some way suggestive, persuasive, or rhetorically loaded.

That said, a more nuanced history of MTV is needed: of its rise, and the proximate causes and effects. It is striking, to work backward, that within just a few years MTV would abandon the video format altogether and willingly relinquish its position as musical kingmaker. In 1992, MTV began airing *The Real World,* the "reality show" that supplied the dominant format for what would swiftly become, in effect, the world's most successful documentary network. Music clips ebbed, eventually vanishing altogether.

Why might it be the case, then, that the visual form of the pop song, *the pop song as image,* should reach its zenith exactly in this historical passage, when pop music was undergoing the upheavals this book considers, before

shortly receding? This is a substantial question, but can only be an aside to this book's inquiry into those changes themselves. The correlation is nonetheless suggestive. Specifically, it suggests the possibility of a shared source that exists beyond the genealogy of pop music in and of itself. To state it plainly, this parallel development proposes that MTV's domination of the image was less a *cause* of musical changes (as the purist hand-wringers would have it) than an *effect* of something else entirely, just as the changes in pop music are effects: the outcomes of a historical dynamic that has a great and particular use for the congealed and singular image-event into which all meanings are bound to collapse.

THE WIND OF CHANGE

After a sourceless wave of applause, the Scorpions video starts with a pensive tune whistled over a minor-heavy chord progression. Tanks on Potsdamer Platz in 1953 (presumably suppressing the strike and protest that came to a head on June 17 of that year with dozens of fatalities); a soldier affixing barbed wire to the new wall in the same location, 1961 (perhaps the Brandenburg Gate is behind them). These images, black and white, are intercut with shots of a vast crowd holding flickering lights in the dark, overlaid with a color image of a single hand holding a sparkler. A spotlight scans side to side: rock lightshow or state surveillance? It is, in fact, impossible to discern whether these images spliced into the newsreel footage are from a vigil at the Wall or a Scorpions concert—a confusion that will propagate aggressively throughout the video. As the vocal starts, an image of Klaus Meine is again overlaid with numerous hands holding sparklers; whether we are watching one or more events is unknowable and, we are starting to suspect, irrelevant.

It's an insipid, magnificent song, from the whistling through the bridge and into the last chorus. Why it was a good candidate for its particular task seems clear enough, even beyond the fact that Scorpions are providentially German. Power ballads exist so that one can feel all sensitive and weepy and overwhelmed, as one does in the face of the historical sublime, but at the same time exaggerated, grandiose—feel like you are at once bigger than God and a tiny Zippo in a world on fire. The video indexes the flames of political violence to the flash-spots of Scorpions' stage show to the audience's personal pyrotechnics, all with unhesitating shamelessness. It turns again and again to tie the song to the Fall of the Wall, even as it locates that as an event among others, such as the obligatory Tiananmen Square icon. The band's

Figure 2. A tiny Zippo in a world on fire: Scorpions, "Wind of Change." (Video dir. Wayne Ishan, Mercury Records)

performance at Potsdamer Platz in 1990 would also do the work of securing the song to the Wall, or to the absence of the Wall, or, really, to the instant of the Wall's coming down.

The video itself takes on the force of a single meaning, threads of sound and language and picture braided together to conjure the instant in question, what happened, how it felt. This is part of the double-faced drive of editing, of collage in general, with its tension between dissolving and reproducing the unities of time and space, sounds and images and ideas. In this confrontation between continuity and discontinuity, it is not too much of a generalization to suggest that the pure products of MTV or the Top 40 regularly take one side over the other. In distinction to, for example, modernism and its polemical dissonances, the music video and the pop song tend toward unification, toward this consolidation of meanings. In their construction they resemble, as suggested, the motion summoned up by "the end of history": the imaging of a single way of being, one that offers itself equally to everybody, into which all trajectories empty. The logic of "the end of history" is in some degree the logic of pop itself.

