

## Hauntology and Its Supplements: The Role of the 'Spectre' in *Pole, Four*<sup>6</sup> and *Metatechnic*.

...a ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come-back.

(Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*)<sup>1</sup>

'What's in a word?', we may ask ourselves. What indeed, especially when words have a nasty habit of evolving, mutating, getting lost or diverted, slipping through our fingers, or should that be 'our minds'? But a certain evolutionary quality, in that how we understand and use words changes according to their contexts, times and users, does allow for an even greater multitude of interpretations than might otherwise be the case (it's hard to think of many words whose meanings have never evolved), and also throws questions of authors, origins, and centres nicely into doubt. In fact, it allows for the permanent deferment of the arrival of a fully stable meaning or use, thereby allowing our hermeneutic faculties full play. Thus, meaning is deferred: our word plays through contexts of difference, differences that can be read, but not always heard, written but not *effectively* spoken—our word is caught up in a net of *différance*, one of Derrida's key concepts. As Wortham notes: '*différance* is a famous neologism coined by Derrida to establish the limits of phonocentrism. *Différance* combines and develops a sense of differing and deferral implied by the French word '*différence*.'<sup>2</sup> Wortham goes on to suggest that 'Derrida frequently includes *différance* in an unmasterable chain or untitled series that also includes the trace, the supplement, the remainder, writing, dissemination, pharmakon, cinder and so on.'<sup>3</sup> Thus, although one of *différance's* key attributes is what might be loosely termed its speech-curtailing properties, it is its capacity for an implied *deferral* that is of most relevance here. In French the full play of *différance* is evident in the two spellings of *hauntologie* and *ontologie*, which have an *almost* identical pronunciation. However, in English, there is more of a difference in pronunciation, giving the voice more prominence than in French. Nevertheless, hauntology's status as a construction of two pre-existing terms (haunting and ontology) does not change between languages, and of course hauntology's contexts and usage *do* change in any language.

Derrida had a habit of coining neologisms, which is hardly surprising for someone whose life's work was concerned with the observation of linguistic and philosophical instability, or aporias. Derrida first used the term *hauntologie* in *Specters of Marx* (2006),<sup>4</sup> where he derives it during an analysis of the 'conjunction' against Marxism:

this frontier between the public and the private is constantly being displaced, remaining less assured than ever...because the medium in which it is instituted, namely, the medium of the media themselves (news, the press, telecommunications, techno-tele-discursivity, techno-tele-iconicity...) this element itself is neither living nor dead, present nor absent: it spectralizes. It does not belong to ontology...or to the essence of life or death. It requires, then...*hauntologie*. We will take this category

---

<sup>1</sup> Derrida, 2006, 123.

<sup>2</sup> Morgan Wortham, 2010, 36.

<sup>3</sup> Morgan Wortham, 2010, 37.

<sup>4</sup> *Spectres de Marx*, 1993.

to be irreducible, and first of all to everything it makes possible: ontology, theology, positive or negative onto-theology.<sup>5</sup>

Thus Derrida attaches 'hauntology' here to a discussion of the 'medium of the media,' especially where it concerns technology, technology that contracts both *time* and *space*. Which brings me back to my opening question, 'what's in a word?'<sup>6</sup> and why the allusion to Shakespeare?

One of *Specters of Marx's* recurring tropes is a quotation from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*—'The time is out of joint'<sup>7</sup>—from which Derrida weaves a complex net of linking ideas of political economy, Marx's legacy, *Marxism's* legacy, time, space, inheritance, spectres, spirits, and mourning, in which the word *hauntology* is inextricably entangled. Hauntology is a construct, the combination of two pre-existing terms; therefore, Derrida cannot (and does not) claim to have been the originator of the 'word' (only of its assemblage), as it was already in existence but in a deconstructed form, waiting for the right moment to coalesce. As Derrida says, 'a context, always, remains open, thus fallible and insufficient.'<sup>8</sup> Which brings us to hauntology's other uses and contexts, its evolution; it brings hauntology right back into the technological realm, to Derrida's 'techno-tele-iconicity' through its use by Mark Fisher and Stephen Prince, its use in turntablism, and its association with technologically recorded archives, loss and mourning, the *unheimlich*, the 'other', dreams and the haunt of haunting...

