

**The Contemporary Avant-garde: Classification, Organization,
Spatiality and Practices of Resistance**

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Doctor of Philosophy

University of York

Sociology

September 2014

Abstract

The intention of the thesis is to explore and make visible the sociological importance of contemporary avant-garde music by investigating the ways in which associated cultures are constituted through the interplay between technologically mediated forms of dialogue and destabilizing practices. Through the case study of hauntology, the present work explores the interrelationship between different participant groups (building on, and problematizing, aspects of Becker's *Art Worlds*) and how they negotiate and collaborate with one another. Methodologically-speaking, the thesis adopts multiple approaches to data collection and analysis in an effort to develop a series of conceptual research tools predicated on the partial connections and assemblages observed during field work. The research is participant-focused, dealing primarily with the ways in which these groups engage in meaning-making activities within their own interpretive frameworks.

The empirical focus of the thesis is fourfold. In the first instance, this involves detailing classificatory work on genre and boundary formation as enacted by participants through differing forms of dialogue in a variety of virtual locations. Secondly, an assessment of the organizational structures developed by artists (such as the record label) and audience members (the archive) is undertaken, in an effort to understand how information is collated and stored and how the development of a mediated 'aesthetic', or metadiscourse, is facilitated by these systems. Thirdly, co-operation between social actors is examined in relation to spatial associations and participant-led acts of destabilization (read through the work of Lefebvre). Fourthly, practices of micro and macro-level resistance - including direct political activities, techniques of composition, intertextuality and engagement with cultural theory - are considered in relation to the other empirical foci.

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Accompanying material

If reading a non-interactive (printed) version of this thesis, the audio examples and illustrations discussed herein are replicated at the following website, which accompanies the project:

<http://contemporaryavantgarde.wordpress.com>

Further information about the use of this site and the materials referenced on this site can be found in Chapter 1.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible with the help of the following people:

In the Department of Sociology, Dr. David Beer and Professor Robin Wooffitt, my supervisors; Dr. Ruth Penfold-Mounce on my Thesis Advisory Panel; Dr. David Hill, Thomas Rodgers and Daniel Merriman for off-tangent discussions; others, too numerous to mention, who have offered advice during my time in the Department.

Crucially, I would like to thank my family - who have remained a source of support throughout - and my wife Zoe, who has somehow put up with me over the last few years of writing and constructing this work.

Author's declaration

This is to certify that I am responsible for the work submitted in this thesis, and that the original work herein is my own; neither the thesis nor the original work contained within has been submitted to this or any other institution for a higher degree, or to external sources for publication.

Chapter 1 - Towards an exploration of the contemporary avant-garde

1.1 The sociological importance of avant-garde music

The aim of this thesis is to make visible contemporary avant-garde music cultures by investigating the ways in which associated cultures are constituted through the interplay between dialogue, destabilizing practices and technological mediation; to achieve this we will examine and analyse a case study of a predominantly online music culture called 'hauntology'.

It is helpful, prior to outlining the features of this case study, to offer some working definitions so as to underscore the sort of terms we will be problematizing throughout. Following this, we will demonstrate why contemporary avant-garde music continues to be sociologically vibrant, as these issues will inform the empirical focus of this thesis.

To begin with, it is worth noting that we are only interested in one aspect of the avant-garde, namely avant-garde music culture; throughout this thesis, the use of the term 'avant-garde' – either in a historical or contemporary sense; a distinction that will be elaborated on presently – will be in reference to avant-garde music, unless stated otherwise (we may draw on aspects of ideology or discourse from other forms of cultural production, but these will be identified as distinct from music).

It is also useful to elaborate a little on what we mean by the 'avant-garde'. A common point of reference amongst academic sources is that the avant-garde is characterized by a break from traditional notions of 'high culture' – the classical repertoire, for example – and a move towards modern (and postmodern) approaches to composition that directly challenge both the forebears of classical music and broader socio-political issues (Gendron 2002; Adlington 2009; van den Berg 2009) with these concerns often formalized through the development and use of new forms of technology. Tham (2013), for instance, identifies the work of Schoenberg, Webern and Berg as a clear split from the classical repertoire, and the construction of noise machines by the Futurists as an exemplar of the relationship between technological practice and ideological separation.

This reading of the avant-garde echoes Gendron's work on the intersection between the avant-garde and popular music (this distinction already delimiting the two in a sense). Gendron (2002: 16) describes the avant-garde in the following way:

...any high-cultural production of a modernist or postmodernist kind, in opposition to traditional high culture. In Baudelaire's terms, traditionalists prize "eternal" beauty and a barely shifting canon, whereas avant-gardes are enamored [sic] with the continually shifting "contemporary" beauties and are constantly fomenting revisions in the canon. The avant-gardes – artists, critics, producers and patrons – constitute a restricted market characterized by recurrent turnovers in the ruling orthodoxies and in the values through which products and agents are endorsed and consecrated

Here we see how the ideological differentiations between traditional and new forms of high culture are typified, and this definition – combining technological development and a shift in high cultural production – is one we will go on to problematize throughout this study.

It is also important to offer a contextualization of the avant-garde, as our definition is contingent on processes of change and adaptation. One of the central concerns of this work is understanding the relationship between what van den Berg (2009) calls the 'historical avant-garde' and what we will term the 'contemporary avant-garde', in relation to the ways in which continuity might be maintained or discord encouraged. Although we will cover this in more detail in Chapter 2, simply put the historical avant-garde refers to a historical period stretching from Schoenberg's development of atonality in the 1920s, through the post-war development of musique concrète, to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The supposed collapse of communism in the late 1980s/early 1990s acts as a theoretical split between the socio-political concerns of earlier generations of composers - for whom specific conflicts were reflected and counteracted in their work - and contemporary musicians whose work, while clearly related in a compositional and technical sense with the historical avant-garde, is concerned with more recent socio-political and cultural issues.

It is also worth underlining the interrelationship between the avant-garde and popular music, as some of the musicians we go on to discuss are poised between these distinctions, and it is important to question these associations: the primary concern of this thesis is to understand how distinctions such as 'popular' and 'avant-

garde' are contextualized and questioned by participants, and the vital role that classification and boundary work play in these practices.

Gendron (2002) notes that the avant-garde and popular music have routinely borrowed from each other, citing both the appropriation of jazz by avant-garde composers and *musique concrète* as exemplars of this in the historical avant-garde (16-18). What is crucial is that no music culture exists in isolation, so we need to be aware of the variety of “interactions”, “engagements”, alliances” and “border crossings” between the art world and popular music’ (16); we will explore these affiliations and appropriations through the use of a case study – hauntology – which we will expand upon following a discussion of the sociological importance of the avant-garde more broadly.

There are a number of reasons why the avant-garde continues to be interesting in a sociological sense. The first point of note is that academic discourse on music cultures has, for the most part, focused on popular music and how social practices coalesce in ‘scenes’, ‘genres’ and ‘subcultures’ (Bennett and Peterson 2004); considering the sociological significance of popular forms of culture, this focus is entirely necessary, but it is also worth considering less popular forms of cultural practice. The avant-garde has been studied at length by a variety of scholars - we will explore the readings offered by Barthes (1975; 1981), Bauman (1997) and others in the next chapter - but avant-garde music in particular is a less well-developed area of study (Gendron 2002), with more recent discussion returning again to art rather than music (see, for instance, Léger 2012). The various narratives of popular music are well developed, comprising journalistic accounts (Reynolds 2007), academic discourse (Adorno & Simpson 1941; Frith 1996; Bennett 2000), and folk histories (Marcus 1989), but, we shall argue, of equal validity in terms of its ability to challenge these established discourses is an emergent narrative of the contemporary avant-garde, one which, while built on historical foundations and associations is not static but evolving. As other scholars have identified, new music cultures ask important questions about classificatory practice, the use of technology and the ways in which more traditional explanations of ‘scenes’ or ‘subcultures’ are increasingly destabilized in late modernity (Tironi 2008; Korczynski, 2011; Lee & Lingo, 2011), and our case study affords us the opportunity to understand how this might relate to meaning-making practices the avant-garde more broadly.

Secondly, the contemporary avant-garde is a site where notions of identity continue to be questioned. This is not only the result of the ways in which culture can be categorized and codified by geographically disparate social actors but also how new forms of social media enable cultural participants to negotiate, construct and rewrite cultural boundaries; technology is reshaping social action. Through our case study, we will assess the techniques that contemporary avant-garde participants pursue with regards to delineating their culture from others, and how classification is used to contest the spaces between popular and less-popular forms of cultural production; these practices and processes demonstrate the continuing importance of technological developments in music culture – including the use of social tagging, and online dialogues - as well as reflecting contemporaneous cultural and socio-political concerns.

Thirdly, participants in contemporary avant-garde music cultures are engaged in a continual and developmental process of cultural production that involves mutual dependence and interrelationships between different groups. The way in which culture - be it the production of artefacts or of ideas - is constituted by these groups is clearly connected to questions of identity and classification, but also that of organization and collaboration. How cultural participants organise themselves, share and develop specific practices of cultural production, or destabilize established ways of working is vital in understanding how the avant-garde is situated within wider structures of contemporary music culture.

Fourthly, the contemporary avant-garde operates in a number of diverse spatial realms. For example, our case study is virtually-constituted through blogs, message boards and social media sites such as Last.FM, but these spaces are supplemented by non-virtual counterparts, where musicians and audiences explore hauntological culture through live performances and installations. This duality between physical and virtual space appears - on the surface at least - to differ from that of the historical avant-garde, and our approach will uncover how space is utilized by different participant groups and the bearing this has on our comprehension of the construction of the contemporary avant-garde.

Finally there is the question of whether or not - like its historical forebears - the contemporary avant-garde can still be viewed as a site of resistance. As we will see in the next chapter, the historical avant-garde became associated with a particular type of left-leaning political discourse, but following the sizeable socio-

political changes at the end of the twentieth, and start of the twenty first, centuries, how does the contemporary avant-garde resist and, if it does, what form does this take, bearing in mind recent shifts in the technologies of cultural production? The historical avant-garde might be understood as an attack on the homogeneity of mainstream culture, within a simplistic dichotomy of left/right political discourses, but to what extent has technology changed the conditionality of these concerns.

More broadly speaking, music movements and subcultures continue to be sociologically interesting because they reflect and refract wider socio-cultural trends and concerns (see, for instance, Toop 1995; Thornton 1995; Seiler 2000). Concomitant activities might provoke different types of conflict and resistance, where boundaries are deconstructed and redrawn, and power struggles between different participant groups ensue. As Muggleton and Weinzierl (2003) point out, struggle

takes place, moreover, not in some flattened-out plane of 'hyper-reality', but in a stratified global economy where social groups engage in conflict over scarce economic, cultural and political resources (14).

The contemporary avant-garde can be situated within this arena, responding to contextualised conflicts - social, cultural, political - in a variety of ways. There may be macro level engagement with political and social dynamics, or acts of protest derived from the minutiae of day-to-day interactions; artist-led installation sound art or small scale community building activities based around shared cultural interests. Resistance to a 'stratified global economy' can potentially take on a multitude of forms, each reinforcing the sociological significance of the avant-garde as a form of music culture.

With these factors in mind, the purpose of this study is to present a cartography of hauntology, and in doing so observe and consider how the features of our case study relate to wider structures in contemporary avant-garde culture. Part of the process of situating our case study will involve questioning its position; for instance, can the contemporary avant-garde be thought of as a genre, a scene, a subculture or something else? These sorts of questions are important because they pertain to broader issues around the classification of culture.

The purpose of this opening chapter is to familiarise the reader with some examples of hauntological culture, and to flesh out the primary concerns that will

make up the empirical chapters of this thesis. The overarching question throughout relates to how we understand and locate music cultures through practices, people, objects and ideas; how do we make visible the features of the contemporary avant-garde?

In this brief opening section we have identified a number of important issues around the sociological importance of the avant-garde, embodied in the interrelationships between classification, organization, space and resistance. This chapter will expand on these tentative categories and will work towards framing four research questions based around each category. We will begin by discussing some instances of hauntological culture, considering some of the potential thematic connections between hauntological artists by comparing and contrasting two cultural artefacts; from this, we will attempt to categorize different forms of cultural production in our case study and, in doing so, we will highlight the problems associated with this process, demonstrating the ways in which participants may grapple with similar issues of boundary creation and maintenance.

Allied to considerations around categorization we will think about the role systems of organization play in stratifying and codifying cultural and social boundaries. Following on from this, we will discuss two examples of hauntological performances and the roles that different kinds of space play in the construction of a tentative aesthetic and how this may impact understandings of our case study more broadly. These processes, we will argue, facilitate the locating of the contemporary avant-garde in relation to both the historical avant-garde - in terms of modes of production and an overarching commitment to resistive practices - and new developmental types of micro-level participant engagement. Through these discussions we will develop our four research questions, alongside a justification for exploring hauntology as a case study.

It is also useful to consider the role of the researcher throughout the forthcoming sections; prior to a return to academia, I was involved in running a record label that, on our own terms, we considered to be hauntological, in that our production techniques and thematic interests mirrored other artists who had been termed similarly at the time. The record label operated for five years, from 2005 until 2010, and my involvement in hauntology - albeit small - will allow for alternative insights into some of the meaning-making activities of participant groups. This will also have a bearing on the methods of data collection and analysis we will

use in later chapters and we are mindful of issues around 'insider knowledge'; these approaches and perspectives will be addressed in Chapter 3.

Throughout this thesis, a variety of audio-visual media will be embedded within the text to augment our discussions; these media will be context-dependent and may include audio material from records, live performances or video. In exploring a culture where meaning-making is predicated and constituted by discussions of music, it was felt that including audio examples would promote a more detailed engagement with the case study and its participants. The sources that have been embedded are referenced throughout, and audio-visual material presented here is reproduced from publically-accessible sources, in most cases hosted by the artists themselves. These sources are hosted at a website <http://www.contemporaryavantgarde.wordpress.com> which has been designed to be used in conjunction with this thesis. Instructions on how and when to access appropriate materials are given in-text, and relate directly to particular passages or arguments within each chapter. The website also reproduces, where necessary, some of the data from particular chapters; for example, scalable images - where details can be enlarged as needed - of the network diagrams discussed in Chapter 5 are provided on the site. Similarly, the reference list is reproduced so that links to online material can be accessed in an effort towards the confirmation of claims made in the thesis and the reproducibility of data.

1.2 Hauntology - a case study

As touched on briefly in the previous section, our interest is in understanding the interplay between dialogue, destabilizing practices and technology, so it is useful at this early stage to detail our case study and demonstrate why we are situating it within what we have already identified as 'contemporary avant-garde music culture'; our intention in doing so is to offer a working definition that we will then problematize. Hauntology, as a genre term used to describe a particular form of largely electronic music, first appeared on the blogs of music fans and critics during late 2005 and early 2006 as a result of discussions of emergent trends in post-millennial music. It developed online initially, where cultural artefacts (including physical records as well as digital releases and artwork) were debated and digested; from this, boundaries started to form in terms of what could and could not be considered hauntological. These online discussions were subsequently augmented

by occasional live musical performances, though it is worth highlighting that the virtual still outweighs the non-virtual in terms of locations where cultural production takes place.

We might conceptualize hauntology in terms of the intersection between aesthetic criteria, developmental institutions, and forms of ideological discourse. In the case of aesthetics, hauntology draws on production techniques from the historical avant-garde, particularly *musique concrète* and collage, alongside those found in popular culture. Participants combine music with intertextual readings of associated television programmes, video games and books (Fisher 2006), though the focus will be firmly on music in this case. Here, we can see a potential connection with Gendron's (2002) problematizing of the separation between high and low art; what is it that distinguishes hauntology as a contemporary avant-garde music culture?

Firstly, hauntology has much in common with Gendron's view of 'a restricted market characterized by recurrent turnovers in the ruling orthodoxies' (16) where one of the primary features of hauntology appears to be disagreement and contestation over what hauntology actually is (Chapter 4 will explore this in more detail); institutionally, classificatory destabilization and the negotiation over meaning marks hauntology out as avant-garde rather than popular. Understanding the complex interrelationships between these orthodoxies and the cultural artefacts on which categorization is based will enable us to question both these early associations and the ways in which participants construct their culture and defend its boundaries.

Secondly, in terms of ideological discourse, hauntology is bound to the avant-garde through its association with particular theoretical positions as posited by critics such as Fisher (2006a; 2006b; 2009; 2013) and Reynolds (2006; 2010). This involves a terminological association with Derridean post-structuralism – 'hauntology' being the term Derrida (1994) employs to describe how the ghost of Marxism continues to haunt contemporary neoliberalism – and broader discussions about cultural practices such as collage, tape hiss and the use of outdated instruments and production techniques feeds in to a narrative of alternative heritage (Sexton 2012) and offers a commentary on failed utopias and futures past (Fisher 2006a; Reynolds 2010)

As we discussed at the beginning of this chapter, while some scholars have noted an artificial differentiation between the avant-garde and popular music, arguing instead for an acceptance of the sharing of ideas between these perspectives (Gendron 2002) others, such as van den Berg (2009), suggest that while there may be similarities in a compositional sense, this does not diminish the impression and perception of a separation between different forms of cultural practice. The historical avant-garde is a product of a particular socio-political context, namely the period between the end of the Second World War and the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the contemporary avant-garde might be thought of as that which emerged following this period. In relation to our case study, the fall of the Berlin Wall has been identified by Derrida (1994) as an imagined cut-off point with what came before, and in adopting a post-structuralist perspective, critics like Fisher (2006a) position hauntology in relation to a contested narrative of what constitutes the avant-garde; is there continuity, or is the historical/contemporary split an accurate representation? In essence we will be using a variety of data related to our case study to assess and problematize these ideological positions.

To summarize, hauntology is an esoteric, avant-garde music culture with aesthetic origins in both popular electronic music and avant-garde techniques of *musique concrète* and collage, where the everyday practices of meaning-making involve the negotiation and destabilization of boundaries around that which is and is not classified as hauntological, underpinned by a critical ideological discourse that positions cultural production as offering some kind of attack on dominant narratives of social progress and heritage.

1.2.1 The validity of hauntology as a case study

Our case study is a valid site of enquiry for a number of reasons. Firstly, in pursuing a contemporary avant-garde music movement, we are exploring a relatively niche form of music, one given infrequent attention, sociologically or otherwise, but one which has a necessary relationship with both popular music (perhaps in terms of influence as Gendron attests, or in tacit rejection); in this sense, narratives and scholarship on popular music - arguably the focus of much academic discourse on music - and avant-garde art are of parallel interest, with our case study potentially overlapping these discussions. There is a central tension in this position on the margins of differing cultural discourses, and the way in which this music

culture negotiates these kinds of contradictions, connect it with wider social processes and difficulties related to technological change, production practices and the contestation of identity through processes of classification and codification.

Secondly, building on the inbetweenness of popular and avant-garde narratives, the genesis of our case study as an online, or virtual, music culture potentially distances us from a number of notable subcultural studies which have tended to focus on physical gatherings of participants and more traditional forms of media sharing such as zines, posters and CDs (Hodkinson 2002) or how Internet-based groups augment an already extant, and geographically fixed, scene (Bennett 2000; Lee and Peterson 2004). Hauntology relies on technologically mediated virtual environments for the codification of its features - in terms of classificatory practice, organization and distribution of artefacts, archiving, production and, in some cases, performances – and therefore speaks to more studies that move away from fixity towards a fluid reading of people and place (see, for instance, Straw 1991; Prior 2008; Hollands and Vail 2012) and our case study may offer insights into this kind of developmental practice in terms of points of similarity and departure from these case studies and discourses.

Thirdly the interplay between participant groups who straddle virtual and non-virtual worlds may offer interesting reflections on the changing nature of social action in music movements. Subcultural studies in the past have focused on the social dynamics of participants within a given location (Malbon 1998; Watt and Stenson 1998), consumption practices (Hetherington 1992), or the increasing disconnect between fluid groups of participants (Muggleton 1997; Bennett 1999), and our case study appears to suggest a culture where connections between groups are similarly active, involving complex interrelated processes of meaning-making through engagement with intertextual associations of cultural artefacts, historical narratives and resistive practices. In this sense, hauntology is a viable case study because it is constituted by both established and developmental forms of social interaction in online and offline environments; building on earlier studies, our analysis of this iteration of the contemporary avant-garde should facilitate insights into the ways in which small-scale cultures construct and destabilize different spaces, alongside the ways in which these activities are negotiated through different forms of dialogue.

Finally, my own personal involvement with hauntological culture makes it a valid case study, in terms of access and insight. Running a record label, and identifying my own music within a hauntological narrative was a peculiar process, and part of the impetus for this study was to better understand the social practices and roles involved in this type of process. I may have identified my own work in this way, but how do other musicians react to the classification of their work, and why do fans and critics undertake the process of codifying musical cultures? One crucial aspect of operating the label involved the organizational relationships that enabled us to release records and put on events that interested parties would attend. In recent years, a number of studies have explored aspects of this type of organizational sociality (DeFillippi, Grabher & Jones, 2007; Hollands and Vail 2012; Tironi 2012), and these can be used to bolster our comprehension of how hauntology is situated in terms of other types of music culture. Finally, from a practical point of view, my position as an 'insider' potentially offers a number of useful methodological opportunities in terms of accessing and identifying participants and spaces where culture is practiced, experienced and negotiated. There are problems associated with insider-led approaches (and these will be addressed in Chapter 3), but in terms of access to participants and an existing knowledge base, there are also some advantages, and these will be explored throughout this thesis.

1.3 Two hauntological records

To better acquaint the reader with the sort of culture we will be focusing on, we will not consider a number of iterations of hauntological cultural production, starting with two hauntological records. The releases discussed below were chosen to demonstrate the variety of musical output that has been categorized by participants as hauntological (see, for instance, Fisher 2011; Reynolds 2010); after considering their aural attributes, we will move on to assess problems associated with processes of classification, foreshadowing the sort of dialogic approach we will adopt in Chapter 4. In doing so, we hope to suggest - tentatively at least - that while categorization is seen as necessary in music culture, in terms of delineating one expression from another, it is also a contested practice negotiated by participant groups and cannot be reduced to the grouping of aural similarities; this is the first of

many ways in which the contemporary avant-garde can be seen to destabilize earlier narratives on cultural production.

The first release we are going to explore is *The Owl's Map* by Belbury Poly, released by Ghost Box Records in September 2006; the second is *Box of Birch* by A Broken Consort, released by Sustain-Release Records in October 2007.

PLAY NOW: Belbury Poly - *Rattler's Hey; Tangled Beams; Pan's Garden* (excerpts)

Belbury Poly is the performing title of electronic musician Jim Jupp, co-founder of Ghost Box, a record label that primarily produces hauntological music. Jupp's music has a strong conceptual underpinning to it, which has been described by Jupp as '... nostalgia and attraction to the past but...it really is the idea of trying to convey the feeling of things half-remembered from a fictional past or a parallel world' (Fisher 2009). In terms of production, *The Owl's Map*, Jupp's second album as Belbury Poly, combines a number of different musical approaches including disjointed vocals, harpsichord, fanfares and the sound of passing trains in an attempt to evoke childhood memories of library and television music made by the BBC's Radiophonic Workshop that Jupp remembers from childhood. To reinforce this connection, the audio examples above - collating minute-long samples from the record - demonstrate how Jupp utilizes the same sort of sounds made by synthesisers and arpeggiators used by the Radiophonic Workshop in the late 1960s. Alongside this, Jupp uses more traditional instrumentation including different kinds of organs; this mix of synthesised sound, and more traditional instrumentation, comes from various locations and genres

It's got a lot of early 60's electronic sounds and jazz elements, so it will be a bit like Joe Meek, and John Baker's stuff for the BBC, electronic jazz. A sound palette from a world that could be about 1962 (Hennings 2009).

These production distinctions are important because they pertain to a particular aesthetic that Jupp is trying to cultivate. Alongside the music, in terms of the design of the cover art and liner notes, this aesthetic is clearly demarcated. The liner notes discuss the fictional town of Belbury, its Neolithic stone circle and polytechnic college; the look is reminiscent of old Penguin paperbacks (see Figure 1, below). Embodied in this cultural artefact, we can see the combination of numerous artistic approaches. The intention is to convey specific perspectives through aural

and visual means; in this instance, Jupp is invoking connections to musical histories, but also to other forms of culture including literature and occult practices, developing an alternative history through the creation of an imaginary past (Jupp 2009). Listening to *The Owl's Map* is purposefully disorientating - in terms of its juxtaposition of music styles and practices - but this is the outcome of its design, the confluence of ideas and sounds that are intended to form a cohesive, yet destabilizing, whole.

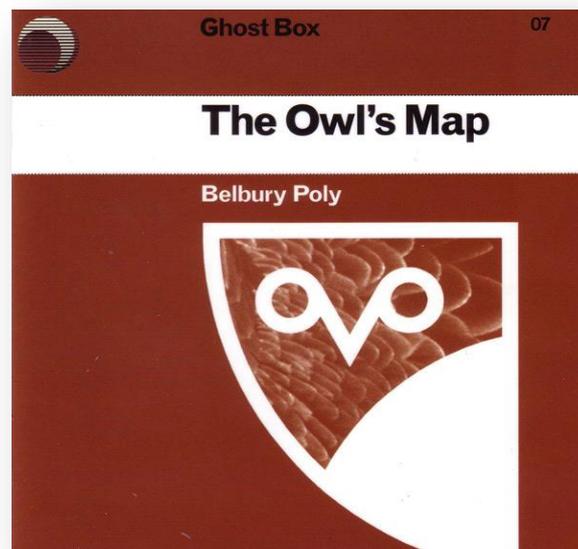


Fig.1 Cover art for *The Owl's Map* by Belbury Poly (House n.d.)

The record is part of a wider range of aurally-similar releases on the Ghost Box label. Those involved with the label have '...always imagined that the Ghost Box world is a kind of an 'all at once' place where all of the popular culture from 1958 to 1978 is somehow happening all at the same time' (Fisher 2009). Their aesthetic choices, presented to potential audiences through these cultural artefacts, involve alternative narratives - 'like all the Ghost Box stuff, it's an imaginary past. But given that, it's from the late-70s of this imaginary past, if that makes sense?' (Hennings 2009) - which implicates Jupp and a number of other like-minded artists in the creation and maintenance of a viable aesthetic identity for the label. These are very distinct artistic choices, which appear to offer a commentary of sorts on temporality through the use of intertextual markers from other periods. In doing so we see one of the ways in which a combination of different musical techniques and conceptual decision-making may facilitate the categorization of cultural artefacts by suggesting an artist-led lineage to this contemporary cultural production of music. This can also

be seen as an attempt to codify responses from other participant groups with musicians codifying the artefact *a priori*. In doing so, there is the potential for destabilization, as the aesthetic markers used by musicians to classify their work are subsequently debated by other participant groups; here we can see one of the ways in which dialogue between interested parties might delimit cultural forms.

PLAY NOW: A Broken Consort - *Box of Birch* (excerpt)

Richard Skelton, who performs as A Broken Consort (amongst other aliases), takes a different musical approach to Belbury Poly and the Ghost Box label. As the audio example above illustrates, the music he creates is aurally dissimilar, but there are also conceptual differences. Skelton's website explains the *modus operandi* for his work, stating that his record label is 'a private press dedicated to his wife Louise' and that the music he produces is designed as a tribute to her (Skelton 2005). His releases symbolise a 'desire to perpetuate the memory of Louise's life, and her creativity' (The Line of Best Fit 2009). They also represent a response to the natural world and his adopted Lancastrian home. The music he makes is composed outdoors, on the moors and fells of Barnacre and Bowland, in abandoned farmhouses, alongside rivers and beneath stone bridges. Stylistically, the difference between source materials is stark, with Belbury Poly drawing inspiration from childhood memories of television and Skelton looking to more recent, and personal, trauma for inspiration.

In terms of rooting this work in technological approaches to composition, Skelton's music is also quite different from that of Belbury Poly; music by A Broken Consort is almost exclusively acoustic, combining elements of violin, mandola, piano and guitar alongside natural sound effects that echo the environment in which he is recording. Describing his work in *The Wire* (Reynolds 2006), Skelton explains how he uses the natural environment to produce certain effects on his records. In the case of *Box of Birch*, reverberation was achieved by initially recording beneath a bridge arch, before playing the recording back into the arch of another bridge, thereby creating a natural reverberation across the brickwork. The result is something that is Skelton describes as 'essentially aetheric and temporal' (The Line of Best Fit 2009). Here there are similarities with the sort of atmosphere Jupp suggested, but it is achieved through alternative practices.

Again, the musician is engaged in the production of a specific kind of aesthetic distinction in his work. Skelton's aesthetic is as well developed as Jupp's, but completely different (see Figure 2 below). He organizes each release, hand packaging the CD and personalising it for the listener (my copy of *Box of Birch* came wrapped in a linen strip with *For Matthew Spokes* written on the front), adorning them with his wife's art work and small tokens from the sites where the album was recorded. He wants 'the package [to] feel very much like a gift, creating a connection between myself and the recipient' (The Line of Best Fit 2009), an alternative approach to what he sees as the depersonalisation of artefacts in the mainstream music industry; this is perhaps an early example of how musicians attempt to negate the effects of commercial logic, by taking control of the various facets of the production process.



Fig.2 A Broken Consort's *Box of Birch* Second Edition (Skelton n.d.)

Of equal interest is the subject matter of Skelton's work. In addressing memories of his wife, and attempting to reflect them through his music, Skelton addresses question of memory and the ways in which we remember. In imbuing his work with personal attachments, sharing what amounts to his individual experiences of grief with an audience, Skelton seems to offer a critique of what he views as the impersonality of contemporary music production; the suggestion is that Skelton is not simply selling a product, but rather making a statement about remembrance and

loss. If this is the case, his work demonstrates a nascent form of resistance, and these unusual approaches are worth exploring in more detail.

There are a number of questions raised by these two recordings; firstly, what is it that these records share that makes them hauntological in the eyes of participants? In the case of Richard Skelton's work we see an attempt to convey an emotional connection through artistic practice, with location and the concept of memory foregrounded by the artist both in sound production and the rhetoric that accompanies the release. Having listened to an example of the music of A Broken Consort, these approaches might also be seen as linking into the British folk tradition through the use of acoustic instruments, finger-picking, which suggests that categorization is not as simple as stating that cultural production is hauntological or otherwise. Belbury Poly, in contrast, focuses on aspects of technological production that are more similar to popular music than the sound experiments of the historical avant-garde: what we see if how technologically-mediated production processes impacts this is example of contemporary avant-garde practice. The question it raises is if these particular pieces of music are aurally quite different, how can participants categorize them as hauntological?

As we have attempted to indicate in these early discussions, one of the ways in which hauntological music has been categorized is thematically (Reynolds 2010). Although the sounds that comprise these two releases are aurally distinct, both musicians explore notions of memory, be they memories of childhood or personal relationships. The question is whether or not thematic comparisons are useful in understanding something like genre, when, as we have seen, pieces of music described as 'hauntological' may share little or no aural similarities?

1.3.1 Classification and organization

Despite the cautious suggestion that thematic similarities are one way that music might be categorized, this is a departure from other discussions of how music cultures are constituted, where aural similarity is considered an important feature (Toynbee 2000; Lena and Peterson 2008). So far we have looked at two musicians who produce dissimilar sounding music, yet both have been categorized by participants as 'hauntological'. How might we distinguish different branches of music under the rubric of hauntology and how might we decide what the

subdivisions are? What criteria are participants using and, crucially, how are these conditions being discussed?

Classification might be further problematized if we return to Gendron's discussion of the overlap between the worlds of high and low art. Gendron (2002) wonders what purpose is served by a number of different types of formal appropriation - which may take the form of 'musical collage, quotation, parody and pastiche, camp, synthesis, attempts by "art" music to elevate the "lower" music, to explore its unrealized aesthetic possibilities, or attempts by popular music to "join the club" of art music through mimicry' (16-17) - if not to blur the lines between associations. There are glimmers of this in the two examples outlined above. In discussing his production process, Belbury Poly identifies techniques associated with *musique concrète*, an association with the historical avant-garde, as well as music popular in the 1960s. Alongside this, Belbury Poly's musical output has been closely aligned with more contemporary popular music including that produced on the Warp label by Boards of Canada, amongst others (Hood 2010; Grady 2012). Despite some critics suggesting that hauntological music is viewed by critical media outlets as too idiosyncratic to be considered popular (Sexton 2012), there is still the potential for hauntological musicians to exist in a hinterland between the popular and the avant-garde. Making distinctions, as others have suggested (Lena and Peterson 2008), are important to participants in music cultures, so having identified this problematic series of associations between high and low art, the predominant concern of any study of the contemporary avant-garde must be how these cultures are classified, differentiated, and how points of similarity and difference are negotiated and potentially destabilized; this will be the primary focus of this thesis.

An antecedent issue is how engagement is constituted. If we return to our two hauntological examples, we can posit that to be considered hauntological involves more than aural similarity, so how are we to interpret the interplay between other non-aural elements? As listeners, involvement with our case study may require engagement with references and artefacts outside of hauntology, a demonstration of what Thornton (1995) has termed 'subcultural capital'. We have seen, through the rhetoric used by Belbury Poly and A Broken Consort, how connections between artefacts and ideas might be codified, but is this something hauntological participants agree on? How is this sort of information presented, accessed, discussed? This returns us to the primary concern of the thesis:

understanding how dialogue facilitates meaning-making and ways of knowing, alongside concomitant processes of destabilization (where, for example, classificatory boundaries or spatial distinctions are tested and remade).

To return temporarily to my own role at the record label, when our label finally ceased operating in 2010, our website shifted from a site of current cultural production to one where artefacts were archived, offering an embedded narrative of what we were hoping to achieve and how far we went towards that end. This organization of material started out as a network where artists could sell products and contribute to a shared approach to our particular socio-cultural concerns, but became instead a locus for highlighting connections between disparate artefacts in a historical sense. This shift in organization constituted our small contribution to hauntology, and it will be useful to explore the role that other similar systems of organization - record labels and types of archive for example - play in developing the hauntological art world, particularly as these shifts are related directly to technological-mediation, especially the development of digital platforms and media sharing.

1.4 Two hauntological performances

PLAY NOW: Heroines of the U.S.S.R - *December 20th*

In the previous section we looked at hauntology in terms of a recorded cultural artefact, as well as concomitant issues of classification and organization. We also noted that, at least in our tentative thematic categorization, some musicians might be less concerned with the production of artefacts than with cultural production embodied in installations and exhibitions, or through live performance. As we indicated at the start of this chapter, our case study is primarily virtual, but there are important issues to be addressed concerning this particular type of cultural production, as non-virtual spaces enable participants to meet and engage in specific environments; these issues are bound to notions of spatiality - where our case study moves from the virtual to the physical - and in this section we will explore how space, in the first instance, is experienced by performers and audiences and, in the second instance, how tension can arise between different forms of spatial association.

The first example is my own performance as Heroines of the U.S.S.R; through these reflections, the intention is to underline some of the ways in which space is enacted and embodied through performance, and that this is a different form of cultural engagement to the consumption of cultural artefacts. This particular performance took place in a public house in Luton in May 2008. The performance was based around a piece of music I had composed called *December 20th*. This composition was originally recorded during the winter of 2003 - 04 during my second year at the University of East Anglia. The song comprised a number of micro-samples (millisecond-long music clips) from a piece by Henryk Górecki, combined with a number of field recordings made in Norwich during that year; included in these field recordings was the sound of children playing in the snow at the bottom of my road during a power outage just before Christmas and a recording of freezing fog on The Broads, recorded in the early hours of the morning. The intention of the performance, in a space that was more routinely associated with open mic nights, was to convey these specific experiences, and my memories of them, to a wider audience. In discussion afterwards, the piece was described as 'icy' and 'eerie', which suggests that the performance achieved this aim.

There are two reasons for telling this story. Firstly, there are thematic overlaps with our earlier discussions of Belbury Poly and Richard Skelton; in the case of the former, my composition involved utilizing multiple compositional approaches to assemble the track, and in the case of the later, my inspiration came from a personalized response to a physical environment. My performance demonstrates the interconnectedness between different forms of cultural engagement - virtual and physical, cultural artefacts and live performance - and how they are spatially constituted. Secondly, the performance raises questions about the sociological nature of artistic space and how context-dependent meaning-making may be. The audio example above uses the same component sounds as the performance did but, on an artistic level at least, it is a different piece of music. The order is slightly different and so too is the context in which the piece is listened to: this is no small point. The process of locating and engaging with music cultures - avant-garde or otherwise - should involve a multitude of spaces and practices which acknowledge the interrelationship between technical issues, semiotic rules, rhetoric, ideology, and behaviour as well as commercialism (Fabbri 1981). Crucially, with so many interconnected elements at play, the opportunity for destabilizing established or

expected behaviours – an important feature of the avant-garde in our earlier definition – is foregrounded, and space problematized alongside it.

Live performance can play as important a role in terms of participant engagement as the production and consumption of cultural artefacts and, despite our case study being primarily virtual, it has developed a physical counterpart to augment this. Music events, be they installations or live music, allow participants to engage in an assemblage of different practices and processes. In this case, the audience were able to see the mechanics of production first hand, and discuss with other audience members what the piece of music sounded like as they experience it together, but this performance was also bound by semiotic rules of genre and my own ideological stance imbued through the music; in short, a simplified reading of these interactions is not sufficient to detail the social activity that takes place at these sorts of sites. In a wider sense, these interactions may solidify or destabilize the boundaries created by participants at other sites, as well as the social bonds between different groups. Essentially, live performance facilitates embodied knowledge and ways of knowing through the interplay between different space and people.

PLAY NOW: Francisco López - *Galatheanthemum Profundale*

The second example of a live performance is one that demonstrates how participants can intentionally destabilize notions of space and, in the process, shows us how individual agency - on the part of the musician in this case - and micro-level social action can impact macro-level conceptualizations of music culture; in this example we will see the tension that may exist between the two.

Galatheanthemum Profundale is a piece by Francisco López, a Spanish avant-garde musician whose work combines field recordings from industrial and natural soundscapes. He works in a live performance environment, but also releases records. Space is crucial to López's work, from the initial collection of sound sources (from locations as varied as the Amazon rainforest and the central business district of Brussels) to the specific layout of the performance arena in which his music is best experienced.

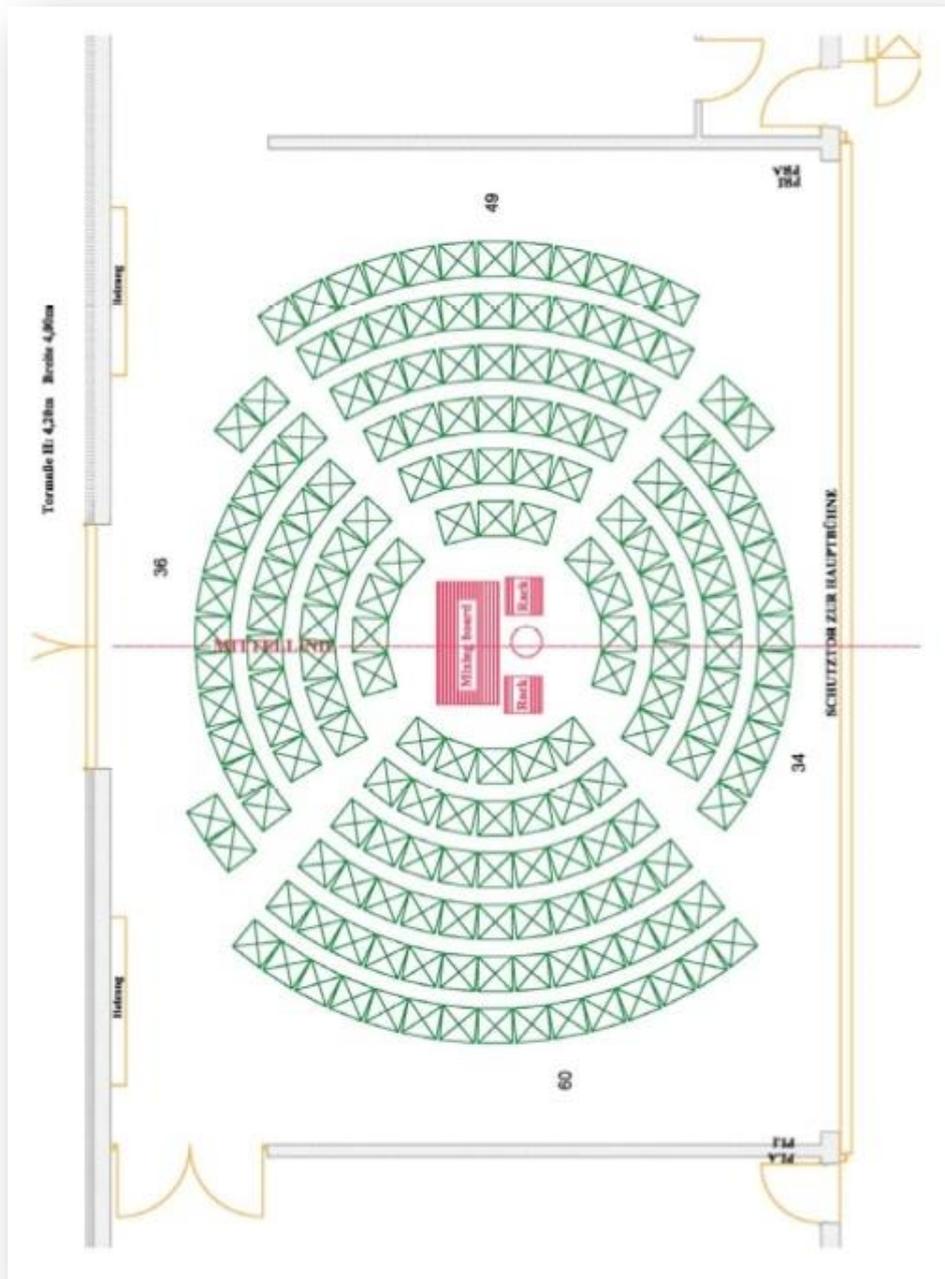


Fig.3 Francisco López live set-up schematic (López n.d.)

Since 2000, López has opted for limiting the sensory experience of participants at his performances - he achieves this by performing in darkness, with the audience seated facing away from him. He also asks audience members to wear blindfolds throughout the performance. The intention here is that the audience experience the sound world without interruption from extra-sensory information, specifically from eye sight. Figure 3, above, shows the spatial arrangement of a typical performance. López discusses this arrangement in the following way:

I position the audience in the middle of a sound field through surround systems, and one of my goals is to give rise to a feeling of being 'inside' the sound (instead of listening 'to' it), thus transforming the visually-defined space into a space of sound that changes its proportions and dimensions [sic] according to the transformations and movements of the sound field (Simons 2004).

What López is describing is another embodied experience of space through musical performance, a transformative act that - in the intention of the artist at least - facilitates a shift from passive to active engagement. Duration is also a factor, with audiences remaining blindfolded for up to an hour at a typical show; there are numerous stories from attendees involving audience members falling from their chairs in tears, or instances where people enter into a sort of semi-fitting state and have to be taken to a first aid room (Simons 2004). As with our more general definition of the role of the avant-garde that we discussed at the beginning of this chapter, this example appears to chime with the notion of space as a medium through which destabilizing activities can take place.

As a highly specialized and spatially-contingent piece of performance art, the public experience of being blindfolded with a group of other people seems to be very different from the production of cultural artefacts in the form of records, moving from a collective setting to one where individuals listen to a record at home. During primary interviews - which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 - I asked López about this difference, and whether or not this change from subjective performance space to the arena of the home-listener had any impact on how his work was understood: he told me that this difference was unimportant (López 2011). However, the issue here is that a space occupied by an audience experiencing a sound art performance appears to be, to this observer at least, dissimilar to listening to a recording in the relative isolation of your own home, yet López felt that there was no issue here. Setting aside the fact that this is at odds with López's own assessment of his work - where 'sound doesn't exist until we hear something, and therefore what we call a sound is always the sound-producing source plus the transmission space' (Simons 2004) - and my own personal experiences of both the recorded material and the live performance (which took place, incongruously, in the Jumpin' Jaks bar at Butlins in Minehead in 2010), this spatial tension replicates the problems we have already witnessed in relation to classification: how do participants understand and negotiate spaces that, to those looking in, appear to be

quite different from one another? Alongside this, this duality of space also speaks to an interesting tension between the want to disrupt and the need to produce a commodified experience or artefact. Again, the interplay between the myriad ways in which culture is performed, interpreted and understood, is crucial to situating both our case study and the contemporary avant-garde more broadly.

1.4.1 Spatiality

These two examples demonstrate some of the ways in which spatiality might play a role in contemporary avant-garde music culture, in terms of how experiences are embodied through artistic practice and how comprehension and engagement is problematized and destabilized by cultural experiences in specific locales. Although we are, of course, in the early stages of developing a lexicon for our case study, we might think of these environments in which cultural understanding is enacted as a form of *spatiality*, a definition of which would need to be maximalist so as to encompass a diversity of spatial realms; in Chapter 6 we will consider these different types of space, and their conceptual underpinning, in more detail, and consider the ways in which participants challenge codified conceptualizations of spatiality.

Our empirical concerns thus far - classification and organization - may also be connected to spatiality: for example, on a practical level, the processes involved in organising a live performance say - where different groups of participants meet in the same physical environment and experience and engage with music as well as each other - are complex, and rely on an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each participant group. Spatiality, in this sense, is understood in terms of the intertwined development of systems of organization, which are subsequently destabilized by artistic practice, so to define hauntological spatiality is to understand how space is utilised in this paradoxical sense.

What is the sociological importance of spatiality in terms of our case study? The conveyance or manipulation of culture in spatial terms takes place both physically, with regards to tangible arrangement of objects in a given territory, but also interstitially, offering a space *between* different participant groups where boundaries may be formulated or dissolved, roles may be codified and negotiated, rhetoric developed and deployed and conventions shared or disavowed. In our case study, classification and organization are potentially developed, through dialogue between groups, in these types of locales and different sites are utilized for different

purposes; comprehending these processes will enable us to see how hauntology operates, but also how we might approach situating these processes into a broader framework of contemporary avant-garde practice.

1.5 The avant-garde and practices of resistance

So far we have surveyed, through a variety of examples from our case study, some of the issues facing the contemporary avant-garde. We have identified concerns related to classification and categorization, organization and spatiality, but it is also important to return to the issues of resistance we touched upon in opening this chapter. We noted that the contemporary avant-garde might be thought of as distinct from what has come to be termed the 'historical avant-garde', at least temporally speaking, as the earlier iteration of the avant-garde was tied to specific cultural and socio-political issues in the 1960s and 1970s (van den Berg 2009:16). During this period, composers such as Frederic Rzewski, Christian Wolff and Cornelius Cardew made explicit links between their musical practices and what came to be viewed as left-leaning politicization; Cardew for example, was a prominent member of the British Communist Party (Tilbury 2008), and Rzewski's most famous composition - composed to reflect Unidad Popular's fight against Salvador Allende in Chile - is titled *The People United Will Never Be Defeated* (Watson 1988).

Adlington (2009) echoes this politicised connection, offering a sort of genealogy of the avant-garde that charts not just the impact of technological changes to compositional practice but also active participation in movement for social change. He highlights a number of case studies (Rzewski and Alvin Curran's group M.E.V., experimental jazz in New York City) that demonstrate the involvement of music and musicians in protest movements and other sites of resistance. From this, we might posit that an integral part of the historical avant-garde was some form of resistive practice; the question is whether or not the contemporary avant-garde is similarly implicated in resistive practices. We have seen already that some forms of resistance exist in the examples we have discussed - where Belbury Poly composes pieces with outdated technology rather than digital approximations, and Francisco López opposes the standard audience/performer relationship through his use of space - but how does this relate to the political sphere, or engagement with social change? Does it need to?

If the contemporary avant-garde is part of a genealogy of 'avant-gardes' then we might imagine that, to be considered as such, it corresponds to some of the features of earlier forms of the avant-garde. If this is the case, then the contemporary avant-garde may also have to answer the critical view that, rather than the revolutionary fighting force suggested by the etymological root of the phrase (from the French 'vanguard'), the avant-garde is simply a feature of the bourgeois capitalist system it seeks to interrogate and attack; critics such as Enzensberger (1962) Barthes (1975; 1981), Bauman (1997) suggest - broadly speaking - that any avant-garde is complicit in the system it rallies against, engaging in battles against institutions, whilst simultaneously relying on them for patronage and financial support. If this reading is correct, it suggests a paradox at the centre of avant-garde cultural life, and something that is worth addressing. These assessments are clearly based on the iteration of the avant-garde they are familiar with - namely the historical avant-garde - so it will be necessary both to explore the specifics of these criticisms (as we will do in the next chapter) and the ways in which the contemporary avant-garde challenges these concerns, or otherwise (as we will do in Chapter 7).

Despite our opening assertion about the relative absence of scholarship on the contemporary avant-garde, in recent years a number of scholars have explored the practices and notion of *resistance* in avant-garde art, using contemporary case studies to explore issues such as multiplicity (Lison 2011), anti-capitalism (Ray 2007), cluster theory (Tironi 2012) and gender (Tamboukou 2010). Others have identified the ways in which the concept of the avant-garde might be recast in light of contemporary developments in the art world (Léger 2012) or have detailed the gaps and misunderstandings in the original critiques of the historical avant-garde (Mann 1991). What this demonstrates is the continuing level of critical interest in the area, and the continuing validity of this particular area of enquiry. There is, therefore, scope and precedent for continuing to question and contemplate how resistance is framed in contemporary avant-garde movements.

Resistance is also implicitly related to our empirical concerns. If the process of establishing the features of our case study involves the creation, maintenance and destabilization of boundaries, then there is the potential for concomitant resistive practices to take place; this may include classificatory transgressions (internally or

externally enacted), organizational opposition (to institutional structures and systems for instance), or spatialized protest.

Engaging with individual (micro-level) and broader macro-level examples of resistive practice should enable us to situate our case study within the contemporary avant-garde but also, in a wider sense, within the historical narrative of the avant-garde more generally. Through these individual acts and practices a willingness to resist may be demonstrated; the sociological importance of the contemporary avant-garde can potentially be understood through these negotiated, collaborative or personalized resistive practices of different groups of participants.

1.6 Empirical questions

The intention of this chapter was a relatively straightforward one; to acquaint the reader with the central issues of this thesis by exploring some examples from our case study. In this final section, we will reflect on what we have explored so far, and offer some research questions based on these reflections.

We started out by defining our terms and explaining the sociological importance of the avant-garde, demonstrating its value as a site of enquiry and suggesting an interplay between participants, destabilizing practices and technology. We then situated hauntology within a narrative of re-engagement with earlier iterations of avant-garde culture - in terms of production techniques and the question of whether or not there is continued value in the aforementioned acts of political positioning - and the similarities and differences between the historical and the contemporary. Our case study appeared to straddle several positions of interest: hauntological musicians compose music with definite stylistic and compositional links with the historical avant-garde but there is also overlap with popular music in some cases.

By using a number of examples, we attempted to highlight aspects of the seemingly problematic negotiations between high and low art and, in the process, underlined some of the contradictory facets of hauntological culture (for example, the disjuncture between the production of records and live performance); this was typified through discussions involving classification, where traditional markers of categorization in popular music - namely the use of aural similarity - proved not entirely helpful in understanding how, for instance, a musician like Belbury Poly can potentially be considered both avant-garde and populist. We suggested that

classification might also be constituted thematically, in the sense that the music might explore similar themes, even if they sound distinct from one another. These difficulties alerted us to the problems participants may face when considering what can and what cannot be considered 'hauntological', and, more broadly, issues with the destabilization of traditional musical associations (which may or may not be technologically constituted).

Our first empirical question, therefore, is deceptively simple: *how is hauntology classified?* To answer this question we need to understand and detail our case study by investigating who the different groups of participants are, and how they approach classification and categorization; understanding their approaches will allow us to reflect on how our case study feeds into more expansive discussions on music culture, including, for example, the changing nature of genre in the face of new forms of technological practice. As we have seen throughout this chapter, there are clearly a number of groups of participants involved in our case study: there are artists or musicians - who create cultural artefacts - as well as fans and critics who consume and debate these artefacts. As in other studies of art cultures (see, for example, Becker 1982) the relationships between these different groups of participants defines how the boundaries of our case study are negotiated, maintained or destabilized. It follows, therefore, that understanding how these groups are organised, and how their contributions are included or excluded, is crucial to making visible not just hauntology but the contemporary avant-garde more widely.

Tied into this question, we also highlighted the importance of organization. Organization, we suggested, can be thought of in a number of ways; first of all we drew on my experiences of operating a record label; organization in this context involved maintaining a network of musicians that connected with the wider structures found in other art communities, including distribution arrangements, event scheduling and interactions with audiences. In this sense, organization could be viewed as clearly delineated, a series of contextual structural arrangements between different groups of participants, but this brief example will need to be compared with others if any meaningful conclusions are to be drawn. It was also noted that, when considering the shift from an active to a defunct record label, cultural production continued in an alternative form, shifting to a nascent archive of cultural artefacts. In these new environs there is the potential for participants to

engage in knowledge creation through the construction of historical narratives mitigated by associations between people, artefacts and ideas. In doing so, participants will be involved in decision-making in terms of what should be remembered and what should be forgotten (an additional tangible link with classification). The technological aspect of these actions is also important; for example, the nature of sharing your interests through something like a blog interface prefabricates certain forms of cultural archiving, as participant discussions gradually accumulate and information becomes ordered through, in this example, word association: this sort of process may create connections between different types of metadata, or themes, reinforcing or undermining aesthetic considerations whilst simultaneously feeding back into the music culture itself (Beer 2013).

Here, in light of these issues, our second empirical question is *how might we understand the organization of contemporary avant-garde music culture?*

Moving on from these two interconnected aspects of our case study, we highlighted the role that non-virtual space might play, through the example of two contextually different performances. In both cases, the nature of space played an important role, connecting the composition of individual pieces of music or sound art with different groups of cultural participants in a physical environment. Although our case study began online, the offline interactions in these spaces are also significant; the reason this is sociologically interesting is that in these locales we may observe the interrelationship between alternative forms of spatial association, where sociality is practiced with regards to both older and newer forms of organization. Our examples also suggest tension in terms of how meaning is communicated in different environments. For instance, despite our assessment that there was a disparity between live performance and listening to records, Francisco López, saw no difference; considering the specific environmental factors associated with his live work, this seemed to be an incongruous statement. What it does show is that spatiality can be explored and interpreted in a multitude of ways, again feeding back into notions of classification in terms of what is and is not considered an appropriate reading of a cultural artefact, or indeed performance.

With this in mind, our third empirical question is *how is spatiality constituted in our case study, and how might it relate to concomitant issues of classification and organization?*

Lastly, we suggested that the narratives of the historical avant-garde, and the contemporary, might be interrelated by briefly considering critical responses to the avant-garde and newer case studies where the role of resistance has been reconstituted and reconsidered. We noted that in these newer case studies, resistance continues to play a role, and offered an interpretive outline for how some of the individual approaches we used as examples in this chapter might be considered in terms of resistive practice. In both cases resistance was not characterised by the sort of sustained, collective attacks on political institutions and trenchant positions which has come to be associated with the historical avant-garde, but could instead be observed as a series of specialized, contextual interventions, with different artists approaching resistance in a variety of ways, be it through compositional practices or personal history work.

Our fourth empirical question asks *is the contemporary avant-garde involved in practices of resistance and, if so, what does this involve?* There are, of course, a number of other questions linked into this, such as the interplay between resistive practices and other participant groups (is resistance different depending on your role?), and the paradox noted by Barthes (1981) and others around the impossibility of resistance when musicians continue to rely on patronage and commercial activity. These questions, it can be argued, contribute to the broader, overarching concern of this thesis, as do our other empirical questions, namely how might we make visible contemporary avant-garde music movements.

It is important to note, in closing, that we are not limiting ourselves to these questions, suitably broad as they are; we are instead using them for guidance. The social world is complicated, frequently illusory and capricious, and to maintain an epistemological stance that reflects this, it is important that we adopt a perspective of enquiry that is open to tangents and changes-of-course as dictated by the data we collect and analyse. Nonetheless, to summarize, following a definition of the avant-garde which sees the problematizing of aesthetic associations via the development of technology, our aim is to use hauntology as a way of understanding how practices and processes of classification, organization, spatiality and resistance are potentially destabilized by participants, and what role technology might play in this.

To conclude, the structure of this thesis is as follows: Chapter 2 will offer a discussion of related literature in and around our field of enquiry; a consideration of our epistemological stance, methods of data collection and analysis as well as ethical

considerations will follow in Chapter 3. Our empirical investigations will constitute Chapters 4 to 7, running from classification, through organization and spatiality, to resistance. In particular, our intention is to explore the four empirical foci we have highlighted through a series of technologically-mediated research processes. Although we will discuss this in more detail in Chapter 3, it is important to underscore the fact that, having acknowledged the significant role that technology has played in shaping the avant-garde, our data collection and analysis will involve sites where technology has facilitated shifts in cultural action. For example, we are suggesting that different forms of dialogue are vital in terms of classificatory practice, so we will explore online message boards, and social tagging through data mining techniques, to better interrogate how dialogue is constituted: our broader argument is that we require new tools and methods for accessing and understanding the destabilization that has taken place in terms of conceptualizing music culture. In Chapter 8, we will return to our overarching question involving our understanding of contemporary avant-garde music movements, reflecting on the data we have analysed and the conclusions we have arrived at through our exploration of the interrelationship between different forms of dialogue, technology and destabilizing practices. We will close by offering some preparatory thoughts on further approaches to the study of the contemporary avant-garde. In each case, we will demonstrate the sociological importance of what we are doing through detailed discussions of relevant theoretical and conceptual standpoints, and how these facilitate our interpretation and understanding of the data we have collected.

To summarize, our intention is to suggest that the contemporary avant-garde (through the rubric of hauntology) demonstrates the ways in which technological change continues to shape and destabilize more traditional explanations of cultural engagement in music, and how participants use different forms of dialogue to codify, contain, modify and reshape classificatory processes, organizational structures, spatiality and practices of resistance.

In the next chapter we will continue the process of situating our case study within the contemporary avant-garde by exploring literature related to music culture, both from a popular and avant-garde perspective.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The intention of this chapter is to explore a number of discourses on music culture in an effort to situate not only our case study, but also the wider-reaching narratives that constitute previous enquiries into the sociology of music. To this end, the chapter will be split into two sections; the first section - from 2.1 to 2.4 - will outline several approaches towards classifying and organizing music culture, offering an initial overview of different positions followed by the identification of potential gaps in the literature and any issues that may impact our case study. The second section - from 2.4 onwards - will look at the ways in which the avant-garde has been explored and what these discourses mean for our study specifically in relation to definitions and criticisms in relation to the historical avant-garde. We will also consider four examples of case studies of the contemporary avant-garde conducted in recent years, two of which are directly related to hauntology. The reasoning behind this split - as we alluded to in the previous chapter - is that studies of avant-garde music cultures have been relatively minimal, and, with few exceptions, those that have been undertaken tend towards analysis of the historical avant-garde. To move beyond this it is important that we, in the first instance, consider sociological enquiries into music cultures that have, for the most part, focused on forms of popular music; the separation between popular and avant-garde is itself a socially negotiated construct and to interrogate these sorts of classifications and segregations it is crucial that we draw on a multitude of sources. From this exploration of sociological perspectives on popular music cultures we will be able to locate, understand and derive potentially pertinent features and approaches that may be applicable, albeit in a broad sense, to the avant-garde. In the second instance, we will begin to situate our case study by considering discussions on the historical avant-garde; in doing so we intend to work towards an understanding of music culture which combines different approaches to the study of popular and avant-garde music as this will underpin the contextualized narratives of our case study. In essence, we are using this macro-level analysis of literature to inform our understanding of micro-level social action in the contemporary avant-garde.

Before we begin, it is worth noting that the process of locating and detailing literature on any given subject is a selective process, in the sense that the

formulation of research questions ultimately shapes and guides what should be explored (Bryman 2008: 103-4). Scholarly interest in music cultures is understandably sizeable and far-reaching so a selective approach is necessary, where we identify relevant studies and gaps in the literature and, in so doing, begin to think about where our case study might reside in relation to these debates. Although we will cover more expansive arguments about related research, it is important to ensure that these discussions are directly related to our overall research aim: making visible the contemporary avant-garde through our case study and the concomitant social processes of classification, organization, spatiality and resistance, thereby situating this literature review in relation to our empirical interests.

We will begin by exploring two of our empirical foci - namely practices associated with classification and organization - in relation to studies of music cultures. First of all we will detail scholarly approaches to the classification of culture, taking into account competing discourses on the construction and codification of music culture and the tactics participants employ to understand the music they are involved in producing; in this regard, a term frequently associated with these classificatory activities is 'genre' (see, for example, Looseley 2006; Savage 2006; Eerola 2011; Kulczak and Lennertz Jetton 2011), and our focus will engage with some of the approaches to understanding how classification can be understood as a function of genre.

Following on from classification and categorization we will discuss the ways in which structural arrangements (such as the interaction between different groups of participants) have been explored in literature on music cultures particularly questions related to the formation of 'genres' and 'scenes'; related discussions on this topic are partly classificatory but also involve a consideration of how culture is organized through adjunctive terminology including 'subculture', 'neo-tribe' and 'art world' (with each term having its own subjective - and shared - organizational characteristics). We will discuss each organizational concept in turn, reflecting on the critiques of these approaches in an effort towards potentially locating aspects of our case study within these discourses.

Having detailed a number of classificatory and organizational debates, we will explore in more detail the arguments related to the historical avant-garde. The intention here is to consider how to situate our case study within a longer narrative,

combining our assessment of literature on popular music cultures with that of the avant-garde. The reasoning behind this is that, in connecting our case study to wider discussions of popular and avant-garde music cultures, we might begin to understand the particular strains and concerns that underline the social activities of our participants. Furthermore, exploring debates on the historical avant-garde will enable us to better comprehend the similarities, changes or adaptations made in the shift towards the contemporary avant-garde.

An important element of the narrative of the historical avant-garde is the critique of its overarching aims; this critique has taken a number of forms, from attacks on the validity of avant-garde perspectives on the nature of art (Bauman 1997), through the economic paradox of attempting to resist a system that provides economic backing for artistic projects (Bürger 1984), to the etymological foundations of the term itself, rooted in militaristic, forward-fighting rhetoric but embroiled in perpetuating the status quo (Enzensberger 1962). An understanding of these criticisms is useful in that they allow us to observe how contemporary practices are related to these wide-ranging critiques, and to explore to what extent the contemporary avant-garde may be related to its historical forebears. Our empirical concerns and the definitions and criticisms of the historical avant-garde will be restated at the end of the chapter.