Here we might repurpose another Jamesonian idea, which for him is attendant to narrative: the imagination of a coherent, unified world which

suppresses the fundamental contradictions and discontinuities that are always fissuring actual conditions.[19] The sudden collapse of the Iron Curtain is made to summon up abstractions like *freedom,* or *democracy,* or "the triumph of the West, of the Western *idea*." But it is impossible to ignore the extent to which the Berlin Wall's deconstruction, as captured in photos, broadcasts, videos, news reports, and the rest, provides a concrete image of unification as an achieved condition, of the overcoming of contradiction and discontinuity.[20] It is the disappearance of the edit, the cut. And this too bears an ideological payload, one that arrives even before the more expressly political messages. It is the spectacularization of coherence itself.

That a feeling, or a set of feelings, might have accompanied this image-event is one of this book's wagers. That the music can grasp or answer those feelings is another, and that the feelings are both complex and contradictory is a third. This situation is complicated by the fact that the book considers an array of genres that might be either too narrow (if one believes that highly commercialized pop can express only its own market imperatives) or too broad (if one thinks of genres and subgenres as existing in discrete form in part because they mean to catch hold of at least somewhat discrete cultural sensibilities, rather than taking part in a broad accounting of a world situation).

The individual chapters, moreover, cannot hope to offer comprehensive accounts of their genres, each of which has generated its own library of book-length considerations. The hope is that, taken together, the exemplary songs, episodes, and apparitions that occupy the chapters of Part One will capture something larger than the truths of each—that the emergent pop genres and attendant social formations might finally be coordinated with the same structure of feeling that captures the spirit of the times, a geopolitical structure of feeling. This requires starting with the belief, or at least the suspicion, that these genres can speak—to each other and to their moment.

THE BOURGEOIS AND THE BOULEVARD

Each of the first four chapters makes account of a different pop genre or, in the case of chapter 4, a metagenre. The chapters are in turn joined by brief bridges that render adjacencies between genres, shared codes that underscore the generalization of certain sensibilities.

The first chapter addresses rap and hip-hop. The conventional attunement of these two terms notes that hip-hop is a cultural complex; rapping or emceeing is one of its four elements, along with DJing, b-boying or break-

ing, and graffiti. While this account has taken on the status of a shibboleth within the culture, both terms have often applied to the musical form in the broader cultural landscape. But it is exactly the relation of music to culture that is at stake here, and the question of whether substantial changes in one can be found without discovering changes in the other. One of the chapter's arguments is that hip-hop's "Golden Age" ends here in a watershed that is equally musicological and cultural, and that these changes determine each other insistently.

Chapter 1 is bracketed by Public Enemy and N.W.A. (along with the solo debut by N.W.A. producer Dr. Dre). Both acts released epochal albums in 1988; strikingly, the albums didn't compete so much as rise in sequence.[21] *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* initially dominated the field, charting earlier and higher, topping critic polls in 1988. In the end, however, *Straight Outta Compton* and its progeny would effectively shift the balance of hip-hop from East to West Coast, in concert with Los Angeles's arrival as the national stage for the drama of the African-American underclass. This succession offers a holographic fragment able to hold a rough sketch of hip-hop's history.

As the continent tilted, an implausibly pleasing collection of acts rolled across the national stage. Among others, the chapter considers the Beastie Boys' sample-happy *Paul's Boutique* and Digital Underground's single "The Humpty Dance"; the leveraging of Black Power and gangsta styles to forge a new hip-hop feminism by Queen Latifah and Yo-Yo; the indefatigable Biz Markie; and members of the Native Tongues posse. Of these, Markie and Native Tongues De La Soul loom doubly large for their involvement in landmark legal cases concerning sampling, music production, and ownership—major skirmishes in the intellectual property wars and episodes that changed the material possibilities of the genre and as a result redirected its aesthetic and, it is argued, political trajectories. The chapter understands this struggle as a front in a broader culture war coordinated at exactly this moment when the stakes of hip-hop were up for grabs. Amid all this, the chapter lingers over a largely forgotten New York rapper, both for his musical pleasures and for his capacity to act as a sort of cipher for the changes in progress.

THE SECOND SUMMER OF LOVE

Chapters 2 and 3 both concern the emergence of new genres more than stylistic conversion within an existing genre, though it should go without saying that such apparent newness always has a history, and genres are never birthed

full-blown from the forehead of some lonely genius or new machine. The relation to origins is substantial, but these chapters don't endeavor to renarrate aesthetic genealogies. For the most part, they address the moments at which these nascent genres precipitated into the public imagination—when their names could be used effectively in casual conversation among music fans without too much confusion, too many blank looks, en route to being calcified as marketing terms.