So, what's at stake? A group of three works, *Pole*, *Metatechnic* and *Four*<sup>6</sup>; a group of three performances, and therefore, interpretations; four different concepts of hauntology as outlined above and their implied chain of supplements. This chain includes the use of 'supplement' to illustrate both its performative sense—a supplement is the 'supplement' of the score, the scores themselves are supplements of other scores through their systems of writing<sup>9</sup> and all performances are 'supplements' of other performances—and the use of 'supplement' to illustrate the evolution of the word 'hauntology' itself, in that, as it evolves (through Fisher and Prince), in a sense, the new meaning replaces the old one but, that it also carries within it the 'DNA' of Derrida's original use. It is a continuation and a replacement that by its very nature must oppose itself. So, 'supplement' here applies not only to the specific interpretations under discussion, but also to the term 'hauntology' under which they are discussed.

The interpretations under consideration come in two forms: a single supplemental performance from the original composer's score, as with *Pole and Metatechnic*, and a supplementary performance which generates its own further supplements, as in *Four*<sup>6</sup>.

Let's consider some interpretations of hauntology and how they fit with performative interpretations. Derrida gives two definitions in *Specters of Marx*. The first<sup>10</sup> deals with notions of space (especially its contraction through electronic media use), time (the same contraction applies as with space) and the undecidable, almost *khora*-like, medium that hauntology appears to inhabit or operate in, that is an element that 'itself is neither living nor dead, present nor absent: it spectralizes. It does not belong to ontology...or to the essence of life or death.'<sup>11</sup> Hence, hauntology

---

<sup>5</sup> Derrida, 2006, 63.

<sup>6</sup> William Shakespeare, 'What's in a name?', *Romeo and Juliet*, II, ii, 1-2

<sup>7</sup> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, I, v, 188

<sup>8</sup> Derrida, 2006, xvi.

<sup>9</sup> See 'Metatechnic Preamble', 'Signals' and 'Bubble, Trumpet, Humming, Fah!' for a fuller discussion.

<sup>10</sup> Derrida, 2006, 63. (See page 1)

<sup>11</sup> Derrida, 2006, 63.

appears to resist conceptual order, it is an 'element' that is undecidable—like the *pharmakon*.<sup>12</sup> Derrida's second definition of hauntology takes this line of reasoning further:

To haunt does not mean to be present, and it is necessary to introduce haunting into the very construction of a concept. Of every concept, beginning with the concepts of being and time. That is what we would be calling here a hauntology. Ontology opposes it only in a movement of exorcism. Ontology is a conjuration.<sup>13</sup>

There is much to be gleaned from this passage. It reaffirms the undecidability of hauntology—'it does not mean to be present'—although we could deconstruct that sentence further and question whether Derrida uses the phrase 'does not mean to be present' as a substitute for 'isn't understood as being present' or whether it could also mean 'does not intend to be present' opening the possibility that to haunt could mean to be present and absent simultaneously. We are back in the domain of the *pharmakon*, and not only as regards undecidability but also in the *pharmakon's* related words (and texts);<sup>14</sup> that is, we are led 'into the very construction of a concept', and the clue to that text comes in the form of Derrida's use of the word 'conjure' in conjunction with ontology, which immediately draws the text into the orbit of the *pharmakeus*, the Derridean sorcerer of *Plato's Pharmacy*. This passage also brings into play (and I use that word advisedly in the context of Derrida) the exorcism: as idea, as ritual, as return, as promise. An exorcism of what, though? In *Specters of Marx*, it is an exorcism of 'what may be' and 'what has been,' an exorcism of future possibility and past/present memory, an exorcism of the 'undead' (ghosts), rather than the dead. And how do you 'kill' the undead? Through a 'magically' enabled return to conceptual order, delivered by the sorcerer (*pharmakeus*).

Again, as Derrida says, haunting is present in 'the construction of a concept'; haunting is present in hauntology, and time's being 'out of joint' is a theme that is woven into the fabric of much of Derrida's work (not just *Specters of Marx*).<sup>15</sup> And how does the supplement fit into this? Hauntology as a concept has its own supplements<sup>16</sup>—those of Fisher, Price et al—and each musical work, too has its supplements in every performance. Every performance is a supplement of both the work itself *and* every other performance, for every single one is already complete and yet lacking something...a further performance, the next performance, the possibility of the future event. Accordingly, *Pole* and *Metatechnic* (as performances) are supplements of their scores, and supplements of all their scores' other performances, while *Four*<sup>6</sup> (LP version), is not only a supplement of its score and other performances, but also the damaged LPs generated in the *process* of performance form four entirely new works, four more supplements, in other words, and the combination of those four individual LPs is yet another work, another supplement, which in turn could generate a whole new cycle of supplements.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> See 'Inter Muros'

<sup>13</sup> Derrida, 2006, 202.