To augment this discourse on continuity and change in the avant-garde we will also consider a number of examples of contemporary case studies; in doing so, we will provide justification for our own situational work and demonstrate some of the ways in which recent scholarship has returned to the avant-garde as a site of sociological interest. Two of these studies will involve the avant-garde music cultures of live improvisation and minimal techno (Atton 2012; Lison 2011 respectively), with two further studies reflecting specifically on elements of our case study (Lison 2012; Sexton 2012). Having considered, earlier in the chapter, the issues of classification and organization, we will also reflect on how spatiality and resistance constitute the backbone of these contemporary studies, again reinforcing our own empirical lines of enquiry. Through these studies we can begin to understand the sorts of approaches scholars have used to explore and detail these sorts of music culture, but also how different branches of the contemporary avant-garde appear to operate.

In essence, our aim is to begin to codify our own analytical framework of approaches to avant-garde culture, firstly by exploring broad debates around classification and organization of music cultures and secondly by considering the specific theoretical approaches and critiques of the avant-garde in both historical and contemporary situations. We will conclude by reflecting on these discussions and the problems that have emerged in relation to our research interests before we move on to formulate methodological approaches towards the ontology and epistemology of research and the use of different forms of data collection and analysis.

2.2 Understanding the classification and categorization of music cultures

We identified in the opening chapter how processes of classification and categorization underpin our case study, so to extend this initial observation we will need to consider arguments related to how certain aspects of cultural production are classified as belonging or not belonging, be that a discussion of cultural artefacts, live performance work or otherwise. Classification is, of course, not unique to music culture and as Bowker and Starr (1999) suggest, can be seen in a wide variety of types of social activity, and although we are focusing primarily on music cultures, it makes sense that we may draw, on occasion, from other aspects of cultural classificatory work.

We will begin by considering genre as a way of understanding processes of classification, as genre is a term that appears frequently in historic and contemporary discourses on music culture; we might say, tentatively of course, that what we are talking about when we talk about genre are the characteristics of a particular music culture, and how participants create, comprehend and detail those characteristics. Music culture is frequently understood through genre theory (Fabbri 1981; Frith 1996; Toynbee 2000) but this can be potentially problematic because scholars approach the notion of genre from a number of different directions and there is often relatively little consensus about what genre is (Gunn 1999), hence our tentative suggestion. An additional issue, particularly in relation to our case study, is that discussions about genre are almost entirely concerned with 'popular culture' (Martin 1995; Bennett 2001), be that music, art, fashion, television or film, so more peripheral culture such as avant-garde music, is often explored in relation to these

debates rather than in and of itself. This is not necessarily a problem - music cultures are often interrelated, so one way of locating the contemporary avant-garde may be to understand its role in juxtaposition to popular culture - but it is a consideration we must carry forward as specific conceptual and methodological tools may need developing along the way.

A further complication is that the way in which we understand these social actions has been transformed in the last decade or so by new social media, enabling participants to connect and construct cultures in different, technologically mediated ways. Any study of music culture has to combine classificatory considerations with an exploration of how these processes are embodied in, and enacted through, new social media (Beer 2013).

To return to genre as a process of classification, the first approach we are going to consider explores categorization through the ways in which cultural artefacts are assessed for points of similarity and difference; we problematized this approach from our own perspective in the previous chapter, but it is useful to locate these sorts of practices within the established literature on genre. Feuer considers genre in this sense, as a technique of categorizing similar texts, what we might think of as a taxonomy of simple classification (1992: 138) where groupings are based around points of comparison or divergence. The difficulty with this is what exactly it is that constitutes these points of similarity, 'and on what qualities of the text are genres created, maintained and changed' (Harper 2001: 397). This issue is also apparent in other forms of cultural production; in film and cinema studies, the problem with genre according to Altman (1984) is that

even the most advanced of current genre theories, those that see generic texts as negotiating a relationship between a specific production system and a given audience, still hold to a notion of genre that is fundamentally ahistorical in nature (8).

What we see here is that genre cannot be reduced to the categorizing of like-artefacts as the conditions of what is considered 'alike' is open to debate; if this were the case then genre theory would not be contested, but Feuer's approach is a simplification which, as Altman suggests, relegates crucial participant-led processes of contextualization and, as Harper suggests, ignores change. These complications suggest that a more expansive understanding of categorization and genre is needed

to include the role of participants and the multiple perspectives they bring to classificatory work.

Building on this, a second approach to genre views classification and categorization not exclusively as the juxtaposition of cultural artefacts, but as the totality of related social process and situations. Lena's work on the formation of genre (2012) compared a wide variety of musical genres in an effort towards understanding the developmental stages that genres move through, and the role different groups of participants play in forming genres. Lena begins her analysis by noting the way 'stylistic distinctions...organise people and songs within a system of symbolic classification' but few, if any, studies 'seek to document recurrent processes of development and change across styles' (4). The suggestion here is that genres are inherently developmental and should be considered as such by researchers. Despite this level of fluidity, there are still a number of recurring characteristics which enable us to conceptualize genre as 'systems of orientations, expectations, and conventions that bind together industry, performers, critics, and fans in making what they identify as a distinctive sort of music' (6). Here we see the importance of comparison in terms of musical production (as Feuer suggests) but only as part of the process of signification participants are engaged in; Lena is also quick to stress that genre does not refer to musical idioms. The importance of the social is reasserted, as around these practices of distinction communities form 'networks of cultural production, distribution and consumption' which - in borrowing a phrase from Becker (1982) - she describes as an 'art world' (2012: 6). For sociality to develop, boundaries have to be malleable, in the sense that part of the work of constructing a music culture involves the continual re-evaluation of those elements which can and cannot be considered part of a genre. This observation appears to run parallel to Sandywell and Beer (2005) and Rimmer's (2012) work on the hybridity of genre, whereby different genres merge or switch from one set of symbolic structures to another. This is based around continual negotiation, thereby making it harder to differentiate or stabilize the notion of genre; the result is the 'transmutation of genres in the digital age' (Sandywell and Beer 2005: 107). Ultimately, our idea of classification and categorization - read through genre theory - is not simply about distinguishing between cultural forms and artefacts, but understanding these processes within the context of the social networks, or art worlds, in which they occur.

Atton (2012) appears to agree with a 'complex world' notion of genre, expanding genre to include live performance, as this sort of cultural setting can be viewed as the locus for classificatory issues. The sort of negotiated spaces Lena details, 'take place within situated contexts which themselves produce social situations within which a genre culture is practiced' (428). In a practical sense, live performances are sites where debate can take place, but, Atton says, this is highly contextualized as norms governing musical - and audience - behaviour differ from genre to genre. It also demonstrates that live performance settings offer an interesting addendum when considering notions of cultural production and consumption. In relation to our case study, live settings could be particularly important because, as we discussed in the previous chapter, hauntology occupies both virtual and non-virtual space, so understanding the interrelationship between spaces may enable us to make visible contemporary avant-garde practices. However, if we think about approaches to genre which engage with new social media, these negotiations are undertaken in a flattened, virtual realm that is quite unlike the offline world of live performance; here negotiation of genre rules may take on a different form, as text is the primary method of communication.

The third approach, as discussed by Gunn (1999), builds on a textual interpretation of genre and considers the linguistic processes of classification and categorization that might constitute genre. Rather than looking at the social relations between participants, the focus is instead on the developmental word-systems that enable participants to comprehend, explain and detail the various aspects of the music culture they are a part of. Gunn accounts for genre as a series of linguistic relations of meaning in specific cultural contexts. There are three orders of signification that contribute to this linguistic understanding; first order signification is the process by which the music is experienced; second order signification sees adjectives ascribed to the explain the music that has been experienced; third order signification is the development of a metadiscourse and 'the process from which genres emerge as an assemblage of metaphors and similes into a coherent system of interpretation' (33). These linguistic processes are necessarily social, in that they are linguistic constructs negotiated by participants. They are also connected, both linguistically and socially, to wider sociocultural concerns in music culture; for example Gunn points out the important role that business plays in terms of genre construction.

What is often being sold and transacted in the marketplace, then, is not music per se, but generic - and thus linguistic - codes. That is, what are peddled to music consumers are, very literally, adjectives. Understanding the commercial elements of musical genre in this way can explain how many music fans can "walk the walk, and talk the talk" of "new wave," for instance, and not own a single Gary Numan or Talking Heads album. Yet genres are not merely scholarly tools or commercial indices, for they also denote a very common critical, categorizing process that musical fans and artists understand intimately and formulate continually (35).

What we might take from Gunn, as well as from Lena and Atton, is that to understand the complexity of our contemporary avant-garde case study we have to engage with multiple approaches to classification and categorization. So far in this section we have demonstrated the need to explore a multitude of social actions and activities, and Gunn is suggesting here that the same rules apply in a linguistic sense; as part of the complex social world of music culture, cultural artefacts are regularly understood by participants in these terms, and although this echoes Feuer's approach, it is one which augmented by descriptive perspectives beyond the sameness of one form of cultural production. Orlov (1981) also notes the importance of language, not simply as a form of description and comparison, but as a way of establishing conventions.

The safest assumption is to see them as cultural patterns learned by individuals in the cultural environment...relations between the signifier and significate in music are mediated by cultural convention rather than based on immediately felt resemblance or shared properties (136).

In terms of our particular case study, the term 'contemporary avant-garde' is in itself a form of linguistic distinction, carrying with it a number of potent associations, conventions and shared ideas, so understanding how participants engage in genre via their own specific language games appears to be of some value as it associates our case study with pre-existing conventions through the application of the term 'avant-garde'. Additionally, Gunn and Orlov's ideas may be important because communication between participants takes place primarily online, where conventions are potentially codified through textual associations and negotiations. In the early stages of the formation of a music culture, definition and boundary

formation, as Lena (2012) suggests, are continual processes so in a virtual realm the written word may be viewed as one of the ways that boundaries are initially constructed; understanding the role language plays, in tandem with the complexities of social actions, will allow us to comprehend the construction of categories and establish where hauntology fits into these narratives.

In this section, through several examples of approaches to genre culture, what we see is that classification is a complicated but unavoidable series of processes that enable participants to understand the cultural world they are a part of. In observing and detailing our case study, and the approaches to categorization used by hauntological participants, our aim is to situate hauntology within these discourses. Part of this process, as we have suggested throughout this section, involves understanding the interrelationships between boundary formation, types of space, linguistic or textual specificities, and the increasing role technology plays in shaping and reshaping these associations.

2.3 Understanding the organization of music cultures

In the previous section we detailed a number of perspectives on genre, expanding on the difficulties experienced in the opening chapter with regards to the classification and categorization of music cultures. So far we have explored 'genre' as a way of comprehending how participants classify and categorize the culture they create, and in this section we will look at three influential ideas in music culture literature - namely 'subcultures', 'tribes' and 'art worlds' - regarding the ways we might organize the groups we find and, more importantly, the ways in which participants organise themselves in relation to the culture they categorise.

Subcultures, neo-tribes and art worlds are three concepts which feature in much of the literature around the organization of music cultures: whereas classification and categorization details the methods by which participants define types of cultural production, organization is how we might comprehend the structures and frameworks that bind multiple elements together. Subcultures, neo-tribes and art worlds are not the only organizational systems used to detail how participants may be grouped together, but they constitute three routinely debated approaches and are, therefore, important to include in our discussions. We will discuss each concept in an effort towards presenting some of the approaches

commonly utilized in studies of music culture and how they might be related to our concerns in later chapters.

We begin with subcultures; the prefix 'sub' in 'subculture' has been described as meaning 'lower than' or 'beneath' depending on whose account you read (respectively Hall and Jefferson 1976; Thornton 1995). Broadly speaking, subcultural theory can be split into three approaches though there is clearly overlap and digression within each; they are the oppositional or hegemonic approach, the subcultural capital approach and the post-subcultural approach: we will consider each in turn.

Subcultural theory took off in the early 1950s, a decade which saw the publication of C. Wright Mills' *White Collar: The American Working Classes* (2002) and David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (2001 [with Glazer and Denney]) which might be considered the forerunners to subcultural theory. It is Riesman, Glazer and Denney's work where we see an initial attempt at defining the burgeoning - and largely youth-based - notion of a sub or counter culture 'which actively sought a minority style and interpreted it in accordance with subversive values. Thus the audience [...] manipulates the product, no less than the other way round.' (361)

Here we see subcultures located in terms of oppositional distinctions, embodied in a self-awareness of how certain stylistic choices - be they fashion or music-related - interact with, and contrast, aspects of dominant culture. This oppositional activity can be seen as the genesis for a hegemonic reading of subculture. Hegemonic subcultural theory was developed by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham (henceforth the CCCS), and combined social analysis with discussions of theories on the nature of social action, exploring the variety of ways that subcultures might act in opposition to dominant culture. Stuart Hall, one of the founders of the CCCS, describes hegemony as

a situation in which a provisional alliance of certain social groups can exert 'total social authority' over other subordinate groups, not simply by coercion or by the direct imposition of ruling ideas, but by 'winning and shaping consent so that the power of the dominant classes appears both legitimate and natural (Hall quoted in Hebdige 1979: 15-16).

In relation to music culture, Dick Hebdige, a CCCS scholar whose book *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* develops this notion of hegemonic subculture by exploring oppositional approaches through an analysis of the stylistic choices of participants in reggae and punk cultures. He explains that to maintain hegemony, dominant class structures need to frame subordinate groups within a range of their own definition - to have control over them in a way that appears to be natural, a position seemingly outside of discourse and beyond the reach of narrow and apparently temporary interests (Hebdige 1979: 15-16). Here we see a relationship with Gunn's linguistic discussion, where conventions are framed by the control and manipulation of language and meaning. Hebdige's theory of resistance to dominant discourses involves engaging with Roland Barthes' work on style (2009). Style is full of semiotic meaning, embodied in clothing, artefacts, gestures or certain types of speech that challenge common cultural consensus; Barthes term for this is 'myth'. Barthes felt that it was possible to demystify and repossess meanings, and, building on this, Hebdige attempted to show that this was possible via a process of '...discern[ing] the hidden messages inscribed in code on the glossy surfaces of style, to trace them out as "maps of meaning" which obscurely re-present the very contradictions they are designed to resolve or conceal' (Hebdige 1979: 18). Subcultures, in this guise, seek to challenge hegemony by creating their own cartographies of cultural significance, the intention being to demonstrate the fallacies beneath the surface of dominant cultural practices through stylistic challenges devised by participants.

There are, however, a number of criticisms levelled at the approaches of Hebdige and the CCCS more widely, which diminish its continuing impact: McRobbie and Garber (1975) highlight the role that male bias plays in much of the research undertaken by the CCCS, and, as detailed by Jensen (2006), Bjurström identifies CCCS scholars as 'having a static and social semiotic approach resulting in the subcultures being read off as already-written-texts' (261) rather than the dynamic and changing cultural arrangements we saw earlier in our discussions of the complexities of genre.

Moving on from the oppositional and hegemonic, the second form of subcultural theory - subcultural capital - moves in a different direction to Hebdige and the CCCS; instead of oppositional action towards hegemony embodied in style, social activity that results in knowledge creation is foregrounded. In *Club Cultures*

(1995), Sarah Thornton develops Bourdieu's highly influential idea of cultural capital (1986) and adapts the term along subcultural lines; the phrase she coins for this is 'subcultural capital'. Thornton's analysis of the London-based dance music club culture scene begins by locating dance music within a historical narrative, viewing subculture as a 'colloquial expression to youth cultures from whom dance clubs and their 1980s offshoot, raves, are the symbolic axis and working social hub' (1995: 3). Subcultural capital, she argues, involves taste as the means through which participants in this social hub negotiate issues of authenticity - embodied in relation to coolness or hipness - against the concept of mainstream culture, as well as considering the role that the media plays in the commercialization, and potential inauthenticity, of dance music. Thornton's focus is on young people, as with many subcultural studies, and how peer-based definition functions in the context of specific spaces and social congregations; here subcultural participants use embodied, objectified and institutionalized markers to obtain and trade subcultural knowledge and improve their subjective standing - or subcultural capital - within a specific culture.

Thornton's book focuses on a number of key developments in relation to club culture as a subcultural practice; two of these are particularly interesting in terms of the genesis of subcultural theory, namely the application of knowledge in furthering the social positions of participants and the fragmentary nature of the subcultures as a whole. With regards to the former, subcultural capital can be understood as the interrelationship between ways of knowing and forms of cultural practice within a particular subcultural context. This interrelationship enables participants to distinguish themselves from others through their enacted understanding of the signs that define their culture (11). In addition, and on a broader scale, Thornton explains that this also entails the establishment of a fictionalized 'Other', or mainstream, through which the entire group can identify itself; to facilitate this, subcultures have an internal hierarchy based on the application of specific, contextual knowledge, the totality of which is juxtaposed with other music cultures to demonstrate points of difference (114-17). At face value, this would appear to hark back to the approaches of the CCCS, but Thornton is quick to point out that the mainstream is not an actual entity but rather an arbitrary construction, so can only be understood in the context of participant's concepts of difference, rather than offering any real form of resistive or oppositional practice.

With regards to the latter issue, the increasing fragmentation of subcultures means that the development of both a contextual music culture and an arbitrary 'Other' is ongoing; rather than a unified force against hegemony - or indeed any other perceived threat - subcultures are instead transient, fluid bodies. Globalisation, coupled with the postmodern turn, leads to an increasingly unstable conception of what constitutes a 'clubber', as Thornton argues, where club nights can be understood not as a stable base but as a site of constant flux, changing typology and modified style. Despite the development of a type of music that was globally marketed and, to an extent, understood, those involved in club cultures engaged on a purely local level, their actions subject to - and dependent on - a highly subjective, minute, and contextual distinctions (1995: 98-99). These transitory associations hark back to the complications of genre highlighted earlier, where the complex assemblage of actors and activities is required to accurately represent the diversity of social life.

The ideas of post-subcultural theory take this fragmentation a stage further. Here, although it is possible for contemporary subcultures to express some political orientation, earlier forms of resistance-through-style have largely dissipated, 'with any "intrinsically" subversive quality to subcultures exposed as an illusion' (Muggleton and Weinzierl 2003: 4-5). The CCCS view of subculture vs. dominant/parental culture is no longer a valid one owing to the complex nature and distribution of ideas, styles, music, technology, people and capital in postmodernity. Subcultures no longer act as a functioning arm of a rebellious working class but rather a 'buy in' to yet another form of commodity culture, whereby participants sculpt their image in specific ways, becoming complicit in their own marketed identities; Thornton's distinctions between authentic and inauthentic are, therefore, problematized in this context.

This relationship between commodity and capitalism is an important one. Clark (2003: 8) is more optimistic than Muggleton, suggesting that although 'subcultures may serve a useful function for capitalism by making stylistic innovations that can then become vehicles for new sales', they can also mutate away from a co-opted marketed creation once it becomes apparent to the members/fans that the subculture has become 'mainstream'; this reintroduces authenticity and offers a space where the possibility of political engagement re-emerges, despite fragmentation. Subcultures, Clark argues, only become political

when this co-optation begins: they become authentic when the *pose* is replaced by a *threat*, whether explicit or not. Contrary to the illusion suggested by Muggleton and Weinzierl, it is possible to see the potential for resistive action again.

Terranova (2004) however, disagrees with this assessment and feels that subcultures may in fact be complicit in their dealings with capitalism, actively encouraging the commercialisation of artistic products and artefacts

Subcultural movements have stuffed the pockets of multinational capitalism for decades. Nurtured by the consumption of earlier cultural moments, subcultures provide the look, style and sound that sell clothes, CDs, videos games, films and advertising slots on television. This has often happened through the participation of subcultural members in the production of cultural goods (independent labels in music; small designer shops in fashion). This participation is, as the word suggests, a voluntary phenomenon, although it is regularly accompanied by cries of 'Sell-out!' (80).

What we see in these perspectives is a problematic relationship between music and capital, where subculture is in effect no different from mainstream culture. In relation to the contemporary avant-garde this observation is provocative, particularly when, as we shall discuss shortly, oppositional positioning and resistance is often viewed as the foundation of the avant-garde. In this sense, resistance becomes another identity or persona for participants to buy into, removing any semblance of actual oppositional practice.

Moving away from subcultural explanations, but still concerned with the fluidity of contemporary music culture, the notion of 'neo-tribes' has gained some traction in academic discourse. Maffesoli (1996), who coined the term 'tribes', describes tribes as new forms of sociality that can be understood as 'post-traditional', where group identities are no longer formed around classical structural determinants like class, gender or religion; consumption patterns and practices enable individuals to create new forms of contemporary sociality and small scale, temporary social configurations operate beyond modernist assumptions of boundaries. The tribe is

without the rigidity of the forms of organization with which we are familiar, it refers more to a certain ambience, a state of mind, and it is preferably expressed through lifestyles that favour appearance and form (98).

Tribes do not exhibit stable practices of inclusion and exclusion, but instead encourage plural, part-time group identities which individuals can move between. Bennett (1999) applies this notion to the subculture debate, stating firstly that the term 'subculture', and the baggage associated with it renders that particular descriptor impotent of meaning and ultimately unusable. He feels that groupings previously categorised as a coherent subculture are in fact better understood as a series of ad-hoc gatherings, typified by loose associations, non-rigid boundaries and transient memberships which he terms 'neo-tribes' (600). Older notions of subculture saw the movement of individuals between associative collectives glossed over in favour of simplified definitions ignorant of the panoply of factors that contribute to an individual's cultural participation and social affiliations; in contrast neo-tribes promotes these aspects. While agreeing with the use of 'subculture' as a failed definitional construct, Hesmondhalgh (2005) takes issue with Bennett's reading, explaining that rather than reflecting the flexibility of music 'collectivities', he is in fact creating a false dichotomy between rigid explanations (the CCCS say) and fluid ones, whereas the separation is not as clear-cut. Coupled with a reading of identity politics which foregrounds youth culture over broader understandings of participants in popular music cultures, 'neo-tribes' becomes as problematic and unrepresentative as the subcultural debates Bennett is keen to move away from (23-6).

Bennett (2005) offers a brief riposte to Hesmondhalgh's critique, reasserting the importance of associating popular music with youth-based studies; in relation to our case study, this is potentially problematic as subcultural and neo-tribal explanations of music culture frequently focus on the younger demographic of participants. Exploratory fieldwork suggests that hauntological participants do not necessarily fit into this category so the specificity of these approaches needs to be taken into consideration.

Our final organizational approach is Howard Becker's 'art worlds' thesis, which, as Lena (2012) notes, connects categorization and social action as part of the same system of organization; Becker introduces the concept of the art world by explaining that artistic endeavour is, by its very nature, a collaborative process, and that any work of art will bear traces of the cooperative effort that produced it.

It is not an approach that produces aesthetic judgements, although that is a task many sociologists of the arts have set themselves. It produces, instead, an understanding of the complexity of the cooperative networks through which art happens (1982: 1).

The construction and perpetuation of art worlds is a complicated process, and one that may underpin several aspects that are relevant to our investigation, namely collaborative organizational networks and the creation of conventions based on internally and externally negotiated classificatory systems developed by participants. Networks, for example, are established through a combination of necessity (an art work cannot be produced if the right materials are not present for example) and mutual assurance, and once established acts as an ongoing series of practical activities as well as a template for continuing production and support. An interrelated process, similar to genre, is the development of a distinct aesthetic identity, again a shared project:

...a coherent and defensible aesthetic helps to stabilize values, and thus to regulate practice. Stabilizing values is not just a philosophical exercise. Art world participants who agree on a work's value can act toward it in roughly similar ways. An aesthetic, providing a basis on which people can evaluate things in a reliable and dependable way, makes regular patterns of cooperation possible...from this point of view, aesthetic value arises from the consensus of the participants in an art world... (134).

Aesthetics allow for the stabilization of the art world, but are perhaps more illusory than the establishment of networks; nonetheless they assist in cementing the distinct elements that delineate one art world from the next.

In relation to the contemporary avant-garde, Becker states that art worlds often splinter into 'relatively autonomous subgroups' where participants 'become responsible for knowing somewhat different sets of conventions' (61). Becker uses the example of 'new music' to explain this, whereby conventionally understood practices on certain instruments have to be modified for new compositional pieces; this would appear to correlate with the observations we made in the opening chapter, where hauntological musicians appropriate musical practices from the historical avant-garde. Within art worlds smaller groups regularly form, nesting within the broad outlines of the initial art world, expanding its scope by co-opting or

altering certain operational aspects depending on the nature of their practice. The art produced by these marginal groups and the variations they create alters the foundational art world, or pushes it in a new direction. It can also lead to the development of new networks, additions to existing ones, and the metamorphosis of participant roles (233-237). What this demonstrates is the structural complexity of art worlds and that when considering the contemporary avant-garde, its development may be characterized in terms of these sorts of departures from earlier conventions and practices.

A final point of note is that Becker sees the role of sociology in art as one of an observer rather than categorizer. He says that sociologists, '...need not decide who is entitled to label things art. We need only observe who members of the art world treat as capable of doing that, who they allow to do it in the sense that once those people have decided something is art others act as though it is' (151). Becker says participants cannot always agree on who is entitled to speak on behalf of the world, and even what position they hold within the art world, and that research into art worlds must therefore be able to take a step back to analyse and unpick these ambiguities; this relates to our earlier difficulty in categorizing hauntological art, reinforcing the problems we highlighted with regards to the role of the researcher, and the importance of the participants view of classificatory practices.

To summarize, there are a variety of approaches to understanding the organization of music cultures. Subcultural theory began by situating organization as oppositional to dominant culture, and the adaptation of Bourdieusian analysis (in the form of Thornton's club culture studies), demonstrating that organizational issues should be framed not solely through this dichotomy, but also through issues of mediated knowledge - or subcultural capital - and authenticity. Bennett's notion of neo-tribes foregrounded the dissolution of bonds between participants in late modernity, or rather that cultural engagement has become increasingly predicated on loose, short-term associations, with identity seen as malleable and adaptable; here organizational distinctions may be framed by temporary conventions, with participants able to move from cultural grouping to cultural grouping as necessary. Becker's concept of art worlds - despite being written many years before Bennett's piece - still has important things to offer in terms of the role of structure. While for Bennett identity may be fluid, for Becker the constituent structural arrangements of art worlds still remain; conventions continue to be shared (perhaps through

processes of classification), the production of cultural artefacts still requires cooperation between participants, and issues of identity - while negotiated - are still relationally contingent on interactions with other social actors.

In the previous two sections we have taken a general and selective look at some of the dominant ideas relating to classification and categorization (genre) and organization (subcultures, neo-tribes and art worlds). The intention in doing so was to chart competing narratives on music culture from the position of our empirical interests. It is worth reiterating that, with the exception of Becker's art worlds, the discussions above have been related to forms of popular music and youth culture, though we have noted many applicable aspects related to more general notions of classification and organization. Building on these features, in an effort towards contextualising our case study, in the next section we will move on to look at the specific definitions and problems associated with the use of the term 'avant-garde' and how the contemporary avant-garde may be conceptualized in relation to these.

2.4 The historical avant-garde: definitions and challenges

At the beginning of this chapter we explained the reason for being necessarily broad in terms of our discussion of literature pertaining to the categorization and organization of music cultures. In the next section, we will be more specific by offering a definition of the avant-garde, its development and the challenges it faces. We will start by considering the historical avant-garde and related critiques, before exploring four studies of contemporary avant-garde music culture; this will involve two case studies related to our particular case study, and two which pertain to other avant-garde music cultures. In the opening sections of this chapter we have considered two of the empirical foci of this thesis - classification and organization - and our concern in the forthcoming sections will move on to consider spatiality and practices of resistance. The intention is to situate these issues in established literature on the contemporary avant-garde, demonstrating concomitant issues in other case studies and justifying our focus at the same time.

2.4.1 Definitions

The term 'avant-garde' can be roughly translated as 'forward force', from the French word 'vanguard'; the vanguard was the forward platoon of the French Army, responsible for reconnoitring a territory before the rest of the army moved into an area. The term first appears in the work of Olinde Rodrigues, who 'in an imaginary conversation in 1825, offered artistic support to Saint-Simon with the remark: "It is we, artists, that will serve as your avant-garde"' (van den Berg 2009: 26). This suggests both the motion implicit in the term, but also notions of responsibility and subordination - to 'serve'. The historical avant-garde can be thought of as the combination of certain artistic practices and perspectives offered by a group of experimental musicians concerned with technologically innovative music which emerged following the Second World War. However, the term 'avant-garde' is not one that musicians necessarily associated themselves with. As van den Berg attests, while some 'of these avant-garde movements certainly had a self-understanding in which they defined themselves in spatial metaphors suggesting that they were holding a position more forward, more advanced than other sections of the artistic or literary field' (18) this does not constitute an agreed definitional relationship, rather a series of on-going - and contested - processes that academics continue to grapple with. As Adlington notes in discussing the reflexivity required by those studying the avant-garde, authors need to be

sensitive to the fault lines affecting particular musicians' activities, but they reach different conclusions, pointing to a striking degree of success in the endeavours of some musicians, outright failure in others (2009: 11).

The historical avant-garde is often seen as occupying a marginal position in relation to mainstream culture. This position, it is suggested, is something that some participants actively foreground: the marginality of the music can be a source of prestige for those involved in what is niche musical practice (Adlington 2009: 9), mirroring Thornton's earlier argument about knowledge and authenticity. Despite this want for authentic engagement -echoing one of the problems associated with the supposed revolutionary fervour of the avant-garde - many avant-garde musicians relied on sponsorship and funding (Manning 2004), but financiers would be similarly buoyed by their involvement in what was seen as a specialist and exclusive form of music: 'such parties can offer valuable enabling resources to the

avant-garde artist, but by serving the interests of powerful patrons the socially subversive function of avant-garde art is also threatened' (9). Here we see that maintaining difference is important, but that resistance is potentially derailed through a reliance on patronage and, in some cases, a sense of pride.

Regardless of this potential paradox, in the 1960s a combination of technological progression, conceptual exploration and sound experimentation were seen as concomitant with social and political action; many avant-garde musicians were politically active. For example, Alvin Curran, who, with fellow practitioners Frederic Rzewski and Richard Teitelbaum, set up Musica Elettronica Viva, based his compositional practice on a view of music as 'a universal human right [...] a form of property that belongs to everyone' (Curran 2006), a perspective potentially at odds with financial considerations around funding and ownership. Similarly, Cornelius Cardew, a composer who set up the Spontaneous Music Ensemble, was an explicit Marxist active in the British Communist Party and, following his death in a hit-and-run accident in 1981, had his obituary run on the front cover of *Worker's Weekly*; these are two examples of sorts of political engagement practiced by avant-garde artists, and are indicative of a broader drive towards activism, or rather an impression that this was the case. Additionally, we see in these examples that the historical avant-garde is related to a specific kind of left-wing politics. In a similar sense, van den Berg (2009) notes a solidifying of the position we have sketched out above:

When Olinde Rodrigues described the mission of the artist...he ordained the artist with a political mission: as artistic avant-garde of a political movement, serving the realization of the ultimate goals of this movement (26).

The way in which we might understand the historical avant-garde is as a cultural entity that has come to be associated, rightly or wrongly, with a particular form of politics, namely a left-leaning stance that frames forms of engagement and interpretive responses. This approach has a knock-on effect with regards to the contemporary avant-garde; if these associations have become the dominant discursive reading of the avant-garde, where is our case study situated in relation to this dialogue? Our empirical focus, therefore, needs to engage with practices of resistance predicated on a historical narrative that connects the avant-garde with

specific types of politicized response, so that we might chart the similarities and differences between our case study and its forebears.

2.4.2 Challenges

If a certain reading of the avant-garde, predicated on left-leaning politics and an internal paradox around funding, has become the dominant interpretive framework then part of the process of locating a contemporary iteration of the avant-garde should also involve interrogating the criticisms that have emerged as a result, as these form an integral part of the narrative of the avant-garde and have a direct impact on the empirical issues we are dealing with, most notably those related to resistance. Despite Curran's claims about the universality of music, his position, and the position of his fellow collaborators, is indicative of what a number of critics have identified as the paradox at the heart of the avant-garde; that resistance is undertaken by a minority on behalf of an assumed majority, by musicians who, despite adopting certain political positions, are well funded and well educated, the epitome of the 'establishment'.

Criticisms of the position of the avant-garde as a project have been both voluminous and vociferous. Whilst also suggesting potential practices of recuperation Mann (1991) suggests that the avant-garde exists in a state of 'theory-death', where it is viewed as 'the instrument of attack on tradition, but an attack mandated by tradition itself' (11). Barthes (1975) describes the avant-garde as inherently compromised, noting 'a structural agreement between the contesting and the contested forms' (55) which prevents it from assuming its etymological foundations, internally compromised by this contradiction: he describes the avant-garde as nothing less than a 'way of expressing bourgeois death' (Barthes 1981: 81). Earlier, in *The Consciousness Industry*, Enzensberger (1962) took issue with the aporias - that is the self-contained and constraining contradictions Barthes builds on - of the avant-garde as these are continually unaddressed by practitioners. Failing to engage with these internal and paradoxical dynamics, Enzensberger suggests, is as problematic and dangerous as the political stoicism the avant-garde supposedly rallies against. Castiglione (2011) notes that, because of this, the avant-garde is reduced to a semantic tautology:

If avant-garde implies a historical consciousness of the future, says Enzensberger, then its bankruptcy is inscribed in its own project since nobody can determine what is “avant”, that is, “to the fore”, up front. As to the possibility of a new avant-garde, for Enzensberger such an appropriation, far from leading to uncharted territory, would eventually lead to a movement of regression, thus contradicting its purpose and proclaiming its own anachronism (101).

The problem may come, Enzensberger suggests, from the relationship between avant-garde artistic practice and its associations, true or otherwise, with revolutionary groups, echoing our earlier discussions of Olinde Rodrigues; for instance, in 1919 Lenin defined the Communist Party as ‘the avant-garde of the proletariat’ (1962: 29). This connection is more overtly politicised than the Saint-Simonist position forwarded by van den Berg, but is worth considering in light of the explicit left-leaning political positioning of artists such as Curran and Cardew.

Bürger (1984) approaches the problem of the avant-garde from the perspective of political economy, ultimately reaching a similar conclusion to Barthes and Enzensberger, that the aims of the avant-garde are a paradox, and impossible to achieve. He sees the avant-garde as a failed attack on what he terms the third stage of the historical development of autonomy, namely ‘the bourgeois’ (the first two being sacral and courtly art, which placed a reduced emphasis on self-referential work and individuation). He explains that ‘in bourgeois society, art has a contradictory role: it projects the image of a better order and to that extent protests against the bad order that prevails’ (50). In attempting to engage with the contradictions inherent in its position the avant-garde becomes indistinct and loses its ability to attack effectively: essentially there is an absence of critical distance. Any new avant-garde would suffer the same fate as the old, institutionalizing ‘the avant-garde as art, and thus [negating] genuinely avant-gardiste intentions’ (58).

Eagleton (1985) suggests that this impasse and the framing of the avant-garde by critics, is the ultimate victory of capitalism, where all opposition is subsumed: ‘to see art in the manner of the revolutionary avant garde, not as institutionalized object but as practice, strategy, performance, production: all of this, once again, is grotesquely caricatured by late capitalism’. In stating as much, Eagleton returns us to Terranova’s observations, that any alternative - be it subcultural or avant-gardist - is ultimately pre-corporated in the capitalist system. It

can achieve nothing because its resistance is already prefigured into the day-to-day operational logic of capital.

Bauman offers an important perspective on the futility of the avant-garde (in this case art rather than music) as a result of the shift towards postmodernism

The concept of the avant-garde conveys the idea of an essentially orderly space and time, and of an essential coordination of the two orders. In a world in which one can speak of the avant-garde, 'forward' and 'backward' have, simultaneously, spatial and temporal dimensions. For this reason it does not make much sense to speak of the avant-garde in the postmodern world (Bauman 1997: 95).

This reading is especially interesting in relation to the contemporary avant-garde; is there a possibility of resistance through a reconfiguration of temporality or is this too doomed to failure? Bauman also offers a perspective that unites Bürger and Terranova's concerns:

The ultimate wonder-weapon of the bourgeois - the market, with its uncanny ability to absorb, assimilate and digest, however unsavoury and inedible the substance and to transform any potential liability into an actual asset - proved to be a force much in excess of the nuisance powers of the avant-gardist *provocateurs* (74).

What we see in these various exchanges is a problematizing of the avant-garde as a wider project, and how these small-scale cultures may be subsumed or co-opted by the capitalism, possibly in the guise of mainstream culture. From this, it seems crucial that we explore how a contemporary avant-garde might function in relation to concerns about the ways in which micro-level activities - live performances, or record production say - contribute to these broader macro-level issues; for the avant-garde to begin to respond to the criticisms we have explored, a structural arrangement between small scale resistance, and large scale societal concerns needs to be considered.

2.5 The contemporary avant-garde

Participants in the contemporary avant-garde are keenly aware of the issues expressed in the previous section. Ronsen (2008) asked a number of avant-garde

artists and musicians to respond to the question 'what is the nature of avant-garde music today?' The responses were understandably varied but expressed many of the sentiments we have discussed so far; definition and classification, the relationship with the historical avant-garde and the impact of commodification. Sound artist Jeph Jerman encapsulated this complexity by answering the question with one word - 'multiplicity' - whereas Sharon Cheslow rejected the suggestion that the "avant-garde" exists in the 21st century. When I hear the term, I think of the historical avant-garde of the 20th century'; this suggests at least some form of dissociation on the part of practitioners. Alison Knowles described the avant-garde today in terms of its richness, whilst observing the nomenclature used to describe it was possibly unhelpful. Bernhard Günter responded by connecting his practice directly to the etymological foundations we problematized in the previous section: 'I guess the more dedicated among us keep continuously advancing, albeit not in a straight line, and with no idea if anybody in the regular troops will follow'. Similar to the discussions of Bauman and Terranova, jazz musician Milo Fine was less than enthusiastic about the state of the avant-garde:

As has always been the case, but to an even greater degree now - particularly in light of the fact that a true avant garde is met with resistance -- avant garde music is nothing but a marketable genre. That stated, a genuinely resonant (and thus rare) avant garde can still, as ever, be found in the concerted efforts of the individual practitioner, regardless of genre (Ronsen 2008).

What these different responses show is a lack of consensus, with some feeling that the connections to the past are unhelpful and others finding them important; Jerman's succinct response perhaps offers the truest reflection, that the avant-garde today cannot be reduced to a simple split between for and against. In the rest of this section we will look at how academics have tried to negotiate these issues, through four case studies of contemporary avant-garde music culture. The first two case studies explore live improvised musical performance and Latin American minimal techno respectively, with the other two case studies discussing the music of dubstep producer Burial as well as the Ghost Box label, both of which are directly related to hauntology. At this stage, it is worth reiterating the point that research into contemporary avant-garde music is sparse at best, so the number of projects on which we can draw is limited but, nonetheless, the following studies

demonstrate the continuing importance of the contemporary avant-garde as a site of sociological interest and debate.

Atton's study (2012) looks at free-improv musicians and combines practices of classification and organization with performance-contingent spatial considerations; a crucial aspect of his approach is to unify contemporary activities with wider concerns in the avant-garde. Atton's study mirrors my own experience running performance events; his work focuses on the Termite Club in Leeds, a free improvisation organization with no permanent home, run by both musicians and fans. He details one particular gig put on by the Termite Club in a pub in Leeds, featuring the band Borbetomagus, which ended with regular drinkers attacking the group with pool cues; 'amidst the chaos' Atton says, 'the police are called' (434). Similarly, subsequent to the performance described in the previous chapter, the group I was performing with were heckled by a number of locals who had to be restrained by staff when our performance concluded. Whilst this personal reflection may be considered immaterial, it does point to a simultaneity of experience in the contemporary avant-garde, particularly in terms of the negotiation of space and the interrelationship between different groups of participants and non-participants; here the avant-garde is viewed as comprising insiders and outsiders, with the latter still engaged in cultural production (albeit in a destructive or violent sense), though this delimits the avant-garde from music more commonly associated with this type of space.

Atton develops this idea further, particularly with regards to the notions of territoriality. What we are seeing, he argues, is a spatial transformation that occurs when participants 'engage not simply with the music as an aesthetic, but with the behaviour of musicians...within a marginal territory' (432) such as the performances described above. This is not to suggest that such a reaction is necessarily predominant, but that the spaces in which these performances take place are interstitial, existing between what is expected of a performance and the environment in which that performance is enacted. Atton, after Holt (2007), views these hyper local spaces as 'small cultures', 'where place becomes [as] important as the complex site of cultural conflict over territory' (2012: 432) and different groups come into contact to negotiate, mediate and alter spaces that are not necessarily defined as appropriate for performance: in the case of these examples of

contemporary avant-garde practice, Atton argues, hyper-local space is often all there is.

Atton is also keen to connect contemporary live improv with earlier research into musical performance. Drawing on Faulkner and Becker's study of 'the repertoire' (2009), Atton develops a repertoire for live improv consisting of 'a situated social enactment of musical production, from which a genre culture is constituted' (429), instead of the fixed number of musical works that often constitutes a reading of repertoire. This approach reinforces an 'art world' perspective of collaboration between groups embodied in performance space, where a number of participants play different but interrelated roles in the formation of genre culture. Overall, Atton appears to echo Jerman's assertion: the 'multiple frames within which performances are assayed and responses are presented' can be understood as a multiplicity, where 'collectivities are subject to change within a repertoire where aesthetic norms and the behaviour of performers appear to be continually unsettled' (439). For Atton then, space, resistance and genre are all interconnected aspects of the same overarching social action, namely the perpetuation of a contextualized art world.

Lison (2011) is also concerned with notions of multiplicity, and uses a case study of minimal techno - particularly that of Latin America - to demonstrate how music might facilitate a cultural politics of protest. Lison locates minimal techno in a narrative that connects it to the historical avant-garde - read through the sonic art of Iannis Xenakis - before detailing the ways in which modern composition has augmented and developed the techniques of earlier generations of musicians. He is also conscious of allying cultural practice with theoretical considerations, and demonstrates the relationship between concepts and activity by exploring Hardt and Negri's concept of 'multitude' both as compositional approach and theoretical tool. He demonstrates contemporary political action through the examples of Ultra-Red - a group of musicians and digital artists whose work has involved critiquing a variety of issues from housing policy to AIDS - and Villalobos and Luciano, a minimal techno/minimal techno duo from Chile whose work deals with the atrocities of the Pinochet regime following the fall of the Allende government.

Lison's approach and case studies are important for a number of reasons. Firstly, he demonstrates the continuing relationship between the historical avant-garde and its contemporary iterations. Again, this may be a small point, but it is a

worthwhile one; here we can see there is a precedent for connecting contemporary avant-garde music cultures to the narrative of the historical avant-garde. Secondly, Lison offers a theoretically rigorous approach which considers theory and practice; this suggests that understanding the complexities of the contemporary avant-garde involves a willingness to engage with socio-political ideas and debates. There are, of course, problems with this approach, and Lison's discussion of the connection between musical repetition in minimal techno and the development of immaterial labour is a murky one, but despite this we can still appreciate the value in attempting to conceptualise aspects of contemporary music culture through ideas as well as structures, artefacts and participant-led activities. Thirdly, Lison's participants can be viewed as politically-conscious actors, developing narratives of protest through the production of music; this suggests that the contemporary avant-garde views resistance - in this case through the politics of housing, illness and politically repressive regimes - as a constituent part of its operations. These three elements are directly related to our own empirical concerns, and further reinforce the validity of the contemporary avant-garde as a site of sociological interest.

Moving on to consider two papers which relate explicitly to our case study, Lison (2012) also demonstrates the validity of *hauntological music* as a form of resistive practice in his discussion of left melancholy. Using the dubstep musician Burial, Lison implicitly attacks Thornton's club cultures thesis, suggesting that rather than a simplistic split between authentic and inauthentic forms of cultural production - in which the former is deemed true and the latter is commodified - hauntological musicians can be seen to attack this position. Burial, Lison suggests, works within the genre conventions of dubstep musical production (described as 'the rave audience's demand for a soundtrack to going mental' [131]) to present 'isolated, *asocial* club music' (131). For Thornton, issues of identity are located in embodied practices within the club, where participants - the DJ, the dancers - interact with one another, negotiating authentic and inauthentic responses in the process, but for Lison, participants in the contemporary avant-garde - in this case artists like Burial - move beyond this by constructing antagonistic commentaries through the production of cultural artefacts that offer a commentary on the very cultural conventions they are complicit in shaping; hauntology, in Lison's reading, challenges Thornton's sociality. We might suggest that this represents a shift from the historical avant-garde as, in 2.4.2, we noted that criticisms of the avant-garde

would require engagement with structural arrangements connecting micro and macro-level engagement, and the sorts of practices Lison details are suggestive of potential locations for recuperation. Similarly, Lison's broader discourse on the role of theoretical commentary as a form of artistic discourse - in this case with regards to Benjamin's notion of 'left melancholy' - demonstrates that the contemporary avant-garde is seen to have the continuing conceptual weight behind it to facilitate complex readings of different types of socio-cultural meaning-making. Whether or not Lison's reading of Burial's music is something we agree with is not necessarily that important; rather we are concerned with the fact that examples from our case study can be situated with complex and theoretically rich narratives of resistance.

Following Lison, Sexton (2012) explores hauntology through the rubric of alternative heritage. He considers critical responses to hauntological culture, including discourses from commentators such as Mark Fisher and Simon Reynolds, and explores the cultural output of the Ghost Box label. Through a discursive analysis of participant's practices of collecting and classifying particular forms of cultural artefacts, Sexton identifies what he terms 'alternative heritage'. He suggests that through these artefacts and the interpretive frameworks developed around them by participants, we can see an attempt at developing a parallel historical narrative, comprising intertextual interrelationships (570-2) and a commentary on the technological uncanny, which we might understand as the way in which current digital technology might be haunted by earlier analogue technology (578). In Sexton's reading the contemporary avant-garde can still be viewed as resistive, in this case antagonizing established historical narratives in favour of an interpretive framework which foregrounds intertextual connections between seemingly disparate cultural artefacts. The crucial factor here is that these processes - whereby participants effectively curate their own cultural history - are interconnected with our empirical issues of classification (what can and cannot be considered appropriate for inclusion) and organization (how these artefacts are arranged and codified). Moreover, like Lison, by integrating Foucault's notion of psychic heterotopia (567) and Freud's notion of the uncanny, Sexton demonstrates the conceptual strength of this particular example of the contemporary avant-garde implying the value of engaging with theory in the process.

In summary, the literature on the avant-garde that we have explored offers two temporally distinct periods of cultural development, separated by a sizable

critique of the validity of the avant-garde as a project; the first period, that of the historical avant-garde, saw the development of new forms of compositional technology, pioneered by musicians who were seen to have a distinctly left-leaning political position; the second period, after the fall of the Berlin Wall - which Adlington views as the cut-off point for the historical avant-garde (2009) - sees the development of the contemporary avant-garde, which, as we have noted, continues some of the traditions established by its forebears, including technologically-constituted forms of cultural production and an ongoing engagement with socio-political concerns through certain types of resistive practice. These narratives and approaches are something we will need to continue to consider in our empirical chapters, particularly in relation to the specific types of data we have collected and analysed.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we have attempted to explore, in a necessarily selective and reductive sense, a number of concepts and debates that show both the development of ways of understanding music cultures and, more specifically, the narratives associated with the avant-garde in both its historical and contemporary forms.

We started by focusing on two of the empirical issues we identified in the first chapter: classification and organization. With regards to classification, we attempted to codify processes of categorization through a discussion of genre as a means for interpreting how culture is comprehended and constructed by both participants and non-participants. Three different positions were forwarded, each of which stressed the need for an approach that includes not only people and artefacts, but social relations, negotiation, language and meaning-making practices. With regards to organization, we explored the historical narratives of subcultural theory as one way of comprehending how cultures are organised by participants and conceptualized by researchers; we also noted the differentiation between positions in subcultural theory and the critiques associated with this. We also discussed Becker's 'art worlds' thesis (1982), which appeared to reinforce the connection between aspects of genre - the classification of cultural products, the establishment of conventions - social relations and mutual support between participants. In this sense, Becker foregrounds both collaboration and structure, whereas later

subcultural theory downplaying the significance of this interplay. Becker's approach is the more helpful, offering a conceptual underpinning that acknowledges the complexities of contemporary music cultures whilst simultaneously suggesting a developmental framework for comprehending the changing nature of structural arrangements within these cultures; this will be considered in more detail in the next chapter.

In the later sections of this chapter, we moved from general discussions of classification and organization to the specifics of the historical avant-garde. The reasoning behind this was to understand any potential relationship - anecdotally or otherwise - between the historical avant-garde, its approaches and critiques, and the contemporary avant-garde. Here we detailed aspects of the development of the historical avant-garde; similarly, we detailed a number of criticisms levelled at the historical avant-garde. The aim here was to highlight the central tensions at the heart of the term 'avant-garde', with different theorists approaching the avant-garde from positions as diverse as political economy, identity and the co-opting processes of advanced capitalism. The importance of stating these objections is that part of making visible the contemporary avant-garde involves engaging with, and possibly refuting, these criticisms.

In an effort towards framing our own empirical discussions, we ended the chapter by looking - albeit briefly - at four contemporary examples of enquiries into the contemporary avant-garde. The first two case studies saw us extrapolating approaches based on live improvisation and minimal techno; both case studies demonstrated the complexity of avant-garde practice, the connections between the music of today and the historical avant-garde, and the importance of different kinds of resistance. Atton's discussion of resistance related to territorial definitions, and the way in which cultural participants engage in protest via the reshaping - and in some cases, destruction - of assumed approaches to spatially contingent performance. In doing so, Atton demonstrated the role of space in terms of facilitating activity and debate, echoing observations on the vitality of space made by Lena earlier in the chapter whilst reinforcing our empirical pursuits in the process. Lison's resistance was perhaps more traditional, where repurposed musical techniques from the historical avant-garde were forged towards contemporary socio-political statements. Our other two examples related directly to our case study of hauntology. Lison and Sexton demonstrated the role of resistive practices with

regards to the music of Burial and the output of the Ghost Box record label respectively, and offered a tentative and contextualized assessment of the connections between micro level participation and macro level resistance. These two examples demonstrated the need for theory-rich readings of the avant-garde, predicated on participant-led social action, potentially located within the narratives of the historical avant-garde.

The question that remains is what sort of methodological framework can we develop from the literature we have detailed in this chapter? There are four key components to our approach.

Firstly, we need a framework that takes into account the competing discourses on the classification of music culture; we saw how contested and complex the notion of 'genre' has become, and reflecting on this during data collection and analysis will enable us to avoid the pitfalls of making assumptions about processes of categorization without first establishing robust approaches to comprehending the data we have collated and detailed. These processes will have to involve a consideration of the role new social media plays, particularly in light of the fact that our case study began as an online music culture.

Secondly we need to consider the different roles that participant groups play in these processes. Subcultural studies, for instance, places an emphasis on the role of audiences in a particular culture, whereas studies of contemporary avant-garde culture - in this case the work of Lison and Sexton - foregrounds the role of musicians; the interplay between different participant groups is one of the ways in which a culture is constituted, so understanding who the participants are and how they negotiate their roles will be useful in understanding how our case study functions.

Thirdly, through our analysis of hauntology, we need to see how participants respond in some sense to the critiques levelled at the historical avant-garde. The literature we have explored has explicitly connected the historical and the contemporary, implying a certain level of continuity (despite temporal distancing) between numerous aspects of each avant-garde era; the examination of our case study will, therefore, be implicated not only in these narratives, but in the contestation of the avant-garde as a broader project.

Fourthly, and finally, our framework needs to foreground the interconnections between our empirical foci; throughout this chapter, the literature

has pointed to the fact that cultural activities and interpretive schemas do not exist or operate in isolation, but act and react in relation to one another, alongside competing arguments about the nature of sociocultural action. Building on this, our aim should be to emphasise points of similarity and departure throughout, in an effort to effectively represent and situate our case study within the contemporary avant-garde more widely.

At the beginning of this chapter we explained the selective and reductive nature of this review. One of the problems in being selective is that we have potentially sidestepped a number of important debates on the way in which culture is engaged with, including, for example, the much debated cultural omnivore thesis (see Peterson 1992; Peterson and Kern 1996; Savage and Gayo 2011), and a wide variety of alternative theories stemming from Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital (see, for example, DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004; Prieur and Savage 2013). As with the case studies we have considered in this chapter, these approaches combine theoretical rigor with strong methodological enquiry; having considered aspects of the former in relation to music culture and the avant-garde, we will not move to consider the latter. To fully understand our case study we will require a reflexive methodology, and we will now turn our attention towards its construction.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline the methodological approaches that we have used to explore our contemporary avant-garde case study. In terms of situating this chapter within the project more widely, we started by introducing the empirical research issues we are interested in and offered some details about the case study we are going to examine; we followed this by exploring literature related to these research concerns by initially considering approaches to classification and organization before detailing contemporary case studies related to spatial and resistive practices. In this chapter we will consider the ontological and epistemological underlining of our study, alongside the types of data collection and analysis that we have used.

We will continue by building on our literature review, detailing two ontological perspectives that underpin a variety of contemporary studies on music culture (see, for example, Hirsch 2007; Scott 2012; Harkness 2013), including an assessment of Bourdieu's notion of the 'field', his work on the avant-garde, and a continuing discussion of Becker's *Art World* thesis (1982). Our intention is to offer a justification for the ontological position on which our methodological enquiries are based.

Following this we will identify some of the features of our case study that we are focusing on, stating plainly what we have looked at and why; in the first instance this will involve developing ideal types of social actors, alongside approaches to the cultural meanings these actors develop, negotiate and maintain; in the second instance we will consider the locations these groups might occupy in relation to other studies of music culture; thirdly we will look at the cultural artefacts produced by participant groups and, fourthly, we will think about the types of social activity required to produce art works. This discussion will involve a discursive reading based on preliminary research - predominantly referral sampling, whereby participants identify likely sites of interest for researchers to follow (Atkinson and Flint 2004) - informed by the ontological outline we have developed.

Having identified the kinds of people, places, artefacts and activities we are interested in examining, we will situate this within a developmental epistemological

framework, as this has informed our choice of methodological tools towards addressing our research questions.

Before continuing it is worth reminding ourselves of the questions: how is hauntology classified?; how might we understand the organization of contemporary avant-garde music cultures?; how is spatiality constructed in our case study and how might this relate to concomitant issues of classification and organization?; is the contemporary avant-garde involved in practices of resistance and, if so, what does this involve? Each of these questions feeds into a wider research interest in understanding how we might access and make visible contemporary avant-garde music cultures.

We will then move on to pinpoint the tools we have used for data collection and analysis, detailing their appropriateness in relation to methodological literature and the specificities of situations where people, places, artefacts and activities come together in our case study.

In the first chapter we noted that hauntology began life online and subsequently spread to non-virtual spaces; this shift has the potential to create complications in terms of offering a distinction between the types of methods used for virtual and non-virtual sites. Rather than enforcing a separation between the two, we will approach our case study as a totality, in much the same way as it is approached by participants; the methods employed will reflect the particularities of the environments we are exploring. It is also useful to consider that music cultures - as highlighted in Chapter 2 - are continually changing, so our methodology needs to be similarly responsive and adaptable. Simply put, our methods are reflexive and will be refined and reflected-upon throughout this project.

To foreground the methods of collection and analysis we have employed, our discussion of data collection includes the use of non-participant, non-reactive observations, asynchronous primary interviews, secondary interview data, document, archival and audio-visual materials, online data crawling and ethnographic field work. Our analysis will involve a variety of forms of textual analysis (interpretive and rhetorical), and discursive narrative analysis framed around types of social media and dialogue; we will consider the specific ethical implications that might arise during data collection and analysis and the importance of informed consent during the research process towards the end of this chapter.

3.2 Ontology and research

In this section we will set out an ontological position that will underpin our methodological enquiries. We saw in the previous chapter how a number of researchers of the contemporary avant-garde have adopted and adapted different ontological positions in their work, with Atton (2012) using territoriality and Lison (2011) multiplicity to comprehend the social world, so, reflecting on these approaches, our own ontological perspective should similarly connect the features of our case study and the relationship between micro and macro-level social action. What we are considering here are the theoretical foundations of how the social world is constituted, with a particular focus on the production of music and the methodological tools we intend to utilize will be guided by this.

The two most frequently cited theorists associated with the sociology of culture are Pierre Bourdieu and Howard S. Becker: a cursory search of Google Scholar at the time of writing reveals that Bourdieu has been cited over three hundred thousand times in academic papers and books, with Becker returning two hundred and ninety thousand results in a similar search of referenced articles. This is, of course, a crude way of ascertaining the relative importance of a theorist's oeuvre, but it does demonstrate the frequency (and longevity) of Bourdieu and Becker's approaches to understanding what constitutes the sociocultural world; their impact on the study of culture and the continuing application of their ideas in scholarship over the past thirty years demonstrates the importance of engaging with their work at this stage.

Alongside the prominence of citations, these two theorists are also considered by some to take oppositional perspectives on the study of culture and cultural movements (see Bottero and Crossley 2011). In the previous chapter we highlighted Becker's idea of artistic cooperation, and how networks of cooperation between different social actors might be collectivized as an 'art world', combining structural organization with participant agency. Bourdieu's work on the field and forms of capital also emphasises the role of structure, but cooperation is side-lined in favour of examining the role that power and hierarchy play. In the following sections we will briefly consider both Bourdieu and Becker's notions of the socio-cultural world, and how specific features may or may not help towards our own methodological approaches. We will begin by discussing Bourdieu's approach before returning to assess Becker in light of Bourdieu's arguments.

3.2.1 Bourdieu, the 'field' and the avant-garde

Bourdieu and his theories of economic, social and cultural capital - as well as the interrelated processes which constitute 'fields' - has remained an influential figure in the sociology of art and culture, despite stating that 'sociology and art do not make good bedfellows' (Bourdieu 1993: 139). For Bourdieu music shows one of the ways in which the social world is structured and within this social positioning can be understood through different forms of capital; essentially 'nothing more clearly affirms one's "class", nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music' (1984: 18). In *Forms of Capital*, Bourdieu explains the importance of capital, as 'it is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory'; his three subdivisions of capital are

economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility (1986: n.p).

Cultural capital - or the types of knowledge we have - can be considered as one of the ways in which we differentiate between those who do and do not understand the various aspects of, in this case, music culture, or rather the extent to which they understand and engage; your level of engagement may demonstrate your class position, or, as in Thornton's schema from the previous chapter, your position within a subculture (1995). Atkinson (2011) explains that class positions are therefore solidified according to taste within these forms of capital:

The dominant...express a taste for difficult and obscure forms of music, particularly classical, whilst the petite bourgeoisie below them betray their position in the middle, aspiring to the dominant style of life and distancing themselves from the dominated...the dominated, finally, tend to consume... not simply because they lack the valued resources to appreciate products in the way demanded by the dominant, but because, following the logic of

tacit deference to valued goods and practices, they accept what is imposed upon them by the 'experts' and 'artists'(170-1).

Here, class is presented as a series of high-brow and low-brow positions, culturally contingent but also related to the interplay between economic and social factors. The importance of the *field* in this situation is that it is the 'space of objective relations between positions defined by their rank in the distribution of competing powers or species of capital' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 113), so the battles Atkinson highlights take place within these different fields, and often in the overlapping spaces between them, resulting in dynamics of power and a hierarchy of sorts.

From a methodological perspective, data collection and analysis would have to involve approaches which emphasize demonstrable measures of the sorts of positioning and classification Bourdieu identifies. Although one of our primary interests is classification, we are not interested in how we might classify participant groups based on their cultural preferences or forms of capital, but rather on the ways in which different groups negotiate and collaborate in classificatory processes of their own; in this respect, a Bourdieusian approach is unhelpful, particularly if agency is minimized in favour of structure. Similarly, the establishment of high-brow and low-brow positions is not especially helpful when considering a small-scale music culture that, by implication, may be viewed as high-brow through its connections to the historical avant-garde.

The use of 'fields' and forms of capital in relation to music culture has, for the most part, related to more popular forms of music (see Kruse 1998; Macleod 2001; Prior 2008). This is also potentially problematic for our own enquiries; if, for instance, we were to supplement methodological approaches from popular music to the avant-garde we could end up assuming similarity, or imposing perspectives, occluding the social reality recognized by participants. For example, in the contemporary avant-garde it is possible that forms of capital may have little bearing on how participants view their relative positions, or that participants might intentionally resist the sorts of codifying systems foregrounded in Bourdieusian analyses of popular music. While the latter concern highlights the oppositional classification Bourdieu discusses as a rift between the popular and the avant-garde (1984: 417), the use of fields as an overarching (and conflict-driven) space where power structures and relations are contested potentially marginalizes the agency of

individual actors, or relegates it to the status of a bi-product in wider structural politics. Indeed, as Bottero and Crossley identify, Bourdieu's 'mapping of cultural fields refers to concrete, named individuals but draws back from analysing their relationships to one another, instead positioning them as 'epistemic' individuals within a field of differentiation'(2011: 100). Whilst there is clearly merit in a structural approach - attested to by the number of scholars conducting Bourdieusian analysis on a diverse array of cultural subjects - we are not so much interested in simply applying Bourdieu's theories to our case study, but rather intend to conduct a responsive investigation of those individual actors Bourdieu draws back from, as their interrelationships are where we hope to find the answers to our research questions.

So far we have discussed, in relatively general terms, the issues around reading the social world through Bourdieusian field analysis, showing how sites of social action between individual agents are sometimes downplayed in favour of epistemic readings of structure and the role of power in shaping the actions of individuals. More specifically, Bourdieu also directly engaged with avant-garde art, particularly painting, sculpture and theatre. We will briefly explore responses to this discourse in an effort to locate our own concomitant interests in the avant-garde.

Fowler suggests that Bourdieu's long-standing aim is to 'unveil the mystification caused by ideological distortion' (1997: 43). Ideological distortion is plausibly acute in the case of the avant-garde if we think about the role ideology plays with regards to both composers of the historical avant-garde and the critics of this particular period, as we discussed in Chapter 2, but our interest is in examining these distortions, rather than moving away from them. As part of this process of unveiling, Bourdieu, in *The Rules of Art* (1996), offers a reading of the avant-garde that situates artistic practice and engagement within a bourgeois field of high-brow activity and association. Fowler (1997), despite being broadly sympathetic, feels that these readings are not without their issues. She uses the example of Scottish Art Nouveau to demonstrate how Bourdieu's reading of avant-garde movements ignores those which 'rejected the view that art should serve merely as a romantic 'other' to the instrumental logic of capitalism' (95); in this sense, the implication is that Bourdieu's approach can, in one sense, be seen as deterministic with regards to the activities of participants, echoing our earlier concerns about the role of agency.

