

Dark Space, Psychic Space

Architecture, Techno and Counterculture

Doctoral Dissertation

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I, Adriano Angelo Migliorino, declare that this thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of Architecture at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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PREFACE

The inception of this body of work began in 2008 when I visited Beirut and Berlin for the first time. The purpose of the trip was to study places that had been afflicted by urban trauma, with the aim to understand how architecture could be operative in these post-traumatic urban environments. The analytical methodology of the urban and architectural terrain was wide ranging; however, particular attention was given to the typological and micro-cultural elements that were embedded in the context of the city. While in Berlin I fortuitously visited Berghain and was introduced to a place that was like nothing I had ever come across or could have ever imagined. It had an ensemble of elements: the most austere and powerful Techno music in the world, a haunting and visceral architectural building and space, and a unique counterculture like no other. The power of this ensemble triggered many unorthodox feelings, senses and perceptions that I was unable to make sense of at that time. The Berghain captivated my imagination, and understanding all the elements at play in such a space became a quasi-obsession. During my second trip to Berlin, I visited the iconic Tresor nightclub. This was a place where the same soul stirring and visceral emotions that I had experienced in the Berghain were again felt and present. These places were fundamentally unique. Slowly but surely a personal mandate emerged: there was a necessity to precisely understand what nuanced elements constituted their formation. My love for Techno music began in these spaces – Techno was the sound of freedom and possibility to me. After these trips to Berlin, I began collecting, curating and producing Techno music. I am now a Techno DJ and producer, and my understanding of the genre has grown over the past 15 years which has in part allowed me to uncover the urban and architectural terrain of the Techno movement in a way that would otherwise not be possible. Over the years Berlin has become a place that I visit frequently, and with each trip I see the nuanced iterations and

developments of these nightclubs and their counterculture. To truly understand the work contained herein, one must at some point experience the immense power of such places.

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Chapter 1. Architecture, Techno and Counterculture after the Fall of the Berlin Wall

1.1 Thesis Summary

This research examines the unique relationship between architecture and the countercultural movement of Techno after the fall of the Berlin Wall. With the collapse of the Wall, the visible and invisible partitions of the city came down. The subsequent administrative void affected the State's ability to govern, control and direct its urban and architectural environment. Consequentially, there was a temporary autonomous zone of the city centre, enabling a new cultural paradigm. Electronic music was one of the actors to step into the gap, firstly inhabiting it, then shaping the city as a unique spatio-temporal culture grew. Electronic music, its historical lineage, and the various socio-political contexts of underground countercultural movements form the basis of this research, with the objective of uncovering the spatial and architectural dimensions of this specific type of heterotopia in Berlin during Die Wende.

Now that the recent and relatively short history of Techno has sufficiently matured, sustained consideration of its effects on architecture are now possible to trace and are warranted. Central to this research are the architectural protagonists and principal case studies that are deeply embedded in the German social and political landscape of the 20th century. The cultural protagonist of the period can be described as the Techno counterculture, more specifically in this case the industrially inspired genre of Techno, which in 1991 was brought to Berlin from Detroit in the USA.¹ The thesis is a study of the spatial, aesthetic and architectural dimensions of these specific heterotopias, namely, underground Techno nightclubs in Berlin.

¹ Sub Berlin: The Story of Tresor, dir. Tilmann Künzel, Tresor Records, 2012.

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Fig. 1. Lichtgrenze (The Border of Lights). 25th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, 2014.
The former course of the Wall was mapped with illuminated balloons demarcating the east and west division of the city.



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Fig. 2. Lichtgrenze (The Border of Lights). 25th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, 2014. 300,000 revellers celebrate and remember the fall of the Berlin Wall. East Side Gallery Berlin.

1.2 Thesis Question

How does the relationship between architecture, Techno and counterculture after the fall of the Berlin Wall shape a new understanding of architecture?

1.3 Motivations for Addressing the Thesis

The principal content of this research brings to the surface a series of anomalies that warrant sustained consideration. The research foregrounds two architectural case studies, the nightclubs Tresor and Berghain, which were epicentres for the contemporary Techno subculture in Berlin. Significant paradigmatic shifts are evident in the case studies, both from the perspective of Western popular music and from the architecture in which the Techno counterculture is housed. As Gilbert and Pearson point out, in “house and techno, the beat has become all important in a way never before seen in western music”,² while in architecture, the two principal case studies reveal unorthodox lessons for the discipline itself. The contemporary reprogramming of the buildings as Techno nightclubs, programs that were never originally intended for the spaces, not only functions programmatically but is strengthened and empowered by the architecture. Moreover, while there are many accounts of the history, culture and political foundations of the underground Techno movement, there has been little attention given to its spatial dimensions and to the significance of urbanism and architecture in the cultivation of the subculture.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

There are two main theoretical concepts within this research that are used to enable a deeper and more nuanced reading of the main area of study: Sigmund Freud’s *uncanny* and Edmund Burke’s *sublime*. Both concepts are firmly grounded within the broader field of aesthetic theory. These concepts are employed as lenses through which the

² Jeremy Gilbert and Ewan Pearson, Discographies: Dance Music, Culture and the Politics of Sound (New York: Routledge, 1999) 38.

architectural, musicological and socio-political contexts of the research are analysed.

Burke's sublime deals with terror, dread and awe, while Freud's uncanny is an exploration of anxiety and fear.³ In Berlin, the post–World War II and Cold War socio-political contexts unequivocally deal with negative histories of terror, dread and anxiety. The psychological and spatial terrains of these contexts are measured through the aesthetic frames which are logical and appropriate instruments for their analysis. Similarly, the musicological considerations of the Techno movement in Detroit and Berlin are more deeply understood once measured against the theoretical frames.

1.5 Research Methodology

The research methodology employed by the thesis begins from a postpositivistic perspective. As such, it takes the position that the subjects of analysis are essentially indefinable, interpreted, and shifting in meaning based on context. The methodology departs from a perspective where meaning is created rather than discovered as a fixed entity.⁴ While the research comprises both quantitative and qualitative data and information, the methodology and its relationship to the thesis question firmly positions the research within a qualitative and inductive paradigm. The research seeks to understand meanings and interpretations; to look at, describe and understand experiences, ideas, beliefs and values, or what can be understood as intangibles.⁵ With respect to the main research method, the case-study is the foundational methodological approach for the research. Moreover, the research implements a comparative case-study methodology for the thesis that serves a number of strategic methodological requisites. Firstly, the case-study methodology allows for the object of study to be explored in-depth, rendering a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative understanding of the object of study. Secondly,

³ Hugh Haughton, introduction, *The Uncanny*, by Sigmund Freud, trans. David McLintock (London: Penguin Books, 2003) xli-xlii.

⁴ Gina Wisker, *The Postgraduate Research Handbook*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 66.

⁵ Wisker 75.

implementation of a comparative case-study methodology across more than one case alleviates any limitations with regards to generalising or drawing conclusions from individual cases alone. The comparative method therefore renders conclusions useful in their application to other examples, cases and contexts. Thirdly, the case-study methodology requires a certain rigour in the systematic collection of data and analysis of the objects of study. It acknowledges within its framework that the researcher needs to employ a certain subjectivity in the process of analysis,⁶ which is imperative given the research question and research context.

Tresor and Berghain have been chosen as the key case studies for analysis within the thesis because they have developed historically into what are arguably the two greatest institutions of Techno in Berlin. The former, marks the point of inception of the underground Techno nightclub in Berlin, while the latter represents the most contemporary manifestation and progressive iteration of the underground Techno nightclub. The thesis therefore utilises a comparative case-study methodology of the two main nightclubs and buildings in question, Tresor and Berghain, as a way of revealing the unique relationship between architecture, counterculture and Techno. The architectural case studies are systematically analysed according to different architectural categories. Initially, a formal analysis of the two buildings according to the factual and formal components of the architecture, such as siting, typology, tectonics, program, scale and style, are undertaken to establish a clear architectural image of the forms in question. The initial formal analysis employs a quantitative approach to the data and objects of study in order for specific deductions to be drawn. Subsequently, the various categories are measured against the theoretical framework to reveal how the aesthetic classifications of the uncanny and sublime are fundamental in shaping a specific type of heterotopia within

⁶ Wisker 216.

an architectural lineage of *dark space*. Here a qualitative lens is applied to the methodology to unpack the implicit and intangible ideas and meanings. As evidenced above, the methodological approach of the thesis recognises the need to employ and operate, where necessary, in both the quantitative and qualitative paradigms of method.

Specific historical and theoretical lenses are also employed as a means of providing a deeper analysis of the architecture. With respect to typology and tectonics, the unique perspective of such categories in the context of the Third Reich as established by Paul Virilio, as well as Gottfried Semper's foundational work in the development of tectonic theory more broadly, are additional frameworks through which the architecture is analysed. Similarly, the works of Anthony Vidler and Étienne-Louis Boullée establish the concepts of an architectural uncanny and an alternative history of space in architecture that are used for further examination of the case studies. Another fundamental area of enquiry relates to Techno music. A theoretical and historical foundation for electronic music more broadly and Techno music more specifically is documented and then measured against the spaces and architecture of the underground Techno movement. Such a study requires some fundamental knowledge of the relationship between acoustics and architecture that is traced as a means of setting a foundation in this specific area. The relationships are subsequently applied to the underground Techno context. Concurrent to these avenues of enquiry are the sociological considerations in their varying forms that underpin the countercultures that are fundamental to the research. In the US context, the groups of people who cultivated Techno music and the electronic music scene, along with the countercultural groups that frequented the early underground nightclubs, are defined in order to establish the foundations of what follows in the German context. Likewise in Berlin, the countercultural groups and their practices are documented and analysed in relation to the music and architecture.

The supporting evidence for the thesis is a combination of primary and secondary source material in relation to the historical, subcultural and architectural components of the study. The social and historical context of the electronic music movement is first established through secondary sources, more specifically books that provide the foundational material of the history. Primary-source film documentaries are also used to gain a more complete picture of the various contexts, with first-hand accounts from key protagonists during the Disco, House and Techno music movements both in the USA and Germany. Film documentaries help with framing the key ideas and considerations of the period. The political contexts of Europe, Germany and Berlin, which are relevant to the research, are established through the use of secondary sources. The architectural cases are analysed through primary sources in the form of historical documents from within the various city planning departments of Berlin. Documents include building plans, sections and elevations, as well as photographs of the two venues. The Bezirksamt Friedrichshain Kreuzberg and Bezirksamt Mitte hold the archived architectural and structural documentation that offer a primary information set. The archived documents further serve to understand the historical development, changes and modifications to both the sites and buildings, as parts of these structures were modified over a 60-year period. The first of the case studies is the original Wertheim department store that became the Tresor nightclub located on Leipziger Straße 126–128 in the Mitte district of Berlin. The second case-study is the VEB Fernheizwerk der Stalinallee that became the Berghain nightclub located on Rüdersdorfer Straße 70 in the district of Friedrichshain Kreuzberg.

1.6 Review of Literature

Although there are detailed accounts of the individual areas of study, there is no scholarly study yet whose principal subject is the countercultural movement of Techno coupled with the infrastructural and industrial architecture of Berlin. The history of electronic music is

widely documented. The key protagonists along with the political and social contexts in which they operated have been reported and analysed extensively. Yet, the historical and theoretical accounts of Techno are lacking in relation to space, urbanism and architecture.

The source material that documents the history of electronic music predominantly falls under the purview of either primary-source documentary films or secondary-source material in the form of books and journal articles. The documentary films of significance herein generally cover the social, political and musicological aspects of the history. They focus primarily on tracing the key figures of the period against the social backdrop that influenced their actions. However, neither architecture nor the space of the city are engaged nor analysed with any depth. The evolution and interrelated aspects of the movement are therefore woven together to form a general musicological history. There are two critical ideas that require foregrounding with regard to the gap in knowledge identified above. Firstly, the musicological history that has been surveyed within the research (a history that forms the foundation upon which much of the thesis unfolds) has not only been documented and analysed according to its explicit content but has also been read with a lens to the spatial aspirations of the thesis question. Secondly, the dissertation opens the door for historians to reconsider and focus more deeply on the spatial, urban and architectural considerations within that musicological history.

More specific to Techno, as opposed to Disco and House, the key figures in both the USA and Europe speak directly of the development, the intentions and the impetus that made them part of the Techno culture. Examples are the accounts by Juan Atkins, Derrick May and Kevin Saunderson, three founding figures of the Techno genre from Detroit, who describe the birth of this new musical style and its progenitors. At various points, the buildings that housed the music are briefly foregrounded in the historical accounts but

never described with any depth, or according to a deeper set of urban and architectural considerations – considerations that would require expert knowledge within the field of architecture. The documentary film *Maestro*⁷ departs from the usual formula. It details the history of Larry Levan and the Paradise Garage, an iconic underground Disco club in Manhattan. Here it is possible to see the beginnings of a moment where the consideration of space is no longer passive but foregrounded and understood as an active and key component to the musical experience. In the film, basic details and commentary are given regarding the building typology, scale and materials, illustrating how these elements affected the sonic qualities of the space. These more nuanced moments within the musicological history act as vignettes, in which spatial ideas and considerations are momentarily foregrounded. They are documented in the thesis and help to build a new spatial narrative within the history of electronic music.

Another key documentary film more specific to Techno called *High Tech Soul: The Creation of Techno Music*⁸ explains more explicitly the relationship between Detroit's urban space and its significance to the Techno genre. The industrial and post-industrial versions of the city are critiqued and architecture is foregrounded again as a key character; however, the depth of engagement is minimal. Contrastingly, in various documentary films concerned with the European history of Techno, space and architecture are engaged with more nuance. The documentary film *Sub Berlin: The Story of Tresor*⁹ details with more specificity the significance of the space itself. Accounts of the types of spaces, atmospheres and tectonic properties are given to render a more complete architectural picture. The division of the city and the spatial ramifications that are registered through the built form take a prominent position as a central component within the history of Techno in the

⁷ *Maestro*, dir. Josell Ramos, Artrution Productions, 2005.

⁸ *High Tech Soul: The Creation of Techno Music*, dir. Gary Bredow, MVD Visual, 2015.

⁹ *Sub Berlin: The Story of Tresor*, dir. Tilmann Künzel.

German context.

Secondary source material provides further detail and precision in relation to the historical accounts but also focuses on the music, not the architecture. Some texts tend toward a more factual grounding while others delve deeper into cultural theory for a more analytical and nuanced reading of the history. *Techno Rebels*¹⁰ by Dan Sicko, one of the more prominent books on the history of Techno, is a pragmatic documentation of details outlining the major considerations relating to the genre. Sicko highlights how Techno was cultivated in the quieter Midwestern city of Detroit, crediting the marginalisation from major metropolitan areas like New York and Los Angeles as the major factor that shielded Techno from commodification during its early development. He contextualises the landscape of Techno and its relationship to media, then highlights the difficulties it faced in a context dominated by Rock and Roll. “Techno was a Herculean triumph in overcoming cultural isolation and desperation and, for most of its existence, has struggled to survive in a rock ’n’ roll-dominated landscape.”¹¹ Sicko, in very tentative terms, engages with architecture and urbanism as he briefly documents the city’s post-industrial urban decay. He attributes the demise of the city to the shifts in manufacturing, poor planning and ill-conceived infrastructure. In relation to architecture he states,

Techno’s future artists and producers seemed to connect on a more personal level with Detroit’s buildings than did the preservationists or guerrilla artists. The juxtaposition between their new music and ideas and this old Midwestern city would continually drive their creativity, . . .

Aware of both the city’s former glory and its future possibilities, these artists found hope in a decaying infrastructure where none apparently existed. This

¹⁰ Dan Sicko, *Techno Rebels: The Renegades of Electronic Funk*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010).

¹¹ Sicko 11.

optimism and empathy would run deep in techno music.¹²

Sicko makes a key connection between the genre of Techno and the built form of the city; however, he does not engage the city's buildings beyond their passive role as a decaying backdrop, instead focusing on drawing connections between the artists and their empathy for the city. However, when drawing parallels with the European context, he states, "In addition, much of techno's future popularity in Europe came out of the eu(ro)phoria associated with raves and such momentous events as the fall of the Berlin Wall, forging an association between techno and elation, rather than with more sombre moods."¹³ Sicko's conclusion lacks a depth of understanding in relation to the 20th century German context and how it affected youth culture, especially in the case of Berlin. While the act of tearing the Wall down is widely framed as a positive historical moment, the collective trauma of two totalitarian regimes ran deep in the consciousness of the people, the traces of which are evident as European Techno producers and DJs pushed the aesthetic qualities of the genre into deeper and darker aesthetic territory. Although he briefly mentions the city and the Wall, there is no analysis beyond a simple introduction of the architectonic element. Given that it is difficult to conceive of 20th century German history without the spatial backdrop of the city and collision of regimes as evidenced in the built form of the city, any subcultural narrative of Techno specific to Berlin would naturally have within it a deeper dimension of space and form.

The actual number of Techno clubs in the Detroit scene was small. The early Techno parties in Detroit were organised by different high-school social clubs around the city. However, one iconic Techno club that acted as a foundation and platform for many Techno artists did briefly help in the cultivation of the genre. Called the Music Institute (MI), it operated from 1988 to 1989. Although its lifespan was short, it was nonetheless legendary

¹² Sicko 36.

¹³ Sicko 38.

for the Techno scene and the genre. Sicko outlines the mythical, transforming and invaluable nature of the Music Institute, but makes no reference to anything spatial or architectural, limiting his comments to the following: “The Music Institute will forever remain a mythical part of techno, due in part to its short-lived energy and brilliance and to the way it functioned as a ‘home’ for the music, transforming one of the city’s old structures and putting it to work for a change.”¹⁴ The thesis, therefore, operates in part to fill the gap in knowledge with respect to the spatial, architectural and urban history of Techno.

Much of the historical literature that comprises the musicological history, especially the history that pertains to Disco and House music, is generally written as a chronological narrative that touches on various social themes, thereby rendering specific interpretations of primary and secondary source materials. With regard to the genre of Techno, however, there are several sources consulted in the research that document its history as a chronological narrative, but also other sources that engage with the theoretical implications and considerations of that history. This ultimately serves the dissertation, given the theoretical underpinning of the research. The theoretical considerations that are uncovered in the literature guide the research as it moves through various broader theoretical considerations.

The theoretical framework of the thesis comprises another large portion of literature to which the dissertation refers. The aesthetic categories of the uncanny and sublime have developed historically via several theorists in the realm of general theory. However, as specific theories enter the domain of architecture, it is critical to survey how they are interpreted, analysed and developed by architectural theorists through specific

¹⁴ Sicko 63.

methodologies. One such architectural theorist that is of great significance to the thesis is Anthony Vidler and his contribution to that which constitutes an *architectural uncanny*.

The methodologies used in various texts by Vidler operate also as reference points for this dissertation. The comparative case-study method is integral to architecture, hence its implementation not only in Vidler's work but across architecture more broadly.

Interestingly, even within the domain of general theory, discrete moments of spatial analyses are employed to elucidate meaning. Freud, a neurologist who is credited with the development of psychoanalysis, in his own quest to locate the nucleus of the *Unheimliche*, often references spatial considerations, the city and architecture, to test and develop theory.

While the thesis seeks to engage the literature and debates within the area of study with which it is concerned, it also seeks to develop its own methodological approach through the literature it surveys. This occurs in both the domains of general theory and architectural theory throughout the course of the thesis. The theoretical perspectives therefore that are developed during a review of the theoretical literature operate to validate the methodological approach of the dissertation.

Developing theoretical perspectives or surveying the wider theoretical and architectural literature serves not only to arrive at a methodological approach but realise how the methodology needs to operate in more nuanced terms. Throughout much of the literature that forms the basis of the thesis, there is generally a bias toward the qualitative and phenomenological considerations of architecture that are foregrounded as a means of developing theories and meaning. While this is completely valid and necessary, especially given the aesthetic terrain in which much of the literature operates and which the thesis is concerned with, it is also pertinent to establish explicit and detailed formal and factual architectural information of the two main case studies. Clearly establishing the quantitative facts with a clear set of comparative criteria is necessary for the validity of the architectural

analyses and findings.

1.7 Key Terms

Electronic music – Electronic refers to the methods of production within the discipline of contemporary electronic music. The term ‘electronic music’ describes music that is no longer generated through traditional acoustic means such as stringed, woodwind, horned and percussion instruments, but rather is produced via the use of synthesizers, drum machines and other electronic equipment. The fundamental difference electronic instruments have from their acoustic predecessors is the fact that they are powered by electricity. They produce an electronic signal that is converted into sound. Acoustic instruments have no such relationship with the power of electricity and were generally constructed using natural materials such as wood. Acoustic instruments were limited to producing a specific type of sound and volume.

The violin, for example, will only ever render a sound with a specific timbre, which is the sound’s character or quality. It does not have the capacity to also produce the timbre of other instruments such as a woodwind instrument or a saxophone. The synthesizer on the other hand has the capacity to produce a vast number of different timbres from the one machine. It is common that a synthesizer will be capable of rendering the timbre of a piano, stringed instruments, percussion instruments and many others from a single unit. Another fundamental difference with acoustic instruments is their capacity to produce volume. The violin with its distinct spatial dimensions will only ever achieve a certain volume whereas the synthesizer has the capacity to incorporate or attach amplifiers that will enable a greater range of volume from the instrument. These differences mean that the full suite of sounds is achievable in one unit with the capacity to vary and transform the sounds in order to create unique timbres. As Curtis Roads identifies in his book *Composing Electronic Music*, “The synthesis and transformation of timbre

is central to the practice of electronic music”.¹⁵ Roads foregrounds the capacity and importance of electronic instruments as the key to generating unique and evolving timbres, something that was hitherto impossible. Furthermore, effects such as reverb and delay can be added to the source sound from the synthesizer to develop more sonic complexity in terms of rhythm, and more interesting spatial dimensions within the sound. This capacity of the electronic medium opens up many possibilities for music with essentially an endless field of aesthetic exploration now possible. As will be developed in subsequent chapters, there is a unique relationship between sound and architecture. An example of such a relationship is that between the Gregorian chants of Christianity and the cathedral typologies in which they are performed. Conversely, electronic music is developed within a machine and originally had no relationship to space, either agrarian, urban or architectural. Electronic music was therefore typeless and in search of a space that was tuned to the possibilities of the music.

Both the synthesizer and drum machine gave birth to new genres of music that were derivatives of Disco, principally House and Techno. The ability to generate advanced tempo ranges well above 100bpm (beats per minute) through the coupling of mechanical sequencing machines and drum machines, as well as the creation of unique electronic timbres and absence of lyrics, led Techno to concretise its position as the most avant-garde genre of electronic club music. According to Joanna Demers, electronic music is a

Term referring to a large, disparate collection of genres and metagenres of musics involving one or more of the following: electronic instruments, signal processing, and phonographic technology. Electronic music appeared in the early twentieth century with instruments such as the Telharmonium, the theremin, and the Ondes Martenot. During the 1950s and 1960s, it flourished on state-supported radio stations in France and Germany

¹⁵ Curtis Roads, preface, *Composing Electronic Music: A New Aesthetic*, by Roads (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) xviii.

and at universities in the United States.¹⁶

Disco – Disco music is generally characterised as an up-tempo version of Rhythm & Blues (R&B). It is significant in two ways. Firstly, it was at the centre of what is now understood to be contemporary club culture and an integral component in the cultivation of underground club culture and music. Secondly, it was the predecessor of all forms of contemporary club music. According to Demers, Disco was “A genre of dance music originating in the early 1970s, combining elements of R&B, salsa, soul, jazz, and synth-pop.”¹⁷ It provided the foundation upon which House and Techno were developed.

House – House music is characterised by the use of vocal or melodic samples, which were coupled with new drum machine patterns and percussive sequences. The samples were originally taken from Disco records. However, contemporary versions of House music generate most of their musical parts from first principles, through the use of synthesizers and drum machines. According to Demers,

One of the most important postdisco genres of EDM, [electronic dance music] house emerged in underground dance clubs in Chicago and New York during the early 1980s. House in many respects retains the most effective elements of disco: a steady mid-tempo beat with R&B or funk grooves. But house updates disco by using sampled rather than performed vocals in the upper register of the track and replaces some of disco’s acoustic instruments with synthesizers.¹⁸

House was the precursor to Techno. It was the first major shift away from Disco music and laid the foundations for a new methodology of creating electronic music.

¹⁶ Joanna Demers, *Listening Through the Noise: The Aesthetics of Experimental Electronic Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 167.

¹⁷ Demers 165.

¹⁸ Demers 169-170.

Techno – Techno music is characterised by the use of complex percussive and synthesized sequences, which, through organised layering, renders a texturally rich composition.

According to Demers,

Techno's name refers to its technological aspect, its nearly exclusive reliance on synthesizers and drum machines. Unlike house, techno tends not to use samples of well-known songs, sticking instead with newly composed materials or unrecognizable samples. Techno arose during the 1980s in Detroit, the result of collaborations between the Belleville Three of Juan Atkins, Derrick May, and Kevin Saunderson. May famously described techno as what would happen if George Clinton and Kraftwerk got stuck in an elevator together; this statement points to techno's combination of psychedelic funk with robotic precision. Techno grew to prominence in Detroit dance clubs even as it gained popularity in other cities.¹⁹

Techno was the next evolution in the lineage of electronic music after House. It is an abstract genre that negates the spoken word, rendering it an art form and language that is indeterminate. There is no codified meaning via language in the music and therefore it is open to interpretation.

Rave – The term 'rave' generally refers to dance parties that were typically held in clandestine clubs, disused warehouses and the rural fields of southeast England.²⁰ The great dawn of rave parties was a pre-millennial phenomenon, and it was built on ideas of resistance and revolution.²¹ Rave culture sought to move beyond the surveillance of media and the authorities. It also contributed to the paradigm in which there was a liquidation of the star and spectator paradigm that was so prevalent in the Rock and Pop experience. Within rave culture, there was a rush of "conspiratorial optimism" and "libratory dance-

¹⁹ Demers 176.

²⁰ Graham St John, *Technomad: Global Raving Countercultures* (London: Equinox Publishing, 2009) 1-2.

²¹ St John 1.

ekstasis”.²² Raves in contemporary times have largely diminished in their original typological construction as an illegal or clandestine event. Within the rave culture, drugs, specifically but not limited to ecstasy, figured greatly. There was a massive backlash against rave parties both in the UK and US by their respective authorities. The implementation of the draconian “Criminal Justice Act” in the UK and the “RAVE Act” in the US brought about what has been described as rave’s “death certificate”.²³ The legacy of rave culture is immensely important to Techno, as Graham St John highlights, “For, from the beginning, and indeed both before the beginning and subsequent to the rave explosion, a techno-underground has subsisted, multiplied, and evolved, mutating and surviving in a transnational network of techno-tribal formations.”²⁴ Raves and rave culture therefore are very important to the origins of the Techno movement and the contemporary manifestations of the underground Techno nightclub.

Musicology – Musicology is generally described “as a process of study, inquiry and reflection”²⁵ in relation to the subject matter of music. While the history of music can be traced back to the distant past, musicology as a discipline is still quite young. The practice of music has always, to some degree, engaged with the peripheral act of theorisation. Whether this be from a technical, structural or cultural perspective, practice and theory have always maintained an interdependent relationship. The broad scope of musicology has two main sub-categories that focus on specific aspects within the study of music. This division, attributable to Guido Adler, differentiates between “historical and systematic dimensions of music”.²⁶ Systematic musicology is principally concerned with the “internal

²² St John 1.

²³ St John 1.

²⁴ St John 1.

²⁵ David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, introduction, *Musicology: The Key Concepts*, by Beard and Gloag, 2nd ed. (Oxon: Routledge, 2016) xi.

²⁶ Beard and Gloag xii.

properties and characteristics of music such as harmony and tonality”²⁷ but extends to other areas such as theory, philosophy and psychology. Ethnomusicology in contrast focuses on the historical components of music, more specifically its social and cultural aspects. The systematic and ethnographic analyses of electronic music in the context of Techno provide a foundation for the research and enable a deeper understanding and consequent extrapolation of the various spatial and architectural dimensions within the thesis.

Counterculture – The term ‘counterculture’ generally references a period during the 1960s and 1970s that was not necessarily specific to any one country or place. Theodore Roszak’s text, published in 1969, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition*,²⁸ is often referred to as the genesis of the concept. However, it is evident that counterculture as a *modus operandi* pre-dates Roszak’s text, as will become evident in subsequent chapters. Roszak details the Vietnam War protestors and their rejection of the corporate technocracy as the foundation of counterculture. However, the term now broadly characterises groups or subcultures with values that run counter to those of established society during a specific period. Subcultures which are typically fringe, opposed to authoritarianism and the values of mass society, are now considered countercultural.

Counterculture underpins the socio-political contexts of the Disco, House and Techno music movements. In the Detroit context, counterculture is grounded in Black history. Techno according to DeForrest Brown Jr was an uprising and response against the “four-hundred-year

²⁷ Beard and Gloag xii.

²⁸ Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and its Youthful Opposition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

history of oppression by an exclusively white European colonial governing body”.²⁹ It was a way of imagining a new future in the context of a colonial framework through the organising of an “advanced vibrational technology that can be integrated into the mind, body, and soul”.³⁰

Modern counterculture in Berlin can be partly traced back to the time of the Weimar Republic. This period of cultural renaissance saw intellectuals condemning the excesses of capitalism, while politics and philosophy became more radical in their thinking. More specifically, however, there are three types of counterculture that are central to underpinning the contemporary Techno subculture in Berlin. The first type of counterculture is documented by Jennifer Evans, a scholar whose work focuses on German history and the history of sexuality. In a contribution entitled *Life Among the Ruins: Sex, Space and Subculture in Zero Hour Berlin*,³¹ Evans documents a specific type of counterculture in the rubblescape of the post-Nazi period. The second form of counterculture is evident in the rhizomatic cultural logic of West Berlin prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The third type of counterculture traces back to the administrative breakdown of the GDR (German Democratic Republic) and the subsequent temporary autonomous zone of the city. Die Wende (the turning point) characterises a period in which a new type of political, social and cultural freedom emerged in Berlin. The vast wastelands and ruins of the city led to empty buildings being appropriated for use as squats, art spaces and nightclubs. This critical moment in history was the catalysing event that spawned the new urban subculture of Techno in Berlin.

The term ‘counterculture’ in the context of the research is synonymous with the definition

²⁹ DeForrest Brown, Jr, introduction, *Assembling a Black Counter Culture*, by Brown, Jr (New York: Primary Information, 2022) 7.

³⁰ Brown, Jr 13.

³¹ Jennifer V. Evans, “Life Among the Ruins: Sex, Space, and Subculture in Zero Hour Berlin,” *Berlin: Divided City, 1945–1989*, ed. Philip Broadbent and Sabine Hake, vol. 6 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012).

of *underground*, as a type of resistance movement. Counterculture and underground are characterised as movements “opposed to the tenets, customs and values of mass society”.³² Techno music within the broader context of counterculture becomes one of the common elements by which this new subcultural or underground group is principally identified and connected. In subsequent chapters the lineage of this counterculture is defined and given a historical context through which various contemporary types and manifestations are understood and measured.

Heterotopia – Heterotopia is a concept that defines certain spaces as having a quality of *otherness*. Such spaces can be perceived as paradoxical, incongruent, transforming, disturbing and intense. The concept was detailed by the French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault in a seminal essay entitled “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias”.³³ Foucault outlines the varying types of spaces that possess these qualities, such as boarding schools, ships, psychiatric hospitals, prisons, cemeteries, brothels and bars. Foucault establishes a heterotopology of space, which is a type of systematic categorisation of various heterotopias and how they manifest in real terms. He also establishes the concept of heterochronies, which is the relationship between heterotopic spaces and time. Foucault notes that heterotopias begin “to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time”, citing the cemetery as a highly heterotopic place.³⁴ The contemporary underground Techno club can be defined precisely as a heterotopia when measured against the principles that Foucault outlines; the connections and manifestations are detailed in subsequent chapters.

³² Alan Bullock and Stephen Trombley, eds., *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, 3rd ed. (London: HarperCollins, 1999) 895.

³³ Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,” trans. Jay Miskowiec *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité* (October 1984).

³⁴ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 6.

Hauntology – Hauntology is a term that was developed by Jacques Derrida in his book *Specters of Marx*.³⁵ The book itself was written after a conference, organised by the University of California’s Center for Ideas and Society, in which Derrida’s plenary address and lecture was given, entitled “Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International”. Derrida’s book is the long-form version of this lecture and questions in part what remains of Marxist theory after the events of 1989. The word itself is a portmanteau of haunting and ontology, and is closely connected to Derrida’s deconstructive method of deferred meaning. Mark Fisher, a political and cultural theorist, wrote extensively on hauntology. In relation to Derrida’s text, he wrote, “In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida defines hauntology as the study of that which repeats without ever being present. . . . that which haunts *insists* without ever *existing*.”³⁶ J. Simpson, writing in reference to William Basinski, an ambient and drone musician³⁷ and producer of the highly acclaimed albums called *The Disintegration Loops*, foregrounds the fact that hauntological art knowingly references time and memory.³⁸ Hauntology has more broadly come to be understood as a concept in which there is a pining for a particular future that never actually arrives, commonly referred to as lost futures. The concept of hauntology aligns with the Afrofuturist mythology, which is foundational for the genre of Techno music and documented at length in the following chapters. Moreover, hauntology refers to the notion that the present moment is being haunted by a lost future that never eventuated. Hauntology is an intrinsic concept to Techno as a music genre and also the architectural and aesthetic configuration of the contemporary underground Techno club. It is a concept

³⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994).

³⁶ Mark Fisher, *K-Punk: The Collected and Unpublished Writings of Mark Fisher (2004-2016)*, ed. Darren Ambrose (London: Repeater Books, 2018) 172.

³⁷ Drone music according to Joanna Demers is characterized as music containing a sustained or unchanging note or group of pitches. Drones were developed in experimental Western music and came to prominence with minimalist composers. They often form part of musical works with extended time frames, sometimes as long as several hours. In the context of contemporary electronic music, they generally form a rich texture of sound behind the percussive elements. See Demers, *Listening Through the Noise: The Aesthetics of Experimental Electronic Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 166.

³⁸ J. Simpson, *William Basinski: Musician Snapshots*, eBook (Stone Blue Editors, 2015).

that functions in the discipline of architecture beyond a materialist archaeology.

Hauntology is developed in relation to the case studies of the thesis in subsequent chapters.

The concept is closely related to heterotopias of synchrony that deal with the shifting meaning of architectural form across various time periods.

Sublime – The theory of the sublime dates back to a text during the 1st century AD of unknown authorship entitled *On the Sublime*.³⁹ The text is written as an epistolary essay that examines over 50 ancient writers through the lens of the sublime. It establishes the sublime as having a quality of greatness defined by Longinus (the author conventionally assigned to the essay) as “man’s ability, through feeling and words, to reach beyond the realm of the human condition into greater mystery”.⁴⁰ Building upon John Dennis and Joseph Addison’s earlier notions of the sublime during the 17th century, Edmund Burke established his own analysis of the concept in a text entitled *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*.⁴¹ Burke was definitive about separating the ideas of the beautiful and the sublime, which were often conflated. Immanuel Kant followed on from Burke’s work in his maturation of the concept. In his book, *Critique of Judgement*⁴² Kant defines the sublime as falling into two main categories: the mathematical and the dynamical. The concept was picked up by many other theorists and philosophers, one of which was Jean-François Lyotard who was particularly interested in Kant’s explanation of the sublime. His book entitled *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*⁴³ interrogates the edges of human sense perception, establishing the noumenal condition as an intrinsic component to understanding the

³⁹ Longinus, *On the Sublime* (n.p.: n.p., 2015).

⁴⁰ “Essay on Poetic Theory: from ‘Of the Sublime’,” *Poetry Foundation* 13 October 2009. 11 Jun 2024 <<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69397/from-on-the-sublime>>.

⁴¹ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (n.p.: Sofia Publisher, 2022).

⁴² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987).

⁴³ Jean-François Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

sublime. Paul Crowther, a contemporary author, looks at the revival of Kant's aesthetics in an essay entitled "The Kantian Sublime, the Avant-garde, and the Postmodern: A Critique of Lyotard".⁴⁴ In this essay he establishes Kant's mature theory of the sublime:

Kant divides sublimity into two modes – the mathematical and the dynamical. The former arises when some vast object overwhelms our capacity to comprehend it *as a totality* in terms of sense-perception or imagination; the latter arises when we encounter an object so powerful that it would overwhelm us with fear for our lives - *if* we were in a position where it was directly threatening us. Now since, for Kant, the sublime is a 'mental movement', these negative moments give way to positive ones. In the case of the mathematical mode, our very incapacity to comprehend the vastness of an object through sense-perception or imagination, serves to make all the more vivid the fact that we *can* comprehend it *as* a totality in purely rational terms. In the case of the dynamical mode, the very fearfulness of the object leads us to imagine defying it in moral terms. We conceive ourselves as facing destruction unflinchingly and with resolve - as indeed befits our status as rational and moral beings, rather than mere animals.⁴⁵

Critical to the concept of the sublime across the various theories is the experience of two opposing feelings simultaneously, of both pleasure and anxiety. The sublime is an experience that is both compelling and conflicting in equal measure.

Uncanny – In aesthetic theory the sublime houses within its broader framework the concept of the uncanny. The uncanny was historically a somewhat evasive concept to define. The uncanny and the sublime share very similar qualities that provoke a sense of terror and anxiety. Freud, in his study of the uncanny, established it as sitting within the

⁴⁴ Paul Crowther, "The Kantian Sublime, The Avant-Garde, and the Postmodern: A Critique of Lyotard," New Formations 7 (1989): 67-75.

⁴⁵ Crowther 67.

outer margins of the traditional sublime.⁴⁶ As Anthony Vidler unpacks Freud's study of the uncanny, he remarks,

The sensation of "uncanniness" was, then, an especially difficult feeling to define precisely. Neither absolute terror nor mild anxiety, the uncanny seemed easier to describe in terms of what it was not than in any essential sense of its own. Thus it might readily be distinguished from horror and all strong feelings of fear; it was not uniquely identified with the parapsychological—the magical, the hallucinatory, the mystical, and the supernatural did not necessarily imply "uncanniness"; nor was it present in everything that appeared strange, weird, grotesque, or fantastic; it was the direct opposite, finally, of the caricatural and the distorted, which, by their exaggeration, refused to provoke fear. Sharing qualities with all these allied genres of fear, the uncanny reveled in its nonspecificity, one reinforced by the multiplicity of untranslatable words that served to indicate its presence in different languages.⁴⁷

While tracing the various etymological roots of the word across different languages such as Greek, Latin and German, Freud found a stronger resonance in the German, *unheimlich*. The word is rooted in *Heim*, denoting the home, with particular attention to the private acts that secretly take place within the home. *Heimlich* therefore translates to homely in the context of domesticity, something that is private.⁴⁸ *Unheimlich* is the inverse of this, something unhomely.⁴⁹ An earlier study of the uncanny by Ernst Jentsch suggested that a "lack of orientation is bound up with the impression of the uncanniness of a thing or incident."⁵⁰ As Vidler interprets both Freud and Jentsch, he states it as a "fundamental insecurity brought about by a 'lack of orientation,' a sense of something new, foreign, and

⁴⁶ Haughton xliii.

⁴⁷ Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992) 22.

⁴⁸ Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock (London: Penguin Books, 2003) 133.

⁴⁹ Freud, *The Uncanny* 134.

⁵⁰ Ernst Jentsch, "On the Psychology of the Uncanny (1906)," trans. Roy Sellars, *Uncanny Modernity: Cultural Theories, Modern Anxieties*, ed. Jo Collins and John Jervis (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 217.

hostile invading an old, familiar, customary world.”⁵¹ Freud, however, was not satisfied with Jentsch’s definitions of the term, and came to a deeper understanding of the concept through both a semantic and etymological analysis. Freud grounded the term through a set of spatial and environmental considerations, concluding that “the uncanny is that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar.”⁵²

Chiaroscuro – Chiaroscuro is a term used within the domains of art and architecture to describe works that implement a strong contrast between light and dark.⁵³ The word *chiaro* in Italian is directly translated as clear or light and denotes a luminous or unobfuscated quality. The word *scuro* in Italian directly translates as dark or black. It indicates that something is literally dark or carries the connotation that something is obfuscated from sight. Fundamentally, the term ‘chiaroscuro’ denotes the dramatic interplay between light and dark. In the domain of art, work by the Italian artist Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio exemplified the qualities of chiaroscuro. He gave up “clear illumination” in favour of “dark backgrounds and powerful chiaroscuro”.⁵⁴ His technique created emotional intensity within the artworks. The manipulation of light and dark dramatically altered the subject matter of his paintings which were often biblical in nature.⁵⁵ Within the domain of architecture, chiaroscuro operates in a similar way. Architecture is also capable of employing a dramatic interplay between light and dark or using light and dark for dramatic effect. Given the dimensionality of architecture and buildings, the interplay also becomes spatial and material. Giovanni Battista Piranesi’s speculative and visionary architecture is exemplary of an architectural chiaroscuro. His works, and how they relate to the dramatic interplay of light and dark within the domain of architecture, are explored and detailed in

⁵¹ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 23.

⁵² Freud, *The Uncanny* 124.

⁵³ George Bray et al. *Artists: Who Changed History*, 2nd ed. (London: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2024) 94.

⁵⁴ Bary et al. 94.

⁵⁵ Bary et al. 94.

subsequent chapters.

Psychoacoustics – Psychoacoustics is a scientific term that relates to the way the human auditory system perceives sound. It encompasses both the physiological and psychological aspects to sound perception, accounting for both the objective quantitative and subjective qualitative components of sound. Objective components can be measured quantitatively such as frequency, level or spectrum, while subjective components are measured qualitatively such as pitch, loudness and timbre. The term is derived from the field of psychology, which deals with human perception as an interdisciplinary field. The foundation of psychoacoustics is the physiological science of sound as a mechanical set of vibrations that travel through space and are captured by the ear and transferred into neural potential for the brain.⁵⁶ Psychoacoustics is important to this research from both the quantitative and qualitative perspectives, in relation to both electronic music and architecture. Apart from psychoacoustics in their own right, the thesis analyses how sound interacts with space and architecture more broadly.

Die Wende – Die Wende is a term that represents the social and political change that occurred in East and West Germany during the late 1980s. The term itself is German, semantically translated as ‘the turning point’. The turning point or change references the end of the Communist Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and what was effectively East Germany. Die Wende marked the beginning of reunification in Germany along with the peaceful revolution of 1989 and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Temporary autonomous zone – A temporary autonomous zone is connected to the

⁵⁶ Peter Xinya Zhang, “Psychoacoustics,” *Handbook for Sound Engineers*, ed. Glen M. Ballou, 4th ed. (Burlington: Focal Press, 2008) 43.

concept of autonomy from political governance. The term originates from a text entitled *T.A.Z. The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* by Hakim Bey.⁵⁷ The text is fundamentally countercultural and a documentation of various concepts that speak to having agency in autonomy. In the text, Bey poses a number of questions that operate to define the term:

Are we who live in the present doomed never to experience autonomy, never to stand for one moment on a bit of land ruled only by freedom? Are we reduced either to nostalgia for the past or nostalgia for the future? Must we wait until the entire world is freed of political control before even one of us can claim to know freedom?

Logic and emotion unite to condemn such a supposition.⁵⁸

Bey sets up a paradigm in which the temporary autonomous zone can be understood without explicit definition. The concept therefore has the capacity to be applied differently in various theoretical and spatial contexts.

Socialist Realism – Socialist Realism is generally framed as a cultural doctrine that was mandated by the Soviet Union as a guide for literature and the visual arts. It is often reduced and overly simplified from a Western perspective as some type of anachronistic form of socialist representation within the cultural domain that functioned as a propaganda apparatus for the State. It more aptly operated as an “artistic method” that was well versed in the Marxist-Leninist philosophy that underpinned it.⁵⁹ C. Vaughan James, author of *Soviet Socialist Realism: Origins and Theory*, credits Vladimir Lenin as the “prime architect” of Socialist Realism.⁶⁰ Socialist Realism has historically been divisive with

⁵⁷ Hakim Bey, *T.A.Z. The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism*, 2nd ed. (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2003).

⁵⁸ Bey 96.

⁵⁹ C. Vaughan James, *Soviet Socialist Realism: Origins and Theory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1973) ix.

⁶⁰ James ix.

respect to the perspectives and criticisms of it.⁶¹ From a Western viewpoint it has often been marginalised or dismissed completely, but from a perspective that is familiar with Soviet history, culture and politics (a perspective that one could describe as internal to that political system) there is a more complex set of beliefs that pertain to the validity of its theories amongst both its proponents and opponents.

Opponents of Socialist Realism see it as an “extension into the cultural field of Stalinist policies” as observed in other facets of social life, rendering it something that was essentially forced upon unwilling artists in the 1930s via the formation of artistic unions at the Union of Soviet Writers in 1934.⁶² To its proponents, Socialist Realism was a “world-wide development” with “local peculiarities, associated with the rise of a politically conscious, i.e. Marxist, industrial proletariat.”⁶³ For James, this signals that Socialist Realism was a battle within the arts “for the creation of a socialist society.”⁶⁴ The artistic method of Socialist Realism dates to 1895 in Russia where its fundamental ideas were forming. These theories and principles became a platform for other countries (with similar ideological underpinning) to adopt in their own journey of cultural production.

Socialist Realism within the arts sought to reconcile several critical considerations. Firstly, much attention was given to the evolution of art and the relationship of art from the past, present and future. Secondly, the ‘class nature’ of art was also of great importance; understanding the objective reflections, social relations and function of art in society was paramount. Thirdly, politics and its relationship to art was another important consideration. The didactic potential of art and its connection to mass communication was deeply considered, given how critical it was to the ideological climate in which it

⁶¹ James 1.

⁶² James x.

⁶³ James x.

⁶⁴ James x.

operated.⁶⁵ The three basic principles of Socialist Realism within the domain of Soviet aesthetics form a basis upon which the artistic method is developed. *Naródnost* ' (people-ness), semantically meaning the “relationship between art and the masses”, *klássovost* ' (class-ness), semantically meaning the “class characteristics of art”, and *partiinost* ' (party-ness), which is concerned with the “identification of the artist with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CSPU).”⁶⁶ Socialist Realism and how it pertains to architecture is detailed further in subsequent chapters.