<sup>14</sup> *Plato's Pharmacy* in *Dissemination*, 119-122

<sup>15</sup> *Archive Fever* (1998), *The Work of Mourning* (2003) and *Cinders* (2014) all deal with this issue in one way or another.

<sup>16</sup> See 'An overabundance of Signifiers' for more discussion of the supplement.

<sup>17</sup> Indeed, *Logosphere* is yet another synthesis of supplements, utilising a fragment from the above-mentioned Cage performance (*Four*<sup>6</sup> LP version—Nick Drake), and three randomly chosen fragments of text from the *Animadversion*.

Conjecture: hauntology has an intrinsically sonic dimension.<sup>18</sup>

As Derrida emphasised the *tele* of technology, in both temporal and spatial terms, and the weight of loss, of inheritance and mourning in *Specters of Marx*, Mark Fisher developed these aspects of Derrida's thought much further in *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (2014), giving hauntology a parallel, and supplemental, interpretation in a new context. Thus, in a sense, hauntology itself has come back to haunt us—it is a revenant, crossing between texts and media, shaping content through context,<sup>19</sup> and entering the virtual in the realms of music, electronic communication, film and video. But I'll pause for a moment here to look at the word 'haunting', as its fluidity of usage forms an important part of its application to music. We have the diminutive 'haunt' as place of *return*, e.g. the 'haunt of musicians' referring to a particular, and presumably agreeable, locus. We have 'haunt' as a more abstract, domain, as in 'the haunt of lost souls.' And we have 'haunting' as memory, 'a haunting strain of music, or scent, or taste', haunting as the acts of of spectres, as is written in the 1848 Communist manifesto: 'a spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism';<sup>20</sup> but, as Derrida comments, communism had not happened when Marx wrote the manifesto, thus the spectre can apparently haunt *from* the future, as well as embody the memories of past events or people and the apprehension of their *return*. Thus, 'What does it mean to follow a ghost? And what if this came down to being followed by it...persecuted perhaps by the very chase we are leading? ... what seems to be out front, the future, comes back in advance: from the past, from the back.'<sup>21</sup>

Developing this strand from *Specters of Marx*, Fisher presents hauntology first as pertaining to both the remnants of the past, often physical, and to a yearning for 'lost futures'; so hauntology is '...that which is (in actuality) *no longer*, but which *remains* effective as a virtuality (the traumatic 'compulsion to repeat', a fatal pattern). The second sense of hauntology refers to that which (in actuality) has *not yet* happened, but is *already* effective in the virtual (an attractor, an anticipation shaping current behaviour).'<sup>22</sup> Fisher goes on to consider the importance of hauntology as 'materialised memory',<sup>23</sup> emphasising the tactile, material dimension of specifically analogue media, their use in music and their degradation and breakdown, further accentuating the revenant's ability to conjure up not only memories of 'things' (often distorted), but also memories of things that never were, an insatiable and melancholy longing for what *did not* come to pass—what Derrida calls the 'heirs...of a promise.'<sup>24</sup> Thus, vinyl 'crackle' in this context not only is representative of a decaying, past (and tactile) medium but also foregrounds the *medium* itself, through its imperfections,<sup>25</sup> all the

<sup>18</sup> Fisher, 2014, 120.

<sup>19</sup> What Derrida describes as '...a performative interpretation, that is, of an interpretation that transforms the very thing it interprets...' (Derrida, 2006, 63)

<sup>20</sup> Marx, 1978, 67.

<sup>21</sup> Derrida, 2006, 10.

<sup>22</sup> Fisher, 2014, 19.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 21.

<sup>24</sup> Derrida, 2004, 113.

<sup>25</sup> See also 'Archive as Thesis.'

while opening new sonic avenues where 'loss' is the driving force of creation.<sup>26</sup> As Derrida remarks '...like all inheritors, we are in mourning,'<sup>27</sup> ...even when all we inherit is a 'lost' future.