Bourdieu's findings are also problematic because of their specificity, with Fowler seeing his selective reading of the avant-garde as 'a reductive analysis of texts in terms of [the] authors motives' (96). While there is clearly some merit in engaging with specific examples of cultural artefacts and practice - such objects are, after all, culturally contingent and a product of particular conventions and circumstances - Bourdieu's readings of sculpture and theatre reduces the avant-garde to 'an empty gesture, or, rather, an occupation of the high moral ground which has become part and parcel of the artistic habitus' (95). This reading, based on the canon of avant-garde works of art (Duchamp and Brecht are examples here) fails to acknowledge or account for 'the crossovers between low culture and the avant-garde [which] are much more numerous and complex than he has suggested' (98). Ultimately, as Looseley (2006) observes in relation to Hennion's critique of Bourdieu, these structural simplifications underplay the 'enthusiastic, and an increasingly skilled, voluntarism' present in contemporary music cultures (346). Bourdieu's analysis occludes dialogue - though this is present in his wider corpus - and collaboration between social actors by focusing instead on situating a small number of indicative examples of art works within broader, prefigured structural trends (in this case, the historical epochs of the avant-garde), again at the expense of individual agency.

Crucially, Bourdieu's reading - as we have alluded to - is one which engages with the artistic approaches of the *historical* avant-garde (here, the historical avant-garde includes other artistic practices such as sculpture and theatre). However, as we demonstrated in the previous chapter, drawing conclusions about the contemporary avant-garde based solely the historical avant-garde underplays potential contemporary changes; Bourdieu's insights, while potentially viable in broader scale studies of taste, are of limited value in relation to the contemporary avant-garde. Our intention is not to suggest that Bourdieu's approach is inherently wrong or misguided, but that in pursuing individual agency and collaborative practice we are keen to avoid confining the contemporary avant-garde to historicized categorization, or forcing participants into predefined hierarchies before exploring their co-operative agency (or the potential for it). We will continue in this effort by moving on from Bourdieu to consider Becker's 'art worlds' thesis.

3.2.2 Becker and ‘art worlds’

Considering the ways in which Bourdieu and Becker have been positioned in academia following the publication of *Distinction* (1984) and *Art Worlds* (1982) some scholars suggest that their respective positions can be understood as oppositional; this is, of course, an oversimplification. In the previous chapter we noted how Becker’s framework sees art worlds constituted by cooperation, negotiated by different groups of social actors. Bourdieu’s position is not wholly different, but the focus tends towards arrangements that embed social actors in certain roles, contingent on varying levels of economic, cultural or social capital. On the face of it, both positions identify the role of agency, but they differ on how important a feature it is; recently, Becker has discussed the differences he has identified with regards to agency:

The metaphor of world—which does not seem to be at all true of the metaphor of field—contains people, all sorts of people, who are in the middle of doing something which requires them to pay attention to each other, to take account consciously of the existence of others and to shape what they do in the light of what others do. In such a world, people do not respond automatically to mysterious external forces surrounding them. Instead, they develop their lines of activity gradually, seeing how others respond to what they do and adjusting what they do next in a way that meshes with what others have done and will probably do next (Becker 2006: n.p.).

What we take from this is that the metaphor of the field sees exterior forces as structurally more significant than individual agency. Methodologically speaking, although Becker has been accused by some of being indistinct in his application of specific modes of study within art worlds (see Cluley 2012), he suggests that methodological tools should be crafted with a focus on social activity, thereby enabling researchers to locate the tangible, observable elements that make up art worlds:

In contrast with the idea of “field,” the idea of “world” seems to me more empirically grounded. It talks about things that we can observe—people doing things rather than “forces,” “trajectories,” “inertia,” which are not observable in social life, if you understand these terms in the technical sense given to them in physics. We cannot observe these things perfectly, of course, but well enough that we can argue about them, and the procedures of empirical

science can give us provisional answers of the kind science gives
(Becker 2006: n.p.).

Our interest is not in an argument about scientific approaches, but about viewing an art world as constituted by people whose actions result in the creation of a work of art, whereas Bourdieu appears to focus more on domination, hierarchy, and the strategies that enforce and reproduce these systems. If we think back to C. Wright Mills' assertion, in *The Sociological Imagination* (1959), that useful sociological research involves both an exploration of systems and actions, then an ontological understanding that positions one over the other is open to question. What, then, is our justification for considering Becker's approach over Bourdieu if all we are doing is positioning agency over structure? Again, if we return to our empirical concerns we see that Becker's perspectives are more conducive to the issues we have identified than Bourdieu's. This is not to exclude the importance of power and its antecedent practices - our intention is to return to interrogate these issues in relation to resistance towards the end of this study - but to foreground social action and its role in creating internally mediated classificatory structures within music cultures, through organization systems, facilitated by negotiation around spatiality and resistive practices. Structure exists within this framework but can be seen as the collaborative efforts of individual agency, in conjunction with forms of collaboration and cooperation.

Simply put, the notion of an art world is an overarching and adaptive frame in which participants cooperate in practices of cultural production. Social actors, their collaborative practices and interrelationships are our primary concern. With this in mind, the ontological position of this thesis can be summarized as follows: the social world consists of different groups of people who collaborate and cooperate to get things done. Our exploration of hauntology is predicated on a foundation which contextualizes these processes within the framework of the art world, which we understand to mean the totality of social activity which results in the creation of works of art; a work of art is only produced in a situation where different groups of social actors cooperate, in one sense or another, in its creation. Collaboration may be direct, in the constructing of a physical cultural artefact, or may involve broader outlying processes such as aesthetic appreciation or more everyday applications of cultural activity such as the distribution and selling of artefacts. Art worlds facilitate the creation of organizational structures and networks to create art works, as well as

the development and sharing of conventions and the allocation, use, and reuse of resources. Whilst we acknowledge the importance and inevitable imposition of certain institutional structures within art worlds, our primary empirical concerns are the ways in which the structures of classification, organization, spatiality and resistance are enacted, embodied and destabilized through micro-level involvement in a shared creative project. Methodologically speaking, from this ontological position of the 'art world' we view the social world as predicated on collaboration, and are therefore able to identify some of the constituent features of our case study and the ways in which we might collect and analyse data that pertains to its operation. Our challenge in exploring this case study of the contemporary avant-garde is how best to make these features visible.

3.3 Identifying features: people, places, artefacts and activities

Building on the 'art worlds' perspective we will now discuss some of the key elements that create a viable art world; our methodology is directly informed by what these elements are and how we might contextualize the relations between them.

The first point to consider is how we might conceptualize different participant groups in our case study as their interaction pertain to our ontological position on collaboration between social actors. Becker (1982) suggests a number of categories which intersect and overlap in terms of their contribution to the creation of art worlds; these are *artists*, *audiences* and *critics*. Each of these categories represents an ideal type, that is 'the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those onesidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct' (Weber 1949: 90); essentially they are abstractions through which we might measure the accuracy or reliability of the definition. It is our intention to interrogate how these categories are constituted in relation to our case study throughout our empirical chapters, and our methodology is, therefore, concerned with ways of detailing and unpacking these distinctions.

In the case of the first category - the 'artist' - Becker is necessarily vague about who artists are. He begins by discussing social interpretations, where 'members of a society generally believe that the making of art requires special

talents, gifts or abilities, which few have. Some have more than others, and a very few are gifted enough to merit the honorific title of “artist” (1982: 14). The implication here is that being an artist does not involve self-definition, but is instead contingent on social processes of negotiation; we might go so far as identifying artists as those who have been termed as such by other social actors.

There are, of course, issues with this definition. Of particular note, Becker identifies that some historical avant-garde composers, such as John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen, are afforded the moniker of ‘artist’ despite their work requiring no special skill, so the application of this term may be contested or the artist might attempt to distance themselves from this distinction (18-19). The ambiguity is helpful, however, in that it allows us the flexibility to consider the potentially malleable classificatory systems we identified in our literature review; problematizing rigid distinctions in the process.

What we arrive at, with this caveat in mind, is an ideal type of ‘artist’, that can be thought of as a social actor designated by other social actors as being responsible for the creation of work that is deemed to be ‘art’.

The category of ‘audience’ could be considered intuitively - essentially those people who consume the cultural products created by artists - but this obscures the important contribution audiences make with regards to the production of meaning. For instance, Becker discusses the importance of ‘conventions’ in comprehending art worlds (1982: 42-8), and audiences are a key factor in co-producing conventions from the bottom up, deciding what does and what does not constitute art in a particular art world. Alongside this, audiences may interpret a work of art differently to the artist who has produced it, leading to a contestation of meaning, and our methodological approaches are responsive to these sorts of practices. It is worth highlighting that, as with artists, there is a certain amount of ambiguity around who constitutes the ‘audience’, as many of the features Becker associates with them (such as the codification of conventions) are similar to the role of the ‘aesthete’, those participants who create ‘a coherent and defensible aesthetic’ (134), where certain characteristics of an art work are deemed to belong to a particular culture rather than another. As we shall see, this is typically work undertaken by critics, but the potential for audience involvement speaks to a destabilizing of definitions.

In our ideal type definition of an audience, we have a conflation of those who consume cultural products and those who discuss the relative merit of cultural

products, which includes the potential overlap between audiences and aestheticians.

Similarly, critics may be considered aestheticians, and because of this we are precluding the aesthetician as a category in itself, as it appears to apply to multiple participant groups. Becker states that

in complex and highly developed art worlds, specialized professionals - critics and philosophers- create logically organized and philosophically defensible aesthetic systems, and the creation of these aesthetic systems can become a major industry in its own right (132).

Again we see the role that different groups can play in the creation and negotiation of culturally-specific norms and conventions. Critics, Becker says, stabilize values not as some abstract philosophical task but as a way of developing value systems and methods of evaluation (134).

In terms of an ideal type, we might posit that critics occupy a role between artists and audiences; they make context-specific decisions on what is and what is not considered art within a given art world, from a position where their role as 'critic' as having some authority to speak, is acknowledged by artists on the one hand and audiences on the other. This position, and the expected limits of the role, is necessarily intertwined with those of the artist and the audience, further strengthening the idea that art worlds are built on cooperation and collaboration between actors as well as the points of overlap between them.

Location is also a significant feature with regards to the functionality of art worlds. A number of prominent case studies, included those identified in the literature review, equate music cultures with specific locales (see, for example, Hodgkinson's work on goths in Whitby [2002] or Thornton's exploration of club cultures in London [1995]), so our premise is that our case study may be explored similarly; viable locations for study are those environments where the processes of negotiated meaning-making between artists, audiences and critics take place. There are, understandably, issues with this premise - in Chapter 1 we identified that our case study began online and subsequently moved into physical environments - but these environs should be considered concurrently, in an effort to represent the cross-pollination that takes place between locales. In exploring both virtual and non-

virtual environments, we will also be able to reflect on the technological changes that have impacted contemporary avant-garde music culture more broadly and facilitated a synergistic relationship between these different forms of space. Locations need to be considered in the widest possible sense as any specific environment where social activities take place; we will identify pertinent sites later, in relation to participant-led preliminary research and other academic studies.

Artefacts are also important when considering how art worlds are constructed. Again Becker's definition of art is necessarily ambiguous, but art constitutes the collective productive effort of artists and other groups within the art world (1982: 14-21). As hauntology is a music culture, the objects produced are music-related, though this may also include visual works (film, photography) and literature. The decision to use the term 'artefacts' is an effort to differentiate between art more generally, and the variety of different media used in contemporary music cultures (vinyl, MP3, cassettes, CDs, streaming media etc.). Again, important questions are raised as to what is or is not considered a viable artefact in our case study, and we will explore these issues on the basis that the viability of artefacts is contingent on dialogue between various participant groups. From a methodological standpoint, our identification and analysis of artefacts is guided by what participants deem to be appropriate, and in this regard we might think of this process as akin to a type of relative, or snowball, sampling.

A final, crucial feature that unites these elements is social activity, which we might think of as the contextual cultural practices that each group engages in, and how these practices involve other groups and the maintenance of those features considered important to the art world; an indicative list of such activities could include the production and contestation of cultural artefacts, discussions or arguments about conventions and attending music performances.

It is worth reemphasising that these definitions of participant groups - artists, audiences, critics - are ideal types, and are not supposed to be considered a form of epistemic categorization. Rather, they represent a way of measuring social reality through comparison with abstract entities; none of these features exist in isolation and the way in which we will explore the art world requires us to combine our initial ontological standpoint with the social activities we observe. As such, in adapting Becker's definitions, we are also foregrounding the need to adequately

problematize these concepts reflected through the analysis of the data we have collected.

Moving on, our intention is to augment our ontological stance with an epistemological approach that encompasses the features we have identified. The participants, locations, artefacts and social activities we have discussed are based on a theoretical and conceptual foundation which has enabled us to develop appropriate forms of data collection and analysis. Furthermore, by constructing an ontological foundation which views the social world as the product of agentic, collaborative practices and cooperation, we have been able to reason that a methodological framework predicated on the multiple ways in which art worlds are constituted by contextualized forms of social action is crucial.

3.4 Epistemological approaches

In the following sections we will discuss the specific methodological tools we have used throughout our empirical chapters; to preface this it is worth reflecting on some epistemological discussions that might connect our ontological perspective with the methodological approaches we intend to employ. Hauntology, as we noted in Chapter 1, is embodied in a variety of different spaces, including locations where music is experienced, in cultural artefacts (that can be seen as the end point in the production process of musical composition), and in the negotiated meaning-making processes of artists, critics and audiences. This diversity, when considered in the context of the features we identified in the previous section, suggests that any investigations will need to be sufficiently broad so as to account for these varied zones of activity; Donna Haraway (1988) and John Law (2004) offer valuable insights in this regard.

Haraway considers methodology in an expansive sense, her epistemology based around what she terms 'situated knowledges', that is a series of approaches that address and respond to the fleeting nature of connections between social elements, be they actors, actions or culture more widely. She says that

the moral is simple: only partial perspective promises objective vision. This is an objective vision that initiates, rather than closes off, the problem of responsibility for the generativity of all visual practices. Partial perspective can be held accountable for both its promising and its destructive monsters (Haraway 1988: 583).

Here we see an acknowledgement of the impossibility of fully capturing or distilling a culture, and the associated problems in trying to do so; instead, charting the partial linkages between contributory factors is crucial, a point echoed by Strathern (2004) in relation to the subjective perspectives of researchers and participants in anthropological field work. In a methodological sense, forms of data collection and analysis need to be responsive to these types of transitional, fluid associations. Similarly, Law (2004) suggests that

there is a need for tools that allow us to enact and depict the shape shifting implied in the interactions and interferences between different realities. There is need for assemblages that mediate and produce entities that cannot be refracted into words. There is need for procedures which re-entangle the social and the technical. There is need for the coherences (or the noncoherences) of allegory. There is a need for gathering (122).

The confluence of these positions is that, to truthfully respond to the social world in all its complexity, the researcher needs to develop a sufficiently diverse range of methodological tools that are conducive to the complicated interactions and connections between actors, a methodology that acknowledges - and is implicated in - the unlikelihood of fully capturing the totality of a culture; therefore, whilst we are considering the potential for structure within art worlds - institutional or otherwise - we are also mindful of the multiplicity of constantly reconfiguring elements that constitute the interactions of participants. It is worth noting also that, while we are adopting Becker's ontology, as well as some of the associated terminology, we are using this as a way of constructing and contesting ideal types; these types offer a form of foundation without stifling or totalizing social processes into formalized structural relationships.

It would be remiss, at this stage, to not offer some discussion of Law's other major contribution to epistemology, namely actor-network theory (Law 1992). In conjunction with notable work by Callon (1987) and Latour (2005), actor-network theory underlines the importance and interplay between human and non-human actors, positing that, crucially, non-human actors are as significant in the social world as human actors. In relation to music, a number of scholars have begun to work towards using actor-network theory in theorizing sound cultures, including Tironi's discussions of the role of clustering and the performance of local space in human/non-human compositional practices (2012) and Prior's development of a

hybridized Bourdieusian/actor-network crossover (2008). Prior's call for the inclusion of actor-network theory is of note because it allies the interaction between people and technology in ways not dissimilar to those already noted: the interaction between musician and instrument (or computer) for example. Furthermore, 'this position adds to Becker's (1982) notion of an 'art world' as collective activity the important understanding that techniques, settings and devices exchange their properties with humans' (Prior, 2008: 313-14). In this sense, Prior echoes Callon (1987) in suggesting that to fully comprehend the art world as a collective enterprise, it is crucial to understand how human and non-human actors relate and identify themselves. In addition, this perspective offers a further problematizing of Bourdieusian approaches, as 'Bourdieu fails to tackle non-human objects head on precisely because they introduce elements of presence, uncertainty and deviation into fields in a way that poses a series of problems to Bourdieu's own schema' (313).

A case could be made for the inclusion of actor-network theory as an epistemological standpoint for this thesis, but the concern would be that this potentially diminishes the agency of individuals in social action, or, rather, shifts the emphasis away from people towards objects: our argument is that, while important, the primary focus of this thesis is the way in which people as social actors negotiate their culture, and while technology clearly plays a vital role, it would be remiss at this stage to overstate or confuse notions of agency (as Prior highlights, there is a possible dead-end in forwarding the notion that objects have independent agency [2008: 316-17])

Moving forward from this, our ontological and epistemological stance has informed the types of data collection we have conducted and the types of analysis we intend to use; our methods are not quantitative in nature. Our case study is a small-scale one and a methodology that involves the collection and analysis of statistical information is unhelpful here. Considering both our ontological position and Haraway and Laws' perspectives, quantitative data is more likely to produce a 'thin' portrait of our case study. To move towards a 'thick' description of context-dependent interactions will require attention to the sorts of narratives and exchanges that larger scale quantitative studies often miss (Geertz 1973), contingent on, as Buscher, Urry and Witchger suggest (2011: 11) 'the nature of a place's atmosphere and its appeal or repulsion to imaginative travel [as this] will generally

necessitate multiple qualitative methods including literary, artistic and imaginative research’.

Furthermore, the position of the researcher as an ‘insider’ - as touched on in Chapter 1 - is also a factor that requires consideration; my own participant involvement prior to undertaking this study would be diminished as a result of focusing on quantitative data collection whereas, in contrast, qualitative collection and analysis may facilitate a number of methodological and interpretive advantages including different types of situated knowledge (be they researcher or participant-led), issues around access to participants and the locating of pertinent data collection sites.

3.5 Data collection

Hauntology, as an example of contemporary avant-garde music culture, occupies a relatively limited number of sites where social action, collaboration and cooperation takes place (compared to, say, forms of popular culture). Despite this, the amount of available data is vast. As a music culture whose genesis can be traced to a number of online discussion groups and blogs, our case study, over the eight or nine years since it was initially identified, has amassed a sizeable virtual archive of material that could be considered relevant to our enquiries; by way of an example, a single hauntological blog - found0bjects, which we will explore in more detail in Chapter 5 when discussing systems of organization - consists of upwards of 2100 posts, each discussing a different aspect of hauntological culture (found0bjects 2014). As such, fully detailing every aspect of the constituent data sites of our case study is impractical. Instead, collection and analysis will be framed through an engagement with a selective number of examples. To avoid taking a deterministic perspective, these examples (which will be further expounded upon in the relevant empirical chapters) are from data sites that have been identified as significant or indicative of hauntological culture by participants themselves rather than simply being the product of insider insight or random sampling; here we are considering how micro-level activity feeds into a broader macro-level conceptualization of the contemporary avant-garde.

In an effort to reflect a multitude of partial perspectives, we have collected a variety of different forms of data including non-participant non-reactive observational data; field notes; participant observation; website data crawling

material; audio-visual and textual documents; asynchronous primary interviews and secondary source interviews. We will consider each in turn, in relation to our empirical concerns of classification, organization, spatiality and resistance.

Non-participant, non-reactive observational data

Non-participant, non-reactive observational data can be thought of as a means for collecting data without directly participating in a social interaction, at locations that are no longer active but where interactions have previously taken place (Lee 2000). As we have identified, our case study is constituted virtually for the most part - with some non-virtual components developing subsequently - so data collection has involved gathering primarily textual information from a variety of online locations where participants have engaged in dialogue about hauntology. These locations consist of message boards, new social media sites such as Last.FM and blogs.

In terms of the use of message boards, there is precedent for utilizing these sites in studies of popular music culture; Lee and Peterson (2004) consider the role message boards play in codifying the boundaries of alternative country music, so our interest in classification may be similarly constituted. If we turn attention to our case study, snowball sampling during preliminary research identified a number of relevant message board threads on the Whitechapel and Dissensus forums, and these sites were subsequently selected as locations for field work; these sites will be detailed in Chapter 4. In relation to our empirical concerns, message board thread data will be considered in relation to classification, as embodied in direct forms of dialogue between participants (by 'direct' we mean a situation where participants actively respond to one another) with textual responses the primary source of data for analysis.

A principle ethical consideration related to this form of data collection is that non-participant observation of message boards and other online environments can be considered 'lurking' (Cora Garcia, Standlee and Bechkoff 2009), as the researcher collects data without alerting the participants to their presence (informed consent is also an issue here). The message board threads we have collected data from are no longer active, with the most recent entries dating back to 2010. What we are looking at instead is non-reactive data collection, where our collection of data is unobtrusive and has no impact on the people being studied because they are - at this location at

least - no longer participating; related to this, the information we have collected is readily available in the public sphere and participants can only be identified through their usernames (Janetzko 2008).

Social media also plays an important role in relation to our empirical concerns of classification and organization especially in virtual locations. For example, the social media site Last.FM allows users to classify particular artists through the application of textual descriptors (or 'tags') which connect types of music together by association. Building on the notion of direct dialogue, we might view these classificatory activities as a form of 'indirect dialogue'; participants are still contributing to the delimiting of hauntology but are doing so individually, without direct negotiation with others. We will consider the textual descriptors that participants have developed as a form of classification, exploring the tagging of information on Last.FM through freely available and accessible software. Again, this information is available in the public realm, and individual users are not identifiable.

As some have suggested, 'combining nonreactive data collection with other kinds of data gathering in order to study the same phenomenon, i.e., using methodological triangulation, ideally enhances confidence in the research findings' (Janetzko 2008; see also Mathison 1988; Webb et al. 2000) and with this in mind we will consider the other forms of data collection we have utilized.

Field-notes and participant observation

Alongside non-participant observation - and implicating the researcher more directly in the case study - we have used ethnographic methods of participant observation, with data collected in the form of field notes from non-virtual sites, allied with text-based sources from virtual sites. Building on our earlier epistemological discussions, we might consider our approach to ethnography as polyvocal, in the sense that 'no community can be described as a homogeneous entity in equilibrium; society is by definition a set of competing centers [sic] of interest who speak with many voices about what their culture is and is not' (Angrosino 2007); as such we are taking into account multiple perspectives and voices including that of the participants alongside the perspective and comprehension of the researcher as an author of the text. Data collection has been framed primarily in relation to issues of spatiality; in the case of non-virtual space,

we have explored a music festival (Netaudio) and in the case of virtual space we have collected textual information from participant blogs.

One regularly-raised issue with ethnographic field work as a form of data collection is that of reliability and reproducibility, that the observations of the researcher are contextual and environmentally-subjective, making results non-generalizable (Williams 2004); this is potentially problematic as our overarching aim is to demonstrate the relationship between our case study and the contemporary avant-garde more broadly. However, this criticism implies that culture is reducible to a codified series of patterns and behaviours, rather than a dynamic and developmental series of ongoing practices and activities. As Wolcott (1987) attests, while 'ethnographic research does not provide comfortable underpinnings of acceptable levels of significance, adequate rates of return of Ns sufficient to assure that a value greater than "0" will appear in every box on a matrix...' (54) it does enable us to comprehend and reflect on the actions of participants in a given environment and, considering our empirical interest in hauntology as a location for small-scale practices of classification, organization and resistance, ethnography is well-suited to capturing these moments; we would argue that the fact that these observations may be subjective contributes in a positive way to our understanding of how esoteric music cultures are constituted by a variety of partial perspectives.

Participant observation, in contrast to non-participant observation, can be thought of as 'observing and interacting with the subject of interest while actively participating in the setting as well as getting very close to research participants and gaining an intimate knowledge of their practices through intensive immersion in the field of study'(Di Domenico and Phillips 2010: 653). The issue of the 'insider' perspective is also worth considering in relation to participant observation. Hine (2011: 261) identifies a number of issues that may have an impact on our approach to field work:

A full participant might find it easy to describe a culture in its own terms but tend to share its assumptions, whilst a full observer might find a culture bizarre in its practices and experience difficulties in taking it seriously as a coherent domain of cultural practice. Any position on the spectrum places an onus on the ethnographer to do careful work on their assumptions.

During field work, we will need to be reflexive enough to address our own role within the research process, and the contribution this makes both to field notes and the ways in which we convey our findings. This approach is reinforced by Bloor and Wood (2006), who suggest that over-rapport can mean that the social realities of a situation are sometimes obscured; instead it is recommended that researchers try to strike a balance between a detached perspective and a familiar one. Our intention, when drawing on insider experiences at field sites and the observed experiences of other participants, is to attempt to uncover that which is notable from the perspective of an outsider, but to explore those meanings from the perspective of an 'insider', contrasting the visible activities of participants with reflections based on subjective experiences.

In relation to spatiality, fieldwork undertaken in the environments where music is practiced and consumed is a mainstay of popular music culture studies (see for instance, Bennett 2000; Connell and Gibson 2002; Krims 2007). In relation to the specifics of our case study, despite being primarily virtual, hauntology is augmented by non-virtual spaces where live performances, installations and festivals take place; we saw an example of this in the Chapter 1, with the blindfolded audience at Francisco López's Butlin's performance. Our field work has involved an exploration of the Netaudio music festival in London (again, specific justification for the validity of this site can be found in Chapter 6) in an effort to understand how the issues of classification and organization might be spatially constituted (demonstrating the possible interconnections between our empirical concerns). Multiple sites at the festival will be detailed, including live music performances, installation art spaces, and a conference on the politics of musical protest, directly related to the issue of resistance in the avant-garde. In this sense, by exploring a number of different spaces, we are engaging in a proxemical investigation, where we explore the ways in which culture is understood through its spatial relations.

To further triangulate our data collection, we will compare our observations and experiences with those of other participants. Secondary document-based sources, including reflections by artists and critics as well as audio-visual material, have been collected and will be analysed. It is worth bearing in mind when analysing these documents that, in and of themselves, they represent part of the outcome of collaborative meaning-making processes we are interested in making visible; as Atkinson and Coffey (2011) argue, different kinds of documents can be considered

to represent these processes, and should be considered in terms of both the intended readership but also the production context. This approach - considering a variety of different types of spatially-contingent data - will further enhance our understanding of the case study, and enable us to better locate it within a broader discussion about the nature of the contemporary avant-garde.

Participant observation will also include virtual locations, building on our commitment to treat these diverse realms as part of the same art world. We will consider how organization is embodied in other social media formats, most notably the blog, a medium identified by a variety of participants in preliminary research as important sites for our case study. Here we are observing participants by proxy, through the information they provide publically in posts on their blog. Blogs (ordered chronologically as part of their design) demonstrate an in-built developmental narrative, similar to message boards, with blog authors (or bloggers) able to express their particular approaches and understanding of culture through individual posts. These individual blogs are connected - via social media - to other blogs, facilitating a nascent dialogue between groups in the hauntological art world. In essence, our empirical concerns with classification and organization are framed by these different narrative structures and the connections between them. Bryman (2012) reinforces this perspective, suggesting that, 'most approaches to the collection and analysis of data neglect the perspective of those being studied [...] In other words, narrative analysis relates not just to the life span but also to accounts related to episodes and to the interconnections between them' (582); by understanding the narratives offered by different participants, we are building on the direct dialogue on message boards and the indirect dialogue of tagging, both of which combine to reinforce the notions of genre we highlighted in Chapter 2. Ethically speaking, we are not directly engaging with the participant, but rather observing them through acts of textual framing; again, this takes place in the public domain and is freely accessible.

Website data crawling

We intend to further explore organizational aspects of our case study with different types of data from virtual sites, augmenting the textual information we have gathered from message boards and social media sites. We will consider the organizational structures and concomitant social collaborations in our case study by

producing a network map from the data 'crawled' by social network analysis software.

Networks are one way of understanding organizational structures in music cultures; Bottero and Crossley (2011), for example, have posited that social network analysis is an essential component in understanding connections between social actors. Their work on the social networks of London and Manchester's punk and post-punk scenes draws on secondary and archival sources to identify key players and the links between them before producing a map of this particular social network; here, the key players are specific musicians and their connections to one another. Our sites of enquiry are a record label - Ghost Box Records - and a blog - foundObjects - both identified by participants in preliminary research.

Our intention is to use this data crawling software to explore the associations between individual web links on these sites, using the data we have collected to create a visual representation of the organizational logic of these different networks; in the case of the record label, we are interested in how the network represents the operation of the record label and in the case of the blog we are interested in understanding the thematic connections between different areas of cultural interest as this pertains to the relationship between organizational structures (the blog) and the development of a recognizable aesthetic (classification).

The process of collecting the necessary information from these sites is known as data crawling. In this instance, data crawling involves a piece of software which collects individual links from a website; the software produces a series of nodes (individual web addresses) that are connected to different parts of the website. From this, the researcher is able to produce a map of the connections between individual web pages, thereby making visible the structural elements of this part of the art world. The data crawling software we will use is called SocNetV, and is freely available under general public license. The network maps produced in conjunction with this software will be reproduced in the appendices, and can be viewed in a scalable format on the thesis website.

One potential issue with this approach is that nodes representing links on the website are not causally linked, or emblematic of the networks of actors themselves, but rather show the construction of a site through hyperlinking. However, there is still much to be gained from this approach and this critique again

perpetuates a split between non-virtual and virtual networks which is not necessarily accurate. In terms of hauntology, we are attempting to ascertain how these organizational structures relate to cultural understandings and practices so our focus on the constitutive elements of web sites is valid as they indicate locations where information is organized and made available to other participant groups. In relation to ethical issues surrounding data crawling, full disclosure is factored into the software design, so a researcher-configured informed consent form is generated and sent to webmasters before the data is collected, enabling the owner of the site to refuse permission to use the data if necessary. Again, all data is publically available by visiting the sites in question. We will augment our discussions of this data through primary interview material, which will be discussed in the next section.

Interviews and audio-visual materials

There are two crucial forms of data collection that will enhance the methods we have already outlined, namely interviews and the use of audio-visual materials. In terms of interviews, we have used, in the first instance, asynchronous primary interviews with members of different participants groups which have been conducted via email. There are many benefits to asynchronous email-based interviews and these have been discussed at length (see, for instance, Hewson and Laurent 2011); respondents are able to engage in the interview process at a time that suits them, potentially utilize additional sources or documents in constructing their answers, consider the positions they are taking as they answer the questions, and edit and reappraise their answers prior to formalizing a response; this form of interviewing has also been useful when attempting to conduct conversations with geographically-diverse respondents. It is worth bearing in mind, as Mann and Stewart (2000) suggest, that there are disadvantages, including the high drop-out rate of respondents and the delay between questions being asked and answered; this, however, may be outweighed by the opportunity to ask follow up questions which is difficult in the real-time environment of face-to-face interviews. In relation to our empirical concerns, interview questions will be framed around classification, organization, spatiality and resistance, and, more broadly, the respondent's interpretation of the culture they are, or were, involved with. The intention is to triangulate the data we have collected, reinforcing other collection methods with interview responses; for instance, as we discussed in the previous section, the use of

data crawling software to construct a network map of a record label has been augmented by an interview with the label owner.

Secondary interview materials have also been collected, in an effort to confirm or query the responses given in primary interviews. In terms of the use of secondary interview material - and indeed other forms of secondary documents - Bryman highlights the value of reconsidering these data sources, stating that 'it is possible that a secondary analysis will allow the researcher to mine data that were not examined by primary investigators or that new interpretations may be possible' (2012: 586). In doing so, we will offer further weight to the analytical conclusions gleaned from our primary interviews by considering responses given in other contexts.

Alongside these interviews, audio-visual materials will continue to be used throughout our empirical chapters. In the opening chapter, audio fragments from a number of different artists were embedded within the text to acquaint the reader with the specific aural characteristics of pieces of music. An important aspect of this project is the ways in which participants classify the culture they are a part of, and because this involves discussions and assessments of the aural characteristics of cultural artefacts, omitting the music from our research would be a considerable oversight. Rather than constituting an aesthetic analysis of the music itself, our interest is in understanding how participants engage in these processes themselves. Embedded music will come from sources available in the public domain. With regards to issues around copyright, the music we highlight is hosted by the artists or record labels that hold the rights, and in most cases the music is offered freely as promotional material.

Along with embedded music, visual materials will also be used to demonstrate certain cultural activities that pertain to our empirical concerns; for example, in Chapter 6, alongside participant observation and field notes we have also collected videos of other musical performances in an effort towards demonstrating points of similarity and departure across multiple spaces. We will also consider photographic materials as recordings of particular events. The use of visual material offers an additional layer of contextually-rich information that would not be possible if we relied solely on textual description. As with our other sites of collection, the use of specific examples will be informed by participant suggestions

and observation. Video material will be freely available in the public domain and, alongside photographic materials, will be referenced accordingly.

To conclude briefly, we have offered an overview of the methods of data collection we have used in this thesis. These methods are necessarily diverse - reflecting the variety of empirical issues we are grappling with - and are informed by the particular ontological and epistemological concerns we have highlighted throughout this chapter. In the next section we will consider how the data we have collected might be analysed.

3.6 Data analysis

In terms of data analysis we are using a variety of approaches to interpret the data we have collected. In each empirical chapter, the analysis will operate in direct response to the specific forms of data that have been collected therein. As such, it is our intention to employ a suitably fluid framework of analysis, and in this sense our overarching framework will adopt an emic perspective, that is an understanding of socio-cultural data that attempts to highlight themes and patterns as understood by participants within a given community (Angrosino 2007).

Textual analysis

Textual analysis will be used throughout our empirical chapters. Much of the collected data consists of textual information gathered from a variety of locations (including interviews, record label websites, participant blogs, and message board discussion threads). Text is also utilized in the form of field notes from participant observations. As such, our analyses will differ depending on the type of data collected; for example, in the case of single-authored blog entries, a descriptive analysis of the content of an entry might be appropriate, both in terms of unpicking the cultural associations of this indirect form of dialogue, and in demonstrating thematic connections between different types of content. However, this form of analysis may be less appropriate when dealing with direct dialogue on message boards.

With regards to message board discussions - where we are collecting data through non-participant, non-reactive observational data - an interpretive narrative analysis of dialogue and rhetoric will be used. Part of the process of understanding the classificatory processes associated with our case study involves the ways in

which participants negotiate and develop certain conventions (Becker 1982). These conventions may also be considered as tropes, that is what Lakoff and Johnson (1980) consider the semantic constituent similarities that participants attach meaning to; for example, during online discussions, participants are engaged in dialogue through the use of metaphors and descriptors, echoing Gunn's discussions of genre in the previous chapter (1999). Our analysis will need to respond both to the specific descriptors being discussed, and the sequential nature of the discussions; interpretive narrative analysis is appropriate for this type of data as we are interested in uncovering the means by which participants constitute their culture through descriptive narratives of their own creation. This approach, alongside the issue of the technical expertise of the researcher, precludes more formalized analytic methods such as content or conversation analysis; a consideration of the content will, of course, also be relevant, but in focusing on descriptors we are looking more at negotiation and the use of rhetoric - that is a form of text or speech that seeks to convince another party of a particular line of thought or argument (Pigrum 2008) - than a codification of approaches where we impose our own structural arrangements from the top-down. For example, in the case of an individual blog post on a record, participants are attempting to convince others that the cultural artefacts they are discussing should be included within the aesthetic framework of our case study.

Rhetorical analysis will be used with regards to primary and secondary interview material. Participant responses will be considered semantically - in terms of how specific responses pertain to conventions or tropes identified within others forms of data - but also latently (Boyatzis 1998), in that the researcher will offer an interpretive, deductive reading of the text in an effort to theorize the broader significance of responses within the context of the hauntological art world, drawing again on insider experience (Patton 1990).

Interpretive forms of textual analysis are also important in terms of our ethnographic work. As Gibbs notes, there is no rigid formula for the strategic analysis of data collected through field notes and participant observation (2007); with this in mind, Agar's use of confessional tales (1980) appears to facilitate a form of interpretive analysis which combines the perspective and reflections of the researcher with observational data about participants and their activities. Here we are drawing on field work experiences and notes gathered at the time, alongside

subsequent interpretive readings of the events developed post-hoc. This will be augmented with secondary document analysis from the sources identified in the previous section (participant reviews of music performances, photographic and video recordings of events).

These examples represent some of the methods of textual analysis we intend to employ; these methods will not exist in isolation, but will be interpolated with other forms of analysis so as to offer a thick, and necessarily expansive, approach to a wide variety of textual data sources. In closing this section it is worth reflecting on one of the problems associated with interpretive readings of textual data, namely that systematic confirmation - or agreement on a collective understanding of what is meant by a text - is not necessarily possible via these forms of analysis (see Kobin and Tyson 2006). In terms of our empirical interests, as we are focusing on the methods that participants use to communicate, negotiate and situate their cultural practices, non-systematic or contextual readings are perfectly acceptable, as these reflect the processes and actions of the participants themselves. Here we reiterate our epistemological stance, that music cultures, as dynamic and transformative projects, can only ever be partially captured and codified, so any systematic approach would be conceptually flawed from the outset including the use of structuring analyses such as content or conversation analysis.

Thematic analysis

Interpretive textual analysis, via our readings of different forms of textual data, might also be framed as a type of thematic analysis. For example, our empirical interest in the ways in which participants classify and organize certain types of cultural artefacts involves understanding how decisions are made as to what does and does not constitute a hauntological object. This process not only develops the conventions of the hauntological art world, but also creates a concomitant aesthetic by which other objects and practices can be judged. As a result our case study can be read thematically, in the sense that certain participant-developed themes are more dominant and important than others. More specifically, if we return to the locations of data collection such as blogs and websites, we may be able to analyse the sorts of themes which cut across, or are prevalent in, different locations thereby alerting us to the sorts of features that contribute to codification in our case study. What we are not attempting to do is to produce a generalizable framework but rather a

reading of participant-led social action and how certain themes facilitate contextual ways of knowing; our intention is not to adhere to a rigid and restrictive schema of analysis, but rather develop a responsive one dependent on a variety of forms of trans-locational text and activities. A potential pitfall here is that a responsive approach, while representative of both the participants and the researcher's experience of the case study, and to the ontological and epistemological foundations of our understanding of music cultures more widely, is not necessarily easily reproducible (Braun and Clarke 2006). It does, however, allow the researcher to better reflect the forms of collaboration, cooperation, partial connections and situated knowledge that constitute the case study, similar to Wolcott's observations on the validity and vitality of ethnography (1987).

Thematic analysis can also be extended to audio-visual materials. An exploration of non-textual media, such as film, photographs and audio sources, can also be considered in terms of themes and conventions. Again this process may be partially deductive, but is located within participant-led readings of the material. For instance, in considering a particular musical performance we are not listening to the music and developing our own independent reading, but rather situating our analysis in relation to the responses of participants, and other forms of available data such as interview material. In this sense we are able to triangulate our findings by augmenting different forms of data collection and analysis, in turn enabling us to offer a fuller picture of our case and the contemporary avant-garde more widely.

Network analysis

This form of analysis relates directly to website data crawling, where we have collected data that allows us to map the connections between links and nodes on specific websites. Our analysis will be inductive, where we offer a descriptive overview of the form and function of a site based on the network map. For instance, in Chapter 5, we will be analysing a network map of the Ghost Box record label which will involve grouping together the connections between different nodes on the label website, constructing a cartographic representation of how the site operates and what its main functions are in the process.

As with other forms of analysis, our network analysis will not be conducted in isolation, but rather triangulation will be sought by augmenting our network diagram with textual analysis. For instance, following a discussion of the network

map of the record label, we will use interview responses from the label owner to build a composite picture of the organization of these types of network, comparing the actual structures found in the network map of the site with the intended functionality discussed in interview. Again, it is not our intention to produce a rigid network analysis based around externally-developed frameworks, but rather respond to the data we have collected. In this case we are looking to develop an analysis which details the ways in which participants organize their culture at certain locations.

Ultimately, in using a number of different forms of analysis, we will not be able to neatly compartmentalize our approach. However, as Law (2004: 122) attests, 'there is a need for tools that allow us to enact and depict the shape shifting implied in the interactions and interferences between different realities' and the combination of diverse methods of collection and analysis will enable us to respond to the actuality of social actions. What we are intending to do is to offer a developmental analysis, where our case study, and the contemporary avant-garde more generally, can be comprehended in terms of how its component parts intersect through the patterns and irregularities present in the data we have collected (Angrosino 2007).

3.7 Ethics and informed consent

Ethical issues have been identified and addressed throughout this chapter but it is also important to offer a general statement of ethical intent. This is done in an effort to ensure that the research methods used are based on the protection and privacy of participants, as detailed in the guidelines laid out by the British Sociological Association (2002).

Informed consent will take place prior to data collection, where possible (in the case of interviews with participants and data collection via web crawling software), following the ethical approval of the Department. Participants will be informed in advance of the interview process as to their rights as a respondent and will have full access to the data collected when requested, as well as opt-out clauses where appropriate. Data that is in the public domain - for example the names of artists and critics - will not be obscured. Similarly, with regards to informed consent for secondary data, where data is held in the public domain - freely accessible to members of the public - the content of this information will also not be obscured;

this will enable full transparency in terms of the verifiability of data sources. For the most part the data collected herein is historical in nature, and no longer part of active participant practice with the aforementioned exception of primary interviews and data crawling; in some cases participants will be identifiable by a username on a website, but this will offer no more information than is already in the public domain. The aim of the research is to minimize as much as possible any potential harm to participants, or the researcher, and a reflexive approach to methods of collection and analysis will enable the identification of any problem areas as they arise; overall, however, the methods outlined above have been designed so as to have relatively little ethical impact.

3.8 Summary

We started by detailing two ontological perspectives on the study of music cultures in the work of Bourdieu and Becker. With regards to the former, we noted issues around the potential application of Bourdieu's ideas - in the sense that the size of our case study seems at odds with certain Bourdieusian conceptual tools - as well as the fact that our area of interest, the avant-garde, has been potentially reduced to a high-brow bourgeois curiosity than a site of meaningful enquiry. With regards to the latter, we noted Becker's criticisms of Bourdieu, and a number of perspectives on collaboration and cooperation which we decided were important to carry forward; these approaches appeared to connect our initial observations of the case study in Chapter 1 with the broader issues of classification, organization, spatiality and resistance we are aiming to explore. In adopting and problematizing Becker's perspective we sketched out some of the features we are focusing our collection and analysis on, including broad ideal types of participants (artists, audiences, critics), locations (virtual and non-virtual), artefacts and activities.

Following on from this, we situated our epistemological perspective within Haraway's notion of situated knowledge, and Laws' discussions on methodological complexity. These two approaches acknowledge the connections between the constituent elements of culture, and suggest that codified representations are, at best, partial, contextualized and fleeting. In light of this, the need for responsive forms of data collection and analysis were highlighted; as such our methods are diverse and wholly qualitative so that we may offer a 'thick' rather than a 'thin' description of our case study (Geertz 1973).

In terms of data collection, sites of collection and the data we have gathered are necessarily expansive. The identification of data sites has been participant-informed, and will be detailed in the appropriate empirical chapters. Data collection has involved collecting textual data from locations such as message boards (Whitechapel and Dissensus), social media sites (Last.FM and audience-led blogs) as well as field notes and participant observation at non-virtual sites (Netaudio). Primary interviews have also been conducted asynchronously via email, augmented by secondary interview materials. Other forms of data include audio-visual materials in the form of music, photographs and video, and network information on record labels (Ghost Box Records) and blogs (foundObjects) which has been collected by data crawling software.

Data analysis is similarly expansive. Our intention is to employ a variety of forms of textual analysis to respond contextually to the different ways in which text is used by participants in our case study. This may involve narrative, deductive and interpretive readings of culturally contingent materials, or analysis of forms of rhetoric. We will also conduct a type of thematic analysis, though this will again be responsive rather than restrictive; here we are attempting to understand the ways that themes (which can be thought of as tropes or conventions, to return to Lakoff and Becker [1980] respectively) can contribute to a developmental hauntological aesthetic, which is embodied in processes of classification, organization, spatiality and resistance. We concluded by detailing our adherence to clear ethical procedures, highlighting the importance of publically accessible data and informed consent in the process.

Ultimately we are seeking to conduct an emic enquiry, using multiple methods of collection and analysis to make visible the art world of our case study. In the next chapter we begin our research into contemporary avant-garde music culture by exploring how artists, audiences and critics negotiate issues around classification, the topic of our first empirical research question.

Chapter 4 - Classification and Categorization

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will begin our empirical investigations by focusing on classification and categorization; locating this chapter in terms of the thesis more broadly, we began by developing four research questions that would enable us to interrogate not only our case study, but a range of factors that contribute to the contemporary avant-garde more widely. The first of our four research questions is as follows: how is hauntology classified? In the second chapter, we began to think about classification in relation to established literature, identifying the importance of genre and boundary formation in codifying particular music movements; in this chapter we will build on this by considering a variety of data related to the development of genre (we will expand on this shortly, but we might think of genre as the end product of different types of classificatory practices). In the third chapter, we found similarities between our empirical interests and Becker's 'art worlds' thesis (1982) in terms of the social worlds predicated on collaboration between different groups of participants. From this we outlined the sorts of participant groups we intended to study, namely artists, audiences and critics; in this chapter our argument is that to make hauntology visible - and indeed aspects of other contemporary avant-garde music movements - it is important to identify the processes that these participant groups use to delineate their culture from others. Within this, forms of classification and categorization are, as Frith (1996) suggests, an integral part of cultural engagement.

Simply put, this chapter is concerned with classification and categorization as a form of meaning-making practice, and what this reveals about the drawing of boundaries around a contemporary avant-garde music movement. Throughout this chapter classification and categorization will be used interchangeably and understood as the processes through which participants negotiate how their culture should be contextualized and understood.

We will begin by expanding on the discussions of our literature review with particular reference to notions of genre, which can be thought of as the overarching series of conventions through which participants, and those external to the art

world, comprehend the various features that constitute a cultural movement (Becker 1982: 28-34). In discussing genre, we will consider Fabbri (1981) and Frith's (1996) work on the generalizing functions of classification; we will also explore Lena and Peterson's (2008) attempts at providing a classificatory system for music genres, and the potential pitfalls of totalizing, top-down theorizing. Moving on from this, we will then consider Beer's (2012) work on classification with regards to new media, as this pertains to our virtual field sites. These three perspectives demonstrate some of the ways in which we might conceptualize genre, and offer a starting point for our exploration of the specific social activities taking place within our case study. We will augment these perspectives with Gunn's (1999) three stages of signification from Chapter 2, where individuals attribute textual descriptors to pieces of music; Gunn's schema is important because it directly addresses the concerns we highlighted in Chapter 3 with regards to the absence of studies connecting the micro level (in this case, language) with the macro-level (metadiscourse, which may underpin genre distinctions) as well as relating directly to the textual data we have collected.

In introducing classification it is worth reminding ourselves of some of the problems we have already encountered. In the first chapter, we highlighted some of these difficulties by suggesting several simplistic - and tentative - categories in an effort to group together artists with similar traits. In our classificatory scheme, these similarities included approaches to composition and the production of cultural artefacts, as well as relations to other types of music. There was one notable problem with this type of categorization, namely the way in which types of music that sound different to one another have been considered, by participants, to be hauntological (we noted, for example, how a number of dissimilar sounding pieces of music - from Belbury Poly, Richard Skelton and Francisco López - have all been classified as such). Our intention then is to comprehend how classification operates in an environment where intuitive readings of similarities and differences of a piece of music are insufficient (Feuer 1992).

Our methodological discussions in Chapter 3 involved another classificatory act on our part; the delineation between different forms of dialogue. We briefly detailed different types of dialogue - direct and indirect - and in this chapter we will explore each of these in turn as we move towards a developmental picture of how classification is constituted in this manner. Direct dialogue can be viewed as a practice whereby participants actively respond and react to one another by offering

their own opinions and ideas; in doing so, participants are directly engaged in classification through negotiation. Indirect dialogue also contributes to classification, but involves individual participants offering opinions and ideas without direct negotiation and debate. Both of these forms of dialogue contribute towards a broader metadiscourse - to use Gunn's terminology - or genre, which we might understand as a hybridized form of dialogue.

In this chapter we will draw on three sources of data. In the first instance we will consider message board interactions between audiences and critics located on the Whitechapel and Dissensus message boards respectively. Message boards will be considered as an example of direct dialogue because individual users engage in classificatory practices in direct response to one another. Our intention, in analysing these interactions, is to see how audiences and critics develop a nascent hauntological aesthetic through textual negotiations, and how this contributes to a broader understanding of boundaries, which are constructed and contested. Direct dialogue is important because it enables us to view, in real time, how these negotiations took place and what the outcomes were in relation to the establishment of genre conventions.

In the second instance we will explore the ways in which indirect dialogue facilitates classificatory processes. Here we will explore the social media site Last.FM and the practice of tagging, which can be understood as the connecting of specific textual descriptors to certain pieces of music. Our intention is to make visible the indirect dialogue of classification that takes place through the use of these social media platforms, as this not only contributes to boundary formation in our case study but also demonstrates developmental forms of cultural interaction. We are interested in understanding how this feeds into a burgeoning hauntological aesthetic because a 'coherent and defensible aesthetic', as Becker attests, 'helps to stabilize values' (1982: 134) and enables participants to understand the conventions of their culture as well as categorize elements as 'belonging' or not 'belonging'; all of these processes contribute towards the overarching conditions we associate with genre.

In the third instance, we will explore a hybridized dialogue - consisting of both direct and indirect forms - by assessing points of overlap between the discussions we have observed on message board threads and the tagging practices we have detailed on Last.FM. Here, in line with our ontological discussions in earlier

chapters, we are considering the collaborative relationship between micro and macro-level activity - how a variety of individual actions contribute to wider socio-cultural practices - in an effort towards comprehending how hauntology is classified. From this, we will be able to suggest how our empirical focus in this chapter feeds into our broader concern with how we might understand the continuing sociological significance of the contemporary avant-garde.

To begin then, we will return to our discussions of genre, and the significance of applying conceptualizations of genre to empirical examples in the field.

4.2 Genre and classification

In Chapter 2 we outlined a number of debates around the classification and categorization of music. Drawing on a variety of sources (Feuer 1992; Gunn 1999; Sandywell and Beer 2005; Rimmer 2012) we concluded that genre can be understood as an overarching series of conventions that encompass the ways in which cultural forms are comprehended collectively. In the context of the empirical concerns of this chapter it is important to consider genre not as a restrictive structure, but rather the culmination of numerous acts of negotiation and contestation undertaken by participants. In this sense, genre is similar to the 'coherent and defensible aesthetic' Becker highlights (1982: 134), in the sense that it represents the aggregating work of participants in classifying that which can and cannot be considered a part of their culture.

An ancillary issue to that of genre is why we might want to build on this term, rather than a descriptor like 'scene' or 'subculture', which we also explored in Chapter 2. If we take the former as an example, Lee and Peterson (2004) - whom we discussed in the last chapter with regards to the validity of virtual sites as locations for data collection - underscore the problem of using 'scene' as a descriptor in the context of a virtually-constituted cultural collective. In discussing how Lee and Peterson's case study fits within the broader context of scholarly work on 'scenes', Taylor (2005) notes that the authors uncover an arrangement of deterritorialized social actors who may at times coalesce but, just as easily, dissipate. He suggests then that their case study - the online P2 country music community - is shoehorned into the parameters of a 'scene' instead of accepting that a more reasonable conceptualization would see this geographically-proximal term undone to some

extent by technological change in online communities. The physical congregation of participants, which is seen as an exemplary feature of a scene is therefore transformed by the increasing fluidity of associations in virtual environments. Bennett and Peterson offer a definition of a scene as 'situations where performers, support facilities, and fans come together to collectively create music' (2004: 3). On the face of it this definition may chime with the collaborative reading we are considering, but this understanding of 'scenes' is still predicated on a level of geographical fixity, exemplified by the number of physical locations that pepper their work (Liverpool, Memphis, Chicago and New Orleans to name a handful [2]). Although the virtual is considered, it is usually in addition to an already extant, geographically-located scene and in our case - where the virtual predates the non-virtual - this reading is insufficient.

Our position is one which sees geographical fixity undermined, and relates directly to Straw's (1991) study on the increasing diffusion of North American rock and, more recently, the work of Peter Webb (2007), who identifies the term 'scene' as too descriptive and easily interchangeable with other problematic terms like post-subculture, neo-tribe and community. Instead he develops – after Rabinow – the concept of 'milieu' to try and get at the more illusory aspects of musically-based associations. He describes the milieu as 'a concept that articulates a set of overlapping levels of meaning, relevance, disposition and understanding. It then tries to illuminate the complex development of types of cultural activity within the stock of knowledge of an individual operating within a social grouping or number of groupings' (30); here, geographical fixedness is considered insufficiently representative as a collective relation, and adds little to the social dynamics of people and music. As such, 'scene' is not fit for purpose in this context. By adopting 'genre' – while still problematic - we are instead focusing on the processes that contribute towards a type of negotiated, and developing, boundary maintenance rather than the locational stability of music cultures.

Bearing this in mind we will now consider how genre might be conceptualized, followed by an example of how categorization has been utilized in a study of popular music genres - again highlighting the relative absence of any detailed work on the avant-garde in this respect - and a discussion of how new forms of social media may have transformed the way in which classification takes place;

these discussions can be considered as a way of foregrounding the issues that we will explore in our data analysis sections.

Simon Frith's book *Performing Rites* (1996) deals with a number of debates on the subject of conceptualizing genre. He problematizes codified notions of genre through the work of Franco Fabbri (1981), who separates genre distinctions into five broad groups; the *rules of musical form* or the aural characteristic of a piece; *semiotic rules* or the rhetoric which accompanies a piece; behavioural rules or the ritual of a performance; *social and ideological rules* or the image of the musician within his community; and *commercial and juridical rules*, or issues around ownership and copyright. While these elements may be present in most musical genres, Frith urges caution in terms of their application:

The problem with such a schematic overview (as Fabbri emphasizes) is that it implies a static picture of genres with clearly defined boundaries, whereas, in fact, genres are constantly changing - as an effect of what's happening in neighboring genres, as a result of musical contradictions, in response to technological and demographic changes (1996: 93).

Essentially, genre should be viewed as an adaptable and active system of meaning-making within a particular culture, constituted by different processes of classification, based on semiotic rules, aural characteristics and ideology.

It is worth spending a little more time thinking about why a static reading of genres is unhelpful to us and Lena and Peterson's (2008) work demonstrates the potential problems of rigidly codifying genre in this way. Lena and Peterson's discussions of genre span a number of styles of music, with the four in this particular study increasing to sixty in Lena's *Banding Together* (2012) which we touched on in Chapter 2. One of the intentions of this project is to develop a series of categories to explain how genres emerge and what their features might be. The categories they use are 'avant-garde', 'scene-based', 'industry-based' and 'traditionalist'. To develop their classificatory schema, Lena and Peterson codify the features of a variety of historical music genres and retroactively construct their taxonomy from the similarities and differences they have observed in different music cultures. There are several issues with this approach.

Firstly the process of fitting diverse forms of music into relatively prescriptive categories is fraught with difficulties, not least the inevitable anomalies that refuse

to occupy any one group; although - as we discussed in Chapter 2 - Lena acknowledges the heterogenic nature of participant actions and systems of symbolic classification, there is still the concern that this type of approach, where practices are differentiated by the researcher, becomes less about the classificatory approaches of participants - who, ultimately, are the primary constituents of these cultures - and more about the researcher's need for their own explanatory classificatory system. This, in Becker's framework, is dangerous as it shifts the role of sociology from observation to categorization (1982: 151). Each one of Lena and Peterson's genre choices is necessarily complicated by decades of debate and reclassification, and a catch-all categorization marginalizes small-scale fringe elements who deliberately challenge classificatory types with, as Frith puts it is, 'rule testing and bending' (1996: 93), in favour of finding features which fit the mould.

Secondly, as a historical analysis, this system is also not especially helpful in understanding the sort of emergent, temporary or fluctuating genres facilitated by new media technologies. The result of this reading of genre is top-down formalised classification, frequently defined by those external to the music movement itself, rather than a dynamic and evolving entities enacted and articulated by participants.

Thirdly is the way in which these taxonomies may obscure on-going processes of negotiation, where genre is regularly reshaped by the dialogue between participants. The classifications offered by Lena and others appears to offer a system by which we can measure the position of certain music movements at a given time, but in doing so we lose sight of the most crucial aspect of genre, namely active participants who contribute to genre boundary creation and maintenance; even historical genres are populated by participants who continue to debate and delineate their culture. If we are to answer the question of how hauntology is classified, we need to look to those participant groups engaged in classificatory practices, rather than imposing our own schema; we are looking for genre as 'constructed and then articulated through a complex interplay of musicians, listeners, and mediated ideologues' (Frith 1996: 88) and how participant groups use dialogue to negotiate and develop boundaries, rather than imposing a potentially misleading structural hierarchy on their development.

Ultimately Frith suggests that although classification is an integral part of genre creation and boundary maintenance, genre cannot be a fixed entity, but rather one where classifications are open to contestation, and may be affected by

both demographic and technological change. Beer (2012) would appear to agree with Frith's position in this sense, situating classification within the context of new forms of social media. He notes that with the advent of social media, particularly those related to music (Last.FM, iTunes, Spotify), for example the ways in which genres emerge has changed and that approaches that acknowledge fragmentation are important. The use of tags and metadata, for instance, allows individuals to classify music themselves, so genres can be understood as systems of classification created from the bottom up, rather than imposed from the top down (as in Lena and Peterson's case). This is not to say that a more formalized music industry is no longer important in codifying the boundaries of genre (in terms of our case study, we will explore this in more detail through the analysis of the Ghost Box record label in Chapter 5), just that these once-dominant structures 'are sometimes bypassed as their efforts are lost in the cultural cacophony of social media' (Beer 2012: 153); in the development of our case study, social media demonstrates a self-organizing system, one transformed by new means of communication and dialogue.

Social media also offers the researcher new tools for understanding the formation of genre in a contemporary setting; in the case of hauntology, where the genesis of what we are discussing involves virtually-constituted dialogue, we need to understand the interrelationship between these classificatory processes and their technological forms. Beer, like Frith, urges caution in the sense that the plethora of fragmentary and tangential information may make it 'almost impossible to get a sense of movements or the broader picture of what is happening in this overwhelming mass of genres and sub-genres' (2012: 93); as such, we are being necessarily selective in our exploration of large quantities of data. In discussing practices associated with classification and categorization, we are forwarding particular aspects of the hauntological art world. Our intention is to combine the information in this chapter with analysis of organization, spatiality and resistance, in an effort to triangulate the data collected from a primarily virtual contemporary avant-garde music movement. At the very least, exploring different forms of social media data should afford us a glimpse of the partial connections between classificatory processes and our other empirical concerns, allowing us to consider how micro-level discussions within our case study feed into the macro-level metadiscourse of the contemporary avant-garde.

Having discussed the conceptual underpinning of genre, noting the pitfalls of top-down structures and the role of new social media, the remainder of this chapter will explore the ways that genre is enacted and articulated through forms of participant dialogue. The suggestion from the literature is that genre is mediated and contested as part of a continual process of refinement and change, and rather than expecting to discover one system to adequately codify hauntology, we are instead concerned with the variety of ways in which participants engage in a dialogue on genre, as they attempt to define the boundaries of their culture.

4.3 Boundaries and classificatory practices

In the previous section we worked towards an understanding of the features of genre, or rather the complications implicit in settling on one formalized definition; the issue here is not describing the *concept* of genre - we demonstrated in Chapter 2 that there are a number of viable concepts - but in explaining the ways in which genre might be *enacted* by participants. How do we make genre visible through these participant-led processes of boundary formation and classification? In Chapter 1, we noted that describing and locating what constitutes hauntology appeared to involve engaging with the variety of contested boundaries around what is and is not considered part of the hauntological canon. Making these decisions can be thought of as a delimiting process, a dialogue which seeks to develop categories and conventions through which cultural artefacts can be understood, often in relation to other forms of cultural production. What we are looking for is how participants go about achieving this, and how their competing dialogues can be understood as a collaborative practice of genre development.

In the context of data collection and analysis, dialogue can be thought of as the way in which certain cultural features and artefacts are discussed, positioned, or juxtaposed, with others; this, as we detailed earlier, is achieved directly or indirectly. The data we have collected includes several discussion threads from the Whitechapel and Dissensus message boards. These will be presented as a form of narrative, where participant discussions are presented sequentially as examples of the classification of cultural artefacts - in this case different pieces of music - alongside the broader theoretical foundations of hauntology as described by participants. Message board data constitutes the section relating to direct dialogue. We have also collected tagging information, via data crawling software, from

Last.FM, where participants have individually attributed textual descriptors to pieces of music. This data constitutes the section on indirect dialogue. We will also consider points of overlap between forms of direct and indirect dialogue, where similarities and differences between practices of classification emerge. Here we will be looking at hybridized dialogue in an effort to understand how the individual micro-level processes of classification feed in to the larger, macro-level metadiscourse suggested by Gunn (1999).

In terms of the analysis of direct and indirect forms of dialogue, we will use narrative description and interpretive textual analysis. As Beer (2012) suggests, in relation to genre and the classificatory imagination, 'there is much to be gained from looking away across from sociology towards literary criticism, genre theory and cultural history' (151) and in using interpretive textual analysis, we are able to combine a descriptive narrative account of the sequential dialogue of participants on message boards and Last.FM with the researchers 'insider' status in a way that tacitly augments, rather than replaces, participant-led readings of material.