In some regard this evolution from subcultural code to music store section heading never quite happened in the United States for the music that organizes chapter 2, the least commercially successful among this book's subjects (which is not to say unsuccessful; fistfuls of dollars changed hands, and a million pounds were incinerated on camera). That is among other things a tale of nomenclatural debates, import-export, and an unpredictable proliferation of microgenres around the electronic dance musics that came down from house, techno, and garage and briefly aligned themselves—a nexus known as "acid house" (and for a time marketed in the United States under the catch-all label of "electronica"). Though the sonic DNA is inextricably braided through eighties Chicago, Detroit, and New York, it's the period immediately around 1989 that sees the rise of acid house in the United Kingdom and its corresponding cultural form of the rave, shortly to become a global phenomenon.

Rave is the live term here; in ways similar to *hip-hop,* it wavers, in the moment, between serving as casual designation for a musical style or styles and referring to the culture arrayed around the music—and specifically, to the parties that married one to the other.

These parties are the chapter's sundial. The era could be clocked by songs, from the dawn of, for instance, 1988's "Theme from S'Express," by S'Express, through the late night of the KLF's epic "3 A.M. Eternal (live at the s.s.l.)," rereleased smashingly in 1991. Or it could be mapped by regions, by rave's two geographical foci: London to the south, of the endless scenes and strata; and Manchester to the north, the Luxor of the age with its daft collosi of Stone Roses and Happy Mondays, bestriding Tony Wilson's Factory Records and Haçienda nightclub.

The significations of individual acts are not, however, what is centrally at stake in chapter 2 (much less stylistic development or intercity competition). Rather, it's the emergence, in just this period, of a subculture and a sensibility and even a politics—one formed just as much in scenes lacking recognizable bands or venues, in warehouses and eventually in the mobile raves along London's M25 Orbital Motorway and elsewhere in the U.K. countryside.

These parties were early on known as "Acid House Summers"; it was in 1989 that they were rebranded "rave parties" in the British press. This will be the solstice of the long "Second Summer of Love": a term that, strangely but conveniently, was applied not to a single season but to the full span 1988–1991, as well as to each of the actually existing summers of 1988 and 1989. What might be meant, in summoning the specter of San Francisco's 1967 and of a more generalized and long-bankrupt hippie tradition, is one of the curiosities herein. Why this belated summer lasted so damned long is another.

NEGATIVE CREEP

Chapter 3 also explores the sensibilities of a new genre, in eighties Seattle: grunge, first used as a genre term around 1987–1988, but without a real genesis until the national success of Nirvana. If the rave era is an epic without a hero, grunge bids to be the most successful genre to base itself so thoroughly on a single act: an implausibly messianic upwelling, down to its singular martyrdom.[22] Nirvana released their first single in 1988, and their cultishly received debut album, *Bleach,* in 1989; in January 1992, their album *Nevermind* replaced Michael Jackson at the top of the charts in a completion of what the music industry experienced as an epochal shift. Similarly popular—and in the case of Pearl Jam, more popular—acts followed, though none of them would synthesize mass appeal and critical triumph so utterly. And none would take on anything like Nirvana's mythic aspect, fueled disastrously by Kurt Cobain's suicide in 1994. The genre would swiftly be adulterated into radio's Modern Rock format, even as the anti-fashion of the Seattle counterculture found itself paraded by models on New York runways. By 1994, grunge was little but a lifestyle brand bound to be disavowed by anyone with remaining subcultural affiliations—an episode of pop eating itself at breathtaking velocity.

In retrospect, grunge was arguably the last next big thing in the rock tradition, before market balkanization and the global ascendancy of hip-hop. That this should play out precisely during the period in question is no small matter. Like various rock "revolutions," it was also a reformation, laying sometimes disingenuous claim to a deskilled musical simplicity that is taken as a return to rock 'n' roll's primal nature.[23] Of particular interest is grunge's much-bruited inheritance of the punk rock tradition—a lineage hypostatized in the title of the documentary film *1991: The Year That Punk Broke.* Grunge, that is to say, is imagined to be at once genesis and resurrection: an

ambivalent situation, answered by a taste for ambivalence that charges the music itself, as both sonic form and emotional content.