To foreground analogue media is to raise questions of the virtual *and* the material, in as much as the object that the sound is recorded onto, for example, a vinyl LP, is wholly tactile and yet the sound itself, in its disseminated form, is virtual—pointing toward a certain moment of undecidability. There is a further correlation with radio static, where there is not only a 'lost' signal but also the possibility of the 'signal yet to come': radio static is a medium (a place and a time) of waiting, while radio is also a means of disseminating the archive (physical 'material' recordings—LPs, tapes and such, and also 'live' broadcasts) which, in its performative sense, it shapes.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, radio is the medium *par excellence* for evoking 'lost futures'; radio was the medium of the earliest sound transmissions, and perhaps most importantly in this context, of the transmissions from the moon landings and other events in the 'golden age' of space exploration.<sup>29</sup> Fisher further develops this idea to encompass notions of identity, identity as a fluid state, one that can be sampled or erased: 'Identification with the alien meant the possibility of an escape from identity, into other subjectivities, other worlds.'<sup>30</sup> A plurality of undecidable, shifting identities, where nothing is fixed, where one can embrace hauntology as a medium out of time, a medium of transformation, where presence is not assured, but is perhaps closer to what Derrida calls 'a spectral moment, a moment that no longer belongs to time, if one understands by this word the linking of modalized presents (past present, actual present: "now", future present).'<sup>31</sup>

What might the implications of the problematisation of the virtual and the material in our current context be? I'll begin with *Pole*, as it is the only score that actually *requires* the use of technology in its performance. *Pole für 2* can be performed by any combination of instruments and voices and also entails the addition of a third player, who controls the sound projection, disseminated through eight speakers placed around the performance space according to one of Stockhausen's schematics.<sup>32</sup> *Pole* takes its basic modus operandi from the earlier work *Spiral*.<sup>33</sup> As in *Spiral*, sound 'events received by a soloist on a short-wave radio are imitated, transformed and transcended.'<sup>34</sup> Sound events can be modified by the use of various electronic effects, including 'tape-loops, electronic storage systems, acoustical and optical electronic controls, time-delay apparatus...etc.' Stockhausen further notes that 'SPIRAL consists of a **sequence of events**, which are separated by **pauses of varying lengths...The first event** must be realised with short-wave receiver and instrument/voice. Its duration, register, dynamic level and rhythmic segmentation are free. The instrumental/vocal performance should match the simultaneous short-wave event so well that it becomes fused with

---

<sup>26</sup> Also referencing sonic arts' standard usage of hauntology as 'crackle'.

<sup>27</sup> Derrida, 2006, 67.

<sup>28</sup> See also Timothy C. Campbell, *Wireless Writing in the Age of Marconi*, 2006 and R.L.Rutsky, *High Technē: Art and Technology from the Machine Aesthetic to the Posthuman*, 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Making it the perfect medium for Stockhausen during the 1960s and 70s as the means whereby the spirits of Sirius could communicate with, and bring their music to, the earth. For more information, see Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Towards a Cosmic Music*, 1989. See also Michael Allen, *Live from the Moon: Film, Television and the Space Race*, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Fisher, 2014, 42.

<sup>31</sup> Derrida, 2006, xix.

<sup>32</sup> Stockhausen, 1973, 8-9.

<sup>33</sup> In a sense, it is another supplement, as is *Expo*.

<sup>34</sup> Stockhausen, 1973, 11.

it.<sup>35</sup> *Pole* works in exactly the same way,<sup>36</sup> but has some additional symbols pertaining to interpretation added to the score; these are largely concerned with practical issues of synchronicity and ensemble during performance and also emphasise the ‘poles’ that the players represent. The score of *Pole* also differs from *Spiral* in that it has a fully worked out part for the sound diffusion, rather than the more fluid role of the technical assistant found in *Spiral*.

Hauntologically speaking, *Pole* plays with three areas: the blurring of the boundaries between digital and analogue media; the contraction of space and time through use of the short-wave radios, in that ‘distant’ events are brought into the performance space; and the occurrence of signal distortion, frequently to the point of complete unrecognizability, both in terms of time frame (‘when’ the signal source emanated from) and its actual sound. The performance also plays with the materiality of analogue technology through its use of electronic effects, doubly emphasising hauntology in the performance both through the utilisation of the ‘analogue’ sound of the short-wave radio requested by the composer and also by the choices made by the performers regarding which effects will be deployed during the performance. The effects that were used here were deliberately chosen to evoke the analogue past—for example, ring modulator, vocoder, various delays and reverbs—but these effects were digitally designed in the present. Also, the means of control—i.e. the effects boxes used in performance—not only use, but also have, the appearance of ‘old school technology,’ the visual aspect of performance being an important constituent of hauntology, while the sound diffusion throughout the performance space is wholly controlled by computer. Thus, again, analogue and digital find themselves in a numinous relationship sonically and visually. Finally, the sound that the computer diffuses—a mixture of analogue media, digital media, digital media masquerading as analogue, and live performance—truly plays with time that ‘is out of joint’. We can take this even further by a consideration of the score’s front cover, a grainy, black and white image of Peter Eötvös and Harold Boje performing on analogue instruments—a distorted version of a ‘lost’ past which evokes, what is now, a ‘lost progressive future’.