4.4 Direct dialogue - message boards threads

Our analysis will be split into two sections (4.4 and 4.5) based on the type of dialogue we are exploring; direct (message board threads) and indirect (Last.FM). Hybridized dialogue will be integrated within the indirect dialogue section, considered subsequently to our discussions of message board threads, as a way of comparing and contrasting the two forms of collaborative negotiation we will have examined.

In this section we will be exploring direct dialogue as a way of demonstrating how participants in our case study develop classificatory boundaries of genre. This process will involve analysis of discussion threads at two message boards; Whitechapel and Dissensus. These message boards were selected as viable areas of enquiry as a result of preliminary fieldwork with audience members, through personal blogs that recommended these particular message boards to their readers as a useful introduction to some of the conventions and genre rules of the hauntological art world; these message board threads represent a locus of classificatory practices, and were therefore considered to be crucial data collection sites.

It is worth elaborating on the specifics of these message boards in a little more detail before discussing the data. These two boards are not explicitly hauntological, but rather situate hauntology with a number of other topics including music, philosophy, film, politics and so forth. Alongside the recommendation proffered by participants, the reasoning behind choosing non-hauntological message boards is twofold; firstly, during the fieldwork planning stage, it was not possible to locate any message boards dedicated solely to our case study. This in itself suggests that locations for dialogue of this nature are either relatively sparse, or are nested within sites of broader cultural debate. An example of the latter can be seen in the structuring of the Dissensus board, which lists 'music, thought, politics, art, literature and film, nature, events, releases, sales and mixes' (Dissensus 2011a) as potential topics of discussion. Although primarily music-focused, this board - in offering these specific topics - guides debate, promotes intertextual associations, and situates our case study within broader cultural discussions.

Secondly, a message board that is not specifically hauntological enables us to see developmental classification from a variety of participants. As we shall see, it is possible to identify participants who are new to the conversation and those who are more experienced depending on their responses. This is important because alongside understanding the ways in which classification contributes to the creation and maintenance of boundaries, we are also able to see how participant groups with differing levels of experience in the art world interact with one another.

Alongside the interactions of audiences it is also worth reminding ourselves about the object of our analysis, namely varieties of 'text', as text is the means by which dialogue is constituted on these message boards; in a broader sense, language can also be seen as vital to any conceptualization of an art world, and is therefore important to consider (Cluley 2012). To return to our genre discussions of Chapter 2, Gunn (1999), in expounding on Roland Barthes' semiotics of musical discourse, notes that 'the basic currency exchange among listeners is the adjective' (33) and that discourse on music is predicated by the process of discussion itself. Gunn suggests that language 'is always *prior* to musical notation', in the sense that part of the classification process involves using existing terminology to describe certain kinds of music, including qualifiers such as 'happy' or 'melancholic' for example. The result is a 'musical metadiscourse' where 'the music elicits moods or feelings (first order signification), which we seek to understand propositionally with adjectives (second

order signification), to exchange and negotiate with others (third order signification, or metadiscourse) (ibid). In terms of the process of classification, on a message board thread, the dialogue that takes place is *subsequent* to the act of consuming and considering the music on an individual basis. The process of classifying that begins with individuals - who use descriptive, adjectival terms to begin the process of comparing what they have heard to already extant terminology - is then negotiated via wider dialogue with others. Here we will see how this micro-level engagement feeds into the development of genre conventions on a macro-level. We will consider these interactions in relation to these processes of signification as this can be understood as intrinsic to the way in which negotiation takes place.

4.4.1 The Whitechapel message board

We will begin by looking at the Whitechapel message board (Whitechapel 2011). As with our earlier observation about Dissensus, Whitechapel is a message board that is not solely music-related, but contains sections on literature, comics and films; hauntology was, therefore, one thread among many. It was suggested as a topic of discussion by board moderator Warren Ellis, and coincided with the *Hauntology Now!* symposium at the Museum of Garden History (the event took place on 12th May 2008, with the thread starting on 26th May); in itself, this demonstrates the potential interplay between virtual and non-virtual iterations of hauntology.

To situate this thread within the broader timeline of our case study, the term 'hauntology' and the initial discussions of the potential parameters of hauntology as a genre, began in late 2005/early 2006 with Mark Fisher and Simon Reynolds' blog posts on the subject, as we highlighted in Chapter 1. This message board thread comes around two years after that, so these discussions are partially predicated on already established conventions and technology. However, as our discussion of genre earlier in this chapter demonstrated, genre boundaries are regularly contested, so despite its temporal location, we are still able to observe genre classification taking place.

The design of the message board thread means that posts are presented sequentially depending on when they were posted. As such, the second and third orders of signification that Gunn suggests - the use of textual descriptors and their contribution to a wider metadiscourse - are prefigured into these exchanges by

design. In terms of our analysis, the sequential format lends itself to viewing this form of direct dialogue as a narrative, and we will treat it as such. Direct quotations from participants will be referenced using the number assigned to the post on the message board thread, indicating its relative position in the discussion. This particular thread has the number 2375 attributed to it, with each point representing the order in which the individual post is situated (so 2375.2 follows 2375.1 and so forth); in adopting this form, we are merely replicating the system used on the message board thread itself.

Warren Ellis, in the discussion titled 'The Hauntological Congress' (Whitechapel 2011), begins by asking 'Have any of you been following this whole hauntology thing over the last 18 months or so? I went to a seminar about it a couple of weeks ago [a reference to the symposium] that felt a bit like people putting a capstone over it' (2375.1). He goes on to detail some of the pertinent features of hauntology. This opening statement sees Ellis eliciting responses and opinions by suggesting that the process of classification is effectively over, that the protective masonry of the capstone demonstrates a closing down of discussion. In reality, this acts as a provocation for the involvement of other audience members in continuing a discussion on genre that has been established, so Ellis implies, elsewhere.

PLAY NOW: Burial - *Archangel*

The opening post is followed by several responses where audience members state that they are interested in engaging but would like more information, with 'hank' (2375.4) and 'burket' (2375.9) exemplars of this. Their responses suggests that these two participants are newly invested in our case study, and are effectively asking more experienced participants for assistance in understanding what is going on, which speaks to the sorts of collaborative and co-operative practices Becker highlights (1982). Their responses are interpolated by others who are already familiar with the subject; for example, 'jzellis' (2375.3) mentions the music of Burial in relation to Ellis' description, stating that it offers a 'vibe that you're listening to music made of ancient sounds'. jzellis also allies the 'vibe' intertextually, saying that it 'reminds me, obscurely, of the film *Angel Heart*: the scene at the end with Rourke

and DeNiro where they use the old Johnny Favorite song as a sort of creepy counterpoint to the action’.

There are several points worth noting in these early exchanges. Firstly, as we have seen, audience members with differing levels of experience respond in different ways to the opening provocation, but are unified through their mutual interest in exploring the issues highlighted by Ellis. Secondly, second and third level orders of signification take place here; for example, jzellis offers individual descriptions of Burial’s music that pertain both to the sounds themselves and the feelings they elicit, and this feeds into the broader thread discussion of what can and cannot be considered hauntological (the description of Burial is offered as a response to Ellis suggesting another artist - Philip Jeck - as hauntological). Thirdly, the process of classification at this stage appears to involve some intertextual association, where jzellis equates the music of one artist with a particular part of the film *Angel Heart*. This association facilitates comprehension through comparison, where music can be understood through other forms of artistic association. These early exchanges are indicative of classificatory processes that perpetuate throughout the thread; they can be characterised as *classification in relation to other artists* (through similarity and difference) and *classification involving intertextual association*.

In relation to the former, discussions of whether or not certain types of music can be included as hauntological make up the majority of responses on the thread. For example, ‘Fauxhammer’ (2375.11) asks ‘does that "To Repel Ghosts" outfit belong in this movement? Their "Partisan Songs" disc reminded me to listening to echoes from another time, a weird time’. Here, Fauxhammer is attempting to situate what he has heard in relation to his understanding of the developmental metadiscourse of the thread. At the same time, we can see that this is not simply an individual offering second order signifiers, but rather a collaborative process; Fauxhammer is asking, rather than telling. ‘frenchbloke’ (2375.25) continues this collaborative approach, suggesting that ‘the whole ghost box label stuff is great, as is mordant music (a former member of Portion Control)’. In this instance, frenchbloke is recommending music rather than telling other participants what they should or shouldn’t be considering. ‘acacia’ (2375.34) goes a stage further by posting a link to a particular piece of music - dntel’s ‘live alone in a studio’ - before offering their assessment in relation to the descriptors that have been

offered so far: '[dntel] fits the sound you describe very well, especially a few minutes in with the vocal transmissions floating in slow motion from a gloomy parlour.' Again, classification involves a participant suggesting the music of an artist for consideration; the responses see an assessment of the artist by other audience members taking place, in relation to already established descriptions of the music ('gloom', 'echoes from another time' and 'ancient sounds' are all second order signifiers that have been offered in this regard). Boundaries around hauntology as a genre are therefore reinforced not simply by identifying similar sounding artists, but through association with particular feelings and impressions, so a development of Feuer's (1992) model of genre.

PLAY NOW: Jeff Grant - *Lonely Water* [Film]

In relation to the latter, intertextual associations also contribute to this form of categorization. Alongside jzellis' and the juxtaposition of Burial and the film *Angel Heart*, '_____' (2375.45) situates examples of hauntological music within earlier discussions of nostalgia in Public Information films, stating that 'you may like to revisit your youth, if you are in your almost 40's by going to see the old public information films of the 70's - lonely water anyone?'. This is of note because it implies that classification also involves temporal associations and reminiscence - so memories as well as feelings and impressions - and that part of the allure of our case study to participants might be how it facilitates engagement not only with other similar sounding artists, but with cultural artefacts from other art worlds or periods in time. This is reinforced by other responses on the thread, including 'bjacques' (2375.73) who suggests hauntology can be seen as 'the aural equivalent of Photoshopped montages of Victorian and Edwardian ephemera [with] filters that make the whole mess look like scratchy old film.' Here we are not only seeing intertextuality but also an implication that there may be a level of insincerity in terms of what the genre represents. Classification, in this case, is not entirely about the establishing of boundaries, but also about the contestation of boundaries through these connections, as Frith also observes (1996: 93).

The process of contestation continues when participants move beyond describing the sounds themselves towards questioning the variety of readings of the theoretical material that is seen to underlie the genre, engaging explicitly with the

overarching metadiscourse of the genre. As we noted in Chapter 1, the word 'hauntology' was derived by Mark Fisher from Derrida's *Specters of Marx* (1994), as a way of describing trends in contemporary electronic music making and a number of participants take issue with these multiple readings. 'acacia' (2375.36), in response to Ellis' opening description of hauntology as 'the past haunting the present' says that this reading

deprives this clever little concept of its nuance and overarching 'spectrality' as applied to culture/history/et cetera. I read it as describing the present haunted by future ghosts till the boundaries dissolve and are redefined with the hauntological lens. I have a tendency of selective reading, however (which with Derrida and similar theorists, I think is quite okay, hence my not complaining too much about the current meme).

The reading acacia offers is self-reflective, selective, and suggests that associating particular types of music with theory may be helpful in a broader sense, where one cultural form can inform readings of another, in the same way we have seen intertextuality operate as a way of clarifying associations.

However, other participants take issue with acacia's reading of Derrida. 'laughingbandit' (2375.49) and acacia engage in a debate about the meaning of the term 'hauntology' over a number of posts, culminating in a *détente* of sorts with laughingbandit eventually conceding that they 'wouldn't disagree...in terms of Derrida's hauntology being about the future (although I would like more of an explication of what you specifically meant in terms of what I said) and really fighting isn't my thing' but that 'perhaps it is simply that my reading of (injunctions of Marx, the first chapter of *spectres of Marx*, of which the above post is majorly based) is read in terms of reading Heidegger before, and approaching Derrida and *spectres* in terms of a persons [sic] fusion of horizons with said *spectres*, which produces a new context/horizon [...]'. Classification in this context involves contesting the descriptions and readings of other participants, but can still be understood as a process of collaboration with the two participants working towards an outcome that contributes towards the boundaries of the genre, even if these boundaries are unstable, constituted by 'a new context/horizon' in laughingbandit's words.

This process also suggests a considerable level of investment on the part of participants; they are not simply discussing music and what it sounds like in relation to other forms of music, but how theoretical notions of, for example, the nature of

temporality in contemporary Marxism contribute to the boundaries of the genre. Theory, it appears from this thread at least, can be as important as the music itself. Although they may disagree on specific readings of the text, participants contribute to classification by suggesting that this particular genre requires a level of engagement that is grounded in theory. This again differentiates participants into groups who can engage (such as acacia and laughingbandit) and those who request help to catch up (hank and burket). In terms of the contemporary avant-garde more broadly, this is significant because it can be read as a form of distancing, or exclusivity. By allying music with philosophical ideas, participants differentiate themselves and their culture from other groups of people, tacitly enforcing a specific kind of engagement - with theory in this case - as a criterion for involvement. This would correspond with Frith's observation, that 'genres initially flourish on a sense of exclusivity; they are as much (if not more) concerned to keep people out as in' (1996: 88).

A final observation from this message board thread is that participants have a level of self-awareness that enables them to identify that classification is a problem in itself. 'Drug Opera' (2375.19), for example, discusses his involvement with hauntology by situating it within the discourse of critics, one of our other participant groups (alongside artists).

I remember seeing the hauntology tag coined by k-punk [Mark Fisher's blogging alias] a couple of years back (if that) during his championing of the Ghost Box label. It did seem to be a bit of a [sic] artificial genre, in the sense that it didn't come out of any real scene that existed at the time, but as term to unify a certain musical approach or atmosphere I'm a big fan.

Drug Opera questions classification on the basis that it creates an artificial impression of a scene; it is attempting to create a scene where there is none. This not only chimes with our earlier concerns about the use of the terms 'scene' and 'genre' - and here Drugopera neatly delineates for us - but it also problematizes the establishment of concrete boundaries around our case study, as they may be constructed on an illusory premise. Instead, genre can be viewed as a 'certain musical approach or atmosphere', which differs from the confluence of features we have thus far discussed. Moreover, 'helenfordsdale' (2375.87) interjects towards the end of the thread by highlighting the fact that although 'hauntology is interesting as an idea [...] the whole thing just strikes me as another (pseudo)intellectual way of

labelling, and therefor [sic] demystifying a rather obscure and unique form of art.’ The classificatory process, helensfordale argues, is ultimately ‘counterintuitive to the very structure of this form of art or music.’ This level of self-awareness again speaks to the potential for exclusivity, but also to an engaged and critical participant base. With this in mind, we will compare and contrast our findings on the Whitechapel board with that of the Dissensus message board in an effort expand on these classificatory practices and approaches.

4.4.2 The Dissensus message board

As we discussed earlier in this chapter, Dissensus is a forum with discussion threads on a variety of topics from music to politics and technology (Dissensus 2011a). Of the 96 threads that included the word ‘hauntology’, two contained a sufficient number of responses to be considered viable data collection sites for this study (again we will identify the username of the respondent and their relative position within the thread using information provided by Dissensus). These hauntological discussion threads were contained within the ‘culture’ board, with responses ranging over a 4 year period; both of these points - the 96 separate threads, and the time span - suggest discussions on classification were wide reaching and ongoing, as evidenced in the opening post of the first thread (Dissensus 2011b).

PLAY NOW: Boards of Canada - *Reach for the Dead*

‘labrat’ (#1) begins by offering a list of artists for consideration, engaging in a comparable way with the classificatory work we witnessed on the Whitechapel thread. labrat suggests ‘BoC [Boards of Canada], Ariel Pink, ghostbox label, Radiophonic workshop’ amongst others, demonstrating a similar process of individual suggestions feeding into the broader metadiscourse. labrat reinforces this relationship more explicitly by stating that they have ‘been really feeling the Hauntology excavations around here and would like to collate a "canon" (I think??? the nature of the subject suggests vagueness)’. There are two important aspects to this remark. Firstly, labrat has identified that attempting to develop static boundaries around hauntology is important, and that others may share this intention, even if this is presently implicit in other responses; here labrat is *inviting* collaboration, whilst attempting to sound-out the wider participant community with

the implied uncertainty of 'I think???'. Secondly, labrat situates this opening post within broader discussions of hauntology taking place elsewhere on the Dissensus board, evidenced in the observation that there are '...excavations around here...'. This shows us that these classificatory processes are not simply the isolated actions of a few individuals on one thread, but rather an interconnected series of negotiations taking place at a number of locations, nestled within the Dissensus message board.

A concrete example of this type of negotiation arrives further into the thread, following a number of exchanges where classification follows the now-familiar pattern of call-and-response with participants discussing the merits of similar, or indeed not-so-similar, sounding artists. The negotiation takes place between 'big satan' (#29) and 'turtles' (#30), and demonstrates some of the ways in which classificatory markers are contested. big satan - we can assume in an attempt to clarify the artist suggestions that have come before this post - asks 'so it's music that sounds haunting right? do they have to be quiet, or can they be loud too?'. turtles responds directly by quoting big satan's question in their own response, showing a clear causal chain between the posts:

Though obviously I'm just following the leaders on this one (blissblog, woebot, k-punk->the holy music-blogging trinity ;-) , but my understanding is that it's not just about sounding haunting, which is really too easy a classification. I mean you could almost throw enya in there at that rate! I think the "memoradelia" tagged suggested on blissblog (by, hold on...that would be Raw Patrick on this very thread, ha!) is maybe a bit more accurate. It's all about reflecting and distorting a past that may never have been there in the first place.

Several important processes are taking place here. To start with, turtles - in offering a clarification to big satan - deflects attention from their own interpretive framework in favour of ceding responsibility to 'the leaders'. This is understandable, in the sense that, as a burgeoning aesthetic, the boundaries of hauntology are necessarily malleable and changeable, so offering a definitive response to questions can be difficult; turtles is showing us that classificatory processes are ongoing, and that they feel they understand their position within this dialogue. This is further evidenced in a latter part of the same post where turtles states that 'it's all being laid out as we speak'. Following this, turtles also shows us that there may be some

form of hierarchy present with regards to the role of different participant groups. In ceding interpretive responsibility, we see that some participants identify others as more or less influential in terms of the perceived value of their classificatory work. The 'holy music-blogging trinity' that turtles mentions includes two blogs by cultural commentators we identified in Chapter 1: blissblog is written by music critic Simon Reynolds, and k-punk is the blogging name of Mark Fisher. turtles' contribution to the debate can be understood as classification mediated by the already-defined parameters developed by a different participant group, the critics. This implied hierarchy may be significant, as it ties in with Becker's observations that some art world participants are seen to have more of a right to speak than others, and therefore have a greater role to play with regards to delimiting the art world of which they are a part (Becker 1982: 150-3).

Furthermore, later in the same thread, Mark Fisher enters into the discussion himself as 'K-punk' (#62), allowing us to observe the interplay between audiences and critics directly. His response to earlier posts is wide-ranging, and considers both the establishing of clear boundaries, or a 'canon' as labrat suggested, but also an issue we observed on the Whitechapel thread, namely the application and use of theory. K-punk is keen to solidify the limits around the genre, in an effort to make the discussion less about similar-sounding artists and more about the broader theoretical validity of hauntology, thereby reinforcing the boundaries through the requirement to engage with theory. He says that whilst he is 'enjoying the proliferating list of ghostly and ghost-themed recordings (many of which I've never heard of, still less heard, but would love to), I'm very much in agreement with calls for more precision in the definition of sonic hauntology.' In terms of third order signification and the metadiscourse, the absence of clarity with regards to the term 'hauntology' he blames on himself: '(No doubt I've been as guilty as anybody else in being loose with the term's use)'. This admission is important, because it demonstrates both the perceived value in establishing clear limits to the genre, but also that within these negotiations, Fisher identifies himself as a key actor, in the sense that he feels the need to directly respond to a message board thread that has placed his ideas at the centre of debates surrounding these limitations. In a wider sense, Fisher's interjection is understandable because, as we noted in Chapter 1, he is directly responsible for applying the term to music, but it is also significant because of its position in the narrative of the thread, that it follows turtles' response

to big satan. In doing so, we see a dialogic process of classification taking place between different participant groups embodied in the negotiated, collaborative direct dialogue on the message board thread.

Despite the potential hierarchy between groups implied by turtles' discussion with big satan, the bulk of the data collected from these threads suggests that it would be misleading to say that critics sit above audiences in terms of the value of their classificatory practice (despite many building on Fisher's use of 'hauntology'); this is important because it reinforces the self-awareness of participants and the importance of collaboration over the inherent power dynamics forwarded by some Bourdieusian analysis. turtles, in the same exchange (#30) demonstrates an awareness and analysis of the debates between Fisher and Reynolds that have played out on their own individual blogs, stating that 'I think the "memoradelia" tagged [tag?] suggested on blissblog [...] is maybe a bit more accurate'. turtles, despite offering a kind of clarification to big satan that initially reads as marginalizing the role of the audience, is not happy with removing the audience entirely from the process. Instead, after identifying the potential value of the 'holy trinity', turtles offers an additional interpretive reading of critics discussions on the terminology associated with the genre, and decides that 'hauntology' is not as useful as 'memoradelia'. In doing so, we can see the agency that audiences have in negotiating the boundaries of the genre; although critics may attempt to codify what is and what is not hauntological, their approaches to the metadiscourse are subsequently assessed and valued by audiences, who may or may not accept their pronouncements.

The lack of the sort of codified agreement that labrat and K-punk are hoping to develop becomes increasingly problematic in further exchanges on the thread, and the response of 'Nick Gutterbreakz' (#130) neatly summarizes these issues. He begins by quoting another participant -'mms' - who appears to be at an impasse with regards to this lack of resolution. mms asks 'so what happened to hauntology, has [is?] it just part of the atmosphere now? DO we have a definition as yet or is the spectral nature part of the spectral word?' Here, mms appears to see a connection between the failure of the classificatory process in resolving this dispute and the instability of the genre overall; in itself this alerts us to the idea that some participants may view classification not as an ongoing process, but rather a negotiation that can eventually be concluded. Conversely, mms also appears to be

suggesting that the 'spectral nature of the spectral word' - and here we assume they mean 'hauntology' - lends itself to this sort of ambiguity, or lack of resolution; this paradox, we can surmise, is the central problem that this thread is unable to resolve.

Secondly, in response, Nick Gutterbreakz identifies not only the lack of resolution but also where the fault lies; he suggests that critics, whose remarks prefigure expectations related to the individual audience member's classificatory process, are to blame. He suggests that if mms wants an answer (to the absence of a codified notion of hauntology), they had 'better ask K-punk'. This can be read as reinforcing the idea that classification in our case study is a collaborative practice of negotiation between participant groups, but also that critics are able to be challenged. He concludes by saying that K-punk's interjections, rather than helpful, can be characterized as little more than nostalgic - 'I'd define it as "the Bagpuss moment" 😊' - and in doing so, the application of weighty theoretical terminology to music, is also challenged, though perhaps in a tongue-in-cheek way (hence the inclusion of a smiley). Genre, in this participant's view at least, can be seen not as a robust theory-rich commentary on sociocultural concerns, but rather a twee, nostalgic act of remembrance.

This contestation plays out in a more dramatic fashion in the second major hauntological thread on Dissensus, titled 'What is HAUNTOLOGY to pop music' (Dissensus 2011c). The title itself is of note, as it alludes to a separation between our case study and popular music, but also the possibility of connections between the contemporary avant-garde and more populist forms of music.

Despite this suggestive title, the second thread actually deals specifically with the relationship between Derrida and music that has been categorized as hauntological, implying that the relationship between hauntology and pop music might be tenuous or problematic. The responses in this thread show us how classification - in reaching beyond the simplified genre distinctions of similar-sounding artists towards intertextual associations with, in this case, post-structuralist theory - can be fractious and antagonistic, especially when agreement is not forthcoming (a continuation of the lack of resolution we noted in the first Dissensus thread).

A pertinent example of potential conflict in classification can be seen in the response by 'whatever' (#95) to a post by 'Man with Feathers' (to avoid confusion, 'whatever' will remain in quote marks), as this is demonstrably different to the

attempted resolution we saw between acacia and laughingbandit on the Whitechapel thread. Man with Feathers says 'I was thinking about how Derrida coined the term [hauntology] as a response to an "End of History"'; 'whatever' responds by saying

Oh yeah wanna show me the direct quote? Cos you're full of bull if you think it's as simple as you say. if you want to think about Derrida, gonna hv to do a hell of a lot more than read k-punk's blog, cos he has amply displayed for years that he hasn't the faintest idea what's going on in derrida's thought and texts.

In this response, 'whatever' demands a thorough critical engagement with the text in question, and comes across as relatively hostile in his reaction to Man with Feathers, considering that the latter appears to forward his position in a tentative manner. Moreover, 'whatever' specifically attacks the role of the critic - Mark Fisher writing as K-punk - and his interpretive reading of Derrida. In this instance, the audience attempts to reassert their role over that of the critic. This shows how collaboration operates even if this involves disagreement; the interplay between different participants and their interpretive frameworks is vital in the negotiation and classification of genre boundaries, even if this results in destabilization. The reaction can also be read as an effort towards situating 'whatever' as a crucial actor in the interpretive process (at least with regards to the application of Derrida) and, regardless of whether or not we think their reading is accurate, it at least demonstrates that individual participants will contest and defend their roles within this classificatory dynamic. This response also reinforces the notion that the conventions of this art world are highly developed, and require a certain level of specialist knowledge to engage with; a tentative reading such as the one offered by Man with Feathers is seen by some as insufficient.

However, we should not view this example as indicative of an exclusively theoretical engagement on Dissensus. Earlier in the same thread, Nick Gutterbreakz (#23) - in a post dissimilar to the arguments taking place around him - agrees with Simon Reynolds' urge to back away 'from all the "post-structuralist" baggage' associated with the genre, but feels that this might speak to his 'lack of education showing through'. This could be viewed as an admission that, in engaging in these debates, a certain amount of highly specialized knowledge - including that outside of the genre - is necessary, but it also shows that personal reflections can contribute in

tandem. Later in the same post, he says that he agrees with Simon Reynolds' observation on 'the prominence of the Television in providing the raw data'. This, he suggests,

fits entirely with my own perception of what Hauntology *might* be (for me the time slot would be the tail-end of that period [1958-1978], I suppose). What I experienced in the '70s has had a spectral bearing on my entire adult life (it was a constant background hum in my blog) and it's kind of amazing to me to see that 'feeling' being recognised, described and defined by Mark, Simon and others.

What we see here is that although Nick disagrees with aspects of Fisher's analysis elsewhere, classification is not as straightforward as being 'for' or 'against' a position, as the arguments on the minutiae of Derrida implies. In this response we see that classification is constructed around personal reflections (television, particular periods of time) and how these contribute to wider descriptions and discussions offered by other participants groups. Here, the individual associations and remembrances of the audience and critics contribute to the expansion of the hauntological metadiscourse, with Nick locating himself in juxtaposition to Mark Fisher and Simon Reynolds. Ultimately, although arguments over the application of theory are noticeable throughout, individual, small-scale injections are also worth considering in relation to how the second order of signification, where impressions and ideas are codified, feeds into the wider aesthetic of our case study.

In concluding this section, it is worth reflecting on what we have learnt by exploring these examples of direct dialogue. Our intention was to locate and observe the ways in which classification takes place, because, as Frith (1996: 95) notes, 'we can only make sense of musical value judgements [...] if we understand the circumstances in which they are made - and what they are made for.' These discussions utilize new social media, in the form of virtual message boards, to constitute the parameters of hauntology, with outcomes akin to Fabbri's notions of the semiotic/rhetorical and social/ideological features of genre (1982). The former deals with the ways in which the negotiated meanings of a piece of music can be conveyed to people; the latter refers both to artists and the musical community in which an understanding of the social forces of the music are considered more broadly. What we have seen in these direct discussions is how the rhetorical features of genre - the positions that participants adopt in relation to specific artists,

pieces of music and post-structuralist theory - contribute to socially-negotiated acts of meaning-making that are routinely contested so that the ideological conventions and features of the genre are only ever temporary fixtures.

4.5 Indirect dialogue - Last.FM

As discussed in 4.2, new social media has transformed the way in which music movements can be shaped and understood. In the previous section we considered the contribution that social media - in the form of the message boards - has played with regards to direct forms of dialogue and concomitant processes of classification. In this section we will consider the role indirect dialogue plays. Having looked at the ways in which participants directly engage with one another, here we will consider the cumulative effects of signification through the use of other forms of social media, namely the practice of tagging, and how this relates to classification.

We have so far discussed classification in relation to the three stages of signification, where individual experiences of music (first order) are given textual descriptors (second order) which contribute towards a metadiscourse (third order), which we might understand as 'genre or a collective 'aesthetic'. In the case of direct dialogue, this involved an actively negotiated connection between the second and third orders, where participants discussed with each other how a piece of music corresponded with the developmental hauntological aesthetic, an overarching construct where conventions may be codified, or indeed taken apart. In assessing indirect dialogue, we are comparing and contrasting these processes in a situation where direct negotiation does not take place. Essentially we want to observe how classification takes place in an alternative virtual context.

The data collected for this section comes from the social media site Last.FM. Last.FM is social in the sense that it facilitates the sharing of music with different users, and enables users to individually categorize the music they are listening to; unlike other forms of social media site such as Facebook and Twitter, Last.FM is primarily concerned with music. This, alongside the size and publically accessible nature of its data corpus - which we will discuss presently - indicates that Last.FM is a viable site for data collection.

It is worth elaborating further on the specific functions of Last.FM as this will allow us to comprehend how individual participants engage in classificatory practices through this platform. According to their website, Last.FM is a music

recommendation service that began operating in 2002; the service works by placing a piece of software on your computer which 'scrobbles' what you are listening to, by which we mean the program transmits data on your listening habits to the site. Each user's listening habits are publically accessible, and are associated with a profile, so you are able to inspect a record of everything you have listened to over a given period of time. Alongside this, the service makes recommendations based on what you have listened to before and what similar users have listened to that you are yet to listen to; this associational information is predicated on the application of 'tags'. Tags are textual descriptors that users attribute to particular artists and pieces of music; in Gunn's schema, this can be considered the practice of second order signification. By way of an example, Jimi Hendrix is tagged as 'classic rock', 'rock', 'blues', 'psychedelic' and 'guitar'. Tags are ordered hierarchically, depending on the number of users who have tagged an artist in a given way. The outcome is that users can be directed more effectively to certain artists based on tags that are prominent, or similar, to music they themselves have tagged and listened to. The reason that this is of interest to us is that, alongside operating as a music suggestion service, Last.FM facilitates indirect dialogue; genre is central to the recommendations the site offers and classification takes place cumulatively, as descriptors for certain types of music move higher or lower depending on the frequency of which they are tagged.

Moving on to the specifics of our case study, Last.FM has a community page for hauntology, where the genre is encapsulated through a combination of descriptors and features. This community page - titled 'hauntology and memoradelia' - is still active, unlike the message board threads discussed in the previous section; by 'active' we mean that data is still being transmitted from users to the page via the scrobbling function of Last.FM's software. At the time of accessing the page (November 2011) the tag 'hauntology' had been applied to different artists and pieces of music over 900 times by 300 different users. The arrangement of the community page involves a brief description of the genre (authored by users, with an in-built editing history allowing users to track changes that have been made to the description), the top ten descriptors (the tags that have been associated with artists most frequently), the top ten 'most listened to' artists, and a message board. In the case of the message board, unlike the proliferation of threads and posts we identified at Dissensus, posts are sporadic and usually contain

little but links to other artists. There is little or no direct dialogue about how and why such a musician should be classified as hauntological. This lack of active discussion further reinforces the notion that the process of classification is constituted in a different manner to that we have already witnessed; even though there is provision to negotiate, direct dialogue is not taking place here.

As previously mentioned, Last.FM allows users to freely access its API (application programming interface); from this it is possible to collect and collate tagging data, which can be thought of as the totality of the textual descriptors applied to a genre. Exploring these tags is useful as they allow us to compare the sorts of textual descriptors given in indirect dialogue with those given in the direct dialogue of the previous section. From this we will be able to understand points of similarity and difference in how classificatory work varies by site and different forms of dialogue. Furthermore, these tags will enable us to comprehend how the boundaries of what can and cannot be considered hauntological are constituted in an environment where textual descriptors are not directly negotiated.

To explore this data, we will be using the data mining program GaMuSo, developed by Knijf, Liekens and Goethals (2011). This piece of software is 'an experimental system ...that consists of more than 140:000 user-defined tags for over 400:000 artists' (1). It is freely available, and the results discussed in this section can be replicated for verifiability by reproducing the steps discussed herein. Essentially, the program collates the tags that have been ascribed to a genre with 'the most popular tag for an artist [...] assigned the weight 100, and all other tags are weighted in accordance with their frequency relative to the most frequent tag' (3). The searched-for term, in this case 'hauntology', is then displayed graphically as a tag cloud, a visible representation of the cumulative tagging data. The tag cloud for 'hauntology' can be seen in Figure 1, below. Alongside tagging information, the program also collects information on the artists most commonly associated with these tags. As such, comparing the two enables the researcher to see how textual descriptors are assigned to particular artists. This can be thought of as a process that is comparable with the direct negotiation of participants on message board threads - suggesting artists based on their understanding of the conventions that have been developed - except in this instance that understanding is implicit, conveyed solely through the application of second order descriptors to artists. We will first consider the tags before moving on to discuss the artists.

In Figure 1, the six most prominent tags, in order of frequency, are ‘Ghost Box’ (a record label), ‘Library Music’ (a genre term), ‘Memoradelia’ (a genre term), ‘Numbers Stations’ (a reference to a specific piece of music called *The Conet Project*), ‘Uneasy Listening’ (a genre term) and ‘BBC Radiophonic Workshop’ (the historical avant-garde studio). After number 6, the other tags are relatively equal in size, suggesting a similar frequency of tagging. There are a number of important observations we can make by looking at tagging data.

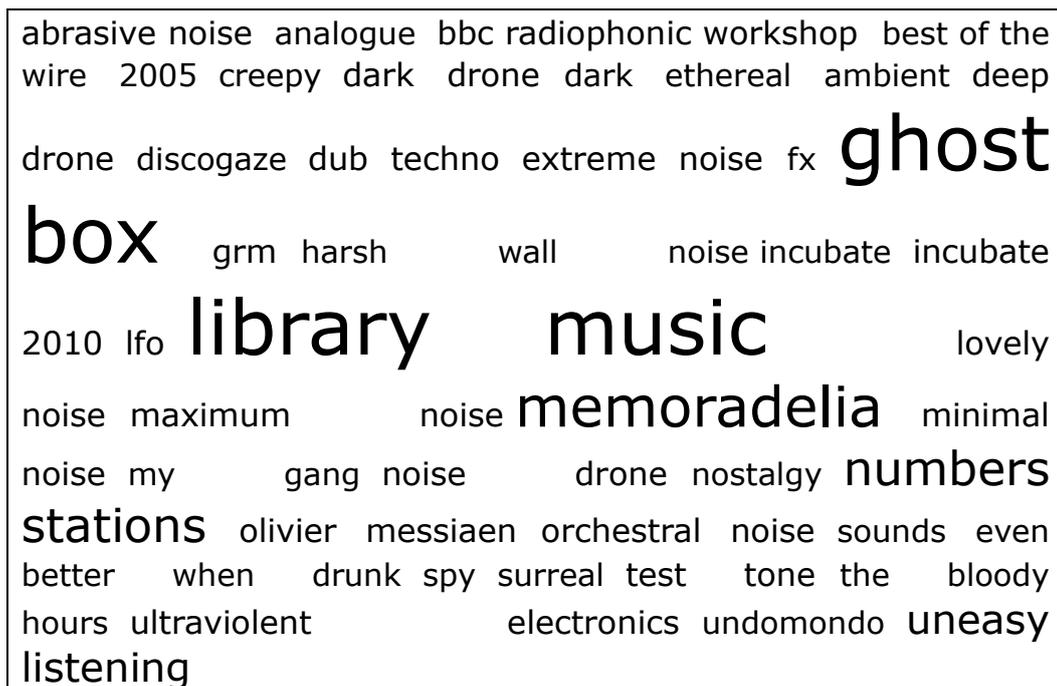


Fig.1 GaMuSo tag cloud for search term ‘hauntology’

Firstly, we notice from these tags that classification through indirect dialogue involves the confluence of different music-cultural forms, as was the case with direct dialogue. The inclusion of the tag ‘Ghost Box’, for instance, demonstrates that the cultural output of this record label is identified by users as important with regards to the genre, but also hints at the types of music associated with hauntology; what we are seeing is how certain types of artist (or in this case a collection of artists) are put forward as indicative. In terms of frequency, we can say that ‘Ghost Box’ is the tag most frequently applied by audiences, meaning that it is considered, in a cumulative sense, an archetype of sorts, that other music and artists can be compared to this in terms of delineating that which is and is not considered hauntological.

Secondly, the tags applied by participants alert other users to the type of listening experience they can expect by relating music classified as ‘hauntology’ with

other types of music. Prominent weighted examples include the tags 'BBC Radiophonic Workshop' - which we also observed in labrat's post on the Dissensus message board in 4.4.2 - and 'Uneasy Listening'; in the case of the former, the tag suggests a tacit connection between hauntology and the historical avant-garde, in the sense that the Workshop drew directly on musique concrète techniques (not to mention 'olivier messiaen' who is also tagged here, reinforcing this association), but it also alerts potential audiences to the sorts of sounds that they can expect to hear via association; in the case of the latter, 'Uneasy Listening' suggests an aesthetic, and descriptive, judgement about the sounds themselves. The inference could be a play on the genre 'easy listening', or a statement about the practice of listening to hauntological music more generally; either way, this application suggests both the experience that audiences have had listening to hauntological music whilst informing potential listeners that engaging with the music is less than straightforward. This may also tie in with our earlier observations about the investment that may be required on the part of participants, that to fully engage you are required to experience music that is 'uneasy'. Alongside this, other genres are also used to suggest similarity of sound; 'library music' – music from commercial libraries, used in films and television - again implies the sort of sound palette hauntological artists might be working with, and shows that audiences have made this connection, mediated through the process of tagging.

Thirdly, the inclusion of the tag 'memoradelia' relates to our earlier discussions about classification on message board threads. The community on Last.FM is titled 'hauntology and memoradelia', which itself is indicative of the difficulty in using 'hauntology' as a sufficient overarching genre descriptor. Moreover, as we noted in the previous section, 'memoradelia' is Simon Reynolds' alternative descriptive term for hauntology, and one that message board participants discussed; turtles, for instance, mentioned that the term was a better fit for his understanding of the conventions of the genre than hauntology. It is also the descriptor that Nick Gutterbreakz discusses in relation to the 'post-structuralist' baggage that comes with the use of a Derridean term. The emergence of the term in the tagging information is therefore suggestive of an attempt to approve its use via indirect dialogue. It also demonstrates the problematic relationship between participants who feel theory is important and those who feel it adds little to the music.

Fourthly, there is an overlap in relation to some of the other sound descriptors used in tagging and on the message board threads. Although these descriptors have a lesser weighting in the tag cloud, they are still significant as the application of these terms allies this indirect form of classification with the direct discussions that took place on Whitechapel and Dissensus. The descriptors are wide-ranging and include genres that have been deemed comparable to hauntology, alongside second order signifiers describing the sound of the music. For example, in the case of comparative genres, audiences have applied genre terms including 'dub', 'dark drone' and 'ambient' to the music they have listened to, allying these terms with hauntology in the process. In the case of signifiers, audiences have described the music as 'orchestral noise', 'creepy' and 'ethereal'. As in Gunn's (1999) three orders of signification, these terms are developed post-hoc, and represent assessments by participants based on their experience of listening to the music. More importantly, in terms of triangulation, this process also mirrors the direct discussions on the message board threads, where participants such as jzellis and Fauxhammer attributed the music to 'ancient sounds' and 'echoes from another time, a weird time' respectively. This connection is also noticeable in the broader discussions which included a consideration of musicians from other genres that may be categorized as hauntological (such as labrat's suggestions of Boards of Canada and Ariel Pink).

PLAY NOW: John Baker - *Milky Way*

Even more can be revealed if we consider these tags in tandem with the artists that have been classified as hauntological, as this is the way in which Last.FM integrates tagging information as part of its recommendation system. The top twenty featured artists in the genre category of 'hauntology' are also provided by data mining via GaMuSo (Figure 2, below). As with the tag list, the artists are listed in order of cumulative weighting. The correlation between the artists and the tags that have been applied is displayed by the program, and we will outline some of these examples below. There are a number of notable conclusions we can draw from the data.

1	Moon Wiring Club	11	John Foxx
2	Mordant Music	12	Basic Channel
3	The Focus Group	13	Porn Sword Tobacco
4	Memory Cassette	14	Pneumogaastriq
5	Belbury Poly	15	Aaron Martin
6	The Caretaker	16	Kreng
7	Black to Comm	17	John Maus
8	The Conet Project	18	Public Image Ltd.
9	bvdub	19	Oneohtrix Point Never
10	John Baker	20	Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti

Fig.2 Top twenty 'hauntological' artists

First of all, there appears to be a link between prominent tags and the artists on the list; this may seem relatively obvious, in the sense that the functioning of Last.FM is such that it connects tags and artists as part of its recommendation service, but it allows us to see the direct relationship between certain textual descriptors and particular artists, which demystifies the associations applied by participants during the tagging process. For instance, in Figure 3 (below, and also reproduced in Appendix 1), we can see how John Baker (#10 on the list) is connected to the genre term 'hauntology' through a number of artists that audiences have tagged as being similar ('electrolux'), as well as through descriptive terms ('electronic pioneers') and historical association; in the case of the latter, Baker is tagged under 'BBC Radiophonic Workshop' - which is understandable as Baker was a composer at the Workshop - which demonstrates the audience's awareness of these associations in their application of relevant tags.

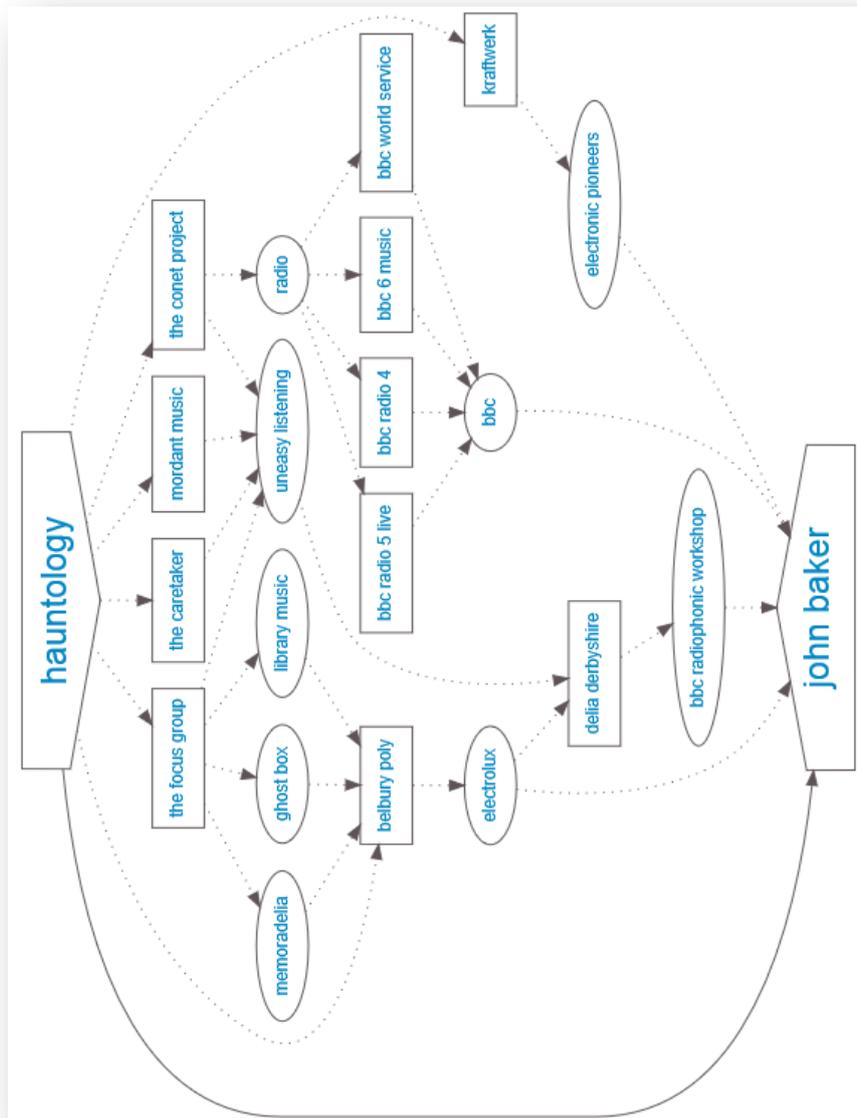


Fig.3 'John Baker' tag association map

Figure 4 (below, and Appendix 1) also demonstrates how association is not simply enacted through similarity of sound. For example, the map for The Focus Group (#3 on the list) shows connections between this artist, Belbury Poly, Broadcast, Moon Wiring Club and Mordant Music. These artists, as well as being identified as similar-sounding, are also connected through association with the label Ghost Box which appears on the map. This demonstrates that participants - through the practice of tagging - group different artists together not solely because of musical output, but also through associations with institutions such as the record label. What this shows is that, beyond simply enjoying the music, audiences are actively engaged in making connections between broader organizational structures

(such as the record label), individual artists and genre terms ('uneasy listening', 'library music').

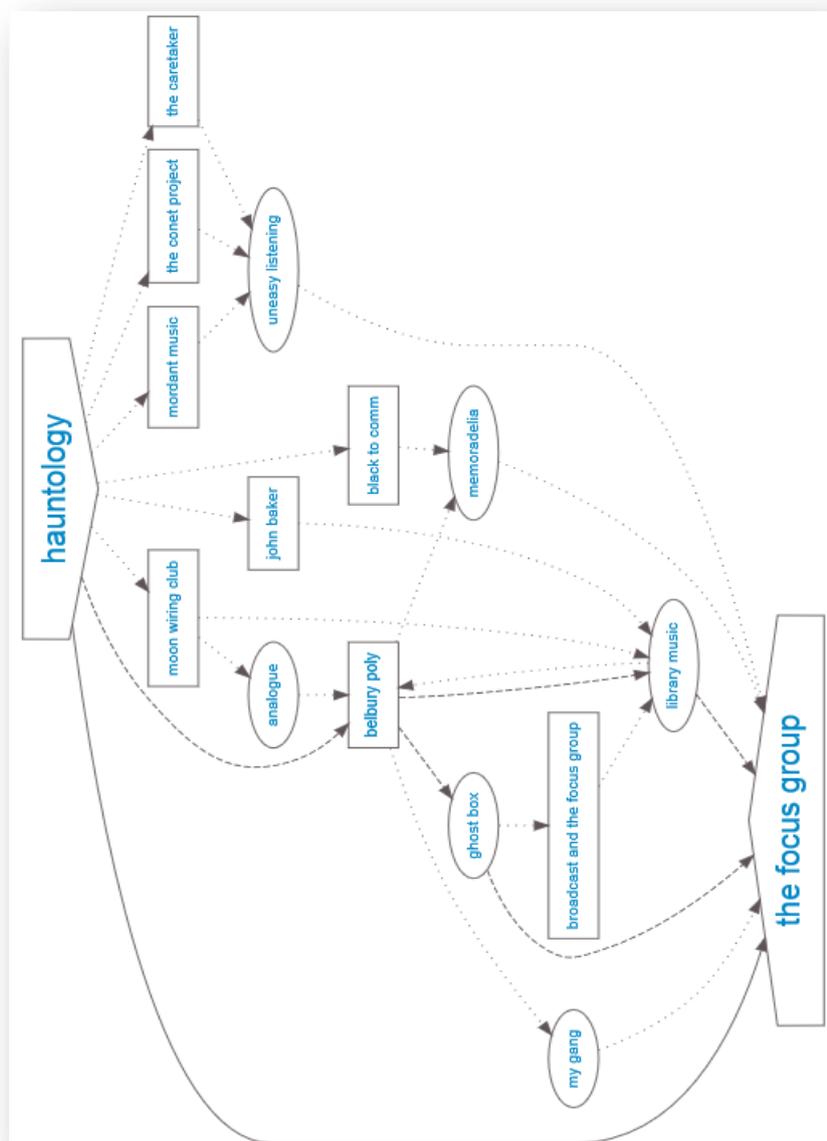


Fig.4 'The Focus Group' tag association map

Secondly, we can see how external genre terms can be applied to the work of specific musicians, interrelating hauntology to other forms of music. For example, in Figure 5 (below and Appendix 1) we can observe how Kreng (#16 on the list), through relationships with other artists ('the caretaker', 'moon wiring club') and hauntology more broadly (the direct arrow from the top of the map), has also been connected by other genre descriptors including 'horror ambient', 'gothic ambient' and 'dark ethereal ambient' (seen at the bottom of the map). These associations not only create links between a diversity of artists, but also expand the connections between hauntology and other genre terms which, through their inclusion, can

subsequently be considered hauntological by association; in doing so, the boundaries around the genre expand as certain terms become cumulatively prevalent in the tag cloud.

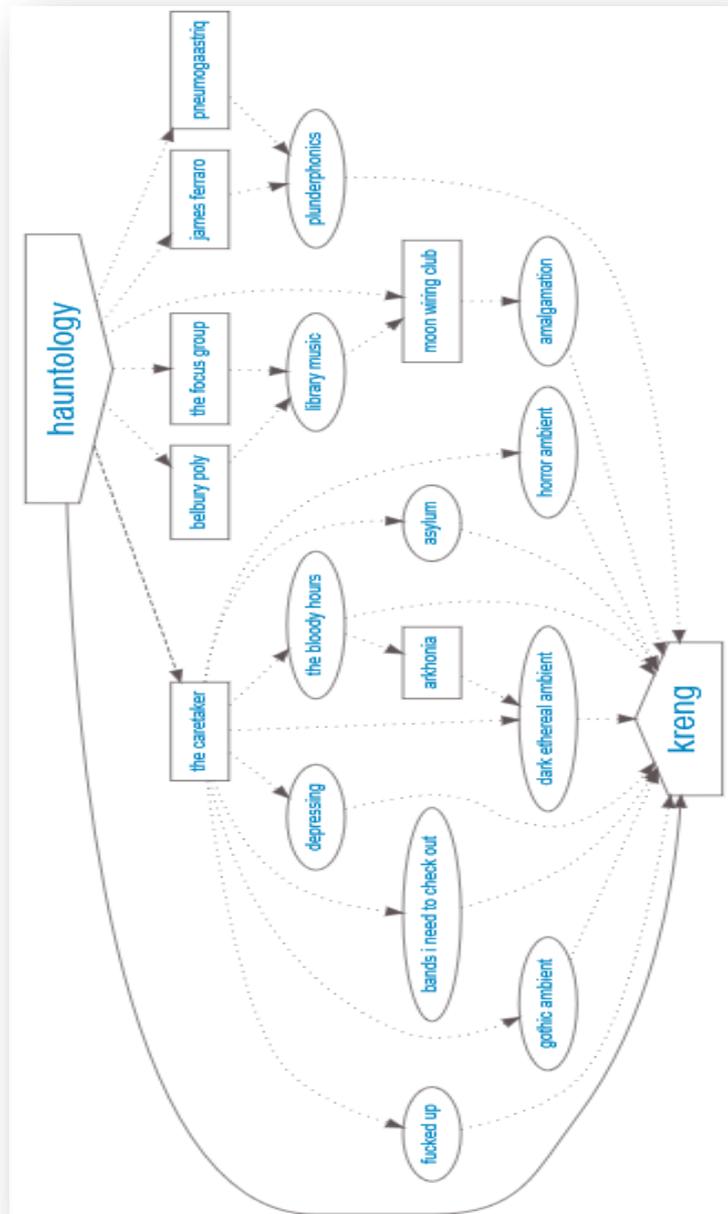


Fig.5 'Kreng' tag association map

This diversity of genre is also noticeable on the list in Figure 2 in relation to the output of artists; in the top twenty we have artists who are also tagged as electronica (Moon Wiring Club, The Focus Group, Belbury Poly) dub (bvdub) and sound art (The Caretaker, Black to Comm), alongside dubstep (Burial), ambient (Brian Eno) and drone (Fennesz) further along the list. This heterogeneity is significant because it reinforces the empirical concerns of this chapter more broadly,

where dissimilar music is considered hauntological by virtue of associations deemed important *by participants*. In indirect dialogue, this is the application of descriptive genre tags, which connect hauntology with other musical genres via cumulative association.

The combination of direct discussion between participants and indirect cumulative tagging could be considered a form of hybridized dialogue. By using GaMuSo, we have made visible the associational maps of indirect dialogue, where cumulative second order signification contributes to what is and is not considered hauntological. We have also seen that classification is not limited to one site of direct or indirect dialogue, but rather involves the confluence of a number of sites where practices of categorizing culture - be it via message boards or social media tagging - contribute to an overarching metadiscourse where conventions and boundaries are created, maintained, challenged and potentially dismantled. The interplay between these forms of dialogue enables participants to categorize different artists as hauntological even if, to the casual listener, there is no aural similarity. This ties in directly with Becker's assertion that the role of aesthetics in a highly developed art world is to provide a defensible position where participants are able to differentiate what they do from that of others (1982); classification then, is about attempting to codify, through negotiation, one art world that is potentially distinct from others. What we learn from the data is that the kinds of music identified as hauntological are myriad and, from a participant perspective, classification is seen as necessary - an issue identified explicitly by both audience and critic groups on message board threads, as well as tacitly through social media platforms such as Last.FM - but contested, and subject to relatively constant change. Alongside our analysis of direct dialogue in the previous section, the tagging information from Last.FM allows us to comprehend the cumulative effects of classification by showing the textual descriptors that are considered important by participants, as well as the artists that they associate with these descriptors. Essentially, hauntology - as an example of the contemporary avant-garde - classifies through the hybridized dialogue of different participant groups.

4.6 How is hauntology classified?

The intention of this chapter was to answer the research question developed in Chapter 1, namely 'how is hauntology classified'? This question stemmed from the

observation that, in our own attempts at classification, there were issues around grouping dissimilar types of music together; we wanted to understand how participants negotiated this problem. Similarly, we noted in our exploration of genre in Chapter 2 that classification enables participants to constitute and understand the culture they are a part of, so to comprehend the value of classification in the contemporary avant-garde we would need to explore these sorts of practices.

We began by considering whether or not we should be discussing hauntology as a 'scene' or a 'genre', and reasoned that, of the two terms, 'genre' was more appropriate owing to its lack of geographical fixity and the flexibility of the term with regards to Fabbri's (1981) constitutive list of genre features. Furthermore, discussions of genre, particularly those of Frith (1996), mirrored elements of Becker's art worlds schema, notably the establishing of conventions (which Frith might read as the attempt at codifying the boundaries of genre), and the developmental nature of an aesthetic as a defensible position for participants; ultimately, genre can be viewed as a collaborative process, 'better understood as something collusive than as something invented individually' (1996:86). We augmented this reading through the application of Gunn's three orders of signification (1999), where an audience member experiences music individually - though with reference to previous experiences (first order) before offering interpretive weight to these experiences through textual description (second order), culminating in a congregation of associations which are negotiated in relation to a broader metadiscourse that can also be viewed as the overarching aesthetic conventions of genre (third order). These processes were then situated within a contemporary discourse on the impact of technological change and new social media, in relation to the textual nature of the data on virtual sites.

We moved on from these generalized discussions of genre to look at specific examples within our case study, in an effort to understand the empirical value of these conceptualizations. We looked initially at direct forms of dialogue, where participants actively responded to one another on message boards. Threads at Whitechapel and Dissensus were identified in preliminary research as suitable locations where debate over the classification of hauntology was taking place, and we explored three threads which had a sufficient variety of responses to make data collection and analysis possible. We considered how classification took place in terms of comparisons with similar-sounding artists, intertextual associations and

theoretical standpoints, all of which were contested by different participant groups; the latter two examples show genre operating beyond aural similarity and difference, an approach more complex than the system we saw Feuer (1992) suggest in Chapter 2.

In terms of indirect dialogue, where participants contribute on an individual level without direct interactions with each other, we looked at how tagging in Last.FM enabled the micro-level application of textual descriptors to contribute towards a macro-level metadiscourse; this was understood as a cumulative process where individual categorizations feed into a broader notion of what constitutes hauntology, rather than the dialogic process witnessed on message board threads. We also looked at how textual descriptors were applied to particular artists, noting that the classification process in this instance involved an observable connection between associative genre descriptions and different kinds of artist. The outcome of these classificatory processes was a hybridized form of dialogue. We noted the similarities between direct and indirect forms of dialogue, and concluded that both of these forms of classification constituted a collaborative attempt at codifying the boundaries of our case study.

In answer to our first empirical research question - how is hauntology classified? - we have seen that hauntology is classified through mediated, negotiated forms of dialogue, both direct and indirect, that take place in virtual locations. In the case of direct dialogue, classification involves participants responding to one another in an effort towards some form of agreement over what constitutes the boundaries of the hauntological art world (even if this is never fully achieved). These boundary dialogues showed not only classification based on comparing cultural artefacts and the musical output of specific artists, but also the way in which hauntology is connected to broader arguments related to its theoretical underpinning in Derridean philosophy and intertextual associations with other forms of cultural production. In the case of indirect dialogue, classification is not mediated by debate, rather individual participants contribute to a metadiscourse framed by the technological limits imposed by new social media; Last.FM, in this case, can be seen as both facilitating and delimiting the classificatory process, enabling participants to categorize hauntological culture whilst simultaneously controlling the way in which this takes place.

More broadly speaking, classification in our case study enables participants to comprehend the culture they are a part of, and this process happens from the bottom up, rather than the top down, as suggested in Beer's (2012) work on classificatory processes. Dialogue can be viewed as a way of developing conventions and an overarching aesthetic - constituted here by textual descriptions and debate - enabling participants to frame their culture through boundaries that are subsequently tested, contested and redrawn. In relation to the contemporary avant-garde more widely, these contextualized practices speak to the continued significance of classification as a way of defining specific forms of cultural engagement, artefacts and people.

In this chapter we can also see the emergence of small-scale examples of our other empirical concerns. The sites where classification takes place through direct and indirect dialogue are also sites where culturally specific information is organized. Last.FM, for instance, offers a form of cumulative stratification where prominent tags and artists are featured at the expense of others. This shows that certain types of information are considered, by Last.FM at least, more important than others and this is factored into the design of their service. Similarly, message board threads have a prefigured call-and-response dialogue built into their design, which, to an extent, codifies the way in which participants can respond to each other. Here, organization informs classification. In considering other ways in which classification takes place, it will be crucial to examine the sorts of organizational structures participants use and develop, as these will facilitate or curtail different meaning-making practices. These issues will be addressed in the next chapter.

The sites we have considered are also spatially mediated. Throughout this chapter we have focused specifically on virtual sites of dialogue, as this allowed us to collect data from discussions around the classification of our case study. However, as we noted in Chapter 1, hauntology is not limited to virtual space, and classificatory practices - including forms of dialogue - will also take place in non-virtual spaces. Identifying these spaces, and comparing and contrasting spatially-contingent practices with the data we have collected and analysed here, will enable us to build a fuller picture of the ways in which hauntology is constituted and contested, and the broader ramifications this has for the contemporary avant-garde. We will consider spatiality in more detail in Chapter 6.

Finally, we witnessed a number of instances where resistance was taking place. The development of textual descriptors involved participants vying for prominence in an interpretive framework where readings of different cultural texts (be they music, film or philosophy) became vital facets of the classificatory drive; resistance was a feature of these exchanges. The clearest example of this would be the reactions of participants to the use of Derridean philosophy and what this meant in relation to the music that was being discussed. In some cases - such as the exchange between 'acacia' and 'laughingbandit' - these resistive practices took the form of interpretive differences that were resolved through mutual cooperation, but in others, such as the responses offered by 'whatever', participants continued to resist the interpretive readings offered by others, be they audience members ('Man with Feathers') or critics (Mark Fisher). In this instance, resistance is not the sort of broad left-leaning approach we detailed with regards to the historical avant-garde in Chapter 2, but micro-level activities framed by individual engagement in classificatory practices. It will be useful to see if and how these small-scale resistive practices relate to wider concerns in the contemporary avant-garde and what connection this may have with the historical avant-garde. We will explore these debates and activities in Chapter 7.

To close by way of a summary, the contemporary avant-garde uses different forms of dialogue to classify and codify aspects of cultural production and delimit that which is, and that which is not, hauntological. In doing so, boundaries are developed, redrawn and destabilized; genre distinctions are enacted through these interrelated processes, and this contributes towards an overarching metadiscourse of conventions, similarities and points of departure which are subject to continual negotiation by participant groups. In the next chapter we explore other facets of our case study that will demonstrate how hauntology is constituted through the interplay between classification and our other empirical concerns. This will involve an exploration of organizational structures - as well as spatiality and resistance - and how this relates not only to our case study but to the contemporary avant-garde more broadly.

Chapter 5 - Organization

5.1 Introduction

Organization can operate in a number of different ways, and in this chapter we will explore how organizational systems are constructed and utilized within our case study. In the previous chapter we detailed how participants classify and categorize hauntological culture using direct and indirect forms of dialogue to establish (and destabilize) genre boundaries; an antecedent issue with classificatory work are the sorts of organizational structures that facilitate these practices, by which we mean that the interplay of different social actors and cultural artefacts necessitates the development of systems of organization where the various aspects of a music culture can be stored, arranged, accessed and, ultimately, comprehended; organizational structures act as a locus for engaging with the (sometimes contested) features of a music culture. Our empirical focus relates to the ways in which participants develop organizational structures, and in relation to this, the research question we developed in Chapter 1 was 'how might we understand the organization of a contemporary avant-garde music culture' through our case study?

Before introducing our data, it is worth underscoring the fact that organizational systems are not unique to the contemporary avant-garde but can be seen across many music cultures; music cultures develop their own organizational systems as a way of connecting like-minded individuals together or combining specific practices with one another and, more generally speaking, can be read as a system for storing, accessing and comprehending different forms of cultural life (Burkart 2008). Organizational systems may be highly complex, involving large numbers of people with a variety of different musical preferences (see Savage 2006), or relatively small-scale, involving a handful of individual actors (see Crossley 2008), depending on the function they are required for. Here, we are discussing organizational systems in their broadest sense, and it will be necessary for us to limit our focus in this chapter so as to explore the details of the structures that operate within our case study; the use of specific examples will also enable us to understand how these indicative systems might be connected to our other empirical concerns; for instance, the processes associated with genre creation, which in the case of hauntology involved extensive forms of direct and indirect dialogue between

participant groups, may also require certain organizational systems to allow both the storage of and access to information and materials relevant to these sorts of practices. To continue our focus on participant-led data sites, this chapter will be split into two related discussions; the first half of the chapter will deal with organizational systems developed by artists and the second half of the chapter will deal with organizational systems developed by audiences.