1.8 Thesis Sequence

The thesis is sequenced over eight chapters. Chapter 1 comprises an initial summary, the theoretical frames, methodology and motivations. It identifies the main question and outlines the gap in knowledge it seeks to address. Chapter 2 traces the historical lineage of electronic music. It looks closely at the social context that underpins Disco, House and Techno in the USA. It documents the counterculture of electronic music as a foundation for what eventuated in the context of Berlin. Chapter 3 establishes the theoretical framing of the thesis, unpacking the core ideas of the sublime and uncanny. This is firstly done by looking at the concepts in the area of general theory and then subsequently within the discourse on architecture. Secondly, the theoretical frames are applied and measured against the genre of Techno with respect to the composition and aesthetics of the music along with its socio-political backdrop. Chapter 4 develops further architectural ideas of typology and tectonics in the context of Berlin as a means of establishing a foundation upon which the principal case studies can be analysed. It also details the concept of a heterotopia and documents the various ways heterotopias can manifest. Trauma and memory are likewise detailed and developed through the historical lens of Berlin during the 20th century.

⁶⁵ James 1.

⁶⁶ James 1.

Chapter 5 establishes a short history of electronic music in Germany and Berlin. It documents the socio-political context of West Berlin in the years leading up to Die Wende and how the landscape relates to the aesthetic framing of the thesis. It looks at the inception of Techno and introduces the Acid House nightclubs that preceded the Tresor nightclub. Chapter 6 is the first case-study chapter on the Tresor nightclub located at Leipziger Straße 126–128. Here the architecture of the nightclub is formally analysed against the theoretical framing. Chapter 7 is the second case-study on the Berghain nightclub at Rüdersdorfer Straße 70, and its architecture is also analysed against the theoretical frame. Chapter 8 comprises the conclusive findings of the dissertation. Here the outcomes and original contribution of the study are detailed. Consideration is given to the potential impact of the knowledge developed beyond the thesis for the discipline of architecture more broadly.

Chapter 2. Lineage of Electronic Music in the USA

In this chapter the history of electronic music in the USA is traced and documented. It is pertinent to first set the musicological foundations of the thesis so that the histories that follow can be understood in relation to the foundational terrain herein. Electronic music and Techno more specifically play a major role in the principal case studies of the thesis, the cultural and political landscape of Berlin during Die Wende and the countercultural underpinning of the Techno movement in Berlin. As will be evidenced, the following history is crucial to a reading of the rich aesthetic considerations of the underground Techno nightclub in Berlin. Further to the musicological foundation, some of the early architectural underground progenitors in the USA are documented as they, in part, are fundamental to the contemporary architectural landscape of Techno in Berlin.

In order to understand Techno both as a genre and social movement, it is pertinent to firstly analyse the other main subgenres of electronic music that acted as precursors, namely House and Disco. In the following sections, the history that pertains to the birth of Disco in New York, House in Chicago and Techno in Detroit is foregrounded, along with the buildings that set the stage for the movement. The DJs, club owners, managers, industry professionals and the renegades of the underground scene are also foregrounded, to illustrate how they shaped the electronic music scene in the 1970s and 1980s.

2.1 Disco Introduction

To understand Disco or any other genre of electronic music, one must attain two diverse perspectives from the distinct disciplines of ethnomusicology (social and cultural) and systematic musicology (music theory, acoustics and physiology). Although there is no

specific person, place or time that can claim Disco's inception, the predominant consensus is that Disco evolved in New York during the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁶⁷ The city of New York not only contextualises the genre but is part of its cultural narrative. The space of the city provided the fertile breeding ground for this new type of music to flourish with its attendant subcultures. Disco, similar to other genres of electronic music, is embedded in a long lineage of music, influenced and informed by R&B, Soul, Jazz and the Blues.

The discotheque is a French phenomenon characterised simply as a nightclub for dancing to live or recorded music. Such spaces were prevalent in New York during the 1960s; however, their popularity according to the mainstream media of the day had begun to wane. The 1970s, however, ushered in a new era in nightclubs, the ritual of dancing, and the role of the DJ, changing the trajectory of dance music culture indefinitely. Tim Lawrence, an author who delves deeply into the culture of 1970's Disco, states that this new phenomenon "went on to become the most distinctive cultural ritual of the decade."⁶⁸ While many nightclubs are mentioned in this chapter, the four archetypal underground nightclubs of the period that can be viewed as the main protagonists for this cultural shift were the Loft, the Sanctuary, the Gallery and Paradise Garage. However, when looking at 1970s and 1980s dance culture in New York, what becomes clear is its division into two distinct categories, with vastly different aesthetics, ideologies, histories and contexts. The first category is identified as the underground Disco movement exemplified in the Loft, the Sanctuary, the Gallery and Paradise Garage; the second is the commercialised version, an emblem of which was the nightclub Studio 54. The underground cultural terrain, cultivated in the downtown area of lower Manhattan, sat in opposition to its mainstream midtown counterpart, holding different foundational beliefs and aesthetics.

⁶⁷ Bill Brewster and Frank Broughton, *Last Night a DJ Saved My Life: The History of the Disc Jockey* (New York: Grove Press, 2000) 124.

⁶⁸ Tim Lawrence, preface, *Love Saves the Day: A History of American Dance Music Culture, 1970–1979*, by Lawrence (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) xi.

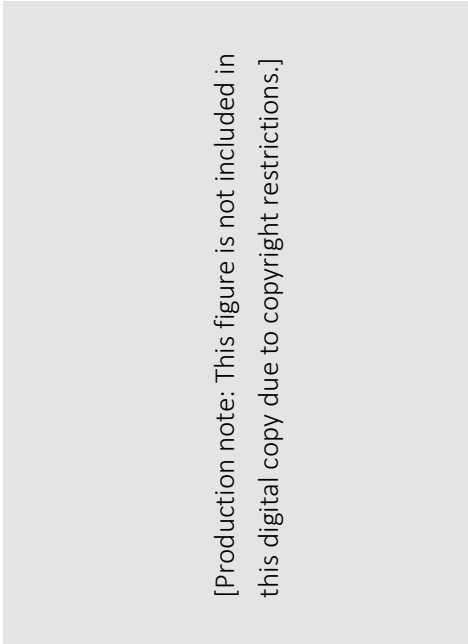


Fig. 3. Francis Grasso 1949-2001.
First Modern DJ (early Disco period).

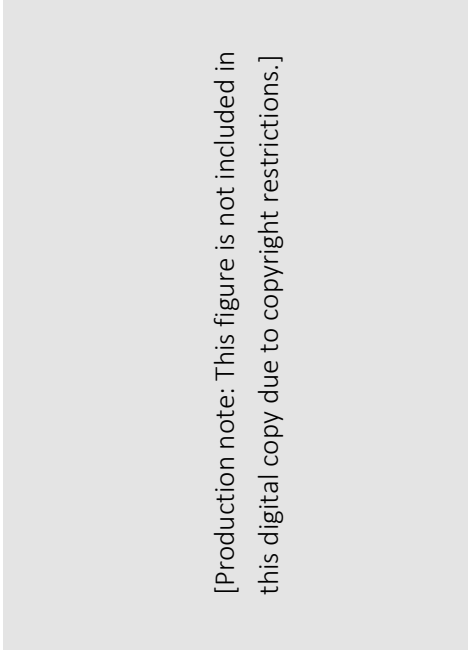


Fig. 4. David Mancuso 1944-2016 (early Disco period).

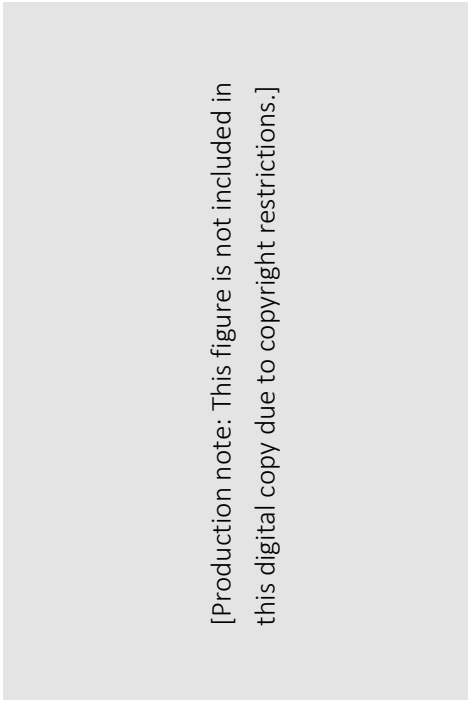


Fig. 5. Nicky Siano 1955-present (Disco).
Larry Levan 1954-1992 (Garage).

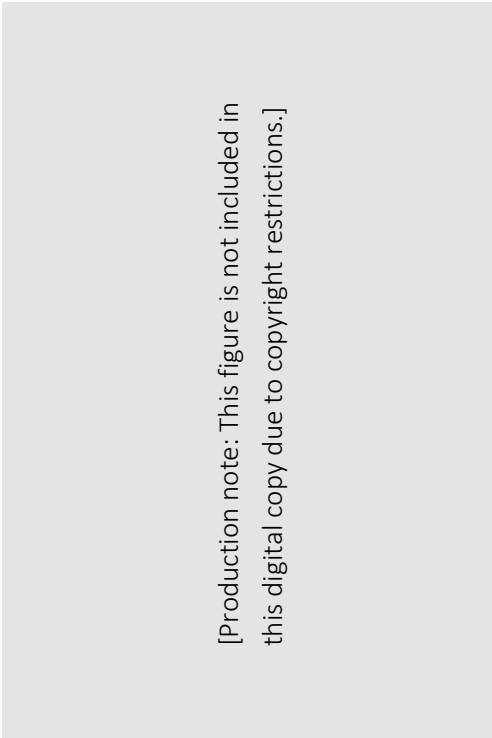


Fig. 6. Frankie Knuckles 1955-2014 (House).

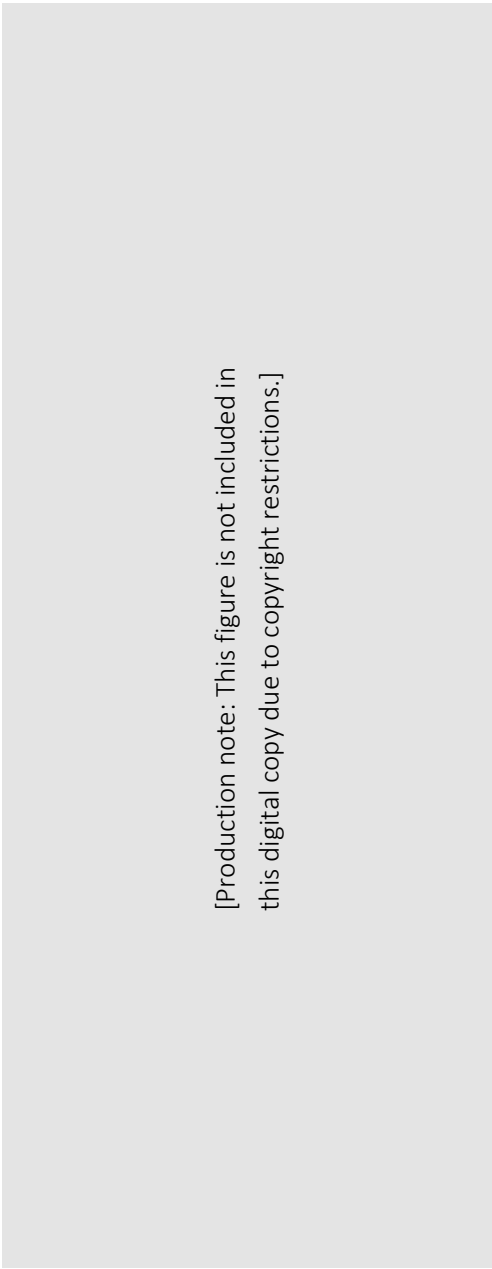


Fig. 7. Juan Atkins 1962-present, Kevin Saunderson 1964-present, Derrick May 1963-present.
The Belleville Three (Techno).

2.2 The Loft

David Mancuso is often regarded as the most influential figure of the early underground scene and credited as its initiator. Mancuso was born in Utica, New York, but spent the first five years of his life in a children's home. His formative years were spent under the care of nuns, one in particular named Sister Alicia. This would prove to be greatly influential in relation to Mancuso's unorthodox perception of family. His unique upbringing would in part be the impetus for Mancuso to develop his famous Loft gatherings that would ultimately influence a whole generation of DJs, musicians, club owners and managers, and set the stage for what the underground electronic music scene would ultimately become.⁶⁹

During Mancuso's formative years,

The orphanage was an unorthodox experiment in social engineering. With twenty children from a variety of social backgrounds cast together under one roof, their original parents a fading memory, domestic life assumed some unusual patterns. The steady flow of arrivals and departures meant that the combination of brothers and sisters changed continuously, and as a result the children grew up with a perception of families as extended, diverse, and precarious rather than nuclear, homogeneous, and stable.⁷⁰

A similar unstable and precarious relationship to the nuclear family is also evident in the counterculture that developed in Berlin after World War II. Although the reasons for such developments are vastly different, there is nonetheless a commonality that is evident in both instances.

Mancuso moved to Manhattan at the end of 1962. Living in the city allowed him to explore all it had to offer in terms of nightlife and parties. He avidly sought out parties downtown

⁶⁹ Brewster and Broughton 141-142.

⁷⁰ Lawrence 5.

in the Village, uptown in Harlem, over on Staten Island or wherever there was a good event organised. Although Mancuso went to the well-known public venues such as the Electric Circus and the Fillmore East, he took particular interest in the rent-party scene which was more intimate and less transient than its public counterpart. These intimate gatherings were for Mancuso reminiscent of his childhood experience. He was not only interested in social gatherings and music but also taken by spiritual discovery and enlightenment. In the West Village Mancuso met Timothy Leary, an ex-Harvard University academic and writer who advocated for the use of psychedelics as a means of spiritual enlightenment. Mancuso frequented Leary's League for Spiritual Discovery headquarters in the West Village, attending lectures and parties. In 1965 he moved to NoHo, just north of Houston Street in what was historically the manufacturing district of Manhattan. His new address was 647 Broadway, and it was here that he began organising the influential gatherings. This part of the city was undergoing great transformation. Its largely immigrant population and low-wage workforce was being relocated to New Jersey where the cost of doing business was cheaper. Artists saw an opportunity to "exchange their cramped Upper East Side apartments for a range of stunningly expansive lofts. The influx triggered a sophisticated experiment into the relationship between art, space, and living".⁷¹ Mancuso followed suit, establishing himself "as a key player within this creative population, intent as he was on reintroducing *art* back into the *party*."⁷² He would extend the experiment into a unique brand of intimate gatherings, music and space.

Mancuso initially used the space to organise small gatherings where the prime focus was the psychedelic experience. He and his guests experimented with acid, using Leary's manual, *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead*, as

⁷¹ Lawrence 9.

⁷² Lawrence 9.

a guide through the process.⁷³ Mancuso took his cue from Leary's lectures, introducing music into his intimate psychedelic gatherings. Tim Lawrence connects these actions further, stating, "Music – which, like LSD, can function as a therapeutic potion that 'deprograms' the mind before opening up a mystical trail to spiritual transcendence – was also introduced into the equation."⁷⁴ Mancuso would prepare musical compilations designed to complement the hallucinogenic experience. He created "journey tapes that would last for five hours."⁷⁵ They drew on many different styles of music from Classical to the Moody Blues. The progression through the musical journey began very peacefully, but "reentry would be more about movement, more jazz-orientated. Somebody might get up and start dancing around the room at some point, although they weren't [explicitly] dance sessions."⁷⁶ The unique approach to Mancuso's gatherings illustrates a subtle inception and progression toward the influential parties that would follow at the Loft.

By the end of 1966 Mancuso was organising proper dance parties in the space. The Loft had also undergone some minor alterations so that the space would cater to a larger crowd where the party and dancing was the main focus. The ambience of the space was very familiar and homely to most people; it was packed with balloons that lined the ceiling, creating a secure and cocoon-like contour to the main room.⁷⁷ The space was dark and warm, measuring approximately 1,850 square feet (170m²); it "symbolically recreated the irretrievable scene of the womb".⁷⁸ The events were strictly by invitation only and they were the first of their type in what would become a mainstay in the underground party scene.⁷⁹ Mancuso's bi-monthly parties lasted for some time; however, his psychedelic

⁷³ Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner, and Richard Alpert, The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead (London: Penguin Books, 2008).

⁷⁴ Lawrence 10.

⁷⁵ Lawrence 10.

⁷⁶ Lawrence 10.

⁷⁷ Lawrence 25.

⁷⁸ Lawrence 25.

⁷⁹ Brewster and Broughton 143.

journeys and lifestyle left him in a psychiatric ward at the Bellevue hospital. He had gone on an inward journey shedding all his material possessions, living the life of an ascetic and spending his days drifting in and out of meditative states. Notwithstanding his hospitalisation, Mancuso was well aware of the path he was travelling. He could have pulled back at any moment but held the course to see what would present in his experimental journey; “The problem was that I tried to shed my ego in the center of the capitalistic world where any kind of deviation looks weird. If I had gone to a monastery in the mountains they would have welcomed me with open arms. They would have considered me to be *normal*.”⁸⁰ The Loft was ultimately an experiment into an alternative way of living and being, a project that was mirrored by the West Berlin intelligentsia prior to the Berlin Wall coming down and by the Techno counterculture in a post-Wende Berlin.

After recuperating from a period of hospitalisation, Mancuso set out to reignite what he had established at the Loft. Plagued by debt, he started hosting rent parties as a means of ameliorating his financial situation. Partnering up with some friends, he initiated a collective called the Coalition. The fidelity of the sound was extremely important to Mancuso, a self-proclaimed audiophile. He had long been interested in the sonic staging of the room; the party therefore was designed to be a superior audio experience.⁸¹ The sound system was designed by Mancuso in conjunction with Alex Rosner, a leading audio engineer of the day. Together they created what would become the “standard for every nightclub in the world.”⁸² They applied audiophile techniques more commonly associated with hi-fidelity to commercial sound systems. The events, however, were fortuitously not successful, due to the musical style that had not been adapted to the underground nature of the downtown space and people. His collaborators were playing a similar style of music to

⁸⁰ Lawrence 12.

⁸¹ Brewster and Broughton 143.

⁸² Brewster and Broughton 143.

that which they played in the public nightclub scene. The aesthetic was incorrect and after a series of disputes between Mancuso and his partners regarding the potential sale of alcohol, he disbanded the collective. In a last-ditch effort to reignite his own private party, Mancuso did away with the open-house policy, opting instead to rekindle the intimacy of the rent-party scene. “Out went the open-house policy and in came the time-honoured method of individual homemade invitations, which Mancuso embellished with Salvador Dali’s ‘The Persistence of Memory’ and the words *Love Saves the Day*”.⁸³ The idea worked perfectly, roughly a hundred people turned up and the party was a huge success. Mancuso never actually wanted to be a DJ; however, he was forced to curate the music for the event because no other alternative was available. He knew that no other DJ would meet his expectations with respect to the musical journey of the parties. Although Mancuso was more interested in communicating and speaking with his guests, he had a critical job in music curation and trusted only himself to deliver the correct musical experience. Mancuso soon came to realise, however, that, through the music he was delivering, he was in fact communicating with the guests, albeit on an abstract sonic level:

as his apartment started to steam up he ripped off his t-shirt, abandoning himself to the psychic stream of the party. “We were on the same wavelength,” he says.

In Mancuso’s terms, a “third ear” – the aural equivalent of the all-seeing “third eye” – had started to beat, directing the path of both the music selector and the crowd according to sonic trajectories that had acquired a supernatural momentum.⁸⁴

This moment signals a new understanding and experience of dancing. The crowd, DJ and the space came together as a unified whole, Mancuso’s psychic streaming conducted both the people and the space.⁸⁵

⁸³ Lawrence 12.

⁸⁴ Lawrence 13.

⁸⁵ Maestro, dir. Josell Ramos.



[Production note: This figure is not included in this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Fig. 8. Party Lights, the Loft, New York. Atmosphere inside the Loft on the dance floor, 1995.



[Production note: This figure is not included in this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Fig. 9. David Mancuso at Lucky Club, London. Recreation of the Loft atmosphere, 2007.

Love Saves the Day grew in popularity until it became a regular weekly event; ultimately the space and party became known as the Loft. Mancuso was opposed to defining either of these things; he resisted labelling the party or the space. He knew that the right name would eventually attach itself and stated ““Because I lived in a loft building, people started to say that they were going to the Loft. It’s a given name and is sacred.””⁸⁶ The party invariably had its own unique business model as a non-commercial private party. Mancuso was adamant that the space should operate as a commerce-free zone, “maintaining that drugs (which were widely used in the absence of alcohol) should not be peddled on the dance floor.”⁸⁷ A small contribution of two dollars was all that Mancuso requested; once inside he then provided food,

which was a positive, even ideological, combination of assorted organic dishes, delicious breads, and freshly squeezed fruit punch that functioned as the perfect fuel for people who wanted to dance until dawn. “I tried to create a situation in which there was no economic inequality. If someone couldn’t afford to pay the contribution at the door then they could write me an IOU.”⁸⁸

Mancuso was also heavily focused on breaking social boundaries of race, sexuality and class,⁸⁹ a theme that is recurrent throughout the early Disco period:

“There was no one checking your sexuality or racial identity at the door,” says Mancuso. “I just knew different people.” Economically the congregation spanned rich and poor; racially it was United Nations leaning toward black and Latino/a; sex-wise, women were always central to the setup (even if men were dominant); and sexually it was as wide as the ocean (although fish that swam in the same direction were in the majority). “It wasn’t a black party or a gay party. There’d be a mixture of

⁸⁶ Lawrence 23.

⁸⁷ Lawrence 22.

⁸⁸ Lawrence 22.

⁸⁹ Brewster and Broughton 148.

people.”⁹⁰

At the Loft, the downtown counterculture found a common space where they came together and shared an undefinable new experience.⁹¹

Number 647 Broadway was a warehouse building in which Mancuso’s loft occupied the second floor. The architecture was industrial; industrial building types are a recurring theme in many of the venues identified in this research (both in the US and European contexts). The interior space was essentially an ex-industrial shell that managed to be both expansive and intimate. It was an open plan arrangement where the various spaces lacked prescriptive definition in terms of architectural program. The space was decorated with multicoloured balloons that hung from the ceiling along with a mirror ball at the centre. Along one wall there was a yoga shrine and along another sat a sumptuous buffet with nuts, fruit and juice. This approach to space and living was unorthodox at that time: “Nobody lives like this. Not even New Yorkers. Or at least they didn’t until now.”⁹² The rest of the space was empty, allowing the party to evolve and operate with the requisite degree of freedom. Mancuso was extremely meticulous with the organisation of his space and parties. The sound system along with the decorations and menu were all carefully considered as a means of setting the conditions by which his patrons could transcend their corporeal reality. The space was free of mirrors and clocks, objects which bound the body to time and space.

In the everyday world the clock signifies the unstoppable forward movement of teleological time, but party time unfolds in a different dimension – thus Mancuso’s decision to print Salvador Dali’s melting watches on the Love Saves the Day invitation. When clocks are nowhere to be seen, time starts to dissolve, and this provided the dancers at the Loft with an opportunity to forget their socialized selves -

⁹⁰ Lawrence 22.

⁹¹ *Maestro*, dir. Josell Ramos.

⁹² Lawrence 1.

... “Once you walked into the Loft you were cut off from the outside world,” says Mancuso. “You got into a timeless, mindless state.”⁹³

This timelessness is one way in which the heterotopia presents itself here; Mancuso’s loft space operated in a way that dissolved the normal boundaries of time.

The Loft was also emblematic of a condition where socialised boundaries faded, where people had the freedom to exist without categorisation. There was freedom to embrace one’s primitive state and desires:

The secure and cocoon-like contours of the dance space created the perfect milieu for experimental regression – there was always lots of screaming and growling and whooping – ... individual dancers had little choice but to dissolve into the amorphous whole, and, as the distinctions between self and other collapsed, they relinquished their socialized desire for independence and separation.⁹⁴

The transformation is exemplified in the concept of liminality, where a transition occurs from a previous way of structuring time, identity and community to a new one. The Loft enabled a particular type of liminality, a rite of passage from a singular state of being into a collective:

That energy was never individualistic. Rather, it was social, and contained the possibility of collective politics. Rooted in the party, this new form of *socialism* echoed Mancuso’s experience in the children’s home, with the Broadway crowd revolving around a cross-section of New York’s grown-up orphans – people who for one reason or another were not part of the idealized white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant nuclear family.⁹⁵

This unique congregation of people seeking a specific corporeal and cerebral freedom is a

⁹³ Lawrence 24.

⁹⁴ Lawrence 25.

⁹⁵ Lawrence 26-27.

recurring motif in dance music culture, particularly in the context of Berlin during the 1990s. The reconfiguration of social boundaries in this particular space also occurred with respect to the role of sex as a mediating act within social dancing:

“The Loft chipped away at the ritual of sex as the driving force behind parties,” says Mark Riley, one of Mancuso’s devoted followers. “Dance was not a means to sex but drove the space.” Revelers refigured the dance floor as a site not of foreplay but of spiritual communion where, thanks to the unique combination of decor, space, music, drugs, lighting, and dance, as well as Mancuso’s guiding party ethos, sensation wasn’t confined to the genitals but was *everywhere* – in every new touch, sound, sight, and smell. Freud defined the sexuality of an infant in similar terms – he called it the polymorphous perverse – and while the Loft didn’t enable a literal return to an irretrievable childhood it nevertheless functioned as the affective medium through which dancers invented new possibilities of bodily pleasure that didn’t revolve around genital sex.⁹⁶

Mancuso’s Loft recalibrated sensuality as a spatial construct. Bodily pleasure was no longer confined inside the body, but was located inside the building. This is one particular frame that defines the Berghain in its contemporary form and is detailed further in the case-study chapter.

The Loft was referred to as underground by the people that frequented it. Mancuso himself thought of what he was doing as underground. He preferred to cultivate something that operated in the margins and was adamant about not bringing the Loft into public visibility. “The social and political rebellions of the sixties underpinned the Loft’s radical blend. ‘A lot of people were bonding and making relationships because of the Vietnam War and

⁹⁶ Lawrence 25-26.

Martin Luther King,’ says Mancuso.”⁹⁷ This underground aesthetic has been closely connected with the term *counterculture*, distinguished by its focus on lifestyle as opposed to politics. “The term *countercultural* is a useful one, for while new leftists focused on political demonstrations, counterculturalists were more interested in lifestyle and leisure.”⁹⁸ However, the countercultural movement of the 1960s and the underground movement of electronic music differed in some fundamental ways. The marginalised and often disenfranchised underground groups were never part of the middle-class demographic predominant in the countercultural movement. Michael Gomes, a devoted member of the New York nightclub scene, states that: “black gay men and other marginalized groups ‘couldn’t tune in and drop out because they had *nothing to drop out from*.’ So, instead of creating a new world, these disenfranchised groups ‘created their own world, their own little artificial paradise, in which the clubs became these sanctuaries.’”⁹⁹ The Loft also operated as an illegal space, not only from the perspective of drug availability but purely by the fact that it was located in a building designated for an industrial use. “Mancuso organized ostensibly commercial parties without a certificate of occupancy, a cabaret license, or officially sanctioned fire exits. Going to the Loft and keeping quiet about it [therefore] wasn’t a pose. It was a pragmatic practice.”¹⁰⁰ The party operated outside the normal regulatory boundaries; its condition is a microcosm of what would happen at the scale of the city during Die Wende in Berlin.

2.3 The Sanctuary

The Sanctuary was an iconic Manhattan venue that would concretise itself as another pillar of the underground scene. It was a discotheque at 407 West 43rd Street and ran concurrently

⁹⁷ Lawrence 51.

⁹⁸ Lawrence 52.

⁹⁹ Lawrence 53.

¹⁰⁰ Lawrence 53.

to Mancuso's Broadway parties.¹⁰¹ The Sanctuary, however, did not evolve from the rent-party lineage; instead it was modelled on the French invention of the discotheque. It initially opened as a normal venue but soon after reinvented itself as "Manhattan's first explicitly gay-run discotheque".¹⁰² The building itself was an old church of the Romanesque Revival period, designed by Henry Franklin Killburn in 1890 for the German Baptist Church.¹⁰³ It operated as a church until the 1960s and was subsequently transformed into a nightclub. In its current format the building is home to the off-Broadway Westside Theatre. The owner Arnie Lord originally called the club The Church; however, New York's Roman Catholic representatives served an injunction against the venue, forcing the owner to change its name.¹⁰⁴ In terms of the building's interior arrangement,

Downstairs the catacombs were turned into a lounge area that functioned as a chill-out zone for anybody who was dead on their feet. Upstairs the pews were rearranged so that they lined the circumference of the dance floor, facing the new congregants of the night. And – in the most ingenious metamorphosis of all – the altar was converted into a DJ booth, which implied that the focal point of religious worship wasn't going to have to change. The fledging culture of the discotheque was beginning to exploit its neo-spiritual potential.¹⁰⁵

The Sanctuary initiated a spatial narrative that oscillates around the concepts of spirituality and death in the architecture of the underground nightclub. Churches and cathedrals render a very particular aesthetic environment, one that is dark, spiritual and soul stirring; these elements are critical to the contemporary underground Techno nightclub. Similarly, the catacombs foreground the significance of underground space as a powerful typological agent for both the countercultural movement and Techno music.

¹⁰¹ Brewster and Broughton 133.

¹⁰² Lawrence 13.

¹⁰³ Brewster and Broughton 133.

¹⁰⁴ Brewster and Broughton 133.

¹⁰⁵ Lawrence 18.

Initially, despite the spatial uniqueness and innovation of the Sanctuary, it was not doing well under Lord. He decided to hire a new DJ and change the clientele, as it was originally comprised predominantly of managers and secretaries looking for discreet date spots.

Francis Grasso, a young Italian American, was appointed as the new resident DJ. Despite Grasso's injection of energy, the Sanctuary still struggled financially and the club lacked the dynamism of a thriving party. Two entrepreneurs, who were well versed in the business machinations of nightclubs, dealing with the Mafia and the local district offices, took over the space from Lord. Seymour and Shelley were "a middle-aged Jewish double act who ran a series of gay bars in the West Village and were known just by their first names."¹⁰⁶ They quickly established a new business framework for the Sanctuary and hired "a well-known gay maître d'hôtel to spread the word and man the door. 'The maître d' knew a lot of the fashion artsy-fartsy crowd, and he told them to come,' says Grasso. 'There were a lot of designers and Broadway chorus dancers.'"¹⁰⁷ On the opening night 500 dancers showed up and there was a mix of White, Black and Latino people with a large gay contingent. The energy was immense, the party was a success, the counterculture had arrived and set into motion the famous Sanctuary party.

In New York during the 1970s the underground party network was predominantly a mix of people from the margins of society. As the historian Charles Kaiser notes: "'New York City became the literal gay metropolis for hundreds of thousands of immigrants from within and without the United States: the place they chose to learn how to live openly, honestly and without shame.'"¹⁰⁸ While there were other people from varying demographic backgrounds who frequented the early underground discotheques and parties, it was gay people and

¹⁰⁶ Lawrence 20.

¹⁰⁷ Lawrence 21.

¹⁰⁸ Lawrence 27.

marginalised ethnic groups predominantly who cultivated the scene.¹⁰⁹ The social and cultural background of Disco was firmly grounded in the historical struggle of marginalised communities seeking equal rights, along with their capacity to express themselves by living according to their personal preferences. In Greenwich Village and other neighbourhoods with a gay presence, police often raided the clubs and bars, harassing and arresting gay people.¹¹⁰ The Stonewall riots in June 1969 were the culminating moment, when tension between police and the gay community exploded. The riots constituted a series of violent demonstrations against the police that continued for several days.¹¹¹ It is viewed as a catalysing event that gave much traction to the gay liberation movement.¹¹² Mel Cheren, a well-known figure of the period, wrote, “We had all suffered humiliation at the hands of the police; we all knew that no one else was going to fight this battle for us.”¹¹³ It was the gay community, and the clubs they sought out as havens, that generated the momentum and interest in an alternative underground culture. This specific social context was a major influence on the actual music. Evident in both the lyrics and the musical elements, Disco often proclaimed ideals of liberation and freedom, while the music itself reflected that sense of spirit, with the predominant attributes of an “orchestral accompaniment, and a female lead singer singing in a soul or gospel style.”¹¹⁴ Sexual preference in some discotheques was less of an issue. Salvation, for example, was not an explicitly gay nightclub; however, a significant percentage of the patronage was gay. The idea was to provide a safe place for gay people to congregate, even though there were straight people in the club to even out the numbers and alleviate issues with the police. Richard Brezner, someone who frequented the scene, recalls that ““There were always gay people there and I never felt uncomfortable, but

¹⁰⁹ Brewster and Broughton 134.

¹¹⁰ Mel Cheren, *My Life and the Paradise Garage: Keep on Dancin'* (New York: 24 Hours for Life Inc., 2000) 78.

¹¹¹ Brewster and Broughton 125.

¹¹² Cheren 80.

¹¹³ Cheren 79.

¹¹⁴ Demers 166.

they weren't gay clubs. They just let in a certain number, a kind of quota, to give the place more of a party atmosphere.'"¹¹⁵ Instead at the Stonewall Inn sexual preference did matter, this made it an easy target for the NYPD, which would turn a blind eye to the illegal gatherings in exchange for a reputed two thousand dollars a week. Reprisals were inevitable if the Mob-controlled management forgot to hand a bulging brown envelope to the man from the local precinct, and this is exactly what happened on 17 June 1969 when eight police officers raided the Christopher Street location and served the manager with a warrant for selling liquor without a license. . . .

Stonewall should have never happened in the first place given that the Appellate Division had overruled the State Liquor Authority's regulation that prohibited bars and restaurants from selling drinks to homosexuals in 1967.¹¹⁶

There was a general sense that the Stonewall wasn't initially viewed as the great catalysing event of gay liberation and that there had been a general momentum toward this uprising for some time. The Sanctuary equally wasn't viewed as something that grew out of the Stonewall but in a way was something that ran parallel to it, with a similar but revised sentiment toward the gay community and gay way of life. The nightclub, however, "could never function as a homogenous gay discotheque".¹¹⁷ New York State law "asserted that all-male dancing was illegal and that discotheques should contain at least one woman for every three men".¹¹⁸ Seymour and Shelley understood the potential of the shifting demographics, they introduced their

West Village clientele to a pulsing paradise in which conversation was optional, free-flowing bodily contact inevitable, and the rhythmic beat more exhilarating than anything that was going on in bars or the bathhouses. The subsequent influx of gay men transformed the club from an insignificant and ephemeral straight space into a

¹¹⁵ Lawrence 28.

¹¹⁶ Lawrence 28.

¹¹⁷ Lawrence 31.

¹¹⁸ Lawrence 31.

flourishing business.¹¹⁹

This triggered “a profound shift in the wider demographics of the discotheque”.¹²⁰ They had formed something with just the right balance in terms of clientele, glamour, decadence and mystique, all housed within a defunct Romanesque church, concretising its position as the most exciting underground public venue of its time.

2.4 The Paradigm of Structure

If the contemporary landscape of Western popular music has been indelibly affected by House and Techno,¹²¹ then much of that paradigm can be traced back to the practice of music delivery emerging in the early Disco period. During the 1960s and early 1970s, “the jukebox was the predominant medium for listening to music in New York clubs”; however, the live DJ was slowly taking over as the source of live music delivery.¹²² DJs at this point in time used two turntables and a mixer. They would play a record on ‘turntable A’ and then switch the record over to ‘turntable B’ at the end of a track, ensuring a relatively cohesive transition from one song to another. In the early days such manoeuvres were called ‘changes’.¹²³ However, in the late 60s, Francis Grasso, who is referred to as the first modern DJ, changed the way a DJ would present music to a live audience. He unknowingly established the two greatest paradigms in the history of DJing as a practice.¹²⁴ Up until this point, patrons would generally request popular tracks to be played by the DJ in the nightclubs; however, Grasso was first to illustrate the true potential and agency of the DJ as a track selector.¹²⁵ Grasso delivered music he believed was unique and of higher quality and discarded the traditional form of popular music requests.¹²⁶ Grasso’s nuanced aesthetic with

¹¹⁹ Lawrence 32.

¹²⁰ Lawrence 32.

¹²¹ Gilbert and Pearson 38.

¹²² *Maestro*, dir. Josell Ramos.

¹²³ *Maestro*, dir. Josell Ramos.

¹²⁴ Brewster and Broughton 128.

¹²⁵ Brewster and Broughton 129.

¹²⁶ Brewster and Broughton 129.

respect to track selection created a condition where the DJ became recognised as a professional with a specific agency in the art form. He focused on more soulful music, more R&B and African influences. One of the songs that he used to push the trajectory of dance music into a deeper aesthetic dimension was Olatunji's *Drums of Passion* album, specifically a track called "Jin-Go-Lo-Ba".

He went on to technically evolve the practice of DJing by developing a technique that later became known as beat matching.¹²⁷ Beat matching is a process by which the tempo of the incoming song is matched to the tempo of the outgoing song, enabling two separate songs to be blended together as one song transitions to the next. The vision to create such a technique was born out of Grasso's ability to see how the energy of the dance floor would diminish as a track was ending while a new one was beginning.¹²⁸ Beat matching allowed for seamless transitions, which meant that the energy level of the dance floor remained constant. This subsequently shifted the way music producers thought about the composition of electronic music. The steady 4/4 rhythm of Disco, House and Techno, coupled with a long intro and outro, is what drives the structure of contemporary dance music. As Tim Lawrence states,

The nascent dance ritual enabled gay men, ethnic groups, and women to experiment with a new way of being that revolved around communal hedonism, ecstatic release, stylish yet functional clothing, and bodily rather than verbal communication. Yet just as the dance ritual recast the identity of the crowd, so the shifting identity of the crowd revolutionized the dance ritual, and this interaction enabled – or even required – Grasso to perform not only longer and longer mixes but also longer and longer sets.¹²⁹

Grasso began including in his sets less music that was slow in order to keep the energy

¹²⁷ Brewster and Broughton 136.

¹²⁸ Lawrence 37.

¹²⁹ Lawrence 37.

levels up. He also noticed a difference between the appetite for dancing between the straight and gay crowds. He was able to play more intensely for the gay clientele, in a way that would take people to a deeper place.¹³⁰ What was realised at the Sanctuary, and equally in the Loft, was a synergistic relationship between the crowd and DJ: “the relationship between the DJ and the crowd resembled a dynamic conversation between separate agents that, when combined, had a greater total effect than the sum of their individual parts.”¹³¹ This structure is critical to understanding the experiential nature of contemporary underground Techno clubs. Nowadays, the DJ presents a series of tracks that blend together to form a textured musical and audio experience without distinct beginnings and endings. There is a continuity enabled through the structure, which renders the space of a modern underground Techno club, one of texture, unorthodox temporality and aesthetic.

2.5 The Gallery

The Gallery was another nightclub that is of relevance to the thesis and history of the period. It was situated in Manhattan’s SoHo district, co-owned by two brothers Joe and Nicky Siano. Nicky was a young and influential DJ of the period who was deeply embedded in the downtown network of parties.¹³² The first premises that hosted the Gallery nightclub was located at 132 West 22nd Street in Chelsea, in a loft space similar to Mancuso’s except that it was bigger than the Loft, measuring 3,600 square feet.¹³³ The second location was 172 Mercer Street, on the corner of Mercer and Houston in SoHo. The Chelsea venue opened in February 1973. The sound system was installed by Alex Rosner, who had set up Mancuso’s system at the Loft. The room at the Gallery was bigger and it therefore produced more reverberation. “‘We used several two-way ALTEC Lansing Voice of the Theatre horn-type speakers for the midrange,’ says Rosner. ‘The space was larger

¹³⁰ Lawrence 38.

¹³¹ Lawrence 38.

¹³² Brewster and Broughton 151.

¹³³ Brewster and Broughton 152.

than the Loft so there was more reverberation, but the sound was quite clear.”¹³⁴ The focus in the underground scene was always on good sound and underground Disco music as the driving force behind the parties; this ethos was embraced by Siano at the Gallery.

Like Mancuso he implemented an invitation-only system. Despite a good turnout of roughly 150 people for the opening party, many of whom were friends of Joe Siano, the club was not initially successful. Again, there was a discrepancy between the music, atmosphere and the clientele, similar to the Sanctuary, when it first opened under the management of Arnie Lord. Siano realised that the party needed the correct crowd in order to be successful. He called upon Larry Levan and Frankie Knuckles who were instrumental in bringing a new clientele to the Gallery; they were the connection to the downtown party network of regulars seeking alternative spaces in which to dance. The downtown party network was a living and breathing organism that followed the underground music and its spaces.

Siano’s contribution was similar to Mancuso’s from the perspective of the music and also the club culture at the time. He was heavily influenced by two key figures of the period. The first was a DJ named Michael Cappello who used to play at a club called Limelight. Nicky would spend much of his time dancing there and followed intently what Cappello was doing. Through Cappello he “developed a powerful sense of what a DJ was capable of”.¹³⁵ He also spent a lot of time with Mancuso at the Loft. There he “developed a set of strong opinions about what went into the perfect club – the room, the dance floor, the sound, the lighting.”¹³⁶ Siano was a perfectionist, he emulated Mancuso in almost every

¹³⁴ Lawrence 102.

¹³⁵ Cheren 110.

¹³⁶ Cheren 110.

way and because of this the Gallery was hugely successful and influential.¹³⁷ He contributed to the art of mixing just as Francis Grasso had done previously, by developing a sophisticated and tailored musical aesthetic. He was the first DJ to use three turntables, thereby revolutionising and mastering the craft of mixing week after week at the Gallery.¹³⁸ Siano acquired knowledge from the DJs and underground nightclubs around him during the period. Synthesising these elements, he was commandeering the latest iteration of underground Disco nightclubs in the downtown party network.

The Gallery in Chelsea closed after the Fire Department intervened because of a lack of fire exits.¹³⁹ It reopened at the SoHo venue in 1974. It was here that Siano gave much more attention to the space of the nightclub itself; he was an innovator with respect to the overall production of the party. He designed and developed specialised lighting rigs, bringing a level of theatricality to the space. The music and the lights in part were coordinated by him from within the DJ booth. With the music and lights in sync, he elevated the experience and atmosphere of the space with respect to light and sound.¹⁴⁰ At the centre of the club was a new three-tiered lighting system; its effect was ground-breaking in the way it rendered a unique sense of space and atmosphere. As Siano notes: ““If you were on the dance floor the lights looked as if they went into the ceiling. Traditional club systems would flash and move around, but this actually gave you a unique spatial effect.””¹⁴¹ The sound system was another point of focus for Siano in the design of the atmosphere. The speaker caskets were recessed into window reliefs that were two-feet deep, the adjacent building had been constructed right up to the boundary, creating walled-in window niches. Alex Rosner placed the ALTEC speakers in

¹³⁷ Brewster and Broughton 152.

¹³⁸ Brewster and Broughton 152.

¹³⁹ Brewster and Broughton 151.

¹⁴⁰ Nicky Siano, personal interview, 9 June 2014.

¹⁴¹ Lawrence 135.

these niches, gaining an extra 20dB from the reflection of the sound.¹⁴² The relationship between sound amplification and architecture in the context of underground music is foregrounded in this foundational moment. According to Siano, the building's space was perfect for the next generation of underground nightclubs coming out of loft spaces. The ceiling inside the building was very high with an internal balcony that could overlook the dance floor.¹⁴³ A larger internal space allowed for the unique multicoloured lighting system that animated the space. It was referred to by Siano as an atmospheric conditioner that would change the mood and feeling of the club.¹⁴⁴ Equally, larger spaces provided a more fertile ground for experimentation with sound. The tectonic properties of the buildings were now being called upon to modulate the quality and power of the sound. It was the Gallery and Siano that carried the underground lineage forward and set the stage for what came next.

2.6 Paradise Garage

Continuing in the footsteps of its predecessors, Paradise Garage, located at 84 King Street in Manhattan from 1977 to 1987, was the most iconic underground nightclub of its time. Its resident DJ, Larry Levan, learnt his trade under the careful tutelage of Nicky Siano and was also deeply influenced by David Mancuso.¹⁴⁵ The club was the final iteration of the pure underground Disco nightclub in New York; however, it was not purely a Disco club but rather transitional in nature. The musical aesthetic sat between Disco and the genres that would succeed Disco, most notably House.¹⁴⁶ Paradise Garage was in fact so influential that a new genre of music was named after the club itself, called Garage.¹⁴⁷ The name was given because of the building's original use as a parking garage. The nightclub was founded by Michael Brody. Before he took over the space as an adaptive reuse, it was home to a former

¹⁴² Siano.

¹⁴³ Siano.

¹⁴⁴ Siano.

¹⁴⁵ *Maestro*, dir. Josell Ramos.

¹⁴⁶ Brewster and Broughton 289.

¹⁴⁷ Brewster and Broughton 272.

defunct disco called the Chameleon.

Levan was a talent and rising star that Brody was astute enough to recognise. Brody therefore had the club designed around Levan's specifications; "he obsessed over every detail: the perfect sound, the perfect floor, the perfect lights".¹⁴⁸ Levan developed "the idea of a five-way crossover, a completely revolutionary component of sound design that he created with Richard Long."¹⁴⁹ Long originally worked for Alex Rosner and was also involved with the revolutionary system in Mancuso's Loft.¹⁵⁰ He would later become Rosner's main competitor and was considered to be another leading audio designer of the period.¹⁵¹ Rosner's systems were precise, crystalline and polished, while Long's systems were centred on the body, and were heavier in the bass frequencies. "Larry could manipulate the five-way crossover to pluck out certain lyrics, and by omitting or emphasizing different voices make records actually talk to each other (and to the crowd)."¹⁵² This method of live remixing tracks would become fundamental to the inception of House music. For Levan the sound system was his main concern; he was adamant that the sound had to be perfect and gave the utmost importance to the sonic quality of the space. His musical selection was veritably underground.