These are dangerous waters to enter: the number of serious, book-length studies of punk rock is ever-growing, and a single chapter can't hope to summarize the material or the endlessly freighted debate around the historical and political import of punk. Our study is inevitably more narrow, concerning itself mainly with the matter of ambivalence—with continuities and ruptures between punk and grunge, and the kinds of social relations figured by these musics.

THE BILLBOARD CONSENSUS

Pop music, largely as a matter of definition, cannot be emergent. If hip-hop, rave, and grunge succeed in standing as both cultural and musical orders, pop does neither. The truth of pop music is neither musicological nor specifically cultural, but economic and after-the-fact: popularity itself, as measured in sales and radio play (measurements that would change dramatically in 1991 with the shift to Nielsen SoundScan tracking). In any week of any year, there is always a Top 40, a Hot 100. Seen through money-colored glasses, pop is always the dominant.

But this is not to say that pop lacks characteristics that reward attention, nor that pop is unable to be a sign of the times. Chapter 4 attempts to take the measure of pop music around 1989, and argues that even if pop can be abjected for its sensation of deracinated timelessness, it paradoxically *had its time* at the end of the Cold War exactly because the sensation of pop captured a dimension of social experience at the end of the Cold War. To put the matter perversely: rather than pop emerging in new history, new history emerged to meet pop.

Some of the music considered in the chapter belongs to mayfly acts recalled finally via a single song, such as Deee-Lite, and period inventions that implausibly survived to even greater success, such as teenpop. Some music belongs to bands with more durable careers that nonetheless found the summits of the pop chart only within the exigencies of this era, as in the case of the Divinyls and Sinéad O'Connor. And then there were those of ongoing success who nonetheless hazarded their finest moments here, such as Madonna and the extraordinary case of George Michael's "Freedom '90," which despite its title went out of its way not to be about global politics.

The chapter's argument doesn't require that these songs have political or historical content. Indeed, almost the opposite: the inquiry regards the extent

to which history can sometimes only appear as trace, as mood and affect—the very things pop is more apt to capture than the grain of quotidian life amid great upheavals, or the subtleties and grandeurs of history writ large. Nonetheless, there is room for songs that seem desperate to clutch at history itself, such as the catalogic spasm of Billy Joel's "We Didn't Start the Fire"—lead single from an album released on November 10, 1989. The chapter ends with a consideration of the stirring political anthem from Sweden's Roxette, "Listen to Your Heart," the song that had just hit number one that same week, which is to say that it was ensconced atop the Billboard singles chart on November 9, 1989, when, after twenty-eight years, a partitioned Berlin was thrown open: the Fall of the Wall.

ONE

The Fall of the Wall—that's a phrase to conjure with. The Wall itself was a kind of conjuration, summoned as if overnight to secure both pragmatic and representational goals. The concrete icon grew to be the densest object in the world, compressed as it was by the weight of two world empires pressing against it without surcease.

The Fall of the Wall, as an image-event that must be constantly recalled, is no less an icon; it replaced the Wall itself with a rapidity no less startling than the speed with which one story about the world situation replaced another. As an image-event, the Fall doesn't validate Fukuyama's account so much as render its contours visible. A city with a wall removed. History with the history removed. And still this iconic absence, *the Fall of the Wall,* lingers in Potsdamer Platz and Checkpoint Charlie, below the Brandenburg Gate and in the metro's reopened "ghost stations." This persistence of vision wherein *the absence of a singular image,* that of the Wall, becomes itself a singular image explaining everything—this is the representational truth of the end of history, a message that presents itself as universal and as easily understandable as a pop song.

So then: did history end in pop music too? Did that story get told, that structure of feeling captured, in the Hot 100, in the clubs and warehouses and radios of the first world? This is the possibility taken up in Part Two. At least part of that sensation, a deflated paralysis in the face of history itself, is found in "Right Here, Right Now," to which Part Two returns in order to begin its orchestration into a single account of the emergences and apotheoses of the preceding chapters.