To understand the ways in which artists construct organizational systems we will focus on the example of the record label Ghost Box. Initially, we will explore Ghost Box by using data crawling software to collect information from the label's website. A network map will be produced, and the connections between the different nodes on this map will be discussed to ascertain the relationships and significance placed on certain aspects of hauntological culture within this organizational system (so, for example, the potential importance of sales over dialogue with audiences). To reinforce or challenge our observations, network data collection will be augmented by primary interviews with one of the label founders. Secondary qualitative interview data will also be used to further bolster our argument and demonstrate the consistency, or otherwise, of our primary interview materials. A more detailed discussion of our data collection and analysis can be found in the next section.

Our exploration of the systems of organization created by audiences will also combine network analysis with interview data. We have already seen how audiences engage in genre creation via dialogue on message board threads and through social media, and organizational systems may offer a way of extending these forms of meaning-making. Expanding on the types of social media related to our case study, we will explore notable audience-led blogs. Blogs can be viewed not only as a type of dialogue, whereby individuals convey their opinions and ideas via textual discussion (we will expand on this definition in later sections) but also as an organizational system for collating information. Our intention, with regards to the use of blogs, is to consider them in terms of their relationship with 'the archive' - a site where the various facets of a culture (artefacts, for example) are stored and accessed - and how this sort of organizational structure may contribute to the metadiscourse and aesthetic boundaries we considered in Chapter 4.

As in the previous chapter, preliminary research revealed a number of sites that participants identified as contributing to wider discussions about genre

creation. The two blogs we will be exploring are foundObjects and The Hauntological Society (again, a discussion about the selection of these sites will take place in the relevant section of this chapter). In the case of the former, as with the Ghost Box label, we will use data crawling software to collect and thematically systemize the connections present on the site. From this we will be able to detail the cultural artefacts that this organizational system stores and allows access to and see how this relates to our other empirical perspectives. It is worth emphasising, in both cases, that our intention is not to create a complex diagram of organizational systems per se, but simply to discuss some of the unique or mundane features that participants foreground through their involvement in hauntological music culture. To broaden the discussion and triangulate our findings we will conduct primary interviews with another participant-identified blog - that of The Hauntological Society - in an effort to elaborate on how audiences members (specifically blog curators) view their involvement and engagement with our case study; in doing so, we will be able to compare and contrast alternative blogging sites, and chart the relationship between organization structures and the intentions of individual bloggers.

In terms of data analysis, we will approach our data in a number of ways, building on the assessment we outlined in Chapter 3. With regards to the analysis of artist-led organization structures, as we have suggested above, this will involve the creation of a network map based on the data provided by data crawling software. A combination of interpretive network analysis (whereby the connections and nodes on the network map are situated within the broader framework of the record label) and textual analysis of primary and secondary interview responses will be used. The analysis of audience-led organizational structures will also involve interpretive network analysis, but for practical reasons of legibility, data will be presented textually rather than as a network map, allowing for an associational thematic reading of these structures. Again, this will be bolstered by an interpretive textual analysis of primary interview responses.

There are three significant points to reflect on at this early stage. Firstly, as we detailed in Chapter 3, art worlds are made up of different participant groups, and in our own organizational schema we have defined these groups, after Becker (1982), as artists, audiences and critics; however, the creation of organizational structures - in tandem with classificatory work - potentially destabilizes our earlier

definitions of these groups. Organizational structures can be viewed as the direct outcome of the ways in which artists, audiences and critics decide to systematize or stratify different forms of culturally-relevant information. In the previous chapter we saw how one organizational system - Last.FM - codified, and subsequently represented, our case study via cumulative data in the form of textual descriptors, or tags. The classificatory work that contributed to this system, despite relying on a framework coded by the music recommendation service, was participant-led, and in this chapter we will see how participants develop their own organizational structures that contribute towards the sort of metadiscourse, or overarching aesthetic, we have observed so far. Part of this process will potentially involve problematizing the role of our participant groups. We saw in the previous chapter how audience members and critics contest their roles during direct dialogue, and with regards to organizational structures it is again worth considering that the differentiation between participant categories may become blurred as a result of multiple forms of engagement. This complicating of roles is given further weight if we return to Becker, who alongside the threefold separation we have discussed, also notes the overlap between roles such as that of the 'integrated professional' (1982: 228) and 'support personnel' (ibid: 77-82) - that contribute to the functioning of organizational systems within art worlds. Essentially, we are interested in understanding how the interrelationship between groups might impact the organizational logic of these systems.

The second point, building on this problematizing of roles, is that of the three groups of participants identified in the Chapter 3, critic-based organizational systems are largely absent from our data collection. In preliminary thematic analysis of relevant blogging sites, a relationship between audience-led and critic-led structures was observed, in that the functions of the sites operated by both groups appeared to be the same; rather than artificially imposing our participant categories, we will instead focus on audience-led blogs as indicative of those run by critics. This approach corresponds, to an extent, with Becker's discussion of aesthetics and the blurring of roles between participant groups; Becker uses the term 'aesthete' to describe those participants who develop the aesthetic boundaries of an art world (1982: 150-3), and in this sense both audiences and critics can be viewed as aestheticians. This is further reinforced by our findings in the previous chapter where we saw how in the classificatory process of signification, audiences and critics

are similarly engaged in aesthetic development; their overlapping roles, in terms of genre formation, suggest that any forced separation between the groups in an organizational sense would be arbitrary at best and misleading at worst.

Thirdly, in both instances, we acknowledge that our focus is on virtual - or online - organizational systems. In the previous chapter we explored how participant groups used different forms of dialogue to establish and destabilize genre structures; the sites where dialogue took place were exclusively virtual, comprising message board threads and social media sites. In this chapter, building on the links established in the previous chapter that situated these participant actions within virtual locations, we will consider how classificatory activities and practices are facilitated by organizational structures. Continuing to explore virtual sites enables us to make direct comparisons, connections and observations with the classificatory processes we have already detailed. This is not to suggest that non-virtual space does not have a role in organization, but rather that we will consider these tangible, physical spaces in the next chapter and critical distance is helpful in not muddying the water.

These explorations of organizational systems - one artist-led, the other audience-led - do not exist in a vacuum, so it is also important to acknowledge that what we are dealing with is a series of snapshots of the *kinds* of social activity that take place in and around these organizational systems. From this, we will attempt to piece together how these actions and structures relate to the broader features of art worlds, constituted by collaboration and the interrelationships between socio-cultural actors, cultural artefacts, and organizational structures.

5.2 Artist-led organization

The focus for this section will be on organizational systems created and maintained by artists and to this end we are focusing on the organizational structure of a record label. There are a number of reasons why we might want to look at record labels; firstly, record labels are a location where the sorts of aesthetic conventions we explored in Chapter 4 manifest alongside institutional structures, as artists are gathered together under a particular banner; secondly, as we have alluded to already, a record label offers a relatively stable structure where interconnections between artists can be observed (see, for example, Tschmuck 2009); thirdly, this combination of organizational system and the production of

aesthetic conventions locates the record label as a likely site where the sorts of cooperation and collaboration Becker discusses might take place. With regards to this final point, the interrelated features of an advanced art world - the mobilization of resources, as well as the production, distribution and selling of art - rely on the differing types of participant roles within organizational structures (1982: 83-7). Our intention then is to understand the role that artists play within the art world by examining the structures they create.

In the previous chapter we noted that some aspects of the narrative of our case study were rooted in examples of historical avant-garde practice, such as those of the B.B.C. Radiophonic Workshop; there is also an important contextual historical narrative to record labels, and the shift from physical releases of records to digital consumption is something worth reflecting on in terms of our case study. Traditionally, record labels and individual artists operated independently of one another with the arrangement between the label and musicians represented by a legal contract relating to the distribution and selling of their music as a cultural commodity; here the organizational structures of participant groups were kept separate and the ultimate aim of a label was making money and providing employment via the production and sale of records (Vandegrift and Matusitz 2011). To do this, as Hirsch suggests, record labels would set norms or 'institutional regulators of innovation' (1972: 649), where consumers of records would have *choice* but within parameters set not by individual artists but by the label itself. These sorts of practices date back to at least the 1940s, and establish a legal and distributive framework based on 'control over publishing rights, marketing and promotional power, and control of distribution networks' (Tschmuck 2003: 134-5), with individual artists having little agency within these organizational structures. The growth of the Internet, and changes in the way we interact with and consume music in a digital or virtual environment, can be read as an erosion of these frameworks (Rogers 2013). The development of digital ownership and distribution has enabled independent artists and labels to reach a variety of people in ways that a traditional record label may not have been able to; today, 'new forms of technologically driven production and distribution are fundamentally altering the music industry, structurally and spatially' (Hracs 2011: 442).

In this section we will use Ghost Box Records as a case study of a hauntological record label. Our exploration of Ghost Box will involve the use of data

crawling software to produce a network map of the record label website (see Figure 1, below). We are not intending to provide a detailed network analysis of the site, but rather to discuss some of the connections between the various aspects of the site and what they might say about the functionality of this kind of contemporary avant-garde organizational structure; we are using the information here to understand the micro-level features of the structure of the network. This is not to suggest that network analysis is unimportant, but that the way in which we intend to explore the connections - as indicative of relationships between hauntological cultural practices and people - is not further illuminated by the application of clustering coefficients and betweenness ratios. We will augment this data by looking at examples of individual pages as they appear on web browsers to understand their function on an aesthetic, as well as structural, level: here we are connecting organizational systems with our earlier discussions of aesthetic boundaries of genre. Finally, we will build on this discourse by comparing and contrasting the micro-level features we have observed with interview responses by the label owner, indicative of the macro-level functionality of the record label.

5.2.1 A hauntological network: Ghost Box Records

We have so far detailed the reasoning behind focusing on record labels, but it is worth spending a moment justifying our choice of Ghost Box Records over other labels. Although focusing on one example may appear reductive, there are a number of distinct advantages in spending time looking at one record label rather than attempting to offer a partial overview of a number of different labels.

PLAY NOW: The Advisory Circle - *Sundial* (excerpt)

Firstly, among the many micro-labels which release hauntological music, Ghost Box has been operating the longest - it began producing records in 2004 - the result of this being that the label has wider available data corpus for us to work with; conversely, a label that has operated for a relatively short period of time will have less data for us to work with which may limit the conclusions we can draw.

Secondly, in preliminary primary interviews with artists, Ghost Box was routinely discussed as an archetypal example of a successful network, a locus around which hauntological culture has developed. This sort of participant-led information

suggested that the label warranted attention; for instance, Ian Hodgson - a musician who would later become formally affiliated with the label - discussed how Ghost Box can be viewed as the primary reason for the perpetuation of hauntology as a recognizable genre: 'say if Ghost Box "folded" for some reason tomorrow, that would be pretty much it. I don't think anyone else carries the weight of interest' (Hodgson 2011). This corroborates a variety of other sources, not least our own observations in Chapter 4 where Ghost Box and its affiliated artists ranked in the top ten tags and artists on Last.FM. Similarly, from an academic perspective, Sexton's discussion of 'alternative heritage' uses Ghost Box as its case study, setting a precedent in this regard (2012). It is important then that we engage with this artist-led organizational system, as it is one that other participant groups and academic sources consider to be a crucial example of hauntological culture.

Figure 1, below, shows the network map for the Ghost Box label. The network map is also reproduced in Appendix 2 and on the website that accompanies this thesis, if a clearer (and scalable/zoomable) representation of the data is required. The map is constructed from information obtained via the data crawling program SocNetV. As with GaMuSo in the previous chapter, SocNetV is a freely available piece of software that operates on an open source license (Kalamaras 2013). The program 'crawls' a designated website, collecting a user-defined number of links between different webpages. Following this, an adaptive network map is produced, enabling the user to see the organization of a particular website. Nodes, which can be thought of as the individual pages that make up the site, vary in size depending on the number of links going to and from the page so, for example, the homepage will always be the largest node on the map as all other pages are connected to it. The map that SocNetV produces requires repurposing by the researcher as, although the raw data of links and nodes are represented by the program, the sheer number of connections makes the map almost unreadable. As such, the network map in Figure 1 has been thematically organized and colour-coded by the researcher to demonstrate the structures present within the network. It is also important to reiterate that, in line with the ethical guidelines highlighted in Chapter 3, an informed consent form was sent to the webmaster prior to data crawling to inform them of the activity and allow them the opportunity to refuse access if necessary.

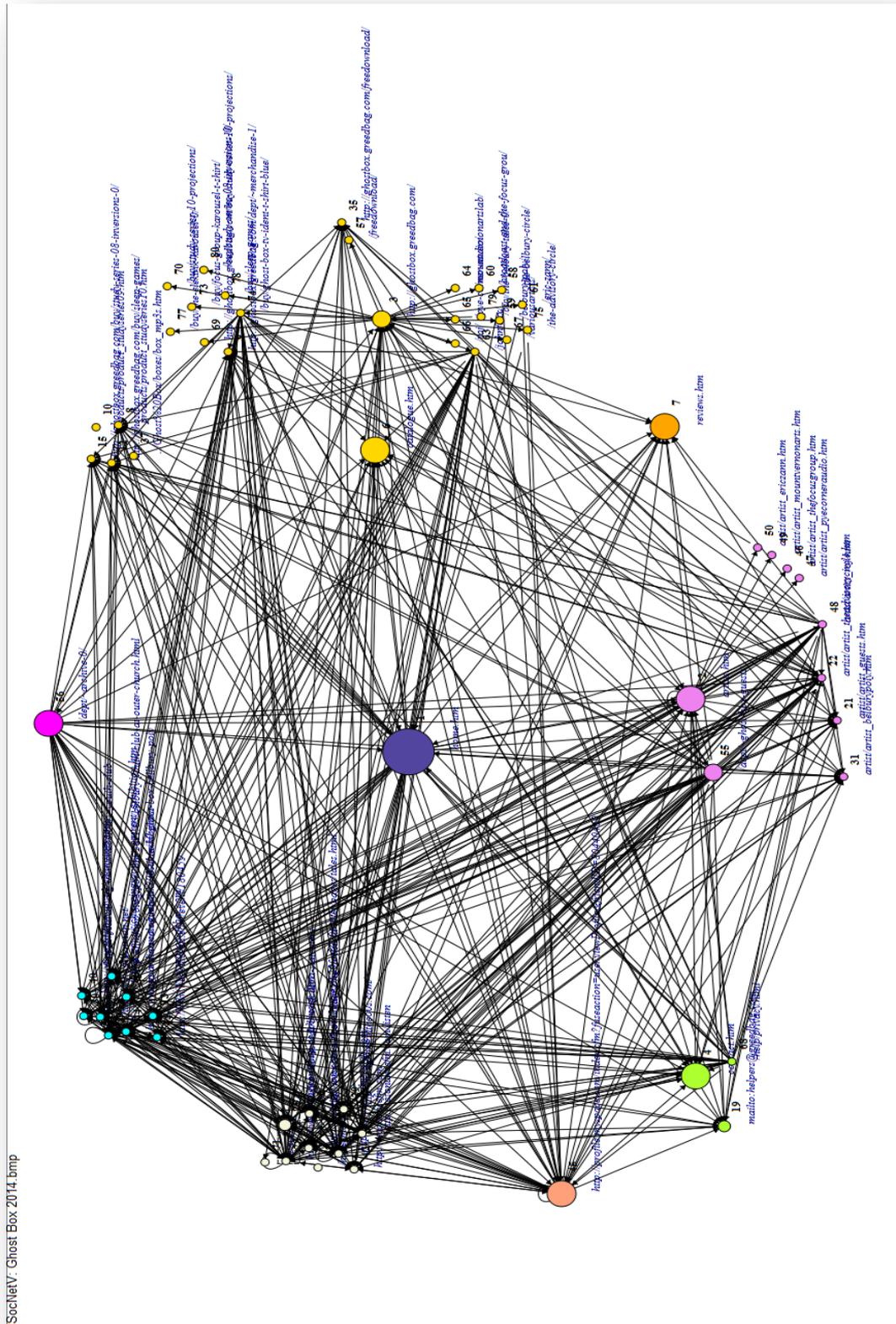


Fig.1 Ghost Box label network map

The network map shows a variety of different nodes connected to each other by lines which represent the links between pages; each of these lines indicates

a causal connection, so for example the central node - the home page - is linked to the yellow node - the shop - meaning that users can click a link on the label website that takes them from the home page to the shop. The central purple node, which represents the homepage, serves as a gateway to the rest of the site as well as introducing audience members to the aesthetic style typical of the label (we will return to this later in this section). The site has a relatively typical layout, where numerous links are connected to each other via a central hub or homepage, as well as through individual, thematically associated pages (Forte 2005). For instance, to the right of the network map, the yellow nodes represent the record label shop and the products sold through this page, despite having their own individual nodes, can be understood as being directly connected to the shop via their links to the page. The map has been organized thematically based on these links and nodes so, to take another example, the nodes representing artists such as Belbury Poly, the Focus Group and the Advisory Circle are thematically connected to each other through the 'artists' page and have all been given the same colour (pale pink) to represent this thematic association; this process was applied to all other links, giving eight thematic clusters around the central purple node of the home page.

If we move around the network in a clockwise fashion we see that the bright pink node at the top of the map is the site archive, and as such is necessarily linked to all of the other major nodes on the diagram; the yellow nodes are individual record releases, collaborations or merchandise and have been directly connected to the 'shop'; the orange node is the section of the website dedicated to 'reviews'; the pale pink nodes at the bottom are those artists directly associated with the label (Belbury Poly, The Focus Group and the like); the green nodes represent links where audience members can contact the record label; the beige node is the connection between the label's Myspace page and the rest of the site; the white nodes are external links (that is outward connections from the label) to other affiliated artists and arts organizations; finally, the turquoise nodes are similar external links to music events and installations.

There are a number of interesting insights into the features of an artist-led organization that can be gleaned from exploring this network map. Firstly, the greatest frequency of connections are between pale pink nodes, white nodes and turquoise nodes; these represent the connections between artists signed to the label, artists affiliated with the label and external events and organizations. This

suggests that one of the main functions of the label, as represented by this structure, is the maintenance of relationships between these groups of actors. From this, we might imply that in this artist-led network, some form of cooperation and collaboration is facilitated, as evidenced by the relationship between individual artists signed to the label and artists who are affiliated with the label. This echoes - albeit in a tentative sense - the sort of interdependency between artists and wider participant groups in the art world framework Becker (1982: 77-81) discusses. It is, of course, problematic to draw too bold a conclusion from a single example, particularly one which does not demonstrate agency per se, but it is indicative of the sorts of relationships that the label foregrounds through organizational association, and this is something worth considering in later primary interviews.

Secondly, building on this observation, if we turn to the pale pink 'artists' cluster, we can see that one of the larger nodes - that is one with a comparatively large number of inward and outward connections - is made up of 'guests'. Guests are artists who are not label mainstays, but work with other artists who are. Their prominence in this network map reinforces the potential for interdependence and collaboration, or at the very least demonstrates that the label highlights their relative importance, or the frequency of their appearance, by featuring guests prominently on their site. Having said this, a further observation would be that these connections are variable in frequency, in the sense that some artists have a greater number of links than others and can therefore be viewed as being more significant in terms of this relative weighting. To elaborate, there are three artists at the bottom of the network map represented by pale pink nodes. These three artists - Belbury Poly, The Advisory Circle and Roj - have a variety of links stemming to and from them, but other artists, such as Mount Vernon Art Labs, Pye Corner Audio, The Focus Group and Eric Zann have fewer connections; there are several potential reasons for this. If we explore the label website itself, we see that Belbury Poly and The Advisory Circle are by far the most active artists signed to the label; for example, they have the largest number of cultural artefacts available in the shop and have been relatively active in terms of live performance work. Mount Vernon Arts Lab and Eric Zann, on the other hand, have comparatively few releases and do not perform live, so the lack of internal and external connections may be explained by this. Similarly, Pye Corner Audio performs live but - at the time of writing - is a new signing to the label and features on comparatively few releases. Although Roj is in a similar

position, he is a former member of the band Broadcast (a group affiliated with the Warp label), and this may explain the number of connections he has external to the site. The Focus Group, operated by label founder Julian House, is the anomaly here as they have a number of releases on the label but the lack of connections may be explained by a lack of live performances. Ultimately, what we see is that the prominence of artists is dependent on a number of factors, but that 'guests' – as the largest cluster - are foregrounded within this, potentially forwarding the importance of collaboration.

Thirdly, there are a large number of links related to the sale of cultural artefacts (the yellow nodes), suggesting that a primary function of the label is commerce; this may seem like an obvious point, but it is indicative of a departure from perceptions of the avant-garde as antagonistic towards commodification, as we noted in Chapter 2. The primary shop node has a wide variety of inward and outward connections, which includes artists, affiliated artists and external organizations. This not only indicates the significance between those internal and external to the label but also the importance of sales of products.

Building on this observation, we can see how the commercial and aesthetic aspects of the label intertwine by moving away from the network map, and looking at the features of the site as it is presented to audience members. The primary sales platform Ghost Box uses is the 'greedbag'. Greedbag is described by its makers 'the51stateconspiracy' as 'a customizable free e-commerce solution' for 'record labels, artists and managers' and is utilized by '600 independent labels' (State 51 2013); here we see a digital example of the elements of an art world which 'provide[s] distributions systems which integrate artists into their society's economy' (Becker 1982: 93) and the burgeoning role of the integrated professional (ibid: 228-33): unlike the system of ownership discussed earlier where individual artists and record labels were kept separate, this particular example shows how artists are increasingly central not just to the production of cultural artefacts, but also to the development and maintenance of systems of distribution, with Greedbag operating under instruction from the label itself.

Continuing our combination of analysis from the network map and label website, in relation to our discussions in the previous chapter, we can also see from the home page of the label how aesthetic characteristics are presented to the audience, building on the classificatory framework discussed in the previous chapter.

The front page (Figure 2, below) reveals a variety of links to other sections of the site on the left-hand side including 'Artists', 'Shop', 'Contact' and 'Look&Listen' (the implication of the latter is that visual and aural art share similar ground in the Ghost Box aesthetic), with the majority of the page taken up by a scrolling news feature that effectively archives events and releases when it is updated. There is also a very brief 'About' style section, where the label is described as being 'for a group of artists exploring the musical history of a parallel world'.



Fig.2 Ghost Box Records website home page (Jupp and House n.d.)

What we see is the confluence of a number of rhetorical devices - graphics, descriptions, and lettering - within the organizational structure of the label, which draws the audience in whilst simultaneously demonstrating the aesthetic parameters of Ghost Box. Alongside this, the commercial importance of the site is further strengthened by the aforementioned scrollable news function, which foregrounds new releases as news items that are prominently featured on the front page of the label website. Ultimately what this shows us is that this contemporary avant-garde record label combines classification through aesthetic parameters and distinctive artistic styles, with an economic relationship with audiences, where a variety of commodities, produced by artists either signed to the label or tangentially connected with the label, are sold to audiences through the site's framework.

What does this analysis tell us more broadly? It demonstrates that contemporary avant-garde record labels may serve the function of selling cultural commodities, but that unlike previous arrangements between artists and record labels, the artists are themselves involved in the associated processes of commerce through marketing (the aesthetic feel of the site) and distribution (the use of Greedbag); they are the integrated professionals of this art world. A further collaborative function of the site is that in the purchase cultural artefacts, participants have to engage with what Becker terms 'intermediaries' (1982: 93); in the case of Ghost Box the intermediary is an online shop platform operated by the label but designed and maintained by State51. To engage with the label, and hauntological culture more broadly, negotiation - on the part of artists and audiences - through these intermediaries is required.

However, there is only so much we can observe from the network map and the website itself. We are yet to explore - except through the links we have noted on the network map - the intentions and agency of participants involved with the label, and how their actions impact the development and maintenance of a record label as an organizational structure. In the next section we will draw predominantly on primary interview material to explore some of these issues, augmenting our discussions with secondary interview material where necessary.

5.2.2 A hauntological network - Interviews

Having explored one aspect of the label through the nodes and links on the network map, it is important that we build on this analysis by considering other forms of data in an effort towards developing a more robust and rounded picture of the purpose of this artist-led organization. Although the connections between different nodes illustrates some of the connections present in the network they do not tell us about the reasoning or decision-making aspects associated with participants. In this section we will explore these issues by considering primary interview material from interviews conducted with Ghost Box co-founder Jim Jupp, who alongside running the label performs as Belbury Poly and Eric Zann.

In an effort towards reinforcing our findings, we will compare and contrast these responses with secondary interview material where this is deemed necessary. The primary interviews were conducted with Jupp via email in June and July 2011;

any secondary interview data will be referenced as such, and will be from publically accessible sources.

PLAY NOW: Eric Zann - *Threshold* (excerpt)

The initial questions in the primary interviews - which were semi-structured and loosely based around the empirical themes of this project - involved a consideration of how record labels function in a digital age. When asked about the difference between the physical and virtual aspects of the label, Jupp said that

the online presence [of the label] is simply a window into our world, and all the various aspects of it are really just what's become an essential part of marketing for any kind of creative endeavour, we don't rely on PR agencies, pluggers and managers so we have to push all our work ourselves through blogs and social media (Jupp 2011).

In this response, Jupp alludes to the broader art world of which he and his label are a part and, crucially, acknowledges the mutual involvement and relationships that form when the artists affiliated with the label become involved in the wider operations and organization of Ghost Box. As well as producing art works, here artists are expected to become involved in marketing roles as well. Jupp also appears to contrast the approach of Ghost Box with that of other labels, reinforcing his independence as part of an artist-led organization in contrast with the traditional models of ownership and legal frameworks we detailed at the start of this chapter (despite commerce appearing to be a crucial factor, as demonstrated on the network map). Significantly, Jupp identifies this integration as 'an essential part' of what Ghost Box and affiliated artists do; if we think back to the website network map, the connections between external organizations and Ghost Box make more sense in this context, as the nodes linking to external organizations may not simply represent spaces where art can be experienced, but also potential marketing locations and opportunities (festivals, radio programmes and the like). Following on from this, Jupp discusses the importance of the website in terms of the label and the artefacts connected to it.

Its perhaps all a bit tawdry [the website] and blows some of the mystique of a mysterious electronic music label, but I like to think

our main website lives up to the purity of intent of our physical releases - and is by common agreement among us the only really official online Ghost Box presence and accordingly we keep it fairly impersonal (Jupp 2011).

There are two interesting aspects to this response, namely the suggestion of mutual cooperation and the dynamic between the functionality of the label and its aesthetic principles. In the case of the former, Jupp talks of a 'common agreement', the implication being that the consistency of message is maintained centrally by cooperation between social actors, in this case artists. However, this could be seen as problematic, as in other interviews artists signed to Ghost Box have discussed the aesthetic dissimilarities between music styles on the label, which implies some form of tension (Stannard 2010). Consistency of message then might be hierarchical, with the label founder's rhetoric imposing certain restrictions on artists, yet this seems at odds with other primary and secondary interviews (including Hodgson 2011; Turner 2013) where there is no suggestion of this sort of top-down control, so instead might speak to a more complicated classificatory process than Jupp reveals in these responses.

In the case of the latter, Jupp discusses the conjunction of aesthetics and the function of the website as a sales platform. The mention of the impersonality of Ghost Box's web presence may serve to maintain some kind of critical distance between individual artistic intent and audience interpretation or understanding. What Jupp calls 'purity of intent' can be read as the communicative potential of an artefact, where artists and audiences engage in the same sort of meaning-creation, which is contested or reconfigured, as we noted in the previous chapter.

Later in the interview, Jupp says that the website is 'probably a neater and more appropriate window on our world and what we're trying to convey than interviews and press' (Jupp 2011). Here we see that artists are able to identify, if only tacitly, the different roles social actors occupy in this art world. The communicative strength of the website, and the potential for commonly agreed aesthetic values means that critical voices are, to an extent, cut out of the arrangement, with artists able to directly convey meaning - via their cultural artefacts - to audiences. With interviews and press coverage, the central aesthetic message may be affected by the critic's interpretation (or in our case that of the 'researcher'), whereas the label site offers a space where content can be controlled. The contradiction here is that when we return to the network map we

see that reviews by critics are included as part of the label site which appears to undermine the 'purity of intent' argument. The balance struck is between the role of the critic as destabilizing the aesthetic integrity of the label, and the role that the inclusion of positive review material might play in marketing the label.

More broadly speaking, the balance between aesthetics and the selling of products is clearly a recurring issue. Marketing the label may require the sort of 'mystique of...mysterious electronic music' Jupp suggests, but this is countered by the way in which the interconnectivity of digital media might 'blow the mystique' of the endeavour, enabling audiences easy access to the once hard-to-locate cultural markers associated with the label; overall though, Jupp appears to acknowledge that the balance the label has struck appears to work, noting that the site is 'an ideal way for us to present our all at once 50s-70s world to someone who's not yet heard the music or seen our record covers' (Jupp 2011). Furthermore, the label as a commercially-focused organization clearly requires the sort of interconnectivity facilitated by new digital media platforms. Jupp feels that

it would be daft not to acknowledge we can only do what we do and reach our very niche, yet globally scattered audience because of the internet. We started at an exciting time in the early 00s when hobbyists were becoming DIY labels and gradually turning professional. No need for expensive PR people, adverts, distributors or any of the paraphernalia formerly needed to release records (ibid 2011).

This echoes Jupp's earlier point about increased independence and artistic freedom, not simply in relation to the artefacts produced by the label, but wider factors around the maintenance of Ghost Box as a viable business; ultimately 'its [sic] born out of a DIY mentality', with success or failure the responsibility of the artist themselves. Whilst acknowledging this increased freedom, Hracz argues that this sort of flexibility may lead to instability, as DIY musicians see their typical workday 'chopped up into tasks which are often spread across space and musicians struggle to find the time to write new songs, maintain their online storefront, apply for grants, book shows and promote their products' (2013: 6). In the contemporary avant-garde the work of the artist is not solely the production of art, but ancillary processes of maintaining organizational structures which facilitate the former. Moreover, the shift to a physical/digital format of record releases has meant that the role of the artist into the production process at every stage; whereas the

previous framework kept the artist at arms-length from these processes, this separation of roles is no longer possible. While enabling greater freedom and control for the artist, or groups of artists, it also increases the level of responsibility and the amount of non-art based work needed to maintain organizational systems.

This again ties in with the notion of the integrated professional. Becker suggests that integrated professionals can be viewed in a variety of ways - as problem solvers, producers and so forth - but that there is always the potential for crises to emerge where private and collective interests collide (182: 239-30); the fact that Jupp, in collaboration with other artists, aims to keep the site 'fairly impersonal' appears to be an attempt to avoid these sorts of complications, or mediate the outcomes through the guise of 'common agreement', even if this is more of an aim than a practical reality.

Building on this, a further point of note is that the involvement of the artist in a number of different aspects of cultural production - from composing music, to mastering, marketing and distribution - destabilizes the delineation between participant groups. We saw in the previous chapter how audiences attempted to destabilize potentially hierarchical relationships with critics through direct dialogue and, in this instance, artists appear to destabilize their own roles rather than conforming to any external mandate.

Becker offers a useful definitional example of this sort of destabilization. He notes that art worlds, as collaborative sites of sociocultural involvement, rely on support personnel to function effectively, support personnel being other participants who are commonly - but possibly inaccurately - delineated from artists by virtue of the fact that they do not produce the 'real work' that artists do (1982: 77), but contribute in other ways, through managing resources to distribution and marketing. Taking into account the problems implicit in oversimplifying the complex roles of different participants groups we see that in our case study a separation between the 'artist' and 'support personnel' is destabilized as artists increasingly adopt the role of support personnel, so as to maintain control over both art work and the chain of production and distribution; as Jupp explains, there is no PR department, or music managers, just the artists themselves. Despite State 51 acting as a distribution site for Ghost Box Records, we can infer from these interview responses that this platform facilitates - rather than reduces - the involvement of artists affiliated with the label, and was adopted as a result of its

malleability. From this the implication is that to keep control over the aesthetic output of the label those artists affiliated with Ghost Box occupy the majority of the support personnel roles themselves. What this means is that the hauntological art world, whilst highly developed in terms of the multitude of rhetorical roles participants play in classification, is relatively narrow in terms of support personnel.

The outcome of this is that collaboration and cooperation between groups - even if this takes the form of contestation - is vital as the continuing operation of these organization structures is predicated on the involvement of a small number of active agents. To maintain itself, a record label such as Ghost Box is reliant on an audience base whose continued involvement allows the label to continue functioning.

It is also worth considering the role production plays in the functionality of the label and broader aesthetic concerns, as this unites organization and classification. Jupp's idea of 'purity of intent' clearly extends to the reasoning behind the production of certain types of artefacts, as he attests. Despite being a digital platform, and offering digital releases, Ghost Box augments this form of production with physical releases in the shape of CDs and, increasingly, vinyl. As seen in secondary interview material, in terms of digital releases, 'download music is great and its [sic] nice to be able to grab stuff quickly and cheaply on demand, but popular music divorced from its physical and visual context is somehow a pale shadow' (Hood 2010). Although it is a key pillar of the commercial side of the label, physical releases are still important; the question is whether or not this is an aesthetic decision or a financial one, as the physical products can of course be sold for a greater return than digital counterparts. Jupp goes on to explain that

the fidelity arguments about CD versus vinyl are well worn and I think it depends on the kind of music you're listening to. I think classical and acoustic music are far far better on CD and electric and electronic music are much nicer with all the warmth and artifacts of vinyl (Hood 2010).

In the above quote we see that a tangible *aesthetic justification* is being made - that the label has decided the way in which artefacts can be consumed - with artists recommending what to listen to as well as ways of listening. This secondary interview material therefore corroborates primary interview responses, where aesthetic choices are considered vital to maintaining not only purity of

intent, but also rhetorical control over the way the label is understood by those external to it. Returning to the specifics of the production of cultural artefacts, what is to be made of the argument that labels may increasingly push physical products because the financial returns are more lucrative? Jupp explains that demand is rising from manufacturers *and* audiences, a bottom-up rather than top-down understanding of the demand for bespoke releases (Hood 2010). With these primary and secondary responses, we are choosing not to make latent assumptions about how candid this admission might be; ultimately, even if untrue, what we are seeing is the continuing potential for ambiguity between art as an endeavour and art as a saleable product, a dichotomy which might be particularly problematic in terms of the contemporary avant-garde and its relationship with the revolutionary fervour of its predecessors.

To summarize, the Ghost Box record label demonstrates a number of important functions with regards to artist-led organizations in the contemporary avant-garde. By combining interview material with our analysis of the network map, we have been able to show how the label foregrounds particular aesthetic choices as crucial aspects of collective 'creative endeavours'. This is combined with a commercial arm where artefacts are not simply produced as part of a critical dialogue about art, but as a series of saleable items, making Ghost Box similar to more traditional notions of the record label. Unlike traditional record labels however, the maintenance of this organizational system is artist-led (with the interjection of occasional intermediaries such as State 51) facilitated by new digital platforms, even if their primary function is to offer a way of purchasing physical commodities. Potentially there is a tension in balancing the aesthetic with the commercial, but the demonstration of mutual cooperation in interviews with Jupp offers an insight into how this might be managed in the art world. Moreover, in a shift away from Becker's albeit problematized delineation between those producing art and those making art saleable (1982: 77-8) participant roles are expanded in this scenario, with artists operating not only as integrated professionals, but also as their own support personnel, involved in manufacture, distribution and marketing. This shows us that through the development of their own organizational structures, the role of artists in our case study extends beyond the production of cultural artefacts to a variety of other roles that destabilize simplistic readings that reduce participants to those who produce and those who consume.

Furthermore, these activities run parallel with processes of classification. In the previous chapter we noted a clear causal relationship between textual descriptions of music and the Ghost Box label via the practice of tagging (a form of indirect dialogue). We saw relationships between Ghost Box label artists such as Moon Wiring Club and Belbury Poly and tags such as 'uneasy listening' and 'radiophonic workshop'. The aesthetic choices made by Jupp and the label with regards to the way in which their cultural output is represented - such as the description of their music as 'mysterious' - is therefore allied with these sorts of codifications where textual and visual signifiers are connected to particular pieces of music. This is further reinforced when looking at the specific style and design of the website which establishes a clear, artist-led aesthetic. Where audience members engage in these practices via message board threads and social media, artists use organizational structures, such as record labels, to contribute to this broader metadiscourse.

Building on these ideas, in the next section we will see how audience-led organizations explore aesthetics, and engage in contemporary forms of meaning-making and knowledge creation through the organizational systems they have developed.

5.3 Audience-led organization

In the previous chapter, we noted how audiences and critics classify hauntological culture by comparing certain facets of different artists to each other (be that in terms of aural, intertextual or thematic similarity). While contestable, this involved the construction of aesthetic parameters based around both contemporary and historical examples. For instance, in the direct dialogue on message board threads, we saw how participants on the Dissensus board named the Nineties electronica duo Boards of Canada as an important cultural touchstone (the band are also name-checked elsewhere by Jupp as the inspiration for elements of Ghost Box [Hood 2010]). In terms of indirect dialogue on Last.FM, we noted that hauntological music was compared to that of the B.B.C. Radiophonic Workshop alongside the composer Olivier Messiaen, who also featured prominently in the tag cloud. These examples are useful because they demonstrate how a nascent historical narrative can develop that situates contemporary practice within a broader musical lineage, establishing a kind of origin story in the process. As we saw in the previous section,

this type of meaning-making - through processes of classification - may be reinforced when allied to certain organizational structures. Ghost Box codified relatively stable aesthetic boundaries because their particular system is largely closed off to audiences, with aesthetic stability predicated on controlled access, the domain of the integrated professionals who maintain the label outside of the forms of dialogue we have considered so far. Those audiences and critics who are also engaged in the codification of aesthetic boundaries are therefore required to create their own organizational structures in an effort to codify culture from their own perspective, one where despite potential contestation, they have authority over what is presented. Alongside the social media systems we explored in the previous chapter - message board threads and Last.FM - blogs are an important site where audiences are able to contribute to the aesthetic boundaries of hauntology through mediated by organizational structures.

Simply put, blogs are an updatable type of online diary, enabling people to discuss their lives and interests via an easily-editable virtual platform. They usually consist of a small number of principle users, with non-principle users contributing to individual blog posts in the form of a comments section (Chang and Yang 2013). In terms of the practices we have already explored, blogs represent an additional site of dialogue, not entirely dissimilar to message boards. In relation to music cultures more widely, it has been suggested that - perhaps in the same way that the Internet has enabled new forms of artist-led organization - blogs represent a new form of audience-developed publication, not unlike 'zines' (Lymn 2013). In this section we will consider the role that two prominent hauntology-related blogs play, and how audience-led organizational structures such as this destabilize the role of the audience whilst simultaneously codifying and classifying music culture.

An important question to address at this stage is why we might conceptualize the blog as an organizational structure? In this respect, Eichhorn (2008) offers some useful reflections here, locating blogs as a digitized form of archival work, again not unlike the zine. In the first instance the formatting of blogs demonstrates a default form of organization in terms of chronologically dating of entries. In the second instance, Eichhorn suggests that 'blogs are both products of collecting and ordering (archival practices) and reflect common understandings of authorship, intellectual property and subjectivity' (1). They are curated collections that '...serve either exclusively or partially as records of readers' engagements with

other texts. They may also be read as templates of technologies that offer readers a means to organize information' (8). Here we begin to comprehend their broader organizational function; blogs are a user-led way of systematizing and sharing information. Eichhorn expands on this, explicitly connecting blogging - in this case in relation to literary texts - to archival processes:

Like the archive, they simultaneously function as sites of storage, methods of information management, and semi-public spaces where readers dwell amongst texts. And like the archive, they are far from neutral - these *authored* collections engage in the construction and circulation of narratives, even when they appear to serve as mere compilations of existing textual fragments and links (ibid).

This conjunction of subjectivity and technology situates blogs as sites of knowledge creation, with accompanying processes communicated and shared in the public realm. This not only connects blogs with other forms of archiving, but also ties these organizational systems with the sorts of categorizing and classification we explored in the previous chapter, as the user, or author, contributes their own perspective. The connection with authorship, as Eichhorn suggests, is important and worth considering particularly in relation to the notion of authorship or authored work as this relates to Derrida's writings on archives. In *Archive Fever* (1996), Derrida offers an etymological excavation of the word and its origins that is worth quoting at length:

The meaning of "archive," its only meaning, comes to it from the Greek *arkheion*: initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the archons, those who commanded. The citizens who thus held and signified political power were considered to possess the right to make or to represent the law. On account of their publicly recognized authority, it is at their home, in that place which is their house (private house, family house, or employee's house), that official documents are filed. The archons are first of all the documents' guardians. They do not only ensure the physical security of what is deposited and of the substrate. They are also accorded the hermeneutic right and competence. They have the power to interpret the archives (9 -10).

Derrida views the archive, through its etymological roots, as a curated repository, where the 'archons' have the power to interpret the information stored

within; they are, effectively, the authors of the archive, and the agents of knowledge creation.

The contemporary archive in the form of the blog, much like the conceptual one, is also based on classification and curatorial involvement, but it is worth noting that the two are not necessarily synonymous. Digital archives are considerably different to the kind of document-based archive outlined by Derrida (Gane and Beer 2008). Rather than a simple repository of written documents, the archive can now be viewed as a networked structure which enables ‘...the storage, retrieval and accelerated communication of unprecedented amounts of data’ (71) between numerous sites. Accessing, engaging, creating, searching, adding and sharing: all of these archival activities are part of the social processes of involvement and belonging that are increasingly demonstrated online via public interactions with blogging. Rather than one site, one ‘publically recognized authority’, the power or control of the archive is potentially more diffuse. In the next section, we will look at an example of a hauntological blog, and see if we can understand this shift to an ostensibly more democratic structure in relation to both archival ideas and classificatory processes.

5.3.1 The hauntological archive - foundObjects

Before considering the specifics of data collection and analysis in relation to our case study, we need to think about the crucial issue of how we go about conceptualizing the audience-led structures provided by these blogs, particularly in light of the discussions on the archive from the previous section.

The contemporary archive, now seemingly divorced from the traditional notion of a physical repository of documents, is something which has received little in the way of meaningful discussion, outside of the work of Featherstone (2000; 2006) and, more recently, Beer and Burrows (2013). In relation to digital archives - our primary site of enquiry - Beer and Burrows identify four components of what they term ‘popular culture archives’ - namely *profiles*, *linkages* or *data intersectionality*, *metadata* and *play* (50) - and these perhaps offer us a way of understanding the data we have collected on audience-led blogs. Briefly put, a *profile* is the site of an individual’s data accumulation, or the ‘case-based instances in which data is accumulated’ (4); this could take the form of a Facebook page or an avatar. *Linkages*, or *data intersectionality* can be thought of as

the connections that form between people and things as a consequence of data harvesting and mining, or through the connections made between people and things as they search and browse pre- and self-organized content (50).

These linkages can happen automatically, as the result of an algorithm, or they can happen as a result of the agency of users, based on mutual understanding and decision making; we have already seen an example of these types of linkage in the previous chapter, where interactions mediated by Last.FM demonstrated both the agency of participants in relation to tagging, and the algorithmic work of the overarching music recommendation service in suggesting similar sound artists to participants.

Building on Kitchin and Dodge (2011), Beer and Burrows explain how, by considering linkages between data, it is possible to understand broader assemblages, whereby data moves between archives and 'archives feed into one another' (2013: 50). *Metadata* can be thought of as the ways in which archives are organized in an overarching sense, so in the case of sites such as Last.FM, this is typified by tags being applied to particular artists and music to assist in categorization; this parallels, to some extent, the processes towards a metadiscourse we detailed in Chapter 4. Finally, *play* might be thought of in terms of 'how people generate and create data both actively and passively through their engagements with popular culture, as they have fun and as they find and consume stuff' (51); again, the practice of tagging can be considered a form of play.

Building on this taxonomy, Beer and Burrows apply these contributory types to different forms of cultural archive. The first form of archive - the 'transactional' - is something we can discount in the context of audience-led blogs; these archives tend to be commerce-led, with the emphasis on the audience consuming cultural artefacts in an economic sense. This sort of platform perhaps suggests similarities with Ghost Box, but is not represented in audience-led blogs where the accumulation and sharing of information appears to be the primary driver for engagement.

The second form of archive is the 'everyday'. These archives are concerned with the 'accumulation of data afforded by prosumption practices with an elective affinity to Bauman's "confessional society"' (54). The audience-led blogs we are considering focus on specific aspects relating to our case study and, on the face of it,

are not concerned with the everyday aspects of people's lives. However, it is worth bearing in mind that as part of the technical framework of blogs, connections to other participant's personal blogs are a possibility and therefore the everyday should not be entirely discounted.

The third form of archive - the viewpoint/opinion archive - is primarily constituted through blogging and/or micro-blogging, where individual bloggers use the platform to express their opinions on a variety of topics. Beer and Burrows discuss viewpoint/opinion archives in relation to celebrity culture, but the associated practices of viewpoint/opinion archives can clearly be extended to music cultures where posting and commenting on a wide variety of related cultural artefacts forms the backbone of innumerable music websites, as well as print magazines and their online counterparts (in our case, see, for example, *The Wire*, *Fact Magazine* or *The Quietus*).

The fourth and final type of archive are crowd sourcing archives, 'products of often huge communal presumptive effort on the part of participants', collecting together and connecting a variety of informational resources with relevant cultural contributions, whilst facilitating scrutiny and debate (55-6). The information collected on these sites is often categorized by searchable metadata - a feature of many sites such as WordPress and Tumblr - which can be added to by users. Here ideas and content are connected together via strings of related textual descriptors; this category would potentially include Last.FM where we observed these practices taking place in Chapter 4.

Having sketched out the sorts of contemporary conceptual archives that blogs might conform to, we turn now to the specific examples we will consider in this section. Preliminary research into hauntological blogs determined that the number of related blogging sites was vast and, as with Ghost Box, selecting a suitable location would be important to increase the likelihood of a sufficient quantity of usable data; to this end, a blog called foundObjects was selected. This blog was chosen because it comprised a large corpus of publically accessible, searchable information - at the time of accessing there were 2180 individual posts - and had been running for 2 years. Alongside this, the blog had over 400 subscribed 'followers' (users who would receive an update whenever the blog owner added new material), which from a participant-led standpoint suggests that audiences feel that this site is significant enough to follow.

As with Ghost Box, foundObjects was subject to data crawling from SocNetV and from this a network map was generated and organized thematically; in line with the ethical guidelines highlighted in Chapter 3, an informed consent form was sent to the webmaster prior to data crawling to inform them of the activity. The network map is viewable in Appendix 3, as well as on the thesis website. The data was extensive owing to the number of individual posts and links on the site (far larger than the Ghost Box map), and connections to other blogs were by far the largest thematic group; in the final map, the information was organized so that blogs were omitted as although they were clearly important constituents of the organizational structure of the site, their inclusion made the network difficult to read and interpret. Our intention is to discuss thematic links in the first instance and return to discuss the significance of these additional blogs separately. The remaining connections on the network map were thematically organized into separate common groups, according to types of cultural form. These groups were then considered in terms of two overarching categories, namely 'externally defined' and 'internally defined'; these are presented in the table below (see Figure 3 below).

To expand on this thematic ordering, in line with our discussion in Chapter 3, the classification process for this data-crawled information operated as follows: in terms of separate common groups, the types of group were established by clustering similar themes together so, for example, different forms of music-related information were divided into groups with common attributes such as festivals, record labels and artists. These themes are presented in the left hand column of the table. The latter categories ('externally' and 'internally defined') constitute the central and right hand columns of the table, and cluster individual instances of these thematic groups in relation to whether or not each element has been considered hauntological at sites external to foundObjects (on message boards or critic's blogs for example) and those which have been deemed hauntological specifically by foundObjects, respectively speaking. For example, the *Electric Eden* website - which accompanies Rob Young's book of the same name - is not explicitly hauntological, but aspects of the book, such as Young's discussion of Ghost Box, have been deemed hauntological by participants on foundObjects; *Electric Eden* is 'internally defined'. Conversely, Ghost Box's website as we have seen, has been considered hauntological on other sites and is therefore defined 'externally'.

	Externally defined	Internally defined
Locations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - drinkinbrighton.co.uk - parksandgardens.ac.uk - walesonline.co.uk - burlingtonbunker.co.uk - wirelessmuseum.org.uk - southhillpark.org.uk - photos.shetland-museum.co.uk
Festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - avfestial.co.uk - flatpackfestival.org 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - andfestival.org.uk
Artists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cafekaput.blogspot.com - pyecorneraudio.wordpress.com - kemperton.bandcamp.com - mycatisanalien.com 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - blog.thequietman.co.uk - solidspacemusic.com - oldapparatus.org
Record Labels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ghostbox.co.uk - trunkrecords.com 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - broken20.com - lysergicearwax.com - yattix.com - pontone.pl
Critics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - warrenellismovie.com - k-punk.abstractdynamics.org 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - electriceden.net
Magazines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - phantomcircuit.wordpress.com - exoticpylon.com 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ubu.com - factmag.com - thequietus.com - loopsjournal.com - resonancefm.com - drownedinsound.com - dangerousminds.net - thisislondon.net
Activities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - totallyhaunted.co.uk - english-heretic.org.uk - hampshireghostclub.net
Artefacts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teacards.com - pulpartists.com - foundshit.com - thingsmagazine.net - broadcastforschools.co.uk

Fig.3 Table of foundObjects thematic connections

Following the separation of cultural forms in Figure 3, an additional table - Figure 4 - was also produced, for connections on the network map that represent forms of social media and media sharing. These links have been separated from the thematic associations in Figure 3 as, rather than being externally or internally related to hauntology, they instead offer a general platform to share or explore hauntological media. Combined, these two tables offer data about the sorts of

cultural information detailed on foundObjects and the ways in which that information is shared. We will also consider, as we did with Ghost Box, pertinent examples from posts on the blog itself.

So what can we understand by exploring the audience-led organizational system of foundObjects in light of Beer and Burrows (2013) conceptualizations of contemporary archives?

Firstly, in Figure 3, we see that the majority of the foundObjects archive is concerned with creating new connections and links with other forms of culture. Of the two columns the 'internally defined' column contains the majority of connections. When bloggers discuss cultural artefacts, those artefacts that are not already considered hauntological may become hauntological as a result of their incorporation. In this instance the blog acts as the organizational structure through which classificatory processes associated with the continued development of a hauntological aesthetic can be reinforced and codified; for the audience members who create these archives, cultural forms (be they locations, books, films) are shared with other audience members via their inclusion on the site and any dialogue that ensues (direct or not) determines whether this or that form is included or excluded. The relative frequency of links to other cultural forms on foundObjects suggests that this is one of the primary activities on this blog.

Secondly, in terms of data intersectionality, the data on foundObjects demonstrates that a wide variety of cultural forms are considered to be hauntological. There are connections to newspapers, television shows, and other artists who have perhaps not been considered as hauntological elsewhere (for example, the inclusion of Old Apparatus and Solid Space). This reinforces the aesthetic values of hauntology, the ongoing classificatory processes we observed in the previous chapter, and the importance of intertextuality, where the interrelationship between dissimilar cultural forms is significant in determining boundaries.

Some cultural forms are featured more prominently than others on foundObjects. Outside of individual blogs, the bulk of connections on the site pertain to music, so we see links to individual artists (both externally and internally defined), music magazines, record labels and music festivals. From this, we might surmise that music is considered the primary focus of the archive, augmented by other cultural forms which again reinforce the aesthetic, but in a less significant sense. This may

seem an obvious conclusion to draw, but is useful in establishing a hierarchy with regards to intertextual relationships between forms where music is given primacy.

Thirdly, we can see concrete examples that connect this blog with the contemporary concerns of 'every day' and 'crowd sourcing' archives. Here we are considering not only the links on the network map, but also individual posts on the blog itself. In terms of the 'everyday' archive, rather than reflecting an interest in the everyday aspects of people's lives, foundObjects appears to include material related to the everyday as part of a broader curatorial project; for example, the inclusion of housing projects and family photos are not included in and of themselves, but rather as thematically-relevant artefacts, further bolstering the aesthetic parameters of the hauntological. This suggests an adaptive archive that draws on some elements of the 'everyday' repurposing them as a hauntological forms.

There are also connections to 'crowd sourcing' archives in the way that information is organised. The various cultural forms discussed on the site are collated from elsewhere - predominantly from other websites - and reconfigured by foundObjects' curators. This speaks both to the role of the curator and the way that informational resources are connected between archives. There is also a collaborative aspect to this practice of collating pertinent information, evidenced in the authors tag for each post; foundObjects is not the work of one participant, but a co-operative effort on the part of a variety of bloggers (bollops, Keith Seatman, Objectophile, Dolly Dolly and Unmann-Wittering are some of the names listed). Their personal opinion, as per the definition of a viewpoint/opinion archive, is not explicitly stated in each post, but their selection and presentation of certain types of cultural artefacts suggests collaborative decision-making based on aesthetic considerations, but also an understanding of what is expected of the blog more broadly as a locus for hauntological information; in the process the collaborative nature of the art world is further reinforced.

The use of metadata offers us another way of understanding the classifying and organizing of information in this audience-led system. This archive operates as a collaborative centre of knowledge on the subject of hauntology, and ideas, artefacts and subjects are networked and interconnected via metadata as it is tagged by users on the blog, a process akin to that of Last.FM. To take an example of this in practice, posts on an artist like F.C. Judd (Seatman 2013) is tagged with 'music concrete' '1960s' and 'tape splicing', situating F.C Judd as hauntological, but within a narrative

of the historical avant-garde via the association with musique concrète; similarly music events such as those organized by Outer Church are tagged with ‘electronic music’, ‘folk music’ and ‘haunted’ (Outer Church 2012). The organizational structure offered by the blog facilitates classificatory practices with metadata enabling users to connect similar themes within hauntology, and augment their own understanding with that of others in relation to what is and is not considered applicable. Furthermore, when bloggers apply tags to individual posts, we see how indirect dialogue - such as that we explored in the previous chapter - is also manifest in this audience-led organizational system. This process of connection-building also ties into notions of *play*, where the links on the blog allows users to explore the origins of the cultural artefacts, further reinforcing aesthetic boundaries and historical associations through active participation.

These practices can be connected back to notions of direct dialogue as blogs like foundObjects allow users to comment on the connections that have been made as part of the technological framework of individual posts, so views can be shared and social bonds with other users can be established via the exchanging of opinions on different topics. This can be understood as a point of crossover between crowd-sourcing and viewpoint archives.

Media Sharing (Music)	- mixcloud.com - MediaFire.com - SoundCloud.com - myspace.com
Media Sharing (Video)	- vimeo.com - YouTube.com - video.google.com - stagevu.com
Social Media	- twitter.com - blogger.com - facebook.com - wikimapia.org - maps.google.co.uk - en.wikipedia.org - imdb.com
Newspapers	- telegraph.co.uk - independent.co.uk - bbc.co.uk - guardian.co.uk

Fig.4 Media sharing platforms

In Figure 4, the importance of sharing cultural forms is further reinforced through the prevalence of social media sites, which feature prominently in the network map. Twitter and Facebook are present, as are links to specific media sharing sites including YouTube and MediaFire where users can upload and share content with one another. This demonstrates the interplay between sharing opinions on the blog, and how the functions of the organizational structure can be used to facilitate the sharing of media. Earlier research into online communities, such as the P2 country-music community discussed by Lee and Peterson (2004) in Chapter 2, noted that an important facet of these emerging communities was the augmenting of online communications with real-world meet ups, where music could be exchanged in person; the presence of sites such as MediaFire and SoundCloud suggest that the function of sharing is still important, but that digital forms of exchange may have superseded the physicality of actual meetings; the relative infrequency of links to live music or festivals is also telling in this regard.

As discussed earlier in this section, individual blog links - that is the connections between individual users and foundObjects - form the majority of links to the archive. The initial network map (which was streamlined for legibility) showed that two thirds of all connections to foundObjects were from individual blog users. This suggests another feature of the viewpoint/opinion archive, where networks of blogs are formed through relationships predicated on mutual interest in shared topics. A problem here is that, from the network map at least, it is not possible to infer active or passive participation, simply that individuals are connected to the site in some way. If we look at the site itself, foundObjects lists hundreds of 'followers', but relatively few of these followers comment on individual posts; comments, for the most part, are sporadic, or confined to a small number of participants. This suggests that the notion of *play*, for a sizeable number of participants, is passive, enabling the exploration of material without any overt engagement with commenting or the public contestation of certain media forms, what Beer and Burrows term 'symbol communal engagement' (2013: 57). This also means that these blogs, despite some evidence of commenting by users, are sites of indirect rather than direct dialogue between audiences.

To summarize, foundObjects demonstrates a number of features of conceptual digital archives. The blog is the work of several collaborating users, and presents a variety of cultural topics and artefacts for either active or passive

discussion. The outcome of these 'inclusion or exclusion' dialogues is a constantly developing 'hauntological archive', which rather than simply being contained within this one site, is in fact the interconnected work of numerous participants and numerous sites. We might conceptualize this in relation to the metadiscourse we established in the previous chapter, where the cumulative effect of the various types of classificatory practices contributed to a broader hauntological aesthetic. Data intersectionality is demonstrated in the complex series of connections between cultural forms (including locations, music, pass-times, festivals and alike) and we see different forms of play in terms of the way audiences utilise material and choose whether or not to discuss certain ideas and cultural artefacts. Essentially, the function of this audience-led organization is to systematize cultural data, data which feeds into a wider, trans-archival metadiscourse that stretches beyond the confines of one blog to a variety of other related sites.

There are, however, some difficulties associated with exploring this type of hauntological archive. Firstly, the design of contemporary digital archives tends towards instability in terms of the constantly changing nature of the information that is presented. When combined with the options for audiences to edit or false-edit, the potential for individual posts to be compromised is great. Despite being continually updated, we should consider our investigations of the site to be a snapshot and we will need to augment this approach to triangulate our findings.

Secondly, assessing whether a participant is active or passive presents a challenge; although the network map shows that the majority of connections to foundObjects are from individual bloggers, their involvement is hard to accurately assess without a comprehensive analysis of each individual blog and post. Similarly, levels of interest may vary from topic to topic and from user to user. However, as we have suggested, participation is not necessarily the act of engaging in a dynamic - and direct - dialogue, but can also be achieved by passive consumption, solitary exploration and highly selective involvement. The intentionality of individual users is, therefore, something impossible to chart. This is a central problem related to this kind of network data; although we can use it to see the interconnections between topics, and the wider picture of how a hauntological archive is structured through data intersectionality, what we see is the organizational structure as part of a system of aesthetic construction, with the individual involvement and agency (or play) of other audience members difficult to accurately gauge. What we can say is that at

this site there are a variety of participants who engage in a diffuse number of ways. The hauntological archive demonstrates the flexibility of audiences, content, types of data and methods of play whilst attempting to codify this disunity through the establishment of a semi-coherent aesthetic. The end result is a site where forms of data are recontextualized and shared through new forms of social media.

A coeval concern is that although we can see what is presented publically, the network map and thematic tables do not offer explain *why* this information is presented or the ways in which material is selected. Earlier in this chapter we augmented our network map of Ghost Box Records with interview material, and in the next section we will expand on our understanding of audience-led organizations similarly by considering primary interview material related to this concern.

5.3.2 The hauntological archive - Interview

As with the artist-led organizational structures typified by the record label, it was important to enter into a dialogue with the people behind these blogs or archives in the hope of making visible the intentionality that was missing from the network analysis. Unlike Ghost Box records - our example of an artist-led organization - it was not possible to gain permission to interview the curators of foundObjects. In the interests of detailing a sufficiently broad range of data, it was felt that pursuing interviews with other blog curators was warranted; although this would not offer specific information related to our earlier example, it would enable us to draw conclusions based on multiple examples of audience-led organizational systems. As with foundObjects, a sufficiently large and regularly updated blog was identified - The Hauntological Society (henceforth THS) - and the webmaster was contacted to ascertain if he would be willing to engage in interviews. The primary interviews took the form of an email exchange over several weeks in the summer of 2011. They began with several set questions, but subsequently became a less structured conversation with questions stemming from the responses given.

In the last section we noted that the greatest frequency of connections on foundObjects were the blogs of other users - what we might conceive as an indicative hauntological audience - and that this audience is engaged in both an active and passive sense by commenting on individual posts, or by using the archive as a stepping-off point to explore wider notions of the hauntological. The dialogue between the author of a blog and the participants who choose to comment on posts

is undertaken in public, so the first questions put to Richard Lockley-Hobson, who runs THS, related to this:

What sort of people read my blog? Good question. For a while, I thought that any significant interest in the blog would never be forthcoming, then I did some searches on Google, etc. It seemed that more people than were prepared to admit it were taking an interest, with much being reposted. This included my personal blog; R/J/L-H (inc. on Simon Reynold's recommend list) and my Flickr account. A guilty pleasure? Soon after, I set up the Twitter account. This has drawn a more visible response. Now, here's where it starts to get interesting. A significant proportion of 'followers' on Twitter are from the media and education (Lockley-Hobson 2011).

This response demonstrates a number of interesting facets of data intersectionality, echoing what we saw in the previous section. Lockley-Hobson identifies the significance of new social media in connecting participants together and in enabling the sharing of information as suggested in the reposting of topics which may act as a process for solidifying or canonizing certain cultural connections as hauntological or otherwise.

Additionally, we can see a level of reflexivity with regards to the curator connecting with other audience members, as Lockley-Hobson actively explores the sorts of people and technologies used to engage with his blog. Twitter is seen as offering a 'more visible response', implying that dialogue via the comments section on THS is perhaps less frequently used, reinforcing the observation we made in relation to the apparent absence of direct dialogue on foundObjects. Through new social media, the author is able to interact directly with individual members, potentially negating the active/passive arrangement noted in the previous section. What we see then are alternative forms of communication interlinked through the archive, with different platforms enabling a variety of forms of interaction.

Although it is interesting to note that there are '...a significant proportion of 'followers'...from the media and education' we should be cautious about drawing conclusions from this statement; understanding meaningful connections between elements such as somebody's profession and their cultural interests via Twitter is difficult and prone to inaccuracy (Sharma and Ghosh et al. 2012). The important point here is that as the author or curator, Lockley-Hobson takes an active role in connecting with other audiences members and attempts to maintain a dialogue via a

number of different social media platforms, even if his assessment of the audience sometimes comes across as off-hand (in the sense that he views some audience members as unable to admit an interest in hauntology whilst still reading the blog).