Larry focused on heavier black music, the r&b-disco style that was also a favorite at the mostly straight black clubs uptown. . . . He was pulling together the threads of a musical style that would be named after the Garage itself and ultimately would flow into house music. Larry's style shunned the happy mainstream and embraced something dark, sexy, and sometimes dangerous.¹⁵³

Levan's track selection pushed the underground scene itself into a deeper and darker

¹⁴⁸ Cheren 182.

¹⁴⁹ Cheren 182.

¹⁵⁰ Cheren 107.

¹⁵¹ *Maestro*, dir. Josell Ramos.

¹⁵² Cheren 182.

¹⁵³ Cheren 183.

musical aesthetic. This was coupled with a countercultural spirit of the time, and the Paradise Garage “quickly established a reputation as the premier underground black gay club”.¹⁵⁴ The social makeup of the club was reminiscent of Mancuso’s Loft. Brody was adamant that the club would host not only White gay men, but also the Black and Latino minority groups. He was intentionally challenging mainstream gay nightlife that largely remained segregated by race.¹⁵⁵ The club, as a consequence, sat as the antithesis to mainstream discos like Flamingo and Studio 54. It was a place where people came to dance and be immersed in the sound and atmosphere. The elitist attitude was not present – the focus was the music, the people and dancing. The nightclub earned a reputation as “the hard core place to dance”.¹⁵⁶ Levan had also developed as the “king of a mostly black world”,¹⁵⁷ and the natural consequence was that minorities gravitated to the space. As time passed the White gay community slowly increased at the Garage, but it would remain a place for Black and Latino men – women were not heavily represented in the social makeup.

The 10,000-square-foot space was a large, cavernous room that sat on top of a parking garage. Even though the Chameleon did not last in the building, Brody was determined to make the architecture work by splitting up the space. The large industrial room was believed to be too austere for a Disco club at first, hence the decision to modulate the space into two rooms.¹⁵⁸ Initially the project was “a vast, lumbering wreck of a building”,¹⁵⁹ and Brody had been working endlessly raising funds and generating income from the parking garage below to realise the project. He approached the design and build of the club in stages due to funding restrictions. The first part of the adaptation was the construction of a smaller space called the Grey Room, an intimate enclosed area about 900 square feet, carved out of the larger void and

¹⁵⁴ Cheren 183.

¹⁵⁵ Cheren 199.

¹⁵⁶ Cheren 199-200.

¹⁵⁷ Cheren 210.

¹⁵⁸ Cheren 171.

¹⁵⁹ Cheren 180.

renovated.

In the spring of 1977, word spread that the much talked-about Paradise Garage would open in bits and pieces, a disco-in-progress. . . . The main dance floor was left dark and sheets of plastic obscured it from the Grey Room, but you could see it anyway. And what you saw was this looming cavern, the biggest dance floor in the city outside the famously gigantic Roseland Ballroom.¹⁶⁰

The Grey Room was the antechamber to the huge central space and main dance floor of the nightclub. Given the sequencing of the construction, people were held in suspense as they caught glimpses of what was to come.

Slowly the revellers became familiar with what was to be a new spatial paradigm for underground nightclubs. The architectural promenade and sequence of movement through the building added to the suspense and intrigue of the space. Entry to the building was through the large parking garage, a vast space with a small security checkpoint and membership desk. After moving through the control point the members were led to “the bottom of an immense ramp leading to the second floor. The ramp ran the entire length of the building, hundreds of feet in all, and was painted pitch black and lined with chaser lights like an airplane runway.”¹⁶¹ As people moved up the long dark ramp, the pounding of the music would slowly start to present itself from the space beyond. The dramatic manipulation of light and darkness set the aesthetic staging of the nightclub and is a recurring motif throughout this thesis. At the top of the ramp there was an entry door that moved the user into the Grey Room, and from this anteroom the main cavernous space of the club loomed beyond.¹⁶² It was said that “Paradise Garage had two acknowledged stars – the space itself (including the sound system), and Larry Levan.”¹⁶³ The large concrete structure and the tectonic properties of the space dramatically transformed the

¹⁶⁰ Cheren 181.

¹⁶¹ Cheren 198.

¹⁶² Cheren 198.

¹⁶³ Cheren 181.

sonic experience in the cathedral-like dance floor.¹⁶⁴ The space of the architecture also mirrored this deeper and darker aesthetic that Levan was sculpting with sound. Paradise Garage is significant not only for its musical legacy and social impact but also in terms of understanding architecture's potential as a mediating agent in the underground electronic music landscape. It is one of the earliest progenitors of the contemporary industrial Techno nightclub central to this research and shares many spatial and aesthetic similarities with the Tresor and the Berghain.

2.7 The Demise of Paradise Garage and Disco

The demise of Disco began in 1979 and marked the beginning of a shift toward electronic music. One of the reasons that contributed to the change was the over-saturation of Disco as a commodified genre in the mainstream segment of the market.¹⁶⁵ Given Disco's rapid rise to prominence, the music industry sought to take advantage of its earning potential, which led to some of the music becoming excessively formulaic with substandard pop-Disco music.¹⁶⁶ Coupled with this was the growing resentment toward the Disco movement as a genre that represented minority groups— in particular, Black, Latino and gay communities. This sat in opposition to the Rock and Roll genre, which according to Mel Cheren represented

white, middle-class straight baby-boomers, particularly guys. It spoke to them and for them, and now it was in danger of being relegated to a niche market itself by a new style dominated by black musicians and gay promoters, producers and tastemakers. As the disco sweep turned into a tidal wave, a near panic set in. Beneath the bitter complaints that disco was mindless, hedonistic, repetitive, pounding – exactly what critics had said about rock itself in the early years – there was this deeper complaint: disco was black and

¹⁶⁴ *Maestro*, dir. Josell Ramos.

¹⁶⁵ Brewster and Broughton 195.

¹⁶⁶ Cheren 242.

Hispanic. Disco was mindless and gay. Disco sucked.¹⁶⁷

These were the conditions that initiated the demise of Disco as a genre.

The demise of Paradise Garage began as the AIDS epidemic swept through the Disco movement and society. Many of the men who frequented the club were part of the gay community. This tight network in the underground scene created a deeply unfortunate scenario where many men fell victim to the disease including Michael Brody. At the same time, the ten-year lease on the Paradise Garage was also coming to a conclusion, and the landlord was under pressure from the city and the neighbourhood to rent the space to a telecommunications company.¹⁶⁸ The club consequently closed. Brody preferred to shut the doors rather than hand it over to someone who would compromise its *raison d'être* in a new location. When he told the staff the news, it was received with great shock and sadness. "As everybody sat there stunned, unable to say anything, they could hear Larry starting to play out in the empty club. His music got louder and louder until it was deafening. The sound system drivers blew out. Pushed past their limits the whole thing just exploded, and it was silent again."¹⁶⁹ The underground scene in New York was coming to an end; the epidemic had ravaged a whole generation of men who had been pivotal to the burgeoning culture. "What ended it for us was AIDS. It was the true finish to the trajectory that had taken us from little underground clubs in out-of-the-way lofts to the apex of the music industry and, for a moment, the axis of popular culture."¹⁷⁰ Disco was a movement with a spirit of liberation, freedom and optimism, but was now shrouded in darkness and death as its final songs rang out.¹⁷¹

The underground Disco clubs of the era had been places in which the gay community found a

¹⁶⁷ Cheren 245.

¹⁶⁸ Cheren 383.

¹⁶⁹ Cheren 385.

¹⁷⁰ Cheren 427.

¹⁷¹ Brewster and Broughton 202.

home, places of safety and an escape that created a path from nothing and a blueprint for the future. This community reformulated ways of relating, via an avant-garde gay culture.¹⁷² In the pre-AIDS era, they pioneered a new form of relational aesthetics¹⁷³ that would be foundational for contemporary spaces such as the Berghain, a place that has been described as a sex-positive nightclub. Michel Foucault wrote of these new “ways of relating, . . . that are, at certain points, transferable to heterosexuals.”¹⁷⁴ The blueprint of the underground Disco community lives on; it has been reconfigured and reiterates the experiment of transcending sexual categorisation in the contemporary underground Techno nightclub. The end of underground Disco nightclubs created a huge void where the countercultural movement had been. This void was filled by upmarket venues like Le Jardin, which shifted away from Disco as an underground movement. Equally, Studio 54, Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager’s iconic nightclub, further exacerbated the commodification of Disco, shifting the focus to an elitist and superficial aesthetic.¹⁷⁵ As the club scene was changing, so too was Disco’s future within the record industry. Exploitation of Disco artists and the perpetual clash with Rock and Roll led to a decline in the production of Disco records. The escalating racial antagonism culminated in a large-scale rally in which Disco records were communally burned in a mass grave, summoning the end of the Disco era. Disco was now over, and House was the next great invention that would take its place.¹⁷⁶

2.8 House Introduction

The vacuum in the record industry with respect to the amount of danceable Disco music that was being produced, and consequently how much new material Disco DJs had at their disposal, led to the birth of a new musical genre which came to be known as House.

¹⁷² Johan Andersson, “Berghain: Space, affect, and sexual disorientation,” *Society and Space* 40(3) (2022): 452.

¹⁷³ Andersson 452.

¹⁷⁴ Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth: The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Robert Hurley and others, vol. 1 (New York: The New Press, 1997) 159–160.

¹⁷⁵ Brewster and Broughton 186–190.

¹⁷⁶ Brewster and Broughton 202.

[Production note: This figure is not included in
this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Fig. 10. Paradise Garage, 84 King Street, 1979.

[Production note: This figure is not included in this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Fig. 11. Paradise Garage Entrance Ramp, 1979.

[Production note: This figure is not included in
this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Fig. 12. Paradise Garage Dance Floor, 1979.

According to Jessie Saunders “It was like a phoenix rising from the ashes of the infamous Disco Demolition night at Comiskey Park in 1979, where tens of thousands of Disco records were piled into a bonfire in the center of the field to chants of *Disco sucks, Disco sucks, Disco sucks*.”¹⁷⁷ The ‘Disco Sucks’ campaign led by disc jockey Steve Dahl was not simply a revolt against Disco music; it was a racially fuelled backlash against Black musicians. Black, Latino and gay people were targeted through this campaign as they represented what some believed Disco had become. The records that were brought into the baseball stadium were not simply Disco records but records produced by Black musicians.¹⁷⁸ As Disco began to fade, a new movement arose to take its place; one that would bounce back from the repression inflicted upon Disco by the Rock and Roll community. In a most uncanny way, the musical elements of Disco would return and become the shot heard around the world. House was based on samples that had been taken from Disco records, with new drum and percussion parts laid over Disco melodies and vocals. In the mid-1980s Chicago was the city where House was developed with protagonists such as Frankie Knuckles who pioneered the early sound, and Jesse Saunders, who had the first commercial House single. It was the period in which the music finally moved beyond the Disco era, establishing House as the new genre to take Disco’s place. The name itself references a club in Chicago that pioneered the early sound of this musical style.¹⁷⁹ As people became more familiar with the new sound that was being played at a nightclub called Warehouse, they soon abbreviated the name. The style of music at 206 South Jefferson Street in Chicago became known as House.¹⁸⁰

2.9 The Warehouse

In 1977 Frankie Knuckles was the original resident DJ at the Warehouse. The position was first offered to Larry Levan; however, due to commitments in New York, he recommended

¹⁷⁷ Jesse Saunders, *House Music: The Real Story* (Baltimore: Publish America, 2007) 15.

¹⁷⁸ *Pump up the Volume*, dir. Carl Hindmarch, Channel 4, 2001.

¹⁷⁹ Brewster and Broughton 295.

¹⁸⁰ Saunders 11.

Knuckles to the owner Robert Williams.¹⁸¹ “Frankie was a Disco DJ that stunned the crowd every night with a grooving, soulful style of music that led to an entire generation of new music and different subgenres once it was fully evolved.”¹⁸² The nightclub had a Richard Long sound system and Knuckles played a style of music that was referred to during the early period as ‘warehouse’ music. The clientele at the Warehouse was similar in makeup to that in the underground New York clubs and was comprised predominantly of gay people.¹⁸³ Knuckles played “to a crowd of about 250 gay men and women each Saturday night”.¹⁸⁴ The musical style was also similar and it therefore attracted a similar crowd of people. As the music moved beyond the Warehouse into other bigger clubs in Chicago, it came to be widely recognised as House music. The other clubs in Chicago were not predominantly gay; there was also a straight crowd that embraced the sound wholeheartedly. What occurred as a consequence of the “segregation between the gay and straight party communities”¹⁸⁵ was a “gap of understanding about the origin of the name; the straight party community wanted little to do with the gay party community”,¹⁸⁶ and therefore the name was abbreviated and differentiated from the style that Frankie Knuckles was playing.¹⁸⁷ This caused rifts within the scene. As the record companies got involved and House became more recognised and widely distributed, there was much jostling for position by the protagonists of the period for recognition of their place within the new musical movement.

Jessie Saunders, a producer and DJ who grew up in Chicago, was interested in many genres of music but was increasingly captivated by Funk music. It was the structure of the music

¹⁸¹ *Pump up the Volume*, dir. Carl Hindmarch.

¹⁸² Saunders 11-12.

¹⁸³ Brewster and Broughton 297.

¹⁸⁴ Saunders 12.

¹⁸⁵ Saunders 12.

¹⁸⁶ Saunders 12-13.

¹⁸⁷ Saunders 13.

which “used a two bar repeating loop”¹⁸⁸ that was mesmerising to him. In his DJ mixes, Saunders was not just recording songs sequentially but reconfiguring the music. He was recording tracks and sections of tracks from vinyl records multiple times, creating unique loops in the final arrangement of the recording. He focused on changing the structure of the tracks, remixing them and developing new arrangements.¹⁸⁹ A similar process of remixing was already being used in the industry, pioneered by Tom Moulton in the early seventies, “in which he would extend the middle instrumental sections of songs as well as any others that merited extension. This edited version would become known as a *Disco version*.”¹⁹⁰ Frankie Knuckles was also editing and remixing old Disco tracks in a similar way for his DJ sets at the Warehouse, and this process was key to the genre of House music.¹⁹¹ Saunders would take the technique live, remixing vinyl records on turntables in real time in nightclubs. It was this paradigm that ultimately gave rise to House music’s structure and aesthetics.

Saunders was instrumental to the way musicians approached the production of this new musical style. Up until this point in the early 1980s, music was still being produced in the classical way with bands that used live drummers, guitarists, vocalists and musicians playing the keyboard and stringed instruments. With the introduction of drum machines such as the Roland TR-606 and TR-808 and bass machines such as the TB-303, along with polyphonic synthesizers by manufacturers like Moog and Korg, Saunders was able to produce the full suite of orchestral sounds from these machines and circumvent live performance. The timing of the machines was synced with one another so everything was playing in unison to the designated tempo or bpm. This revolutionised the music industry and gave young musicians the possibility to write and create their own music with only a

¹⁸⁸ Saunders 23.

¹⁸⁹ Saunders 25.

¹⁹⁰ Saunders 26.

¹⁹¹ Brewster and Broughton 296-297.

few pieces of equipment. There was now a cost effective and accessible way to combat the lack of available music for DJs.¹⁹² These new machines propelled the production of House music forward. The first House single that was ever written in this way was “Fantasy” by Saunders in 1983.¹⁹³ In 1984 Saunders went on to release the very first commercially available original House track called “On & On”.¹⁹⁴ During the same year, another instrumental figure of the period, Byron Walton (who released under the pseudonym Jamie Principle), would be elevated to a mythical status during this phase of inception for House. He wrote a track called “Your Love”; however, it was not released through a record company at the time but spread like wildfire throughout the underground nightclubs of Chicago and became the “year zero in the evolution of House music”.¹⁹⁵ The track was a masterpiece and was far more musically sophisticated than “On & On”. It was later released on vinyl after Frankie Knuckles was sent the tape and realised the brilliance of the track.

After Knuckles it was Ron Hardy who would become resident DJ at the Warehouse.

By late 1982, the Warehouse had become a victim of its own success, its gay clientele increasingly diluted. Frankie remembers “a lot more hard-edged straight kids trying to infiltrate what was going on.” The owners got greedy and doubled the entry fee.

Knuckles left and opened [a nightclub called] the Power Plant, [in] a former electrical substation. His crowd followed him loyally, but the owners of the Warehouse had an ace up their sleeve: renaming the club the Music Box, they hired another young DJ, black and gay like Knuckles and with similar tastes, but with an even more orgiastic approach to music.¹⁹⁶

When Knuckles left the Warehouse in 1983, the club reopened as the Music Box in a new

¹⁹² *Pump up the Volume*, dir. Carl Hindmarch.

¹⁹³ Saunders 55-56.

¹⁹⁴ Saunders 60-61.

¹⁹⁵ *Pump up the Volume*, dir. Carl Hindmarch.

¹⁹⁶ Brewster and Broughton 298.

location. Ron Hardy, who is frequently framed as Knuckle's main rival of the period, had a more severe approach to playing records. He still played groovy Disco, but his intense drug use and habit of DJing high on heroin caused him to speed up the tempo of the music.¹⁹⁷ He also incorporated harder percussive elements that made his sound much tougher in style. Hardy became a great influence for future Techno pioneers such as Juan Atkins, Derrick May and Kevin Saunderson, who at that time would visit Chicago from Detroit, watching Hardy play at the Music Box.¹⁹⁸ Hardy was critical to the dissemination of another sub-genre of House called Acid House. This new style would become the predominant sound in West Berlin prior to the Berlin Wall coming down, and the precursor to Techno in Germany. It was a genre that had harder percussive elements and was most notably characterised by its acid-sounding bass lines made possible by the Roland TB-303 bass synthesizer. A musical duo at the time called Phuture (comprised of DJ Pierre and Earl 'Spanky' Smith) developed this new style of music. Upon its creation they needed someone bold enough to play it. As the duo were avid fans of the Music Box, they approached Ron Hardy who was most willing to play this harder and more electronic-inspired style of House. Hardy played the track four times in the same night. The first run through was received with confusion by the crowd, but by the last play through, the crowd was hooked and had "lost their minds".¹⁹⁹

Similar to New York's iconic Paradise Garage, Chicago had its own architectural protagonist that occupied a central role in the cultivation of the new music genre: the Warehouse, "a three-story factory building in the city's desolate west side industrial zone."²⁰⁰ Located in the West Loop neighbourhood of Chicago, the building was originally designed by the architect Vernon W. Behel in 1906. It is a tall and relatively

¹⁹⁷ *Pump up the Volume*, dir. Carl Hindmarch.

¹⁹⁸ Brewster and Broughton 320.

¹⁹⁹ *Pump up the Volume*, dir. Carl Hindmarch.

²⁰⁰ Brewster and Broughton 292.

slender building, constructed of brick masonry with infilled glazing. The industrial building type is split over three levels; composition of the façade comprises three slender columns that are framed by a simple rectangular entablature. The glazed bricks render the building relatively elegant given its original function; and the styling incorporates abstracted classical motifs. Although the architecture of the building is industrial, it nonetheless exudes a formal quality that is sophisticated and quasi institutional. The Warehouse nightclub functioned like an institution (of the religious kind) in which the new warehouse music was cultivated.

Offering hope and salvation to those who had few other places to go, here you could forget your earthly troubles and escape to a better place. Like church, it promised freedom, and not even in the next life. In this club Frankie Knuckles took his congregation on journeys of redemption and discovery.²⁰¹

The architecture brought a degree of formality and legitimacy to the music it gestated. The success of House as a genre is in part due to the poise and strength of the architecture; it was a foundation and chamber in which the genre developed.

The architectural promenade illustrates the drama and qualitative nature of the space. The entrance to the club was via an external stairway on the top floor of the building. In order to reach the dancefloor,

you had to enter through a stairwell from the white, plant-filled lounge above. Heat and steam drifted up to meet you, generated in the murk of the underlit room by the glistening black bodies that were down there “jacking” away. And as you descended into the shadowy cavern, you were hit by the power of the sound system.²⁰²

The parties at the Warehouse were intense with energy. Knuckles describes the energetic

²⁰¹ Brewster and Broughton 292.

²⁰² Brewster and Broughton 293.

feedback that he got from the room which was electric and spiritual.²⁰³ The club had a capacity of around 600 people but often reached numbers as great as 2000. Alcohol was not sold at the Warehouse, dancers were “energized further by acid [LSD] and MDA powder (a precursor to ecstasy).”²⁰⁴ On the main dancefloor the atmosphere was dark and hedonistic. As Knuckles described it: ““People would say it was like climbing down into the pit of hell. People would be afraid when they heard the sound thumping through and saw the number of bodies in there, just completely locked into the music.””²⁰⁵ The tectonic and spatial DNA of industrial buildings was becoming a mainstay within the underground electronic music movement. The raw and primal nature of these buildings fed into the cultural aesthetic of the music and its sonic signature. In Chicago, the adaptive reuse of industrial spaces as established in New York was being continued. The building typologies that were successfully housing underground nightclubs were churches, parking garages, warehouses, industrial buildings and power stations.²⁰⁶ They shared common spatial and tectonic properties that not only enabled underground nightclubs to operate successfully, but also enhanced the experience with respect to sound and the possibilities for architectural program.

The House music movement, like the Disco music movement before it, broke down social barriers and imagined a new and more open future through the vehicle of electronic music and the spaces in which it was played. House music was the new language of the times; it was developed from the ashes of Disco and was the foundation for what was about to eventuate in Detroit. Techno was now imminent.

²⁰³ Brewster and Broughton 292.

²⁰⁴ Brewster and Broughton 293.

²⁰⁵ Brewster and Broughton 293.

²⁰⁶ Another significant architectural protagonist of the Chicago period was a nightclub called the Power Plant, an old electrical substation that Frankie Knuckles opened after Ron Hardy took the resident position at the Music Box (formerly known as the Warehouse). See Brewster and Broughton Last Night a DJ Saved My Life: The History of the Disc Jockey (New York: Grove Press, 2000) 298.

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Fig. 13. The Warehouse Nightclub. 206 S. Jefferson Street, Chicago.

2.10 Techno Introduction

The deep roots and mythology behind Techno can be traced back to Afrofuturism, which is described as a cultural philosophy, aesthetic and science.²⁰⁷ While the term itself was coined in 1993 by Mark Dery, the ideas and practices can be traced back as far as the 1930s, evident in the work of Blues musician Robert Johnson. Afrofuturism focuses on challenges surrounding the African diaspora through the lenses of science fiction and technology. Three musicians who were working independently of each other, across different genres and periods, each assisted in defining and focusing the considerations within Afrofuturism: George Clinton, Sun Ra and Lee ‘Scratch’ Perry.²⁰⁸ Clinton, a songwriter and record producer, developed a type of Funk music called P-Funk (Psychedelic Funk) in the 1970s and 80s under the names Parliament and Funkadelic.²⁰⁹ Particular to the music was a central mythological theme of space, with imagery and iconography of space and the extra-terrestrial. Clinton was deeply influenced by a musician from the 1940s named Sun Ra, born Herman Poole Blount. Blount was a significant figure in the Jazz scene of Chicago in the 1940s and went on to form a group called The Arkestra. Sun Ra adopted this name after the Egyptian God of the sun called Ra, and he was a central figure of Afrofuturism who embodied and developed its mythology by claiming he was an alien from Saturn.²¹⁰ The third protagonist was Lee ‘Scratch’ Perry, who pioneered various production techniques within the genre of Reggae. He was heavily involved with the development of Dub, a genre that would go on to become very influential to Techno. These three architects of Afrofuturism viewed their music as a way of exploring the future. Clinton believed that mankind had either been in outer space or had returned from outer space, or was a product of an extra-terrestrial intelligence that seeded life on earth through genetics. He believed that humans were

²⁰⁷ Lisa Yaszek, “Afrofuturism, Science Fiction, and the History of the Future,” *Socialism and Democracy* 20(3) (2006): 41-60.

²⁰⁸ *The Last Angel of History*, dir. John Akomfrah, Black Audio Film Collective, 1996.

²⁰⁹ *The Last Angel of History*, dir. John Akomfrah.

²¹⁰ *The Last Angel of History*, dir. John Akomfrah.

descendants of the stars.²¹¹ What emerges in Afrofuturism is a deep connection between music, technology, space and the future. Science fiction's significance within Afrofuturism is attributable to the conventions of its narrative structure in the way it deals with a particular subject – generally one who is at odds with the apparatus of power, or is experiencing some type of alienation, estrangement or severe cultural dislocation.²¹² This experience is particularly relevant to African culture in the Americas over the past centuries. Estrangement is a recurring theme throughout the various histories that contextualise this thesis and is explored further in subsequent chapters, particularly with respect to the aesthetic category of the uncanny.

Drums are deeply embedded within the African culture, in their customs and forms of communication. Drum telegraphy practised by cultures in Africa, New Guinea and Central America enabled messages to be sent at a rate of 100 miles per hour.²¹³ Drums were the tools of communication and signalling across the plains.²¹⁴ What becomes significant is the relationship between the drum and space. Africans brought the tradition with them to the new world where they used them to communicate with each other. When slave owners realised this, they banned the drums.²¹⁵ This relationship is further explored in the work of Techno artists as they project and imagine music in more complex spaces of the universe. The sounds of space (imagined or mimicked sounds of the universe beyond the boundary of our planet) were developed through the use of machine instruments and synthesizers that have the ability to render advanced sonic textures and unique timbres. Techno music, or technological music, firmly rooted in Black culture, was not a reflection of an urban condition, but rather an impossibly imagined music enabled by the industrial apparatus. It was a way of imagining a speculative future beyond the

²¹¹ The Last Angel of History, dir. John Akomfrah.

²¹² The Last Angel of History, dir. John Akomfrah.

²¹³ James Gleick, The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood (New York: Pantheon Books, 2011) n. pag.

²¹⁴ Gleick n. pag.

²¹⁵ Gleick n. pag.

post-industrial decay of the world.²¹⁶ Techno was a type of sonic warfare. It was connected to and was a continuation of a long tradition in which drums and percussion were communicative devices and formed language. Techno, the music of the future, would become the language of the future.

The methodology of constructing House music paved the way for new genres to be created. The compositional shift of pushing back the vocal samples and emphasising the beats and texture of the music gave birth to a new genre called Techno. Techno is an abstracted and distilled form of electronic music, in which the ties with Disco are finally severed in pursuit of the “clarity of pure creation.”²¹⁷ The industrial and mechanical landscape of Detroit was the perfect context for this new urban musical movement to flourish.²¹⁸ Detroit was different to New York and Chicago with respect to its social makeup, a direct reflection of the city’s industrial heritage and inner-city reality. Disco was influenced by a social and political struggle that had effects on the music that was being created. Disco was about liberation and the right to dance, mandates that can be heard throughout many Disco records. House was significant in the way it engineered a solution to a different problem associated with the commercial record industry, a problem embedded in the continued struggle against the African American community’s racial marginalisation. Techno was concerned with how the mechanical age, and a sense of urban decay associated with political and economic struggles, was now the context by which artists understood themselves, their music and the future. The problems were larger in scale, not limited to race and sexuality, but rather extended to the industrial and post-industrial age.²¹⁹

While Techno can be viewed in one way as an extension and derivation of R&B, Disco and

²¹⁶ *The Last Angel of History*, dir. John Akomfrah.

²¹⁷ Brewster and Broughton 320.

²¹⁸ *High Tech Soul: The Creation of Techno Music*, dir. Gary Bredow.

²¹⁹ *The Last Angel of History*, dir. John Akomfrah.

House, it is also attributed to the influence of other electronic music artists from Europe and the USA, along with the rich musical history of Detroit. George Clinton's Funk bands Parliament and Funkadelic from the USA, and the electronic band Kraftwerk that was formed in Düsseldorf but rose to prominence in West Germany, were great influences and prototypical examples for Techno.²²⁰ These bands were not making classical Techno music but experimenting with and producing music that was a product of technological instrumentation. Kraftwerk in particular is viewed as the catalyst for electronic music production in general. "With all eyes on the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, almost no one in the mid 1960s could have predicted that two students studying highbrow musical theory at Dusseldorf [*sic*] Conservatory would go on to unveil the future."²²¹ Techno as a genre, however, is defined by a different musical structure, tempo and aesthetic. The name Techno was appropriated by Juan Atkins, from Alvin Toffler's book *The Third Wave*, in which Toffler references the techno-rebels.²²² DeForrest Brown Jr, author of *Assembling a Black Counter Culture* also states that,

Atkins' use of the prefix "techno" was in direct reference to the word "technology," which etymologically combines the idea of art or craft with emergent early-seventeenth-century logic stemming from the Greek word *tekhnologia*, meaning "systematic treatment." It can also be considered a reference to Toffler's use of the word "technocracy," designating a society or governing system led by an elite class of technical experts who build platforms of production for a class of largely unskilled consumers.²²³

Techno is ultimately a musical expression and language with its foundation in technology.

²²⁰ *The Last Angel of History*, dir. John Akomfrah.

²²¹ Mark Sinker and Tim Barr, *The History of House*, ed. Chris Kempster (London: Sanctuary Publishing, 1996) 95.

²²² Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave* (New York: Bantam Books, 1981) 149.

²²³ Brown, Jr 6-7.

2.11 Techno Rebels

Juan Atkins, along with two other protagonists of the Techno period, Derrick May and Kevin Saunderson, were known as the Bellville Three.²²⁴ They collaborated on music using synthesizers and drum machines, taking their cue from various electronic bands. The three pioneers reinterpreted the electronic music that inspired them, recalibrating it to a harder social landscape and aesthetic. Juan Atkins was very much the pioneer of the genre that came to be known as Techno. Originally from Detroit, Atkins was born in 1962 and moved to Belleville where he completed high school. Among other things, he was introduced to the futurist theories of Alvin Toffler. The subject matter resonated with Atkins; futurism captivated his imagination and became an influential factor in his music. Atkins also attended Washtenaw County Community College and met Richard Davis, an aspiring electronic musician.²²⁵ This encounter would in retrospect become one of the most important moments in the history of Techno. The pair began working together, the content of their labour far surpassing the technical aspects of electronic music production. They explored the concepts of futurism, developing futuristic narratives and languages:

As Atkins and Davis began creating synthesized music in the studio, they also tinkered with language and created a dictionary that reflected their own predictions for the future, which they called “the grid.” Essentially, the grid was just a growing list of recombinant compound words, but Atkins and Davis seemed to treat it more as their own Bible, the one source from which all of their new concepts would come. At the very least, one of their first entries would help get them noticed: “cybotron,” which was fashioned from “cyborg” and “cyclotron,” became the name under which they would record.²²⁶

While the musical similarities between Cybotron and Kraftwerk were readily apparent,

²²⁴ Demers 176.

²²⁵ Sicko 43.

²²⁶ Sicko 43-44.

Atkins continued to draw much of his inspiration from the influence of George Clinton and his psychedelic lineage of music. Cybotron, strictly speaking, would still be categorised as belonging to the genre known as Electro, emergent in the 1980s. Cybotron went on to produce more albums and singles that gained widespread recognition. Atkins and Davis drew a new line in the definition of electronic music styles, representing a milestone in the fusion of electronic experimentation with funky dance music. Atkins was viewed as the driving force and spiritual leader of the Techno movement; “his work would continue to help keep techno conceptually complex”,²²⁷ inspiring future generations of Techno music producers.

Much of the proliferation and evolution of Techno took place on the radio in Detroit.

Charles Johnson, a central figure of the period, was an integral part of the genre’s dissemination. He was a radio presenter known as the Electrifying Mojo who brought a fresh approach to the procurement and presentation of radio material.²²⁸ It was the

early electronic atmospherics of Tangerine Dream and Kraftwerk, whose music apparently served no better purpose at the time than backing tracks for commercials and promotions. “I remember when ‘Trans-Europe Express’ came out,” remembers Johnson. “I played it and they [the station executives] said, ‘What the hell is he playing now?’ It wasn’t a beat that people understood, but I could hear it perfectly. I mean, here’s a band who’s obviously from the same planet that I’m from, right?”²²⁹

Mojo was a huge inspiration for the generation, the conduit for the type of futuristic sonic possibilities upon which the future Techno producers would so heavily leverage. Another key figure of the period is Jeff Mills; his musical career began as a DJ and went on to form the iconic Techno group Underground Resistance. Mills was another prominent

²²⁷ Sicko 49.

²²⁸ Sicko 57.

²²⁹ Sicko 57.

figure on the radio with his own show at WDRQ in Detroit.²³⁰ “The work of Mills and Johnson helped give the techno scene solid beginnings in Detroit. And while adventurous radio programmers would become harder and harder to find as the 1980s rolled on, there were still a few other savvy media entities that ‘got’ techno, recognizing the distinct Detroit sound and its potential.”²³¹ Through the protagonists of the period, Techno began to be understood and appreciated for its experimental and futuristic possibilities.

2.12 Expansion into Europe

From 1988 to 1990, Techno’s expansion beyond Detroit surprisingly occurred through Europe instead of other areas within the United States. Initially the United Kingdom was the place where Techno took a strong hold, largely due to the efforts and foresight of Neil Rushton, head of Kool Kat Records from Birmingham. An existing connection between England’s industrial north and the Midwestern cities of Detroit and Chicago had been established well in advance of Techno’s arrival through record labels such as Motown. Northern Soul was the nickname for “higher-energy American soul records. . . . These records were scooped up and danced to in frenetic fashion by fans originally concentrated in England’s northern urban centers”.²³² While Rushton was in Chicago sourcing House records, he came across the new sound from Detroit. For Rushton, the connection with Detroit’s musical legacy was readily apparent and, after making a connection with Derrick May, began organising a compilation album of this new sound from the great motor city. During the album’s curation, the working title for the compilation was *The House Sound of Detroit*; however,

Atkins turned in a song called “Techno Music,” which used the same integration of speech synthesis Kraftwerk had used throughout its 1981 album *Computer World*.

²³⁰ Brewster and Broughton 324.

²³¹ Sicko 61.

²³² Sicko 66.

The voice “sang” out repeated refrains of “I program my home computer” and “techno music.” Rushton was instantly prompted to change the compilation’s title to *Techno! The New Dance Sound of Detroit*. Just like that, the name for Detroit’s dance music was born, setting it apart from house and defining it as a new musical genre in its own right.²³³

This marked the beginning of Techno as a genre, clearly defining a new and unique musical trajectory within the commercial market.

While the release of the compilation album garnered serious attention, Techno was still not accepted at the same scale as other popular genres. This defining moment was perhaps a forgone conclusion; the music seemed destined to be an underground genre, something which its early pioneers misunderstood and potentially resisted. Techno music was underpinned by futuristic sounds and ideas. The post-industrial decay of Detroit and the culturally estranged community around Techno would ultimately come to operate not in the mainstream but in the margins.

Despite the hype and press coverage of the producers and DJs involved, the *Techno!* compilation did not sell as well as Virgin had hoped. The simple fact was that it didn’t sit well with buyers or with the collective attention span of London – one of the harshest environments for new musical trends. Though Londoners had accepted techno in the form of club entertainment or isolated singles, perhaps they weren’t yet ready for an entire double album of the music.²³⁴

What becomes increasingly evident is the disjunction between the core principles of Techno, and their value being measured by the very systems and economy of consumption they seek to indirectly critique. Perhaps this incongruence was something that both Mojo and Rick Davis were at least subconsciously aware of. This in part

²³³ Sicko 68.

²³⁴ Sicko 70.

explains their *modus operandi* in relation to Techno, as overtly discrete, shadowy and self-marginalising. It appears they had a nuanced understanding of the music's deep estrangement. The compilation was put out by a subsidiary of Virgin called 10 Records, and despite the reception of the first compilation Virgin proceeded with a second, called *Techno 2: The Next Generation*, in a persistent effort to commodify the genre.

Techno 2 introduced the new talents of the Detroit scene, such as Carl Craig, Octave One, and Jay Denham (aka Fade 2 Black). Unfortunately, fickle London audiences and the press seemed to have tired of techno for the time being and failed to appreciate the talent and more focused approach of the new compilation. Or, as Octave One's Lenny Burden puts it, "The fad was over. . . . The second album came out and the people were like, 'Okay, we've heard techno, we need something else.'"²³⁵

Techno was an abstract musical genre, and, similar to other forms of abstract art, required more effort and participation to interpret its meaning, exemplified in the words of Peter Wohelski: "The corollary, of course, is that audiences must do more work than they have in the past. . . . 'This is *not* music for the masses.'"²³⁶

While Techno failed to imprint on the mainstream segments of the US and European markets, it continued on in the periphery of European cities where the art form was appreciated for its aesthetic and intellectual complexity. The consequence of this for Detroit and Techno more broadly was the realisation and realignment of the genre toward the underground; a recalibration that would allow the future pioneers of Techno to extract more deeply the essence of the genre away from the over-commercialised mainstream market forces. The second wave of development in the story of Techno came through new artists and record labels. Jeff Mills and Mike Banks were two key figures of this next

²³⁵ Sicko 72.

²³⁶ Sicko 5.

wave. Their collaborations “quickly grew into a concept and movement known as Underground Resistance (UR), a kind of covert musical operation set on toppling the industry establishment.”²³⁷ After a few releases they found their footing, solidifying their identity with a release in 1991 called *Waveform*. “As different as its sound was to the Detroit techno continuum, so too was UR’s image (or lack thereof). The more Mills and Banks stripped away their identity, focusing on a simple message and only the barest of details, the more notorious they became.”²³⁸ UR was specific in pursuing a direction and image that was not concerned with commercial success. They brought an increased visible, audible and political dimension to the project of Techno. Their brand of sonic warfare was hard, abrasive and direct.

Contributing to the mystique that developed around UR was their use of militaristic motifs. Their label art, wardrobe and rhetoric were all “couched in military terms – more a token of respect than mere appropriation.”²³⁹ There were no violent sentiments behind UR’s music; “foreboding would be a more appropriate description.”²⁴⁰ Their “unwavering stance against the record industry’s mainstreaming of techno earned comparisons to hip-hop revolutionaries Public Enemy.”²⁴¹ For UR, their environment and the context within which Techno was operating were seen as something to be cautious of. Banks was specific about not allowing people to get too close; they were protective of the Techno culture and resistant to its appropriation and commodification by outsiders.²⁴² Their clothes, a combination of flight jackets, combat boots and bandanas used as masks, generated an image more reminiscent of freedom fighters or revolutionaries in a struggle

²³⁷ Sicko 99.

²³⁸ Sicko 100.

²³⁹ Sicko 100.

²⁴⁰ Sicko 100.

²⁴¹ Sicko 100-101.

²⁴² Sicko 101.

against the dominating hegemony.²⁴³

It was this particular flavour of Techno that would capture so viscerally the imaginations and collective attention of the European underground, especially in Berlin. As UR grew in prominence it stuck by its foundations, rejecting record deals with the majors.

In the process of its assault on the establishment, the European environment, and raves, UR jumped right into the fray to beat the opposition at its own game. The result was a brand of increasingly over-the-top, experimental, and anthem-like techno. Ironically, the European crowds reveled in it; whatever havoc UR wreaked on their synapses, they kept wanting more.²⁴⁴

With the release of their track “The Punisher”, UR “began stretching the limits of what was funky, supplanting melody with simplistic, abrasive riffs. . . . backing its aggressive sounds with round after round of high-caliber frequencies – exactly the kind of punishment the European crowd had been asking for.”²⁴⁵ The so-called mythology and mystique of UR is traceable through all of its aspects. Its logo was appropriated from the Punisher, a fictional comic-based character and vigilante who wages a one-man war against crime. The logo, which comprises an ominous skull inscribed with the letters UR, came to represent the militant underground resistance of the group.²⁴⁶ This concept of resistance packaged up into a dynamic new form called Techno was inspiring and catalysing.

As a tribute to the strong European underground ethic discovered on the tour (which must have caught UR by surprise to some degree), the label released a series known as World Power Alliance (WPA) in 1992. Starting with these records, UR showed development far beyond its simple, anonymous beginnings. The group and its

²⁴³ Sicko 101.

²⁴⁴ Sicko 101-102.

²⁴⁵ Sicko 102.

²⁴⁶ Sicko 102.

associates had grown into a wonderfully complex and vivid array of images and theories. This was the stage, if any, when UR rose to the level of myth, during a period of expansion and even deeper experimentation.²⁴⁷

It was the context of Berlin that provided additional inspiration for UR and allowed them to push the trajectory of their hard-sounding Techno. The Tresor nightclub became the pivotal element and catalyst for their expansion into Europe and Berlin. UR set the aesthetic tone of the music for the Tresor nightclub and the lineage of Techno in Berlin.

2.13 The Detroit Musical Institution

The club scene in Detroit was less developed in comparison to that of Chicago and New York. The Techno pioneers initially placed more emphasis on music production as opposed to the nightclub community. Techno was different to Disco and House in the way its producers intellectualised what they were doing. They were extremely focused on the music, concerning themselves with developing more theoretical complexity and creativity.²⁴⁸ Once Techno gained increased recognition as a new genre, the nightclub scene grew stronger in Detroit. The Music Institute was a nightclub that became the cultural epicentre of Techno in Detroit. In the summer of 1988 Alton Miller and George Baker “opened a small club called the Music Institute (or more correctly, ‘The Detroit Musical Institution’) where May, Darrell ‘D’ Wynn and Chez Damier (Anthony Pearson) played.”²⁴⁹ Although the venue was open for just over a year, the nightclub served to catalyse more of an actual scene in the city.²⁵⁰ It was the first underground Techno nightclub in the world.²⁵¹

The MI seemed to bring back the days (and most of the clientele) of the preps and

²⁴⁷ Sicko 103.

²⁴⁸ High Tech Soul: The Creation of Techno Music, dir. Gary Bredow.

²⁴⁹ Brewster and Broughton 333.

²⁵⁰ Brewster and Broughton 333.

²⁵¹ High Tech Soul: The Creation of Techno Music, dir. Gary Bredow.

social cliques era of the early 1980s. For a short time, divisions of class and sexual preference vanished once again, letting Detroit's collective black bohemia express itself the way it wanted. Inside, the DJ booth was raised on a platform almost a full story above the dance floor, set against the dark background of the MI's high ceilings. On the floor, the sounds were overwhelming and kick drums resonated in your chest cavity. Lights were almost an afterthought, so the only thing to do was dance – until 6 A.M.²⁵²

The building that housed the nightclub was located at 1315 Broadway Street, on the corner of Gratiot Avenue in downtown Detroit. Atkins, May and Saunderson set up their respective record labels on Gratiot Avenue, which came to be known as Techno Boulevard, with a clear connection between the genre's founders and the city of Detroit – Techno now had a “geographical locus”.²⁵³ The building was originally designed as an industrial space,²⁵⁴ sharing similar attributes to other underground clubs in New York and Chicago, particularly the Warehouse. The architecture comprises a tall and slender three storey structure, spanning from Broadway Street to the Belt Alley, a narrow pedestrian street that runs along the rear boundary of the site. The composition of the façade is configured in a series of horizontal bands that run the full width of the building. There is a combination of rectangular fenestration, glazed terracotta tiles and a simple entablature that caps the building on top. The ground floor and entrance comprise a heavy dark base with fenestration and an entry alcove that pushes into the building internally. The exterior proportions are similar to the Warehouse in Chicago, although the building is more proletarian in its material composition and less elegant than its counterpart.

Internally the building is made up of long rectangular spaces that run from the front to the

²⁵² Sicko 62.

²⁵³ Sicko 56.

²⁵⁴ High Tech Soul: The Creation of Techno Music, dir. Gary Bredow.

rear of the site. The external walls are brick masonry, and the floor plates are constructed with timber beams and floorboards. The internal space is unadorned and extremely raw. As a nightclub, the dark industrial building was a reduced and stripped-back space mirroring the type of industrial music it played.²⁵⁵ The large, cavernous internal volumes acted as reverberation chambers for the industrial Techno that was being developed during the period. The main floor of the building had 16-foot ceilings, almost 5 metres high, rendering the space expansive. Similar to other protogenic nightclubs discussed in the early part of the chapter, the building had a specific sonic signature that worked in symbiosis with the music. Although the Music Institute was short lived, it remains significant in the lineage of underground spaces, especially in the context of this research as the first underground Techno nightclub to emerge. The space shared similar spatial qualities to Tresor in Berlin; although it was on the other side of the Atlantic, it would be a point of reference for the Berliners in the Detroit–Berlin alliance and concretise its mythical position in the history of Techno. The Music Institute closed in November of 1989. Derrick May played the closing set, rounding out the short life of the iconic institution to his track “Strings of life”.²⁵⁶

2.14 Politics, Abstraction and New Configurations

Fordism set the context and foundation upon which Techno was born. It is a term that was coined in the 1930s, referring to the intentions and accomplishments of the US car manufacturer Henry Ford. It was representative of the capitalist industrial complex and its associated methods of mass production and standardisation.²⁵⁷ During the post-war economic boom in the USA, the manufacturing heartland of the country, Detroit, saw the proliferation of industries and factories that defined the economic thrust of the city.

²⁵⁵ *High Tech Soul: The Creation of Techno Music*, dir. Gary Bredow.

²⁵⁶ Sicko 63.

²⁵⁷ Bullock and Trombley 330.

However, with the city's industrial restructuring and its consequential economic downturn, Detroit endured a population exodus that shifted its economic and social landscape. It was the Fordist context of Detroit and the great social and economic shift that set the foundation for the new musical form.²⁵⁸ Alessio Kolioulis outlines how the socioeconomic factor in the evolution of Detroit techno is the new relationship established between artists and machines. On the one hand, the advancement of mechanisation and robotics contributed to the collapse of the Fordist society. However, on the other, the children of factory workers were increasingly fascinated by the alternative uses of machines. The “manufactory” and “futuristic” elements in the collective consciousness of the time remains one of the most powerful elements of Detroit techno.²⁵⁹

This seemingly ambivalent relationship with technology²⁶⁰ for these children was in fact a means by which to “survive their situation and orient themselves towards the future.”²⁶¹ The modernist utopian project of the industrial city that turned into a dystopian reality is where the politicisation of Techno can be located. Techno, in effect, confronted the “ontological oblivion of ‘late capitalism’”²⁶² by “observing and playing [in]to the real of its environment”.²⁶³ Detroit Techno, as opposed to other genres of electronic music, subdues the use of escalating melodies and harmonies and negates the spoken word which forms the basis of Western popular music. It focuses instead on percussion and rhythm. The music purposely seeks to minimise any “pseudo-individualized”²⁶⁴ recognition, opting instead for a stripped-back percussive assemblage that is read not in relation to itself as a track, but rather as an abstract texture in relation to the DJ set. As Michel Gaillot states:

²⁵⁸ High Tech Soul: The Creation of Techno Music, dir. Gary Bredow.