Fisher stresses the importance of the juxtaposition between the analogue and the digital: on the one hand, there is the tactile analogue media of objects onto which sound is ‘cut’ or ‘burned,’ while on the other hand, the digital domain is clean and endlessly iterable. As Fisher remarks: ‘so many hauntological tracks have been about revisiting the physicality of analogue media in the era of digital ether.’<sup>37</sup> Accordingly, a lost future can be inscribed onto a physical present via a past medium (vinyl), a past event (in terms of style, persons, the recording), a past moment in time: ‘at a certain point promise and decision, which is to say responsibility, owe their possibility to the ordeal of the undecidability which will always remain their condition.’<sup>38</sup> So, not all of the past is necessarily lost, new versions of it can be manufactured, even if it is, ‘...a re-dreaming of the past, a condensation of relics of abandoned genres...’<sup>39</sup> For Fisher, the unrealised future is always, already, and permanently lost, while the material objects of the past just decay beyond the point of redemption, which brings

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Its performance instructions state: ‘All performance instructions from SPIRAL apply. **Exception:** An event is realised **either** with the short – wave receiver **or** by the instrument/voice; one can also use the instrument/voice to accompany or mix in with the short-wave event (as in KURZWELLEN), blending with it as far as possible.’ (Stockhausen, 1975, 8)

<sup>37</sup> Fisher, 2014, 21.

<sup>38</sup> Derrida, 2006, 94.

<sup>39</sup> Fisher, 2014, 103.

us back to creation through loss. If that 'creation' is stored in the digital domain, then it is endlessly repeatable, and, as Fisher suggests, in a sense, loss itself has been lost.<sup>40</sup>

And what of repetition in this endless circle of time, Fisher's 'traumatic compulsion to repeat'?<sup>41</sup> Derrida proposes that we consider repetition as 'Repetition *and* first time: this is perhaps the question of the event as question of the ghost... but also repetition *and* last time, since the singularity of any *first time*, makes of it also a *last time*. Each time it is the event itself, a first time is a last time.'<sup>42</sup> This idea is taken up by Fisher in his assertion that 'hauntology is the proper temporal mode for a history made up of gaps, erased names and sudden abductions...the fragments of a time permanently out of joint.'<sup>43</sup> The keyword here is fragments, for these are the stuff of repetition for Fisher and, for Derrida, the stuff of responsibility, of promise and decision, whereby notions of authorship and time are no longer assured (if they ever were), in particular as applied to sampling, where 'it is difficult to disentangle sampling from songwriting, impossible to draw firm lines between a cover version and an original song.'<sup>44</sup> A whole succession of first and last times, endlessly repeatable, endlessly new *and* old,<sup>45</sup> foregrounding the paths taken, haunted by the paths not taken in '...a difference whose uniqueness, disseminated in the innumerable charred fragments of the absolute mixed in with the cinders, will never be assured in the One...it happens only in the trace of what *would happen* otherwise and thus also happens, like a spectre, in that which does not happen'<sup>46</sup>—which is, of course, how a temporal medium, such as music, 'works.'

Fragments and repetition are also very relevant to the performance of *Metatechnic*. The score is graphic, made up of a number of symbols, vaguely similar to fractured glass or ice, organic forms, constellations and aggregates (perhaps they are fragments?), similar but different each time they appear. The score contains no information whatsoever about realisation. Therefore, every decision must be made by the performer/s, some in advance of the performance, some during the performance, in the moment of decision. The performance here used two grand pianos, fully prepared in advance with wood, metal and pottery, in the manner of John Cage, with some of the preparations placed between and some placed on top of the strings. This preparation produced a heavily distorted (live) sound during the first half of the performance. During the performance these preparations were removed, gradually de-preparing the piano until its original timbre was restored. Thus, the piano, not as an analogue medium, but certainly as a machine, is foregrounded, evoking and concurrently unsettling the Western classical piano 'tradition.' To this sound world Ableton live was added, so that each player was able to record, hold and play back up to four different moments of the performance's 'time' simultaneously, being potentially able to draw from a total of twenty-four 'samples.' By combining Ableton live with the very audible (as well as visual) process of de-preparation, the performers were able to make time 'out of joint' in two ways: through the gradual process of sonic change inherent in the live performance, and through the utilisation of Ableton to grab, hold and disseminate 'patches' or samples of time from earlier in the performance. As the performance progresses, the live piano becomes closer and closer to its original timbre, but the