Following on from this, Lockley-Hobson was keen to move the discussion towards the content of the blog, and the processes by which he decides what to include:

The selection process for THS is mixed [...] I often produce a series of interlinked posts, as I want to keep things as tight as possible. Interrelated subjects may follow each other, or, sometimes, less obviously interrelated subjects may reoccur, as and when. I never happened upon things at random, though it is an adventure. I have a storehouse of ideas, patiently waiting (Lockley-Hobson 2011).

In this response we again see a form of data intersectionality where connections are made between a variety of topics and artefacts. In terms of his own agency, Lockley-Hobson views himself as being in complete control in terms of the material that is selected for inclusion. This harks back in part to Derrida's notion of the archon, or the curator, who decides what can and cannot be seen (although the control over who sees things is clearly limited owing to the public nature of the blog). Lockley-Hobson is effectively returning the digital archive to its foundations, with the curator recognized as an authority figure, despite the flexibility and accessibility afforded the blog via new social media. It also suggests that, as with foundObjects, this blog conforms to aspects of the viewpoint/opinion archive, though this is refuted in a later conversation:

The question of content is a different story. Once I decide what the subject is, there is a period of research, so as to find information which best represents the subject. I avoid personal comment, as the selection process is personal enough. I consider my role with THS as a curator. It's not quite as simple as that, but that's the idea. I want very much to take my content from existing sources. However, I occasionally give a personal comment/introduction (Lockley-Hobson 2011).

There is the suggestion of tension here, between the role of the curator and the artefact, that in some sense the more personal the description the more an audience's interpretation might be occluded. Another important acknowledgment

is that no crowdsourcing appears to be involved in the selection and dissemination of materials. The same is also true of foundObjects: while having multiple authors, the information is not requested or mutually agreed upon by general consensus, but rather is selected (or 'found') by the minority on behalf of a larger audience, which offers a kind of parallel with the avant-garde as discussed in Chapter 2.

Lockley-Hobson also expands on the processes involved in posting to the blog, or adding to the organizational structure by choosing and researching a topic. This process demonstrates a level of commitment that extends beyond simply linking information together. However, aside from the occasional introduction, information is apparently presented *without* personal reflection. This approach is a 'detached overview', again an attempt at distancing the curator from aspects of the viewpoint/opinion archive, and also, potentially, the audience more generally (in the sense that the curator views themselves as somehow apart from the passive consumption of culture). The process is expanded on in a further interview:

Once I have the 'text' I require, my thoughts turn to audio/visual content. I try as much as possible to use my own audio/visuals. If a post features a book cover, I draw upon my vast (and much reposted) collection, or acquire something especially. I've used my own photographs, record-covers, etc. If I have to source from, say, the Internet, I take my time to find the best/most representative images. If I'm using audio, I usually use some I have/own, etc, then source from the Internet, if need be. That said, I sometimes have to tidy up/remaster material, and/or contact the owner of the audio, not for permission, but just to give them a heads up (Lockley-Hobson 2011).

There are a number of important activities here that enable the expansion of this organizational system. Firstly, the curator makes his own connections between the material on his blog and that of another site; he draws the links and expands the reach of the network. In contacting the owners of these sites 'to give them a heads up', Lockley-Hobson might be alluding to interdependence, or even tacit collaboration, between different cultural participants, echoing the mutual cooperation Becker cites as a feature of advanced art worlds (1982). However, this can also be read as a form of participant positioning. Earlier, in Chapter 4, we noted some disagreement over who is entitled to speak in a given situation, or, more accurately, who is allowed to codify aspects of the hauntological metadiscourse. We saw how some audience members identified critics as crucial in this process, and

how others vehemently disagreed with this position. In organizing information, the curator can play a considerable role in contributing to these sorts of classificatory processes we have observed, where artists are forwarded as 'belonging', and connections are made between disparate intertextual cultural artefacts. In the case of THS, Lockley-Hobson demonstrates how important a role he believes he plays in relation to the material he presents to audiences members. He says that he sometimes needs to 'contact the owner of the audio, not for permission, but just to give them a heads up'. Rather than an example of collaborative activity, what this shows us is that the curator self-identifies as more crucial to the metadiscourse than those who produce the cultural artefacts on which this metadiscourse is initially based. Lockley-Hobson sees himself as occupying a position where he does not have to ask permission, but does so merely as a courtesy. Through this we see the potential for destabilizing the delineation of artists, audiences and critics, as well as the problematizing of any hierarchical relationship between participant groups.

Secondly, aesthetic considerations are crucial, as was the case in the artist-led network. Finding the 'best/most representative images' facilitates the solidifying of aesthetic boundaries but also demonstrates the curators understanding of his position within the network of participants; he is not so much interested in presenting to the audience what they want to see, but rather what they should be interested in; while operating as a bottom-up form of engagement, here we see a form of positioning that attempts to construct a top-down organizational structure via the presenting of specific content.

Thirdly, the material offered by THS is sometimes the result of active processes of digitization, where the curator digitizes older media formats to share them through the blog. Lockley-Hobson mentions record sleeves and photos in this regard, showing that data intersectionality not only draws on links to online materials but also to physical objects which have not yet been included in the burgeoning archive; here we note the similarities between THS and foundObjects in terms of the inclusion of internally and externally defined cultural artefacts, where 'interrelated subjects may reoccur' (Lockley-Hobson 2011), as well as the relationship between the digital archive, and a tangible real-world archive of dissimilar objects. In doing so, the contemporary iteration of the archive is connected with the culture of tangible physical cultural artefacts that came before it.

These audience-led networks, in establishing bottom-up control over the aesthetic development of our case study, also destabilize traditional notions of participant roles. In this instance, audience members hold increasing sway over not only what can and cannot be considered part of the hauntological canon, but over how that information is subsequently stored, ordered, and accessed. As with foundObjects, THS demonstrates the constant development and maintenance of the contemporary archive. THS is regularly updated and expands through different kinds of mediated play and data intersections. A complete picture of all of these interconnections is not necessarily possible (owing to the developmental nature of these projects), but the insights gained from these interviews reinforces our understanding of the processes that take place in this particular audience-led organizational structure.

From what we have seen, audience-led organizations, in the form of blogs/archives, are concerned with detailing cultural forms as part of the process of codifying a specific aesthetic of hauntological art. The audience-led organization is primarily concerned with systematizing information, and presenting it in the public realm for discussion, which can take place either within the archive (through comments) or external to the archive (via Twitter for instance). Through these different forms of dialogue - and active and passive engagement - participants create new assemblages of meaning. Artist-led organizations construct similar meanings through dialogue and cultural forms but, as in the case of Ghost Box, these appear to involve narrower aesthetic dimensions, potentially motivated by commercial considerations; as such there is some dissimilarity between audience and artist-developed aesthetic conventions.

5.4 Conclusion

The intention of this chapter was to explore the ways in which hauntological participant groups organize their culture, in an effort to answer our empirical research question: how might we understand the organization of a contemporary avant-garde music culture through our case study? We focused on two groups of participants - artists and audiences - and found that although the impetus for their use of organizational structures differed, both were involved in the codification of a hauntological aesthetic. In direct response to the research question, we have shown how organizational structures in our case study can be understood as facilitating

forms of classification as well as offering a space for information to be stored and accessed. There are a number of important conclusions we can take from our analysis of these systems that enable us to make visible certain features of contemporary avant-garde music cultures.

Firstly, in both instances, as with our observations in the previous chapter with regards to processes of classification, the focus in this chapter has been on the significance of participant-led activity and how this can have a destabilizing effect on the way we might conceptualize participant roles through Becker's art world schema (1982). In the case of the record label, the network map demonstrated that while adopting a form familiar to standard business models, the changing nature of the industry, partially in relation to digitization, has transformed the role of the artist, as they become increasingly involved not just in the production of cultural artefacts, but in their manufacture, marketing and distribution. This is a departure of sorts from the panoply of support personnel Becker identifies in relation to other art worlds (1982: 77-82). In the case of audience-led blogs, destabilization takes place through the practice of organizing the information that contributes to the broader hauntological metadiscourse we discussed in Chapter 4. Some blogs, such as foundObjects facilitate the establishing of connections between disparate cultural sources by offering other audience members links to examples of hauntological media. This, to some extent, mirrors the practices we witnessed between participants on message board threads, but also extends the process of classification beyond the comparison of potentially similar-sounding artists. Although intertextual links played a role in Chapter 4, audience-led systems, as interconnected locales, facilitate this kind of work in a different way. Information is collated and presented in a certain way so as to highlight some aspects at the expense for others; for example, in the case of The Hauntological Society, Lockley-Hobson exercises complete control over what is considered hauntological, demonstrating the increasing influence curators have in terms of the way that our case study is understood.

Secondly, in conjunction with this destabilization, we see that the participant base of our case study becomes increasingly convoluted, and a clear delineation between groups is challenged. In artist-led organizational structures, we saw that artists are no longer distinct from ancillary support personnel, so the issue of how an artist is constituted in this art world is, therefore, difficult to address. Similarly,

building on our observations of the challenging of participant roles with regards to classification in Chapter 4, the way in which audience members - through their blogging activities - delimit aspects of the hauntological aesthetic merging their role with that of the critic, as they selectively comment and respond to specific cultural forms, akin perhaps to Becker's notion of the aesthete (1982: 150-3).

Thirdly, we noted the importance of the continuing codification of hauntology. In the previous chapter we considered hauntology as a genre - or metadiscourse - and charted the ways in which participants contribute and expand this notion through different forms of dialogue. In this chapter, we have seen how both artist and audience-led organizational structures facilitate the development of this metadiscourse, or underpin aesthetic parameters through the establishment of digital archives. What this demonstrates is that, despite identifying the challenges in developing stable and permanent boundaries around our case study, participants still engage in these practices as mediated by organizational systems. These systems of organization continue to actively evolve, through a variety of forms of participation and despite the differences between the approaches of record labels on the one hand and blogs on the other, both contribute to the continued development of hauntology and demonstrate that the perpetuation of a contemporary avant-garde music culture requires the complex interplay of classification *and* organization.

In conclusion, it is worth saying that we are not suggesting that these are the only ways in which groups of participants are organized in the contemporary avant-garde. Instead, we suggest that in our case study organizational structures are developed to facilitate practices of classification and the production and distribution of cultural artefacts. Adaptability and malleability are common features, and the functionality of new social media enables organizations and organisers to adjust accordingly. These organizational structures, whether primarily concerned with distributing information or selling cultural products, are sites where specific forms of social action take place and where different forms of cultural engagement intersect.

The arenas we have explored in the previous two chapters have been entirely virtual, consisting of message boards, social media, record label websites and blogs. Our discussions, therefore, have pertained to certain forms of technologically-mediated discourse. This approach has enabled us to account for contemporary issues in wider debates about the nature of classification and genre

and implies a shift from the physical to the digital, although vestiges of tangible artefacts remain for aesthetic purposes. While the scope and scale of cultural activity taking place online is expanding, it would be foolhardy to suggest that the social aspects of experiencing music culture in a physical environment is at an end, particularly when popular music cultures are increasingly reliant on live music revenue as physical format sales tail off (Topping 2010). A concomitant feature of our case study that we have so far neglected is the role of non-virtual environments and in the next chapter we will consider the physical spaces of our case study and how these spaces relate to the classificatory and organizational practices we have seen so far.

Chapter 6 - Spatiality

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter our intention is to explore, through our case study, the sorts of non-virtual spaces that the contemporary avant-garde constructs and populates. In the previous two empirical chapters we have detailed exclusively virtual spaces where processes of classification and organization take place. In relation to these concerns, we will consider the following research question, which we formulated in Chapter 1: how is spatiality constituted in our case study and how might it relate to concomitant issues of classification and organization? To this end, we will examine some of the physical spaces occupied in our case study and how these connect with our other empirical concerns, as indicative of the contemporary avant-garde more broadly. Spatiality can be understood as the interrelationship between participants and non-virtual environments and we will focus on the interplay between space and what this might mean in relation to classification, organization and resistance.

We will begin by detailing the ways in which spaces have been explored in studies of popular music cultures so as to situate our empirical concerns within relevant discussions of spatiality and music; we will augment this exploration with a reading of the locational politics of the historical avant-garde so as to compare and contrast popular and avant-garde notions of space. In doing so we will demonstrate that the historical avant-garde can be viewed as geographically distinct, in the sense that it occupied a relatively small number of specific physical spaces, thereby enabling us to assess similarities and differences within our contemporary avant-garde case study. Following on from this, we will develop a conceptualization of space through which our case study can be analysed, taking into account that any definition of spatiality will need to be sufficiently broad so as to incorporate non-virtual spaces and the virtual spaces already discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. We will then detail the types of contextualized space we have formulated, namely *live performance space*, *installation space* and *rhetorical space*.

Building on these conceptualizations, we will use one particular field site - the 2011 Netaudio festival - to explore how these conceptual spaces may be constructed in our case study. As in previous chapters, this site was identified by participants in preliminary research. We will discuss the specifics of the festival as emblematic of contemporary avant-garde spatiality more broadly prior to drawing

on a number of examples that highlight the spatial dynamics of hauntology. From a methodological point of view, our approach in this chapter bolsters the interpretive textual and network analysis we adopted in earlier empirical work, by moving towards additional forms of data collection and analysis that reflect both the participant and researcher's experiences of non-virtual spaces. This will involve the collection and interpretation of field notes, alongside data gathered from other media sources such as video material and photographs; this diversity of source material will allow us to develop a more rounded, nuanced and reflexive understanding of the connection between micro and macro level practices taking place in our case study.

With regards to the three types of conceptual space we are working with, analysis of *live performance space* will involve field notes, video material, and participant reflections related to two different types of performance detailed later in this chapter. Here we are seeking to test how our conceptualizations of spatiality demystify the enactment and embodiment of space in the contemporary avant-garde. Moreover, we will consider broader spatial issues from a practical viewpoint, including the significance of geographically disparate artists coming together in non-virtual locations, and how this might relate to the processes of classification and organization we observed earlier.

Installation space will again be explored through field notes taken at Netaudio, alongside video and photographic material from the festival. Here we will consider the interactions between participants in small-scale spaces (individual rooms, for instance) and how this feeds into a wider spatial dynamic, connecting our case study with the parallel practices of categorizing and systematizing hauntological culture.

These connections will be reinforced more concretely through a consideration of what we are calling *rhetorical space*. We will flesh out our conceptualization more clearly in later sections of this chapter but, briefly put, rhetorical space can be thought of as the way in which participants use textual representations to connect non-virtual space with the classificatory practices we have witnessed in the virtual spaces of our case study. With regards to what Becker calls a 'defensible aesthetic' (1982: 133) - or metadiscourse - this has been of primary importance to participant groups in terms of both practices of classification and systems of organization. In relation to the former, we saw in Chapter 4 how

participants delimited their culture through dialogue, and in relation to the latter we noted how artists develop structures that facilitate specific hauntological narratives (for example, with Ghost Box this involved connecting their music with art from an imaginary version of the 1950s-1970s). In the case of rhetorical space, we will consider how artists and critics use interpretive frameworks and narratives in an effort to classify and systematize the role that physical space plays in contributing to this aesthetic underlining the way that critic's textual descriptions augment the processes we have already identified.

Ultimately, we are attempting to address our research question by exploring a field site *within* our case study, demonstrating how, through a flexible but robust conceptualization of spatiality, non-virtual spaces (where live performance and installation art take place) can be directly connected, through the use of rhetoric, to the practices of classification and organization we witnessed in the previous two chapters.

It is worth reflecting at this early stage that the taxonomy of spatiality we are building on is an interpretive one, constructed from reflections on field work as well as the thematic relationships already identified by participants with regards to the spaces they create and populate; we saw some brief examples of this in the spatially-contingent material featured on the foundObjects network map in Chapter 5. As with those networks, our data is not supposed to represent the totality of spatial relations, but should be understood as exemplary of the sorts of spaces that can exist and were present at the time fieldwork and analysis were conducted.

Our intention in taking this approach is to balance relationships between participants and space, as well as remaining true to the wider methodological framework set out in Chapter 3. In essence, we are intending to show both the assemblage of numerous methodological approaches and the concurrent contextual realities of the social world of our case study. As Law states, 'the argument is no longer that methods discover and depict realities. Instead, it is that they participate in the enactment of those realities' (2004: 45). In adopting this stance we are framing our case study within the broader context of the contemporary avant-garde not as 'independent, prior, definite and singular as they are usually imagined in Euro-American practice, [but] instead, interactive, remade, indefinite and multiple' (122). Our inclusion of field notes and other forms of media analysis reflects the multiplicity of this social world and the meaning-making practices which join virtual

and non-virtual forms of space together. Our aim is that through the use of a variety of methodological tools, we are better able to reflect the actuality of social activity, where a multitude of viewpoints are valid as constituent elements of the diverse series of assemblages that constitute the social world (123-31). So far in this study, through our interpretive textual analysis of interview materials, we have ourselves engaged in a dialogic processes that is similar to how participants who seek to classify and organize the hauntological art world; in this chapter we are making plain this involvement, by explicitly situating ourselves within the field, observing and codifying the spatial dynamics we find there. Before discussing the specifics of our field site we will first contextualize avant-garde spaces within broader discussions of music culture, further elaborating on the different kinds of space we will be exploring.

6.2 The development of space in music cultures

Our aim in this section is to identify potentially pertinent arguments and points of similarity that may add to an overarching understanding related to the themes, practices, people and places we are discussing, bearing in mind that music and spatiality are connected in a number of complex and contested ways. We will begin by considering spatiality and music in its broadest sense - geographically - before narrowing our focus to include more localized notions of space.

Music, and music culture, has been subject to a considerable amount of theorizing with regards to its relationship with spatiality; some scholars have lamented the lack of interest in the wider geographies of music culture (see, for example, Connell and Gibson 2004 on the emergence, commercialization and deterritorialization of 'world' music), and more recently we have seen work on the specific geographical fixity of music in Havana (Finn and Luckinbeal 2009), Los Angeles (Pesses 2009) and Newfoundland (Keogh 2011) as well as the association between locality and socio-historical discussions, in this case relating to of the emergence of the punk scene (Crossley 2008), or the development of distinct industrial locales for the music industry (Florida and Jackson 2010).

If we turn to our case study, we can see that geography plays an important role in terms of the both processes of classification but also in the relationships between participant groups. In terms of classification, we have seen how participants group dissimilar types of music together (as a genre or metadiscourse)

in an attempt to codify boundaries; this involves geographically diverse artists being considered part of the hauntological canon. For example, critics such as Mark Fisher (2006) cite numerous U.S. based artists - Jessica Rylan, Ariel Pink and William Basinski for instance - as notable hauntological musicians. Furthermore, *The Wire* magazine - whose remit is celebrating '...the most visionary and inspiring, subversive and radical, marginalised and undervalued musicians on the planet, past and present' (The Wire, n.d.) - routinely discuss musicians from other parts of the globe as connected through practice, including BJ Nilsen (Sweden), Jacob Kirkegaard (Denmark), Fennesz (Austria) and Tim Hecker (Canada). The reason this is important is that it connects spatiality - in the form of geography - with cultural production and the classificatory drive.

As an example of contemporary avant-garde practice, this geographical boundlessness also suggests a potential break with the historical avant-garde. In terms of contextual examples of locational fixity, musique concrète composer Pierre Schaeffer's Club d'Essai was based in Paris, and sponsored and funded by government money (initially through Radiodiffusion- Télévision Française, the state owned public broadcaster in France, but later by the less strictly controlled Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française in 1964 [Palombini 1993]). An informal British counterpart to the studio, the B.B.C. Radiophonic Workshop, was also geographically fixed with the workshop providing contextual regional news and radio soundtracks to U.K. based radio stations from Maida Vale in London (Marshall 2008).

Furthermore, on a broader conceptual level, the avant-garde composer Steve Reich has explicitly discussed the links between the theoretical compositional approaches of the historical avant-garde and geographical location. In an interview with Robert Fink (2005: 118), he describes the fracturing trajectory between minimalism and musique concrète:

Stockhausen, Berio, and Boulez [contemporaries of Schaeffer] were portraying in very honest terms what it was like to pick up the pieces after World War II. But for some American in 1948 or 1958 or 1968—in the real context of tailfins, Chuck Berry and millions of burgers sold—to pretend that instead we're really going to have the darkbrown Angst of Vienna is a lie, a musical lie.

Historical avant-garde music, in this sense, combines spatiality with socio-political activity, and raises questions not only about the role of political agency in

music culture, but how significant an impact geography has on particular types of music culture. The reason for focusing on these examples is that they demonstrate that the historical avant-garde was, in a number of senses, spatially distinct and localized whereas our case study appears - on the surface at least - to be less distinct and localized, diffused across a number of virtual and non-virtual spaces. Moving forward it will be important to look at whether or not this distinction is valid, or if hauntological participants use space in other ways to connect the virtual and non-virtual.

The complicated and contested relationship between space and the agency and activities of participants is neatly encapsulated by Johansson and Bell (2009) who observe that music cultures may exist in a variety of spatially-diverse locations including places where activism, identity politics, genre distinctions and symbolic mapping intertwine. Relationships are necessarily complex because they involve the interplay between many diverse actors, artefacts and spatial arrangements; as such, an understanding of the relationship between music cultures and the conceptualization of space needs to include these sorts of sophisticated assemblages.

During the literature review, we identified a number of important subcultural studies that reinforce this mutuality between spaces, social action and music; while we are continuing to avoid arguing that the contemporary avant-garde is a subculture, in situating our case study within established literature, it is worth considering potential points of overlap. The following three examples show how spatiality can be seen operating in an array of different music cultures.

Hodkinson's study of goths (2002) charts a number of interlinked locations - principally London and Whitby - where groups of like-minded cultural participants meet to share experiences, artefacts, and interests; here organization meets spatiality as events such as club nights or larger annual gatherings such as the Whitby Goth Weekend are scheduled. The interplay between participants is crucial as these events, which may have a level of spatial fixity as they take place in the same areas each year, are only perpetuated by mutual cooperation and collaboration between different groups. In terms of the sorts of assemblage Johansson and Bell discuss, this case study shows how spatiality facilitates meaning-making through associations in physical environments.

The nature of these assemblages of people, artefacts, genres and symbols is temporally as well as spatially contingent. The annual goth weekend in Whitby, by definition, happens once a year so in this case, the coming together of participant groups is only temporary, despite the spatial fixity of the event. Similarly, Sarah Thornton's work on club cultures (1995) considers the geographical rooting of club culture in London - her first ethnographic encounter is at the Wonderworld club - but also explores the broader temporal associations taking place during the twilight of rave where the club became a new locus for cultural production. Thornton charts the temporal (as well as spatial) shift from the late 1980s rave culture of illegal parties in privately owned spaces to the commodification and organization involved in establishing club nights at specific locations and at specific times of the week. The conclusion we might draw from this example is that in certain music cultures, spatial and temporal associations can both destabilize (in the case of the potential upheaval at the close of rave culture) and reterritorialize (in the case of the emergence of a formalized club culture) the ways in which participants are able to engage with one another in certain locations.

Andy Bennett (1999), in furthering both the club cultures discourse and his adaptive theory of neo-tribes builds on Thornton's analysis by considering the participant as a crucial factor in these spatio-temporal assemblages. Bennett's field work focused on the nightclubs of Newcastle, and how taste and consumption became spatially-mediated as participants move between musical styles on different floors of the nightclub. Again we see club cultures condensed to specific (and regulated) locales, but with a subdivision of thematically-constituted spaces within this environment. In this example, space (the club) and time (when the club nights take place) are relatively regimented but there are destabilizing factors at play; in this instance, the participant is able to, by moving through certain spaces within the club, contest readings of taste by consuming a variety of different forms of music. Here, space facilitates the sorts of identity politics and micro-level activism Johansson and Bell (2009) have foregrounded.

What these case studies demonstrate is the validity of our working definition of spatiality, which involves the interplay between physical spaces - from the large to the small - and participant activities; within these sites cultural meanings continue to be negotiated. Classification is able to take place when participants gather together in certain locations. Similarly, organization facilitates the running of specific events

be they ad hoc or regular. Furthermore, physical, non-virtual space in these examples allows negotiation and dialogue by combining varying arrangements of people, artefacts and ideas in specific locations.

A final point of note is that we have already noted the spatial vibrancy of the contemporary avant-garde in relation to the recent work on live improv in Leeds undertaken by Atton (2012); here, space is frequently concerned with boundaries and malleability as participants move through contested, and sometimes antagonistic, locales.

In terms of commonality, Hodkinson, Thornton and Bennett detail a number of locations that are utilized by participants in their case studies including, but not limited to, club nights, music events and festivals. The inference from the relative similarity of these types of events across different music cultures is that our empirical investigation will need to consider similar sorts of spaces in an effort towards unpicking the ways in which space is constituted and experienced.

However, although we have detailed a number of examples where spatiality and music can be seen as interrelated, we have not explored the antecedent issue of how we view space more broadly; in the next section we will move from discussing these micro-level manifestations of spatial politics in music cultures to consider an overarching, macro-level conceptualization of space in relation to the sorts of issues we have considered throughout our empirical chapters. Our aim is to develop a taxonomy of space that is sufficiently varied to incorporate concomitant processes of classification and organization and robust enough to allow us to detail the specific features of different spatial arrangements.

6.3 The production of space

Having offered an overview of geographically contingent case studies as a way of demonstrating the significance of specific locales in establishing music cultures we will now consider spatiality in a broader, conceptual sense. In our earlier empirical chapters we detailed how aesthetic and genre boundaries are formed through direct and indirect dialogue across numerous social media platforms, and how these discussions are facilitated by organizational structures. These systems of meaning-making involve negotiation and collaboration and are, in essence, wholly *socially* constructed, and mediated by technology. The spaces we have explored so far enabled dialogue and, building on the observations made in relation to other

case studies of music and spatiality, it is sensible to suggest that physical spaces will also be conducive to the social construction of meaning within a given environment; in this regard, Henri Lefebvre's writing on space offers a potential inroad for our enquiries.

Lefebvre's work on space is extensive and diverse, but his definitions are built on a foundation which views 'social space [as] multifaceted: abstract and practical, immediate and mediated' (1991: 266). Space is not simply a physical arrangement of objects, but is constituted by the complex interplay between abstract and practical ideas, people and physical structures, a view echoed by Johansson and Bell (2009). Lefebvre explains that the production of space involves a combination of *spatial practice*, *representations of space* and *representational spaces*. The first of these - spatial practice - 'embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation' (1991: 33). Representations of space is 'conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers' who 'identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived'; this is the 'dominant space in any society (or mode of production).' Finally, representational space can be understood as 'space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of "inhabitants" and "users"' (33). The difference between representations of space and the representational may affect forms of dialogue in terms of what is possible or permitted in a given area but, ultimately, this tripartite conceptualization of space will enable us to assess not just the potential tensions between virtual and non-virtual space, but also points of contention where representations of the spaces of music culture - the conventions of the club night say - are destabilized by the representational.

Brenner and Elden (in Lefebvre 2009) suggest that Lefebvre's earlier preoccupations with space are bound up in a Marxist dialectic on the State, where hierarchical territories of space were imposed from above, and the development and eventual consensual understanding of various institutions was denied sociality through the imposition of a 'system of "adapted" expectations and responses' (2009: 225); as such, dialogue is curtailed in these spaces (Lefebvre lists families, schools and workplaces as potential examples where dialogue may be restricted by institutional frameworks). In relation to our case study, we might consider a similar range of 'adapted expectations and responses', where social activity in certain

spaces produces a range of actions and reactions; our task will be to see how hauntological participants negotiate these sorts of conventions, perhaps in an attempt to develop their own (Becker 1982: 64-6).

The suggestion of hierarchy in this early definition - where lived experience follows conceptual form, also suggests that space, in its multifaceted configurations, can be controlled in a number of ways. In Lefebvre's early work, control is largely institutional, but in *The Production of Space* (1991) this is extended to broader notions of sociality:

Social space may be described and explained, at least partially, in terms of an intentional signifying process, in terms of sequential or stratified codes and in terms of imbricate forms. Dialectical movements 'superclassify' and 'supercode' overlapping categorizations and logical connections (233).

Here, sociality and dialogue are interconnected processes, with spatiality understood in terms of contextualized codes and classifications through which people interpret physicality, expectation, movement, permissions and the like. These processes may be representations of space - that is partially mediated by dominant forces - or representational, challenged by lived experience, signs, symbols, and art (33-34).

As with our adoption of Becker's art world thesis, Lefebvre's notions of space will allow us to make visible the interplay between participants and the spaces they create and occupy. Our first task will be to ascertain how these ideas about the nature of space contribute to our understanding of the non-virtual aspects of our case study, and how they relate to processes of classification and organization. So far we have seen how hauntological spaces are constructed as part of the dialogue between participants, and this could be viewed as involving representations of space on the one hand - via aesthetic distinctions and conventions - and representational space on the other, where structures and arrangements are challenged and tested by collaborative action, including the destabilization of traditional organizational systems such as the record label (as we saw in Chapter 5) or the hierarchy implicit in deciding who has the right to speak, which we saw attacked by some audience members in Chapter 4.

Crucially, Lefebvre's codification of space extends specifically to the realm of art - which he terms 'theatrical space' - and, through this, artistic space is

delineated. Whilst building on the conceptualizations outlined above, theatrical space is typified by an 'interplay between fictitious and real counterparts and its interaction between gazes and mirages in which actor, audience, 'characters', text, and author all come together but never become one'(188). Here Lefebvre is alluding to the shift between the anticipated experience of the physical space (the stage) and the interpretive opportunity which takes place in public but is not itself public; the experience of individual participants in a collective, social activity. In terms of our case study, there appears to be a parallel between the ways in which certain participant groups perceive their individual involvement (for instance, Richard Lockley-Hobson's view of his role in categorization through The Hauntological Society), and the broader aesthetic conventions of what is deemed acceptably hauntological (such as the codification offered by Ghost Box record label). It will be useful to build on these potential distinctions if we are to understand how dialogue continues to take place in non-virtual environments.

It is also important to note that although artistic space is delineated from other forms of social practice, it is still predicated on representations of and representational spatiality. Theatrical space, Lefebvre suggests can be *both* of these things:

Theatrical space certainly implies a *representation of space* - scenic space - corresponding to a particular *conception* of space (that of the classical drama, say - or the Elizabethan, or the Italian). The *representational space*, mediated yet directly experienced, which infuses the work and the moment, is established as such through the dramatic action itself (1991: 188).

Theatrical space, in its definitional sense, is interstitial, a liminal space where conventions exist but can be destabilized by 'dramatic action'; again, there may be a tension between each form and this is where dialogue takes place, within a broader assemblage of elements. This reading preserves the complexities of spatial dynamics and actors, as well as the concurrent realities of music cultures we have observed so far, but allows us to begin to sketch out the features of spatial association in our case study.

In exploring hauntology through this conceptualization of space, it is important to state that we do not intend to suggest a simplistic codification of hauntology, but, as with our other empirical chapters, offer a snapshot of some of

the spatial relations we have experienced so as to adequately represent the elasticity of these associations. Lefebvre also urges caution in this respect and it is worth quoting at length

Knowledge of spaces wavers between description and dissection. Things in space, or pieces of space, are described. Part-spaces are carved out for inspection from social space as a whole. Thus we are offered a geographical space, an ethnological space, a demographic space, a space peculiar to the information sciences, and so on *ad infinitum*. Elsewhere we hear of pictural, musical or plastic spaces. What is always overlooked is the fact that this sort of fragmentation tallies not only with the tendency of language itself, not only with the wishes of specialists of all kinds, but also with the goals of existing society, which, within the overall framework of a strictly controlled and thus homogeneous totality, splits itself up into the most heterogeneous spaces: housing, labour, leisure, sport, tourism, astronautics, and so on (1991: 91).

By imposing categorization, what Lefebvre is suggesting is that we are potentially delimiting the complex and interwoven realities of space. This is clearly problematic if unaddressed, but without some sort of descriptive clarity we will be unable to detail aspects of our case study sufficiently, so we will endeavour to balance these approaches and concerns. With this in mind, in the next section we will begin this exploration of contemporary avant-garde spatiality by detailing the selection of one particular field site and the categories of space we will be exploring. Again, these types of space, whilst being codified by the researcher, are guided by participant activities, and as such reflect their spatial activities and understandings.

6.4 A case study - Netaudio 2011

Moving on from our discussions of representations of space and the representational, we will consider how one particular field site embodies the contradictions and interstitial relations between space and social action that constitutes theatrical forms of spatiality. In our earlier empirical chapters, following participant-focused suggestions, we explored some of the individual locales and activities that make up the hauntological art world; these included a variety of virtual spaces such as message board threads, social media sites (Last.FM), record labels and online archives in the form of blogs. In terms of exploring non-virtual space, the identification of relevant spatial arrangements would be required so as to

augment what has up until this point been a solely virtual consideration of space with tangible, physical locations.

Earlier in this chapter we observed how some music cultures have a certain level of spatial fixity, in the sense that there are common types of space that music cultures create and populate; it makes sense then to try and locate similar types of space with regards to our case study, bearing in mind that the spaces we have seen so far in Hodkinson, Thornton and Bennett's studies all pertain to forms of popular culture, whereas we are considering the contemporary avant-garde. Following preliminary participant-led research on hauntological blogs, the Netaudio festival - based at Camden's Roundhouse - was selected as a viable site for fieldwork. Netaudio began in 2005, combining live music, installations, conferences, broadcasts, workshops and tutorials and has staged events across Europe (in Berlin, Barcelona, London, Bern and Cologne) with both established and emergent artists who use 'digital and network technologies to explore new boundaries in music and sonic art' (Netaudio 2011a).

There are a number of reasons why Netaudio was chosen as a viable site for fieldwork. Firstly, initial research into the festival indicated that, in relatively simplistic spatial terms, Netaudio was geographically diverse both in terms of the artists involved and the locations it utilized; this connects the festival with our earlier observations on the importance of geography in music culture. Netaudio spanned a weekend in May 2011 and opened with a party at the Apiary Studios in Bethnal Green followed by a live performance at Café OTO in Dalston, an avowedly avant-garde music venue described as 'a home for creative new music that exists outside of the mainstream' (Café OTO n.d.[a]). An all-day music and installation event on Sunday was situated at Camden's Roundhouse, with a showpiece closing concert taking place in the evening, a mile away at KOKO by Mornington Crescent underground station; to experience the totality of the festival, participants would be required to move across London, and to occupy a number of spatially distinct venues. This echoes elements of the Hodkinson's work (2002) on the Whitby Goth Weekend, where a series of events took place in a relatively central location - the Whitby Spa Complex - with splinter events happening in other locations; in Hodkinson's case study this was included RAW nightclub and Shambles Bar in Whitby (Whitby Goth Weekend Guide 2012) and in our case study this involved the Apiary Studios, Café OTO and KOKO in London.

The all-day music and installation event, Netaudio's main showcase, took place in the Camden Roundhouse which was also a subdivided space mirroring Bennett's reflections on Newcastle club culture (1999); the Roundhouse was divided into installation and live performance spaces, as well as a lecture theatre for a conference, and a series of smaller rooms for community workshops on digital and network sound art collaborations. As a microcosm of wider contemporary avant-garde spatiality, the Sunday event was staged in heterogenic spaces that, while being defined in a representational sense by the physical structures and culturally understood meanings of 'concert venue' or 'installation space', could be repurposed and refashioned for the needs of the festival; as such, there was the possibility to see how representational space might function in terms of participants collaborating and negotiating meanings within certain delineated zones.

Building on the geographic diversity of the venues, the artists involved in the festival were also spatially disparate. The opening event hosted French and British DJs in Bethnal Green (Alex Fisher and Leif) alongside Italian and Polish sound artists in Dalston (Valerio Tricoli and Robert Piotrowicz), with musicians from Finland (Mika Vainio) and Austria (Radian) performing at the closing concert at KOKO. The installation spaces at the Roundhouse - collectively titled the 'Sonic Maze' - featured artists from Switzerland (D'incise), Germany (Julia Willms) and Australia (Jodi Rose) to name a few. What this shows is the geographical diversity of those involved in the festival, echoing our earlier discussion on a departure from locational fixity - as in the case of the historical avant-garde - towards a more fluid relationship that sees artists from across the world contribute to genre distinctions.

Secondly, if we consider the confluence of these spaces and the participants who create and occupy them, Netaudio can be viewed as a nascent form of contemporary avant-garde hub, or a type of assemblage to return to Law's description from Chapter 3. Artists from a variety of different countries appear alongside one another, produce live musical performances and/or installation works, and engage in discussions (direct and indirect) with other participants whose interactions are, in spatial terms, subjective but also potentially codified via the physical structure of the building or the tacit expectations of their roles. Alongside the live performance and installation spaces, Netaudio also operated workshops that saw professional software designers giving seminars on the use of new music technology, as well as talks on media platforms such as SoundCloud, IOS

applications, and musical composition via open source software. In addition there was a more formalised conference, with topics including politics, protest, internet collaboration and the argument of digital versus analogue (which we touched on in Chapter 5 in relation to Ghost Box's modes of artefact production). The confluence of these disparate activities, spread across a variety of locations, shows the complexity of contemporary avant-garde organization, and how this might be spatially constituted. This panoply of social actions and actors is also suggestive of the types of activity Lefebvre describes as 'theatrical', and therefore warrants further analysis in terms of how these interactions constitute the hauntological art world in non-virtual spaces.

It is also worth highlighting the fact that Netaudio was not a hauntological music event per se; rather it featured artists who have (or indeed can be) categorized as hauntological. The lack of an explicit hauntological context on the part of the organizers is worth underlining, as it demonstrates how our case study might be connected to the wider contemporary avant-garde as events are nested within broader avant-garde festivals. In turn this augments our discussions in the previous chapter with regards to the relationships between established organizational structures (record labels like Ghost Box) and external organizations such as music festivals. It also demonstrates the sort of 'messy' interpretive work that takes place in terms of overlaps between types of music and artists.

This leads us on to our third point, that Netaudio represents the intersectionality between spatial practices and our other empirical concerns, namely classification and organization. In the case of the former, categorization is spatially constituted in terms of the curation of the event, where organizers decide who should be included and how certain pieces of work are connected to the thematic concerns of the festival. What this shows is that boundary formation can be formalized and policed by certain contemporary avant-garde participants; in this instance, the festival organizers have control, but we have also seen this in terms of the control over aesthetic parameters exerted by record labels and blog authors. Similarly, as we have intimated, organization is vital to the running of events where organizers seek thematic consistency (or intentionally avoid it), as well as the more prosaic practical problems of bringing together a number of participant groups from geographical disparate locations in a series of spaces across London.

Fourthly, and finally, Netaudio can be seen as integrating the non-virtual with the virtual. In our previous chapters we focused exclusively on virtual spaces, and Netaudio - whilst being predominately non-virtual - also had an online presence which is worth acknowledging in the sense that it further reinforces the connection between the festival and our broader concerns. With its emphasis on digital culture, Netaudio facilitated virtual attendance, in a mediated form, via a continual live broadcast on the festival's website (the festival commissioned three new works solely for the broadcast strand), which streamed live video and sound throughout the event, and enabled engagement with participants unable to attend in person, thereby connecting both the virtual and non-virtual aspects of our case study in a tangible, observable sense.

As we have touched upon, the organizers of Netaudio split the festival into different artistic themes and spaces and we will consider these with regards to the notion of theatrical space (bearing in mind Lefebvre's warning about being overly prescriptive). These spaces include *live performance*, *installation*, and *rhetorical* space. Live performance space can be thought of as the space where artists and audiences come together - in real time - to experience a piece of music. For example, in other contexts, this might be thought of as a concert or gig but we are distancing ourselves from these representations of space to begin with. Installation space is where audiences experience a piece of music or art, but in their own time without the presence of the artist. Rhetorical space is the domain where textual descriptions of live performance and installation spaces are used to codify and classify aspects of the hauntological art world. A more detailed consideration of these three spaces will be offered in the appropriate sections of this chapter. Alongside an organizer-defined delineation at the festival itself, these three types of theatrical space are differentiated by the ways in which participant groups come together to negotiate their experiences. Having considered the viability of the field site, and briefly sketched the types of space we will be exploring, the next section will situate Netaudio within the concept of theatrical space.

6.5 The theatrical space(s) of Netaudio 2011

In this section we will begin to consider some examples of hauntological cultural production and see how participants use spatial arrangements to challenge perceived notions of where and how culture is practiced; our intention is to

demonstrate that, in the contemporary avant-garde, space is increasingly problematized by participants. Netaudio, as we have discussed, involved the confluence of a number of interesting spatial dynamics in terms of both physical space and the exploration and contestation of systems of meaning within those arenas. If we think back to our opening discussion of how we might understand sociality through the application of Lefebvre's notion of theatrical space, we begin to notice some points of similarity within our field site. Lefebvre sees theatrical space as the

interplay between fictitious and real counterparts [...] interaction between gazes and mirages in which actor, audience, 'characters', text, and author all come together but never become one (1991: 188).

Broadly speaking, our field site is constituted by these sorts of interrelationships, and the remainder of this chapter will focus on how we might understand, through this application of space, specific examples of cultural activity. To work towards this we will unpack a variety of examples from Netaudio, using interpretive analysis to assess how these examples relate to representations of space and the representational; our choice of examples is necessarily selective, as in previous chapter, but broader generalizations can be extrapolated, or rather formulated through this field work; in doing so, we are accepting our part in the developmental dialogue of what constitutes hauntological cultural production and the spaces in which it is practiced.

In the previous section we also sketched out the separate spaces we are considering at the festival, using the delineation offered by organizers as well as our own interpretive reasoning. This separation of sites is essentially thematic and represents two of the ways in which participants come together and interact with one another. We will begin by considering live performance space. We will compare and contrast the performances of two artists at the festival - Valerio Tricoli and Nurse with Wound - with other examples of their live performance work. The intention here is to connect, or question, our observations at the festival with other perspectives on the role spatiality plays at different locations. This will allow us to compare non-virtual spaces and how they intersect with classificatory practices and organizational structures.

Following on from our discussions of live performance space, we will look at installation space. Here we will be drawing on experiential material in the form of field notes collected at the site, and from this we will offer a discursive reading of the dialogue between participant groups as experienced at the festival. This discussion will be augmented by a consideration of what we are terming 'rhetorical space'. Rhetorical space differs from live performance and installation space in the sense that it is textual, and operates in response to participant's experiences of non-virtual space (for example, a participant reviewing the festival for a magazine). We will look at how two participant groups - critics and artists - use rhetoric to develop spatially-mediated interpretive frameworks that build on the processes of classification we observed in Chapter 4. This will involve analysing critic's reflections on the installation spaces at Netaudio, and the contributions of artists at the Netaudio conference, to see how textual descriptions contribute to a hauntological metadiscourse.

6.5.1 Live performance space

Building on our conceptual discussions we will now look at two live performances at the festival and consider how artistic approaches to performance space impacts and potentially reconfigures participant comprehension of spatiality. We will look first at performances from Netaudio before comparing and contrasting these with other sites, in an effort towards reinforcing our findings.

The two artists we are considering are Valerio Tricoli and Nurse with Wound (henceforth NWW). Tricoli, a sound artist from Italy, and NWW, the performing name of avant-garde musician Steve Stapleton, both performed live music at Netaudio, (the former at Café OTO and the latter at the closing concert in KOKO). As part of the developmental aesthetic - or metadiscourse - of hauntology, we will argue that destabilizing and problematizing spatial boundaries is foregrounded by these artists, as read through Lefebvre's notion of theatrical space. These practices contribute towards a negotiated and mediated understanding of what constitutes hauntological spatiality.

PLAY NOW: Valerio Tricoli - *Le Qoheleth* +

Our first example is Valerio Tricoli. As we mentioned earlier in this chapter, following the opening party, the Netaudio festival was inaugurated by a collaborative performance between Valerio Tricoli and Robert Piotrowicz at Café OTO in Dalston; prior to this performance taking place, two different descriptions of the event - which we might understand as a preview of sorts - demonstrate how institutionalized, representations of space might be constituted through the use of textual description. Netaudio describe Tricoli as bridging

musique concrète and conceptual forms of sound (i.e. the radical interest in how reality, virtuality, memory relate to each other during the acoustic event): music, as a recorded or as a synthetically-modeled [sic] sound, is always hovering between the “here and now” of the event and the shady domain of memory - distant but at the same time present, akin to a déjà-vu experience (Netaudio 2011b).

There are a number of aspects to this statement that relate to how space is understood in the context of Tricoli’s work, not least of which the act of informing the audience - prior to the performance - what they can expect from it. Firstly, Tricoli’s work is situated as part of the historical avant-garde, in terms of both his musical output (musique concrète) and his theoretical and conceptual rigour (the relationship between reality, virtuality and memory). Bundled with this are a series of assumptions about what can be expected; we are not talking necessarily about how audiences might interpret this information as this is not within our grasp in this instance, but rather that the organizers are in a position where they can delimit the experience of participants through textual description before the event takes place, instilling the sorts of adapted expectations and responses Lefebvre discusses (2009: 225).

Secondly, these descriptions offer an aesthetic distinction that emphasises liminality, situating Tricoli’s work in terms of ‘déjà-vu’ and ‘the shady domain of memory’; whilst this allies Tricoli’s practice with the sorts of aesthetic markers we have detailed elsewhere, it also informs the audience that the performance is aimed at challenging notions of solidity, potentially occupying Lefebvre’s theatrical space. Again, the audiences experience is potentially codified in advance of their participation at the event, as organizers suggest Tricoli is comparable with other types of music - which, to an extent, reflects the way in which we observed audiences relating certain types of music to others in Chapter 4 - as well as particular

types of feeling or emotional impression. The textual description offered by the organizers can clearly be read in terms of representations of space but, in suggesting a performance which engages with the liminal, it also hints at the representational; we see institutionalized interpretations that situate the artist spatially and temporally (the location of the event, the associated narrative of the historical avant-garde) rubbing up against a description of the actual musical output of the artist which challenges this. This is further reinforced by Café OTO on their website:

Tricoli plays live music with electronic instruments - most of them analogue - (reel-to-reel tape recorders, synthesizers, microphones, light effects, ultrasonic speakers), however the structure of the device is ever-changing, seeking multiple relations between the performers, the device and the space in which the event takes place (Café OTO n.d. [b]).

Café OTO echoes Netaudio's locating practices, situating the audience and performance within the predefined tropes of the historical avant-garde. In this instance they list music-making equipment associated with music concrète which suggests that the organizers feel that the audience they attract will understand this association. Alongside this they identify 'multiple relations' between the equipment, the performer(s) and the space in which these practices are constituted. The role these textual descriptions serve is to inform the audience about the sorts of precepts that will be challenged, whilst simultaneously offering a basic interpretive framework through which these sorts of performances might be comprehended. This again suggests the interstitial space between representations of space and the representational.

Building on these descriptions of Tricoli's performance at Netaudio, Figure 1 shows Valerio Tricoli performing in collaboration with Thomas Ankersmit at steim in Amsterdam; the video - available on the thesis website - neatly illustrates the ways in which spatial understanding can be negotiated and destabilized through the act of performance. In the opening few minutes of the video Tricoli uses a speaker and two microphones - one on a stand behind him and one attached to the speaker itself - to create a feedback loop, where the sound of the room is forced into an unending loop between the microphone and the speaker. He then uses this as source material to construct a series of other sounds, which interact with Ankersmit's.



Fig.1 Screen cap from Tricoli and Ankersmit at steim (steim 2008)

The artistic merit of these practices is not something we need concern ourselves with, but the way Tricoli uses the space as a sound source demonstrates how representational space - in this case through specific kinds of artistic practice - challenges the spatial arrangement and expectations implicit in representations of space, in this case steim's performance room. The physical form of the room is, of course, still present but the interpretation of what the room represents is potentially altered by the way these spaces are repurposed by the artist. The audience are also complicit in this artistic practice, as they occupy the same spaces and have an impact on the sorts of sounds that the microphone picks up; this can be understood as a tacit form of spatially-mediated collaboration. Liminality can be seen in the way that representational space is enacted and embodied through the conjunction of artist and audience, where spatial dynamics are experienced both in tangible physical terms, but also aurally, through the production of sound. Tricoli's Netaudio performance echoes this, where a series of tape loops were set up across the performing area and out into the audience, the spools of tape threading through and around participants, alongside carefully situated microphones set up to capture the sounds of the crowd; again, the audience is fully inculcating in the process of *performing* space.

This idea of transforming or reconfiguring spatial associations can be seen in other performances by Tricoli. At a gig at Ausland in Berlin, Tricoli again used his music as a way of altering perceptions of the music venue he was occupying. Tricoli

had made location recordings in and around the area of Teufelsberg - a radar dome facility where, after WWII, the United States National Security Agency set up a listening post to intercept transmissions from the Soviet bloc (visitBerlin, n.d.) - and he worked these into his performance at the club (Richard 2009). In terms of the confluence of representations of space and the representational we again see a variety of destabilizing spatial practices at work; the artist transforms the space of the music venue by introducing the sounds of the bunker, the audience perceives and interprets these sounds in the representative context of the venue (with its accompanying conventions and expectations) and, finally, there is the socio-historic relevance of the sounds, in terms of the music contrasting temporal changes from the old Cold War Berlin (the radar dome) and the new Berlin (the night club). Essentially what these distinctions demonstrate is a willingness - on the part of different participant groups - to engage in a spatial dialogue through inventive and collaborative types of musical performance.

It is helpful to compare and contrast these practices with a different artist from Netaudio, in an effort to see if this sort of destabilization occurs elsewhere. In Figure 2 (below), NWW perform in a representation of space that is relatively conventional; the artist performs on a stage, and the audience is separated from the stage both physically - in the form of a raised platform they do not have access to - and through convention, where the roles and expectations of participant groups differ (one is performing, the other consuming). This is different from Tricoli's performance space, which destabilized this arrangement by involving the audience, blurring the lines between performance and consumptive space as well as the distinction between participant groups, as, to some extent, audience members become artists. Despite NWW using this more conventional arrangement, this is potentially enforced by the organizers or the arrangement of the venue. Here we see how different groups might curtail comprehension through institutionalized spatiality. However, there are a number of ways in which NWW challenge these sorts of impositions in other spatially-contingent scenarios.



Fig.2 Screen cap from Nurse with Wound live at LUFF 2011 (Pennec 2011)

With the exception of Steve Stapleton, NWW have a rotating line up, the result of this being that types of performance differ dramatically depending on the personnel involved. The involvement of different artists as part of NWW means that even in a conventional representation of space like a concert hall, the expectation of the audience, and what takes place within that space, is potentially confounded by the uncertainty of the personnel involved, who may foreground or minimize certain aspects of sound and space. As such, the sort of descriptive codification we saw in relation to Tricoli is not possible. Netaudio instead describe the performance as ‘a wide variety of improvised outsider music in a genre defying experience’ (Netaudio 2011c).

To demonstrate further how NWW destabilize spatial associations we can contrast Netaudio with the AV Festival in Newcastle that took place the following year (AV Festival 2012). At Netaudio, the NWW performance took place in KOKO’s, a conventional music venue similar to that depicted in Figure 2, with performers on stage separated from the audience. In this instance the roles participants play are governed by the physical arrangement of the room, with artists and audiences tangibly demarcated. In contrast, at the AV festival NWW performed an overnight ‘Sleep Concert’ in the Discovery Centre in Newcastle (see Figure 3). While this is clearly a different sort of representation of space to KOKO, in that it is not a conventional concert venue, there are still certain expectations and roles at play in this space, and NWW’s performance antagonizes these associations.

PLAY NOW: Nurse with Wound - *Dream Memory 3*

The Sleep Concert destabilized understanding in a number of senses. Firstly, the duration of the event was a crucial factor as the concert took place overnight. Stapleton remixed his earlier NWW output to offer a soundtrack to the audience falling - and being - asleep. In doing so, the artist is required to challenge the conventions of duration by performing over an extended length of time, rather than the one or two hours routinely expected at an event like KOKO, where external factors such as licensing laws may affect the duration of a performance. Alongside this, the audience is required to adopt a different role, so rather than the active/passive relationship witnessed in conventional stage-based live performances, the audience are implicated in the artistic practice, in a similar way to that of the blindfolded staging we discussed in Chapter 1: the audience *become* part of the performance. Secondly, as we can see from Figure 3, while there is a demarcated spatial logic to the set up, and some form of delineation between artist and audience, the overall dynamics of the performance are different. In line with this shift in perspective away from the primacy of the artist, the audience appears to be foregrounded with the artist situated on a table at the back, virtually out-of-sight; this works against the representation of concert space, which positions performer ahead of audience. Thirdly the confluence of participants, sounds and the unusual physical environment contribute to the in-between, potential intangibility of theatrical space. The space of the Discovery Centre is directly problematized by artistic practice, as are the expectations of the audience, through the experiential act of sleeping (rather than standing/sitting); this again speaks to the notion of liminality, where the music has the potential to impact the subconscious, though on this we can only speculate as access to reliable information in this regard has not been obtained in this instance.



Fig.3 Nurse with Wound Sleep Concert (Davison 2011)

What we have suggested with these examples is that representations of space are destabilized in the environments we have explored. By detailing and interpreting the practices of Netaudio artists, and considering the framing offered by organizers, we are able to view *some* of the intentions behind these practices though we are unable to assess the impact this has on an audience's perceptions of space (the Sleep Concert typifying this concern). In response to this, the success or otherwise of these disruptive representational acts in the minds of audience members is unimportant; our broader argument is that by attempting to destabilize representations of space, artists provoke audience members to react and respond, and while the outcome of this is not important, the intentionality is. Here, our observations tally with Atton's from Chapter 2, where engagement with improvised music is not simply about the consumption of music but includes the interplay between artists and spaces often within unusual, or marginal, territories (2012: 432). Dialogue is promoted during these exchanges, mediated and negotiated by the different groups of participants who, in turn, contribute in a spatial sense to the sort of metadiscourse we have discussed. The spatial processes at work in these examples are crucial, sociologically speaking, as they demonstrate the intentionality of the artist in creating work that facilitates interaction on the part of other participant groups; situating this within the contemporary avant-garde more broadly, these practices demonstrate the importance of challenging spatial

dynamics through the representational arrangement and contestation of expectation (on behalf of the audience and the artist) and how this plays out in institutionally-designated locales.

6.5.2 Installation space

As we discussed earlier, the organizers of Netaudio separated live performance from installation art and, in doing so, suggested an intrinsic split in definitional terms between two different forms of cultural production. Both of these spaces involve audiences interacting with art produced by artists, so it is useful to consider why this delineation might be necessary in a wider sense; how might installations differ from live performances and how can this be understood as theatrical space?

One way of understanding this separation is temporally. The duration of installation work is longer than live musical performances (with the possible exception of the Sleep Concert) and artists are not present when audiences experience the work; this is significant because so far we have observed the importance of direct interactions between artists and audience members, and with the artist removed from these spaces, the destabilizing of representations of space may be altered, or, at the very least, approached differently.

Installations also differ in terms of the institutional conventions associated with them, which may be important if we reflect on how the contestation of expected spatial relations took place in the previous section. Ran (2009) suggests that the artist's authorial autonomy is implicit in the understanding of 'installation': it 'immediately conjures the image of an artistically defined space or milieu. Installation works can identify or create space, transform space, activate, intervene or inhabit space' (140). That is not to say that installation art lacks conventions of its own but that our understanding is framed by '...codes of signification', forcing audiences to engage with 'the discovery of a politics of vision' (ibid), namely, the artist's creation; spatiality, in this context, is already challenged by definition.

In this section we will explore theatrical space in relation to the installations at Netaudio, contained within what the organizers termed the 'Sonic Maze' (which, in itself, already implies a certain problematizing of spatiality). In the previous section we considered live performance space through organizer-led descriptions and video material, whereas here, to assist in the triangulation of various sources,

we will implicate the researcher more thoroughly by considering field notes collected during and after the event; by way of situating our analysis, this commentary was written up following the exploration of the Sonic Maze, prior to attending the NWW performance at KOKO on the same day; the commentary considers three of the twelve installations at the festival. The introduction of field notes at this stage is an attempt at describing ‘inscriptions of social life and social discourse’ (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011); in doing so we are seeking to broaden and augment our methodological enquiries. It was felt that including field notes was important both to vary the data-gathering methods but also in the sense that it more accurately reflects the sort of developmental narratives that participants engage in in certain environments.

1. Reasoning: earlier faltering attempts at submitting our own art work for
2. inclusion in The Sonic Maze. Didn't realize that 'established' artists would be
3. involved. Jodi Rose and singing bridges. Started out in the central hub, an 8
4. channel installation programmed by Call and Response (details?). Circular space,
5. six passageways as spokes radiating to an outer ring where the other exhibitions
6. are housed. Kirkegaard involved in the 8 channel, as is Kaffe Matthews and
7. Jeremy Keenan (follow up...). 8 channel disconcerting. Seats radiate outwards
8. from a central circle, so participants watch you listening. Sounds emanating from
9. the speakers vary in tone. High pitch/low pitch. Rumbling. Also a number of field
10. recordings. Left through one of the six spokes, but didn't lead to the outer hub
11. but rather to Camden Roundhouse offices. Empty room with a big sofa in,
12. biscuits on a table. Sat there with Chris for a few minutes, assuming it was part
13. of the installation until someone told us to leave. All installations on external
14. ring housed in small rooms that you have to open a door to enter. First room
15. devoid of people. *Magnetic Matrix* by Marko Batista, Natasha Musevic. Magnets
16. on 'ferrofluid' to generate sound. Chris taking numerous pictures. Moving the
17. magnets generates sound, though process is unexplained (missing info sheets?).
18. Mobile phone works equally well, but not sure how much damage that does.
19. Other people joined us in the room. Followed our lead with the mobile phone
20. idea. Corridor busy. Some speakers hanging across the wall emitting bass tones
21. that sound like underground trains. Might actually be underground trains. Next
22. room is *Pufination*. Sebjani and Ferlih. Again, empty. Corridor is perpetually
23. busy. Did we just pick the installations no-one cares about? Time of day?
24. Illuminated orbs arranged in a square. Sound changes on contact, as does
25. colour. Discovered with Stokes that holding two together creates combined
26. notes. Primitive half-octave controller? Turn the lights off. Two people open the
27. door but don't come in. We wait a while and eventually others join in. Stokes
28. takes photos in the dark. No-one seems to mind. Similar later when one
29. installation requires a blindfold. People don't seem to mind being photographed.
30. Names?

The field notes are arranged with corresponding numbers facilitating in-text referencing where appropriate (for instance, line 1 discusses ‘our faltering attempts’ at submitting art work to the festival). The initial concern in the field notes (Lines 1 to 3) speaks to the sorts of boundary work we have previously observed in relation to what is and is not considered ‘applicable’ art. To offer a personal reflection, together with a long-time musical collaborator (Christopher Stokes) I had submitted work for the Sonic Maze that was unfortunately not selected for inclusion; it was not until arriving at the event that we realised this was due to the relative quality of the curated installations on show, which included internationally renowned artists such as Jodi Rose, an artist made famous (or infamous) by marrying an Australian bridge. This reflection partially contextualizes the field site not simply as a research environment, but as a space we intended to engage with on an artistic level. It also suggests parallels with the concomitant processes of classification we have seen elsewhere in our case study, in terms of who is and is not considered appropriately hauntological; in this instance, the organizers of the event felt that our work did not merit inclusion alongside that of better-known artists.



Fig.4 8 channel installation in the Hub (Jarvis 2011)

Lines 3 through 10 detail the arrangement of space in the central hub installation of the Maze (see Figure 4). To expand on the field notes, we can infer from the three listed performers - Jacob Kirkegaard, Kaffe Matthews and Jeremy Keenan - that these particular artists have been included because their sound work is spatially contingent. Kirkegaard’s *Eldjfall* was used as one of the pieces in the hub,

comprising field recordings from accelerometers inserted into the earth - at specific locations in Iceland to record the vibration of volcanic activity (Kirkegaard n.d.); one obvious parallel between the sounds of the installation and the reflections is line 20, where the art is compared to the sound of 'underground trains', a demonstrable way in which representational space is operationalized through installation art, but one that also relates back to the way in which participants textually classify cultural products. Furthermore, this transformation of space - from volcano to Camden Roundhouse - also suggests similarities with live performances such as Tricoli's work with the Teufelsberg radar dome.

Similar to Kirkegaard's geographical uprooting of sound, Kaffe Matthews' work was recorded in Texas, and Jeremy Keenan's work featured field recordings of the River Lea; it is also worth highlighting the fact that Keenan is the co-director of Call and Response who programmed the installation (Keenan n.d.). This shows both the importance of the curatorial role with regards to the thematic consistency of the installation space (all the artists use space in their sound work) and the integrated professionalism we discussed in Chapter 5, where an artist like Keenan is also an organizer of the event itself.

The effect these soundscapes have is that they establish a thematic connection between the installations in the Maze whilst simultaneously destabilizing the fixity of representations of space: the central hub installation utilized and recontextualized sounds from outside the building, and indeed the country, and in doing so problematized the space in which they were experienced. In this context, the intent of the curators - and perhaps by extension the artists - is to move away from institutional spatiality towards a more representational notion of space.

A further instance of destabilization can be seen in lines 11 to 13, where a common-room area was mistaken for an installation. Aside from being embarrassing on a personal level, this demonstrates the blurring of distinctions between what is and what is not considered installation art, and how difficult it can be for participants to navigate through contested spaces of convention - in this instance, it involved assumptions and expectations impacting what turned out to be an innocuous and functional space (replete with a coffee table and a plate of digestive biscuits).

Lines 13, 14 and 26 reinforce the tension and overlap between representations of space and the representational. Outside of the central hub in the

Roundhouse, the installations were housed in a number of rooms separated from a circular corridor by individual doors; whilst exploring these installations, on a number of occasions, other audience members appeared reluctant in entering the rooms to engage with the art works. The individual reasoning behind this reluctance is largely moot; the fact that there was demonstrable avoidance is suggestive of the destabilizing of conventional spatial dynamics. Here the move from the central hub - an open space of collective experiences - to a closed-off series of rooms where individual experiences predominate problematized the ways in which participants felt able to engage with the installations. The flow of people, the ingress and egress of each room, complicated spatial comprehension by providing conflicting messages about how individual participants could explore the space, as those designed by the artist (representational) rubbed up against the actuality of the physical arrangement of the space and the people in it (representations of space).