²⁵⁹ Alessio Kolioulis, “Borderlands: Dub Techno’s Hauntological Politics of Acoustic Ecology,” Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture 7.2 (2015): 74.

²⁶⁰ Richard Pope, “Hooked on an Affect: Detroit Techno and Dystopian Digital Culture,” Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture 2.1 (2011): 30.

²⁶¹ Pope 30.

²⁶² Pope 26.

²⁶³ Pope 26.

²⁶⁴ Pope 39.

Unlike rock music, for example, the techno movement was not based on any political presuppositions. The absence of demand and commitment it is so often taken to task for – as if techno agreed to fade into the rules decreed by socio-economic decision-makers – does not mean it cannot be the core of a community, even a communion, however temporary and festive. If only because it has no words or text (the voice operates as pure sonority), being purely instrumental or electronic, techno does not constitute a music that delivers or propounds a message. This puts it from the very start outside the political debate within which other forms of popular music like rock, punk, and now rap, have situated themselves.²⁶⁵

While the prototypical examples of Techno incorporated simple and repetitive refrains, the spoken word was quickly abolished from the genre, leaving the purity of sound. The power of the music lies in its abstraction – an incapacity to attain concrete definitions and meaning. As was partly the aspiration of Richard Davis, Techno as a new language would have the capacity to outlive other formal spoken languages because it did not rely on the same decoding mechanism. Techno is something that needs to be interpreted; it is a form of communication that requires an alternative mechanism for decoding. The mind and the intellect are not capable of translation or interpretation alone in this instance. Techno is intuitively decoded through the universal and innate knowingness of the soul. This is precisely why its measure of success or capacity to reach cannot be determined against the simple criteria of economics and in relation to other forms of popular music. Techno is therefore a reciprocal dialogue; its form negates the prescription of one-way meaning.²⁶⁶

It must then be asked whether this lack of position can be read or explained as a renunciation, or whether it is in fact a sign quite other, confronting us with an eminently timely process gestating new forms of existence. Suppose the social and political

²⁶⁵ Michel Gaillot, *Multiple Meaning Techno: An Artistic and Political Laboratory of the Present*, trans. Warren Niesluchowski (Paris: Éditions Dis Voir, n.d.) 17-18.

²⁶⁶ Gaillot 18.

fundaments and normative ideas that have hitherto structured traditional figures of 'being-together' were in fact to reveal other possibilities for human living, both singular and collective? Here we are not claiming that techno in and of itself is capable of giving rise to these new forms of existence, only that it is in effect a sign of them. What's more, techno is without a doubt where the most concrete experimentation on a new reconfiguration of the world is being conducted.²⁶⁷

Techno in the context of Berlin would become the soundtrack to the reunification of Germany at the level of the street. It would become a framework through which the youth culture and counterculturalists would imagine a new future after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the foundation upon which they would construct their new configuration of the world during Die Wende.

²⁶⁷ Gaillot 18.

[Production note: This figure is not included in this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Fig. 14. The Musical Institute of Detroit. 1315 Broadway Street, Detroit.

[Production note: This figure is not included in this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Fig. 15. The Musical Institute of Detroit. 1315 Broadway Street, Detroit.

[Production note: This figure is not included in this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Fig. 16. The Musical Institute of Detroit. 1315 Broadway Street, Detroit.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter the theoretical framework of the thesis is developed as a lens through which the history, musicology and architectural case studies are subsequently analysed.

Beginning with an overview of the uncanny in general theoretical terms as developed by Freud, Jentsch and Schelling, it then looks more closely at the predominant ways the concepts manifest within firstly architectural thought and subsequently the culture of Techno. The ideas and theories that are documented herein become the foundation for the case-study analyses of the nightclubs Tresor and Berghain. The critical theory outlined in the latter part of the chapter locates and highlights the broader historical and theoretical paradigms in which the thesis is located. These paradigms are not only significant to the thesis but also the broader discourse and trajectory of architectural theory given what is established in the conclusion of the dissertation.

3.1 Das Unheimliche

The *Unheimliche* is a German term that refers to a branch of aesthetic theory²⁶⁸ in which feelings of dread and fear are evoked.²⁶⁹ An approximate etymological equivalent of the adjective *unheimlich* in English would be the terms ‘unconcealed’, ‘unhidden’, or ‘un-secret’.²⁷⁰ However, the adjective *unheimlich* has generally been translated into English as ‘unhomely’ and has therefore become the predominant English word that is most often associated and used when either referring to, or directly translating the German adjective

²⁶⁸ The term “aesthetic theory” In Freud’s opening remarks of the essay “*Das Unheimliche*” signify not the theory of beauty but rather the “qualities of our feeling”. See Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock (London: Penguin Books, 2003) 123.

²⁶⁹ Freud, *The Uncanny* 123.

²⁷⁰ Lucy Huskinson, introduction, *The Urban Uncanny: A Collection of Interdisciplinary Studies*, ed. Lucy Huskinson (Oxon: Routledge, 2016) 2.

unheimlich.²⁷¹ Although there are differing interpretations as to the direct translation of the term, in English the word ‘unhomely’ has evolved as the predominant term given the myriad of literature that has been dedicated to the concept over the past century. In English the term unhomely has developed its own meaning, albeit through an initial ambiguity that has shifted it from the etymological to the semantic.

The original semantic equivalents, as established by Freud, are ‘uncanny’ and ‘eerie’.²⁷² As Freud traced the meaning of *unheimlich* in his essay of 1919 called “*Das Unheimliche*”, typically translated as “The Uncanny”, he concluded that, either through a semantic or etymological analysis of the term, “the uncanny is that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar.”²⁷³ The essay was published one year after World War I ended, and it was translated into English in 1925. In German the word *Heim* directly translates to ‘home’ and *lich* translates to ‘ly’, literally forming ‘homely’. Etymologically the term is rooted in the adjective *heimlich* and according to Freud’s analysis *heimlich* is defined as something not strange but familiar, something that belongs to the house, something intimate and homely.²⁷⁴ The connotation of something homely becomes central to defining *unheimlich*. Being homely carries with it a sense of privacy within the domestic sphere, more specifically the private acts that secretly take place within the home. As Freud outlines, “Starting from the homely and the domestic, there is a further development towards the notion of something removed from the eyes of strangers, hidden, secret.”²⁷⁵ *Heimlich* therefore carries within it the idea of secrecy,

²⁷¹ Lucy Huskinson notes that “*unheimlich* is often mistranslated in psychoanalytic literature as ‘unhomely’ (*unheimlig*: a word that does not exist in the German language).” See Huskinson, introduction, *The Urban Uncanny: A Collection of Interdisciplinary Studies*, ed. Lucy Huskinson (Oxon: Routledge, 2016) 2. The translation of Freud’s “*Das Unheimliche*” does in fact directly translate the adjective *unheimlich* as ‘unhomely’. See Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock (London: Penguin Books, 2003) 125.

²⁷² Freud, *The Uncanny* 124.

²⁷³ Freud, *The Uncanny* 124.

²⁷⁴ Freud, *The Uncanny* 123-134.

²⁷⁵ Freud, *The Uncanny* 133.

concealment and the hidden.²⁷⁶ As its inverse *unheimlich* has two differing connotations: firstly, it signifies something that is strangely familiar, eerie or mysterious; secondly, something that is unconcealed or unhidden.²⁷⁷ The *Unheimliche*, or uncanny in aesthetic theory, sits within the broader aesthetic category of the sublime. Edmund Burke was one of the earliest investigators of the sublime; he “opposed the economy of beauty, built up around [the] positive experience of pleasure, to the sublime, built up around the negative experiences of awe, terror and dread.”²⁷⁸ The *Unheimliche* first developed as a psychoanalytic and philosophical concept and subsequently entered architectural discourse. Within aesthetic theory, the *Unheimliche* relates to negative aesthetic considerations, as opposed to traditional aesthetics that focuses on the conditions of beauty. Freud claims more specifically that the concept presents itself in differing forms – estrangement, return, repetition and the double or *Doppelgänger*. While Freud’s analysis of the *Unheimliche* is the most exhaustive, it is important to note that other analyses preceded his essay. Freud acknowledges at the outset of his work the analysis by psychoanalyst Ernst Jentsch, who concludes that the essential condition of the uncanny is a sense of intellectual uncertainty.²⁷⁹ In the essay “On the Psychology of the Uncanny (1906)”, Jentsch details through the frame of psychology the concept of ‘psychical uncertainty’.²⁸⁰ It is examined from the perspective of a clinician, making particular reference to the cause of an uncanny feeling arising when there is “doubt as to whether an apparently living being really is animate and, conversely, doubt as to whether a lifeless object may not in fact be animate”.²⁸¹ Jentsch also establishes that a “*lack of orientation*” is fundamentally bound up with the impression of uncanniness.²⁸²

²⁷⁶ Huskinson 2.

²⁷⁷ Huskinson 2.

²⁷⁸ Haughton xli.

²⁷⁹ Freud, *The Uncanny* 125.

²⁸⁰ Jentsch 216-227.

²⁸¹ Jentsch 221.

²⁸² Jentsch 217.

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Fig. 17.
E.T.A. Hoffmann, *The Sandman*.
Coppelius, illustration 'The Night Pieces' 1817.

Fig. 18.
Stanley Kubrick, *The Shining* 1980.
The Doppelgänger and the indemnification of the self.

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Fig. 19.
Wanderer above the Sea of Fog: Caspar David Friedrich c1817.
Evocation of the sublime.

Fig. 20.
A Shipwreck in Stormy Seas: Claude-Joseph Vernet 1773.
Evocation of the sublime.

It is important to note Freud's analytical method. In the first part of his essay, he approaches the problem as an historical linguist tracing the semantic and etymological evidence. In the second part of the essay, he sets out to locate the affective nucleus; that is, the sense impressions, experiences and situations that constitute the *Unheimliche* by approaching the material from the perspective of a literary theorist. Freud's essay distinguishes what the affective nucleus of the uncanny is, establishing the reciprocal relationship between the object of the uncanny (that which has the potential to elicit feelings of distress or repulsion) and the way it is emotionally activated in the subject.²⁸³

Central to Freud's literary analysis is a short story by the German writer E.T.A. Hoffmann entitled *Der Sandmann* that in English translates to The Sand-Man. Hoffmann writes in the Romantic tradition, more specifically a sub-genre of the Romantic called Dark Romanticism. Dark Romanticism contains within it another literary sub-category, which in German is called Schauerromantik (Gothic Romance in English). Generally characterised as a frightful Romanticism, parallels can be drawn with the Gothic tradition, as they are both even darker forms of Dark Romanticism. Romanticism to an extent was a reaction against the Age of Reason and the principles of the Enlightenment period. It was preoccupied with the psychological and the expressive. Its core ideas centred around "the primacy of the perceiver in the world he perceives; hence theories of the imagination"²⁸⁴ were central to it. Romanticism also concerned itself with transcendent imagination, with the hallucinatory and the fantastic as modes of perception.²⁸⁵ Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann* is an inversion of an oral folklore tale in which the sandman, a bringer of dreams, sprinkles sand in the eyes of children to invoke both sleep and dreaming. In Hoffmann's story, this benevolent figure is reframed as a malevolent character. He sprinkles sand into the eyes of

²⁸³ Freud, *The Uncanny* 123.

²⁸⁴ Bullock and Trombley 763.

²⁸⁵ Bullock and Trombley 763.

children causing their eyes to fall out. The sinister version of the sandman is named Coppelius in the story. He collects the fallen eyes of children and takes them back to his nest on the moon to feed them to his offspring. In this instance, Freud connects a sense of the uncanny to the character of Coppelius as the robber of eyes. Freud states, “The study of dreams, fantasies and myths has taught us also that anxiety about one’s eyes, the fear of going blind, is quite often a substitute for the fear of castration.”²⁸⁶ For Freud, Coppelius represents the castrating father who repeatedly emasculates Nathaniel, the central figure of the story. With this behaviour, Coppelius inhibits Nathaniel’s capacity for normal heterosexual relationships. What is triggered in Nathaniel is a feeling that Freud outlines in his analysis of *Oedipus Rex*, and calls ‘castration anxiety’. The specific anxiety comes from a fear the child has of retribution by his father in the form of castration. The sinister act is a response to the child’s projected love for his mother. Freud determines in his study that the only way for the child to develop sexually is to repress his castration anxiety. The sense of the uncanny becomes apparent when the repressed anxieties are reinvoked back into the conscious experience. For Freud this occurs within Hoffmann’s story through Nathaniel’s fear of losing his eyes. Freud also synthesises his own psychoanalytic research with the German natural philosopher Friedrich Schelling’s notion of the uncanny, namely that the “term ‘uncanny’ (*unheimlich*) applies to everything that was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come into the open.”²⁸⁷ The concept of repression and return is central to the definition of the uncanny.

Parallel to repression and return, Freud outlines the concepts of the double or *Doppelgänger* and repetition as other ways of conveying a sense of the uncanny. According to Freud, doubling signals the re-invocation of a repressed primary narcissism. He begins his analysis of the double by referencing E.T.A. Hoffmann’s *Die Elexiere des*

²⁸⁶ Freud, *The Uncanny* 139.

²⁸⁷ Freud, *The Uncanny* 132.

Teufels (The Elixirs of the Devil), which he claims is another masterstroke in conveying the sense of the uncanny. Freud does not present evidence from the text, claiming that the complex series of motifs are “too rich and intricate for us to venture upon a summary.”²⁸⁸ He concludes, however, that the essential motif that renders the uncanny in Hoffmann’s text is the *Doppelgänger*. Freud also references an exhaustive study by Otto Rank entitled “Der Doppelgänger”, which “explores the connections that link the double with mirror-images, shadows, guardian spirits, the doctrine of the soul and the fear of death.”²⁸⁹ Freud explains that the double has two different meanings dependent on one’s stage in life. Firstly, for children, the double is a way of indemnifying against their own mortality. Freud explains that according to Rank, “The double was originally an insurance against the extinction of the self. . . . the primordial narcissism that dominates the mental life of both the child and primitive man”.²⁹⁰ In the second instance, Freud explains that once one has moved past the phase of infancy, the double takes on a different meaning, now acting as “the uncanny harbinger of death.”²⁹¹

Otto Rank’s essay “Der Doppelgänger” was first published in 1914. The work comprises five sections, each of which question the concept of the double through various literary, anthropological and psychoanalytic subjects. The double presents a universal human problem, “the relation of the self to the self.”²⁹² Rank, through the double, develops ideas that centre around immortalisation, self-perpetuation and the development of spiritual values within a civilisation. The construct of the soul produces a duality between the person and their shadow.²⁹³ Rank’s anthropological analyses of the shadow focus on embedded

²⁸⁸ Freud, *The Uncanny* 141.

²⁸⁹ Freud, *The Uncanny* 142.

²⁹⁰ Freud, *The Uncanny* 142.

²⁹¹ Freud, *The Uncanny* 142.

²⁹² Harry Tucker, Jr., introduction, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, by Otto Rank, ed. and trans. Harry Tucker, Jr. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1971) xiv.

²⁹³ Tucker, Jr. xvi.

historical superstitions across many cultures that then subsequently developed into the belief of a guardian spirit, which in turn “is closely related to the double-motif.”²⁹⁴ He states, “Primitive peoples have no end of special taboos relating to the shadow. They take care not to let their shadows fall upon certain objects. . . . to let their shadows fall upon a corpse or its grave,” and it was for this reason that funerals quite often took place at night.²⁹⁵ Within the domain of psychoanalysis, Rank ventures on a detailed exploration of the double and its relationship to narcissism. The taboos, precautions and evasions that the “primitive man uses with regard to his shadow” illustrate a narcissistic esteem for the ego and highlight a tremendous fear of it being threatened.²⁹⁶ The double therefore, according to Rank, is an ever complex motif that paradoxically signifies both pathological self-love and pathological fear of one’s self, forever appearing as a messenger of death.²⁹⁷

Repetition was another way that Freud believed a sense of the uncanny could become apparent, albeit given a particular set of conditions and circumstances. To begin with, he likens this to a feeling of “helplessness we experience in certain dream-states.”²⁹⁸ Freud uses various analogies, in particular of being lost in the woods “perhaps after being overtaken by fog, and, despite all one’s efforts to find a marked or familiar path, one comes back again and again to the same spot”.²⁹⁹ Next, he writes about the experience of ‘unintended repetition’:

There is certainly nothing remarkable, for instance, about depositing a garment in a cloakroom and being given a ticket with a certain number on it – say 62 – or about finding that the cabin one has been allocated bears this number. But the impression

²⁹⁴ Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, ed. and trans. Harry Tucker, Jr. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1971) 50.

²⁹⁵ Rank 52.

²⁹⁶ Rank 83.

²⁹⁷ Rank 85-86.

²⁹⁸ Freud, *The Uncanny* 144.

²⁹⁹ Freud, *The Uncanny* 144.

changes if these two events, of no consequence in themselves, come close together, so that one encounters the number 62 several times in one day, and if one then observes that everything involving a number – addresses, hotel rooms, railway carriages, etc. – invariably has the same one, at least as part of the whole. We find this ‘uncanny’, and anyone who is not steeled against the lure of superstition will be inclined to accord a secret significance to the persistent recurrence of this one number – to see it, for instance, as a pointer to his allotted life-span.³⁰⁰

Finally, he outlines how a certain “*compulsion to repeat*” in the unconscious mind can signal a feeling of the uncanny; “it is still clearly manifest in the impulses of small children and dominates part of the course taken by the psychoanalysis of victims of neurosis.”³⁰¹

Nicholas Royle, an author who produced an exhaustive book-length study on the uncanny entitled *The Uncanny*, reaffirms its connection to repetition:

It would appear to be indissociably bound up with a sense of repetition or ‘coming back’ – the return of the repressed, the constant or eternal recurrence of the same thing, a compulsion to repeat. At some level the feeling of the uncanny may be bound up with the most extreme nostalgia or ‘homesickness’, in other words a compulsion to return to an inorganic state, a desire (perhaps unconscious) to die, a death drive.³⁰²

The *Unheimliche* or uncanny, therefore, is an ever complex construct that can manifest in many different ways. At its most basic, it is experienced as a deeply disturbing “commingling of the familiar and unfamiliar.”³⁰³

3.2 Das Unheimliche and Architecture

If the uncanny in theory and literature signals an unsettling sense of anxiety and fear, in the urban and architectural realms it manifests as a sense of “estrangement, alienation, exile,

³⁰⁰ Freud, *The Uncanny* 144-145.

³⁰¹ Freud, *The Uncanny* 145.

³⁰² Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003) 2.

³⁰³ Royle 1.

and homelessness.”³⁰⁴ The architectural historian Anthony Vidler has written the most extensive analysis of the uncanny in architectural terms. He explores various aspects of a spatial and architectural uncanny in the text *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*.³⁰⁵ Vidler traces the term’s evolution from the beginning of the 19th century to the present. At the outset he restates the significance of an etymological connection between the uncanny or *Unheimliche* and the domestic sphere, coupling the *Unheimliche* to considerations of space, urbanity and architecture. Vidler traces various interpretations of the uncanny by different cultural theorists as a means of establishing a general sense of its qualities in the context of modern urbanity. Two of the major recurring motifs of his study are that of alienation and estrangement. He notes that for Benjamin Constant the sense of estrangement was evident in the dislocation of individuals from their birthplace, while for Karl Marx the term was grounded in class struggle and alienation.³⁰⁶

Freud clearly demonstrated that the *Unheimliche* was “the transformation of something that once seemed homely into something decidedly not so, from the *heimlich*, that is, into the *unheimlich*.”³⁰⁷ In the broader context of the 19th and 20th centuries this transformation mirrors the physical displacement of people due to the effects of political conflict, industrialisation, economic change, centralisation of the State, distribution of wealth and the concentration of political and cultural power. As Vidler unpacks Freud, he notes that:

“unhomeliness” was more than a simple sense of not belonging; it was the fundamental propensity of the familiar to turn on its owners, suddenly to become defamiliarized, derealized, as if in a dream. . . . Themes of anxiety and dread, provoked by a real or imagined sense of “unhomeliness,” seemed particularly appropriate to a moment when, as Freud noted in 1915, the entire “homeland” of

³⁰⁴ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* ix.

³⁰⁵ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*.

³⁰⁶ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 4.

³⁰⁷ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 6.

Europe, cradle and apparently secure house of western civilization, was in the process of barbaric regression; when the territorial security that had fostered the notion of a unified culture was broken, bringing a powerful disillusionment with the universal “museum” of the European “fatherland.” The site of the uncanny was now no longer confined to the house or the city, but more properly extended to the no man’s land between the trenches, or the fields of ruins left after bombardment.³⁰⁸

The deep disillusionment triggered by World War I continued in Europe, Germany and especially Berlin throughout the rest of the 20th century. The World Wars and Cold War instilled deeper levels of alienation and estrangement in both the corporeal and cerebral dimensions of the people. Homelessness was another prominent issue that surfaced as a result of the uncanny in the 20th century. Vidler points to Georg Lukács who saw homelessness as the predominant modern condition following the war. Vidler states that a “nostalgia for the true, natal home, thus emerges in the face of the massive uprooting of war and ensuing Depression as the mental and psychological corollary to homelessness.”³⁰⁹ The uncanny in this regard has brought into question the very notion of domesticity and its relationship to the city. It is synonymous therefore with our contemporary urban condition. Georg Simmel, in his essay of 1903, “The Metropolis and Mental Life”,³¹⁰ analyses the human condition in the context of the metropolis. The essay establishes the deepest problem of modern life being the “attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society, against the weight of the historical heritage and the external culture and life.”³¹¹ The metropolitan individual therefore deals with the problem by creating a “protective organ for itself against

³⁰⁸ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 7.

³⁰⁹ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 7.

³¹⁰ Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” *The People, Place, and Space Reader*, ed. Jen Jack Gieseking and William Mangold (New York: Routledge, 2014) 223.

³¹¹ Simmel 223.

the profound disruption”³¹² of the external *milieu*. According to Simmel this is done cerebrally; the mind is fortified against the external environment through rationality: “the metropolitan type reacts primarily in a rational manner, thus creating a mental predominance through the intensification of consciousness”.³¹³ The *modus operandi* of the metropolitan type takes on new meaning in the context of underground Techno culture. The underground Techno nightclub can be reframed as the physical manifestation of the protective organ to which Simmel refers.

Urbanity and the urban space of the city is of particular relevance when discussing the spatial dimensions of the uncanny. Lucy Huskinson, editor of *The Urban Uncanny: A Collection of Interdisciplinary Studies*, notes that the urban uncanny produces mixed or contrasting feelings of “awe and unease in relation to the fantasy of what might be hidden within the shadows of the city, and, moreover, what could emerge and suddenly be revealed from out of them.”³¹⁴ The urban uncanny presents when there is a “rupture in the fabric”³¹⁵ of the city that produces an “unsettling mismatch between the city and [the] citizen”.³¹⁶ Moreover, the urban uncanny is generally ascribed to particular locations and spaces such as cemeteries, catacombs, underground metro systems and even urban sewers; places that are subterranean, shadowy, out of sight and barely frequented.³¹⁷ Such places are not only significant because of their latent potential to elicit the uncanny through their strangeness, but are also thought to “invite acts of moral transgression, of crime and corruption, and other insalubrious activities. They suggest, too, fantasies of death and the limits of human mortality, with possibilities of ‘going underground’ and into the ‘beyond’;

³¹² Simmel 223.

³¹³ Simmel 223.

³¹⁴ Huskinson 9.

³¹⁵ Huskinson 9.

³¹⁶ Huskinson 8.

³¹⁷ Huskinson 8.

to wholly new realms of experience”.³¹⁸ Although the act of transgressing the physical boundaries and thresholds of such places can be deeply unsettling, they can also lead to “creative insights, to new social orders and identities” and to “stabilise and reinvigorate relations between city and citizen.”³¹⁹ This is of particular relevance, both in the context of this research and in relation to the principal case studies of the thesis.

In the realm of architecture, it is important to note that there is no single or specific spatial form or sequence that unequivocally elicits the uncanny. That is to say, in the words of Anthony Vidler, “there is no such thing as an uncanny architecture, but simply architecture that, from time to time and for different purposes, is invested with uncanny qualities.”³²⁰ As will become increasingly evident in relation to the principal case studies of the thesis, for the “buildings or spaces [that] are interpreted through this lens, it is not because they themselves possess uncanny properties, but rather because they act, historically or culturally, as representations of estrangement.”³²¹ What becomes readily apparent in Vidler’s surveying of the uncanny is its unequivocal connection with architecture:

As a concept, then, the uncanny has, not unnaturally, found its metaphorical home in architecture: first in the house, haunted or not, that pretends to afford the utmost security while opening itself to the secret intrusion of terror, and then in the city, where what was once walled and intimate, the confirmation of community . . . has been rendered strange by the spatial incursions of modernity.³²²

Urbanity, architecture and the sequencing of space are therefore intrinsic parts of the aesthetic category.

³¹⁸ Huskinson 8.

³¹⁹ Huskinson 9.

³²⁰ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 12.

³²¹ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 11-12.

³²² Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 11.

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Fig. 21. Plainmont, la maison visionnée. Victor Hugo, 1866.

Moving beyond the more generalised statements and evidence of the uncanny's relationship to architecture, Vidler analyses various texts as a means of identifying the more nuanced architectural elements that contribute to a sense of the uncanny. He initially looks at the haunted house as a recurring leitmotif within Gothic novels, fairy tales, horror stories and, more broadly, Romanticism.³²³ *The Fall of the House of Usher* by Edgar Allen Poe is a Gothic novel with themes of madness, isolation, metaphysical identities and death that Vidler unpacks in relationship to the uncanny. Vidler notes in his analysis of the text that the house in the novel, according to Poe, "exhibited nothing untoward in its outer appearance"³²⁴ that would trigger this sense of the haunted. However, upon further examination, he states,

But in Poe's paradigmatic haunted house, all the tell-tale signs of haunting were present, systematically culled from his romantic predecessors. The site was desolate; the walls were blank and almost literally "faceless," its windows "eye-like" but without life—"vacant." It was, besides, a repository of centuries of memory and tradition, embodied in its walls and objects; the walls were marked by the "discoloration of ages" and crumbling stones; the furnishings were dark, the rooms vaulted and gloomy; . . .

The house was then a crypt, predestined to be buried in its turn, an event prefigured in the "barely perceptible fissure" that ran vertically from roof to foundations.³²⁵

The condition of hauntedness, or architecture that has a haunting quality, is important to the aesthetic category of the uncanny and also to a reading of the principal case studies in the thesis. The haunted house is also correlated to the double; it is the uncanny copy of an otherwise cosy domestic image. It violates the familiar, welcoming and natural with the

³²³ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 17.

³²⁴ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 17.

³²⁵ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 18.

unwelcomed intruder of a presumably supernatural origin.³²⁶

Vidler also references Victor Hugo, a French Romantic writer and politician, for another perspective on the conditions surrounding haunted houses. Hugo was a political exile living on the island of Guernsey off the coast of Normandy. Vidler states,

Abandoned houses, real or imaginary, had a similar effect on the viewer. Those described by Victor Hugo on the islands of Jersey and Guernsey, veritable figures of his own unhomely exile, shared characteristics with the House of Usher, with the difference that they were “haunted” not by some imaginary family spirit but by virtue of the superstitions of the islanders.³²⁷

Highlighted here is the connection between the uncanny and the spirit world. What dominates are not the architectonic elements, but rather the emptiness of the abandoned houses on the island and the superstitions that have built up in relation to them. One of the houses, which is used as a central motif in Victor Hugo’s *Les Travailleurs de la mer*, is both described and analysed by Vidler: “the house, as Hugo develops the narrative, becomes paradoxically secure for those unaffected by the haunting; it is the home of smugglers and renegades, exiles and fugitives. Only those on the margin would feel at home in so disquieting an abode.”³²⁸ Established in the passage are the types of people that are unaffected by the haunting. Not everyone is susceptible to uncanny spaces. This is an important consideration and a theme that is developed further in the case-study chapters with respect to the countercultural makeup of the principal case studies.

Vidler reinforces the point with respect to the connection between the spirit world and the uncanny. Writing about another work by E.T.A. Hoffmann entitled *Der Unheimliche Gast*,

³²⁶ Huskinson 4.

³²⁷ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 19.

³²⁸ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 20.

he states,

Thus the setting of Hoffmann's "Uncanny Guest" ("Der unheimliche Gast"), where "the four ingredients, autumn, a stormy wind, a good fire, and a jorum of punch" engendered a strange sense of the awesome, provoked a fear of the supernatural, that was then deliciously prolonged by stories that reminded the listeners of the spirit world surrounding them.³²⁹

The capacity for empty and neglected buildings to be filled in with the individual's imagination is critical to note here. Perception and imagination are fundamental components of Romanticism and the Gothic. They are also powerful agents that can facilitate a "metamorphosis"; that is, a transformation in the nature of things and people.³³⁰ As the architectural case studies of the research were abandoned, distant structures that were restored and readapted, they operate in a similar way to the houses described above. They were imprinted with the collective traumatic memories of the city, as distant and haunted structures. However, they subsequently went through their own type of metamorphosis, due in part to the power of the 'imagination', to realise their unrealised potential. This mechanism is an often highlighted and celebrated aspect of Gaston Bachelard's iconic work *The Poetics of Space*, another canonical text that deals with the ephemeral and salient power of imagination and the oblique insights of the unconscious; "Imagination is a laboratory of the possible inviting us—through reverie and poetry—to give a future to the past."³³¹ There is thus an inherent duality in the mechanism of imagination. Parallel to the power of the imagination sits the "poetic imagination" or "poetic image" as established by Bachelard.³³² A poetic image is rendered by the depths of the imagination but is not a simple direct representation, image or perception of reality; rather, it "emerges

³²⁹ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 36-37.

³³⁰ Richard Kearney, introduction, *The Poetics of Space*, by Gaston Bachelard, trans. Maria Jolas (New York: Penguin Books, 2014) xvii.

³³¹ Kearney xx-xxi.

³³² Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (New York: Penguin Books, 2014) 1.

into the consciousness as a direct product of the heart, soul and being of a man, apprehended in his actuality.”³³³ The poetic image is not bound by logic or causality, but rather is a dynamic and transformative event, operating on the individual consciousness.³³⁴ It differs from the psychoanalytic perspective with respect to the provenance of an image in the conscious mind; it is not the subject of an “inner thrust” nor an “echo of the past”.³³⁵ Bachelard states: “On the contrary: through the brilliance of an image, the distant past resounds with echoes, and it is hard to know at what depth these echoes will reverberate and die away.”³³⁶ The Tresor and Berghain can again be reframed, this time as poetic images that resound the past with echoes. Moreover, the *alternate provenance* and effect of the poetic image that Bachelard charts is paradoxically and inherently uncanny even if it does not operate on Freud’s economy of repression and return. Its inverted nature triggers an ever-growing series of disjunctions in the theoretical terrain of the uncanny.

Further connection to an architectural uncanny is made by Vidler as he unpacks E.T.A. Hoffmann’s story entitled *Councillor Krespel*. The story demonstrates how disjunction can trigger a sense of the uncanny. The Councillor (and key protagonist) builds a house “according to his own somewhat peculiar specifications.”³³⁷ He does not engage an architect or employ any formal design schemes but rather, through instinct, instructs the masons to build according to his own methodology. What ensues is a spontaneous set of decisions in terms of placement of rooms, windows and doors that renders an unusual relationship between the outside appearance and the interior organisation. Vidler notes, “Krespel’s house, in its peculiar relationships between exterior and interior, takes its place among many uncanny houses throughout the nineteenth century. Through them, inside and

³³³ Bachelard 3.

³³⁴ Bachelard 2-3.

³³⁵ Bachelard 2.

³³⁶ Bachelard 2.

³³⁷ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 29.

outside, like *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, became the privileged topoi of the uncanny.”³³⁸ The disjunction between the exterior and interior is another way that the uncanny operates in architectural terms. The uncanny therefore is now visible in the formal organisation of space. As Vidler traces the disjunction of interior and exterior, so too does Bachelard in a chapter entitled “The Dialectics of Outside and Inside”.³³⁹ His dialectical approach to the subject sets up a thesis and antithesis, developing an argument that resolves in a synthesis on the subject. According to Bachelard, interior and exterior typically operated as a simple dialectic of division which he finds highly problematic.³⁴⁰ Interior and exterior are reframed in the text as mutually dependant, acting upon one another in a relationship that negates either being totally independent: “the dialectics of inside and outside multiply with countless diversified nuances.”³⁴¹ Bachelard, in his argumentation against the horrible ‘inside–outside’ paradigm, argues again for the ephemeral imagination, as the means by which a more nuanced sense of the relationship between interiority and exteriority can be imagined. He calls for *exaggeration* in the poetic image, a piece of “experimental folly, like a virtual grain of hashish without which it is impossible to enter into the reign of the imagination.”³⁴² The exaggerated and ephemeral poetic image, as it relates to interior and exterior, sets up an infinite series of disjunctions, incongruencies, indeterminacies and potentialities that aggravate “the line of demarcation”³⁴³ between the two and are therefore both indicative and exploitable in the application of an architectural uncanny. The lens that is formed in the dialectic of outside and inside is of consequence to the thesis and to the principal case studies.

Vidler develops further another instance of the uncanny, one that he calls a spatial uncanny,

³³⁸ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 36.

³³⁹ Bachelard 227.

³⁴⁰ Bachelard 227-228.

³⁴¹ Bachelard 231.

³⁴² Bachelard 234.

³⁴³ Bachelard 235.

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Fig. 22.
Carceri D'Invenzione di G. Battista Piranesi. c1770.
Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

Fig. 23.
The Arch with a Shell Ornament. c1770.
Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

“no longer entirely dependent on the temporal dislocations of suppression and return, or the invisible slippages between a sense of the homely and the unhomely, but displayed in the abyssal repetitions of the imaginary void.”³⁴⁴ To explain the new concept he refers to Giovanni Battista Piranesi’s *Carceri d’invenzione* or *Imaginary Prisons* of 1745, a series of etchings depicting enormous subterranean vaulted rooms with geometrically impossible intersecting stairs and machinery. The etchings use the formal technique of chiaroscuro for dark and light dramatic effect. When analysing the works, Vidler employs Thomas De Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* to ground the concept of a spatial uncanny, stating, “The vertical labyrinth traced by De Quincey images the artist, Piranesi, caught in a vertigo *en abîme* of his own making, forever climbing the unfinished stairs in the labyrinth of carceral spaces.”³⁴⁵ There are two important ideas to note here. Firstly, Piranesi’s carceral etchings are indicative of a perspectival and spatial indeterminacy. Indeterminacy and disjunction are components of an architectural uncanny, as they render uncertainty, a concept established at the outset by Jentsch. Secondly, Vidler acutely locates the spatial uncanny within the etchings, in the formal technique of a *mise en abîme*. This technique is expertly exemplified in the Spanish master Diego Velázquez’s *Las Meninas*, a painting that is set in the Royal Alcazar in Madrid, where the young infanta Margaret Theresa is surrounded by an entourage of chaperones and caretakers. Velázquez inserts himself into the scene, standing in the foreground of the image adjacent to Margaret Theresa and the entourage, but behind an easel on which he is painting. The torsos of the King and Queen of Spain, standing outside the space of the painting, are reflected in the mirror that hangs on the wall at the back of the scene. In this way, they are present in the room even though they physically stand outside its space. Evidently, they are placed outside the space of the picture in a position similar to the viewer. The painting therefore demonstrates the idea of *mise en abîme* or infinitely recurring space that is a fundamental

³⁴⁴ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 37.

³⁴⁵ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 37.

concept evident in Piranesi's etchings.

Atmospheric conditions within space can also create an uncanny effect. In the underground Techno club, for instance, several factors create atmosphere: the music, the light and dark, and the space. It is the invisible repetitive beat of Techno music that animates the interior space. The aesthetic of Techno as a mechanical, abstract and repetitive music creates an atmosphere with continual repetition, and by consequence renders that atmosphere uncanny. In Freud's work *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*,³⁴⁶ he theorises the death drive. This is a drive towards death and destruction, exemplified in behaviours such as aggression, self-destruction and most importantly the compulsion towards repetition.³⁴⁷ In Vidler's surveying of Freud, he establishes a connection between repetition and the death drive which in the context of this research can be extended to Techno music and its spaces. "This endless drive to repeat is then uncanny, both for its association with the death drive and by virtue of the 'doubling' inherent in the incessant movement without movement."³⁴⁸ Moreover, incessant movement without advance has a destabilising, arresting and restrictive feeling. It is another way that an unsettling sense of the uncanny can manifest from Techno music.

Another concept of relevance to an uncanny atmosphere is that of dissolution. Smoke was typically an instrument of the uncanny employed in Romantic works to render an environment mysterious and eerie. Vidler notes that "From Hoffmann to Rimbaud, in short stories and in many *veillées*, smoke is thus an agent of dissolution by which the fabric of the house is turned into the depth of the dream; in the same way, as an instrument of the

³⁴⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings*, trans. John Reddick (London: Penguin Books, 2003) 83-99.

³⁴⁷ Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings* 56-62.

³⁴⁸ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 38.

sublime, smoke has always made obscure what otherwise would have seemed too clear.”³⁴⁹ Obscuring something that is clear, into something decidedly not so, is fundamental to the uncanny and the sublime. Vidler connects the theme of smoke in the Romantic tradition to Gottfried Semper’s tectonic theory. For Semper the hearth was the centre of the home – the fireplace created warmth and produced smoke. The hearth provided a cosy setting for gothic stories to unfold and was critical to an uncanny atmosphere.

The uncanny was, in the first incarnation, a sensation best experienced in the privacy of the interior. Ernst Bloch was not the first to remark that “the setting in which detective stories are enjoyed the most is just too cozy. In a comfortable chair, under the nocturnal floor lamp with tea, rum, and tobacco, personally secure and peacefully immersed in dangerous things, which are shallow.” The vicarious taste for the uncanny has been a constant in modern culture.³⁵⁰

In the context of the underground Techno club, the lack of visibility due to darkness and smoke is another way that an uncanny atmosphere is created. The hearth and its abstracted form in the contemporary Techno club are detailed further in subsequent chapters.

Darkness or ‘dark space’ is the most important atmospheric and architectural condition of the uncanny. Nicholas Royle claims that “Freud’s ‘The Uncanny’ is [fundamentally] an essay in the night, and investigation in the dark, into darkness.”³⁵¹ He outlines how darkness and the dark are constantly affecting any reading and interpretation of Freud’s essay. Darkness therefore is intrinsically linked to the *Unheimliche* and the *Unheimliche* is intrinsically linked to darkness. The notion of repression and return within the uncanny is simply that which was meant to remain hidden, coming to light, or that which is revealed to the eye; hence the uncanny is “what

³⁴⁹ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 41.

³⁵⁰ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 4.

³⁵¹ Royle 108.

comes out of the darkness.”³⁵² In Freud’s essay there are myriad direct and indirect references to darkness. Darkness is not only the subject of Freud’s essay but is also apparent in its structure. “Throughout the essay Freud keeps coming back to the dark, or the dark keeps coming back to him. Repeatedly he evokes the uncanniness of moving about in the dark, without necessarily remarking that this is what he is doing.”³⁵³ Darkness in the essay operates like the akashic field, that is, as the aether or space of the essay from which everything emerges.

Dark space, and the way it functions aesthetically, requires an understanding of two things: its antithetical model of light space, and the relationship between death, the body and architecture. Vidler underscores the importance of dark space after Foucault, who says in “The Eye of Power”, “A whole history remains to be written of *spaces* – which would at the same time be the history of *powers* (both these terms in the plural) – from the great strategies of geo-politics to the little tactics of the habitat, institutional architecture from the classroom to the design of hospitals, passing via economic and political installations.”³⁵⁴ Vidler takes up the mandate of Foucault, stating,

I will, that is, analyze the visual construction of images and objects that refer to this dark side of space in the modern period, as a way of approaching a more complex and (I hope) more politically subtle interpretation of subject-space relations than that offered by the conventional wisdom of modern urbanism (flood dark space with light) or architecture (open up all space to vision and occupation).³⁵⁵

It was thought that light space, championed by way of a material and spatial transparency, “would eradicate the domain of myth, suspicion, tyranny, and above all the irrational.”³⁵⁶ Vidler notes,

³⁵² Royle 108.

³⁵³ Royle 108.

³⁵⁴ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham and Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980) 149.

³⁵⁵ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 168.

³⁵⁶ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 168.

Historians have preferred to study this myth of “power through transparency,” especially in its evident complicity with the technologies of the modern movement and their “utopian” applications to architecture and urbanism.

Yet such a spatial paradigm was, as Foucault pointed out, constructed out of an initial fear, the fear of Enlightenment in the face of “darkened spaces, of the pall of gloom which prevents the full visibility of things, men and truths.” It was this very fear of the dark that led, in the late eighteenth century, to the fascination with those same shadowy areas—the “fantasy-world of stone walls, darkness, hideouts and dungeons” —the precise “negative of the transparency and visibility which it is aimed to establish.” The moment that saw the creation of the first “considered politics of spaces” based on scientific concepts of light and infinity also saw, and within the same epistemology, the invention of a spatial phenomenology of darkness.³⁵⁷

This spatial phenomenology of darkness is critical to a reading of the principal case studies that are firmly situated within the paradigm of dark space.

The concept of death in architecture is best understood in two ways: by examining how the body relates to architecture and by looking at the architectural strategies that anthropomorphise the body. The relationship between the body and architecture during the classical period was understood as either a “mathematical inscription or pictorial emulation.”³⁵⁸ Architects used the proportions of the body as the basis for building proportions, or they literally sculpted bodies onto the façades and other building components. Buildings derived their

authority, proportional and compositional, from this body, and, in a complementary way, the building then acted to confirm and establish the body—social and individual—in the world. The principles of Vitruvius traced the origins of proportion to the Greek canons of bodily mathematics, to be incorporated by the architect-sculptor in the column and in the

³⁵⁷ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 168-169.

³⁵⁸ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 69.

relations of the different parts of the order to the whole, and thence to the building.³⁵⁹

Renaissance theorists also found value in this concept. Not only was there a metaphorical attachment of the body to classical architecture, but it was also traceable in the formal dimensions of the building; “from the column to the plan and façade, buildings were bodies, temples the most perfect of all, as were cities, the seat of the body social and politic.”³⁶⁰ During the 18th century, however, the body’s relationship to architecture took on a new form. This was principally due to the aesthetics of the sublime.

Here, the building no longer simply represented a part or whole of the body but was rather seen as objectifying the various *states* of the body, physical and mental. Edmund Burke, followed by Kant and the romantics, described buildings not so much in terms of their fixed attributes of beauty but rather in their capacities to evoke emotions of terror and fear.³⁶¹

The new paradigm was grounded in an “aesthetic based on experience rather than artifice, . . . If any bodily attributes remained in the building, they were the result of projection, rather than of any innate qualities.”³⁶² In other words experience was now a key component of aesthetic theory in the relationship between architecture and the body, and this paradigm shift mirrored “the states, rather than the aspect, of the body”.³⁶³ Or, as the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin illustrated, perception became critical to architectural design, a process that he termed the “process of unconscious endowment of animation”.³⁶⁴ This was a projection of the mind (feeling, vitality and subjectivity) into the forms of art and architecture, into the architectural object. Architecture “expresses the ‘Lebensgefühl’ [attitude to life] of an epoch.”³⁶⁵ That is to say, it expresses the aspirations of people.

³⁵⁹ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 71.

³⁶⁰ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 71.

³⁶¹ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 71-72.

³⁶² Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 72.

³⁶³ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 72.

³⁶⁴ Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance and Baroque*, trans. Kathrin Simon (New York: Cornell University Press, 1967) 78.

³⁶⁵ Wölfflin 78.

In the context of modern architecture, an architecture based on technology, its relationship to the body changes. Health and hygiene in body and mind take over as the underlying universal abstraction and are reflected in the overtly sanitised aesthetic within the modern canon.

However, Futurists interpreted this relationship in a different way. For them, it was the placement of the body in space; the body's positioning was preferred through their dynamic works.

Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* painting is an exemplar here. Conversely, for the cubists, there was a dismembering of the body in order to find new expressive models. The fragmentation of the body would set the foundation for the next paradigm in body-to-architecture relations: "a third and final extension of the body outside itself: a kind of animism, which, through an even more generalized work of projection, refuses any one-to-one ascription of body and building."³⁶⁶ The body was now "an object of nostalgia [rather] than a model of harmony, manifested in art as a series of irreconcilable fragments".³⁶⁷ The body in this newly fragmented form was thus "Deprived of its previous status by the reflection of the whole, this morselated body is repressed to the unconscious, where it shows up regularly in dreams or 'when the movement of psychoanalysis touches a certain level of the aggressive disintegration of the individual.'"³⁶⁸ The morselated body is therefore dismembered. Dismemberment for Freud sits in close proximity to the castration complex, a source of uncanny anxiety. Over time in architecture, there is a "progressive distancing of the body from the building, a gradual extension of the anthropomorphic analogy into wider and wider domains leading insensibly but inexorably to the final 'loss' of the body as an authoritative foundation for architecture."³⁶⁹ The relationship of the body to architecture takes on new meaning in the context of the underground Techno nightclub.

³⁶⁶ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 75.

³⁶⁷ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 77.

³⁶⁸ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 77.

³⁶⁹ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 70.

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Fig. 24. Monument funéraire caractérisant le genre de l'architecture des ombres. Étienne-Louis Boullée. 1781-1793.