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 144. Stephen Prince makes an interesting point about the loss of the full spectrum of sound during the recording of an MP3 file through the inherent process of compression. Even though the digital is (perhaps) endlessly repeatable, at the present time it cannot repeat the entirety of what it records. (Prince, 2019, 225)

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>42</sup> Derrida, 2006, 10.

<sup>43</sup> Fisher, 2014, 130.

<sup>44</sup> Fisher, 2014, 131. Which also plays into Derrida's concept of 'play'—see *An Overabundance of Signifiers*.

<sup>45</sup> Both Derrida and Fisher bring to mind René Char's phrase, 'Each act is virgin, even the repeated ones.' ('L'acte est vierge même répété,' Char, [1946] 2010, 149.)

<sup>46</sup> Derrida, 2006, 34.

players can choose to replay the most heavily prepared earlier sections at the same time, or they can choose to create a more closely linked semi temporal 'echo.' Thus, the performance comments on its own history; it shapes and collates its own archive. Always, the path not taken, the 'lost' future, is blatantly forced upon the listener–performer; agency is absolutely to the fore in all of the choices regarding which fragment(s) to use and when. Due to a technical problem on the day of the recital, this was made even more prominent in the performance than was originally intended because of an unsolicited, unintended, and very noticeable 'echo' (delay) in the replay fragments from Ableton live. This was of some concern initially; but, ultimately, it seems to doubly reinforce the nature of hauntology: the path taken is taken twice; the first time and last time repeat themselves.

## §

The final text under discussion is Stephen Prince's *A Year in the Country: Straying From the Pathways*,<sup>47</sup> which can be seen as a continuation of Fisher's work, as well as a further development of it, since, as Prince says, hauntology is 'a cultural category [which] is fluid and not strictly delineated...'<sup>48</sup> Prince summarises the standard' uses of 'hauntology,' largely derived from Fisher but, with an acknowledgment of the term's first use by Derrida, as pertaining to the following: loss; lost progressive futures; a sense of yearning; a fascination with utilising analogue media as cultural/historical icon and means of distorted dissemination in the current, digital, age; the sound of the medium itself (crackle, hiss and so on); an obsession with British cultural objects and institutions from the mid-1960s to 1979 (including the BBC radiophonic workshop); and the use of these objects to '...to conjure...strange, parallel or imagined world[s]...',<sup>49</sup> through a process of mis-remembering and re-imagining—in other words, a process of first and last repetition. Where Prince develops hauntology's usage away from Fisher is in his focus on an 'otherly pastoral/spectral hauntological intertwining,'<sup>50</sup> drawing from (amongst other things) early 1970s folk music, public information films, and children's television to produce a sense of numinous and oneiric 'otherness,' where the time is always 'out of joint.' As Derrida says: 'But also at stake, indissociably, is the differential deployment of *tekhnē*, of techno-science or tele-technology. It obliges us more than ever to think the virtualization of space and time...',<sup>51</sup> so theoretical knowledge is put into the service of a performative, yet virtual, realisation of the past and its relation to the present as well as to the 'futures' to come and those which are always, already, lost.

John Cage's *Four*<sup>6</sup> finds itself placed somewhat in the middle of the three performances under discussion—or at least its score does, for its performance in the LP version is firmly technological nor hauntological. Cage doesn't leave everything to chance (as is the case in *Metatechnic*), nor does he *require* the use of technology as Stockhausen does, but his score does include a written option, and therefore, an implicit suggestion, as to technology's use in performance when he writes: 'for any way of producing sounds (vocalization, singing, playing of an instrument or instruments, electronics, etc.).'<sup>52</sup> Having already trialled several versions of *Four*<sup>6</sup> (discussed in 'Trumpet, Bubble, Humming,

---

<sup>47</sup> The 'print' arm of the much broader 'A Year in the Country' project, which encompasses a web presence, music and artworks.