Fig.5 Video still of *Magnetic Matrix* (Batista and Musevic 2011)

These difficulties are not static but are in fact open to continual negotiation. Lines 17 to 19 detail this through a collaborative engagement with an installation piece. In the first instance, my colleague and I explored Batista and Musevic's *Magnetic Matrix* ferrofluid installation by experimenting with sound patterns as we moved magnets across the screen (Figure 5 shows this as a video). Later, when we noticed that electrical equipment such as mobile phones could also be utilized to

change the nature of the sounds emanating from the installation; those participants who had joined us in the room followed our example and began experimenting with the aural dynamics of the piece in similar ways. This suggests that when they choose to engage, audience members are free - within a certain context - to challenge spatial logic, either individually, or through collective activity; whereas the larger installation piece in the central hub enabled audience members to engage in a passive sense - as music was played through speakers - the smaller installations facilitated audience engagement in a more active way, where installations could be touched and palpated, even if there appeared to be some trepidation to begin with (itself indicative of the liminality of theatrical space). It could be argued that the collaborative aspects described above are simply forms of mimicry, but this is misleading in that it side-lines the role of the artist in creating work which facilitates this type of collective experimentation.



Fig.6 *Pufination* by Sebjani and Frelih (Stokes 2011)

Lines 23 to 25 reinforce the collaborative role of audience members in destabilizing spatial associations. Here, exploring the installation work involves an understanding of spatial dynamics based on mutually-dependent interactions between different audience members; touching the orbs in the *Pufination* installation (see Figure 6, above) produced one series of sounds, but to fully experience the variety of sounds on offer other people were required to complete circuits, by holding combinations of orbs together. This audience engagement shows the complexity of representational space, involving arrangements of objects, bodies

in space, tactile practices and different forms of collaborative work that are facilitated by the artist(s) responsible for the installation.

The definition we offered at the beginning of this section also allows us to understand destabilization as a temporal effect, as the audience and artist do not experience these socio-spatial activities concurrently. Challenges to representations of space may be implicit when artists create installation works, but the destabilization process is effectively the responsibility of audience members and their interactions with each piece. In our case, this destabilization was viewed through a specific experiential narrative (field notes collected at the event), that describes some of the processes of becoming involved in spatial contestation through embodied collaborative practices. The tacit confusion charted in the field notes speaks again of the liminal nature of theatrical space as Lefebvre describes it, whereby artists and audiences never fully coalesce (188) but nonetheless cooperate in challenging representations of space.

What we have seen in this section is that installation space, like live performance space, can be understood through Lefebvre's notion of the theatrical, in that the interrelationship between representations of space and the representational plays out in the interactions and dialogue between artists and audiences. The outcome, in the cases we have explored, is an active destabilizing of spatial dynamics and associations, where space is reimagined and reconfigured by participant groups as a way of delimiting their culture.

As we have alluded to in the descriptive work undertaken by Café OTO and Netaudio in 6.5.1, there is another spatial element that contributes towards participant's comprehension of these associations, and that is the role that textual codification plays. In Chapter 4 we saw how rhetoric has been used to create and maintain boundaries between people, cultural artefacts and aesthetic considerations, so exploring the ways in which rhetoric is employed to serve spatial narratives should also be given some attention. This notion of rhetorical space builds on observations from earlier chapters about the use of textual descriptions to contribute to a hauntological metadiscourse, as well as the way in which we have seen organizers use rhetoric to frame interpretations and engagement with live performances. We will consider how both critics and artists use rhetoric to contribute to spatial understanding in our case study.

6.6 Rhetorical space

So far in this chapter, we have drawn on a number of sources that codify and destabilize spatial dynamics using text; for example, in our assessment of Valerio Tricoli, we noted how organizers may shape or even curtail the responses of audiences through their textual descriptions of artists. Another participant group who also problematize spatial associations through this sort of descriptive activity are the critics. Their descriptive work is rhetorical in nature and relates directly to Lefebvre's notion of spaces lived through 'associated images and symbols' (1991:33). Rhetorical spaces are not physical in nature - hence the taxonomical separation from our previous discussion of live performance and installation space - but relate to the comprehension of the physical, both in terms of representations of space and the representational. Our argument here is that rhetoric, which we have seen playing a role in terms of the development of a hauntological aesthetic or metadiscourse through classification and organization, also has a role to play in terms of spatial dynamics.

We will define rhetorical space more clearly by exploring interrelated examples of its use, again through our field site of the Netaudio festival. We will continue our earlier discussion of the Sonic Maze by comparing and contrasting how critics reviewed the event in an attempt to ascertain the potential meanings behind their specific narratives. Building on this, we will consider how critics use rhetoric to ally physical space with political action, in a move towards our final empirical chapter on resistance. Here we will consider Mark Fisher's Netaudio conference talk; through this we intend to uncover the ways in which spatial distinctions can contribute towards polemical narratives and practices of resistance. Alongside Fisher at the Netaudio conference, the contemporary avant-garde sound artist Matthew Herbert gave a keynote speech connecting political action, space and his own sound work. We will explore the use of rhetoric in this context to frame how destabilizing practices and how political resistance may be intertwined in theatrical space; through these examples we are interested in making visible the connection between the tangible, physical spaces of our case study, and the way that perceptions of these spaces are mediated by different participant groups.

6.6.1 Use by critics

Rhetorical space, as used by critics, can be thought of as an arena in which textual descriptions contribute towards both representations of space and the representational, facilitating the development of boundary formation and meaning-making. There are a number of ways in which these textual descriptions might be utilized, and here we will draw on two in particular. Both of these examples of rhetorical space focus on critics whose narratives are embedded in the sorts of intersectional archives we discussed in the previous chapter, namely online magazines - in this case reviewing the Sonic Maze at Netaudio. These online magazines are important not only because of their organizational role in terms of data and their joining together of the non-virtual and the virtual, but also because they reassert the overlap we traced between critics and aestheticians, following Becker's definitions; in an advanced art world aestheticians 'construct systems with which to make and justify both the classifications and specific instances of their application' (1982: 131). The traditional view of critics who 'apply aesthetic systems to specific artworks and arrive at judgements of their worth' (ibid.) is conflated with the role of the aesthete - who create these systems - in the following two examples, where two critics ally their sensory experience of space with textual descriptions typifying a rhetorical contribution to an understanding of spatial dynamics and classification in the process. Their perspectives and descriptions are individualized - one more objective, one more lyrical - and allow us to reflect on the installation from an outsider's perspective, having considered an insider's experience in the previous section.

The first critical evaluation of the Sonic Maze comes from Sarah Reed, a contributor to the magazine *New Scientist* who reviewed the event in May 2011. She describes the Sonic Maze in the following way:

The path through Sonic Maze led attendees to a central hub: a brick-walled circular room at the centre of the venue. In the hub, festival-goers sat in the centre, listening to electronic music emanating from eight speakers that were dotted around the circumference of the room. The music had been specifically created for 8-channel output and was curated for Netaudio by independent sonic arts collective Call & Response. The combination of the technology with the dramatic architecture of the room created a rare, enveloping audio experience (Reed 2011).

There are parallels between this description of the Sonic Maze and the field notes we explored earlier. Reed communicates the technical specifications of the piece, but also offers a guide to the spatial dynamics of the location where the installation was experienced from the point of view of someone moving through that space. In terms of spatial practices, this confirms aspects of representations of space in the re-establishing of institutional definitions where physical structures regulate that which is taking place within a given locale. However, if this is simply an objective, dispassionate description then the question we must ask is what function is rhetoric playing in shaping spatial perceptions? Reed appears not to be pushing any perspective too forcefully, in terms of telling an audience how to interpret what went on at the event, but there are still implicit ideas that contribute towards an understanding of what the event symbolizes more broadly. For instance, Reed details the fact that the arts collective 'Call & Response' are independent; speculating on the intentions behind the use of this word is clearly problematic, but what we do see is an indication that, by definition, other events *are not* independent and therefore can be understood in opposition. Similarly, the work was 'specifically created' for the event, implying that at other events this is not the case. The rhetoric here situates the space of the Sonic Maze as dissimilar from other events, and with that we see an implicit requirement for alternative forms of engagement, potentially including the extra effort artists have made in relation to the use of 8-channel audio. Alongside this, Reed describes the confluence of sounds and physical space as offering 'a rare, enveloping audio experience'. Whilst we might read this as hyperbolic, it again speaks of a separation between 'other' forms of experience and the authenticity of Netaudio. Rhetoric, in Reed's case, does not destabilize associations in a direct sense, but instead moves towards this through implication; the installation at Netaudio and the space it occupies is genuine and authentic, in contrast with 'other' unnamed events which are not.

The second critical evaluation comes from Catherine McCabe, a critic writing for the film magazine *Little White Lies* (henceforth LWL). The first question that springs to mind is why would a film critic review what is advertised as a music festival? McCabe covers this in her by-line, locating Netaudio as 'three days of experimental AV anarchy' (McCabe 2011). The interest for the LWL audience - presumably mediated by editorial decision - is the 'visual' aspect of audio-visual art, but we should also note that the process of contextualizing the event has already

begun with the festival tagged as 'experimental' and anarchic. This initial hyperbolic description of the event - the suggestion of 'anarchy' appears at odds with this researcher's experience, and the broader organizational complexity, of the event - demonstrates how representational space can operate through seemingly innocuous textual qualifiers, which in turn potentially alter perceptions of the space itself; this is not a space where conventions exist, but a space where chaos and experimentation reign.

McCabe uses rhetorical space as a destabilizing force in a more explicit way than we discussed with regards to Reed. She describes the Sonic Maze as 'a Blade Runner-inspired collection of hi-tech sonic art' with 'a dark curved corridor [hiding] 12 installations behind 12 doors' (2011). Here the installation becomes bound to other visual signifiers, the physical structure of the installations comprehended through a textured intertextual description that connects sound with film (similar perhaps to jzellis comparing Burial to the film *Angel Heart*, as noted in Chapter 4). This type of rhetoric continues throughout, and extends to descriptions of individual installation works, where 'anyone who has stopped to listen to the hum of a rain-soaked pylon will appreciate the haunting sounds of Jodi Rose's Singing Bridges' (ibid.).

This type of descriptive work, aside from offering a means of classification, also enables audiences to conceptualize the event through other types of spatially contingent experience they may have had, as the use of similes and lyrical phrasing facilitates connections between other cultural forms; this also shows a link between the use of textual descriptors by critics and by audiences as we saw in Chapter 4 where audience members on message boards and social media regularly classified with similar descriptors (such as 'ancient sounding' or 'gloomy' for example). Alongside this, McCabe forwards her own opinion in a clearer way than the associations and boundary distinctions implied by Reed. Simon Katan's *Sound Pit* - an installation that produces sound by tracking the movement and impact of coloured balls across a monitored surface - is described as 'pure simple pleasure' for 'the sonar philistines' (2011), suggesting that the other installation works are complex and that some people might struggle to understand the meaning behind them. This shows, at least on the part of this critic, a tacit understanding of the delineation between the contemporary avant-garde and more populist forms of culture, and - in

a faintly antagonistic sense - appears to say that there are correct and incorrect ways of understanding these art works.

McCabe, in her conclusion, summarizes the event as 'a futuristic wonderland that sees our senses converge' (2011); we might speculate that this demonstrates the concomitant processes of rhetoric and descriptive license on the part of the critic/aesthete but, more significantly, what we are seeing is how rhetoric - in this case a description of events - can reflect or influence an understanding of spatial dynamics. The critic's role in this instance is to describe, and therefore capture, what was there and what it may have meant, again reinforcing the boundaries of what can and cannot be considered appropriate art and, to an extent, appropriate engagement. Alongside this, the critic also constructs linkages between images and symbols - including the futurescape depicted in the film *Blade Runner* - that facilitate classificatory practices on behalf of other participant groups, allying the aural with the visual through a type of data intersectionality.

An alternative example, which is not strictly textual, but uses rhetoric to alter perceptions, can be seen in Mark Fisher's involvement in the conference strand at Netaudio (Spokes 2011); here we are again drawing on field notes taken at the event. The opening panel of the conference was made up of academics, tax protestors from UK Uncut and the contemporary avant-garde musician Matthew Herbert; the topic was 'Politics and Protest'. On a basic level, the continued intertwining of participant roles is evident in critics and artists sharing the conference platform, but on a spatially-specific level Fisher exemplifies not only the use of rhetorical devices to shape spatial understandings, but, moreover, the ways in which representations of space can be destabilized by the representational, and how musical practice can be connected with broader societal concerns. Fisher's talk was partially framed as a response to Herbert's - which we will arrive at presently - and involved the notion of 'sonic militancy', or the methods musicians could use to contribute towards a post-capitalist society. The talk was polemical, with Fisher calling for 'a resistance to what is taken for reality' as well as noting the problems with music and its relationship with political action: all too readily, Fisher suggested, musicians distance themselves from explicit political engagement, and this is how music culture is eventually commodified by capitalism. In this sense, Fisher echoes Eagleton's argument in Chapter 2 and Terranova's observation about complicity, here facilitated by intentional inaction on the part of the artist. An adjunct to this is

that new forms of technology offer opportunities not for collaboration but rather for putting increasing distance between people, enabling a retreat from the pressures of 'genuine' interaction and, by association, collectivized action. The specifics of this message are something we will contemplate in the next chapter with regards to resistance, but they also highlight a number of issues that connect rhetoric and spatiality.

On an observational level, representations of space can be seen in the delineation of a formalised conference space for the talks, where there existed a clear split between those who were talking - the critics and the artists - and those who were listening (the audience) mirroring the performer/audience dynamic found in the traditional notions of live performance we addressed earlier in this chapter. Following the talks, there was a question and answer session where the audience were allowed to respond to both critics and artists. This arrangement reinforced representations of space in terms of the assumptions and roles of individual participant groups, framed by the particular spatial arrangement of the room the conference was held in; in terms of dialogue and narrative it also suggested a separation between those who could speak first, and those who had to wait. Representationally, Fisher's vociferous polemic about the insouciance of artists and audiences in the face of the destructive forces of capitalism had the potential to transform the interactions between audiences and art works during the festival itself as alongside the implied meaning offered by artists, Fisher was suggesting a way of knowing allied to a socio-political discourse, reinforcing interpretive frameworks and boundaries during the event itself. Crucially, this demonstrates the role that different participant groups can play in shaping spatial understanding, where critics offer a rhetorical reading of the role of the art featured at the event. This is potentially destabilizing when we situate it within the organizer-defined spatial boundaries of the festival - a conference space, a workshop space, a live performance space, an installation space - as Fisher's suggestion is that any separation is false, and collaborative practice should be embraced and embodied across these distinctions in opposition to codification (even if Fisher himself is implicated in this process by occupying the role of the 'antagonist').

To summarize our findings in this section, rhetorical space, from a critic's perspective, can be seen as an environment where textual descriptions may facilitate a destabilizing of representations of space through implication (Reed),

intertextual associations (McCabe) and political action (Fisher). However, we must also consider that these attacks can also be read as new forms of codification, where destabilization itself becomes a convention of the contemporary avant-garde.

6.6.2 Use by artists

Matthew Herbert, who we mentioned briefly in the previous section, gave the key note address at the conference strand on politics and protest (Spokes 2011); Herbert does not self-identify as a hauntological musician, but his cultural output, when considered in light of the categories and classifications provided by participants, can be considered hauntological. Here - again drawing on field notes taken at the event - we will consider the impact of an artist's rhetoric, where an artist engages directly with the audience unmediated by the interpretive frameworks of other participant groups (with the obvious exception of the researcher). During his talk, Herbert framed his own musical output around what he termed '17 crises' of music today, which ranged from production to consumption and even broader notions of the institutions of the political left. Herbert's use of rhetoric is similar to Fisher's but perhaps serves a different purpose. In Becker's schema, critics have an interpretive function, so in the case of a work of art a critic may offer a way of reading or understanding the latent meanings present in a work; this is not simply what the artist is showing, but rather how the work relates to other cultural forms or the concepts that underpin the work, at least in their purview (1982: 133-5). By discussing 17 crises from his own perspective, Herbert is potentially challenging or undoing this critical function, offering an interpretation that is not filtered through the critics. This approach echoes Jim Jupp in the previous chapter, who uses the organizational structure of his record label to control the aesthetic and interpretive readings of the music he releases. It also shows how forms of rhetoric can challenge the associations and expectations of the social in representations of space.

However, the superseding of the critics interpretive framework by Herbert in this scenario also suggests a binary distinction or opposition; in fact, we should view this as a form of collaborative work. Within this context, both artists and critics are able to ally artistic practices with rhetoric and polemical dialogue; for example, rather than viewing Herbert as intentionally isolated from different participant groups as a result of his individual approaches, his ideas are explicitly connected to

those of the other panellists - including Professor Jeremy Gilbert, a cultural and political theorist from the University of East London, as well as representatives from UK Uncut - through association. While representations of spaces see the physical arrangement of different participant groups in the conference room, this is interrogated in a representational sense by Herbert's direct dialogue on the meaning of his music, in conjunction with the interpretive work, dissimilar or otherwise, of critics like Fisher; this multitude of approaches all feed into the development of the hauntological metadiscourse. Importantly, in connecting his musical practice with political issues, Herbert establishes a relationship between the contemporary avant-garde activity in our case study and what is traditionally seen as the political remit of the historical avant-garde, namely the activism of the left. This offers an additional way of understanding the art work at the festival, contributing to the interpretations of critics, and the evolving nature of audience experience in a spatial sense, as definitions and attitudes continue to be contested by rhetoric.

It is vital to emphasise, however, that Herbert's perspective is not necessarily a universally accepted position, merely one example of the ways in which some artists may use rhetorical devices to affect understandings of cultural space. In terms of our discussion, all we are suggesting is that by using the case study of Netaudio and the various locations it utilizes and occupies, we can observe examples of the complexity of theatrical space, the merging of multiple perspectives, the ways in which representations of space and the representational facilitate the assembly of meaning. Critics use rhetoric to destabilize some socially-accepted readings of representations of space - as in the case of the reviews of the Sonic Maze - as well as allying spatiality with political positioning, as in the case of Mark Fisher who delineates the contemporary avant-garde as a site of resistance through the spatial segregation of the conference at the festival. Artists build on this in a different way, delimiting the interpretive readings of their work by directly engaging in forms of dialogue with audiences, albeit dialogue mediated by the institutional conventions of a conference. Regardless of whether these processes are intentional (through the delineating of space for different purposes such as conferences/workshops) or unintentional (such as the way audiences interpret their sensory experiences) they enable collaborative, sometimes tacit, meaning-making practices between participant groups and these relationships further contribute towards the boundary construction of a dynamic and developing advanced art world.

6.7 Conclusion

We opened this chapter by framing our investigations in relation to our empirical observations in previous chapters, alongside the following empirical research question: how is spatiality constituted in our case study, and how might it relate to concomitant issues of classification and organization? Throughout this chapter we have demonstrated the diverse ways in which spatiality is constituted. We began by considering how space has been explored in a number of case studies. From this we ascertained that, despite certain differences in relation to genre and participation, these studies identified similar spatial arrangements including festivals and music venues. With this in mind, we detailed firstly our conceptualization of space - reading live performances and installation space through the notion of the theatrical in the work of Henri Lefebvre - and secondly the reasoning behind our selection of the Netaudio festival as indicative of the multifaceted spatial arrangements operating within our case study. Our intention was twofold. Initially, we sought to demonstrate the role that non-virtual spaces played in relation to classification and organization. We were then concerned with the ways in which we might comprehend these differing spatial forms as locations where acts of destabilization occur.

Our argument is that, in the contemporary avant-garde, destabilization is a characteristic that cuts across all the forms of non-virtual spatiality we have looked at. In terms of live performance, representations of space were destabilized through the collaborative activities of artists and audiences, where through the act of performance, the challenging of spatial associations is facilitated. Here we explored how artists such as Valerio Tricoli and Nurse with Wound achieve this; in the first case, Tricoli implicating the audience in the performance itself and in the process deconstructed conventional understandings of the separation between audience and artist by making visible the individual spatial arrangements of his music; in the second case, Nurse with Wound problematizing the broader notion of institutionally-defined space by facilitating contestation from participants in terms of arenas that are deemed appropriate for performance and dialogue. In both cases, live performance space could be seen as directly connected to classificatory activity and organizational structures as artists and audiences used their spatially contingent

interactions as a way of delimiting aspects of the hauntological aesthetic, or metadiscourse, contributing to the processes we witnessed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Installation space was also understood as a locale for socially-mediated destabilization, but the interactions between audiences and artists were temporally distinct, with the artists rarely present when audiences experienced the work. We saw how, from both a researcher and participant perspective, representations of space - where conventions and expectations shape social action - were interrogated and destabilized by representational art, as certain pieces of work intentionally antagonized spatial arrangements and forced audiences to act and react in response. To this end, we noted the issues around navigating these spatially-contested environments, and the tentative (and sometimes confused) interpretive activities on the part of both researcher and audience members. In the case of the Sonic Maze, we saw how installation art offered chances for audience-led destabilization through collaborative, bodily practices and mutual cooperation.

In terms of rhetorical space, we saw how critics contributed to the blurring of spatial distinctions (the essence of theatrical space) by reflecting on Netaudio post-hoc, through descriptive and interpretive reviews (or indeed by becoming actively involved in collaborative disruption as Mark Fisher did at the conference strand on the Netaudio festival). We also noted how Matthew Herbert's political position contributed to the hauntological metadiscourse through the use of rhetoric. Ultimately, these differing approaches are typified by what Lefebvre calls superclassification and supercoding, where ideas and approaches overlap, coalesce, and dissemble and meanings, in line with our observations of classificatory practices and organizational systems in the previous two chapters, are multiple (1991: 233).

Whilst this is not necessarily an objective codification of all the spatial practices in our case study, the view we have presented demonstrates how attempts are made to destabilize representations of space in favour of multifarious explanations and lived experiences. These practices are not entirely successful, but then as Lefebvre suggests theatrical space never fully realises the totality of one or the other, but rather exists in an in-between phase (32-5). Nonetheless, attempts at destabilization suggest that in the contemporary avant-garde, a resistant approach to simplistic interpretations of spatial dynamics is taking place, contrary to the geographical fixity we uncovered with regards to the historical avant-garde.

However, important questions are raised by these approaches, questions which feed into the narrative of the contemporary avant-garde in relation to the subject of our final empirical chapter: resistance. Throughout this chapter we have noted the interplay and tension between representations of space and representational space that, as Lefebvre suggests in relation to theatrical space, sees these notions challenged, but not necessarily resolved. This absence of resolution can be allied to the concerns of both critics and artists in relation to rhetoric. Mark Fisher calls for a 'resistance to that which is called reality' and, similarly, Matthew Herbert highlights the crises afflicting music culture today. Both the critic and the artist tie current sociocultural and political problems with music as a form of intentional response. Although we have intimated that this position is not necessarily accepted by all in the contemporary avant-garde, it does speak to a tangible link between historical and contemporary forms of avant-garde practice and these require further enquiry. We have already observed some of resistive practices that take place, in the form of artistic interventions (live performance and installation art) that challenge spatial dynamics. However, the resistance suggested by Matthew Herbert and Mark Fisher appears to go beyond that which can be understood through concomitant processes of classification, organization and spatiality. Within this context, we need to consider the contemporary avant-garde in light of the historical, and acquaint ourselves with some of the contradictions levelled at this avant-garde, as suggested in Chapter 2.

Roland Barthes in *Mythologies* (2009) and Hans Magnus Enzensberger in *The Consciousness Industry* (1962) suggest that the avant-garde is incapable of being truly resistive because of its ties to certain institutional structures. We noted earlier in this chapter (section 6.2) that artists associated with the historical avant-garde were supported by differing forms of patronage, be that State funding (in the case of Pierre Schaeffer and the French government) or institutional funding (in the case of the Radiophonic Workshop and the B.B.C.); we can see this echoed, to an extent, in our field site of Netaudio. The festival was organised by a community interest group called Cenatus CIC, but the funding came from the National Lottery, the Jerwood Foundation, Camden Council, the University of East London, Last.FM and SoundCloud, to name a few (Cenatus n.d.). The suggestion here is that this particular event would not be possible if it were not for certain forms of patronage from charitable organizations and businesses. There is a paradox here, with participants

involved in challenging spatial dynamics and offering a rhetoric of resistance whilst simultaneously requiring non-virtual space to host events, and financial support from the sorts of institutions they are potentially rallying against. In the next chapter we will explore the role resistance plays in the contemporary avant-garde, allying theoretical perspectives and debates with analysis of artistic practice and interview materials.

Chapter 7 - Practices of Resistance

7.1 Resistance and politics

The intention of this final empirical chapter is to draw together a number of strands from previous chapters in an effort to understand the role resistance plays in the contemporary avant-garde. As we saw in Chapter 2, different approaches and practices of resisting have been considered - by a number of scholars - to be central pillars of the historical avant-garde (see Barthes 1981; Eagleton 1985; Bauman 1997; Adlington 2009) and part of this thesis has been about highlighting points of similarity and departure between the historical and contemporary strands of the avant-garde; this process will continue here through the exploration of how participants in our case study practice resistance and how this relates to broader narratives of the avant-garde. The confluence of potentially oppositional attitudes to resistance may imply instability but, we will argue, although there are considerable challenges in terms of unifying the disparate aims of dissimilar social actors, these subjective approaches are still rooted in dialogue and negotiation, which demonstrates, to some extent, that our case study - as indicative of the contemporary avant-garde more broadly - can be conceptualized as a resistive entity. Resistance, when considered across both historical and contemporary iterations of the avant-garde, is a convention, one which is practiced, if not explicitly accepted, by all participant groups and the collaboration and interplay between these differing forms underlines the sort of collective activity Becker cites as indicative of a highly developed art world (Becker 1982: 28-31).

To address the issues around practices of resistance we will, in part, return to some of our earlier empirical concerns. In Chapter 4 we saw that processes of classification involved negotiation between different participant groups, and that the boundaries of what is or is not considered hauntological are malleable and open to frequent recodification through dialogue. Resistance may be located in and around this sort of boundary work, perhaps taking the form of a particular artist's approach to cultural production or the ways in which critics offer interpretive readings of cultural artefacts. As with classification, resistance can operate on a micro level - where individual approaches to composition can highlight an artist's political stance - or on a macro level, in terms of the subversion of broader notions of dominant cultural identities. To understand how resistance is constituted we will

need to consider individual examples of resistance (musical, technological, rhetorical) and the ways in which they speak to the wider narratives in which the contemporary avant-garde is situated.

Before moving on to consider a number of examples from our case study it is worth making a differentiation between *politics* and *resistance*, as the terms will be utilized in different ways in the context of this chapter. Politics, particularly in the historical avant-garde, was considered to be synonymous with a particular brand of left-leaning activism (Eagleton 1985) and while it is accurate to say that certain artists in the historical avant-garde were explicitly political in their approach to composing and performing - we discussed M.E.V. and Cornelius Cardew in relation to this in Chapter 2 - one of the potential fallacies of arguments against the validity of the avant-garde rests on this type of simplistic left-right dichotomy. In this chapter, some artists may be political in a traditionally leftist sense, but others may not. To differentiate between politics and resistance, we need to conceptualize politics as a small-scale practice, by which we mean it is a personalized approach (even if this factors into wider debates). Resistance on the other hand can be thought of as overarching, a complex series of practices - some interrelated, some not - that all contemporary avant-garde participants are involved in; this may take the shape of more traditional activism, but equally it might involve choices about compositional technology, or the ways in which cultural artefacts are consumed, or debated. Simply put, we are considering politics as a micro, individualized action and resistance as a broader, macro-level collective activity, or developmental convention.

In Chapter 3 we discussed the methods of data collection and analysis we would be using throughout this thesis and it is worth briefly re-familiarising ourselves with the methodological approaches we intend to use in this chapter. As well as continuing to draw on the field notes from the previous chapter, our source material will return to a consideration of primary interviews with artists in the first instance, augmented by secondary interview material where necessary. Interviews will be supplemented, as in earlier chapters, with interpretive analysis of related textual documents as indicative of forms of dialogue; in this sense we are building on the methodological approaches found in earlier chapters, but in this case we will also be considering rhetoric in terms of resistance, following on from looking at rhetoric in relation to spatiality in Chapter 6. We will again focus on a handful of

examples as exemplars of broader activity in both our case study and the contemporary avant-garde; whilst these examples represent a relatively small percentage of the resistive activities of participants, they are not diminished by this, rather their use reemphasises our epistemological standpoint in terms of the importance of partial perspectives as this is how participants identify with the features of their art world. Practices of resistance will cluster around two key attributes that we have identified in previous chapters, namely continuing practices of classification (which will involve dialogue around the production and consumption of cultural artefacts) and the role of rhetoric in delineating hauntology from other music cultures.

We concluded the previous chapter with a discussion of Matthew Herbert, whose conference paper at Netaudio established him as an overtly political artist, producing work that directly engages with socio-political issues. Moving on from the spatial contingency of his talk, in this chapter we will explore his resistive practices by considering the relationship between his artistic output and the political position he has forwarded. In terms of resistance, our interest is in comprehending the connection between cultural production and politics, which is sociologically interesting because it may connect the contemporary avant-garde with its historical forebears, alongside facilitating a further means of classification, with pieces of art deemed political or otherwise. To this end we will also detail the political approaches of other artists including Christopher DeLaurenti, Francisco López and Richard Skelton, comparing and contrasting their differing approaches to composition and politics.

Jim Jupp, who we discussed in Chapter 5, has expressed - in secondary interview material - a distaste for this type of politicking (Hood 2010); our own primary interview material, most notably responses by William Basinski which we will return to later in this chapter, has also revealed this concern, so moving away from explicit political engagement, we will consider how resistance might operate in less overt ways, through compositional and intertextual means, in relation to the perpetuation of the metadiscourse we detailed in Chapter 4. Using examples from a number of hauntological artists - namely Belbury Poly, Moon Wiring Club, D.D.Denham and The Caretaker - we will also consider how academic discourses on hauntology, particularly Sexton's work on 'the uncanny' and Mark Fisher's

exploration of 'crackle', contribute to our understanding of less-traditional forms of resistive practice.

Augmenting these narratives of cultural production is the use of rhetoric. We will continue our exploration of the ways in which critics employ rhetoric as a discursive interpretive framework, building on our observations of event reviews in Chapter 6, by analysing particular rhetorical forms in relation to the themes which have intersected our research (such as the establishment and negotiation of boundaries which contribute to a broader hauntological metadiscourse). We will close by assessing the differing impacts these forms of resistance have, as well as returning to the issues raised in Chapter 2 about the effectiveness or otherwise of the avant-garde as an overarching cultural project.

We will begin by considering four artists whose practices of resistance engage directly, in a positive or problematizing sense, with politics; in considering these artists, our intention is to understand how resistance is practiced by one group of participants, and to assess points of similarity and departure between these examples. In Chapter 2 and Chapter 6 (in relation to narratives and spatiality respectively) we saw how resistance was a key feature of historical avant-garde practice, so in exploring these different hauntological artists we hope to comprehend how micro-level politics relates to macro-level resistance in the contemporary avant-garde.

7.1.1 Matthew Herbert

Reflecting on the field notes collected at Netaudio, we saw in Chapter 6 that Matthew Herbert's key note address demonstrated the contested arrangement of representations of space and the representational within the hauntological art world: it also offered an overt political engagement with an apparent crisis of the left. Herbert's paper addressed what he termed '17 crises' in music today, many of which echoed the sorts of concerns we have already drawn upon. Of the seventeen crises listed, Herbert makes reference to issues with cultural production (technique, texture, repetition, laziness, distribution and authenticity as he terms it), framed within broader systemic concerns about geopolitics (engagement with capitalism, right wing politics, philosophy and climate are all cited), or what he describes as an overarching 'crisis of the left'. He details these issues in a generally playful fashion - his references to the absurdity of music and capitalism involves a story about

Beyoncé performing at a birthday party for Colonel Gaddafi - but is clearly serious about the wider implications of a failure to engage politically through cultural production and activism (Spokes 2011).

Herbert's key anecdote during the speech involved this combination of serious political intent and playful subversion. During the recording process of the Matthew Herbert Big Band's second album - *There's Me and There's You* - Herbert had visited Palestine and asked people there to record their 10 favourite and 10 least favourite sounds on some digital recorders that he had provided. When he received the recorders back, a frequently recorded 'least favourite sound' was that of tanks on manoeuvres in the Occupied Territories. More upsettingly, someone else had provided the sound of the Israeli Defence Force (I.D.F) shooting a protestor at a rally. Herbert said he was unsure what to do with the sound; he did not know if the protestor had survived or not, and wanted to do the sounds justice rather than simply removing them from context, considering the effort that people had gone to to record the sounds (Spokes 2011).



Fig.1 Israel Eurovision introductory video (Solovey 2009)

Figure 1 shows the video accompanying Israel's entry at the 2009 Eurovision Song Contest. At first glance, the video appears to be relatively innocuous in terms of its content. It shows a number of colourful examples of the cultural icons and conventions that the filmmaker has decided typify Israel; the other video introductions at the Contest have similar functions and layouts with different pieces of music attached to images associated with the countries performing at the event.

The filmmaker, as Herbert tells the story (Spokes 2011), was a personal friend of his and offered him the job of composing the 30 second soundtracks which accompany each video. Herbert saw this as the perfect opportunity to utilize the recordings he had; the soundtrack for Israel's entry uses the sound of I.D.F gunfire as a snare drum with the tank manoeuvres employed as a distorted climax reminiscent of an electric guitar. Listening again, with this in mind, the soundtrack can be understood as a subversive juxtaposition, a commentary on the ongoing situation in the Occupied Territories that was broadcast to hundreds of millions of people who watched Eurovision.

It is of course debatable how many people are or were aware of the satire present in this introduction but to an extent this is unimportant; what is important is the continuing activist intent of the artist, and that this particular approach locates Herbert's practice within the problematic left/right binary we mentioned earlier. In terms of resistance, in detailing these approaches and concerns to an audience, Herbert is adding rhetorical depth to his musical output, allying specific socio-political causes with descriptions of individual pieces of music; in this sense, for an audience to fully engage they need to be aware of the accompanying narrative. This can also be read as a type of classification, with Herbert offering an interpretive framework through which the sounds take on an additional meaning, demonstrating the relationship between practices of resistance and how music might be categorized as 'political' or otherwise.

Alongside the Eurovision video and conference polemic, his album output is also overtly political; *Plat du Jour* takes issue with the absence of debate around the food chain, using sound samples from battery chicken sheds as source material in one instance (Herbert 2005a) with other tracks limited by a 'manifesto of sound' which prohibits the use of autotune and presets (Herbert 2005b), issues Herbert returned to in his '17 crises' speech.



Fig.2 *One Pig* making-of video (Herbert 2011)

In Figure 2, Herbert discusses how he has taken this approach to its logical conclusion on the album *One Pig*, where the entirety of the release is constructed from samples of a pig's life, from birth through to slaughter and eventual consumption. The accompanying visuals in the release booklet, and associated live performances, reinforce Herbert's message in a way similar to the narrative of the Eurovision subversion and resulted in a widely publicised argument between Herbert and the animal rights group PETA (Malone 2011). This shows that rather than an insulated form of conversation, Herbert's approach speaks to wider audiences through engagement with cultural artefacts.

There is also a clear connection between the historical and the contemporary here. This approach demonstrates activism constituted by Herbert's production techniques, echoing both the compositional approaches of collage and musique concrète used by composers such as Pierre Schaefer, a link further reinforced by Herbert's recent commission as director of the recently reconstituted Radiophonic Workshop (BBC News 2012).

Taken as whole, Herbert's work is indicative of certain artists using compositional technology, in this case sampling and field recordings, to make direct political statements; for Herbert this involves the use of explicit rhetoric reinforced through the interpretive frameworks he packages with his music in the form of liner notes and video material, which we might understand as an indirect form of

dialogue in this instance. The connection with the historical avant-garde is exemplified through the combination of production techniques and political statements, though we should be reluctant to assume more traditional left-wing political standpoints on the part of other hauntological artists without further investigation. Herbert's production techniques, as suggested in his speech at Netaudio, involve making field recordings of particular sites, before using this source material to produce an edited or manipulated aural discourse. In the next section we will consider how other hauntological artists work and respond in a way similar to Herbert.

7.1.2 Christopher DeLaurenti

Herbert, in his use of the politically-charged sample of a protestor being shot, grappled with doing justice to that recording, an issue that is also a central concern of Christopher DeLaurenti, a sound artist whose more recent work has involved recordings involving the Occupy Movement. In terms of combining rhetoric and cultural production as Herbert does, DeLaurenti uses direct dialogue in response to Michael Rösenberg's (2004) review of his recordings: DeLaurenti discusses his production techniques in detail, and how these relate to the political issues he is trying to highlight through his music

Field recording is over a century old, however phonography does not conform to established, commercially-driven ideas of "quality," technique, "fidelity," and subject matter. As a phonographer, I seek to liberate the forbidden elements of field recording—mic handling noise, hiss, narrow frequency response, distorted proximity effect, haphazard directionality, drop-outs, device self-noise, glitchy edits—and not only erode the erroneous idea that recordings objectively represent one "reality" but admit those overt flaws as music. Today's glitch is tomorrow's melody (2005).

There are a number of important points to raise here. Firstly, DeLaurenti identifies himself as a phonographer rather than a musician. This may act as a way of framing engagement with his work, delimiting classification except through self-definition, suggesting he wishes to reinforce the interrelationship between his experiences in the field, in that moment, and the rhetoric of considered responses to questions or concerns such as Rösenberg's. Secondly, DeLaurenti attempts to

distance his practice from 'established, commercially-driven ideas', which can be seen as a form of boundary demarcation, separating what he sees as the commercial logic of popular cultural forms from the contemporary avant-garde. Thirdly, DeLaurenti wants to highlight the significance of artistic practice in facilitating meaning-making, which shows how his rhetoric, while suggesting multiple perspectives, codifies interpretations by denying objective representation.

PLAY NOW: Christopher DeLaurenti - *N30: Live at the WTO Protest, November 30, 1999* (full recording)

DeLaurenti becomes more overtly political later in the same piece, explaining that whilst his sound sites vary, they are all politically relevant in some sense. He discusses two specific pieces in particular, namely *N30: Live at the WTO Protest, November 30, 1999* (which uses recordings from the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle as its setting) and *Live in New York at the Republican National Convention Protest*. His motivation is clearly detailed: 'I live in an unjust world and therefore must act, rebelling when and where I can. Nonetheless, results, not willful [sic] sacrifice or "noble" intentions, make a work succeed' (DeLaurenti 2005). Similarly, he states that the reasoning behind the use of field recordings is 'to preserve oral history made in the moment, and to convey the truth spoken by voices in crisis' (ibid). What we see in DeLaurenti's work then is not the playful activism of Herbert's subversive Eurovision soundtrack, but a style more akin to documentary. It is still one artist's representation of reality, but there is intentionality in attempting to diminish the role of the phonographer, even if we only glimpse this through DeLaurenti's rhetorical framework.

It is also important to note that DeLaurenti feels his work has the potential to enable or facilitate - if only partially - political action, as this suggests a further strengthening of the link between the historical and contemporary strands of the avant-garde. He notes that his *N30* recordings, according to unnamed political organizers at least, are used by first-time protestors to acclimatize themselves to the noise and chaos that ensues when law enforcement break up a protest; "'it's not music" said one, "it's a training manual"' (DeLaurenti 2014). This ties in with Herbert and the PETA protest, where the actions of contemporary avant-garde composers have a tangible political outcome in a form of direct action, and is not

entirely dissimilar to the reflective politicized sound work of the microhouse artists Lison (2012) discusses, as in Chapter 2. Despite this, DeLaurenti, rather than reinforcing the argument about the validity of resistance, is more reflexive and identifies the problems associated with his approach

I know I'm documenting only a handful of the voices who inspire me to work and improve the world. Listening cannot bandage a wound and feed someone, but it can expose the behaviors [sic], choices, and culprits who allow the bad news - poverty, property, war, and naive, faultless money - to continue. I'm not worried about John Cage's caution about making things worse. We are already there. The world is too much with us. It is dusk (DeLaurenti 2014).

DeLaurenti acknowledges partial perspectives here, or subjective sound choices, whilst also foregrounding, in a rhetorical sense, those he deems to be at fault. Crucially this suggests some level of self-awareness, an issue that Enzensberger (1962) felt was absent from the historical avant-garde.

What do we learn from these two approaches in a broader sense? We see that through cultural production some artists engage with resistance in an overtly political way, allying their musical work with rhetoric to highlight socio-political issues, be they animal rights or protest marches. The success of this is difficult to gauge, but the crucial point is the wanting to be involved, as was the case with the spatial contestation in the previous chapter, and through these activities politicized rhetoric becomes another means by which dialogue is enacted and the metadiscourse expanded. Artists may offer only partial approaches, but they facilitate the development of conventions within the art world, and alert audiences and critics to potential ways of knowing through engagement with cultural artefacts.

The binding of rhetoric with musical production is also significant. In these examples both of the artists use field recordings, directly sampling their environments and using the material as a sound source. In this instance, technology plays an important role in codifying experiences and messages, the potential implication being that field recordings are well suited to representing political issues or expressing ideas of resistance. However, other hauntological composers who work in the same medium challenge this assertion and by exploring their work

we might understand the complex interplay between composition, politics and resistance.

7.1.3 Francisco López and Richard Skelton

Francisco López is another sound artist who utilizes field recording techniques. In Chapter 1 we discussed his live practice, which involved blindfolding his audience in an attempt to facilitate individual engagement via sensory deprivation. One of the issues we raised was what this kind of experience was supposed to signify. If we consider the performance in light of the practices we discussed in the previous chapter, it can be understood as destabilizing spatial demarcations, but in terms of situating it within the rhetoric offered by other field recording artists, the move towards communicating a political position through music is not one shared by López; addressing the issue directly, he states that he has ‘no interest in “representing” anything specific with my music. I actually have a strong commitment to do just the opposite’ (2003).

What this means in terms of resistance is manifold. The relationship between the micro and macro for López is not a simplified historical dichotomy of left and right, but rather an approach to sound work that enables audiences to engage with the sound on their own terms, without the necessary baggage that accompanies the rhetoric offered by Herbert and DeLaurenti. López characterizes this as ‘a blank phenomenological terrain where everyone is compelled to create and move through’ (2003).

Primary interviews were conducted with López whilst he was on tour in Japan in 2011. The point about blank phenomenological terrain was raised during these interviews, the contention being that audience members would already come to a performance with certain expectations of what was going to happen, a result of ‘ what they [the audience] need to know to play their part in the cooperative activity’ (Becker 1982: 50); in terms of art world conventions, this may be the result of what is assumed appropriate in a concert environment (blindfolding not being the norm for most musical performances) or audience members may have familiarized themselves with the set up in advance, so are expecting to experience the performance in a certain way, tying resistance with Lefebvre’s representations of space (1991: 33) from Chapter 6. López, however, countered this, stating that it was

completely irrelevant for the listeners to know any of this. When the conditions are carefully worked out (and blindfolds are a simple example of this), a lot of people engage naturally -without being aware of it, of course- in what we could see as the creation of those individual [sic] “blank phenomenological terrains” (López 2011).

Here, López is suggesting a kind of ‘total music’ in line with the historical avant-garde and the work of John Cage and Pierre Schaefer, which has been highlighted in previous interviews (see, for example, Cox 2000). There was then the potential for audiences to ally this sort of highly-managed performance set up with the historical approaches alluded to by López in these exchanges. Again, he countered this assertion:

I don’t see these historical/philosophical references as conceptual /theoretical in any sense of influence in my music. I’m just personally interested in some of these ideas, but they have nothing to do with what we could call “composition” or “aesthetics” in my work (López 2011).

It was then suggested that Cox (2000) had described López’s work as neo-modernist, and that López himself had located the ideas of total or absolute music within traditions of Romanticism (Simons 2004). In pushing this line of enquiry, the intention was to understand how López’s work was potentially situated in a rhetorical sense, within modernist and postmodernist paradigms, in an effort towards drawing the debate back to a clearer notion of the contemporary avant-garde. López, however, was keen to steer things away from this type of codification

Modernism and post-modernism are cultural socio-historical frames of reference. No more, no less. Their explanatory/descriptive [sic] power is limited, questionable and often misleading, but we shouldn’t have an excessive [sic] allergy to them as well (López 2011).

Concerns around situating his practices within a tradition of modernism or postmodernism have also surfaced in secondary interview material, in questions related to his dual role as a composer and scientist (López trained as an entomologist). His response suggests ongoing resistance to assumptions about this relationship

The more you've worked in science the more you realize how relative, paradigm-biased and temporary are demonstrations [sic], proofs and, in general, that thing called "scientific truth", something that was quite shattered during post-modernist takes on science (Kuhn, Feyerabend, etc.)(Cuzner 2010).

Resistance for López is political, but in a way that eschews the binary of left and right that we have seen directly referenced by Herbert and DeLaurenti. He identifies some theoretical approaches that might inform his work (in Kuhn and Feyerabend) but implies that his overall political stance is unimportant. Of greater importance is the sound itself, in the sense that certain frameworks and rhetorical structures offered by other artists co-opt meaning-making on the part of audiences. In interviews López appears hostile to the notion of codification; in Herbert and DeLaurenti's cases, their recordings can only be listened to in one way, in the sense that proscriptive meanings are attached to the sound by the artist, but in López's case this is intentionally stripped away.

López is not alone in his want for spaces where meaning-making is constituted by an individual's active engagement with a piece of work. Richard Skelton also interposes the role of transformative experience in his work; like Herbert, his work combines field recordings with other forms of instrumentation. Skelton's work not only involves the impact of loss in his personal life - as we touched on in Chapter 1 - but also resistance against collectivised interpretations of experience, enabling participant groups to engage on their own terms.

I don't consciously think of my music as a vehicle for emotion. Whatever is transmitted 'is', and I have no control over it, nor would I want any. I've always viewed music as a life-affirming, transformative energy...it stems from a time when I picked up a guitar after a long period during which I hadn't played, and - as if for the first time - feeling the instrument against my own chest, the sensation of its body resonating in sympathy with the strings, and my body resonating in sympathy with it. It was a singular, transformative moment (Burnett 2014).

In this secondary interview, Skelton offers a personal reflection on the vibrations and resonance of particular instruments, but also suggests that whatever is being conveyed aurally is transmitted outside of his control. This removes the agency of the artist in one sense, and situates the sound outside of critique as individualized experience becomes valid; here, according to López and Skelton,

personal responses to cultural artefacts and performances, rather than codified experiences, can take place: essentially resistance through personal engagement. This is potentially a different approach to that of artists who proscribe meaning, such as Herbert and DeLaurenti, but the success of these blank phenomenological spaces is questionable; López may minimize sensory perception in performance spaces, and Skelton may offer his own personal responses to the transformative nature of sound, but as Becker suggests, there are still expectations that accompany artistic practices (1982: 40-2) and these artists cannot entirely escape the development of conventions, even if non-conformity becomes a convention in and of itself. Ultimately, what these differing approaches point to is that production techniques are not enough to unify resistive activities. This, to an extent, mirrors the classificatory difficulties we witnessed on the part of audiences in Chapter 4, except in this case similar-sounding artists are differentiated through their political (or apolitical) positioning. In the next section we will consider how resistance may be framed outside of traditional forms of political engagement, thereby augmenting our observations and analysis of these examples with alternative approaches to the macro-level metadiscourse.

7.2 Resistance and artistic practices

What we have seen so far is that there is no firm relationship between the role of politics and resistance as a left/right binary, at least in relation to artists with similar production techniques. This suggests a diversity of approaches, but also reemphasizes the issues raised in Chapter 2 about the validity of the avant-garde as a site of resistance; if there is no unity of approach then how does resistance operate? If we consider the necessary complexity suggested by Becker (1982) in relation to participants in art worlds - the roles of mavericks, folk artists and naïve artists in reconfiguring conventions, or the potential overlap between artists, audiences, critics and aestheticians - then it is perhaps sensible to conceptualize resistance as equally diverse; López and Skelton have already demonstrated contextualized and individualized engagement, so we can surmise that not all hauntological artists are engaged in resistance in the left/right political sense.

Resistance can also relate to classificatory practices. Critics, in offering interpretive frameworks for understanding cultural artefacts, may distort an artist's intentions in producing that piece of work; if we consider the sorts of theorizing

done by critics such as Mark Fisher and Simon Reynolds - in terms of associating hauntology with certain cultural artefacts - artists offer a certain level of resistance towards the restrictive nature of this form of categorization. In primary interviews, for example, Jim Jupp of Ghost Box Records stated - in relation to Fisher and Reynolds - that 'there seems to be a lot of intellectual baggage and argument tied up in the H word, its [sic] a lot to live up to and I can see it becoming a stick to beat us with' (Jupp 2011). This demonstrates awareness in terms of the function of critical interpretations, but also concerns about prefiguring engagement, as suggested by López and a wariness about the outcome of delimiting an audience's engagement with cultural artefacts. This is reinforced in secondary interview material.

It was completely unexpected, for a year or so music forums and blogs gave us loads of coverage and there was endless (sometimes very heated) debate about what we were doing and what it meant. Its [sic] a very strange feeling having your motivations dissected like this, kind of annoying and flattering in equal measure. I think the debate carries on but now its [sic] just about hauntology and hopefully and we're not really such a hot topic. I've still no idea what hauntology is though and couldn't give a hoot about Derrida or Baudrillard (Hood 2010).

In this case, aside from identifying the sorts of music forum debates we explored in Chapter 4, Jupp again locates frameworks which have come to predominate the discourses around his work, publically articulating his concerns about the theories that have been applied to his record label and the artists associated with it (within this, we might also wonder about Jupp's view of academics engaging in similar practices, although this is not something that was communicated in primary interview material).

Building on this consideration, these classificatory concerns are not simply the preserve of artists and critics, but can also include the researcher; for example, William Basinski - a sound artist based in New York who is best known for his piece *Disintegration Loops* - was approached for interview in response to both this type of codification and the role that technology plays in his work, as critics have identified a seemingly important connection between concept and practice in this respect (Kawaii 2010).

PLAY NOW: William Basinski - *Disintegration Loops* 1.1 (excerpt)

Following similar lines of questioning to earlier secondary interviews, an impasse was reached; Basinski was asked about the ways in which his work had been interpreted in light of his compositional practice (the composition of *Disintegration Loops* involved old tape loops collapsing as they were transferred to digital storage, mirroring the collapse of the World Trade Centre which was visible from Basinski's window at the time). His response ended the interview in a relatively abrupt fashion:

Please forgive me for stalling on this, but unfortunately the issues you address in these questions are not concerns of mine, so i'm afraid I have nothing to say about it. If you ever want to talk about the music, I'll try again (Basinski 2011).

In Basinski's case, the use of technology was identified by participant groups as intrinsic to the ways in which *Disintegration Loops* had been represented, so at first it was difficult to appreciate this reaction except as indicative of the sort of irritation suggested by Jupp. Slightly confused as to being closed out by Basinski, contact was made again with questions reframed around the music as intimated in Basinski's previous response. The reply was curt: 'I'm so sorry but I have no time for this' (Basinski 2011).

What we see then is that, aside from highlighting methodological issues in interview-based scenarios, technology plays a role in both the compositional practice of artists and the interpretive framework of critics and audiences (or, indeed, researchers) and within this there are points of tension and resistance. Basinski, in secondary interview material, expands on this problematic relationship between artistic production and ancillary interpretive frameworks: 'so the critics certainly had something to dive into with the title, first, and then what happened [with the loops falling apart] second, and of course the relationship to 9/11, as well. But, I don't know... It's still hard to talk about' (Dorof 2012). The role of technology is a recurrent theme across the hauntological spectrum with Fisher's interviews with Jessica Rylan on the role of machines in her compositional practice (2005) and Adam Harper's overview of the role of outdated technology and hauntological aesthetics (2009) but two examples of this in practice. The question is does technology also factor into practices of resistance as it does classification?

7.2.1 Technology

We have so far identified that the role of technology, in terms of classification, is potentially contested, and that this involves a disparity between its use by artists in a compositional sense, and how that use is interpreted or framed by critics. In this section we will consider how the technology used by artists might contribute to practices of resistance. In doing so we are foregrounding artists as the instigators of resistive practices as, if we return to Gunn's three orders of signification, the second order where textual description is applied to the experience of music, can only take place in response to what an artist has produced.

In Chapter 5, we considered the role of technology in facilitating organizational networks, looking at the specific example of Ghost Box and the ways in which developments in technology have enabled artists to become integrated professionals, not only through composition but also through marketing and distributing their work using new digital platforms. In that instance we combined data-crawled information with primary interview materials. During primary interviews, alongside enquiring about the organizational aspects of the record label, Jim Jupp - the label founder - and Ian Hodgson - an artist signed to the label - were also asked about the role technology plays in compositional practice. These questions did not specifically relate to resistance (the nature of these semi-structured exchanges was that topics of discussion were relatively general so as to facilitate the widest possible range of discussions outside of a researcher-developed framework), but their responses demonstrate how resistance cuts across other empirical concerns such as classification, as we have observed elsewhere. We will begin by considering their responses to questions about technology and artistic practice, augmenting this with secondary interview data from Jon Brooks, an artist also involved with the label (as well as self-releasing material via Café Kaput).

PLAY NOW: Belbury Poly - *The Hidden Door/Clockwork Horoscope/Remember Tomorrow* (excerpt)

In 2009, Jim Jupp offered the following summary in relation to his then most recent album, titled *From An Ancient Star*: [I'm looking for] 'more of a focused sound for the whole album, and a focused set of references [...] Like all the Ghost Box stuff, it's an imaginary past. But given that, it's from the late-70s of this imaginary past, if

that makes sense?’ (Hennings 2009). During a primary interview, this quote was framed for Jupp in relation to potential intertextuality and compositional practice:

I was probably thinking specifically about Belbury Poly when I said that. Musically I love using analogue synthesizers and other gear from the late 60s to mid 70s but that gives me a palette of sounds far more vast than those available to a four piece rock band with the advantage of interesting and stimulating limitations of not jumping on all the latest technologies and software (Jupp 2011).

Firstly, Jupp suggests analogue synthesizers offer a variety of different sounds that ‘a four piece rock band’ cannot offer. Here Jupp sees his practice as distinct from other forms of musical activity and composition, distancing himself through his use of technology, the implication being that, as Reed (2011) suggested in Chapter 6, this sort of music is necessarily separate from the more populist or standardized arrangements. Secondly, he views technology as an opportunity to work with certain limitations; this is one of the ways in which we might frame resistance as Jupp is not only suggesting a form of resistance against an expected arrangement of musicians, but in choosing limiting instrumentation, he is also rallying against those who he views as ‘jumping on all the latest technologies’. Limitless opportunity, in compositional terms, is not necessarily helpful. We might also say that this shows how artists in the contemporary avant-garde, in one sense, are involved in codifying their work through the use of certain technological forms. In Jupp’s case this involves the intentional use of outdated instrumentation which offers a vast ‘palette or sounds’. However, this reading presupposes a disdain for the modern based on one response. Later in the interview, Jupp was eager to counter this, saying that

...for Ghost Box in general its not a deliberate process of only using things from the past or a particular period, its just a matter of where our personal tastes have always been - or maybe got stuck as our critics might say [...] And as a group of artists all so drawn to 60s and 70s culture and with all of us hovering either side of 40 its an accusation that's hard to avoid. But I'd stress again that we're more about creating something new from the bits of the past we love so much rather than being some kind of re-enactment society (2011).

What Jupp is saying is that while resistance may be implied by the use of certain forms of technology - in terms of highlighting change and stasis - personal relationships with particular musical forms and equipment are possibly more important. Jupp is positing the idea that technology is not simply being used for the sake of reliving, or recounting, the past, but rather that their concerns as musicians are to use temporally-specific tools to create 'something new' based on personal memories. Resistance can be thought of as a recasting through artistic practice, rather than simply offering a pastiche of older musical styles and in doing so we see parallels with our reflections on Skelton in Chapter 1, where compositional practice was framed by remembrance.

In suggesting this, Jupp also demonstrates his awareness of the label's detractors, echoing, to some extent, the sorts of arguments posited by Barthes (1977) and Bauman (1997) in Chapter 2 in relation to the paradoxes of the avant-garde. The contemporary avant-garde, in their scenario, could not produce anything new, but would rather relive a culture that no longer exists, the state of 'theory-death' that Mann (1991) posits. Jupp does not offer an overt rebuttal of these accusations, but his practice and responses are at least suggestive of a concern about how his work is externally codified. Other artists on the Ghost Box label approach resistance in a similar sense, particularly with regard to the appropriation of old technology.

PLAY NOW: Moon Wiring Club (with Belbury Poly) - *The Young People/Portals and Parallels* (excerpt)

Ian Hodgson, who composes music under the alias of Moon Wiring Club, notes that freely accessible composition technology does not - as Jupp states - facilitate new or revolutionary forms of music; despite Jupp suggesting that the label is interested in creating something new, this is still of particular concern as newness can be allied with the etymological rationale of the avant-garde as a forward fighting force (Bauman 1997). During primary interviews Hodgson raised this issue of newness in relation to the prevalence of software for music making:

I think the increasing prevalence of easily accessible compositional software is part of the larger picture of technology, in that it's a massive plus to be able to make your own music/videos/website,

but the same tools that enable are the same ones that mean it's difficult to stand out, or break out to a wider audience. This is why I think what you could call 'IDM' has pretty much faded in popularity, as that sound is pretty much 'modern computer default sounds' (Hodgson 2011).

Hodgson acknowledges the potential advantages of access here but also notes that from his perspective it is helpful to 'stand out', which is increasingly difficult when everyone uses the same technology. Resistance here is not about newness per se, but can be understood as an opposition to sameness. Hodgson is keen to distance himself from other groups of artists in terms of his idiosyncratic use of technology, resisting forms of classification in one sense by avoiding 'modern default computer sounds'. To do so Hodgson uses his production of cultural artefacts to resist, making a compositional choice to set his work apart from others. This is reinforced in secondary interview material

There's no excuse for something to be half-baked. There's loads of records I've bought over the years with duff tracks, but what's the point in doing that now, if every computer you buy has a home studio inside it? These days anyone could make music, you've got to step up your game - you've got to take it to the next level (Allan 2011).

Hodgson is resistant to being classified based solely on the way in which he composes music. Resistance in this instance is not part of a historical left-wing political stance, but rather another instance of personal micro-politics based on the aesthetic judgements of the artist within a broader interpretive framework offered by other participant groups.

To differentiate his practice, Hodgson uses a PlayStation 2 to compose his music. In doing so, his artistic palette may be partially limited - as advocated by Jupp - but the use of non-standard technology outweighs this by facilitating difference:

In using a PS2 I think I've accidentally found a reasonably idiosyncratic style of making music, but only after years of playing around with it did I manage to produce anything I thought worth sharing with other people (Hodgson 2011).

Hodgson's response is not an arbitrary reaction to an 'us versus them' scenario, but rather one imbricated in a personal narrative of musical experimentation, again echoing Skelton's earlier assertion about the importance of subjective experience in compositional practice. Hodgson is resisting what he views as a linear approach to making music, distinguishing himself by using a games console - a piece of equipment not designed for music - as a compositional tool. This can be viewed as a statement of intent, challenging the commonly understood function of technology, problematizing what can and cannot be considered an appropriate method of cultural production. Moreover, it also shows that the contemporary avant-garde can be challenging when choosing to resist through compositional means; because the PlayStation 2 is not an instrument it requires extra work on the part of the artist to transform it, with Hodgson resisting straightforwardness as Jupp does through his use of analogue equipment.

PLAY NOW: D.D.Denham - *He's Got Something*

These examples show how technology can be used to resist, but technology can also be allied to rhetoric to impel a narrative of resistance. Jon Brooks, who is also signed to Ghost Box as The Advisory Circle, releases music on his own imprint - Café Kaput - under the alias of D.D.Denham, co-composed with Ian Hodgson; their first release is titled *Electronic Music in the Classroom*. Throughout this record, music technology is used in conjunction with rhetoric to establish a specific narrative based on memories of the 1970s. Brooks describes *Electronic Music in the Classroom* as follows:

Let me guide you into the fictitious, colourful world of academic composer D.D.Denham and his pupils. Close your eyes and imagine that the sounds you are listening to emerge from the minds of Mr Denham's class of budding composers. You can practically smell the tape loops as they whizz around jars and broom-handles in makeshift schoolroom studios. You can see the soft light as it chinks through the heavy, lined curtains covering the windows. You can experience the energy of concentration, as these young sonic experimenters work through practical recording techniques with their music teacher (Brooks 2010).

In this description, Brooks allies technological practices of composition to rhetoric to 'set the scene'. He foregrounds technology in relation to the description

of the operation of tape loops, embedding them in a contextual world-view that chimes with apparent period detail (heavy, lined curtains, jars, broom-handles). On a narrative level, Brooks creates an environment where children are apparently being taught about sound via the fictitious academic D.D.Denham and, in turn, this acts as an aesthetic cipher for the audience, who are carried along on the sounds of a bygone era. In doing so Brooks is aping, consciously or otherwise, the historical avant-garde where according to some critics educational records were a useful part of a child's philosophical upbringing, as is the case in B.B.C Radiophonic Workshop founder Daphne Oram's *Listen, Move, Dance* (Mugwump 2010). The outcome is a record which is presented as a historical artefact, something that has been unearthed, when in reality it was only composed a few years ago.

Rhetoric is also being used to restrict comprehension and interpretation; the sounds can only really be understood, Brooks suggests, through the prism of this descriptive work. In terms of resistance, this may imply dissatisfaction with the way that music is interpreted externally, as in this scenario the artist has complete control over what is meant by the sounds, a position reminiscent of the Ghost Box approach in Chapter 5 where the record label has complete creative control over the presentation of the material (although it is of course debatable as to whether or not this approach is successful). In this instance the outcome is an interpretive framework codified by the artist and accepted by critics:

Of course it goes without saying that geography and a sense of place are intrinsic to the purveyors of those critically associated (for better or worse) with the hauntology genre but blow me if you don't find yourself sat in these curious classrooms, participating in the creation of these odd sounds (Mugwump 2010).

Resistance then is an aesthetic classification controlled by one participant group through a combination of rhetoric and compositional practice.