With the relationship of the body to architecture now traced, a phenomenology of darkness and the concept of death in architecture are now more readily understood. Vidler outlines a new relationship between architecture and the body within the newly established paradigm of dark space. For this, he establishes a precedent in Étienne-Louis Boullée's *Temple of Death*. Vidler describes the building as "a temple front etched, so to speak, in shadow form on a flat plane of light-absorbent material—a virtual architecture of negativity."³⁷⁰ He continues:

This shadow, or "effigy" as Boullée called it, prefiguring the disappearance of the body into darkness, was both a haunting "double" for Boullée himself and a model for imitation in architecture. On one level, Boullée was following the traditional idea of architecture "imitating" the perfection of the human body in massing and proportions, inverting the theory in order to make an architecture based on the "death form" of the body, shadowed on the ground. But beyond this Boullée created a veritable "simulacrum" of the buried body in architecture: the building, already half sunken, compressed in its proportions as if by a great weight from above, imitated not a standing figure (as classical Vitruvian theory would have demanded) but a form that was already recumbent, itself depicted on the ground as a negative space. This prone figure was then raised up, so to speak, in order to mark the face of Boullée's temple, now become an image of a specter: a monument to death that represented an ambiguous moment, somewhere between life and death, or, rather, a shadow of the living dead. In this way, Boullée prefigured the nineteenth-century preoccupation with the double as the harbinger of death, or as the shadow of the unburied dead.³⁷¹

Boullée's temple is sunken into the ground; there is no ornamentation, only punched windows of negative space. The rendering of the image is like a photographic negative; the architecture is in shadow, nullified by material that subsumes light. Shadow, negative space and the dissolution of the body into dark space are all aspects of death in architecture, and render an architectural

³⁷⁰ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 170.

³⁷¹ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 170-171.

uncanny. The complete abstraction and dissolution of the body into the dark space of the underground Techno nightclub is the next iteration of body-to-architecture relations.

3.3 Das Unheimliche and Techno

Techno music is connected to the *Unheimliche* or uncanny through the concepts of estrangement and alienation, indeterminacy and repetition, suppression and return, the double, and the automaton. Tracing back to the Techno movement in Detroit, the themes of estrangement and social alienation emerge in the history and mythology of the music which are deeply embedded in Afrofuturism.³⁷² These leitmotifs are connected to the aesthetic category of the uncanny, which not only underpins the architectural components within the thesis but also the musicological ones. To reiterate, Afrofuturism focuses on challenges surrounding the African diaspora through the lenses of science fiction and technology. The ideological underpinning of Techno and its artistic aesthetic position it in the periphery of the social, political and artistic landscape. Benjamin Constant and Karl Marx both identified estrangement and class alienation as conditions that alienated the individual.³⁷³ The powerful disillusionment of that period is analogous to the disillusionment experienced in Detroit by a generation of young Black people during a period of severe post-industrial decay and economic downturn. The dystopic backdrop of Detroit's physical decay and the void left by its post-industrial demise created a haunting, eerie and destabilising set of urban conditions that became the context in which Techno was created. Likewise, tracing further back to the Disco and House movements in New York and Chicago, social alienation was experienced by the marginalised gay, Black and Latino minority groups of the period. Social alienation in its various manifestations is a recurring condition in the history of electronic music.

³⁷² *The Last Angel of History*, dir. John Akomfrah.

³⁷³ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 4.

Retreat from estrangement and alienation is a recurring theme in the musicological history of the thesis. Likewise, it is a factor within the aesthetic category of the uncanny. The work of Piranesi was a focal point for many Romantic writers. Vidler details another reading of the uncanny through the work of Charles Nodier, a French Romantic writer who wrote a short story entitled “Piranèse”. He introduces the character of Count G.,

a rich bachelor, who, having determined to retire from the world, planned the restoration of the interior of his chateau according to the “fantastic plan of a Piranesian palace.” The literal construction of such a space, a “labyrinth of stones,” hides the solitary retreat of the proprietor, who, . . . defends himself from the world by an almost impassable network of broken connections.³⁷⁴

Nodier highlights a retreat from the world, one of self-marginalisation and alienation. This retreat into an interior labyrinth became another site for the uncanny; “The passage from homely to unhomely, now operating wholly in the mind, reinforced the ambiguity between real world and dream, real world and spirit world, . . . the locus of the uncanny now shifted to the mind, such barriers were difficult to maintain, dissolving readily into the fabric of the dream”.³⁷⁵ Retreat from the world manifests in two main ways within the history of Techno. Firstly, it operates in the mythology and aesthetic of the music. Techno producers retreated into an interior mental world where they imagined new futures through the machine language with which they were experimenting.³⁷⁶ Secondly, there is a literal retreat into the interior space of underground Techno clubs, which operate as havens where the marginalised could find solace in an otherwise unhospitable environment. The interior space of the Techno club operates like the Chateau in Nodier’s story for the Count, or like the carceral spaces of Piranesi’s etchings; as interior space protected by an “impassable network of broken connections: ‘galleries which were only to be circumnavigated with

³⁷⁴ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 40.

³⁷⁵ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 41.

³⁷⁶ *The Last Angel of History*, dir. John Akomfrah.

patience and courage; narrow stairs, alternatively mounting and descending, cut by dark and confusing corridors which led nowhere.”³⁷⁷ The dark interior space of the underground Techno nightclub is an interior space of otherness, one of retreat and escape.

The quality of indeterminacy in Techno is another moment where the uncanny presents itself. Indeterminacy is evident in both the structure and absence of meaning in Techno music. Techno was predestined to be an underground music genre. Its abstract aesthetic and negation of the spoken word preclude any immediate meaning or signification, rendering it a language that is indeterminate.³⁷⁸ Indeterminacy sits in close proximity to intellectual uncertainty, which for Jentsch was definitive of the uncanny. Techno music’s structure operates on a fundamental economy of mechanical repetition. Techno is driven by strong repetitive musical elements that shift slowly over time to create interest, or disappear and reappear repeatedly, in a repetitious act of suppression and return. Likewise, the structure of a Techno track generally operates on a constant and repetitive musical phrasing, and, when organised into a DJ set or mix, forms a seemingly endless series of abstract and overlaid mechanical textures that construct something greater than the sum of their individual parts. Repetition and the compulsion to repeat, as previously stated, are core concepts within the uncanny. The interior space of the underground Techno nightclub is a space of arresting repetition. It is an environment of incessant movement without advance.

Much has been written about the *Doppelgänger* or double in relation to the uncanny. It served originally as a method of indemnification and subsequently as a harbinger of death.³⁷⁹ It also operated as a copy, an uncanny double, as a type of malevolent duplicate

³⁷⁷ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 40.

³⁷⁸ Gaillot 17-18.

³⁷⁹ Freud, *The Uncanny* 142.

threatening to usurp the normality of its original.³⁸⁰ The typical evidence that is usually given in uncanny literature is that of the haunted house. However, the evidence in this instance is extended to Techno music, specifically the genre of Techno that presents as the uncanny double of its original, House music. House, as was detailed earlier, is a type of prototypical electronic music that paved the way for Techno. Techno is greatly advanced and removed from House in the contemporary landscape of electronic music, but House is still distantly familiar to Techno. Techno is the powerful double of House. Through its relentless abstraction, repetition and indeterminacy, it charts forward unapologetically into deeper and darker domains. Within the framework of the uncanny, it is seemingly moving towards death, on its own course of the so-called death drive. The death drive as detailed in Freud's work is a drive back towards an *inanimate state*.³⁸¹ However, a more appropriate and perhaps meaningful framing of the death drive is a return back to an *original state*, "the restoration of a state that was disrupted by the emergence of life."³⁸² Freud details two types of drives: the death drives or 'ego drives' and the life drives or 'sexual drives'.³⁸³ He underscores the dualistic nature of the two drives that are constantly connected, combined and blended with each other. Freud states, "the emergence of life is therefore the cause both of the urge to carry on living and, simultaneously, of the urge for death, while life itself is a battle and constant compromise between these two urges."³⁸⁴ For Freud, there is no definitive synthesis or resolution in the dichotomy of drives; instead they remain dynamically locked in a constant state of interaction, one exercising power and influence over the other. Techno evidently exemplifies and expresses the darker drives of the human psyche. Paradoxically, however, it is these very drives that have the capacity to unlock creativity and break through boundaries, potentially leading to new social orders or

³⁸⁰ Huskinson 4.

³⁸¹ Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings 130.

³⁸² Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings 131.

³⁸³ Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings 83.

³⁸⁴ Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings 131.

identities.

In Freud's essay on the uncanny, the development of the *Unheimliche* integrates concepts that pertain to the automaton, a machine that imitates human behaviour. Freud develops the idea that Jentsch initially puts forward, which is that an uncanny effect can arise when there is an ambiguity as to whether a particular figure is in fact a real person or an automaton.³⁸⁵ Intellectual uncertainty arises in relation to ambiguity over the animate and inanimate. The automaton for Freud is characterised by the figure of Olimpia in E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann*. Olimpia is an automaton, who presents in the story as a beautiful doll who is "beautiful, but strangely silent and motionless".³⁸⁶ Nathaniel falls in love with Olimpia at the expense of his relationship with Clara, his fiancée. In Techno music, machines operate as the conduit for expression and meaning. Mathias Kilian Hanf, author of *Detroit Techno: The Transfer of the Soul through the Machine*,³⁸⁷ explores the notion of the soul in relation to Techno music: "A machine has no soul. Yet its execution of human ideas can be conceived as the transfer of the soul through the machine."³⁸⁸ Hanf argues that for Detroit Techno musicians, the machine and the synthesizer reflected the soul. This proposition poses another interesting dynamic between Techno and the uncanny. Techno in this instance occupies an interstitial space in the theoretical landscape of the uncanny. It creates an ambiguity between the machine, the soul and the conferral of the spirit, which is inherently uncanny. Underground Techno music of the raw and hypnotic variety is often described as 'eerie'. It seeks to generate tones that are dissonant and unsettling via a non-compliance with the twelve-tone equal temperament of an octave, a framework that is the foundation of Western music. Tonal values or tonal elements seek to inhabit the interstitial

³⁸⁵ Freud, *The Uncanny* 135.

³⁸⁶ Freud, *The Uncanny* 137.

³⁸⁷ Mathias Kilian Hanf, *Detroit Techno: Transfer of the Soul through the Machine* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2010).

³⁸⁸ Hanf 3.

space between notes,³⁸⁹ obscuring the human brain from pattern recognition in relation to tonal values. This is often the reason that Techno is described as ‘unsettling’, along with its repetitive structure. The liminal space of the Techno track is felt in its aesthetic values and in its theoretical ambiguity, one which obfuscates the clean line between the machine and the soul. The aesthetic category of the uncanny is woven into the history, social context, mythology, theory, structure and aesthetics of the genre.

3.4 Dark Space, Psychic Space

Dark space has generally been ill-favoured, misunderstood or negated completely over its antithesis, light space. Within the history and theorisation of Modern architecture, light and transparency (either spatial or material) have dominated the discourse. The reasons for this are multifarious; however, the rationale for this preferencing is traceable to the totalising metanarratives that are born out of modernity, or what was the cultural and philosophical movement of the Enlightenment. Modern architecture knowingly adopted many of the ideas that were developed during the new Age of Reason; however, it also unknowingly inherited the burdens and paradoxes of Enlightenment theory. One of the Enlightenment’s principal metanarratives postulated that true knowledge could be attained via reason and logic.³⁹⁰ Enlightenment philosophy advocated for science as the foundation of knowledge. Science arose as the new authority; investigation, deduction, categorisation and reason reigned supreme.³⁹¹ This course of thinking had profound effects on architecture. The Modern Movement adopted these philosophical ideas; rationalism, functionalism and elementarism became the catchwords of Modernism; architecture was the new machine for living. There was a preferencing of transparency, openness and light-drenched urban and architectural

³⁸⁹ The mathematical division of the octave is now practically limitless due to machines and computation. The normal octave is divisible in a myriad of ways, opening the possibility for microtonal scales that lie between standard semitones. Much of Techno’s sonic interest lies in its obscurity and dissonance created by microtones and microscales.

³⁹⁰ Kieron O’Hara, introduction, *The Enlightenment*, by O’Hara (London: Oneworld Publications, 2010) 4.

³⁹¹ O’Hara 4-5.

spaces that were efficient, functional, hygienic and democratic, in service of Modern architecture's ultimate goal, "paradise on earth".³⁹² However, according to architectural theorists, the unintended consequences of Modernism's formal maneuverers ended up instrumentalising a politics of surveillance.³⁹³

Metanarratives, or the method of thinking according to metanarratives more broadly, has undergone much scrutiny in contemporary discourse. Jean-François Lyotard was a leading voice of dissent against the paradigm that was so prevalent within structuralist thinking. He believed that Enlightenment theory failed in its attempt to render a more perfect world through reason.³⁹⁴ Although science and reason led to great discoveries, the Enlightenment has been blamed by its critics for the "bloody disasters of the twentieth century".³⁹⁵ totalitarian regimes, genocide and much of the brutality (both physical and mental) that occurred throughout its decades. Berlin was perhaps the greatest example of how reason and rationality in the form of totalitarian ideology can pervasively slip into a condition where the ends justify the means. In the discourse of architecture, the architectural foundations of the early 20th century were "praised by its advocates and attacked by its critics for its rationalist and functionalist character, grounded on the dictates of the engineer and the technologist."³⁹⁶ Poor utopian housing schemes proved not to be the great agents of change in urbanism; spatial and material transparency did not solve the complex series of spatial problems in the modern world; and there was

objectively, the recognition of a basic failure on the architects' own terms: the new buildings of Le Corbusier and Wright did not finally change the world, nor even

³⁹² Iain Boyd Whyte, preface, *Modernism and the Spirit of the City*, by Whyte (New York: Routledge, 2003). n. pag.

³⁹³ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 168.

³⁹⁴ Jean-François Lyotard, introduction, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, by Lyotard, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, vol. 10 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) xxiii-xxiv.

³⁹⁵ O'Hara vii.

³⁹⁶ Whyte, preface, n. pag.

modify the junk space of late capitalism, while the Mallarmean “zero degree” of Mies’s towers quite unexpectedly began to generate a whole overpopulation of the shoddiest glass boxes in all the major urban centers in the world. This is the sense in which high modernism can be definitively certified as dead and as a thing of the past: its Utopian ambitions were unrealizable and its formal innovations exhausted.³⁹⁷

Michel Foucault wrote extensively about power, subjectivity and contingency; he set out to illustrate how objective truths were not stable, but ultimately just the dominant narrative of a particular period in history. One such narrative that he investigated was that of science as an objective vehicle through which facts and truths could be arrived at. Foucault highlighted the limitations of science, its underlying power structure and unintentional consequences which are “profoundly enmeshed in social structures.”³⁹⁸ Another such narrative is that of power, of which Foucault established two main types. The first type is referred to as sovereign power; a repressive power that is exercised by the State, the justice system or any institution or person that can affect an individual’s life.³⁹⁹ The second type is referred to as biopower, which is a normalising and diffuse form of power, unstable and flowing through everything at the same time. It manifests in cultural norms, persuasions, education, surveillance and basically all forms of interaction in contemporary society.⁴⁰⁰ This invisible, pervasive and intrinsic form of power is heavily connected to science along with its organising principles, objectifications and categorisations. Foucault highlights how this type of power is not repressive but in fact productive, especially for scientific discourse that shapes the dominant narratives in society; hence the connection between science, knowledge and power.⁴⁰¹ Micro tactics of power and

³⁹⁷ Fredric Jameson, foreword, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, by Jean-François Lyotard, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, vol. 10 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) xvii.

³⁹⁸ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977* 109.

³⁹⁹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, vol. 1 (New York, Pantheon Books, 1978) 139-140.

⁴⁰⁰ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction* 140-141.

⁴⁰¹ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977* 119.

dominant metanarratives have shaped Modern architecture and its ideas of space, light and transparency.

The disagreements between the modern and post-modern, outlined above, have prompted architectural historians and theoreticians to refute the arguments offered by critics. Within the discourse, there have been many attempts to reframe Modern architecture as a means of revalidating the underlying foundations and manifestations of Modernism. One such example is the anthology *Modernism and the Spirit of the City*,⁴⁰² which clearly sets out to debunk the attacks modernist architecture sustained, labelling the prevailing criticism as ‘simple’. The concept of *Geist* is foregrounded in the text: “The German word *Geist* defines a human quality that combines both rationality and spirituality. It embraces mind and intellect on the one hand, and metaphysical belief or spiritual faith, on the other.”⁴⁰³ The argumentation is that “myth, history and spirituality, on one hand, and instrumental reason, order, and functionalism, on the other, need not be understood as mutually hostile, but as essential complements to each other.”⁴⁰⁴ The disagreements outlined above are deeply engrained in the discourse of philosophy and architecture. They sit juxtaposed and are unlikely to ever resolve completely.

Establishing the preceding history is imperative to the thesis as it looks to locate itself within the greater discourse of architecture. While Lyotard was a leading voice within post-structuralist theory, he nonetheless cautioned against the naive dispensing of the modern project: “I have read that under the name of postmodernism, architects are getting rid of the Bauhaus project, throwing out the baby of experimentation with the bathwater of

⁴⁰² Whyte, *Modernism and the Spirit of the City*.

⁴⁰³ Whyte 33.

⁴⁰⁴ Whyte, preface, n. pag.

functionalism.”⁴⁰⁵ The genesis of a phenomenology of darkness traces back through the debates and incongruencies outlined above, to the moment of architecture’s preferencing of light and transparency. Vidler’s quest for a more complex and subtle reading of subject–space relations after Foucault is where dark space finds its agency – the phenomenology of darkness is a fissure within architectural discourse that was never fully pried open. It is an alternative lineage that frames an alternative theorisation of spatial conditions.

Jean-François Lyotard argued against grand narratives in favour of what he called *petit récits*,⁴⁰⁶ which are smaller, more modest and localised narratives that embrace the diversity of the human condition instead of a singular view of humanity and culture. Lyotard defined the postmodern as an “incredulity toward metanarratives”.⁴⁰⁷ To qualify, it was not that metanarratives were wholly wrong according to postmodern discourse, but rather that a good degree of scepticism was necessary in relation to them.⁴⁰⁸ In the case of Berlin, counterculture, which coupled itself to Techno and the space of the city, is a *petit récit* that elucidates and emphasises the diversity and plurality of realities and possibilities. What is of particular concern therefore is the agency of dark space, as an alternative aesthetic and spatial model. The establishment of a spatial phenomenology of darkness, by virtue of its existence, brings forward the potential for a whole body of knowledge that pertains to this specific paradigm. This thesis is but one contemporary example within an untapped terrain of knowledge in the arena. There are many histories to be written within the paradigm of dark space that render lessons for architecture as evidenced in the principal case studies that are forthcoming. These localised narratives and the knowledge they produce facilitate the production of contemporary culture and ideas. Tresor and Berghain are an example of the types of countercultural micro-tactics that can pierce the biopower that shapes architecture,

⁴⁰⁵ Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* 71.

⁴⁰⁶ Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* 60.

⁴⁰⁷ Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* xxiv.

⁴⁰⁸ Jameson xi-xii.

thereby rendering architectural discourse and practice more autonomous.

Counterculture and aesthetics are two components of the thesis that have greater implications beyond their position within this research. As established, there has been much criticism of the European Enlightenment with respect to the metanarratives it produced. Metanarratives that are ubiquitous, pervasive and deeply entrenched in what Fredric Jameson calls the “political unconscious”, are charted by him; he highlights “not the disappearance of the great master-narratives, but their passage underground as it were, their continuing but now *unconscious* effectivity”.⁴⁰⁹ Dissensus is an important concept to Lyotard, and to any discussion relating to persistent metanarratives and conformism.⁴¹⁰ Dissensus, or what could be thought of as countercultural dissent or subversion, is therefore what breaks the stronghold of grand narratives.⁴¹¹ Countercultures historically represent a moment in time where the continuity of the metanarrative is broken momentarily. Countercultural movements and histories therefore are windows into unique sets of conditions that potentially carry spatial implications (as was the case with the countercultural movement of Techno in Berlin) and thereby function as significant to architecture. Equally, aesthetic theory, with its sense perception, subjectivity and ambiguity, is fundamental in opening up new paradigms of knowledge that deviate from the stronghold of science and reason within architecture.⁴¹² The nuances of aesthetics provide alternative lenses through which *petit récits* can be unpacked and interrogated. It is for this specific reason that counterculture and aesthetics are employed in the research; they are powerful agents in the quest to unlock new paradigms within the arena of dark space.

⁴⁰⁹ Jameson xii.

⁴¹⁰ Gary Browning, “Dissensus,” *The Lyotard Dictionary*, ed. Stuart Sim (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011) 58.

⁴¹¹ Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* 64.

⁴¹² Browning 57.

The interplay between counterculture, the human psyche and space is a fundamental consideration for the thesis. Psychic space emerged in the work of psychologists and psychoanalysts in the early 20th century. There was a new understanding of space. Space was originally thought of as something objective, physical, real and empirical; it was unchanging over the ages, framed as a “passive container of objects and bodies”.⁴¹³ Subsequently, the notion of space was reconfigured, and was redefined as a “relative, moving, dynamic entity”⁴¹⁴ and “as a product of subjective projection and introjection”.⁴¹⁵ The focus was not limited to the object of perception, but, rather, extended to the perception of the object.⁴¹⁶ In this alternative model, space is understood as the projection and introjection of individual and collective psyches, and is a model of space that figures greatly in the context of the underground Techno movement.

A number of these ideas that relate to the concept of psychic space are documented and developed throughout the thesis, interwoven with the cultural and architectural components of the work and figure prominently in relation to a reading of the principal case studies. The individual and collective psyches of the Techno counterculture in Berlin (with their historically laden traumas and phobias) reconstitute the architecture and space of the city. Freud, towards the end of his life, reached some very conclusive beliefs about space; in a final posthumous note he states, “Space may be the projection of the extension of the psychological apparatus. No other derivation is probable.”⁴¹⁷ Space therefore can be reframed as an extension and projection of the psyche, which is essentially a series of cultural and historical projections. The architectural case studies are spaces that were physically and

⁴¹³ Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001) 3.

⁴¹⁴ Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* 3.

⁴¹⁵ Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* 1.

⁴¹⁶ Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* 44.

⁴¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, *On Touching—Jean-Luc Nancy*, trans. Christine Irizarry (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005) 43-44.

cerebrally reconfigured. As established, it was the counterculture that re-adapted the existing space and architecture of the city to serve a new and collective paradigm of meaning in a post-traumatic urban condition. The covert and fortified space of the underground Techno nightclub is none other than an embodiment and projection of a collective psyche; one that has grafted itself to the estranged urban space and architecture of the city.

Within this alternative model of space, there is a reframing of the idea of abstraction. To illustrate this point, it is necessary to understand how phobias of varying kinds, such as agoraphobia, claustrophobia and monophobia (to name a few), relate to a new understanding of space.⁴¹⁸ Within these so-called morbid fears, there is a relationship to space. It was the effects and significance of space itself in these ailments that was fiercely studied and debated by psychoanalysts at the turn of the last century. Without venturing into the specificities here (refer to Anthony Vidler's tracing of the various psychopathologies of urban space in *Warped Space: Art, Architecture and Anxiety in Modern Culture*), it was the well-known art historian Wilhelm Worringer who reframed the concept of abstraction after his encounter with Georg Simmel. As Vidler notes, "Worringer identified agoraphobia as the underlying cause of the ceaseless drive of art toward abstraction",⁴¹⁹ and, in the words of Worringer himself, "The urge to abstraction is the outcome of a great inner unrest inspired in man by the phenomena of the outside world. . . . We might describe this state as an immense spiritual dread of space."⁴²⁰ It was the geometric abstraction within avant-garde movements and the modern conception of the world that Worringer was referring to. However, this idea has renewed significance in relation to the thesis. There is a drive toward abstraction within the underground Techno nightclub and within Techno as a genre. There is an abstraction of the body in the configuration of dark space and there is a fundamental notion that underpins the

⁴¹⁸ Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* 35.

⁴¹⁹ Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* 44.

⁴²⁰ Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* 44.

spatiotemporal moment preceding the Techno movement in Berlin, one of spiritual dread in relation to the city and its history.

The unique relationship between architecture, counterculture and Techno that the thesis presents is an unparalleled moment that highlights the power of dark space and psychic space for contemporary architecture. The application of the phenomenology of darkness has great potential beyond the countercultural moment of Techno – it is an untapped frontier of knowledge and the return of an uncanny domain of exploration for the discourse of contemporary architecture.

Chapter 4. The Context of Berlin

Chapter 4 develops specific ideas relating to architectural typology and tectonics. Initially there is an overview of trauma and memory, more specifically how they relate to ‘traumascape’ and the city of Berlin. Following this, there is a detailing of Michel Foucault’s heterotopias, the concept is documented and its relationship to the thesis is established. Subsequently, typology and tectonics are developed, with particular consideration given to their relationship with the bunker fortification program of the Third Reich. The architectural properties and symbolic meaning of the bunker typology in Berlin are established, along with their relationship to the principal case studies of the research.

4.1 Trauma and Memory

Trauma and memory are of particular relevance to the subject matter of the thesis. The word *trauma* is of Greek origin meaning ‘wound’, which can result from either “physical injury or emotional shock”.⁴²¹ Trauma is a response to highly distressing and frightening events. Maria Tumarkin, author of *Traumascapes: The Power and Fate of Places Transformed by Tragedy*, writes about places that have been “indelibly marked by histories of violence and loss.”⁴²² Trauma should be understood as something intensely painful and overwhelming. The traumatised person is incapable of fully comprehending the events they have witnessed or endured, “So much so that the ways in which they usually experience the world and make sense of their own place in it are effectively shattered.”⁴²³ Berlin is one such place that epitomises trauma and loss, beyond perhaps any other European capital city.⁴²⁴ In the first half of the 20th century, the monarchy of the German

⁴²¹ Bullock and Trombley 885.

⁴²² Maria Tumarkin, *Traumascapes: The Power and Fate of Places Transformed by Tragedy* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005) 4.

⁴²³ Tumarkin 11.

⁴²⁴ Tumarkin 4.

Empire gave way to the constitutional republic of the German Reich (Weimar Republic) from 1918 to 1933. This occurred following defeat and subsequent civil unrest in the aftermath of World War I. During the interwar period Berlin experienced the repercussions of hyperinflation, reparations (as a consequence of the Treaty of Versailles) and the Great Depression.⁴²⁵ It went on to experience twelve years of Hitler's Third Reich from 1933 to 1945, as the regime planned and attempted to institute its super-metropolis and capital of the world, Germania.⁴²⁶ It was also the linchpin and command centre for the Nazi genocide machine, the physical place where an evil and sinister mindset conceived and fashioned the Holocaust.⁴²⁷ The city was instead reduced to rubble by the end of World War II, a city of ruins, "The level of destruction was apocalyptic."⁴²⁸ Over a million tonnes of ordnance were dropped on German cities and towns; the 'area bombing' of Berlin was so powerful and violent that it damaged the ionosphere, the earth's outer most layer where the International Space Station now orbits.⁴²⁹ The area bombing or carpet bombing that the city endured was a new paradigm of indiscriminate destruction of the urban fabric and its civilians, a type of 'urbicide' that was justified through the frame of 'total war'.⁴³⁰ The term 'urbicide' was used specifically to describe what happened to the city of Sarajevo when it was placed under siege by the Yugoslav National Army, in what was "a deliberate and cold-blooded murder of a city."⁴³¹ In 1945 Berlin was then subjected to full dissection in the wake of the war, divided amongst the Allied forces into four sectors even though the city sat totally within the Soviet occupation zone (the zone that would eventually become East Germany). It was effectively a marginalised urban island and enclave. Between 1961 and 1989 "the city was cut in half by the Berlin Wall, becoming the most potent and universally recognisable symbol of the worldwide stand-off between Eastern and

⁴²⁵ Frederick Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler: The Occupation and Denazification of Germany* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2012) xix.

⁴²⁶ Tumarkin 4.

⁴²⁷ Eloise Florence, *Traces of Aerial Bombing in Berlin: Entangled Remembering* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025) 2.

⁴²⁸ Taylor xxii.

⁴²⁹ Florence 2.

⁴³⁰ Tumarkin 5.

⁴³¹ Tumarkin 5.

Western blocs.”⁴³² The turmoil and trauma that the city endured was evident in its urban fabric, from the rubblescape to dissections and bullet holes, voids and walls left in the wake of destruction, along with dramatic debates about its reconstruction.⁴³³ After three decades of Cold War and the terror-inducing Stasi (East German secret police), the city was forced to deal with its past. As Tumarkin notes, “Few other big cities engage so head-on with layered traumatic histories in their psyche and fabric. Few are as intensely self-conscious and upfront about their difficult past as Berlin.”⁴³⁴ The cultural memory of Berlin is intricately enmeshed in trauma.

For people that have experienced severe trauma, “The past enters the present as an intruder, not a welcome guest. Traumatized people have to live with the past that refuses to go away.”⁴³⁵ Trauma is therefore intertwined with the uncanny, operating according to the same economy of repression and return. Likewise, *traumascales*, a term that Tumarkin uses to describe places marked by trauma, violence, suffering and loss, are also subject to the past, never quite going away.⁴³⁶

Traumascales are more than the physical settings of tragedies; they are spaces where events are experienced and re-experienced; they “catalyse and shape remembering and reliving of traumatic events.”⁴³⁷ Traumascales are places of shared human suffering; they reconfigure our understanding of trauma from something that is a psychological process to a site or place with spatial coordinates, the transposition of trauma onto collective histories and places.⁴³⁸ Such places are a “distinctive category of place, transformed physically and psychically by suffering, part of a scar tissue that now stretches across the world.”⁴³⁹ Places that constitute traumascales can be singular sites such as the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan, or extend outwards to encompass entire cities such as Berlin and Sarajevo. They are fundamentally connected to memory, not only in terms of traumatic

⁴³² Tumarkin 4.

⁴³³ Tumarkin 4-5.

⁴³⁴ Tumarkin 5.

⁴³⁵ Tumarkin 12.

⁴³⁶ Tumarkin 12.

⁴³⁷ Tumarkin 12.

⁴³⁸ Tumarkin 12.

⁴³⁹ Tumarkin 13.

memories returning but also the experiences of mourning and remembering. Within the traumascapes there is an added dimension of ‘sense making’, understanding and making sense of traumatic histories that are imprinted on them.⁴⁴⁰ Imprinting either an urban space or architectural object with individual or collective traumatic memories is of great significance to the thesis. Places of trauma connect the past and the present through the object or space, space that is either occupied or void. Moreover, traumascapes are fundamentally spaces of otherness that resonate in a unique way, they are places in which the past “cannot simply be erased” and the future not “simply reconstructed”.⁴⁴¹ They are highly heterotopic. Memory, according to Tumarkin, has the capacity to “not only let the past loose but also liberate the future and the present.”⁴⁴² Sites of trauma are spaces that enable “thoughts and feelings to crystallise, to find their right pitch and their singular expression.”⁴⁴³ Places that have been afflicted and transformed by tragedy, in return, open up in unorthodox ways to novel meanings and expressions. This is particularly relevant in relation to the broader context of Berlin and to the case studies of the thesis. The nightclub Tresor was founded on a traumascapes.

Cultural memory in the case of Berlin often enters an entangled series of narratives and counter narratives. The area bombing of the city and the consequential trauma sustained by Berliners and Germans is part of an uneasy narrative structure where the Allies have generally been framed in Anglo-American articulations as “heroes of a ‘good war’ against a ‘bad empire’, ‘winning’ against a tyrannical and genocidal regime.”⁴⁴⁴ The issue with such dichotomous narratives is that there is little room afforded to the trauma inflicted by the Allied bombing campaigns, “for the exploding walls of school buildings”⁴⁴⁵ and for the trauma inflicted on civilian populations. Germany has actively analysed and interrogated its

⁴⁴⁰ Tumarkin 14.

⁴⁴¹ Tumarkin 18.

⁴⁴² Tumarkin 130.

⁴⁴³ Tumarkin 36.

⁴⁴⁴ Florence 5.

⁴⁴⁵ Florence 5.

past for eighty years. However, the “mainstream cultural representations of the former-Allied combatants on both sides of the Atlantic have continued to mostly exclude any Allied culpability in civilian deaths and the destruction of non-military targets from their national stories.”⁴⁴⁶ The trauma associated with the Allied bombing campaign sits uncomfortably in the terrain of cultural memory. The terror and trauma of the Holocaust is not (and should not) be diminished by cultural memory work that seeks to detail more nuanced readings of the urban and civilian trauma experienced in Berlin brought about by the Allied forces. As a consequence of the horrific acts of violence by the Nazis, there is an unending series of debates, narratives and counter narratives that deal with the Holocaust and German victimhood. This thesis is not a study of those debates but the subject matter of the dissertation in part touches the boundaries of such debates. Eloise Florence, author of *Traces of Aerial Bombing in Berlin: Entangled Remembering*, charts the cultural memory of aerial bombing in Berlin, seeking to detail a history that moves beyond a “zero-sum game”, where “remembering one event more doesn’t have to mean remembering another event less.”⁴⁴⁷ Florence’s work seeks in part to reframe the dichotomy of victim and perpetrator narratives through a Foucauldian genealogy; fragmenting, disrupting and interrogating underlying power relations in narrative structures and memory cultures that have traditionally been considered immobile.⁴⁴⁸ The culture memory of Berlin is one of simultaneity, where several trauma histories converge and overlap in unsettling ways.

Memory work by academics and scholars is not a domain that is inconsequential or neutral with respect to contemporary politics and morality. Remembering, delving into and reframing specific traumas and traumascapes invariably raise other concerns and considerations. When highlighting certain trepidations and anxieties with respect to memory studies that relate to

⁴⁴⁶ Florence 5.

⁴⁴⁷ Florence 11.

⁴⁴⁸ Florence 44.

the Allied bombing in Berlin and Germany, Florence notes,

This is no over-anxious fear. Remembering the suffering of German civilians under Allied bombs has often been used to downplay the culture memory of the Nazi genocide by far-right groups, revisionist historians and Holocaust deniers. These groups utilize the shared memory of suffering under Allied bombs to equate the suffering of German civilians with that of the Holocaust and to exculpate some of Germany's historical responsibility for the Holocaust. The cultural memory of the bombings and the related concept of Germans as victims is therefore inherently linked with the rise of the 'alt-right' in Germany and elsewhere, which makes remembering the bombings a potentially dangerous evocation of the past. Any investigation into the memory of area bombing must be fully aware of this danger. The debate remains politically and morally fraught.⁴⁴⁹

While it is necessary to proceed cautiously in the domain of memory studies in this context, it is also necessary work that sheds light and creates nuance in the culture memories that dominate history. The Allied bombing has generally been framed as a response, and a necessary evil in the 'total war' against Hitler and the Nazis.⁴⁵⁰ The issue arises, however, in the moral narratives that have shaped and justified certain historical acts of aggression, especially those committed against the citizenry of Germany. Generating more nuanced readings of these culture memories and moral justifications reframes the way contemporary wars are viewed; more specifically, the victim versus perpetrator dichotomy and the justification for total war and urbicide.

Within the context of area bombing, the existence and horror of the camps only reaffirmed the monstrous qualities of the Nazis, and a monster that grew almost immediately to encompass every German citizen, including those who died in bombing raids. In fact, the full scale and horror of the Holocaust was not revealed until after

⁴⁴⁹ Florence 24-25.

⁴⁵⁰ Florence 22.

1945, and was not once mentioned in the British or American governments' documents as a motivation for an area bombing campaign.⁴⁵¹

This thesis and its fundamentally architectural foundation are impelled with understanding space, architecture, the urban environment and the way these various elements speak and remember the experiences they have been charged with. Setting foot in the uneasy terrain of remembering in Germany is thus a necessary but equally precarious mandate, especially when it charts the trauma that was sustained by German citizens and their cities.

Traumascapes curiously activate a compulsion that draws people to see and feel them as closely as possible.⁴⁵² Inhabiting sites of trauma can be deeply cathartic for those who have been directly affected by the events and for those who are seeking to make sense of that which has the capacity to shatter their psyche, and their conception of the world. As the uncanny is connected to trauma via repression and return, it also connects through the double and haunting. As Tumarkin notes, "Traumascapes, of course, were haunting and haunted places. Yet they were not poetic or metaphorical terrains but, rather, concrete, material sites, where visible and invisible, past and present, physical and metaphysical came to coexist and share a common space."⁴⁵³ However, not only is the uncanny operational in the traumascapes but so too is the sublime. The fascination with the dark remnants left in the aftermath of tragedy in some cases is activated by the vicarious taste for darkness; "ideas of pain, death and hardship are much more powerful and affecting than ideas of pleasure."⁴⁵⁴ Given the requisite and ensured corporeal security, the subliminal compulsion toward the traumascapes is thus sublime. Trauma and traumascapes are both webbed into the aesthetic domain of the sublime and the uncanny.

⁴⁵¹ Florence 40.

⁴⁵² Tumarkin 31.

⁴⁵³ Tumarkin 233.

⁴⁵⁴ Tumarkin 49.

In the Western tradition, the object of death and the site of death are particularly relevant both culturally and spiritually.⁴⁵⁵ When death occurs, the significance of the bodily remains becomes glaringly apparent; although inanimate, the body provides something tangible over which mourning can occur. The absence of these remains can trigger deeper levels of psychic trauma, leaving unsuspecting relatives and people in a state of mind that psychologists call “searching behaviour”, a state in which there is a determination to look for traces of the person and their death in order for the tragedy to be fully conceived.⁴⁵⁶ Physical spaces also operate according to the same logic, and if a site of trauma is recognised by a broader group of people, or a nation, that site is deemed to be sacred.⁴⁵⁷ Equally if a dark site is erased spatially, we can find this unsettling because it is essentially obfuscated. An example of such places are the Reich Security Main Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt), currently the Topography of Terror, that was bombed by the Allies during the war, and the Reich Chancellery (Reichskanzlei) which was also badly bombed and subsequently razed during the Soviet occupation. The other building that presents as a more curious example is Adolf Hitler’s bunker (Führerbunker), located in the centre of Berlin in the garden of the Reich Chancellery. It is a place that was erased during the occupation and subsequent reconstruction of the city, a city subject to denazification, a process of destroying and erasing the “fabric of Nazi totalitarian control, not just in the administration but throughout industry, the arts, education and the sciences.”⁴⁵⁸ The Soviet occupiers left no real and tangible trace on the surface of the earth, creating a disturbing and ambiguous state of mind like the aforementioned ‘searching behaviour’ for those who were and are particularly interested in seeing and touching the place where Hitler died. The monolithic entrance to the subterranean bunker was deleted from space, slowly becoming increasingly marginal in the culture memory of the city. The contemporary site, although banal, is still haunted by a spectre. In

⁴⁵⁵ Tumarkin 8.

⁴⁵⁶ Tumarkin 73.

⁴⁵⁷ Tumarkin 85.

⁴⁵⁸ Taylor xxix.

truly uncanny fashion the subterranean bunker resisted its own destruction, returning not only as a memory but as a continual problem for the Soviets who were mandated with ‘liquidation’ of Nazi monuments.

The Führerbunker, though, proved a resilient structure. It had withstood flooding and Soviet shelling in spring 1945, and the effects of the 1947 explosives only sufficed to destroy the entranceway and ventilation shaft and collapse some of the interior walls.

The main body of the bunker persisted, thanks to all those meters of reinforced concrete.⁴⁵⁹

The bunker is thus an unsettling “countermemorial”.⁴⁶⁰ The site defies expectations: “it challenges tourists to reflect on what they had hoped to see, and why”.⁴⁶¹ Conversely, it also problematises the act of remembering and the culture memory of the city. The abstraction of the countermemorial and the absence of a physical object do not induce the ““façade-peeling stories”” or “puncture the pomposity of Nazi architecture and remind visitors of the regime’s atrocities.”⁴⁶² It is the persistence of memory even in absence that is perhaps the most powerful unconscious driver seeking to understand and come to terms with the traumascapes of modernity, either sacred or dark sites, to create order from disorder. “Nothing is ever erased fully from places. Not from traumascapes, which contain histories that, more often than not, have never been fully articulated or remembered.”⁴⁶³ Temporality is another dimension that figures greatly in relation to sites of trauma. Traumascapes produce an unorthodox sense of time; “the knot tying the present and the past together often cannot be untied.”⁴⁶⁴ Moreover, in post-traumatic stress disorder there is a non-linear sense of time; the sequence of time is often ruptured with flashbacks and intrusive thoughts, and haunting

⁴⁵⁹ Caroline Sharples, “Sealed Off Heritage: Navigating Hitler’s Bunker in Postwar Berlin,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 59(1) (2024): 127.

⁴⁶⁰ Sharples 138.

⁴⁶¹ Sharples 138.

⁴⁶² Sharples 139.

⁴⁶³ Tumarkin 193.

⁴⁶⁴ Tumarkin 14.

memories reconfigure time at will.⁴⁶⁵ When this phenomenon spills over into the urban environment and the objects contained within it, the temporal disjunction is read in both the remnants of physical objects and in the absence of physical objects – the so-called void.

The rubblescape of Berlin in the aftermath of World War II reached a staggering 75 million cubic metres.⁴⁶⁶ The city was effectively a ruin; carpet bombing by the Allied forces rendered rubble the principal matter of the city. The debris was sorted and salvaged in large part by the women of Berlin. They created human chains in which they would salvage and clean bricks, the *prima materia* that would facilitate the refashioning and rebuilding of the city, or otherwise be moved to its outskirts. The contemporary topography of Berlin in some areas is literally the result of leftover rubble. These rubble mountains are called *Trümmerberg* and there are approximately seven scattered throughout the city, the largest of which is Teufelsberg, its elevation is around 80 metres and comprises 55 million tonnes of rubble.⁴⁶⁷ The women who facilitated the sorting of debris were called *Trümmerfrauen* (rubble women).⁴⁶⁸ Incessantly tapping with their hammers, they worked their way through the rubble and mortar, cleaning and preparing bricks for reconstruction. The percussive hits of hammers against brick (I imagine) would have been one of the sonic signatures of the city in the aftermath of the war. That sonic signature of industrial percussion returns as a haunting spectre, the uncanny harbinger in German Techno's industrial and relentless aesthetic of abrasive percussive tones. The impact of gendered warfare on the women of Berlin was another form of the evil mindset:

Before the war ended, most of Berlin's women, regardless of their age and appearance, are known to have endured a wave of mass rapes. Soviet troops entered Berlin in April of 1945 determined to avenge the destruction of their homeland and the murder of

⁴⁶⁵ Tumarkin 79.

⁴⁶⁶ Tumarkin 175.

⁴⁶⁷ Florence 1.

⁴⁶⁸ Tumarkin 173.

millions of their compatriots by the Nazis. For weeks in Berlin, rape was not simply the legitimate weapon of war but also the status quo.⁴⁶⁹

With most of the men in Germany either missing or dead, it was the women and children who were left to deal with the repercussions and aftermath of what the Nazis, Allied powers and Axis powers had created. For the children of Berlin, the rubblescape was their playground, their innocence and imagination reconfigured the meaning of the wreckage in the city. Children magically inverted the meaning of the ruins, redeeming and re-energising the objects and artefacts of devastation. “For years after the war, in phantasmagorical scenes right across the devastated city, rubble kids played on rubble mountains assembled by rubble women.”⁴⁷⁰ This magical and transportive power of the mind would be the same mechanism at play in the 1990s, when the city’s youth took over the bunkers of the city, refashioning them as temples of Techno. Youth culture eviscerated and pulverised the vision that Hitler and Speer had for the ruins of their ‘Thousand Year Reich’.⁴⁷¹ Berlin became a living and breathing palimpsest. The dense layers of rubble not only reconfigured the topography of the city but also created multiple layers of meaning in the built form, rendered through an iterative series of superimpositions, transpositions, transformations and reconstructions.

4.2 Heterotopias

As established in the definitions earlier, heterotopias are spaces that have a quality of otherness. They can be perceived as paradoxical, incongruent, transforming, disturbing and intense. Michel Foucault, in his essay “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias”,⁴⁷² defines what heterotopias are, giving detailed descriptions of the various ways they can manifest. At the outset of the essay, the relationship between time and space is foregrounded as something that is fundamental to the subject matter. It then moves into a

⁴⁶⁹ Tumarkin 176.

⁴⁷⁰ Tumarkin 176.

⁴⁷¹ Florence 82.

⁴⁷² Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias”.

definition of heterotopias according to six different principles detailing the characteristics of each type. Prior to this, however, Foucault set the foundation for the argument by defining the heterotopia in relation to a utopia. He defines utopias as “sites with no real place” that generally present “society itself in a perfected form”.⁴⁷³ What is emphasised is the fact that utopic places are “fundamentally unreal spaces”.⁴⁷⁴ Foucault uses the simple example of a mirror as a place that could be understood as both a utopia and a heterotopia. As a utopia it acts as a virtual space “that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent”.⁴⁷⁵ As a heterotopia it functions as a real space, the place from which one can watch oneself in the virtual space of the mirror. He states, “it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy.”⁴⁷⁶ Heterotopias can therefore be categorised as different spaces or other places, where there is “a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live”.⁴⁷⁷ The systematic categorisation and description of these spaces for Foucault is what he termed heterotopology.⁴⁷⁸

In the first principle he divides the heterotopia into two distinct categories, heterotopias of ‘crisis’ and ‘deviation’. An example of the former is the placelessness of the 19th-century boarding school or the tradition of the honeymoon, where one’s first sexual encounter could take place elsewhere, outside of the family home. Foucault states that “The young woman’s deflowering could take place ‘nowhere’ and, at the moment of its occurrence the train or honeymoon hotel was indeed the place of this nowhere, this heterotopia without

⁴⁷³ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 3.

⁴⁷⁴ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 3.

⁴⁷⁵ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 4.

⁴⁷⁶ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 4.

⁴⁷⁷ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 4.

⁴⁷⁸ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 4.

geographical markers.”⁴⁷⁹ Conversely, heterotopias of deviation are described as places occupied by individuals whose behaviour deviates from the current average or standard. Examples of such places are psychiatric clinics, prisons and old-people’s homes,⁴⁸⁰ places in which an individual’s behaviour is deviant or has deviated from the mean or norm.

In the second principle, Foucault outlines how the process of ‘synchrony’ can change the meaning associated with a particular place. He uses the example of a cemetery as a heterotopia which until the end of the 18th century was still physically located in the centre of the city. However, a shift in belief regarding the immortality of the soul changed the importance given to the body after death.

Basically it was quite natural that, in a time of real belief in the resurrection of bodies and the immortality of the soul, overriding importance was not accorded to the body’s remains. On the contrary, from the moment when people are no longer sure that they have a soul or that the body will regain life, it is perhaps necessary to give much more attention to the dead body, which is ultimately the only trace of our existence in the world and in language.⁴⁸¹

Along with considerations of the soul’s immortality were pragmatic concerns relating to health and hygiene, which resulted in the cemetery moving outside the borders of the city. The cemetery in the centre of the city was by the end of the 18th century considered the propagator of illness and disease. It became a representation of death, and with the newly applied meaning was shifted as a physical location out to the suburbs. The cemetery was no longer a representation of “the sacred and immortal heart of the city” but was now a representation of a dark resting place.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁹ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 5.