<sup>48</sup> Prince, 2019, 14.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>50</sup> Prince, 2019, 9.

<sup>51</sup> Derrida, 2006, 212.

<sup>52</sup> Cage, title page, 1992.



Fah!'), I wondered if it might be productive to try a version that was accompanied by not only a sonic record (as in the recorded performance of *Four*<sup>6</sup> itself) but that would also generate a material record (no pun intended) that could then be used for further musical projects—in other words, a supplement—and this was how the design for the LP version came about. The LP version was performed according to Cage's instructions, but every sound was made by the application of something to an LP. So, the LPs were painted, scratched, rubbed, tapped, beaten, glued, had rocks, sand and water dropped onto them, etc.<sup>53</sup> As it turned out, the LP version generated not one, but two supplements from the live performance,<sup>54</sup> and more could easily be produced in the future.<sup>55</sup> On re-playing and recording, the LPs presented varying degrees of distortion: the Pärt had the soft hiss and crackle reminiscent of an early phonograph record, the Gould was completely missing substantial portions of the original sound, and barely audible for much of its playing due to hiss and erasure, the Springfield had numerous erasures and repetitions from needle jumps caused by surface damage, and the Drake was so badly damaged (including Sellotape, super glue, sand and two small rocks stuck on the surface) that the needle was pulled from the turntable's arm twice during replaying.

Both Fisher and Prince emphasize the importance of the LP in hauntological music. Fisher asks, 'Why should crackle resonate now? ...crackle exposes a temporal pathology: it makes "out of joint" time audible. . . Crackle now calls up a whole disappeared regime of materiality...'<sup>56</sup> Crackle then is representative of that sense of timeslip embodied by the memory of a lost future, evoking, for example, both the permanently 'rose coloured' false memory of the eternal summers of 1950s teenagers 'rock and roll' musical culture, and also the sometimes much darker regions of the sonic landscape such as folk horror, experimental electronica, and punk. It is the medium of crackle and hiss, where we are forced to acknowledge that what we are listening to is not either 'real' or 'now' but 'other'. As Fisher remarks '...think of hauntology as *the agency of the virtual*, with the spectre understood as...that which acts without (physically) existing.'<sup>57</sup> The performances on the Cage project LPs do not physically exist in the here/hear and now of re-playing, and neither does the performance of *Four*<sup>6</sup> which created these damaged sonic objects. Thus, this damaged sound world is '...an acknowledgement and homage to the layers of recording history.'<sup>58</sup>

Although the LPs were chosen completely by chance, determined only by price (most inexpensive) and availability (what could be obtained in a short space of time before a travel deadline), the resulting musical choices turned out to be strangely apposite to the hauntological aspects of the Cage LP project. Nick Drake's *Pink Moon* album sits in the category of early 1970s 'otherly' folk music; *Dusty in Memphis* not only embodies a certain blurring of (and escape from) identity by its performer, but also that performer, Dusty Springfield, was an icon of 1960s and 70s British music,

---

<sup>53</sup> I was also attracted by the idea of recreating the sense of the medieval monastic scriptorium: a place of joint endeavour where individuality is obscured although fully present, as are the Cage performances in sound (and paint, in the 'Art' version). The materiality of the of LPs as impermanent objects which could be inscribed also seemed to resonate with Derrida's views on paper: '...I have the impression (the *impression!*—what a word, already) that I have never had any other *subject*: basically paper, paper, paper.' And further on 'Support, subject, surface, mark, trace, written mark, inscription, fold—these were also themes that gripped me by a tenacious certainty...that the history of this "thing," this thing that can be felt, seen and touched, and is thus contingent, paper, will have been a brief one.' (Derrida, 2005, 40)

<sup>54</sup> The four individual LPs damaged during performance were played as single tracks, and then combined to make a composite track.

<sup>55</sup> See note 16.

<sup>56</sup> Fisher, 2014, 144.

<sup>57</sup> Fisher, 2014, 18.