From these three examples, we might consider resistance - facilitated through technology - in a number of different ways. In the case of Jupp, his use of analogue synthesis in favour of digital synthesis suggests an aesthetic response to what he views as the inadequacies of newer technologies. Analogue has a richer sound, which is representative of both the period he wants to evoke in his music, but also offers a commentary on the notion of obsolescence, or technological

redundancy; by utilising this older technology Jupp is able to make a specific statement about the apparently limitless possibilities of new technology. For Hodgson, his use of the PlayStation 2 subverts the notion of what can and cannot be considered a compositional tool, transforming the console into an active site of cultural production. In conjunction with this Hodgson is able to distance himself from other artists, simultaneously resisting methods of composition which he views as predominate. Finally, Brooks creates a narrative of resistance through the guise of a fictitious music teacher and his pupils, disrupting temporal associations (through a recreated but unreal 1970s classroom) and establishing, through both sound and rhetoric, a space for aesthetic engagement and reflection, set apart from the interpretive frameworks offered by critics; Brooks is resisting codification, except on his own terms.

In all of these cases resistance involves engaging with, and reconfiguring cultural artefacts that may be viewed as nostalgic; as Sexton terms it, this reclamation of sound through association is 'alternative heritage' (2012). In this sense we see hauntological artists moving towards subjective histories, constituting the 'now' from what Jupp views as 'the bits of the past we love so much' (2011). While these examples may differ in terms of their individualized uses of technology, they are unified in their approach to resistance, seeking to take control of their own particular narrative. Their practices allow other participant groups to consider the ways in which certain compositional tools are used to create music, and challenge the interpretive frameworks that may develop around certain artists.

7.2.2 Intertextuality

Brooks' combination of rhetoric and music as a means of resistance also speaks to the observations we made in Chapter 4 with regards to the development and maintenance of boundaries. We saw that social actors - artists and critics in this instance - delineate to some extent by ensuring that the cultural artefacts they produce are viewed and understood in certain ways, and part of this process can involve the use of intertextual associations as a way of connecting disparate elements together. For audience members, the classificatory processes we saw on message board threads involved music and film being considered together as a way of making accessible the associations of that which is and is not hauntological; in turn this contributes to the development of a hauntological aesthetic - or a

negotiated collaborative metadiscourse - through a combination of different cultural touchstones or markers. The employment of these dissimilar elements is, as Sexton suggests, a form of alternative heritage (2012), where through the reconfiguring of cultural artefacts, new perspectives on socio-cultural history are possible. In this section we will consider how this process might be understood as an act of resistance.

Our discussion of intertextuality in Chapter 4 was relatively brief so it is worth spending a moment detailing what we mean by intertextuality, and we will extrapolate from primarily textual readings of the term so that we can frame aural artefacts similarly. Barthes views text as 'a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations... The writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them' (1977: 146). This process of merging, as embodied by text, reads similarly to the intertwining of spatial dynamics in Lefebvre's theatrical space as we discussed in the previous chapter. In hauntology, what we see instead of the power 'to mix writings' is the power to mix cultural forms and arrangements, such as different types of artefacts (music, film) within certain spatial arrangements (the virtual world of message board dialogue, or the non-virtual concert hall). Intertextuality in this regard may be conceived as a way of forming boundaries through the organization of disparate elements as we saw with digital archives in Chapter 5. However, as Foucault attests, the establishment of these boundaries is not straight forward.

The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network... The book is not simply the object that one holds in one's hands... Its unity is variable and relative (1974: 23).

Foucault's blending of form, and the potential contention in 'variable and relative' outcomes, reinforces our earlier observations in terms of the negotiations over what can and what cannot be considered hauntological; ultimately, these kinds of dialogue have shaped the metadiscourse of our case study throughout our empirical chapters. Foucault's assessment also suggests that the totality of a work

cannot necessarily be known, but its associations can be traced; in this respect intertextuality has some relationship to Strathern's partial connections, whereby we never know 'the whole' but can only comprehend the particular area we have been implicated in forming, and, with that, our involvement in choosing some perspectives over others *becomes* political (Strathern 2004) - this reading of the intertextual relates not only to the epistemological framework we discussed in Chapter 3 but also to resistance. There is a political significance in terms of what is and is not considered appropriate, what can and cannot be combined, and this mirrors what we observed in Chapter 5 in relation to the role of archons - or curators - in delimiting the hauntological corpus through interactive, online blogs. These choices, which contribute to a wider dialogue on the parameters and limits of the hauntological art world, can be understood as the Foucauldian 'node[s] within a network' (Foucault 1974: 23).

The notion of authorship is also problematized by intertextuality; Barthes suggests that rather than writing a text, authors are instead constructing a text from 'already-written' elements (1974: 21); this again ties in with to our observations of audience-led organizations, in the way that The Hauntological Society arranged and displayed the 'already-written' rather than creating independent content. In relation to resistance, the combination of aural and visual elements from different locations (as in the case of Herbert and DeLaurenti) or different time periods (as in the case of Jim Jupp and Jon Brooks) can be seen as a collage, a form of intertextual assemblage that permits the telling of an alternative historical narrative, one that resists predominant perspectives on cultural heritage and what should be remembered. We will explore this type of resistance through a number of examples from our case study again using artists how have been identified as hauntological by participants.

James Kirby, under his alias The Caretaker, produces work that is intertextual through its blending of sounds and images and the sources he draws inspiration from. During a secondary interview discussing these influences, Kirby cites 'Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* also Dennis Potter's *Pennies from Heaven* and the film *Carnival of Souls*. The music itself too from the 1930's has its own sadness and melancholic sense of loss' (Breznikar 2012). Here Kirby identifies the individual elements that inspire him whilst inferring the synergy of these disparate elements in his own work. Furthermore, his alias 'The Caretaker' is a direct reference to Jack Nicholson's character in *The Shining*, and Kirby's use of warped and distorted dance hall records

references the music of the interwar years, mirroring the soundtrack of the film. Through this form of collage, Kirby shapes patterns of association which is itself implicitly shaped by the works from which he draws, and involves reconfiguration, the development of his own artist-led historical narrative, a destabilizing of the established lineage of historicised cultural artefacts.

Similarly, in discussing the release of Belbury Poly's *From An Ancient Star* with Mark Fisher, Jim Jupp situates the concept for the album as 'both the soundtrack to a 'mysterious world'-type documentary programme of the 1970s and also [...] a bit of cosmic disco from the same period - like the track 'Supernature' by Cerrone. After reading round a bit for some reference material for the album cover it occurred to me that this stuff was perfectly echoed in Lovecraft's mythology which we've often referred to in the past' (Fisher 2009). Jupp combines source material that includes other music, imaginary documentaries (but based on some older cultural signifiers such as public information films) and text in the shape of the occult writings of H. P. Lovecraft, again establishing an alternative narrative, a collage of elements the artist has identified as important or significant. This approach, as Jupp indicates, also inculcates other artists on the Ghost Box label: Julian House draws on similar sources, citing 'books by H. P. Lovecraft, M. R. James' as well as 'weird Czech animations' and even 'Gandalf's Garden', the Sixties commune (Turner 2013). The foregrounding of these disparate materials - the way in which they are situated by artists - shows an alternative reading of aural and visual texts on the part of the artist, and implies a need for similar engagement on the part of the audience.

Resistance in this instance is not necessarily an opposition to standardized notions of heritage - the artists we are discussing do not offer a direct challenge of any sort in primary interview materials - but rather the offering of an alternative historical narrative. This can be conceptualized as an act of destabilization, the presentation of a hidden history through the attempted codification of a hauntological aesthetic. Sexton (2012) suggests that these artists are engaged in creating an 'uncanny environment' where 'the more prosaic signifiers, such as public service broadcasting and post-war concrete edifices, are themselves possible uncanny triggers' (576). In combination with the more subjective signifiers espoused by artists - specific memories of books, or television for instance - hauntological music has 'the potential to revivify dormant memories' (ibid). This is important because this juxtaposition of elements can be understood as an interpretive

framework of resistance, where artefacts, their intertextual associations and rhetorical forms combine to facilitate access to less-dominant or well-known readings of cultural history.

This alternative heritage can also be viewed as hauntology continuing to distance itself from popular culture, the inference being that to truly engage with the music you need to understand increasingly obscure cultural signifiers and the role they play in the broader metadiscourse; without this, you cannot fully participate. Crucially, it shows us that intertextuality is one of the core conventions of the hauntological art world, echoing Becker's observation that art worlds sometimes use 'materials deeply embedded in the culture quite apart from the history of that art medium' (1982: 42) as a way towards meaning-making. Here, new cultural forms are constructed through the arrangement of older, often dissimilar signifiers which in the process challenge established historical narratives of cultural production by implication.

Intertextuality can also be observed in the ways in which critics connect cultural artefacts together; this process is similar to artists who offer interpretive frameworks but here critics respond to art from a position outside of the composer, an alternative but concurrent perspective that is worth interrogating. Here we will consider Adam Harper and Mark Fisher, and the interpretations they offer in terms of allying hauntological music with other forms of cultural artefact.

Harper (2009), on his blog *Rogue's Foam*, offers entries involving artists he considers to be hauntological, including Boards of Canada and Burial (these artists have also been identified as hauntological by audiences in Chapter 4 and artists in Chapter 5, demonstrating a synchronicity of sorts between different participant groups). In terms of the former, he discusses their work in relation to the paintings of Luc Tuymans and Peter Doig (himself a painter influenced by film); in terms of the later, Burial is considered within an extended meditation on mourning, melancholia and memory framed around the paintings of Whistler and Grimshaw. Here Harper highlights the instability and uncanny nature of recollection and reflection by connecting music, painting and emotional states. In doing so, he suggests potential relationships between different art forms, where the conventions of the art world are predicated on the confluence of these artistic forms. Allied with this, he also offers a discussion on the photography of Cold War East Germany and the sculpture and drawings of D-L-Alvarez (ibid), which demonstrates the potentiality for

interpretation based on multiple cultural sources. Not only does this contribute to classificatory work, it also sees Harper developing a narrative that situates hauntological music as part of a historical lineage of his own devising (melancholic painting), a critic's approach to the sort of 'alternative heritage' Sexton suggests (2012) and an example of the role rhetoric can play in creating a collage of meaning.

PLAY NOW: The Caretaker - *Moments of Sufficient Lucidity*

Our earlier example of James Kirby and his work as *The Caretaker* features in the interpretive framework of several of Mark Fisher's journal articles, thereby giving hauntological cultural production further academic substance. Fisher's interpretation of Kirby's practice is not simply about highlighting the re-contextualization of filmic and audio elements, but instead involves allying these artistic choices with theoretical discussions on contemporary issues; for instance, *The Caretaker's* work is read through the conceptual foundations of Frederic Jameson's writings on postmodernity. Fisher, in considering *The Caretaker's Theoretically Pure Anterograde Amnesia* sees the 'crackle, fizz and noise', of the record as 'providing what is in effect a new diagnosis of the pathology of postmodernity. Our problem, for *The Caretaker* as much as Jameson, is not so much that we are seduced by our memories of long ago, but that we cannot produce new memories' (2013: 46). Here resistance involves hauntological music being used as a means for interrogating dominant cultural forms, or as a way of exploring pertinent socio-cultural concerns such as the role of memory and melancholy in contemporary social life. His operationalization sees the contemporary avant-garde assume some of the apparent intent of the historical avant-garde, where culture is used as a means to trouble or destabilize prevailing political consensus. Another contingent, and necessary, feature of these sorts of approaches is the use of rhetoric, which we have observed across our empirical chapters. In the next section we will consider how what we have detailed so far can be understood through accompanying forms of persuasive language.

7.3 Resistance through rhetoric

So far we have explored specific approaches by political sound artists, apolitical sound artists and artists who resist using technology and alternative

heritage rather than political activism. Whilst the approaches of individual artists may differ, they are unified in two senses. In the first, most rudimentary sense, they are all engaged in some form of resistance. Secondly, these forms of resistance do not rely exclusively on an audience's ability to interpret hauntological aural worlds by themselves, but are instead augmented - sometimes through interview, description or review - by rhetoric. The rhetoric offered by artists, as we have discussed, is allied to the ongoing boundary work that sees specific aesthetic markers ascribed to cultural artefacts. Having considered the approach of artists through their cultural production - in terms of technology and intertextuality - in this section we will look at how critics associate these aesthetic markers with cultural theory and, in the process, develop a particular kind of rhetorical resistive practice. Here we are returning to the concerns of Chapter 4 around the meaning behind the use of the term 'hauntology' - we saw the Derridean etymology hotly contested on message board threads - and how classification and resistance might be thought of as concurrent and mutually-dependent processes.

The first, and perhaps clearest, form of resistance through rhetoric is the use of the term 'hauntology' to describe different kinds of music. As we briefly discussed in our introductory chapter, the original meaning of the term comes from Jacques Derrida and his notion of the revenant, that at the end of history - as proclaimed by Francis Fukuyama in a book of the same name - liberal democracy and the free market had in fact *not* been victorious, but was instead plagued by the spectre of Marx, a constant reminder of the fragility and instability of the systems that had been constructed in the run up to, and following, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (Derrida 1994). Regardless of how successful or accepted this reading might be in relation to contemporary avant-garde music, the co-optation of the term by critics automatically suggests associations between left-leaning politics and hauntological cultural production. Moreover, it implies that to understand the complex meanings that run through the music, you need to engage on some level with the theory that is being invoked. Here, critics resist engagement through simplistic readings of the culture they have categorized by developing contextual ways-of-knowing on behalf of an assumed audience, the suggestion being that without their interpretive framework the real meaning of the music cannot be grasped.

In the absence of any real lyrical content in the music, critics frame their interpretations around specific sound markers - or recurrent motifs - within certain

pieces of music, and this is codified in a number of ways. Firstly, in describing the meaning behind specific sounds - the lineage of a piece of analogue equipment for example - critics imbricate aural characteristics and political ideas. We saw in the previous section how Mark Fisher discusses the political significance of crackle on records, and this approach of allying sounds and ideas continues throughout much of his work. If we take a section from Fisher's blog we see how cultural commentary may be framed through the discussion of specific sound markers

What Little Axe, Burial, Ghost Box, The Caretaker share with Tricky is that they foreground the surface noise. There is no attempt to smooth away the textural discrepancy between the crackly sample and the rest of the recording. This is one reason why hauntology is not just some lazy, hazy term for the ethereal. Hauntology isn't about hoky [sic] atmospherics or 'spookiness' but a *technological uncanny* (Fisher 2006b).

Here Fisher alludes to the importance of technology, as we have seen artists do, but offers something beyond that justification; the use of surface noise and crackle are not simply aesthetic choices, or a wistful reuse of old equipment, but rather offer a way of unsettling our understanding of temporality, of seeing technology as disruptive and disorienting. He continues

The surface noise of the sample unsettles the illusion of presence in at least two ways: first, temporally, by alerting us to the fact that what we are listening to is a phonographic revenant, and second, ontologically, by introducing the technical frame, the unheard material pre-condition of the recording, on the level of content. We're now so accustomed to this violation of ontological hierarchy that it goes unnoticed. But in his Wire piece, Simon refers to the *shock* he experienced when he first heard records constructed entirely out of samples. I vividly recall the first time I went into studio and heard vocal samples played through a mixing desk; I really do remember saying, 'It's like hearing ghosts...' (Fisher 2006b).

In this extract, Fisher suggests a disembodied sound experience, that when we listen to a piece of hauntological music, we experience a temporal and ontological unsettling: the 'uncannily connected' (Sexton 2012: 577) aspects of the aural world allow us to engage with haunting in the Derridean sense, where we are plagued by ghosts of half-remembered ideas. It is not important whether or not the critics reading is right or wrong (although, as we have seen, audiences may disagree

with this), rather that it shows the ways in which critics can separate one form of music from another through engagement with theory. Resistance, in Fisher's rhetoric (as in the use of the term 'hauntology' which he coined), is also a distancing process, separating the work of hauntological artists from other musicians. Their use of specific technology, for Fisher at least, means something more than the simple imitation or pastiche of postmodernity (Jameson 1991) but rather a commentary on time and being. What this solidifies is the notion that the contemporary avant-garde is a site where active engagement with ideas is required and resistance can be understood as a detailed reading of cultural forms, one way of opposing passive consumption.

This separation between hauntology as cultural commentary and popular music as pastiche or imitation is further expounded by Simon Reynolds in his discussion of 'retromania' (in the book of the same name), a term he coins to describe 'a pop age gone loco for retro and crazy for commemoration' (2010: ix). Reynolds' approach can be viewed as a further way in which sound markers are used as a form of resistance, in this case to delineate historical narratives of sound, developing an alternative heritage as we have seen artists do. *Retromania* builds on Reynolds earlier piece in *The Wire*, titled *Society of the Spectral*, where many of the still-debated conventions of hauntological music - children's television, the Radiophonic Workshop, woozy memories - were laid out, even if the term was only in its infancy at that point (Reynolds 2006); *Retromania* can be thought of as terminological statement of intent. While it does not deal entirely with hauntology - which is used more as a counterpoint to popular music - it does situate hauntological artists within a broader spectrum of the history of popular cultural production, which facilitates both comparison and delineation in terms of boundary work. Reynolds echoes the notion of alternative heritage by suggesting that 'perhaps this music feels ghostly because it is a form of "memory work", Freud's term for the grieving process...the UK hauntologists are self-consciously playing with a set of bygone cultural forms that lie outside the post-Elvis/Beatles rock and pop mainstream' (2010: 337). As with Fisher, this can be viewed as a distancing act, with hauntology conceptualized outside of an accepted history or narrative of music. We can again see a connection being drawn between music and theory, notably the work of Freud. Reynolds connects Freud's conceptualization of memory with the hauntological project more broadly, suggesting that 'hauntology is all about

memory's power (to linger, pop up unbidden, prey on your mind) and memory's fragility (destined to become distorted, to fade, then finally disappear)' (335). Hauntological music then is not simply about the reproduction of certain sounds or the arrangement in a composition, but rather a commentary on the state of memory and remembering. This echoes both Fisher's discussion of crackle and temporality, but also the approach of artists; for example, to return to *The Caretaker*, in a number of secondary interviews James Kirby explicitly makes this connection with memory and forgetting (see Davenport 2011; Gibb 2011). Critics and artists problematize conceptualizations of memory through musical form with this interrelationship potentially strengthening the interpretive frameworks suggested by critics. This establishes their perspective as the way in which hauntological cultural artefacts should be viewed, something reflected on, and indeed challenged, by participants on the message board threads we detailed in Chapter 4.

In summary, Reynolds views the role of hauntology as a potential site for resistance, returning again to the notion of alternative heritage, and solidifying the connection between an artist's output and politics in the process:

playfully parodying heritage culture, hauntology explore two ways to, if not resist, then perhaps bypass the "no future" represented by mash-ups and retro. The first strategy involves the rewriting of history...trying to uncover alternate pasts secreted inside the official narrative, remapping history to find paths-not-taken...the other strategy is to honour and resurrect "the future inside the past" (2010: 361).

Here we see an acknowledgement of Jameson's separation of pastiche and parody, where the latter is more important with regards to resistance as it is that which is imbued with a critical edge (1991). There is also a remnant of the Derridean meaning of hauntology in this statement, a notification that temporality is unsettled by what critics suggest are the incursions made by this music. Rhetorical resistance again frames hauntology in juxtaposition to traditional historical trajectories of aural culture, as well as against nostalgic navel gazing; the point of hauntology for Reynolds is to interrogate rather than accept.

For critics then, the use of rhetoric further reinforces the sorts of boundaries we explored in Chapter 4. This involves the complex interplay between intertextualized cultural artefacts and how these are understood to be situated within the alternative histories that artists create, or that critics interpret and codify,

thereby establishing specific ways of knowing (which are also open to antagonism, as in the responses of López and Skelton). In terms of resistance, the rhetoric of critics facilitates attacks on the pastiche of what Reynolds terms 'mash-up' and 'retro' culture (2010: 361), attempting to elevate hauntology above popular culture in the process. In turn, this acts to differentiate the contemporary avant-garde from pop cultural references and artefacts that may have been co-opted and redefined by artistic practice.

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have attempted to chart some of the ways in which resistance operates, in an effort to answer our research question: is the contemporary avant-garde involved in practices of resistance and, if so, how are they constituted?

To begin with we considered the role of politics (as practiced by individual artists), to see if there remained a trace of the political activities associated with the historical avant-garde in contemporary practice; to this end, following on from our discussions in Chapter 6, we returned to consider the sound art work of Matthew Herbert and Christopher DeLaurenti, both of whom approached resistance through forms of direct political activism. The views of Francisco López and Richard Skelton, however, problematized a simplistic reading of resistance as political in a traditional, left-leaning sense; resistance could also be framed as antagonism towards interpretive frameworks that prefigure individual engagement with music, a point forcefully advanced in both primary and secondary interviews. From this position, we considered a potential reframing of resistance, exploring small-scale examples of artistic practice. In this respect, choices involving the technologies of composition and the role of intertextual elements - both as inspiration and as direct source material - spoke to resistance as highly personalized, but often contained within a broader comprehension of what other participant groups might view as the accepted conventions of the hauntological art world. Within this, there was a central tension between artists not wanting to be portrayed in a certain way and the use of commonly understood characteristics of sound that facilitated this sort of typifying process.

Building on our observations in Chapter 4, we found that certain sound conventions are reinforced through the use of rhetoric. Having detailed the

rhetorical components of artistic discourse in relation to technology and intertextuality in previous sections, we saw how critics framed resistance around the codification of alternative historical narratives. These narratives attempted to situate hauntology as a distinct entity, different from both retro and popular culture; this was allied with discussions of the importance of interpreting artefacts and practices through readings of cultural theory, in an effort to suffuse hauntology - as emblematic of the contemporary avant-garde more broadly - with a critical, or resistive, edge. Ultimately, resistive practices in our case study appear to involve meaning-making that combines specific forms of artistic work with rhetoric, a collaboration of sorts which implicates both artists and critics in the same kind of classificatory scheme.

The concomitant act of resisting in this way also ties in with the attempt to solidify the boundaries of the hauntological through a metadiscourse, a process that has cut across our empirical chapters. This has involved the establishing of certain textually-constituted conventions which, whilst destabilizing other cultural forms, enable knowledge to be shared and understood by participants. An example of a convention which both destabilizes and solidifies would be the use of the 'uncanny', employed by both Fisher and Reynolds to suggest a type of intangible memory work, as well as being contextualized within theories of alternative heritage by Sexton (2012); here, the uncanny can be seen as a form of thematic stability whilst being used in an interpretive sense to suggest an anamorphic relationship between sound and remembering. Barthes (1977: 39) suggests that this sort of concept can act as a form of anchorage. In relation to linguistic and visual examples, he suggests that certain elements presented in conjunction with one another may constrain readings of an image or text, or as he puts it, may '*fix* the floating chain of signifieds'. This example of the 'uncanny' fixes individual (and, as we have seen, often dissimilar) pieces of music around a theme that troubles notions of time and memory. This anchoring process, Barthes suggests, is primarily ideological (40), so artists and critics demonstrate their resistive practice of distancing by simultaneously challenging the status quo - in this case a predominant cultural history - whilst solidifying the conventions through which hauntological artefacts can be understood in the sense that a number of artists make music which can have a second order signifier of 'uncanny' attached as an anchor. The contemporary avant-garde, in this paradoxical sense, can destabilize and conform simultaneously.

Intertextuality is also important in terms of how resistance operates. We noted how Barthes and Foucault considered text to be the work of multiple authors, and that originality involved the assemblage of already existing elements to produce new forms. Authorship, at a conceptual level, is problematized in these definitions, and the practicalities of composition further complicates matters. This reading of hauntology as a means to assemblage (whereby artists incorporate numerous, sometimes disparate forms in their work) can be expanded through Lévi-Strauss' notion of bricolage, which appears to have a relational connection to the process of anchorage. Bricolage, according to Lévi-Strauss, 'builds ideological castles out of the debris of what was once a social discourse' (1974: 21n). Resistance comes from the rearranging of old materials to make something new (Jupp operationalizes this quite neatly in 7.2.1), the *bricoleur* deciding, in this case, how cultural artefacts can be reshaped to take on new meanings. In terms of our case study, both artists and critics can be viewed as constructing 'a system of paradigms with the fragments of syntagmatic chains' (150n), developing alternative pathways and ways of knowing, disassembling some associations whilst anchoring others. These are not necessarily agreed-upon activities, as witnessed in the differing approaches of Matthew Herbert and Francisco López for example, but contestation at least demonstrates the role that 'mavericks' might play in terms of defining and redefining artistic conventions within the art world (Becker 1982: 233). Crucially, these practices highlight the way that idiosyncratic types of artistic production and rhetoric play in the contemporary avant-garde.

In the same way that some hauntological critics have done, we too may be guilty of slipping into theorizing, but this in itself is demonstrable of the way in which the participants of the hauntological art world produce and perpetuate specific readings of music. In turn, this shapes dialogue and discussion, with meaning negotiated through the prism of cultural artefacts, whose by-product is the establishment of contextual ideological forms predicated on concomitant practices of anchoring and bricolage. The contemporary avant-garde then is not simply about sounds and music, but about how cultural practices and products are read and how their meanings become a collaborative process: a complex art world of people, ideas, objects and activities. In this respect, the contemporary avant-garde has some relationship with the critical readings of its historical forebear, challenging rather than simply confirming our understanding of cooperation in cultural practice. We

can say that the contemporary avant-garde is still engaged in resistance, but that there is no unity of approach aside from that resistance takes place in a multitude of symbolic and active ways. Similarities and overlaps with the historical avant-garde are observable, but rather than a simplistic binary approach of left versus right, the contemporary avant-garde presents itself in response to socio-cultural concerns through a variety of means, means as diverse as the music that is classified as being hauntological.

However, it is worth noting that this appears to be a constructed form of resistance for the most part, a socially-mediated presentation which does not translate to actual change, where the actions of participants have a direct, tangible effect on the cultural world more widely. As such, the contemporary avant-garde has not fully escaped the criticisms levelled at it by the likes of Barthes (1981) and Bauman (1997). For example, the attacks - tacit or otherwise - on the current socio-political climate as read through cultural artefacts and their associated meanings still comes from a position of privilege, where the architects of the movement are often actual architects and graphic designers (Reynolds 2005; House 2014). Alongside this, rather than challenging the structures and institutions associated with the music industry, hauntological musicians are still involved in a political economy where they sell their cultural artefacts for a profit, as we saw in Chapter 5, a concern mirroring the issues around patronage that we touched on in Chapter 6. So while resistance does take place in a symbolic sense, through interpretive frameworks and occasional acts of cultural sabotage, the aporias of the avant-garde (Enzensberger 1962) prevent it from addressing its etymological foundation as a forward fighting, or revolutionary, force.

In summary, resistance still plays an important role in the contemporary avant-garde regardless of if it is constituted by explicit political activity on the part of some artists (Matthew Herbert and Christopher DeLaurenti), problematized by others (Francisco López, Richard Skelton and William Basinski), or embodied and enacted through alternative forms of engagement with technology, intertextuality and rhetoric (Jim Jupp, Ian Hodgson and Jon Brooks). Critics augment the resistive practices of artists by using rhetoric to contribute to an antagonizing of cultural associations, which in the process develops a new historical narrative for the contemporary avant-garde. In this respect, the rhetoric of resistance offers a similar outcome to that of classification, organization and spatiality, contributing to an

overarching metadiscourse that can be understood as a defensible aesthetic (Becker 1982) or a form of genre. Its construction is contingent not just on processes of signification but through the empirical issues we have seen cut through this thesis, namely the use of dialogue and acts of destabilization. These crucial contributory elements will be explored in our next, and final, chapter.

Chapter 8 - Reflections and conclusions

8.1 The contemporary avant-garde as art world

As stated at the beginning of this thesis, our aim was to explore the interplay between different forms of dialogue and destabilizing practices, and how these are mediated, in some sense, by technology. In doing so, we have made visible the ways in which participants, places, artefacts and activities have interrelated with processes of classification, organization, spatiality and resistance. The foundation for these investigations has been an ontological framework which conceptualizes social reality as a co-operative and collaborative series of practices. Becker, in considering the birth and death of art cultures offers the following observation in relation to the types of avant-garde processes we detailed in earlier chapters:

The invention of the tape recorder and other electronic devices (from oscillators to synthesizers) created a way of making music without human performers. Nevertheless, much electronic music is created by people trained in music, who use machines as an adjunct to live human performance, is heard by audiences raised on more or less conventional concert music, and judged by critics who use the same standards they apply to other serious, composed music. All this suggests that no new art world has arisen around the electronic inventions (1982: 311).

What this observation offers is an entry point through which we might interrogate the central concern of this thesis, namely how might we understand - or make visible - the contemporary avant-garde. Becker's suggestion in this excerpt is that in much contemporary art it is difficult to discern between that which can be seen as a new and distinct art world and that which is simply a continuation of an earlier art world. In this closing chapter we will consider how we might situate the contemporary avant-garde within this debate, initially by thinking about whether or not, based on the evidence we have collected, our case study represents an art world; the art world is not only the ontological underpinning of this thesis but also speaks to the positioning of the contemporary avant-garde as a site of collaborative social action. Following on from this discussion we will extrapolate from our analysis what our case study means in terms of the study of the contemporary avant-garde more broadly. To this end, we are seeking to connect the micro-level practices of hauntological participants with a more expansive notion of the constitution of the

contemporary avant-garde, highlighting the interplay between participants, locations, artefacts and activities whilst problematizing the position we adopted in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 3 we also discussed the importance of remaining open to the partial connections between sociocultural actors and activities, noting that an assemblage of disparate elements more accurately reflects the complex and evolving nature of cultural production, and we have attempted to preserve this by combining different forms of data with numerous complimentary and contested viewpoints. If capturing the diversity of meaning-making practices has been crucial, why are we seeking to understand if our case study is an art world or not, as this would appear to achieve the sort of codification we have sought to avoid?

The answer is relatively simple: the concept of the art world, through the development of ideal types of participant, locations, artefacts, activities and conventions, offers us a framework through which we can anchor some of the features we have observed, and by assessing these features in relation to this framework we are able to represent the complexity of both our case study and the avant-garde more broadly; the elements we have isolated will allow us to make connections between micro-level activities and more generally-applicable aspects of the contemporary avant-garde. Understanding whether or not our case study is an art world requires us to situate what we have observed within the general framework that Becker offers. The initial issue Becker identifies in the earlier quote is the difference between an art world, and the continuation of an already extant world, that is a culture that exhibits some of the necessary features of an art world but is ultimately connected to an earlier iteration of the same, or similar, culture. We will begin by considering our case study and potential arguments against the contemporary avant-garde operating as an art world.

Firstly, implicit in the use of the term 'contemporary avant-garde', there is a continuation and narrative connection with the historical avant-garde, as detailed in Chapter 2. Etymologically at least, this suggests that we might understand the contemporary in relation to the historic, which would be problematic in terms of Becker's earlier assertion. Becker typifies the emergence of new art worlds as follows:

New art worlds grow up around something that has not been characteristic practice for artists before. Since art worlds have

many characteristic modes of practice, ranging from conventions for making works to methods of display and technical and material components, a new way of doing any of these might be the basis for a new world (ibid).

Throughout this thesis we have highlighted a variety of continuities between the historical and the contemporary avant-garde. We have seen how a number of musicians - Jim Jupp and the Ghost Box label for example - utilize the sort of production techniques developed by musique concrète composers in the 1950s and 1960s. We have also witnessed how artists such as Matthew Herbert and Christopher DeLaurenti use resistive practices in line with those of the historical avant-garde - approaching political activism through subversion in the case of the former, and documentary in the case of the latter - to offer a type of left-leaning resistance like that we detailed in the work of Cornelius Cardew and Frederic Rzewski in our literature review. Other participant groups, most notably 'critics', have also perpetuated a distancing between our case study and more popular forms of culture, through discussions of compositional practice, the use of post-structural theory or by creating complex intertextual associations between dissimilar cultural products.

However, the case for hauntology - and by association the contemporary avant-garde - operating as a new art world is stronger than these points of congruity. Becker states that

Some art worlds begin with the invention or diffusion of a technology which makes certain art works possible. The technical development will likely have originated for nonartistic purposes, for art is seldom important enough to attract serious inventors to its problems (ibid).

In the case of hauntology, technological change can be seen as one of the ways in which our empirical concerns are interconnected and can be used to understand how hauntology operates as its own art world, rather than an adjunct of the historical avant-garde. Setting aside the fact that some, and by no means all, artists continue to use production techniques based on those of the historical avant-garde, there are a number of approaches and practices that distance hauntology from its forebears, and make a case for the contemporary avant-garde operating within a framework of collaborative practice.

In the first instance, *we have seen how technological change facilitates practices and processes of classification*. In Chapter 1 we asked how hauntology is classified, and we have demonstrated how technology has facilitated the classification of cultural artefacts and boundaries by participants; this took the form of negotiated methods of delimiting that which can and cannot be considered hauntological. We saw in Chapter 4 how technology has enabled participants to begin this process through forms of direct and indirect dialogue. In the case of the former, online message boards were used by audiences to discuss specific aspects of hauntology, including the comparison and dismissal of different artists, the intertextual associations between music and other art forms as well as arguments about the value of critics allying music with cultural theory. In the case of the latter, participants were able to engage in classificatory practice on an individual level by applying textual descriptors to different artists, thereby codifying them in an overarching aesthetic or genre. In this sense, the contemporary avant-garde can be viewed as the confluence of individual, technologically-mediated micro-acts of classification that filter into a broader, macro-level metadiscourse. Importantly, these conventions and the overarching aesthetic are not static but are subject to the regular redrawing of boundaries through contestation by various participant groups. The contemporary avant-garde seeks to codify itself, but the aesthetic it develops is routinely questioned and reformed, with technology enabling this to take place.

In the second instance, *we have seen how new organizational structures - both artist and audience-led - can be established through the use of new technology*. In Chapter 5, the artist-led organization we explored was the Ghost Box record label. Jim Jupp, the label owner, discussed how technological change, specifically the Internet, allowed him to build a business around selling records to audiences, arranging live performances, and collaborating with like-minded artists; moreover, Jupp's role expands the 'ideal type' of artist to become more in line with Becker's outline of 'support personnel' and 'integrated professionals', as he describes increasing involvement in marketing, distributing and manufacturing, demonstrating the integrated roles that artists in the contemporary avant-garde are increasingly adopting (1982: 228-233). Audience-led organizational structures also challenge the 'ideal type' audience by directly inculcating them in cultural production practices. Through their own social media networks a variety of individual authors on different blogs expand the hauntological aesthetic by discussing different ideas, artefacts and

artists, continuing an ongoing development of conventions that separate this art world from others, similarly extending their roles and blurring the lines between audiences and critics into what Becker terms the 'aesthete' (153-6). In this sense the contemporary avant-garde operates as an increasingly integrated concern, with participant groups overlapping in terms of the roles they play, again facilitated by technologically-constituted organizational systems.

In the third instance *we saw how technology played a crucial role in combining the processes of classification and organization we witnessed in the virtual realm with non-virtual spatiality*. Our field site of Netaudio demonstrated how social media and communications technology assisted in organizing geographically disparate artists and audiences across a number of locations. Audiences were able to engage with artists in a variety of spatially-diverse senses, through the destabilizing of representations of space in live performance and installation art and through the interpretive frameworks offered by critics through interpretive accounts of events featured in their blogs and associated magazines. Here the contemporary avant-garde can be understood as a site where spatial associations are troubled by artistic practice and audience interactions, constituted by challenges to conventions and the impact of bodily experience in repurposed non-virtual environments; where the virtual offers a framework for developing new organizational structures, the non-virtual antagonizes and destabilizes spatial representations.

In the fourth instance, related to these discussions, *we saw how technology aided practices of resistance*. In the case of composition, new music technologies - such as portable recording devices - assisted Matthew Herbert and Christopher DeLaurenti in recording and producing their subversive and documentary media forms, building on the approaches forwarded by historical avant-garde composers. Vitality, technology also enabled the dissemination of critical perspectives on art through the use of personal blogs from the likes of Adam Harper, Mark Fisher and Simon Reynolds, furthering the contested dialogue on the role of intertextuality, alternative heritage and post-structuralism in our case study. The historical avant-garde - as we saw in Chapter 2 - was imbricated in particular types of resistive practices, and it might be argued that in engaging with similar perspectives the contemporary avant-garde can only be viewed as a continuation, rather than an art world in its own right. However, the resistive practices we witnessed indicate individualized, and highly subjective, approaches to resistance that, while relating in

part to aspects of the historical avant-garde, move away from these associations. Although Matthew Herbert and Christopher DeLaurenti engaged in explicitly political activities, their positions were rallied against by others artists such as Francisco López and Richard Skelton. This suggests that the contemporary avant-garde *is* engaged in acts of resistance, but that these acts are as diffuse and varied as the artists categorized as hauntological. While the criticisms levelled at the historical avant-garde may play a role in this - that participants may seek to distance themselves from their forebears - the frequency and diversity of resistive practices, even in the small sample we analysed, speaks to a more nuanced and less overtly politicized approach in the contemporary avant-garde.

Our intention here has been to offer a snapshot of hauntology as indicative of the contemporary avant-garde more broadly. We have demonstrated how our case study is an art world in its own regard, and this distances it, to some extent, from the criticisms of the historical avant-garde. It also enables us to see how individual, micro-level activities operate within a wider, and contest, framework of ideal types and categories as conceptualized by Becker; although 'the art works art world produce, the cooperative activity through which they are produced, and the conventions by which people coordinate their cooperation all change more or less continuously' (1982: 301), by adopting the ontological standpoint of the art world, we have been able to demonstrate the similarities and points of departure between the contemporary avant-garde (and its interplay of participants, places, artefacts and activities) and older art worlds as characterized by Barthes (1975), Enzensberger (1962) and, to a lesser extent, Bourdieu (1996). Within this, we have identified two particular collaborative processes that underpin technologically mediated cultural production; these processes can be characterized as *dialogue* and *destabilization*.

8.1.2 The use of dialogue

The use of dialogue has been another feature that has cut across each of our empirical chapters. Where technology facilitated classification, organization, spatiality and resistance, dialogue can be thought of as the means through which participants negotiate meaning-making practices and ways of knowing, alongside concomitant practices related to cultural production; we have seen dialogue manifest itself in a number of ways, and it is worth detailing these as they speak to

the broader applicability of dialogue as embodying collaboration in the contemporary avant-garde more widely.

In relation to the use of ideal types in the contemporary avant-garde art world, we have seen how *dialogue enables both the identification and contestation of participant groups*. In Chapter 3 we adopted Becker's threefold descriptor of artist-audience-critic as a way of differentiating between the roles potentially occupied by participants. In Chapter 4 we saw how these groups negotiated their positions relative to one another. Audiences and critics engaged in direct dialogue with each other over the validity of their position (with artists indirectly involved through the production of cultural artefacts for debate). Through direct dialogue on message board threads, some audience members accepted the role of the critic as defining the limits of hauntology, but others problematized the role of the critic by questioning their authority to speak, or interpret, on behalf of others; this demonstrates the way in which dialogue enables the contestation of roles. Similarly, curators of audience-led organizational networks increasingly occupied a position not unlike that of the critic, suggesting and interpreting cultural artefacts on behalf of other audience members. The outcome of these dialogues is the problematizing of ideal types, where audience and critic become increasingly indistinguishable from one another. This suggests that in the contemporary avant-garde, participation is involved but roles are fluid; audiences and critics may overlap in terms of the development of a codified and defensible aesthetic, and artists may occupy roles other than that of composition (the expansion of roles at record labels is an example of this). The overarching feature is that the apparent malleability of roles is contingent on negotiation through direct and indirect dialogue.

Building on this, *dialogue is also key in terms of the classification of culture in the contemporary avant-garde*. The processes through which classification happens have all been contingent on the interrelationships constituted by dialogue. In Chapter 4 we detailed how classification takes place through direct negotiation between different participants on message board threads, or through indirect dialogue, where individual decisions about how pieces of music can be described feed into an agglomerated aesthetic through which boundaries and conventions are established (even if they are subsequently contested).

In Chapter 5 we saw how *dialogue enables artists to delimit the interpretive frameworks of other participant groups*, as the production and description of

cultural artefacts through artist-led - and regulated - organizational systems established specific ways of knowing and interpreting different pieces of music. Similarly, curators of audience-led organizational systems used their blogs to offer their own perspective-dialogues on what could and could not be considered hauntological; dialogue in this instance involved the establishment of negotiated boundaries around ideas and artefacts considered to be suitably emblematic, including film and art as well as music. As a result of this, dialogue and technology came together in the establishing of a nascent archival structure in virtual space, whereby other audience members are able to access, contribute and interact with cultural artefacts and dialogue stored online.

In Chapter 6 we saw how *dialogue impacts on spatial associations*. Live performances and installations represented different forms of dialogue between artists and audience members, with representative, institutional readings of space interrogated, in an indirect sense, by art works that provoked spatially-contingent reaction by participants as well as testing the limits of spatial perception (at least according to the dialogue offered by critics after the event). This indirect form of dialogue was met by direct dialogue in the form of the conference at Netaudio, where artists, critics and audiences debated the functions and limitations of their cultural production in light of the spatial antagonisms offered at the festival, with each group offering their own interpretation of the value of the contemporary avant-garde.

This final point demonstrates another vital feature of these negotiations, namely that *dialogue can be used as a rhetorical form* to influence and persuade participants of certain approaches and viewpoints. Dialogue, as we have seen, is embodied in a variety of ways, and rhetoric is one of the forms through which participants can delimit their culture and defend the conventions and boundaries they have established (even if this process eventually breaks down). Rhetoric gives artists a way of regulating aspects of debate around the art work they produce, enables audiences to uphold the merits - or otherwise - of particular pieces of music, and facilitates the application of theoretical and intertextual associations on the part of critics. All of these forms of dialogue contribute towards a burgeoning metadiscourse with aesthetic criteria at its core. From this we can say that the contemporary avant-garde is involved in the sort of genre debates we discussed in Chapter 2 and 4, and that these are contingent on dialogue as negotiation and

dialogue as rhetoric; in both of these cases dialogue facilitates working together. Collaboration in the contemporary avant-garde involves participants working together to shape, mould, dispute and question the culture they have created and we should think of these collaborative processes as productive, despite the potential for dialogue to enable participants to destabilize both their culture and the cultures which surround and influence them.

8.1.3 The role of destabilization

Throughout this study we have seen that dialogue allows participants to engage in collaborative practices of classification, organization, spatiality and resistance; a parallel series of processes is the destabilization of the features we have identified as associated with avant-garde cultural production. In this section we view destabilization not simply as disruptive, but as productive agentic challenges to institutional frameworks. We will consider some of these destabilizing activities in relation to micro-level examples in our case study and macro-level conclusions about the contemporary avant-garde more broadly, before moving on to address potential long-term implications of our study.

Firstly, *participants destabilize the institutionalized framing of their roles*, meaning that the separation between participant groups is not straightforward. To offer some context, in Chapter 1 we discussed the relative absence of a sociology of the avant-garde, and as a result we intended to build on the insights of popular music and subcultural studies in an effort to understand points of similarity and departure in our case study. In Chapter 2, we noted how a variety of subcultural studies investigated participant's experiences of particular forms of music - and the accompanying social activities associated with this - but an issue with these studies is that they often focus on the perspective of the audience or consumer. In developing our own approach to participant activity, we adopted Becker's delineation between artists, audiences and critics. However, what we have seen is that the associations and boundaries between these groups is routinely problematized by the activities of different participant groups. In Chapter 4, we saw how audiences and critics came together in direct dialogue to consider the merits or otherwise of particular pieces of music and other art forms. In doing so, both audience and critic assume the role of the 'aesthetician' (1982: 156), responsible for framing the aesthetic dimensions of the art world; it is not only audiences and critics

involved in this dialogue, but also artists who enshrine and contest aesthetic boundaries through the production of cultural artefacts. The outcome of this is that the line between different participant groups is destabilized as each group contributes to the broader overarching metadiscourse. For example, what was noticeable in message board dialogues was that the hierarchical structures implied by the responses of some participants were also directly challenged by others, so audience members were involved in contesting the importance of critics in offering interpretive frameworks. This blurring is further evidenced by indirect dialogue, where participants from any group can contribute textual descriptors to music on their own terms, contributing to the aesthetic dimensions of movement on equal terms as the aesthetic becomes cumulative, as in the case of Last.FM; here, new social media is transforming the ways in which participants interact and define their culture. The contemporary avant-garde, in this sense, is comprised of a variety of actors who intentionally confront and destabilize institutional definitions of their involvement in cultural production and reshape their roles through different types of dialogue.

Secondly, *participants in the contemporary avant-garde destabilize traditional organizational structures*. In Chapter 5, in our exploration of the Ghost Box label, we noted how in terms of the structure of the label, and the interview responses of the organizers, artists have become increasingly involved in roles outside of composition including marketing, distribution, design and mastering. This development is facilitated by new forms of digital technology which not only undermine older operating models of the record industry, but also enable a shift towards small-scale production where artists have more control over their cultural output, a move away from the historical separation between label and artist we identified. We also saw audience-led archives as indicative of the increasingly curatorial role adopted by participants, potentially destabilizing perceptions of audience members as passive recipients into dynamic social actors who contribute equally to an overarching metadiscourse. Factored into this is the democratization of organization through technological means; in this instance, audience-run blogs enabled participants to offer their own perspectives on the culture they are a constituent part of, adapting the earlier zine culture we identified in Chapter 5.

Thirdly we saw how *spatial associations can be destabilized by different participant groups*. In terms of live performance we saw how artists used space in

non-traditional ways, where music was constructed using space as a sound source - as in the case of Valerio Tricoli - or non-traditional performance spaces were transformed by the inclusion of music, as in the case of Nurse with Wound's Sleep Concert in Newcastle's Discovery Centre. Installations also enabled audiences to destabilize representations of space by interacting with spatially-contingent art works that unified bodily experience, tacit understanding and experimentation within a formalized setting (as in the case of the *Pufination* orb installation at Netaudio, which required audience members to work together to produce sound). These processes not only challenged institutionalized notions of space, but also further interrogated participant roles, as artists involved audience members directly through their performance work. It would be wrong to say that roles are now entirely indistinct - temporally-speaking the artist is still ultimately the agent facilitating audience interactions through their work - but these actions are at least suggestive of a contemporary avant-garde which seeks to problematize top-down interpretive frameworks and associations.

Fourthly, linking back to our earlier discussions on the validity of the art world, *participants in the contemporary avant-garde destabilize associations with the historical avant-garde*, and with it address some of the criticisms we highlighted in Chapter 2. Although there are clearly connections between the two in terms of etymology and, in some cases, compositional practice, the key pillar of the historical avant-garde - political action - was contested from a variety of different angles in our case study. Matthew Herbert and Christopher DeLaurenti may have operated in a traditional left-wing activist sense, but others artists (such as William Basinski) flatly refused to involve themselves in these debates, or approached resistance and politics in individualized ways, through the use of unexpected technologies in compositional work (Ian Hodgson's use of the PS2 for example), intertextuality (Belbury Poly and The Focus Group) and rhetoric (D.D.Denham). Critics attempted to destabilize external readings of our case study as 'retro' through the application of post-structuralism which offered a particular line of flight, though some audiences and artists were cagey about the value of this sort of interpretive and descriptive framing, in the sense that it replaced one form of codification with another. The contemporary avant-garde, in this context, destabilizes traditional notions of resistance as implied by its association with the historical avant-garde, moving away

from traditional notions of left-leaning political activism to one of ad-hoc micro-level, subjectivised engagement.

In a cumulative sense, all of these destabilizing practices contribute towards the broader metadiscourse of hauntology; as such, we would argue that *classification is a key unifying factor in constituting an art world*. Classification does not take place from the top down, but from the bottom up, with institutional imposition - be it in the form of organizational systems, representations of space, practices of resistance or a researcher's initial assumptions - destabilized in favour of negotiated, collaborative work between participant groups (whose identity is itself open to internal reclassification).

In exploring these social activities in a contemporary avant-garde art world we have offered a partial perspective on the sorts of meaning-making actions that contribute towards cultural production, predicated on an epistemological view that a rigid and inflexible approach would have ineffectively captured the complex classificatory work of different participant groups as they become increasingly distended across numerous virtual and non-virtual spaces. The contemporary avant-garde, as we have seen, can only really be captured by exploring these dialogic destabilizing practices and processes. Although we have assessed some of the thematic connections - or conventions as Becker would see it - between disparate actors, places, artefacts and activities that contribute to a broader metadiscourse, this is itself open to constant contestation, as boundaries move and associations are reshaped. Instead, to effectively explore the contemporary avant-garde, it is important to reflect on the assemblages and partial relations we have uncovered on their own terms, rather than attempting to force these multiplicities into an overarching schema. With this in mind, we return to our own overarching question; how can we make visible contemporary avant-garde music movements?

8.2 Towards a sociological understanding of the contemporary avant-garde

In this closing section we would like to consider the implications of our study in terms of future projects, suggesting approaches that will assist in identifying and situating music-related practices and processes in the contemporary avant-garde. As we identified in opening this study, the contemporary avant-garde is sociologically important for a number of reasons, and we shall return to some of these issues in

light of what we have explored through our case study. We set out with the intention of providing a cartography of sorts, and here we will suggest potential routes for further travel.

Firstly, *'genre' and practices of classification are vital to understanding the dialogues and destabilizing processes that take place in the contemporary avant-garde.* The classificatory practices we have witnessed show how dialogue facilitates the construction of a metadiscourse through which we can outline some of the features and conventions (even if temporary in nature) of an art world. To understand the contemporary avant-garde in relation to wider debates on the nature of genre, it will be important to locate participants as central to this codification process, with classification operating from the bottom up rather than the top down. Within this, complex networks and organization logic develops which facilitates a heterogeneous reading of music culture as the intersection of participants, artefacts and locations; here we note a level of parity with Tironi's exploration of music culture in Santiago (2012) and, through a problematizing of the various facets of the 'art worlds' concept (Becker 1982), a potential move forward in understanding the interrelationship between actors and objects might be to reassess the value of an actor-network theoretical approach to avant-garde music cultures (see, for example, Prior 2008). Similarly, these overlapping features reinforce Gendron's (2002) argument about approaching the avant-garde not as a separate entity, but as implicitly involved with other forms of culture, most notably popular music.

Secondly, building on these sorts of classificatory practices, *aesthetics play a crucial role in instigated and perpetuating dialogue and destabilization.* In relation to hauntology, we have seen how an aesthetic is developed through negotiated textual descriptions of art work and in the contemporary avant-garde more widely, aesthetics - building on Becker's purview of 'a defensible space' (1982: 134) - offers a way to understand the interpretive frameworks of different participant groups, as well as representing the collaborative social processes that contribute to a burgeoning art world. For example, the micro-level aesthetic considerations we have explored pertain to the use of particular technologies of composition by artists or the way in which critics intertextually connected musical artefacts with other forms of art (as in Harper's discussions of painting in Chapter 7), but these individualized activities enacted by differing forms of dialogue which loop back into a wider

metadiscourse, an overarching macro-level assemblage of disparate participants, artefacts, places and activities. As such, an approach to aesthetics that preserves the connection between micro and macro level interactions is necessary to adequately comprehend and represent the complexity of the contemporary avant-garde.

Thirdly, *spatial considerations are critical to understanding the arenas in which dialogue and destabilization in the contemporary avant-garde take place.* We began this study by considering the virtual spaces in which dialogue takes place, noting that equally valid forms of discourse abound through individualized approaches (such as tagging on Last.FM) and collective direct discussion (such as the message board debates on classification), and that these engagements constitute the establishment, sustainment and contestation of the boundaries of the art world. These virtual spaces are diverse, encompassing sites where ownership can delimit dialogue (such as the record label website), or where engagement and cooperation is encouraged through forms of interactive social media (as in the case of the interactive audience-led archives). These virtual spaces are augmented by non-virtual spaces where participants intermingle and engage through direct discussion (as in the conference thread at Netaudio) or activities that develop and extend tacit ways of knowing (including the art installations at the same festival); organization structures, self-determined or institutionally imposed, are key to maintaining these spaces as viable locations where dialogue and destabilization can take place. Ultimately, as we have demonstrated throughout, the contemporary avant-garde can be understood anamorphically, by observing the impact that spatial contestation has on meaning-making practices between different groups of participants.

Fourthly, despite notable points of departure, *it is important to consider the contemporary avant-garde in relation to the historical avant-garde,* and the variety of narratives that both reproduce and contest the conditions by which it is constituted. For instance, in Chapter 2 we noted how a number of theorists - including, for example, Bauman (1997) and Bürger (1984) - had offered robust critiques of the historical avant-garde and to comprehend the ways in which any contemporary iteration is structured, we need to understand similarities and differences across these narratives. It is not enough to accept or dismiss these perspectives, as they are enacted in a variety of complex and interlocking ways; a useful example of this is our empirical work on resistance. In Chapter 7 we opened by considering the work of Matthew Herbert and Christopher DeLaurenti, which

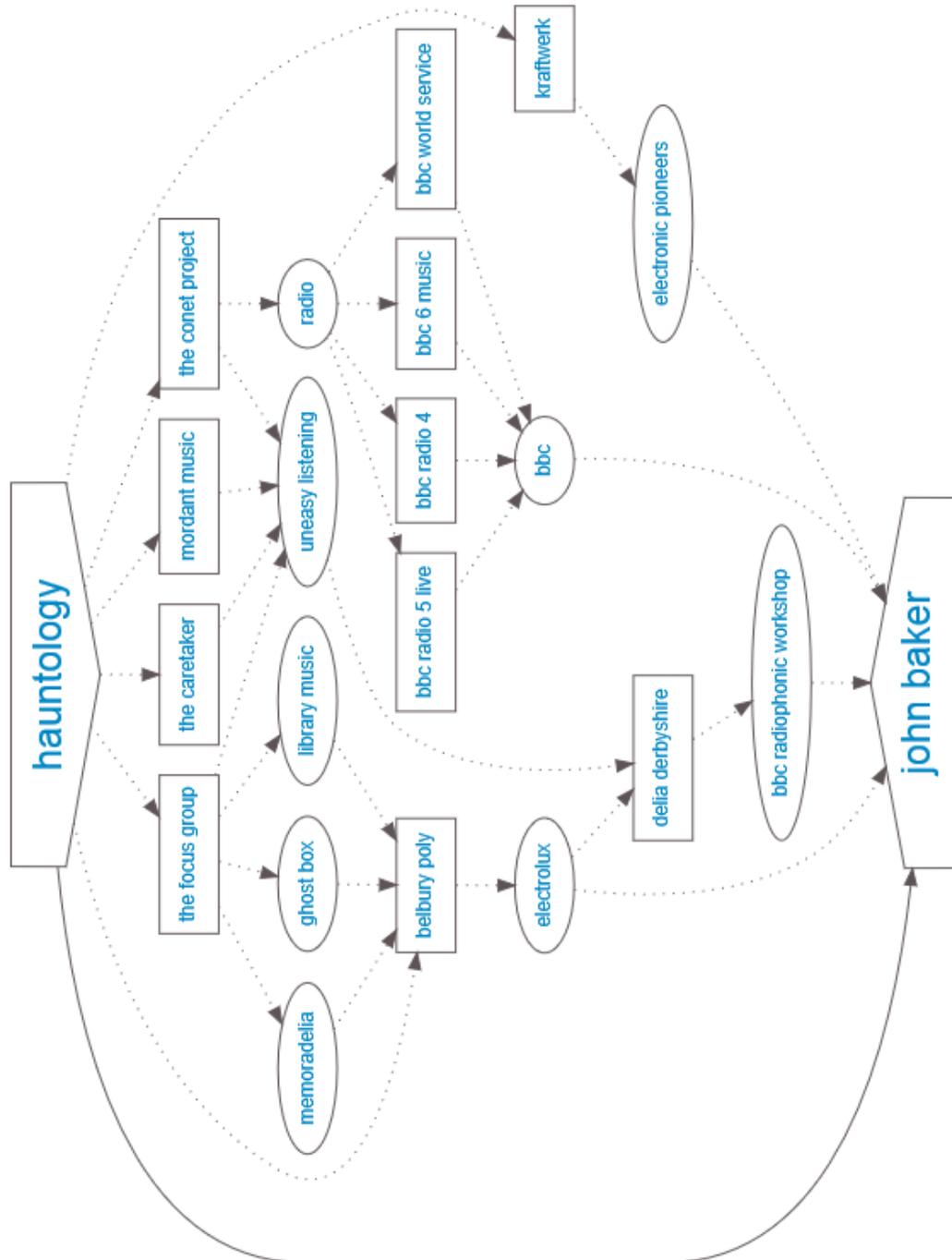
involved an examination of how their compositional approaches and political positioning directly mirrored that of historical avant-garde composers such as Cornelius Cardew. We contrasted this with a practices of resistance which eschewed traditional left-wing activism in favour of small acts of individualised rebellion against, for instance, technological change (in relation to composition) or the interpretive frameworks of dominant historiography (in relation to the critic's introduction of alternative heritage and post-structuralism). Neither the broadly parallel or divergent forms of resistance we witnessed could have been adequately represented without an understanding of the development of the avant-garde through the period now characterized as historical. To fully engage with the critiques of a new avant-garde means engaging as thoroughly as possible with its past, through similarity, partial connections and points of departure.

Fifthly, and finally, *the development of appropriate conceptual and methodological tools is necessary* to fully respond to the diversity of actors and environments in the contemporary avant-garde. To construct a useable toolkit which adequately responds to the mutable assemblages of features in the contemporary avant-garde will require a combination of approaches which draw not only on sociology, but also from other disciplines including literature studies (which we drew on to an extent in our discussions of discourse and textual signifiers), geography (in terms of the interplay between virtual and physical space), and musicology (for a more detailed conceptualization of sound). We have offered a handful of alternative approaches in response to our particular case study, drawing on Barthes and the notion of anchorage (1977) to understand the ideological significance of sound markers, Foucault in terms of the relevance of the author in constructing intertextual associations between disparate artefacts (1974), and Lévi-Strauss in relation to the bricolage of elements - compositional or otherwise - that contribute to the interpretation of artefacts (1974), but our ability to adequately reflect the social reality that connects written texts with an alternative language of sound and aural signifiers is curtailed somewhat by the absence of the tools to do these complex associations justice. That is not to say we reject the notion of multiple perspectives in favour of one mode of study - our methodological approaches have demonstrated the value of maintaining a variety of enquiries - but that there needs to be a greater emphasis on the interplay between music and other forms of culture

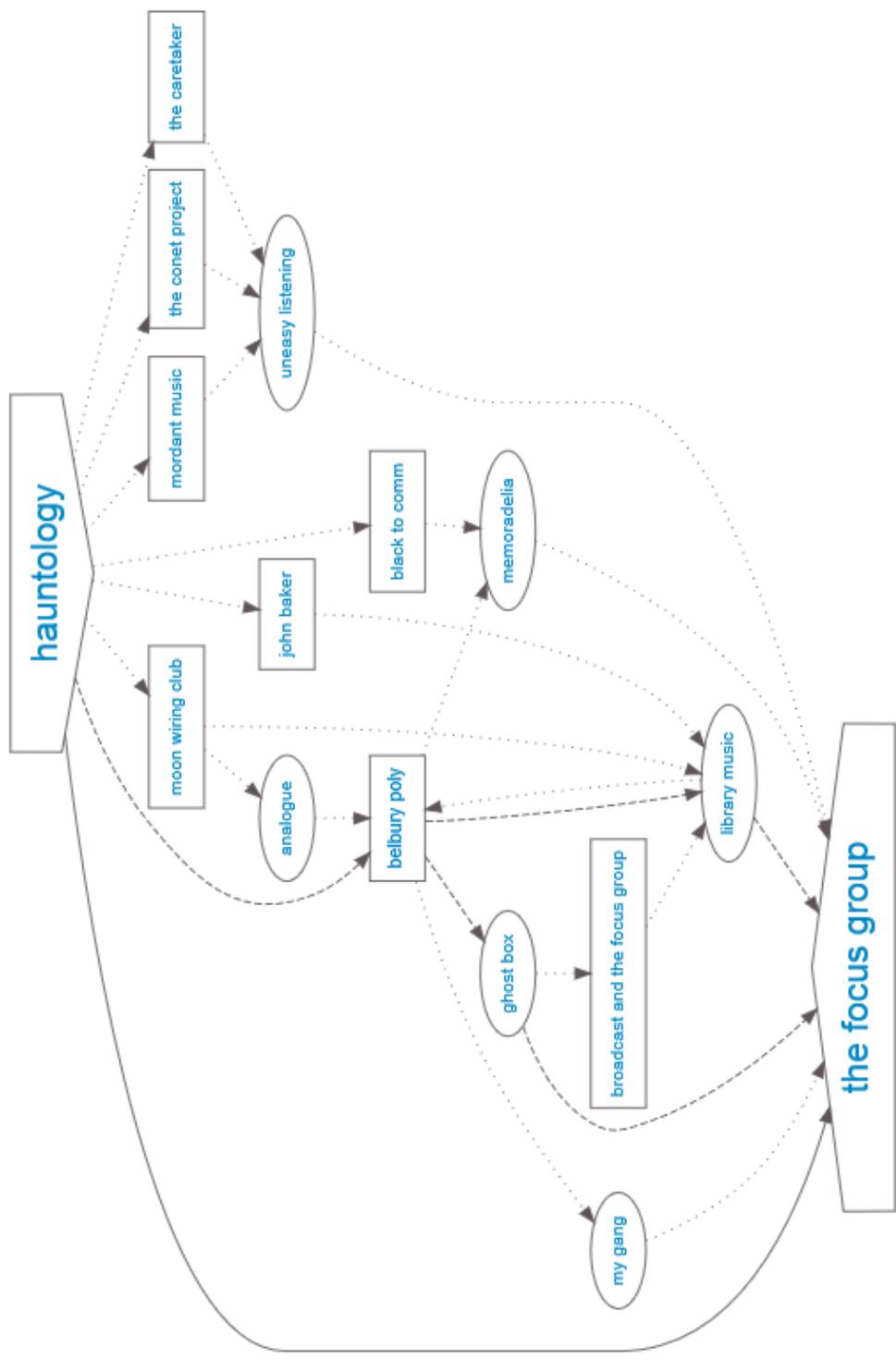
if we are to adequately address the diversity of the contemporary avant-garde in future research.

Ultimately, what we have made visible is the multiplicity of the contemporary avant-garde - echoing Atton (2012) and Lison's (2011) earlier findings - through its associations with participant groups who negotiate their positions through acts of destabilization and polyvocal dialogues on music, cultural theory and ongoing technologically-mediated processes of classification, organization, spatiality and resistance.

Appendix 1 - Tag cloud images



John Baker tag cloud (GaMuSo)



The Focus Group tag cloud (GaMuSo)

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