⁴⁸⁰ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 5.

⁴⁸¹ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 5.

⁴⁸² Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 6.

The third principle outlines how the heterotopia is capable of ‘juxtaposition’. Foucault states, “The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible.”⁴⁸³ The example given is that of a cinema, which projects three-dimensional images on a two-dimensional screen in a “very odd rectangular room”.⁴⁸⁴ The idea of contradictory space is being foregrounded here, spaces that are incongruent and juxtaposing.

In the fourth principle the relationship between heterotopias and time is detailed, something that Foucault calls ‘heterochronies’. The principle outlines how the heterotopia functions fully when there is a break in traditional time.⁴⁸⁵ Foucault uses two examples. Firstly, the museum or library as a place where there is an accumulation of time:

the idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity.⁴⁸⁶

Secondly, the example of a fairground is employed for a second reading of the idea. The fairground is a place that operates in an inverse manner to the accumulation of time. It is a place in which time is transitory and precarious: “fairgrounds, these’ marvelous empty sites on the outskirts of cities that teem once or twice a year with stands, displays, heteroclite objects, wrestlers, snakewomen, fortune-tellers, and so forth.”⁴⁸⁷ Time operates in an ephemeral way in such spaces.

⁴⁸³ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 6.

⁴⁸⁴ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 6.

⁴⁸⁵ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 6.

⁴⁸⁶ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 7.

⁴⁸⁷ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 7.

The fifth principle looks at the permeability of the heterotopia – “system[s] of opening and closing”.⁴⁸⁸ Distinguished here is how the “heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public place. Either the entry is compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications.”⁴⁸⁹ Moreover there are other places and sites “that seem to be pure and simple openings, but that generally hide curious exclusions. Everyone can enter into the heterotopic sites, but in fact that is only an illusion – we think we enter where we are, by the very fact that we enter, excluded.”⁴⁹⁰ An example of such a condition is that of some Brazilian farms, sites where travellers could enter the farmhouse. They are rooms that function as bedrooms; however, they are attached to the house but do not access the private quarters of the home – “the visitor was absolutely the guest in transit”.⁴⁹¹ Such sites contain unorthodox systems of opening, closing, inclusion and exclusion.

The sixth and final principle details the relationship between heterotopias that “function in relation to all space that remains.”⁴⁹² Divided into spaces of ‘illusion’ and ‘compensation’, they expose “every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned”.⁴⁹³

The example that is given here is that of the brothel, as an extreme illusory space. The space of compensation conversely creates “another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled.”⁴⁹⁴ In this instance the Jesuit colonies of Paraguay for Foucault illustrate the regulated and rigorous life of the village “in which human perfection was effectively achieved.”⁴⁹⁵ The village was

⁴⁸⁸ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 7.

⁴⁸⁹ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 7.

⁴⁹⁰ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 7-8.

⁴⁹¹ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 8.

⁴⁹² Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 8.

⁴⁹³ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 8.

⁴⁹⁴ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 8.

⁴⁹⁵ Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” 8.

laid out according to a rigorous plan around a rectangular place at the foot of which was the church; on one side, there was the school; on the other, the cemetery, and then, in front of the church, an avenue set out that another crossed at right angles; each family had its little cabin along these two axes and thus the sign of Christ was exactly reproduced. Christianity marked the space and geography of the American world with its fundamental sign.⁴⁹⁶

The colony and the brothel according to Foucault are two extreme forms of heterotopia.

The six principles outlined in the essay illustrate the fundamental characteristics of heterotopias. As stated, they are heterotopias of crisis, deviation, synchrony, juxtaposition, heterochronies, opening and closing (permeability), illusion and compensation. There are several different spatial conditions detailed in the thesis that relate to the concept of heterotopias. The contemporary underground Techno club is an environment and space that can be defined as such. The concept also relates to considerations of typology and the urban spatial incursions that are evident throughout World War II and the Cold War in the city of Berlin, examples of which are forthcoming in the chapter and thesis. In the case-study chapters of the thesis, the aesthetic categories of the uncanny and sublime are the mechanisms by which various instances of heterotopic space are triggered in the architectural cases. Critical to note is that the heterotopia operates as a conduit for the uncanny in this research. Foucault's heterotopia enables a deeper and more nuanced analysis of the uncanny and sublime; it also enables a deeper understand of the way these aesthetic categories relate to considerations of space.

4.3 Typology of Trauma

Between 1940 and 1945 Germany was subjected to an aerial bombing campaign that was

⁴⁹⁶ Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" 8.

hitherto unseen.⁴⁹⁷ The scale and severity of the attacks were staggering. Over two million tons of bombs ravaged the country.⁴⁹⁸ In response to the Allied attack on Germany, the Third Reich developed a defence fortification program.⁴⁹⁹ The strategic defence system consisted of a mix of both active and passive technologies. The active defence comprised of fighter aircraft and the infamous *Flugabwehrkanone* (aircraft defence cannon) or flak. The passive defence comprised air-raid shelters and bunkers.⁵⁰⁰ What resulted was the formulation of new bunker typologies, the main requirements of which were to withstand and protect against the industrial-grade weaponry of the period. World War I set the precedent for how modern warfare would be waged. Germany's use of Zeppelins and bombers to attack British cities established a new paradigm,⁵⁰¹ a paradigm in which architectural form and tectonics would play a major role in defence technology. Beginning in 1933 there was a concentrated and formal effort to fortify Germany. This was initiated through Hermann Göring's National Air Raid Protection League (Reichsluftschutzbund).⁵⁰² In 1935 Hitler signed the air raid protection laws, mandating that all German citizens were to participate in the program. Whether they were fortifications for military infrastructure or for the protection of citizens, a general methodology of construction within government organisations and among private design firms was adopted.⁵⁰³ The State-mandated participation of citizens and communities brought forth a ubiquitous and institutionalised adaptation of these new typologies. Air raid protection was encouraged for private, public, commercial, industrial and domestic buildings, with a new set of national standards that were implemented across the board. In September of 1940 Hitler initiated the Führer-Sofortprogramm (emergency program) to protect Germany's urban population. Although the

⁴⁹⁷ Steven J Zaloga, *Defense of the Third Reich 1941–45* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2012) 4.

⁴⁹⁸ Zaloga 4.

⁴⁹⁹ Zaloga 4.

⁵⁰⁰ Zaloga 4.

⁵⁰¹ Zaloga 24.

⁵⁰² Zaloga 25.

⁵⁰³ Zaloga 26.

scheme wasn't fully completed, it nonetheless set itself a task of implementing 6,000 bomb-proof bunkers for 35 million civilians in 92 cities.⁵⁰⁴ "The original scheme would have required the fantastic total of 200 million cubic meters (260 million cubic yards) of concrete, about as much as the past two decades of civil construction. . . . the construction was overseen by the Organization Todt (OT) paramilitary construction administration."⁵⁰⁵ There are two typologies within the passive fortification program that are significant to this research, and which relate to the principal case studies of the thesis.

The first typology is the underground bunker in its various configurations. Underground bunkers and trenches were constructed of reinforced concrete with compacted earth around them, and on top of the trenches to insulate from the tremendous force of the bombs. They were also constructed in a manner that sealed them off from the outside environment in the case of chemical warfare, with their own energy supply to provide electricity for lighting and air filtration systems. Paul Virilio's *Bunker Archeology*,⁵⁰⁶ a seminal text that reframes the 1,500 bunkers along the French littoral, comprising the Third Reich's Atlantic Wall, identifies an important shift in the signification of the underground space of the city in the context of 20th-century German history:

Between the First and the Second World Wars a totally buried fortification was "erected"—the Maginot Line. Tightness became the key word of fortress builders; this was the era of the submarine, and the underground structure could efficiently protect you for a considerable depth from the omnipotence of the new arms. It was no longer in distance but rather in burial that the man of war found the parry to the onslaught of his adversary; retreat was now into the very thickness of the planet and no longer along its

⁵⁰⁴ Zaloga 27.

⁵⁰⁵ Zaloga 27-28.

⁵⁰⁶ Paul Virilio, *Bunker Archeology*, trans. George Collins (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994).

surface.⁵⁰⁷

The underground bunker typology shares the same spatial and architectural characteristics as the Wertheim bank vault (the space that would later become the Tresor nightclub). As a buried architecture with monolithic proportions its function was to house and protect precious objects, just as the Nazi bunkers were designed for the protection of people and precious artefacts.

The second typology is the above-ground bunker in its various configurations. Above-ground fortifications or bunkers were constructed in a very similar manner except they were not subterranean. Thick reinforced concrete walls, extremely small openings in the envelope of the building and monolithic proportions were an efficient and pragmatic architectural response for their intended use. The thickness of the walls and roof changed as the Allied military technology evolved. Earlier bunkers used a roof thickness of 1.4 metres;⁵⁰⁸ however, the advancements in military technology towards the end of the war, in particular with the advent of the 10-ton Grand Slam bomb, saw wall and roof thicknesses increasing dramatically. What resulted was a tectonic arms race, culminating in the design and construction of the infamous Bunker Valentin U-Boat Factory at Farge. The building was an above ground structure in which the Third Reich's submarines were constructed. The initial design used a roof thickness of 4.5 metres; however, additional plans were made in response to advancements in Allied bombing technology, and the revised design incorporated a roof thickness of 10 metres.⁵⁰⁹ Equally the Führerbunker in Berlin, located on the site of the Chancellery but deep underground, used a gauge of 8.5 metres for the thickness of the bunker's roof.

⁵⁰⁷ Virilio 38-39.

⁵⁰⁸ Zaloga 47.

⁵⁰⁹ Zaloga 55.

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Fig. 25. Leitturm I, Flak-Division, Berlin.

[Production note: This figure is not included in
this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Fig. 26. Atlantic Wall, observation post.

The most refined iteration of the above-ground bunker typology was evident within the *Flaktürme* (flak towers). Evolving initially from dirt trenches, they became the most sophisticated pieces of military architecture of the period. Initially, mobile flak batteries were set up on coastlines and in open field conditions, with simple use of timber parapets as outer walls which were backfilled with earth. These soon developed into semi-sunken concrete platforms open to the sky, with ammunition storage and an emergency shelter. Advancing design saw the realisation of mobile flak towers, and finally, in response to the RAF air raids on Berlin, proper above-ground bunkers of 7–8 storeys with flak batteries located on the roof were developed. “Hitler envisioned the towers as a means to remind the citizenry of Germany’s defiance of the British bombers, but also as a means to shelter precious museum artefacts and public documents. . . . construction of the first Berlin towers was nominally under the control of Hitler’s personal architect, Albert Speer”.⁵¹⁰ What evolved was three generations of *Flaktürme* based on the architectural models of Professor Friedrich Tamms, a subordinate of Speer. The Type 1 *Gefechtsturm* (gun tower) and the Type 1 *Leitturm* (fire control tower) present clear architectural attributes in the form of these above-ground bunker typologies. They had small openings in the envelope of the building, single entrances at the base of the building, monolithic proportions and a militarised version of prospect and refuge theory. There is an uncanny resemblance between the *Leitturm I* building and the formal architectural attributes of the VEB Fernheizwerk der Stalinallee (Berghain). Initially the resemblance presents and functions as a haunting image. Steven Zaloga points out, however, that the “Third Reich’s air defense fortification program was intensely studied by the Allies after the war and served as the inspiration for many Cold War bunker programs.”⁵¹¹ Not only did the Third Reich’s fortification program inform other bunker programs and military architectures in the post–World War II period, but also infrastructural and public works. There is a clear typological connection between the

⁵¹⁰ Zaloga 38-39.

⁵¹¹ Zaloga 4.

Leitturm I bunker and the Socialist Realist architecture of the Berghain.

The symbolic function and applied meaning of the Nazi bunker typologies (both above and below ground) are an important consideration within the thesis. Their symbolism changed over time as different socio-political events reframed the historical landscape in which they were situated. In the first instance they operated as heterotopias of compensation during the war. Like the perfection of the Jesuit colonies, “The goal was to replicate life above ground as accurately as possible.”⁵¹² Their symbolic function was to showcase the power and might of the Nazi regime, designed “as an emblem of Nazi war preparedness”.⁵¹³ However, the meaning of the bunkers changed by the end of the war. In the second instance they were no longer the embodiment of the masculine State, *Männerstaat*; they were now ““catacombs of fear”” with the “ubiquitous calls of ‘Frau komm’ (‘woman come’) once the Russians arrived.”⁵¹⁴ The bunkers were transformed into spaces of violence and degradation. No longer a mirror image of life above ground, they were transformed by mass rape into a heterotopia of crisis. “With little doubt, area bombing, street fighting, mass rape, and occupation put a violent end to Berlin’s metropolitan trappings. In the central districts, those most heavily affected by the two-year bombing campaign, very little remained of Berlin’s former glory.”⁵¹⁵ With the sustained attacks on the city the bunker typology became inextricably associated with terror and violence. “Perhaps the bitterest irony of all was the fact that these protective havens turned into the deadliest of sanctuaries. . . . the wave of rapes that gripped the city transformed the spatial meaning of the bunker from one of protection and community to one of danger and depravity”.⁵¹⁶ In the post-war context of the city there was yet another transformation in the bunker’s symbolic meaning. The third instance saw the

⁵¹² Evans 14.

⁵¹³ Evans 15.

⁵¹⁴ Evans 15.

⁵¹⁵ Evans 11.

⁵¹⁶ Evans 15.

underground bunkers and rubblescape of the city operate as havens and shelters for gangs, prostitutes and the rent boys of Berlin. The space took on a new symbolic meaning, exemplifying the physical and cerebral trauma of the underground that was etched into the collective psyche of the people. The bunkers were now heterotopias of deviation. They were the left over, marginalised and estranged spaces of the city and the new sites of subversion.

The bombed-out bunker was no longer simply a symbol of Nazi war bluster; it was now a tangible sign of the perceived immorality of [the] victor's justice and the depths to which Germany had sunk in defeat. In the weeks after capitulation, it began to take on new meaning as well, as a site of communal identity for the legions of children and youths left orphaned, homeless, or in the care of physically damaged parents. More than a physical shelter for Berlin's large number of street youth, the bunkers provided emotional relief from the quotidian challenges of life after Hitler with black marketeers, rent boys, and fallen women camping out together in subterranean cliques and gangs.

Just as the rapes solidified in public consciousness the danger and immorality of these underground spaces as sites of racial mixing and bodily assault, the bunkers posed unique challenges to German sensibilities.⁵¹⁷

The symbolic transformation rendered the bunkers sites of countercultural resistance; "the rubble provided shelter for another underground activity—the male sex trade."⁵¹⁸ The city's ruins "were not only spaces of violence and death; they were also sites of subversion, nonconformity, and visibility for a host of sexual subcultures".⁵¹⁹ The bunker was now the metaphorical shelter for Berlin's street youth who found protection in the cavernous insides of the bombed-out spaces.⁵²⁰ The estranged street youth had no renewed faith in ideology as a mechanism of change; they "chose their subcultural identification over official attempts at

⁵¹⁷ Evans 16.

⁵¹⁸ Evans 17.

⁵¹⁹ Evans 20.

⁵²⁰ Evans 18-19.

buttressing the family and channeling ideological renewal.”⁵²¹ The bunkers consequently “played host to the reflowering of Berlin in terms of irregular sexualities and transgressive identities.”⁵²² Transgressive sexual practices found their metaphorical home in the typology of the bunker, a lineage that is present in the contemporary environment of the Berghain.

The symbolism of the bunker typology in the context of Berlin has transformed over time. They were initially places that represented security and the masculine State, then were reconfigured into places that signified violence, death and trauma, and finally became sites of countercultural subversion. The typology of the bunker underpins the reading of the principal case studies, both from the perspective of their spatial configuration and their shifting symbolic meaning. They are heterotopias of synchrony and a haunting representation of past trauma.

The bunker typology is connected to culture memory in a unique way. In the aftermath of the war the Nazi bunkers towered over the rubblescape of the city; they stood in stark contrast to the rest of the urban landscape that was largely eviscerated, the architectural envelopes of the city were heaped piles of rubble or they stood precariously on the knife edge of collapse. The bunkers witnessed the urban trauma of the Allied bombing. Germany and Berlin are to a degree different to other locations that have endured some type of urbicide; the bunkers were able to withstand the industrial weaponry of the period unlike other cities around the world that have endured similar actions against them. Brian Ladd, author of *The Ghost of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*, is a scholar who delves deeply into the terrain of historical memory. He states, “More generally, many (if not all) pre-1933 structures in Berlin are indelibly marked as witnesses to or participants in the events of the Third Reich.”⁵²³ The buildings that preceded the Third Reich and the bunkers of the Third Reich are the architectural witnesses to all forms of trauma that the city

⁵²¹ Evans 20.

⁵²² Evans 12.

⁵²³ Ladd 5.

endured. As participants, the bunkers figure in remembering the history of the city; their ominous mass, scale and tectonic properties form containers, reservoirs of memory spilling over with the traumatic events they have witnessed. Aerial photography of Berlin and Germany in 1945 showed various above-ground bunker typologies as the only remaining urban figures, both surveying the urban landscape and casting their haunting shadow over the city, they were uncanny harbingers of death.⁵²⁴

4.4 Tectonics of Trauma

Tectonic theory as outlined by Gottfried Semper identifies four principal elements of architecture, namely hearth, enclosure, roof and mound.⁵²⁵ The four fundamental components of architecture derive their meaning through the anthropological considerations of primitive conditions;⁵²⁶ however, with the advancing of time, the associated meaning and complexity of these elements has evolved. The first element is the hearth. In primitive cultures the hearth was a fire or fireplace around which people gathered for warmth and the preparation of food after hunting.⁵²⁷ It was the literal centre and central point of focus in primitive construction. It also doubled as the symbolic centre, a place that “formed that sacred focus around which the whole took order and shape”,⁵²⁸ the place where “the first groups assembled; around it the first alliances formed”.⁵²⁹ For Semper the hearth was the most important of elements; it was the moral element of architecture around which the other elements were grouped. In order to protect the hearth’s flame against the elements of nature, enclosure, the second element, was required in the form of screens. Early enclosing devices consisted of thinly woven materials and tapestries

⁵²⁴ Zaloga 36.

⁵²⁵ Gottfried Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 102.

⁵²⁶ Semper 102.

⁵²⁷ Semper 102.

⁵²⁸ Semper 102.

⁵²⁹ Semper 102.

of a non-load bearing nature.⁵³⁰ Evolving programmatic requirements in architecture affected the thickness and material property of the enclosure. The configuration of the enclosure not only protects from the external elements but also mediates the internal spatial division of a structure.⁵³¹ The third element is the roof. Similar to enclosure, it provides protection from specific weather conditions but also functions as the connector between the enclosure and the load-bearing structure. The fourth and final element is the mound. Its function is to elevate the structure off the ground and offer another form of protection from the bareness of the earth.⁵³² In primitive cultures thin mats were used to provide the required separation; however, with the progression of time and newly established programmatic functions the mound operated as the foundation or plinth upon which the structure sat.

An important distinction in the work of Semper is the difference between the concepts of tectonics and stereotomics. Kenneth Frampton's commentary on the difference between the two concepts foregrounds the following:

Semper would classify the building crafts into two fundamental procedures: the *tectonics* of the frame, in which lightweight, linear components are assembled so as to encompass a spatial matrix, and the *stereotomics* of the earthwork, wherein mass and volume are conjointly formed through the repetitious piling up of heavyweight elements. That this last depends upon load-bearing masonry, whether stone or mud brick, is suggested by the Greek etymology of stereotomy, from *stereos*, solid, and *tomia*, to cut. This tectonic/stereotomic distinction was reinforced in German by that language's differentiation between two classes of wall; between *die Wand*, indicating a screenlike partition such as we find in wattle and daub infill construction, and *die*

⁵³⁰ Semper 103.

⁵³¹ Semper 103.

⁵³² Semper 103.

Mauer, signifying massive fortification.⁵³³

Die Mauer is of particular significance to the typologies outlined above. They are massive elements that are quintessential to the bunker typology.

Semper places great emphasis on enclosure in his writing on tectonics. He establishes the origins of the enclosure, detailing the early technique and artform of the *Wandbereiter* (wall fitter).⁵³⁴ This was a craft form of woven and braided mats and carpets. The tapestries were hung from supporting structures, providing protection to the hearth from the external elements. Original subdivision of space was also achieved through hanging carpets and woven membranes; the secondary structure behind was there only to facilitate the hanging material.

Hanging carpets remained the true walls, the visible boundaries of space. The often solid walls behind them were necessary for reasons that had nothing to do with the creation of space; they were needed for security, for supporting a load, for their permanence, and so on. Wherever the need for these secondary functions did not arise, the carpets remained the original means of separating space.⁵³⁵

However, as new programmatic requirements evolved, the inner wall became solid and the outer wall or dressing became the reliefs and ornamentation evident in many forms of architecture. Polychromy within classical architectural form mimicked the original coloured patterns of the Assyrian carpets.⁵³⁶

The tectonic concepts outlined above take on new meaning in the context of the Third Reich's fortification program. In either the Atlantikwall along the French littoral or the

⁵³³ Kenneth Frampton, *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture*, ed. John Cava (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995) 5.

⁵³⁴ Semper 103.

⁵³⁵ Semper 104.

⁵³⁶ Semper 104-105.

Führerbunker in Berlin, the type of enclosure is technically classified as a *Mauer* not a *Wand*. The external wall of the bunker, although monolithic, finds its strength in the wet trade of reinforced concrete, with its internally woven steel reinforcement. A distinction that is outlined in Karl Otfried Müllers's *Handbuch der Archäologie der Kunst (Handbook of the Archeology of Art)*⁵³⁷ is that tectonic refers to a dry form of construction. Müller "remarks on the specifically junctional or 'dry' jointing implications of the term [tectonic]".⁵³⁸ Another important distinction is that the monolithic wall of the bunker is not stereotomic, in that it is not the product of cutting and assembling mass or blocks, but rather the forming and pouring of a cement mix. The reinforced concrete wall erases any trace of classical jointing as evident in the "triglyphs and metopes of the classical entablature".⁵³⁹ However, reinforced concrete is paradoxically a type of woven structure before it sets. It uses the same technique as the first iteration of solid walls that replaced woven carpets, which were timber panels covered in bitumen or stucco.⁵⁴⁰ The woven steel and concrete mass of reinforced concrete mark a moment where the proportions and thickness of *die Mauer* are reconfigured to withstand the enormous force of industrial weaponry. The original woven wickerwork of early cultures outwardly displayed the structure of the enclosure, whereas, in the case of the reinforced concrete wall, the woven elements are concealed and inwardly focused. Concealment, as it relates to the *Unheimliche*, is occurring not just in the space of the bunker but in its material properties.

The strength of the bunker's enclosure illustrates the increasingly hostile external elements which are both corporeal and cerebral. The thickness of the wall is now a reflection of a profoundly debased and hostile ideological environment. In the disproportionate relationship between sentient beings and the industrial military complex, architecture's

⁵³⁷ Frampton 4.

⁵³⁸ Frampton 4.

⁵³⁹ Frampton 4.

⁵⁴⁰ Semper 104.

mediating role is evident in its distorted proportions. *Die Mauer* is not only a partitioner of space, but a space in itself and now a heteroclit object, something abnormal and irregular. What becomes evident is that both World War II and the Cold War reconfigure symbolic meaning in German architecture. In the debate over German national identity, Brian Ladd points out that “Buildings and monuments are also the visible remnants of the past: they often outlast the human beings who created them. How these structures are seen, treated, and remembered sheds light on a collective identity that is more felt than articulated.”⁵⁴¹ Identity in Berlin used to be exemplified in the grandeur of the city under the Prussian Hohenzollern, the Royal Palace and the work of Karl Friedrich Schinkel. However, a new lineage within the history of Germany and Berlin is traced through the fortified architecture of the 20th century. The embedded set of spatial conditions and collective memory associated with the typology have profoundly influenced the contemporary culture of the city, and specifically in this case the underground Techno nightclub.

Materials and matter are increasingly recognised in the landscape of contemporary memory studies as agents that have the capacity to create and affect change. Matter and its relationship to memory are of consequence in the analyses of urban environments that have undergone massive transformation, traumatic or otherwise. Contemporary studies of memory are carving out new space for a material agency; matter sits alongside humans in a network of actors that affect culture memory. As Eloise Florence notes, “Through a new materialist lens, we can expand what we consider as the objects and actors of memory to include more things such as trees, sunlight, rain, rust, masonry. These objects might then be afforded the same capacity to act in cultural remembering.”⁵⁴² Posthumanism and posthuman memory studies are highlighted by Florence as a philosophical and cultural

⁵⁴¹ Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997) 2.

⁵⁴² Florence 65.

movement that decentres the human and the typical archives of memory studies. In relation to matter Florence writes, “When afforded agency, matter becomes constitutive of new states of play, driving the force of history, not only recording its marks – it is, like cultural texts, productive. When considered vibrant, matter is inherently entwined with processes of meaning-making.”⁵⁴³ The idea here is not that inert matter alone has the capacity to affect change, but rather when people bring political and social subjectivity to that matter it produces cultural memory. Although matter is something that has typically been the object of projection in cultural memory, it can also act as a productive text given subjective interaction. *Die Mauer* is one such object and assemblage of matter that reconfigures cultural memory in Berlin. It is fundamental to Techno in Berlin and the ongoing production of culture in the underground Techno movement.

In order to better understand the way tectonics and trauma are connected in this study, it is imperative that a widening of perspective is implemented with regard to the way destruction and urban trauma ultimately occurred in the case of Berlin. The civilian deaths and casualties sustained by the Berliners during the Allied bombing were less a cause of the bombs directly but rather the material and debris of the city.⁵⁴⁴ The urban fabric was thus weaponised against its citizens. Architecture and buildings were readily transformed into *actants* against the waiting population on the ground. Simply put, bombs dropping in an open field are far less impactful (in their *raison d’être* of extinguishing human life and taking out military targets) than bombs that drop in dense urban environments. “The bombs themselves did not cause the most damage to stone, but the fires they spread and propagated, and the avalanches of debris they created. In fact, the air raids were designed to turn German cities into a giant weapon against themselves and their inhabitants.”⁵⁴⁵ As

⁵⁴³ Florence 67.

⁵⁴⁴ Florence 127.

⁵⁴⁵ Florence 127.

such, the Allied bombs were only one component of a complex assemblage. In truth, following the logic of distributed accountability, assemblage theory and posthumanism, there is an ever-complex series of non-human actants that can be drawn into the urban trauma of Berlin. Likewise, this logic applies to the Holocaust and the way it occurred through a complex series of actants against the Jewish people of Europe. Much has been written of this in contemporary discourse; however, it goes beyond the scope and expertise of this dissertation, but nonetheless figures in the wider application of distributed accountability that is applicable to all forms of trauma, especially in Berlin. With regards to the Allies and the way they reinterpreted the building fabric of the city as a component of warfare, Florence notes,

The Allies systematically planned their attacks based on how incendiary they determined different districts of German cities and towns to be. Using reports by geographer R. E. Dickinson, the Research and Experiment Department of the British Air Ministry designed maps that split German cities into zones that corresponded to population and building densities. The zones were assigned based on which densities would provide the best conditions for creating firestorms.⁵⁴⁶

Moreover, not only was the city weaponised against its citizens but so too were the bodies of the citizens themselves. “The British Research and Experiments Department of the Ministry of Home Security employed scientists who specialized in anatomy, physics and explosives to study the effects of blasts and fire on the human body and residential architecture to inform a strategy of mass bombing urban areas.”⁵⁴⁷ Residential architecture was therefore weaponised against its own owners, the secure home turned into something decidedly not so, from something *heimlich* into something *unheimlich*. A more contemporary example and analogy of the weaponisation of buildings and architecture is perhaps best epitomised in the tragedy of 9/11. The terrorist act in lower Manhattan was

⁵⁴⁶ Florence 128.

⁵⁴⁷ Florence 134.

that of two commercial airplanes being flown into the Twin Towers. However, the major destruction occurred when the towers that soared 110 storeys into the sky (an immense height that I personally experienced when visiting the buildings) came crashing down into the urban surrounds. The towers became bombs in their own right, active actants in both the destruction of the city and their own destruction, pulverising human bodies, themselves and the urban fabric. It is through this revised lens of tectonic trauma that the meaning of reinforced concrete is rewritten in the context of Berlin. It is not simple coincidence that the underground Techno movement would look to the bunker typology as the most secure and appropriate typological vessel for the new movement. It was typologically and tectonically the only object that survived the attempted urbicide by Allied bombing and hence the only thing capable of physically and metaphorically protecting people in the aftermath of what was effectively a shattered collective psyche.

While the case studies of the thesis engage various theoretical concepts, they also magnify the visceral corporeal realities of the tectonic form. The buildings are not simply iconographic and spatial, they produce real corporeal effects. The hardness of the building material resonates immediately in the body. As one walks on concrete, the effects are felt in the joints and bones; in this sense the body is registering the tectonics of the building, something that is amplified with the extended time scale of the nightclubs. This is supported by Scott Gartner:

The philosophical alienation of the body from the mind has resulted in the absence of embodied experience from almost all contemporary theories of meaning in architecture. The overemphasis on signification and reference in architectural theory has led to a construal of meaning as an entirely conceptual phenomenon. Experience, as it relates to understanding, seems reduced to a matter of the visual registration of coded messages—a function of the eye which might well rely on the printed page and

dispense with the physical presence of architecture altogether. The body, if it figures into architectural theory at all, is often reduced to an aggregate of needs and constraints which are to be accommodated by methods of design grounded in behavioural and ergonomic analysis. Within this framework of thought, the body and its experience do not participate in the constitution and realization of architectural meaning.⁵⁴⁸

The contemporary underground Techno club reconfigures the relationship between the body and architecture in two fundamental ways. Firstly, the reconfiguration is attributed to the new framing of the body in dark space, as established previously. Secondly it does so through the material form and the animation of the interior environment with Techno, a mechanical music that literally resonates in space, a resonance that can be physically registered by the human body. As articulated by Tadao Ando, “When ‘I’ perceive the concrete to be something cold and hard, ‘I’ recognize the body as something warm and soft.”⁵⁴⁹ The tectonic composition of the building acts in a reflexive manner. There are certain subtle but equally visceral existential cues that are registered as the mass of the structure, and the energy of the music pushes back against the human body. As will be developed further in the following chapters, reinforced concrete is the tectonic agent of Techno music. If Techno found its metaphorical home in the typology of the bunker, its corresponding tectonic and material prerequisite is now *die Mauer*.

4.5 Psychoacoustics and Techno

The relationship between sound, music and space is another fundamental consideration for the thesis. As defined previously, psychoacoustics refers to the physiological and psychological aspects of sound perception. In the context of underground Techno music, sound and architecture operate in a unique way. In order to uncover this unique relationship,

⁵⁴⁸ Frampton 10-11.

⁵⁴⁹ Frampton 11.

it is pertinent to first understand how architecture and sound work in general terms. Steen Eiler Rasmussen's text, *Experiencing Architecture*, posits the following:

Most people would probably say that as architecture does not produce sound, it cannot be heard. But neither does it radiate light and yet it can be seen. We see the light it reflects and thereby gain an impression of form and material. In the same way we hear the sounds it reflects and they, too, give us an impression of form and material.

Differently shaped rooms and different materials reverberate differently.⁵⁵⁰

The reflection and reverberation of sound in different architectural forms provides a unique sonic signature that contributes to the impression of a space. This is of particular relevance when considered in relation to the aesthetic categories of the uncanny and the sublime, especially with regard to the effects they render.

The psychoacoustic impression of space is affected by differing architectural form, scale and materiality. Rasmussen uses various examples to illustrate how sound operates within different spatial and material conditions. Initially, he provides the example of a barrel-vaulted passageway and a tunnel as structures that enhance sound in a specific way. The vaulted passageway is capable of producing a thunderous sound when loud objects move through it.⁵⁵¹ Architectural form and scale in this case work like a chamber in which the sound reverberates, building energy and force. Subsequently, with the example of the tunnel, its unique form produces specific characteristics of sound. The "impact of both the length and the cylindrical form of the tunnel"⁵⁵² are registered by the ear giving specific spatial and aesthetic impressions of the form, as one of extension and depth. Rasmussen goes on to note that hard-surfaced buildings with large internal spaces have long reverberation times. With the example of a cathedral, he notes that such spaces give an impression of expansion. The

⁵⁵⁰ Steen Eiler Rasmussen, *Experiencing Architecture* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1962) 224.

⁵⁵¹ Rasmussen 225.

⁵⁵² Rasmussen 225.

examples above highlight the connections between sound, space and sense impressions.

There is another relationship between architectural space and music that is of particular significance to the thesis. The connection of the two is not explicitly about sense impression as detailed above, but rather about the reciprocal relationship between the two. Rasmussen uses the ancient Basilica of St Peter in Rome to illustrate the connection:

The greatest church of early Christendom was the Basilica of S. Peter, forerunner of the present Renaissance edifice in Rome. It was an enormous, five-aisled building with stone columns separating the aisles. In *Planning for Good Acoustics* Hope Bagenal explains why the acoustical conditions of such a church must by their very nature lead to a definite kind of music. When the priest wished to address the congregation he could not use his ordinary speaking voice. If it were powerful enough to be heard throughout the church, each syllable would reverberate for so long that an overlapping of whole words would occur and the sermon would become a confused and meaningless jumble. It therefore became necessary to employ a more rhythmic manner of speaking, to recite or intone.⁵⁵³

The Gregorian chants of Christianity are a product of the specific psychoacoustic conditions that the architecture of the basilica renders. The musical form traces back to the delivery of the sermon, which required a specific cadence and intonation to be audibly clear in the basilica. The cadence, delivered in a sympathetic note (a region of pitch that reinforces a specific tone), would prevent the words from becoming overlapped due to the long reverberation time of the space.⁵⁵⁴ The priest would recite a specific note and then let his voice fall away with a cadence. Moving the voice up and down, each syllable could be distinctly heard; the technique of modulation mitigated the overlapping of sound caused by

⁵⁵³ Rasmussen 226-228.

⁵⁵⁴ Rasmussen 227-228.

the long reverberation time of the space.⁵⁵⁵ The text and sermon became a song that worked in symbiosis with the architecture of the cathedral; “in the old churches the walls were in fact powerful instruments which the ancients learned to play upon.”⁵⁵⁶ Here the connection between architecture and music is clearly visible in the ancient context. Rasmussen also distinguishes the audible difference of religious music that is heard on a gramophone (music that has been recorded in a studio with far shorter reverberation times) to that of the basilicas. He notes that “with a comparatively short reverberation,” the music “sounds rather poor”.⁵⁵⁷ This emphasises the effect that space has on sounds. Space that has longer reverberation time renders the music richer. The underground Techno nightclub shares a similar relationship between music and space. It is the industrial and manufactory timbres of Techno that work in symbiosis with the architecture that houses them.

With the Industrial Revolution, the soundscape of the modern world was fundamentally changed. The advent of engines, machines and the factories that housed them rendered new protogenic sounds that would ultimately be the reference point and basis for Techno music. Sound and space in the context of Berlin and the countercultural Techno movement have their own unique set of aesthetic values and properties. Techno music with its hard musical aesthetic was both produced by a machinic industrial technology and reinforced by hard industrial spaces in which it came to be played. Techno sought out a new psychoacoustic environment that fit its aesthetic. Particularly evident in the principal case studies of the thesis, the hard and tight concrete chamber of the Tresor and the hard expansive cavernous space of the Berghain both generate unique psychoacoustic signatures and environments. In Tresor’s underground chamber the tight space amplified the mechanical and industrial aesthetic of the music with an intensity of reverberation that was not hitherto rendered with

⁵⁵⁵ Rasmussen 228.

⁵⁵⁶ Rasmussen 230.

⁵⁵⁷ Rasmussen 230.

such force. The immense power in the sound was an uncanny reinvocation of a soundscape of industrial weaponry and war. In the case of the Berghain, the cavernous interior engenders an aesthetic that is ominous and reminiscent of the ancient basilicas with their large reverberation time and soul-stirring qualities. The architecture in these two circumstances, with their unique psychoacoustic spatial qualities, was coupled with a specific type of music to create a dramatically enhanced aesthetic environment. The tectonic and scalar properties of these architectural case studies are detailed and analysed in subsequent chapters in order to show the unique relationship between Techno, architecture, the uncanny and the sublime. The aesthetic frames of the thesis are not only registered visually – but also audibly.

Chapter 5. The Berlin Techno Club

The focus of this chapter is the context of Berlin during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Initially there is an outline of the socio-political climate in East and West Berlin (prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall) and central Berlin during Die Wende. The outline is measured against the spatial and aesthetic qualities of the uncanny. Subsequently, the history of electronic music in Germany and Berlin is documented. The urban and architectural spaces that relate to this history are also investigated. The final section of the chapter deals with the aesthetic and spatial conditions of the early Acid House and Techno nightclubs, as progenitors for what eventuated in Berlin after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The visual staging and how it relates to the aesthetic category of the sublime is also documented; the history of Berlin that is presented throughout the chapter emerges through the lens of counterculture.

5.1 West Berlin, Die Wende, Space and the Uncanny

West Berlin was an urban island; circumscribed by the Berlin Wall it sat in the middle of East Germany. It was spatially configured by the three occupied sectors of the city under the control of the United States, Britain and France.⁵⁵⁸ The fourth and remaining sector was occupied by the USSR; this area constituted East Berlin which dissolved into East Germany. In 1948 tensions had already risen; the USSR challenged the division of Berlin with a blockade, halting ground transportation between western Berlin and the western part of Germany. The blockade lasted one year but was fiercely resisted by the United States and NATO.⁵⁵⁹ The Berlin Wall divided East and West Berlin. In 1961 the East German government decided to effectively ‘box in’ and encircle the three western sectors of the city,

⁵⁵⁸ David C. Engerman, “Ideology and the Origins of the Cold War, 1917–1962,” *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 39.

⁵⁵⁹ Engerman 39.

creating an exclave that separated West Berlin from East Berlin and East Germany. They called it the ‘antifascist protection rampart’.⁵⁶⁰ West Berlin was an enclave, an outpost of capitalism buried deep in the Eastern Bloc. It was connected back to West Germany through the umbilical cords of the *Transit Autobahn*, dedicated transit highways that shuttled people in and out of the island.⁵⁶¹ The unorthodox nature of the urban space and its unfettered subsidisation rendered “West Berlin a sanctuary for contrarians looking to lose themselves, to search and reinvent. By the 1980s, stories of its all-night clubs, loose morals, and occupied tenements, known as squats, had leaked out through the militarized borders.”⁵⁶² West Berlin was truly unique in many different ways; its history was vast, its quirks and micro-narratives endless. Fundamentally, however, West Berlin became an experiment and testing ground for a new way of living. It pushed the boundaries of normality right back and carved out a space that was the “antidote to tradition-girded Germany, the walled-off half city buzzed with subversive energy.”⁵⁶³ Much of its attraction, drawing the contrarians and counterculturalists, was “the exhilaration of existing on the brink.”⁵⁶⁴ West Berlin was

a walled-in, cement-girded outpost surrounded on all sides by Soviet communism.

This extraneous fragment of Western urbanity – deep behind the frontlines of the Cold War – wasn’t for everybody, which was exactly what made it so appealing to the cranks and draft-dodgers, artistes and slackers, Hegelian Marxists and punk rockers, who called it home in the 1980s.⁵⁶⁵

The extraneous city of West Berlin gave rise to a truly unique countercultural renaissance, the echoes of which still resound to this day.

⁵⁶⁰ Paul Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* (New York: The New Press, 2017) 24.

⁵⁶¹ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 3.

⁵⁶² Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 1.

⁵⁶³ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 2.

⁵⁶⁴ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 3.

⁵⁶⁵ Dimitri Hegemann, Paul Hockenos, and Regina Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* (Berlin: Mikrofisch Verlag, 2022) 260.

Counterculture runs deep in the heritage of Berlin. While the Weimar-era culture of cabaret and decadence are often cited as forerunners to the libertine contemporary Berlin, the traces go deeper and further back. As of the late 19th century there was a burgeoning gay culture in Berlin.⁵⁶⁶ “Berlin was known for its more liberal treatment of same-sex erotic love long before the era of Weimar.”⁵⁶⁷ The concept of “*Schwul*, or ‘gay,’ didn’t even exist in London or New York before it was parlance in Berlin.”⁵⁶⁸ There was a red-light district around Nollendorfplatz and Potsdamer Strasse, with all the trappings to go with it; on offer was “absolutely *alles*”.⁵⁶⁹ This thread carried through into the Golden Twenties,⁵⁷⁰ a period of “eccentricity and sexual tumult”.⁵⁷¹ Weimar-era Berlin flourished after World War I; there was over half a decade in which “vampish cabaret, sexual freedom, and [a] culture of intemperance” set the foundation upon which imaginations would fire ever since.⁵⁷² The expression of Weimar Berlin, although crushed by the Nazis, would return to West Berlin as the city began its mid-century cultural resurgence.

Channelling the zeitgeist of the Golden Twenties was perhaps best exemplified through the lens that was Chez Romy Haag, a transsexual burlesque dancer in 1970s West Berlin. Romy Haag was born Edouard Frans Verbaarsschott in 1951, hailing from the Netherlands. Haag, “a boy who felt like a girl”, entered the circus at the age of 12 and then moved into show business as a teenager.⁵⁷³ Working across Europe as belly dancer and stripper, Haag brought a glamorous and audaciously sexy spirit to the stage. After arriving in West Berlin, she opened an Art Deco style nightclub in Schöneberg. Recruiting an “international troupe” of dancers from across the city, she instituted the legendary burlesque show and unwittingly

⁵⁶⁶ Sinclair McKay, Berlin: Life and Loss in the City That Shaped the Century (London: Penguin Books, 2023) 130.

⁵⁶⁷ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 48.

⁵⁶⁸ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 48.

⁵⁶⁹ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 48.

⁵⁷⁰ McKay 130.

⁵⁷¹ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 19.

⁵⁷² Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 19.

⁵⁷³ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 48-49.

ushered in a “momentous transgender swerve that would play out in the city for decades to come.”⁵⁷⁴ Part of her innovation was the dismissal of the “pedestrian categories of ‘gay,’ ‘lesbian,’ and ‘straight’ in exchange for a much broader, more nuanced category of ‘queer,’ even if she didn’t employ the term that theorists such as Eve Sedwick and Judith Butler would popularize decades later.”⁵⁷⁵ Fluid sexual and gender identities would eventually “transform the city like no other in Europe.”⁵⁷⁶ Weimar-era Berlin embodied a decadent femininity that West Berlin was taping into.⁵⁷⁷ Haag’s story intersects with the iconic David Bowie. Their romantic union and cultural influence on West Berlin assisted in normalising queer identities and increasing the “mystique of the western side of the divided city that seeped out to the rest of Europe and across its seas, too: Berlin, [was] a place of extremes, a city in which to lose and then find yourself anew. A city with space to live and breathe and think.”⁵⁷⁸ Bowie was an English singer, songwriter and actor, a world-famous rock star who spent almost three years in Berlin from 1976. His eclectic and androgynous sensibilities were mirrored and emphasised during his relationship with Haag. He lived on Hauptstrasse and inserted himself into the Schöneberg scene,⁵⁷⁹ dividing time between the recording studio, Haag’s Burlesque nightclub and the Andere Ufer café which was a meeting point, “like a shared living room” for the Schöneberg crowd.⁵⁸⁰ Although Bowie was an international figure, the city’s raw and down-to-earth nature had a lasting effect on the superstar, and in return he had an effect on Berlin. In West Berlin David Bowie was free in a way that he would never be in Europe and the United States; the city’s borders, both cultural and spatial, were liberating and forever impactful. He stated, ““Never again would I

⁵⁷⁴ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 50.

⁵⁷⁵ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 50-51.

⁵⁷⁶ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 51.

⁵⁷⁷ McKay 130.

⁵⁷⁸ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 54-55.

⁵⁷⁹ Peter Schneider, *Berlin Now: The City After the Wall*, trans. Sophie Schlondorff (London: Penguin Books, 2014) 63.

⁵⁸⁰ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 53.

feel so free as I did in Berlin.”⁵⁸¹

While Bowie’s Berlin and the scene he was a part of assisted in lifting the cloak on an ever expanding gay scene and a burgeoning subculture, when he arrived in West Berlin with expectations of a “Weimar-era-inspired sanctum of transsexual decadence and artistic ferment” he in fact entered a Berlin that in many ways was a city epitomised by a culture of excesses evident in the lifestyle that surrounded the Bahnhof Zoo.⁵⁸² Bahnhof Zoo is the U-Bahn train station where all of the disparate populations intersected during the 1970s and 1980s. At Bahnhof Zoo,

a broad society of new wavers and punks, the whole queer community, house squatters, student rebels, and artists had, in terms of quantity, reached a critical mass. They’d inscribed their signature on whole city districts where they flaunted an alternative economy of clubs and collectives in vast city blocks dominated by squatted housing. Tongue-in-cheek, some referred to the domains as their self-made “free republic.”⁵⁸³

While the 70s and 80s saw vast shifts in the culture of the city, pushing the limits of a boundaryless space came with perilous consequences. *Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* was a 1978 memoir, the story of Christiane Felscherinow, a teenage heroin addict and prostitute.⁵⁸⁴ Her story begins on the far western side of the city close to the Berlin Wall. Having moved from the country in northern Germany, her family inhabited a small apartment in the satellite suburb of Gropius City, the social housing project designed by Bauhaus architect Walter Gropius. Public housing of the modernist variety was erected quickly in West and East Germany at that time,⁵⁸⁵ effectively compartmentalising and

⁵⁸¹ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 55.

⁵⁸² Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 43.

⁵⁸³ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 11.

⁵⁸⁴ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 39.