<sup>58</sup> Prince, 2019, 221.

the most resonant time period for hauntology; the Glenn Gould recording is earlier, but is a re-mastered version, so is already hauntological through its reworking of the past, even though it is a reworking designed to 'clean' that earlier sound; and the Arvo Pärt has a strangely music box quality in its use of sparse harmony and repetition. All are 'a dialogue with the ghost of the past...'<sup>59</sup>

Prince further expands hauntology's reach into the realms of architecture, covering abandoned cities, borderlands and hinterlands, Brutalism, and architectural 'memory'<sup>60</sup> (pertaining to T.C Lethbridge's 'stone tape theory');<sup>61</sup> 'folk horror', including the classic films *The Wicker Man* (1973, director Robin Hardy), and *The Blood on Satan's Claw* (1971, director Piers Haggard); the temporary autonomous zone<sup>62</sup> (as a manifestation of time being out of joint, or 'time slip', for example, a section of improvisation in the middle of a score with otherwise standard notation); and hypnagogic pop music. The two areas of particular interest here are the concepts of re-imagining and mis-remembering, and the sense of aporia relating to time, the quality of 'time [being] out of joint.' Thus, when Prince writes of 'psychedelic-like imagery which is filtered through a contemporary lens to create work that is not purely a retro re-treading, but which...is more a reimagining,'<sup>63</sup> we can see that something has been added to the fragments of that which (once) was already complete. We see the workings of the supplement in action again. The ghost comes back. It is not simply a reusing as collage, the pieces of which are (fairly) easily identifiable, but a reformulation, muddying any sense of specific timeframe or a specific locus. Past sonic objects are reimagined through layers of superimposition, distortion, and fragmentation (as in the Cage, Lesser and Stockhausen performances) using current technology to produce a sound world that is definitely 'other,' one that 'exist[s] in an atemporal timeline of its own,'<sup>64</sup> where present past, present future and present present all merge into an 'otherly pastoralism' and 'spectral hauntology.' Sonic objects from the past defy any sense of 'orderly' heritage, in that they don't just reappear as they once were (how could they?); they are first and last every time they are used, and whether they are recognisable or not is beside the point. 'A heritage is never natural, one may inherit more than once, in different places and at different times...';<sup>65</sup> and if memory (as inheritance) can no longer be relied upon, then we find ourselves in a truly unsettling and oneiric realm, populated by '...work created as though it could only access its source material via a distant, out-of-tune, fading-in-and-out shortwave radio...'<sup>66</sup>

Thus, three readings of 'hauntology,' three texts, three performances, each one an inheritor, each one an act of mourning. After all, 'we are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep.'<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>60</sup> Prince describes this as '...the recording and transmission of a malevolent presence in the stone of a building over hundreds of years.' (Prince, 2019, 111)

<sup>61</sup> See *Signals* for more information.

<sup>62</sup> See also *Hidden in Plain Sight*

<sup>63</sup> Prince, 2019, 214.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 222.

<sup>65</sup> Derrida, 2006, 211.

<sup>66</sup> Prince, 2019, 219.

<sup>67</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, IV, i, 156-158

## References

- Allen, M., *Wireless Writing in the Age of Marconi*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Cage, J., *Four*<sup>6</sup>, New York, NY: Henmar Press, 1992.
- Campbell, T.C., *Live from the Moon: Film, Television and the Space Race*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2009.
- Char, R, trans. Caws, M. A., & Kline, K., 'Leaves of Hypnos' in *Furor and Mystery & Other Writings*, ('Feuillets d'Hypnos' original publication date 1946), Boston, MA: Black Widow Press, 2010.
- Derrida, J., trans. Allison, D., *Speech and Phenomena*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973.
- Derrida, J., trans. Bass, A., *Margins of Philosophy*, Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- Derrida, J., trans. Johnsons, B., *Dissemination*, London: Continuum, 2004.
- Derrida, J., trans. Bowlby, R., 'Paper or Me, You Know . . . (New Speculations on a Luxury of the Poor) in *Paper Machine*, Stanford, CA: Stanford university Press, 2005.
- Derrida, J., trans. Kamuf, P., *Specters of Marx*, London: Routledge, 2006.
- Fisher, M., *Ghosts of My Life*, Winchester: Zero Books, 2014.
- Lesser, C., *Metatechnic*, Bridport: Clare Lesser, 2018.
- Morgan Wortham, S., *The Derrida Dictionary*, London: Continuum, 2010.
- Prince, S., *A Year in the Country*, Manchester: A Year in the Country 2019, 2019.
- Rutsky, R.L., *High Technē: Art and Technology from the Machine Aesthetic to the Posthuman*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.
- Stockhausen, K., trans. Davies, H., *Spiral*, Vienna: UE, 1973.
- Stockhausen, K., *Pole für 2*, Kürten: Stockhausen-Verlag, 1975.
- Stockhausen, K., trans. Nevill, T., *Towards a Cosmic Music*, Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1989.