Certainly the changes tracked in the first four chapters have their own cul-

tural coordinates, each worthy of its own detailed accounting. Nonetheless, they can also be attuned toward a decisively coherent understanding, a pop worldview, which echoes, and even reproduces, the basic logic of the moment. This in turn begins to suggest pop's capacity for grasping, as a mode of cultural thought, world-historical events often thought to be beyond it.

However, this analytic path runs up against one of the horizons of the story: the plausibility of suggesting that the world events of "1989" have a single logic, that there is one story that can make sense of the details. This would be to settle for Fukuyama's version, in the end, mirroring the progressive historical teleologies that end in a single, triumphal truth. From a different perspective, this isn't the truth but the problem. Here we recall, to focus only on the most freighted example, that the brutal events that unfolded beneath the Gate of Heavenly Peace in that year are related only obliquely to the story of the Wall and the end of the Cold War.

The year 1989, we must concede without hesitation, had not one but two poles of world-historical force. The Tiananmen Square massacre is by some measure even more shocking than the events of Berlin, given the death toll, governmental cover-up, and brutal revisions of history. Certainly these two moments share some qualities and some geopolitical backstory as episodes in the unwinding of twentieth-century Communist seizures of state power. From that point, however, the two events diverge extraordinarily, and in some regard might be seen to have *opposite* dynamics—a point that will be touched upon later. For the moment, what bears notice is the extraordinary success of the Western narrative of liberal democracy at capturing the meaning of Tiananmen Square for itself as a pungent but, in the last summary, secondary instance of the Fall of the Wall. In the realm of actual events, this is perhaps the most violent of all elisions, conducted with breathtaking casualness; consider the inclusion of images from Beijing in the "Wind of Change" video, at once index to and agent of the ongoing collapse of meanings to a single point. That this book attunes its analysis to the Fall of the Wall is not to suggest that that image-event deserves its position, alone astride the summit of contemporary history. Rather, it means to wonder over the vanishing process that allows such a consolidation—that indeed requires it—and to understand pop as participating in that process, even as it struggles to register what is amiss within it.

The unified and uncontested account is itself a kind of end of history—the thinning of historicity into a single idea, the image-event in the form of an idea. What does the popular meaning of "1989" offer, after all, if not unity and coherence?

THE MAGIC OF THE MOMENT

The concluding motions of Part Two look to the discontinuities of Fukuyama's account, and pop's relation to it. To do so it returns to the musics of the first four chapters, returns more than once, considering them from different vantages. How can pop music register an end to history when it hasn't ended? Does it capture discontinuity, contradiction, depth? Is there much to say beyond the well-worn suggestion that mass culture is a machine for ideological reproduction, singing back to us messages of convenience in the guise of social truths?

Here some of Jameson's propositions are of considerable use. If pop music did indeed develop, around 1989, "senses of the end of this or that," it would seem to follow Jameson's description of the postmodern. His most aggressive political indication is that "this whole global, yet American, postmodern culture is the internal and superstructural expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world"—that the ungraspable totality of American power defies the effort to tell its story and is thus a different sort of narrative failure than Fukuyama's victorious *exeunt omnes*.[24] However, this book's final movement concerns an adjacent idea: that pop has in this moment grasped, within its brutal and jubilant reductions and excesses, exactly what's missing from the picture called the end of history—that pop preserves within its blind spot the kernel of historical truth, of actual discontinuities, of the dynamics and processes that have not in fact come to an end. Thus, in the final accounting, pop has an ambiguous—even dialectical—relation to historical knowledge and to the world wherein, per the Retort collective, "American victory in the Cold War was rendered in retrospect magical, unanalyzable, by the mantra 'The Fall of the Wall.'"[25]

WHAT COMES AROUND GOES AROUND

This book was finished in 2009, eight years into the current American era, which follows on the political belle époque of 1989–2001. It is worth naming something of the strangeness of its bracketing conflicts, the Cold War and the "war on terror." Both in their own ways are metawars—even, by one logic, postmodern wars. This is not to say that they are fragmentary (though they are); that they often appear depthless, an endless series of surface effects (though they do); or that they are endlessly projected "mediatic" events, as Régis Debray would put it (though they are this as well). What is at stake is