⁵⁸⁵ Schneider 97.

concentrating the “fallout of a troubled society still grappling with its own physical and moral reconstruction.”⁵⁸⁶ Her Berlin was one in which the full limits of excess were pushed and the repercussions felt. The memoir became synonymous with West Berlin and was issued to high school students as a warning of the dangers associated with such a lifestyle.⁵⁸⁷ Bahnhof Zoo epitomised the culture that Bowie arrived into, as Hockenos describes: “The queer and punk rebellions of the near future were delicate buds just beginning to blossom in obscure niches.”⁵⁸⁸ The bleak excesses of the early 70s were part and parcel of a city that was experimenting, pushing boundaries, going too far and constantly recalibrating; West Berlin was a city “beyond the pale, where anything could happen.”⁵⁸⁹

The underground pastiche of the city was equally affected by the student movement and the city’s squatters.⁵⁹⁰ During the 1960s the radical partisans of West Berlin resisted the subservience of West Germany to Washington. Out of the three Allies, it was the USA that exerted the most influence on West Berlin as the outpost of capitalism in the Cold War divide. The North Atlantic Treaty was the capstone of a grander strategy to co-opt West Germany and commit it to the values of democratic capitalism.⁵⁹¹ Given the 1968 social upheaval that defined the political climate of the city,⁵⁹² West Berlin was a place where people fleeing “sexual prejudice, provincial West German hometowns, [and] the East bloc’s secret police” converged on account of its post-war status that spared men the mandatory military service.⁵⁹³ The student movement of the mid-1960s was the origin of the new post-war subculture in Berlin that resonates until this day. This generation was born at the end of

⁵⁸⁶ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 41.

⁵⁸⁷ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 39.

⁵⁸⁸ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 44.

⁵⁸⁹ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 43.

⁵⁹⁰ Schneider 77.

⁵⁹¹ Melvyn P. Leffler, “The Emergence of an American Grand Strategy, 1945–1952,” The Cambridge History of The Cold War, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 81.

⁵⁹² Schneider 77.

⁵⁹³ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 4.

World War II.⁵⁹⁴ They were well aware of the Third Reich's crimes and became increasingly paranoid of a new "proto-fascist state rising from the ashes of the old one."⁵⁹⁵ The re-evaluation of the war and Nazism during this period was triggered by a broader context of "ageing war criminals on trial before West German courts" and increased "talk of the Holocaust", largely ignored during the 1950s.⁵⁹⁶ Along with this there was the protestation of the Vietnam War by French and American students, and a new wave of socialism (a collective ferment) that was on the rise in West Berlin.⁵⁹⁷ Their idea of socialism was not the top-down (authoritarian) version from "next door in the GDR" but was more aptly the aspiration for an "egalitarian and liberal society of self-realizing citizens".⁵⁹⁸ Rudi Dutschke, an East Berlin citizen (who defected from the East upon the wall's erection in 1961), led the movement with "stirring oratories"⁵⁹⁹ that clicked with the idealist student population, most of whom were studying at the Free University (FU), girded philosophically and economically by Hegel and Marx. Although idealistic,

His [Dutschke's] vision was to transform all of Berlin into an open metropolis, independent of both East and West Germany. All of the city's walls would come down, not just the concrete monstrosity cutting across the city. The Free and Technical Universities (in the west), the Humboldt (in the east), and all of the city's other academies would be dissolved in favor of a sprawling, unstructured "learning city." Berlin would be governed by local councils and communes; workers would take over the factories while police and bureaucracy would be abolished. Self-organization would prevail from schools to hospitals.⁶⁰⁰

This revolutionary spirit would fashion the model of a newly unified Germany according to

⁵⁹⁴ Taylor xxxiv.

⁵⁹⁵ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 28.

⁵⁹⁶ Taylor xxxiv.

⁵⁹⁷ Schneider 77.

⁵⁹⁸ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 30.

⁵⁹⁹ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 30.

⁶⁰⁰ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 30-31.

Dutschke, and although this framework “never left the drawing room” it would stoke the imagination of the city, resounding through many of its countercultural and subcultural iterations.⁶⁰¹ The physical and temporal suspension of the city allowed for an unorthodox casting of the imagination. Critical to note is that the West Berlin student movement, although fundamentally opposed to East German socialist ideology of the authoritarian and Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism variety,⁶⁰² was still haunted by the spectre of a fascist resurgence and nationalist tendencies. They remained committed to some type of socialism couched firmly in collective Marxist ideals.

The squatting movement in Berlin was one such cultural innovation that was clearly influenced by the political discourse of the period, however, it was not necessarily an overtly political revolution; “The countering of mainstream culture started a ball rolling that transformed the way Germans lived, learned, dressed, and even loved.”⁶⁰³ There were three waves of squatting throughout Berlin, the first of which was exemplified in Kommune I (Commune I), an alternative model for living that rejected the traditional nuclear family; “the prototypical German *Kleinfamilie*, in their eyes [was] the nucleus of both capitalism and fascism.”⁶⁰⁴ Formed in 1967, the group comprised seven men, two women, and a nine-year-old girl. Their belief was that political cultures, “be they authoritarian or liberal, militaristic or peaceful—reflect our interactions with one another: in the family, sexual relationships, leisure, work and elsewhere.”⁶⁰⁵ They believed that Germany needed to distance itself not only from Nazism but also “the conditions that enabled it to germinate and thrive.”⁶⁰⁶ The “communards” were heavily influenced by Situationism and the Situationist International (SI), who used *détournement* (diversion) to subvert and alter

⁶⁰¹ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 31.

⁶⁰² Engerman 22.

⁶⁰³ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 32.

⁶⁰⁴ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 32.

⁶⁰⁵ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 32.

⁶⁰⁶ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 32.

existing social and political paradigms; a revolution of everyday life as a method of creating new meaning.⁶⁰⁷ While they were also influenced by Dadaism, an artform that among other things used satire (artistic flippancy) as a political weapon,⁶⁰⁸ they were more invested in the latent revolutionary potential that the SI framework offered. The SI also sought to transform and subvert urban space, breaking out of capitalist routines, instituting living experiments and new architecture, all of which could “expand the sense of what is possible.”⁶⁰⁹ Although Kommune 1 ultimately dissolved after two years, Hockenos emphasises the lasting effect it had on subsequent squatting movements in West and East Berlin, but also on Berlin more broadly even after the fall of the Wall. He states, “Berghain is inconceivable without the lipstick traces of Kommune 1, the nest of 1968’s lifestyle rebels, or the East German punks who rocked the dictatorship in the 1980s, or the ‘miracle years’ of post-Wall innovations.”⁶¹⁰

The second wave of squatting was exemplified by another West Berlin cultural innovation that took place in the district of Kreuzberg,⁶¹¹ adjacent to the Wall in what is frequently described as a cul-de-sac suburb of amputated streets, given the course of the Wall in that part of the city. Kreuzberg’s urban fabric was comprised of the *Mietskasernen*, which were tenement buildings designed to house the working-class population of an industrialising Berlin after the 1871 unification of Germany. Many of the *Mietskasernen* had “factories in the back courtyards” the *Hinterhöfe* that enabled “proletariat living above their workplaces.”⁶¹² The Allied bombing campaign destroyed much of Kreuzberg; however, it was not decimated in the same way that Berlin’s central district of Mitte was. The city of West Berlin left the buildings of Kreuzberg to deteriorate, “turning Kreuzberg into West

⁶⁰⁷ Bullock and Trombley 795.

⁶⁰⁸ Bullock and Trombley 196.

⁶⁰⁹ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 33.

⁶¹⁰ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 3.

⁶¹¹ Schneider 80.

⁶¹² Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 96.

Berlin's premier slum".⁶¹³ Consequently, the area attracted many of the bohemians and the immigrant workers (mainly from Turkey) who were a part of much of the city's reconstruction.⁶¹⁴ Ironically, real estate speculators bought many of the abandoned buildings. They were manoeuvring while in "close collusion with the city's politicians"⁶¹⁵ hedging their investments against a broader scheme that would institute radical redevelopment through wide-ranging demolition.⁶¹⁶ The boarded-up buildings that were awaiting demolition were thus occupied by squatters; this was in part facilitated by social workers and community activists of the anarchic type who "believed that modernization and renewal were possible within the context of Berlin's traditional urban geography."⁶¹⁷ The squatters were an integral part of the equation; ultimately, through their occupation, they forced the "city to rescue historic Berlin from bulldozers and carpetbaggers. More than that, they eventually beat back the architectural orthodoxy of the day."⁶¹⁸ A war-ravaged Berlin was after all the new playground for architects and city planners, ultimately becoming an "unwitting open-air museum for the deeds and misdeeds of the pioneers of the architectural profession."⁶¹⁹ A citizen's initiative called SO36 (the postcode of Kreuzberg) initiated the occupation of a building in the neighbourhood, and what followed was a wave of squatting that peaked in the early 1980s with more than 275 squatted buildings.⁶²⁰ The suburbs of Kreuzberg, Wedding and Schöneberg were notorious places for the "punks and homeless people, runaway boys and queers, artists and radical anarchists."⁶²¹ They shared a common intention to "reconfigure West Berlin's unattended spaces by turning the old workers' tenements into attractive housing, administered by the people who lived there."⁶²² This view

⁶¹³ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 98.

⁶¹⁴ Schneider 17.

⁶¹⁵ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 98.

⁶¹⁶ Schneider 97.

⁶¹⁷ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 99.

⁶¹⁸ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 99.

⁶¹⁹ Schneider 97.

⁶²⁰ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 100.

⁶²¹ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 100.

⁶²² Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 100.

of urban renewal, space and the *Freiraum* (free space) of the city was instrumental for the Techno movement.

The third wave of squatting unfolded on the other side of the Berlin Wall in East Berlin's central district of Prenzlauer Berg. While West Berlin is often seen as the leading edge of the countercultural movement, East Berlin had its own *bohème*, equally invested in subverting the conventional and realising a future of the non-authoritarian variety.⁶²³ The suburb was similar to Kreuzberg; its "old breweries and *Mietskasernen* stood in states of ruin—a hinterland that tourists weren't supposed to see, and indeed few ever did."⁶²⁴

Prenzlauer Berg was veritably spooky, there being little sign of urban life in the pockmarked tenements, ground floor shops often shuttered with no advertising or even graffiti to animate an otherwise "gray-brown cityscape".⁶²⁵ Hockenos crossed over from the West and explored the terrain in detail, stating, "In the spooky silence of the pitted cobblestone streets we gaped at block after block of forlorn structures, their disrepair more extreme than those in all but Kreuzberg's roughest corners."⁶²⁶ Moreover, "The GDR's underground scene was well camouflaged, out of sight not just to tourists but to most East Berliners, too."⁶²⁷ The stakes were naturally much greater on the other side of the Wall; subversion could lead to a host of negative repercussions including jail. Squatting took on a different form, far more clandestine and subversive. In East Berlin there was also a housing shortage. "Living space was among the scarcest of the many scarce commodities in the GDR. Even people with party credentials had to wait on lists, for years, to obtain their own tiny apartment."⁶²⁸ The GDR city planners like those in West Berlin didn't value the old tenement neighbourhoods; many of the buildings were demolished in favour of the

⁶²³ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 5.

⁶²⁴ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 127.

⁶²⁵ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 127.

⁶²⁶ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 127.

⁶²⁷ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 128.

⁶²⁸ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 134.

modernist and utilitarian *Plattenbauten*, which were essentially prefabricated concrete buildings that later came to epitomise the great failure of an overly homogenised modern architecture.⁶²⁹ These housing units were “appropriate for the cog-in-the-machine socialist.”⁶³⁰ Squatters in the East followed a different protocol than their West Berlin counterparts.

The first step entailed scoping out a vacant apartment: one without curtains or lights on at night. An empty mailbox, a broken window, or untended balcony were telltale signs that had to be monitored over weeks. . . . After breaking in and then repairing the door, the scam then was to obtain the building’s bank account number and begin paying rent. After three months, if you could prove that you’d kept up payments, the housing authorities slapped you with a fine for breaking in, and then issued you, a recently confessed criminal, a proper lease. This was squatting East Berlin style: tactical, nonconfrontational, full of contradictions.⁶³¹

The contradictory nature of such a situation only highlighted the ideological and managerial deficiencies of the GDR. The modus operandi of the squatters was far more tactical and even ephemeral; some people had apartments in various locations throughout the city and would use them like safe houses scattered throughout a hostile urban environment.

Squatting in East Berlin, the appropriation of space, was a highly political act that undermined the GDR government and its socialist platform: “Just by organizing space independently of the state, this community was disputing the state’s claim of total control and exercising democracy, too.”⁶³²

Another countercultural thread that weaves itself into the narrative of West Berlin emerges in the coalescence of punk culture, Punk, Post-Punk, New Wave and the ‘Geniale

⁶²⁹ Schneider 83.

⁶³⁰ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 134.

⁶³¹ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 135.

⁶³² Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 139.

Dilletanten' (Brilliant Dilettantes), as the 70s gave way to the 80s.⁶³³ West Berlin became far more vibrant, the city increasingly animated by bars, cafés, self-styled shops, experimental galleries, arty cinemas and record stores, all sitting in front of a backdrop of wall-art, the *Mauerkunst*, "a kind of punk art, or postmodern Dada" that brought the city to life.⁶³⁴ Dadaism was again, as it had been in the interwar period, providing an artistic reference point for artists.⁶³⁵ The Brilliant Dilettantes, comprised of artists and musicians who borrowed their name from the German Dadaist Kurt Schwitters, purposely misspelt *Dilettanten* as '*Dilletanten*' to emphasise their amateurism.⁶³⁶ More precisely, however, there was a democratisation in the artistic domain: new technologies in music that were far more accessible to the average aspiring musician meant that the barriers to entry were far lower, and this in turn opened up the landscape for greater experimentation. "The protagonists of the post-Wall techno scene, for example, were embedded among them [Brilliant Dilettantes], experimenting with electronic music more than a decade before its global boom."⁶³⁷ The Punk Rock scene was important to West Berlin and current day Berlin, because it moved the countercultural needle further away from politics, deeper into the domain of culture. Gudrun Gut (born Gudrun Bredemann), a Post-Punk and New Wave musician and an electronic artist, was much influenced by the Punk image and sound coming out of London. The exciting and new sound, along with the image and aesthetic, created a new subcultural thread that took over the 80s and set the stage for the 90s. "The way she saw it, the heirs of the 1968 revolt and Kommune I had lost the plot. The long march through the institutions had turned the onetime antiauthoritarian rebels into the new pillars of the system, in culture as well as politics."⁶³⁸ Punk became the antithesis of the 1968 culture, and ideology as a mechanism of change had lost its lustre among this new

⁶³³ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 66.

⁶³⁴ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 117-118.

⁶³⁵ McKay xviii.

⁶³⁶ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 67.

⁶³⁷ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 67.

⁶³⁸ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 69-70.

cohort. To them, the tomes of Marx were becoming ineffectual and passé. “Punk stripped rock down to the basics—three chords and a simple melody—turning up the volume and speeding up the rhythm.”⁶³⁹ Punk’s emancipation came as it killed the proverbial father, liberating itself from “rock-and-roll superstars, their money-blinded promoters, and the traveling circuses they called tours.”⁶⁴⁰ In Berlin, Punk moved to wipe away the past like many other revolutionary groups before it. In distancing itself from the cultural and political innovations of the 60s and 70s (as much as is realistically possible) it took “another decisive step from its Nazi past. Its ethic challenged and subsumed the past, creating a new German synthesis that would accompany West Berlin until the Wall fell.”⁶⁴¹

The nihilistic exclamations of Punk fit the urban island’s *milieu* perfectly. “If ever there was a city that appeared to have no future, it was superpower-contested, end-of-the-world, and corrupt West Berlin. The specter of nuclear Armageddon and West Berlin’s geopolitical vulnerability informed much of the art and aesthetic of West Berlin’s ’80s underground”.⁶⁴² The threat of nuclear war was all too apparent; “As for West Berlin, NATO strategy abandoned the city the moment East bloc forces penetrated the Federal Republic proper.”⁶⁴³ The latent potential for the Cold War to erupt was enough cause to embed continual estrangement and alienation in the citizenry. The unorthodox nature of time in a world of nuclear weapons meant that “the distance from Moscow to Washington [was] measured in the flight time of a cruise missile.”⁶⁴⁴ West Berlin was in effect the pawn of a geostrategic battle between superpowers. The angst of the situation was expressed sonically and aesthetically through Punk during the 80s. Blixa Bargeld (born Christian Emmery), lead singer of the West Berlin experimental and Industrial band Einstürzende Neubauten, was

⁶³⁹ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 70.

⁶⁴⁰ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 70-71.

⁶⁴¹ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 71.

⁶⁴² Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 71-72.

⁶⁴³ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 72.

⁶⁴⁴ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 72.

the visceral and piercing sound of the generation. The band's name literally translates to 'collapsing new buildings'. Bargeld's voice was veritably haunting and the visceral screeches that the singer delivered came to represent the darkness of the times.⁶⁴⁵ "West Berlin's dark mindset reflected the extraordinary conditions of the superpower confrontation and West Berlin's precarious perch."⁶⁴⁶ They considered their art a vehicle for "exorcising the past, of purging the sinister spirits of the Nazis with fiery onstage sorcery against the background of megaloud untuned guitars and thunderous drumming."⁶⁴⁷ Through an alien, discordant and deconstructive sound, Bargeld was trying to obliterate the truisms of post-war Germany, the dominant ideologies of the 20th century and "open the way for a novel postmodern synthesis."⁶⁴⁸ Punk brought an attitude and mindset to Berlin that laid another foundation upon which Techno would find its own stability.

The punk culture and Punk music in East Berlin evolved in a way that is oddly inconceivable and truly unorthodox, developing an unusual alliance with the East German Protestant church. "From day one of the postwar occupation, the church fought fiercely to keep the communists from proscribing its activities in the East, where the vast majority of Germans are Protestant."⁶⁴⁹ Likewise, the Roman Catholic Church under the leadership of Pope John Paul II (who was Polish) vehemently supported the Solidarność (solidarity) movement, severely destabilising Soviet communism and contributing to peaceful revolution in Poland. The tripartite relationship between Solidarność, the Vatican and the CIA was spearheaded by the Pope as an ideological offensive against communism, the KGB and the eastern Soviet bloc.⁶⁵⁰ Incidentally, early Christians who were persecuted under the

⁶⁴⁵ Schneider 31.

⁶⁴⁶ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 73.

⁶⁴⁷ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 14.

⁶⁴⁸ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 87.

⁶⁴⁹ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 143.

⁶⁵⁰ Nigel West, The Third Secret: The CIA, Solidarity and the KGB's Plot to Kill the Pope (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2001) 6.

Roman Empire were forced underground into catacombs. Their beliefs were oppressed, forcing them to develop a resistive resilience, the same kind that was propagated in the Soviet bloc during the anti-socialist resistance movements. Czechoslovakia was one such republic within the Soviet Union where political oppression was particularly strong, forcing resistance movements underground. Although the union between counterculturalists and the Protestant church seems highly unlikely, it highlights a fundamental truth: that spirituality and cultural belonging transcend ideology. The Protestant church was a critical component to the anti-communist and Punk underground. The Zionskirche (Church of Zion) was an integral institution and site, lending its premises to groups “whose activities the state refused to sanction.”⁶⁵¹ There were Punk concerts and alternative fashion shows; the church was effectively providing the East German youth with the necessary *Freiraum* to exercise their cultural and political position. The church premises was not subject to the same policing and surveillance by the GDR’s Stasi and was therefore a heterotopic and subversive space within the GDR. “Punk in the GDR was the rudest, most direct, unswerving critique of the regime.”⁶⁵² The Church of Zion and its countercultural cohort not only had to worry about the East German government and its totalitarian socialism but also neo-Nazis that stormed the church during a concert, attacking the concertgoers.⁶⁵³ This was a home-grown neo-Nazi movement from within the GDR, highlighting the schism in the East German ideology, one that so desperately wanted to inculcate its citizens with a total socialist apotheosis. ‘Church from Below’ (*Kirche von Unten*) was a group of young East Germans in Berlin that fused counterculture and politics in a way that assisted in the collapse of the Berlin Wall and ultimately the GDR.⁶⁵⁴ By 1987 they were operating from within the Protestant church, itself now deeply divided between conservative and politically resistant factions. Sheltered by the libertarian pastors, the nonconformists and activists subversively destabilised the

⁶⁵¹ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 143.

⁶⁵² Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 145.

⁶⁵³ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 148.

⁶⁵⁴ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 169.

ideological foundations through a series of zines, flyers, manifestos, handbills, posters and public letters (produced from a printing press underneath the Zionskirche), as well as protests and radio programs.⁶⁵⁵ Radio Glasnost (*glasnost* a Russian term meaning openness and transparency) was a Trojan horse plotting communism's overthrow. The content was generated in East Berlin by Church from Below, sent across to a West Berlin radio station where it was broadcast across the West, and also back into East Berlin, with East Berlin listeners in mind.⁶⁵⁶ There was a network of countercultural activists working across the border to bring about a regime change, many of which were East Berlin expats, exiled in West Berlin.

During the 1970s and 1980s the central district was a wide open, suspended and timeless space of the city that provided a fertile foundation for a rhizomatic cultural renaissance. West Berlin, in the areas closest to the central districts, was extremely rundown. The bitter winter climate was endured in poor, coal-heated and draughty buildings. There was a gloomy aesthetic of soot-scarred and bullet-pocked facades that formed the urban backdrop.⁶⁵⁷ Living there, one was always conscious that the Cold War could turn hot at any given moment and the dissected political enclave could be flattened in a matter of hours.⁶⁵⁸ For those that could withstand the unnerving and precarious political climate, there were many attractions that the urban island could offer. The West German government, well aware of the conditions, offered an 11 percent subsidy that was nicknamed the *Zitterprämie* (tremble premium), “the payoff for the angst endured by living in West Berlin.”⁶⁵⁹ The trade-off for creative people especially was the bountiful *Freiraum*, the vacant factory buildings and empty cellars which were appropriated, serving as “rehearsal rooms and

⁶⁵⁵ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 182.

⁶⁵⁶ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 176-180.

⁶⁵⁷ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* 260.

⁶⁵⁸ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* 260.

⁶⁵⁹ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 56.

ateliers where absurd flings of imagination were possible.”⁶⁶⁰ The composition of life in West Berlin enabled people to experiment with and imagine new ways of living. There was the space, *Freizeit* (free time), and lack of financial pressure to shift the quotidian paradigm. It was a place that was heavily subsidised, wages were topped off, scholarships handed out along with travel to and from the mainland. Rent and education were extremely cheap, leaving ample time for creativity, contemplation and experimentation.⁶⁶¹ Incidentally, when the Berlin Wall was on the brink of collapse, along with the East German government, many of the West Berliners who were natively born and raised, or those who had immigrated to the West and found refuge there, were taken by great sadness. Their sanctuary and bubble of *Freiraum* was about to burst, so many of the West Berliners shed tears of sadness, not joy;⁶⁶² their Wall and their *Mauerkunst* (wall art) would be dismantled and demolished, the world’s “biggest open-air art gallery”.⁶⁶³

West Berlin established a cultural paradigm that endured during Die Wende. When the Berlin Wall finally came down, there was a unique type of urban and architectural openness in East Berlin. The central parts of the city, especially in the east, became a temporary autonomous zone.⁶⁶⁴ Hakim Bey, the popular anarchist thinker who developed the idea, draws on examples of “pirate utopias”, intricate networks of enclaves that are scattered around the globe with “mini-societies living consciously outside the law” in ““intentional communities””.⁶⁶⁵ These free enclaves constituted a spatial resistance to “the totality” – utopian, uncontrolled and temporally fluid geographic spaces.⁶⁶⁶ The temporary autonomous zone (TAZ), however, pushes beyond spatial coordinates as a “psychospiritual

⁶⁶⁰ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* 260.

⁶⁶¹ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* 260.

⁶⁶² Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 15-16.

⁶⁶³ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 16.

⁶⁶⁴ Felix Denk and Sven von Thülen, *Der Klang Der Familie: Berlin, Techno and the Fall of the Wall* (Norderstedt: BoD - Books on Demand, 2014) 9.

⁶⁶⁵ Bey 95.

⁶⁶⁶ Bey xi.

state or even existential condition.”⁶⁶⁷ And, if the TAZ became “permanent”, as in a ‘permanent autonomous zone’ (PAZ), then there would be a recurring and repetitive autonomy.⁶⁶⁸ The squats and communes of Berlin operated according to the logic of the TAZ, setting the stage for what eventuated during Die Wende. The central parts of the city that were converted into uninhabitable no man’s lands by the GDR during the Cold War, along with bombed out buildings and neighbourhoods, became the new geographical locus and the urban backdrop upon which Wende culture developed. The political vacuum at the time enabled the required freedom to appropriate, improvise, squat and reuse the city and its buildings with creativity and imagination, an opportunity that was presented because of a breakdown in the political system and its governance. The spatial dimensions of the Techno subculture during Die Wende can be located at both the urban and architectural scales. When the Wall was breached, so too were the urban and architectural spaces that lay beyond it. There was a plethora of disused factories and warehouses along with buildings from the turn of the century that lay in ruin. There were former Nazi bunkers, obsolete shops and a host of abandoned war-strafed buildings that became the new urban playground.⁶⁶⁹ Leftover space within the city was also used for Techno parties such as abandoned bunkers from the Russian Airforce or emptied missile silos that had previously housed nuclear weapons such as the infamous SS20s.⁶⁷⁰ In the early stages of this new spatial paradigm, space was activated in an ephemeral way. Tactics of appropriation and makeshift adaptation rendered a type of pop-up before the ubiquity of the term arose. Spaces and clubs were there one week and gone the next.⁶⁷¹ The electronic music scene quickly adapted to the new paradigm, taking full advantage of the opportunities in space that the urban conditions offered.

⁶⁶⁷ Bey x.

⁶⁶⁸ Bey xi.

⁶⁶⁹ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 261.

⁶⁷⁰ Sub Berlin: The Story of Tresor, dir. Tilmann Künzel.

⁶⁷¹ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 261.

[Production note: This figure is not included in
this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Fig. 27. Todesstreifen im Norden Berlins (Death strip in northern Berlin). 1990.

[Production note: This figure is not included in
this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Fig. 28. Hausbesetzung in der Kinzigstraße (Squatting in Kinzigstraße). 1990.

[Production note: This figure is not included in
this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Fig. 29. Tacheles. 1993.

With the collapse of the wall there was a lack of administrative control in the years that followed. Buildings were occupied and used illegally as nightclubs. This illegal use had certain temporal implications. Clubs often used space for short periods of time until they were either forced or decided to move locations. Initially, the architectural space within the buildings was intervened with in very minimal ways. There was less emphasis on architectural intervention as opposed to the appropriation of urban and architectural space. The makeshift nature of the venues spawned a new paradigm where the people who frequented the Techno scene were also the people who organised the parties and set up the spaces.⁶⁷² There was a democratisation within the party scene, where the clubbers and patrons were also the organisers and DJs of the events. The opportunity for people to shape their own space according to their own social and political aesthetic was now possible.⁶⁷³ Conversely, in the current contemporary landscape of the city, the Techno subculture and its attendant spatial dimensions have shifted back from the urban to the architectural scale; once the administrative breakdown was restored, along with the government's renewed ability and willingness to enforce legal boundaries, architecture's role in the spatial configuring of the subculture was accordingly increased. At the architectural scale, the nuances of building typology, the ordering of objects in space, iconology, tectonic properties of structure and scale are reinscribed through the lens of the countercultural Techno movement.

West Berlin, in the time that preceded the fall of the Wall, was a place with a heightened and tense political atmosphere. The Cold War political climate was the dominant condition of the time. The aesthetic category of the uncanny, with its varied interpretations and permutations, is partly concerned with ideas of alienation and estrangement as previously

⁶⁷² *We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene and Culture*, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick, Sense Music and Media, 2008.

⁶⁷³ Denk and Thülen 9-10.

developed. They are apparent in the spatial dimensions and political and social climate of the time. The strangeness and eerie haunting of a divided city at the front line of Cold War tension created a space and atmosphere with uncanny qualities. Simultaneously disturbing and intriguing, West Berlin, a walled-in city, provided the perfect paradoxical condition where one was personally secure but immersed in a dangerous context. As discussed in the theoretical framing, “The vicarious taste for the uncanny has been a constant in modern culture”.⁶⁷⁴ In this case, the vicarious taste for the uncanny was not limited to the privacy of the domestic home but operated at the scale of a city. Existing on the brink, the enclave of West Berlin was the metaphorical armchair from which the heightened climate of Cold War tension was fully experienced. The marginalised city was the ideal place for those wishing to live in the margins of society – a place where they had a degree of freedom to imagine and create their own future. The West Berlin landscape provided the social, economic and political setting for this to occur for a period of time.

The Techno counterculture and the spirit of experimentation were emblematic of the uncanny as the cultural signs of estrangement during the period. The occupation of the city’s estranged spaces mirrored an established tendency of the modernist avant-gardes; “the uncanny readily offered itself as an instrument of ‘defamiliarization’ or *ostranenie*; as if a world estranged and distanced from its own nature could only be recalled to itself by shock, by the effects of things deliberately ‘made strange.’”⁶⁷⁵ This was the case in Berlin, a landscape of strange urban spaces violently distorted and disfigured over time, reactivated with renewed strangeness during Die Wende. The Techno counterculture embraced an extreme, strange and futuristic sound of experimentation in the form of Techno that echoed what was happening in spatial terms. Techno was the soundtrack to the rhizomatic and unorthodox conditions of the time. The music was the invisible ingredient, but the common

⁶⁷⁴ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 4.

⁶⁷⁵ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 8.

thread unifying the counterculture. Protagonists from within the scene believed that the process of reunification at the level of the street would never have been as strong or visceral without the powerful ingredient that is Techno.⁶⁷⁶

Critical to note in the history outlined above are the waves of countercultural thought and action that emerged during the 60s, 70s and 80s. They rose rapidly, but were then displaced by new waves of counterculture eager to take the place of the preceding ones. The underground Techno movement, conversely, once realised (in part as a by-product of the preceding waves of counterculture) has endured for almost four decades; the great Techno institutions of Tresor and Berghain each form a permanent autonomous zone (PAZ). “Like punk had a decade before, techno unceremoniously dethroned its predecessors and struck out onto new terrain.”⁶⁷⁷ Although the form of the underground Techno movement has morphed over time, its countercultural and cultural agency is still as great as it was during the 1990s, albeit in a newly modified form. The true agency of the *contemporary* underground Techno movement is developed through the case studies and given definitive form in the conclusions of the dissertation.

5.2 Electronic Music in Germany and Berlin

Electronic music and the venues that house it in Germany have their own distinctive history. The combination of this history and the transatlantic influence of electronic music from the United States has shaped the contemporary landscape of Techno within Germany and more specifically Berlin. Detroit Techno had specific influences in the form of George Clinton, Lee ‘Scratch’ Perry and Sun Ra. Techno music in Germany was based on the same musicological foundations but was also influenced by musicians and bands

⁶⁷⁶ *We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany’s Early Techno Scene and Culture*, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

⁶⁷⁷ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 258.

within Germany itself and other countries of Europe. The German band Kraftwerk, along with English bands such as New Order, Depeche Mode, Heaven 17 and Belgian electronic bands such as Front 242, all form part of the early lexicon of electronic music within Germany.⁶⁷⁸ In the West German city of Frankfurt, a young and burgeoning scene developed. During the 1980s the city had a strong economy in comparison to Berlin, a roster of big nightclubs and music labels that made it fertile ground for a developing electronic music scene.⁶⁷⁹ One of the central figures of the period, Talla 2XLC (Andreas Tomalla), was instrumental in the scene's development. Talla worked at a prominent music store in Frankfurt called City Music during the early 1980s.⁶⁸⁰ He was deeply invested in electronic music and would carefully curate the music of various electronic artists under the banner of Techno, which according to him signified music that was produced via technological means. Talla ran a music label called Zoth Ommog⁶⁸¹ and was also the organiser of a club event called Technoclub established in 1984.⁶⁸² It was a club-in-club event at a venue called No Name. The party later moved to another venue called Dorian Gray, with a novel concept of playing Techno music exclusively. Dorian Gray was an important nightclub around which the Frankfurt scene developed. Located in the Frankfurt Airport it was modelled on the iconic Studio 54 nightclub in New York (Studio 54 was an adaptive reuse – the space was originally an old Baroque theatre called The Gallo and later became a CBS studio). It boasted a Richard Long⁶⁸³ sound system and offered similar music styles in the form of Disco, Funk and Soul during the late 1970s. Opportunely located, DJs could fly into Frankfurt, play their set and easily move onto

⁶⁷⁸ We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene and Culture, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

⁶⁷⁹ Denk and Thülen 9.

⁶⁸⁰ We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene and Culture, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

⁶⁸¹ Sicko 119.

⁶⁸² We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene and Culture, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

⁶⁸³ Richard Long was the sound designer and engineer that set up the sound system in the Paradise Garage. The connection between Germany and the USA in terms of dance music's sonic signature and aesthetic was deliberate. The influence that the USA had on Germany with regard to dance music was extensive.

their next European or global destination – its location was partly why it was so successful. The name of the club was derived from Oscar Wilde’s gothic novella *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The motifs of decadence and hedonism present in the novel were reflected in the interior space of the club. Plush finishes, strong colours of red, orange and yellow flooded the space, drenching the ceilings, walls and floors in colour. Soft textures and contrastingly extravagant lights set the backdrop to a world of fantasy and spectacle, similar to its point of reference in New York. The dancefloor was checkered, embracing the iconic Disco aesthetic popularised by clubs such as Studio 54 and films such as *Saturday Night Fever*. The Technoclub party that was hosted in Dorian Gray played music that was considered Techno according to Talla and other central figures within the Frankfurt scene; however, with the advantage of posterity, the music would more aptly be categorised as Electronic Body Music (EBM), not Techno. EBM was a genre emergent from the European New Wave movement.⁶⁸⁴ This moment highlights the initial disagreement regarding the Techno label and its categorisation in Germany. It was believed to be one sound with a specific lineage in Frankfurt and another in Berlin. Berlin identified with the sound that had come from Detroit where the genre was born. Irrespective of this, Technoclub was more than a dance party; it was a movement with intent and focus. This was exemplified through the organisation and content of its in-house fanzine called *Frontpage* that was first published in 1989. Technoclub and *Frontpage* had an influence that reached far beyond the borders of the city, becoming internationally recognised. It was pivotal as a platform for technological music, much of the early traction that was achieved by Techno and House was in part because of *Frontpage* and Technoclub – they were leading voices for the movement of electronic music.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸⁴ *We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany’s Early Techno Scene and Culture*, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

⁶⁸⁵ *We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany’s Early Techno Scene and Culture*, dir. Maren Sextro

As mentioned previously Studio 54 sat within the commercialised lineage of Disco from the perspective of its aesthetic and cultural matrix. In the downtown party network of Manhattan, underground clubs paved the way for an alternative underground lineage, both in terms of music and their spatial-aesthetic nexus. The Technoclub party was hosted in a space that in retrospect did not adequately represent its musical offering. There was an incongruence between the musical aesthetic and the spatial-aesthetic characteristics of the club. The nuanced relationship between Techno and space matured in Berlin throughout the late 80s and 90s, with a clear set of spatial and aesthetic conditions that enhanced the genre and enabled it to flourish, making post-Wall Berlin the “techno capital of the world”.⁶⁸⁶ The left-over space of Berlin was a fertile ground to test the new sound in different industrial and infrastructural architectural forms. The Berlin Techno scene embraced the early trajectory of nightclub space that had been established in clubs such as Paradise Garage in New York and the Music Institute in Detroit. Industrial and infrastructural architecture in its various forms had the necessary spatial, aesthetic and tectonic properties for the genre. These building types worked in symbiosis with the music, just as the architecture of the cathedral worked in symbiosis with the chants and hymns of religious music.

Although there was a small overlapping scene of EBM in Berlin, the city was predominantly focused on guitar Rock during the 80s.⁶⁸⁷ What shifted in West Berlin was the introduction of House and Acid House music, which immediately began to dominate the underground scene. Acid House in Berlin was largely cultivated in a Kreuzberg basement nightclub called UFO, located underneath the second iteration of Fischbüro (the

and Holger Wick.

⁶⁸⁶ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 258.

⁶⁸⁷ Denk and Thülen 9.

history and description of which is forthcoming).⁶⁸⁸ Unique to UFO was its close-knit community that exemplified the countercultural spirit of the underground scene. Acid House was considered a type of proto-Techno, with increasingly digitised elements and stripped-back melodic sequences. The club itself was extremely rudimentary and raw, an aesthetic that would endure in the context of underground Techno. The basement cellar was constructed of exposed brick walls and columns along with a vaulted brick ceiling soffit. It had an extremely low and compressed ceiling and presented merely as the left-over subterranean space that supported the rest of the building. The cellar was in fact a “former bomb shelter”,⁶⁸⁹ a bunker that had formal and spatial qualities similar to the basement bunkers that were typically seen in Berlin during the Third Reich’s defence fortification program. The *Luftschutzkeller* (basement air-raid shelters)⁶⁹⁰ were typically designed to accommodate 50–100 people, the same capacity as the UFO nightclub. They were simple unadorned utilitarian spaces with a principal function of protecting people from air raids and chemical warfare.⁶⁹¹ UFO was one of the earliest examples of the bunker typology being coupled to underground electronic music in Berlin. The aesthetic of the space sat in polar opposition to earlier club precedents in Frankfurt such as Dorian Gray. In the UFO nightclub, the aesthetic condition of the uncanny was apparent in this early precedent. It was an unhomely space, odd in its overly compressed, recumbent and distorted proportions. It was a subterranean space, severed off and concealed from the outside world, a world that was hostile and under continued threat during the Cold War political climate. It was a space that operated as a protective haven for the people that frequented it; it doubled, however, as the oblique trigger of an architectural typology shrouded in trauma and death.

⁶⁸⁸ *We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany’s Early Techno Scene and Culture*, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

⁶⁸⁹ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 262.

⁶⁹⁰ Zaloga 29.

⁶⁹¹ Zaloga 29.

As the genre of Acid House became more popular, it spread to most other cities in Germany. However, its popularity and appropriation into the mainstream rendered it a relatively short-lived moment in the context of underground electronic music in Germany. What endured was that which had been awoken in the underground scene, a place where the youth of Berlin could escape the reality of their environment and create their own alternative as a way of forming identity in a culture they felt did not represent them. The internal environment of the club was often a disorientating experience, with an ensemble of loud music, darkness, smoke and flashing lights, enabling people to access a new type of escapism from their quotidian life.⁶⁹²

In East Berlin at the same time, the world of electronic music was relatively small. Most of the music and discos fell within the controlling parameters of the State, and the fringe sounds of electronic music were very limited. There were rumours of underground parties being held in cellars and youth clubs in which electronic music was played from pre-recorded tapes. What eventuated as the main source of electronic music for the East German youth came from a West Berlin radio station called SFB4. Two disk jockeys, Monika Dietl and Barry Graves, played certain types of higher energy dance music that the younger demographic would tape and listen to on their Walkmans.⁶⁹³ Monika Dietl's radio show called *The Big Beat* broadcast every Saturday evening was "de rigueur for thousands across the GDR".⁶⁹⁴ When the Berlin Wall came down in November of 1989, the East German youth immediately began frequenting West Berlin clubs. There was an influx of energy and interest in underground electronic music.

⁶⁹² We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene and Culture, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

⁶⁹³ We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene and Culture, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

⁶⁹⁴ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 261.

Among the East Berliners surging into West Berlin were electronic music fans who knew much about the Hard Wax record shop, Turbine Rosenheim, and UFO (the first, illegal incarnation of UFO had been shut down and refashioned in Schöneberg's Großgörschenstrasse). . . .

As for newbies to electronic music, the experience hit them like a tsunami.

Marco Bölke says UFO turned his life upside down. "I was 19 and walked into this madhouse. I grew weak in the knees and the sound sucked me in like a vacuum cleaner. The light was incredible. This place wasn't that big, pyramids hung from the ceiling, huge green-red spirals in the back, all very visual. You could even go in sober and get completely whisked away. Funky people were dancing in black-light holding luminous day-glo objects, neon fans, glow sticks, and wearing fluorescent prints on their T-shirts... I didn't feel lost in space, but as if I had entered a space capsule and was immediately part of the crew."⁶⁹⁵

The nightclub and its musical offering were symbolic of the avant-garde for young people from East Berlin. UFO 2 represented a world where people could experience a new type of independence, autonomy, exhilaration and freedom.⁶⁹⁶ The power and amplification of the sound was symbolic of a new type of agency and expression when the Berlin Wall came down. East Berliners brought an enthusiasm to the underground House and Techno scene and reinforced an already established West Berliner faith in the countercultural underpinning of the movement. The gay community from East Berlin also found in the movement a place where they could freely express themselves and live according to their own choices without prejudice. It was Berlin's zero hour; as stated by Daniel Bier a West German DJ who was part of the scene, "There was no sexism, no homophobia, no east-

⁶⁹⁵ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* 261.

⁶⁹⁶ *We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene and Culture*, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

west, no racism. The scene was a social utopia, one night at a time.”⁶⁹⁷ These elements solidified and intensified the Berlin underground electronic scene and were significant in uniting people from East and West Berlin. Initially the West German regulars “gawked at the eastern Germans in their super nerdy, East-bloc garb: stone-washed jeans, dorky trainers, jackets of drab gray, green, and beige”⁶⁹⁸ but the atmosphere and mood of renewed enthusiasm and optimism was so powerful that it began breaking down the social barriers between the east and west. The West Berliners welcomed their eastern cousins, they were united in a moment where the focus was House’s synthesizer riffs, deep basslines, penetrating beats, rhythm and smoke, agents of transportation and transcendence into Berlin’s new world of underground electronic sound.⁶⁹⁹

5.3 Rise of Techno in Berlin

Dimitri Hegemann is widely credited with having played one of the most crucial roles in the establishment of Techno in Berlin. Originally from West Berlin, he studied musicology in Münster near his hometown of Werl, before transferring to the Free University of Berlin. Moving “in the circles of the Brilliant Dilettantes”, he was and remains involved in the organisation of the Berlin Atonal Festival and was truly paradigmatic in establishing the Acid House nightclub called UFO.⁷⁰⁰ One of Hegemann’s earliest explorations in unorthodox thinking manifested with the inception of a space called the Fischbüro. Fischbüro, directly translated as Fish Office, was a Dadaist-inspired name. It was a space and project where the “declared objective was to turn consumers into producers, to encourage people to start something, give a speech, anything.”⁷⁰¹ The first

⁶⁹⁷ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 272.

⁶⁹⁸ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* 261.

⁶⁹⁹ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* 261.

⁷⁰⁰ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 262-263.

⁷⁰¹ Robert Defcon, “‘Timothy Leary loved it’: Tresor’s Dimitri Hegemann on FischBüro’s Dada Experiments,” *Electronic Beats* 2014, 12 June 2024 <<https://www.electronicbeats.net/fischburos-dada-experiments-berlin-experiment-vol-6/>>.

Fischbüro was located in Kreuzberg at Wrangelstraße 95 in an old shoe store. Initiated by Hegemann, Antje Fels and David Boysen, it became a space and community of people that developed organically and was frequented by the West Berlin intelligentsia.⁷⁰²

Timothy Leary and Robert Anton Wilson were guest speakers at the Fischbüro and were followed by the West Berlin eccentrics with much interest during a period of “rhizomatic cultural logic upon which Berlin’s nineties boom was based.”⁷⁰³ The cultural underpinning that Leary provided in the context of New York’s Disco period with David Mancuso was also at play here in Berlin with the community that was forming around Fischbüro and what would eventually be the UFO nightclub. Fischbüro was a rhizomatic Dadaist experiment during a period of cultural renaissance in Berlin. It was based on a non-hierarchical and non-linear methodology of thinking and being in the world. It was a place that explored these non-linear connections between seemingly disparate experiences:

open on Saturdays to scheduled performances, so-called further education classes, readings, or whatever happened: existentialist lectures, impromptu gigs, a dating service, waltz courses, fashion shows for men and dogs. The Fischbüro even had its own fanzine called Interfisch. . . . which primarily dealt with the “last-rites” of the Fischbüro or the question “Can the Fischbüro still be saved?”⁷⁰⁴

Interfisch was later developed into a record label for experimental and electronic music. Experimentation was an idea that was embraced wholeheartedly in West Berlin during the period. Drawing connections between seemingly disparate things is in part what promoted the coupling of Techno to specific types of unhomely spaces in Berlin. According to Hegemann, the only item that was left over from the original shoe store at the Fischbüro was a shoe repair machine called the Power Master Finisher. Once a month, the people who frequented the eccentric space would come together for a meditation session with the

⁷⁰² Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 261.

⁷⁰³ Defcon.

⁷⁰⁴ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 261.

machine. The Power Master Finisher was 25 feet long, constructed of steel, with an assortment of rotating brushes.⁷⁰⁵ Hegemann and company believed that it was instrumental for them in reaching nirvana. “There were maybe 30 or 40 people, we turned off the light and set the Power Finisher to 1. It sounded like a UFO. And then we all flew away.”⁷⁰⁶ The spirit of experimentation evident in West Berlin set in place a cultural foundation that was ripe for the new technological music that was emerging. Techno’s experimental aesthetic fit perfectly to the social and cultural matrix of the period.

The second Fischbüro was located in Kreuzberg at Köpenicker Straße 6. Beneath the gallery was the *Luftschutzkeller* that became the iconic UFO nightclub, a place that again embodied the unorthodox cultural logic of the period. Upon discovering the bunker, Hegemann and company proceeded to advance their next experiment in sound and space:

We discovered a basement under the store that could be accessed through a secret trapdoor in the floor. We didn’t ask twice but just opened a club down there called the UFO. You had to come through the Fischbüro to get in. A stranger wouldn’t know where it was. That gave us a chance to screen them, and if they were alright, we’d open the hatch and send them down the chicken ladder.⁷⁰⁷

UFO was an illegal nightclub that played Acid House music, a genre of electronic music that embraced the psychedelic philosophy. The spatial sequencing upon entry and the concealment from the outside world is where one of the core ideas of the uncanny, that of secrecy and concealment, is functioning in relation to the space. It was the first moment where all the threads of electronic music and the unorthodox cultural spaces of Berlin crossed over in a truly calculated way. It set the foundation for what would eventuate as the greatest underground movement of House and Techno after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

⁷⁰⁵ Defcon.

⁷⁰⁶ Defcon.

⁷⁰⁷ Defcon.

The second Fischbüro (underneath which was the first UFO) was closed after roughly six to seven months. Hegemann recounts that “The neighbour couldn’t bear it any longer. It was too unusual, too strange, too new, too loud. This was where we first listened to the sound of Chicago: Marshall Jefferson’s “Open your Eyes”. And that’s what I did.”⁷⁰⁸ UFO set the foundation for the new spatial-aesthetic nexus of underground Techno clubs in Berlin.

Concurrent to UFO was an open-air festival called the Love Parade that first took place in July of 1989. The event was initiated by Matthias Roeingh, a DJ who went by the moniker Dr Motte, and his girlfriend Danielle de Picciotto, a fashion designer from New York.⁷⁰⁹ In conjunction with the cohort and DJs that had formed around Hegemann and the UFO nightclub, the first event was organised. Relatively small in size, there were roughly 150 people in attendance in West Berlin’s Kurfürstendamm. It was conceived as an open-air dance event leveraging the idea off the Acid House parties in warehouses across London, which when the police shut them down would continue out on the street.⁷¹⁰ There was no permissible way to throw a dance party on one of Berlin’s major boulevards, so the organisers, in a true ironic Dadaist fashion, registered the event as a political demonstration with the title *Friede, Freude, Eierkuchen* (Peace, Joy and Pancakes), framed as a “protest against the Berlin Wall”.⁷¹¹ Peace signified disarmament, joy signified music, and pancakes signified the fair production and distribution of food. The event was a mobile music festival in the street, and the music, Acid House, was curated by the DJs from UFO (Motte, Westbam, Jonzon, Tanith and Kid Paul). Motte believed that peace and love could be fostered through dancing and music. In the lyric-less electronic music there was “dissonant meaning” and a new agency emerged: “Unawares, Motte and

⁷⁰⁸ Defcon.

⁷⁰⁹ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 261-265.

⁷¹⁰ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 264-266.

⁷¹¹ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 264.

Danielle had tapped into the zeitgeist of autumn 1989, which would charge across the East bloc and shake the Cold War world to its foundations.”⁷¹² The Love Parade grew bigger each subsequent year. By 1991 it had become a nation-wide event, people came from different major cities to Berlin for the festival, and that year was known as the German Summer of Love. By 1999 attendance reached 1.4 million people and the event took over the Tiergarten Park and the Strasse des 17 Juni, culminating around the Victory Column, a monument to Prussian militarism. “There Dr. Motte, perched like a god on scaffolding high above the crowd, spoke of music’s role in peace, brotherly love, and communion among peoples, the same themes behind the great-grandmother of all Love Parades in 1989.”⁷¹³ Hockenos makes the “disturbing comparison, that’s three times as many as rallied on Alexanderplatz in November 1989 to demand that the Wall go”.⁷¹⁴ The Love Parade throughout the 90s was the *above*-ground event, that made visible the immense power of the underground countercultural Techno movement.

After the first iteration of UFO, the UFO 2 nightclub was subsequently established in a former store building on Großgörschenstrasse in Schöneberg. It became the first legal House and Techno club of Berlin. Although UFO 2 was legal, many of the nightclubs in central Berlin during Die Wende were not. The landscape of nightclubs during the period oscillated between sanctioned and unsanctioned spaces. The practice of appropriating space and squatting lasted many years; initially this modus operandi amplified the forbidden nature of the early Techno scene. Occupation of space illegally is another trigger of the uncanny; to be immersed in dangerous things was quintessential to the aesthetic category. The club had already been established before the Berlin Wall came down in November of 1989. UFO 2 was faithful to the aesthetic that had been developed

⁷¹² Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 266-267.

⁷¹³ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 277.

⁷¹⁴ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 277.

in the first iteration of the club during the Acid House period and was successful because of this crucial foundation.⁷¹⁵ The aesthetic composition of the original nightclub was a combination of dark space and psychedelic motifs. Apart from the regular party, UFO 2 also hosted the famed Wednesday party called Cyberspace with resident DJ Tanith. Tanith brought the harder sounds of House and Techno, establishing an event that was considered to be the most avant-garde music in the city.⁷¹⁶ The music selection focused on a beat-driven style that was primal, rhythmic and hard sounding; this became the new and dominant musical aesthetic of the underground. The atmosphere inside the club was different to its precursors and there was minimal decoration in comparison to the Acid House parties with their psychedelic motifs. With the use of a simple strobe to animate the space, there was a reduction in the visual staging of the nightclub. The key ingredients were a hard sound, strobe light, enveloping fog, darkness and the image of a fractal on the wall, a geometric figure where the part has the same statistical character as the whole.⁷¹⁷ This moment marks the point where dark space and abstraction take over as the dominant aesthetic of the underground scene. Superfluous staging that had been carried forward since the Disco period was now consciously rejected for pure abstraction. The decision to create a stripped-back atmosphere became a mainstay in underground Techno clubs, especially in what would be the Tresor and Berghain.

The Cyberspace party and the paradigm that DJ Tanith established at UFO 2 became the inspiration for a new Techno party called Tekknozid. Initiated by two DJs from East Berlin, Wolfram Neugebauer (WolleXDP) and Johnnie Stieler, in 1990, the party was held

⁷¹⁵ We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene and Culture, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

⁷¹⁶ We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene and Culture, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

⁷¹⁷ We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene and Culture, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

in “former youth culture buildings of the German Democratic Republic”.⁷¹⁸ Tekknozid was particularly important with respect to the unifying effects it had for young East and West Berliners. “In contrast to the squats, the dance floors of the techno parties were overflowing with good vibes—and only good vibes.”⁷¹⁹ The squats, throughout their various iterations and permutations (couched in a great deal of political thought, ideology and rhetoric of the 60s) became in some instances places of entangled disagreement and disharmony. According to Danielle de Picciotto, Techno “fit the zeitgeist because it was instinctive, all about the senses and nonverbal bonding.”⁷²⁰ Techno is viewed by some as ostensibly apolitical, and this perhaps is where it finds much of its agency in the contemporary landscape. The organisers of Tekknozid were from East Berlin, the DJs from both East and West Berlin and the crowd a mixture of both. The music was extremely hard and the aesthetic foundation was one of rawness and abstraction.⁷²¹ Sound and light operated as a mechanism to transport people outside of their corporeal reality. The environment was staged to experience the abstraction of dark space. Pulsating strobes and laser lights intermittently cut through the atmosphere, mimicking lightning coursing its way through the sky. Neugebauer’s goal was to “create a trance like experience”, he wanted people to experience “a collective sensation through trance and find a way back to a humanity” that they would not have found otherwise.⁷²² Tekknozid was critical in establishing a space that was sublime, a legacy that can be traced all the way through the Techno movement to the present day Berghain. With the advent of Tekknozid, a change was occurring. The club became a place where certain corporeal boundaries were blurred. The Acid House scene prior to Techno explored various ideas around fantasy,

⁷¹⁸ We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany’s Early Techno Scene and Culture, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

⁷¹⁹ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 268.

⁷²⁰ Hockenos, Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin 268.

⁷²¹ We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany’s Early Techno Scene and Culture, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

⁷²² We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany’s Early Techno Scene and Culture, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

where visual staging focused on patterns, colours, videos, fabrics and decorations. In contrast, Techno and particularly the Tekknozid parties created spaces and atmospheres that were about total abstraction and darkness, an aesthetic frame that reflected the hard and dark industrial music.⁷²³ Within these Techno parties there was an explicit move away from the tropes and motifs that had emerged under mainstream Disco. People dressed down, the general aesthetic of the space became far more democratised and there was a definitive move away from the elitist paradigm that had formed in nightclub culture⁷²⁴ – emblematic in clubs such as Studio 54 in New York. There was a new type of dance-floor socialism where the idea was to lose oneself in the crowd, the light and sound.⁷²⁵ Accordingly, as the Techno scene solidified in Berlin, a greater focus and importance was placed on the architectural spatial tactics of the underground nightclub.

The relationship between Techno, architecture, the uncanny and the sublime was clearly established in these early protogenic spaces. Industrial and infrastructural architecture coupled with the manufactory and experimental sounds of Techno was a union that had real traction in the context of Berlin. Abstract dark space, rendered in the staging and through the architecture, was dominating the aesthetic of Berlin's underground nightclubs. What follows in the principal case studies is a detailed unpacking and analysis of these relationships and connections.

⁷²³ We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene and Culture, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

⁷²⁴ We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene and Culture, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

⁷²⁵ We Call It Techno! A Documentary About Germany's Early Techno Scene and Culture, dir. Maren Sextro and Holger Wick.

Chapter 6. Tresor

In this chapter specific qualities of the uncanny and the sublime that relate to the Tresor nightclub are traced and documented. Some of the broader categories applicable to architectural analysis, namely, style, typology, tectonics, scale, space and program, are analysed in relation to the theoretical frame of the thesis. Illustrated in the analysis is how the uncanny manifests in the nightclub's architecture as well as some of its countercultural programming.

6.1 Leipziger Straße 126–128

The Tresor nightclub was the ground zero for the new Techno movement that was emerging in Berlin. It was a product of the rhizomatic culture logic of West Berlin coupled with the emerging unorthodox and experimental sound of Detroit. It became the new home for the youth of Berlin and the locus of Berlin's reunification at the level of the street. "Over thirty years ago, the legendary venue threw open its doors, just off Potsdamer Platz where broken slabs of Berlin Wall lay flat on the ground. It triggered a global music movement that will always be synonymous with the city of Berlin – the world capital of electronic music, then as now."⁷²⁶ Dimitri Hegemann, already heavily embedded in the underground scene, was looking for a space that would be the successor to UFO 2 that closed in 1990. In 1991 after the collapse of the Wall, Hegemann opened in a third location on Leipziger Straße, naming the club Tresor. It was Johnnie Stieler and Achim Kohlberger who discovered the space by chance one night, while on Leipziger Straße in central Berlin. They had been looking for a new club venue and spotted what remained of the old Wertheim department store amongst other abandoned buildings in the

⁷²⁶ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 258.

area. The East German officials had erected an inelegant and basic shoebox of a building on the site. Disguised as a travel *büro*, it operated as a lookout post for the Stasi during their occupation of the area. By 1990 the “inconspicuous structure was shuttered up, like so much of eastern Berlin.”⁷²⁷ Stieler and Kohlberger returned to the site with Hegemann and “a custodian from the federal property office” who was responsible for the building and its surrounding parking lot.⁷²⁸ The custodian produced a long skeleton key which granted them access to several rooms that were crowded with GDR-era furniture, sacks of old custom bills and other leftover detritus.⁷²⁹ “After clearing a pathway to an indistinct door concealed by a tall cabinet, the party of four broke out cigarette lighters to guide themselves down a metal staircase into the pitch black. A gust of cool, musty air wafted into their faces.”⁷³⁰ The group uncovered the Wertheim bank vault that had been sealed off from the outside world since World War II. “In the annals of Berlin subculture, the descent of Tresor’s creators into the murky, ice-cold subterranean vault of the former Wertheim department store’s bank is legendary.”⁷³¹ This vault would become the site of the Tresor nightclub. The location of the building was perfect for a new nightclub that would be the landmark of where east and west came together in a reunified Berlin. The site was located on the former frontier of east and west in Potsdamer Platz. The lifeless no-man’s-land of central Berlin was desolate, barren and had been severed by the Berlin Wall. The urban void created by the GDR left a type of urban *tabula rasa* that was ripe for appropriation and re-definition according to the new coordinates of the Techno counterculture, a subculture that young East and West Berliners chose over official channels of ideological renewal.

⁷²⁷ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 274.

⁷²⁸ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 274.

⁷²⁹ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 274.

⁷³⁰ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 274.

⁷³¹ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 274.

Discovering the dormant bank vault was a profound and powerful moment in the history of Techno. The subterranean chamber became the spatial embodiment of the genre and what the early pioneers of the scene had been searching for. It was the perfect environment and housing for the emergent sound. Once inside the vault,

[they] fell speechless: in front of them on either side stood hundreds of rusted safe-deposit boxes, their doors ripped off, hinges dangling in the air. The low ceiling dropped beads of water on their heads as they explored further, awestruck. Beyond the strongroom was a gated wall of vertical metal bars, like those of a prison cell, that separated the ante chamber from a much larger area studded with support columns. Creeping with their hands along the time-encrusted walls of steel-reinforced concrete, they inhaled the scent of other times and mapped out the dimensions of a dancefloor that surpassed anything the friends had dreamed possible.⁷³²

The power and physical properties of the architectonic space matched the power of the music that it needed to house. In this new unhomely space, they recognised the potential of the architecture not only as a place that would serve the counterculture, but as an incubator of the newly gestating sound.

The nightclub became a platform for the dissemination of Detroit Techno in Berlin.

Hegemann specifically organised for Detroit Techno artists and DJs to come to Berlin and play at Tresor, setting into motion a new transatlantic alliance between the cities. The hard and jarring beats, growling synths and the relentless hypnotic rhythms cultivated in the bleak post-industrial wastelands of the former Motor City were transplanted to the new ground zero for electronic music.⁷³³ The introduction of Techno was a deliberate attempt to erase the old boundaries between East and West Berlin, resulting in the paradigmatic

⁷³² Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* 274.

⁷³³ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* 261.

inception of a new type of space, where “Young people from both sides of the recently reunited city dance to hard industrial music”.⁷³⁴ It was an opportune moment at this point in history, where the countercultural movement in Berlin was open to the new and extreme sound that was coming out of Detroit. Detroit Techno was the logical progression forward from the Acid House movement. As an abstract genre, there was more opportunity for experimentation which was pivotal during a time of great change in Berlin. Hegemann and company were initially unsure whether the new music emanating from Detroit would work on the dance floor but believed with great conviction that the sound fit Berlin’s new zeitgeist perfectly.⁷³⁵ They pursued their vision and instinct; the genre of Techno was not only accepted but was embraced at a scale and with an appreciation that was hitherto unseen. Ironically, even the city of Detroit, as the birthplace of Techno, did not see the genre embraced with such enthusiasm, but the youth of Berlin understood the transformative power of the music. “The collapse of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 gave techno ‘Renaissance man’ Dimitri Hegemann and his cohorts on the Interfish label a window of opportunity, one that was larger and more literal than that which Detroit’s youth had taken advantage of in the early 1980s.”⁷³⁶ Techno ultimately found its new home in the crisis-ridden city.

Tresor became a Techno institution and physical place where the centre of Techno was now located. The club was the epicentre for the genre and the city of Berlin logically followed suit, becoming the epicentre for electronic music worldwide. Tresor was also the catalyst that brought new life and renewed momentum to the careers of various artists from Detroit. Santonio Echols, Eddie Fowlkes and Blake Baxter were some of the club’s first

⁷³⁴ The Basement Record Store, 22 July 2024 <<http://thebasementrecordstore.tumblr.com/TRESOR>>.

⁷³⁵ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* 275.

⁷³⁶ Sicko 119.

bookings, alongside various established DJs from Berlin such as Dr Motte and Tanith.⁷³⁷

The Tresor music label also built its foundation by leveraging off Detroit artists; there were a few dozen releases that set the foundation for the label's aesthetic moving forward.⁷³⁸

The iconic *X-101* release in 1991 by Underground Resistance was one of the first releases.

“Hegemann was intent on building a connection between Berlin and Detroit, as evidenced from the 1993 compilation *Tresor II: Berlin–Detroit: A Techno Alliance*”.⁷³⁹ Tresor was as

an idea, an experiment, a political and social position grounded in the rhizomatic

conditions of 1990s Berlin, as much as it was a Techno nightclub. Techno was not only a

style of music but a movement and way of life; it was the focus for a new set of cultural

coordinates during a period of great change and uncertainty. Along with the musical movement

there was a countercultural lifestyle that broke the quotidian temporal paradigm, rendering a

new time scale in the city that revolved around nightclubs. Techno became a way of imagining a

new future in Berlin. Emulating the original thinking and exploration that occurred under

Afrofuturism, the connections and possibilities between music, technology, space and the future

were now also at play in Berlin with the countercultural Techno movement. It was paradoxically

a harsh critique of Germany's past politics (the youth had no renewed faith in the ideology of

the State) and a vehicle through which they could imagine a new and open future. In this way,

Techno was both a critique and a projection for the German youth, unlike their Detroit

counterparts living in an environment of post-industrial decay. On the other side of the Atlantic,

they were gripped by the hauntological paradox of their situation, a youth culture that was

imagining and pining for a future it knew would never eventuate.

As with many areas of Berlin, there was significant change and development in the central

district of Mitte. The site of the first Tresor nightclub did not survive the gentrification that was

⁷³⁷ Sicko 119.

⁷³⁸ Sicko 119.

⁷³⁹ Sicko 119.

occurring in the early 2000s. In the late 1990s and early 2000s Potsdamer Platz was being redeveloped – geometric glass and metal buildings owned by large corporations such as Sony, DaimlerChrysler and the Grand Hyatt were now the landmark buildings of the area.⁷⁴⁰ There was a struggle between the subculture that had developed during Die Wende and the corporations that were obliterating the spaces where the new cultural paradigm was cultivated. A new urban paradox of which Potsdamer Platz was the exemplar, Berlin was now “straining to fit into global capitalism.”⁷⁴¹ Tresor’s improvident end arrived when the city sold the land to a private investor for 20 million euros. The building was razed to the ground, its iconic vault destroyed and the site re-occupied by a nondescript office building.⁷⁴² “Dimitri used a crane to salvage the heavy vault doors, the many safe deposit boxes and gratings, and shipped them all to a former thermal power station.”⁷⁴³ Today the Mall of Berlin sits on top of Tresor’s resting place.”⁷⁴⁴ Berlin was no stranger to paradox and irony – in consistent fashion the new subcultural centre of the city was taken over by cheap capital. The Techno counterculture was in fact far more sensitive to the collective memory and trauma the urban terrain had endured. They paid respect to the building’s original memory by embracing it and making it the centre of cultural change in Berlin. The counterculture embraced a building that was paradoxically a symbol of prosperity prior to World War II but subsequently a representation of the depths to which the nation had fallen during its 20th-century history. It was the State, with its lack of understanding and short-sightedness, that chose to annihilate the memory of Tresor and what stood on the site in a pre-war Berlin.

The final party at the famous location consisted of a “sixteen-day marathon involving hundreds of sad-eyed fans – the queue to enter wrapped around the block – [and] ended on April 16,

⁷⁴⁰ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 275.

⁷⁴¹ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 275.

⁷⁴² Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 275.

⁷⁴³ The site of the new Tresor nightclub that is still currently in operation on Köpenicker Straße 70 Berlin.

⁷⁴⁴ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 275.

2005. Shortly thereafter rolled in the demolition crew, turning the club back to earth.”⁷⁴⁵

Tresor’s musical legacy and ingenuity impacted the global landscape of electronic music forever.

In the second half of the 90s the new punky UK sounds of artists like Cristian Vogel, Neil Landstrumm, Dave Tarrida and Surgeon or Regis played a leading role and gave Tresor new creative impulses. Tresor morphed and morphed again, never pausing long enough to become stale. Tens of thousands from across the world were hypnotized by the experience. “You had young people growing up in Tresor,” says Jeff Mills, explaining its significance to electronic music. The Tresor DJs travelled the globe, expanding their own cache and that of Tresor.⁷⁴⁶

Tresor truly embraced the spirit of experimentation, setting the tone and standard for underground electronic music. Everything that followed in the context of Berlin with respect to underground Techno traces back to the iconic project.

6.2 The Building and its Site

The original Wertheim building was a *Warenhaus* (department store) that was commissioned by the wealthy Jewish Wertheim family. Designed by the architect Alfred Messel, it was constructed in stages between 1896 and 1904.⁷⁴⁷ Messel was a German architect of Jewish decent, born in Austria in 1853. He was a prominent architect who completed a number of iconic buildings in Berlin and Germany; the Wertheim department store and the Pergamon Museum are two of his more well-known projects.⁷⁴⁸ Messel came from an industrious family that owned a bank in Darmstadt near Frankfurt. He was close

⁷⁴⁵ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* 275.

⁷⁴⁶ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* 275.

⁷⁴⁷ Helen Shiner, “Embodying the Spirit of the Metropolis: The Warenhaus Wertheim, Berlin, 1896–1904” *Modernism and the Spirit of the City*, ed. Iain Boyd Whyte (New York: Routledge, 2003) 97.

⁷⁴⁸ Although Alfred Messel received the commission for the Pergamon in 1906 he did not live to carry out the project. It was completed by his colleague Ludwig Hoffman. See Shiner, “Embodying the Spirit of the Metropolis: The Warenhaus Wertheim, Berlin, 1896–1904” 114.

friends with Ludwig Hoffman, a well-known architect who held the prestigious position of *Stadtbaurat* (director of planning in Berlin) for almost 30 years. Messel worked during a period of history where the old image and characterisation of the “entrepreneurial Jew” had been well established.⁷⁴⁹ There was a predominance of Jewish people working in journalism, publishing, the garment business, banking and department stores as they had been traditionally excluded from many trades.⁷⁵⁰ Given Messel’s cultural background, his connections to the city planning department and to wealthy entrepreneurial Jewish families such as the Wertheims, it is no coincidence that he became the architect for such a prominent retail building in the heart of Berlin. Messel had an established relationship with Georg Wertheim who was the executive head of the Wertheim organisation.⁷⁵¹ He had already been commissioned for two other Wertheim outlets in Rosenthaler Straße and Oranienstraße. In 1896 Messel had become ill with tuberculosis, and by 1902 he knew he was dying. The Wertheim building was his final “opportunity to make a definitive architectural statement.”⁷⁵² Messel and Wertheim “were seeking to achieve a major coup with this project”;⁷⁵³ the building, they hoped, would represent the zeitgeist of the period, and Messel wished to leave a monumental public building to posterity.⁷⁵⁴

Much of Berlin’s modernity was attributed to the Jewish people. As Brian Ladd states, “no one was unaware of the prominent roles in culture and business played by Berlin’s Jews, . . . Many Jews played central roles in the creation of Berlin’s modernity, and many non-Jews were quick to thank them or blame them.”⁷⁵⁵ Nonetheless, by the time Messel was well into the design of the Wertheim building he had undergone baptism, a decision that Georg

⁷⁴⁹ Ladd 112.

⁷⁵⁰ Ladd 112.

⁷⁵¹ Shiner 100.

⁷⁵² Shiner 100.

⁷⁵³ Shiner 100.

⁷⁵⁴ Shiner 100.

⁷⁵⁵ Ladd 112.

Wertheim envied as he too wished to follow in Messel's footsteps.⁷⁵⁶ Both men were acutely aware of the anti-Semitic climate in which they lived. Georg Wertheim was cognisant of the audacity of his retail venture and knew it would be met with a "barrage of anti-Semitic criticism".⁷⁵⁷ For this reason, the building needed to exercise good taste; it would be judged not simply for its architectural merit, but be read as a landmark building that was both owned and designed by Jewish people.⁷⁵⁸ When the Wertheim building was completed, its approximate area was 26,000 metres squared. It faced both Leipziger Straße and Voßstraße spanning from Leipziger Platz to Wilhelmstraße. When the Nazi party came to power the Wertheim family and the department store fell victim to Aryanization.⁷⁵⁹ This was a formal process whereby Jewish owned businesses were forcibly transferred to non-Jewish owners. The Wertheim family made various attempts to maintain ownership. Georg Wertheim's wife Ursula was appointed as the business's sole shareholder as she was technically Aryan by law. The couple also divorced to break the Jewish connection; however, these attempts were unsuccessful. The family ultimately lost the business, its members either ending up in concentration camps or fleeing Germany.⁷⁶⁰ The department store was renamed AWAG (Allgemeine Warenhandels-gesellschaft AG) in the course of the Nazi rule.⁷⁶¹ During the allied attack on Berlin, the building was damaged badly by bombing and fire and was reduced to rubble. The remains of the Wertheim department store were cleared in 1955 by the GDR to make way for the border strip that would demarcate the Russian sector of the city in Leipziger Platz. "The GDR razed its bombed-out ruins, except

⁷⁵⁶ Shiner 106.

⁷⁵⁷ Shiner 106.

⁷⁵⁸ Shiner 106.

⁷⁵⁹ Paul Lerner, *The Consuming Temple: Jews, Department Stores, and the Consumer Revolution in Germany, 1880–1940* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2015) 209.

⁷⁶⁰ Robert F. Worth, "A Jewish Family's Stolen Legacy: Heirs Seek Restitution for Retail Empire Lost to Nazis," *New York Times* 24 May. 2022: B1. 25 Oct. 2023
<<https://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/24/nyregion/jewish-family-s-stolen-legacy-heirs-seek-restitution-for-retail-empire-lost.html>>.

⁷⁶¹ Lerner 209.

for an underground vault that quickly became a trendy music club after reunification”.⁷⁶²

The portion of the building from which the Wertheim Bank operated was the only section that survived.

During the early 20th century, the Wertheim store was a prominent landmark building in Berlin because of its location, neo-gothic architecture and elegance. It was a seven-storey building including one subterranean basement level where the bank vault was located. The façade of the main building comprised a series of tall and slender stone columns with infilled glazing. The main pedestrian entrances to the store had a series of vaulted stone archways with stone carvings, sculptures and reliefs. The department store was the central focus of the shopping district in Mitte and was considered to be the “crown jewel of the main shopping street”.⁷⁶³ Within the site there was also a fire station, restaurants, pastry shops and an *Autopark* for the customers who visited by car. The architecture of the Wertheim was significant at that time because the building was a representation of modernity; “With its glass-roofed atrium, ten thousand light bulbs, and eighty-three elevators, it drew daily crowds of wealthy shoppers and less wealthy gawkers”.⁷⁶⁴

Department stores at the turn of the century in Berlin were seen as great urban monuments and a representation of the new world, “the brave new world of conspicuous consumption.”⁷⁶⁵ Monuments or monumental architecture was of particular concern at the turn of the century. Monuments typically functioned as a representation of the epoch. Ian Boyd Wright highlights the words of Hitler as a way of foregrounding the complaints and skepticism of the period, stating, “In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler bemoans the absence of monumental buildings in the modern metropolis”,⁷⁶⁶ and in the words of Hitler himself, “If

⁷⁶² Ladd 112.

⁷⁶³ Ladd 112.

⁷⁶⁴ Ladd 112.

⁷⁶⁵ Ladd 112.

⁷⁶⁶ Whyte 19.

the fate of Rome should strike Berlin, future generations would some day admire the department stores of a few Jews as the mightiest works of our era and the hotels of a few corporations as the characteristic expression of the culture of our times.”⁷⁶⁷ The building’s principal function was scrutinised and met with unease during the period. Shopping was seen as something decadent and artificial; it was intimately connected to rhetoric about national denigration, moral confusion, female autonomy and burgeoning consumption.⁷⁶⁸ It is for this reason that the building was already dangerous, challenging the normalised mores of the time. These issues invariably shaped the architecture, the discourse around the architecture and what the site came to represent. There was an undercurrent of counterculture in the building and the conditions in which it was surrounded; it was a site of counterculture before it became the ground zero of counterculture during Die Wende.

The main entrance of the building on Leipziger Straße was praised as being understated; it did not outwardly state its function and intention, but rather was seen as dignified, lacking “forthright declaration of its true commercial identity”.⁷⁶⁹ The architecture exuded strength, gracefulness, solemnity and a particular type of power that it conjured from its gothic ancestry. As stated in Helen Shiner’s translation of Paul Göhre’s *Das Warenhaus*:

The building looms from across the other side of the square, to be truthful, not in the manner of commercial premises, but rather like part of an old Gothic cathedral, on which everything fanciful has been spared, or like one of the most noble, earnestly charming chapels of an Oxford college. If you stand of an evening at a distance from it and watch the window masses sparkle with scattered and yet restrained lights – you feel you have to wait there until the first organ tones sound across to you from those

⁷⁶⁷ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (London: Pimlico, 1992) 241.

⁷⁶⁸ Shiner 107.

⁷⁶⁹ Shiner 107.

high halls.⁷⁷⁰

The elegance and strength of the architecture resounded in the façade of the building, a tectonic veil of obfuscation. The subtle nuances of indeterminacy were at play in Messel's design.

In Germany at the turn of the century, there was an adoption and preferencing of the Gothic, as the best representation of national style in many forms of art during the period.⁷⁷¹ It is said that Messel, in the design of the Wertheim (exemplified in the Gothic entrance on Leipziger Straße), sought to counter the established dominance of the French Art Nouveau during the period.⁷⁷² However, the building was constructed with an iron frame that was largely clad in stone. There were various instances in the building where the ironwork was left exposed in some of the interior spaces, and division of space was accordingly achieved in these instances through the use of glazing. The building therefore exploited two different spatial and material expressions. Here the duality of the architecture is visible; Messel was carefully mediating the architecture which was seen as both historicist and modern. As Helen Shiner points out, "For Messel, the essential elements of contemporary architecture were simplicity and functionality, wielded jointly to create an aesthetic whole. It was this fusion which was registered by the young Bruno Taut on first viewing the Leipziger Straße store in 1902."⁷⁷³ Likewise, Peter Behrens spoke of Messel in his obituary, praising the architect for his resolute stance against the academic rules of the day and elevating the building to the status of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*.⁷⁷⁴ The significance of the architecture and building is best exemplified in the words of Helen Shiner:

Messel's building complex for the Wertheim family came to be seen as a model for

⁷⁷⁰ Shiner 107.

⁷⁷¹ Shiner 101.

⁷⁷² Shiner 101.

⁷⁷³ Shiner 102.

⁷⁷⁴ Shiner 104.

future practice. In its referencing and unifying of past architectural styles, it spoke insistently to a generation seeking a national style for all forms of the arts in Germany. The spectacular architectural and sculptural appeal of its main entrance façade on the Leipziger Platz was rooted in reforming ideals of the turn of the century. Envisioning a vitalist utopia based on an idealised, specifically anti-French, national past, the entrance façade belied the primarily commercial function and interior opulence of the store behind.⁷⁷⁵

The building in the early decades of the 20th century represented a new trajectory and focus of architecture heading into the modern age. It challenged societal norms and the architectural discourse of the period with respect to national identity. However, the building seemed predestined to suffer a tragic demise given the rhetoric of the period. In the latter parts of the 20th century, its meaning would shift again. The remains of the building would represent the newly emerging counterculture of Techno.

The Wertheim Bank was a small section of the overall building located at 126–128 Leipziger Straße, near the intersection with Wilhelmstraße. It was an in-house bank for the store that dealt with the usual banking transactions but was also used as a place for the storage of valuables. The Wertheim transacted in cash; it also sold gold and silver that necessitated a secure storage area for precious objects. Beneath the bank was a bank vault called the ‘silver chamber’. Inscribed on the vault doors were two concentric circles with a bar underneath that would become the Tresor nightclub’s iconic logo. Tresor is both a French and a German word. The French meaning is treasure; the German meaning is vault. Both accurately describe the place and its function.

⁷⁷⁵ Shiner 113.

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Fig. 30. Kaufhaus Wertheim, Leipziger Platz, 1920er Jahre, Berlin. (Wertheim department store) 1926.

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this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Fig. 31. Das Schaufenster der Wertheim Bank an der Leipziger Straße (Wertheim Bank Leipziger Straße). Berlin.

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this digital copy due to copyright restrictions.]

Fig. 32. Blick in den Tresorraum der Wertheim Bank an der Leipziger Straße (Wertheim Bank silver chamber). Berlin.

With specific reference to the façade of the Wertheim Bank, its street frontage faced Leipziger Straße. It consisted of a series of columns with glazing in between. There were six slender columns dividing the façade between two large outer stone columns. In this way it was slightly differentiated from the main building. The outer columns were the main supports for the façade; they rose the full height of the building and framed the bank. The Wertheim Bank presented as a single-storey component of the overall building. It had a sign spanning the width of the frontage with the inscription 'WERTHEIM BANK AKT.-GES'. The windows of the façade were divided into bays of four, six and nine quadrants. Behind the glazing sat a steel concertina security cage that was operable, providing additional security and protection to the glazed façade. The main entrance door, aligned on the left-hand side of the bank's frontage, comprised two hinged doors with glazing and security mesh behind. The bank's façade was different to the other parts of the Wertheim façade; it presented as a compact and secure architecture. The building's abstract entablature and inscription were proportionally large in relation to the frontage, creating a sense of weight and compression.

As stated above, the Wertheim Bank was at the centre of an urban condition that underwent great transformation during World War II and the Cold War. The Mitte district was extensively damaged during the allied bombing of Berlin, many of its building's reduced to rubble. During the division of the city, the space that was occupied by the border strip was the dominant element in the landscape. The border strip at this specific site was formed by an inner and outer wall, and between the double wall was the infamous 'death strip'. During the Cold War the site that was formerly occupied by the Wertheim was a ghostly urban wasteland, devoid of the life and dynamism that animated the area during the early 20th century. It was not only the architectonic element of the Wall and death strip, but the cosmopolitan void that produced a haunting urban effect prompting an uncanny aesthetic.

Although the Wertheim Bank survived physically, the building underwent its own type of death. After World War II the space was transformed into a 'tomb' that sat dormant for approximately 45 years. Given its historical location the building can be read as a representation of death, inactivity, and burial over time. This new reading of the building reconfigures its place within the architectural lineage of dark space.

6.3 Typology

The Tresor vault can be classified as an underground building. It was comprised of two main compartments. The first of these spaces was located on the ground floor of the building from which the Wertheim Bank operated. It was accessible from the street level and had a street frontage addressing Leipziger Straße spanning approximately 12 metres wide and 35 metres deep. This volume consisted of four main rooms from which the bank was managed. The second compartment was the subterranean basement level of the building where the vault was located. On the basement level there were two main spaces. The first space was a room that sat adjacent to the vault; it operated as an antechamber measuring 7 metres by 11 metres with four central square columns. This space was the arrival point, a vestibule of sorts, attached to a staircase that was accessed inside the bank on the ground floor. The second space was the vault itself which was comprised of two main rooms. Access into the vault was via two separate entrances. One of these entrances, located between the antechamber and the vault, was where the patrons of the bank would have gained access to their safe deposit boxes. The other entrance was from a second smaller antechamber behind the vault where a second staircase coming from the ground floor was located. This entrance would have operated as a service point for the employees of the bank. Within the vault there were two main rooms. The first room was rectangular and had walls that were lined with safe deposit boxes. It measured approximately 5 metres wide by 10 metres long. This room was the area where the two entrances to the vault were located. The second room was the main chamber of the vault.

This was only accessible through the first room (lined with safe deposit boxes). It was a rectangular room segregated solely by steel security bars, measuring 9 metres long by 7 metres wide. A steel bar door at the threshold between these two rooms was the only way of entering the main chamber. Within the vault there were no other spaces of circulation. Inside the main chamber there were three columns, two smaller columns and one large cruciform column that picked up the structural load from the main columns of the building above.

The Tresor vault shares similar architectonic traits to the underground bunker typology that was prevalent in Berlin during the Nazi fortification program of the city, even though it predates this program. The core principle of this specific architecture and typology is that the space is segregated from the street and provides the required isolation and protection from the external environment. The Tresor vault was a buried architecture. In the first cycle of the building's life, it was a space that housed valuable goods and was designed to be impenetrable in order to protect those goods. In the second cycle of the building's life as a nightclub, it operated as a space that protected the architecture's internal usage and function, hiding them from view; that function was the accommodation of Techno and its associated counterculture. The building operated in an analogous way to the typology of the tomb. The tomb was typically an underground architecture designed as a space for burial. When analysing other building types within the family of fortified structures under the Third Reich, the bunkers of the Atlantic Wall provide additional material through which a deeper understanding of the architecture can be gained. Built by the Nazis between 1942 and 1944 in order to protect against an Allied invasion, these structures are monolithic fortifications that formed an extensive defence network along the Atlantic coastline. As detailed by French philosopher Paul Virilio in *Bunker Archeology*, one of his first impressions upon seeing the bunkers along the French littoral was that they called in a "series of cultural memories . . . the Egyptian mastabas, the Etruscan tombs, the Aztec structures...as if this piece of artillery fortification could be identified as a funeral ceremony, as if the Todt Organization could

manage only the organization of a religious space”.⁷⁷⁶ Foregrounded here is the strong relationship between the architecture of the vault, ancient tombs and the bunkers of the Atlantic Wall, which are all connected to concepts of isolation, impenetrability, burial and death.

Because of its underground location and architectural expression, the Tresor operated as both a vault and as a tomb. It was a catacomb of sorts that metaphorically represented the death and burial of Berlin’s central district during World War II and the Cold War. The safe deposit boxes that lined the walls were akin to the grave niches of a catacomb. Their emptied contents were a sign of a life that was originally there but had since gone. These are the visual triggers of an uncanny aesthetic, the signal of a life and time that has since passed. Transitioning into the subterranean space of the building, into what became a hermetically sealed and buried environment, prompted both a corporeal and cerebral shift. Moving down into the subterranean space and crossing over the vault’s threshold became a rite of passage in a liminal ritual. Victor Turner wrote extensively on the subject in a text entitled *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti Structure*.⁷⁷⁷ Turner outlines the concept of transitional states, where individuals or groups of people detach from an earlier social structure or set of cultural conditions, transitioning into a liminal state of being. This occurs in three distinct phases. Firstly, there is a separation from an earlier fixed point or cultural construct; secondly there is a transition where one moves through an ambiguous state into a new cultural paradigm, and thirdly there is a re-aggregation or re-incorporation where the passage is consummated, where the subject or individual now resonates according to the new customary norms.⁷⁷⁸ In these liminal states they form what is referred to as *communitas*, which is an unstructured

⁷⁷⁶ Virilio 11.

⁷⁷⁷ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1969).

⁷⁷⁸ Turner 94-95.

state where members of a community are equal, or where they share common values.⁷⁷⁹ The threshold of the vault is liminal in two fundamental ways: firstly, as an oversized transitional spatial divider that separates architectonic volumes; and secondly, as an apparatus that mediates the temporal rhythm and sequence of the liminal ritual. The Tresor vault was therefore a highly heterotopic space of otherness – it doubled as both a physical and cerebral space of liminality, and by consequence is exemplary of the uncanny.

6.4 Tectonics and Materiality

The tectonic composition of the Tresor vault operates in a unique way with respect to the four main components of tectonic theory, namely hearth, enclosure, roof and mound. The hearth of the building is the original silver chamber or vault. This hearth does not sit on and is not supported by the building's mounding. As a spatial organisation, the hearth is inverted and sits beneath the mounding. The mounding of the building in this instance doubles as a protective roof for the hearth. Enclosure operates through the use of thick reinforced concrete walls, floors and ceilings. These elements present as a continuous monolithic fabric, similar to the bunker monoliths along the French littoral. The monolith, and the vault in this case, can be read as a hollowed-out stereotomic mass, where the internal space of the vault is carved out or subtracted, leaving a monolithic shell similar to the structural composition of a catacomb.

The plan of the Tresor vault indicates that the enclosure is comprised of a double concrete wall. There are two reinforced concrete walls with an air gap in between them that provide a double layer of protection for the space inside the vault. This haunted architectonic doubling is only revealed in the orthographic drawings and is another way in which the uncanny presents itself in the architecture. Another effect of doubling takes place with respect to the

⁷⁷⁹ Turner 96.

two doors of the silver chamber that were constructed of solid steel and concrete. These weighed approximately 3.5 tons and were the threshold crossings from the antechambers into the vault. The door threshold is an uncanny element due to its proportions. Given the immense width of the threshold, it presents as a dimensional anomaly that produces an uneasy effect as a liminal space. The Tresor vault contains two descending staircases, two antechambers, two entrances and two rooms inside the vault that are protected by two concrete walls; an uncanny doubling is present at every moment through the sequence of spaces and in all the building's elements.

The materiality of the silver chamber in its original state as the Wertheim vault, and in its new life as the Tresor nightclub, was not fundamentally different. The material composition of the vault remained relatively intact; however, the materials degraded and weathered over time. The vault was originally a space that prompted an image of wealth and opulence. The carefully organised safe deposit boxes were visually elegant. The space was lit with delicate glass pendants and although the architecture exuded a specific strength, it was nonetheless a space of wealth, privilege and optimism. In the building's second life as the unearthed nightclub, it was a visual representation of the destruction and decay of World War II. The safe deposit boxes were no longer intact as they once were, the metal was rusted and distorted, the deposit boxes gone, and their doors removed. The mud, dust and condensation accumulated over four decades had eroded the vault surfaces and removed any trace of a lustrous environment that was once there. This visual shift from opulent to decayed is indicative of a ghostly and haunted uncanny aesthetic.

6.5 Scale, Space, Light and Reverberation

The cross-section through the antechamber and chambers of the vault were heavily compressed. The ceiling height was approximately 2.6 metres and was consistent

throughout the space. The ceiling, comprised of concrete, was articulated by a series of continuous small vaults cast into the slab soffit. There was no transition from compressed to expansive space. The sequence of spaces to the vault and through the vault maintained intimate and tight architectural proportions. The compact scale of the vault created a particular type of spatial atmosphere in the modern iteration of the building as a nightclub. As a compressed dark and raw space, comprised of concrete and steel, it was often described as oppressive and severe. There was no natural light and little ventilation causing a high degree of humidity and condensation inside the chamber. Anecdotal accounts of the Tresor captured moments inside the space where it would rain sweat from the concrete vaulted soffit,⁷⁸⁰ and where at times there was not enough oxygen in the air to light a cigarette.⁷⁸¹ Some DJs would bring an oxygen tank and mask down into the vault in order to breathe properly while performing their sets for extended hours.⁷⁸² These atmospheric conditions and the intensity of the sound created a sense of distortion and disorientation inside the space, prompting a haunted sense of the uncanny. As a buried and dark architecture, the space of the Tresor can be read through the phenomenology of darkness as established by Boullée and Vidler; an architecture and space of death, perpetually in shadow, only contrasted by intense strobe lights that mimic lightning coursing its way through the atmosphere.

The amplification of Techno in the concentrated concrete chamber of the vault was paradigmatic with respect to the power and intensity of the music. The concrete structure with its dual enclosures created a massive and rigid architecture whose strength and material hardness caused the sound to reverberate with an intensity that was unique to Tresor and had not been hitherto experienced. The chamber of the vault had specific psychoacoustic

⁷⁸⁰ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 304.

⁷⁸¹ Sub Berlin: The Story of Tresor, dir. Tilmann Künzel.

⁷⁸² Sub Berlin: The Story of Tresor, dir. Tilmann Künzel.

properties due to its compact scale which created an atmosphere that was intense and visceral for the users. These properties began informing production techniques for groups such as Underground Resistance from Detroit. The music they produced was noticeably harder after being exposed to the intensity inside Tresor's vault. The psychoacoustic properties of the vault sharpened and intensified sound, revealing new potential for the genre of Techno itself. The tight reverberation caused by the architecture was mirrored in production techniques. Producers utilised tight room information for specific musical parts that rendered harder timbres in the genre. The result was an ominous sense of power when the music was ultimately amplified through the club's PA system. This new symbiotic relationship between architecture and Techno has permanently coupled the two, with the aesthetic and acoustic properties of space playing a fundamental role in the production of Techno. The protagonists within the scene at that time were aware of this newfound relationship: "‘Everyone really felt the symbiosis of space and music in the vault,’ explains Alexandra, Tresor door person and booking agent. ‘I was always fascinated by the way that architecture and music influence each other. E-Werk, just a shout from Tresor, had a cathedral-like atmosphere where the same music sounded completely different.’"⁷⁸³

Likewise, Regina Baer, a key figure within the Tresor organisation and one of the first people to see the vault after its rediscovery, was appointed site manager during the preparation of the club's space. She states, "‘The hardness of the steel reinforced walls, the concrete floor, the metal safes and gate, this hardness is what made the Tresor sound’, . . . minimalistic, hard, uncompromising."⁷⁸⁴ Tresor Techno established a new paradigm and aesthetic; the relationship between industrial timbres, machinic repetition and acoustically tight and visceral sonic information.

⁷⁸³ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 275.

⁷⁸⁴ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, Tresor: True Stories the Early Years 275.

6.6 Program and Counterculture

As stated, the Wertheim Bank in its original form had two main functions. It operated as a commercial bank on the ground floor level of the building and as a bank vault on the basement level. When the building operated as a nightclub the main entrance was via Leipziger Straße. This entrance coming off the street was connected to what would have been the ground floor of the Wertheim Bank. The original bank area was converted into a long rectangular room that had a series of bars, dance floors, toilet facilities and seating areas. On the basement level there was the main Tresor dance floor located inside the former vault. The first room of the vault was programmed as an entrance and bar area. The second room was programmed as the main dance floor and DJ booth. Outside of the vault, where the original antechamber used to be (the original vestibule for the bank's patrons), the space was reprogrammed as a transitional zone that gave access to the vault and doubled as a bar and breakout area. The DJ booth was inside the vault in what would have been the most inner part of the building's original layout. It was tucked away to the side of the main chamber between the building's major columns and had steel jail-like bars in front of it, foregrounding it as the main jewel of the new building in an act of metaphorical protection. The architecture provided a unique setting that engendered a sense of impenetrability and refuge, allowing the club's primary architectural program to flourish.

As established, liminality corresponds to both states of being and physical spaces. Concurrent to this is the concept of liminal personae (threshold people) who are further detailed by Victor Turner. He outlines how threshold people "elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and

arrayed by law, custom, convention, and [the] ceremonial.”⁷⁸⁵ Their indeterminate and ambiguous natures were traditionally represented by symbols that ritualise cultural or social transitioning. Turner thus states that “liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon.”⁷⁸⁶ Identifying the countercultural cohort of the Tresor is not simply about appearance, culture, politics or activism but rather about groups of people who were deeply invested in an alternative way of living, thinking and being. The Techno counterculture was in part a mechanism by which new cultural production occurred; contemporary *communitas* of threshold people that found new meaning in the slippage between sanctioned and unsanctioned cultural and political norms. Underground dark space resonated with the aesthetic of Techno and with the cohort that comprised the Techno subculture. They were conducted by the DJs that stood before them, and in the case of Tresor they were guided by the “black-masked DJs of the Underground Resistance. . . . [who were] militant, defiantly uncommercial, anti-corporate and strictly opposed to ‘social programming’; ideas which would eventually mesh with Berlin’s subculture”⁷⁸⁷ and come to define this specific group of threshold people. The Techno counterculture specific to Tresor pushed an extreme social and musical aesthetic. The atmosphere of Tresor as a space was intense, visceral and even aggressive. The intensity of the space can be viewed as a type of atmospheric or spatial psychosis. Psychosis forms part of the psychotic disorders, which are “any form of severe mental disorder in which the individual’s contact with reality becomes highly distorted.”⁷⁸⁸ The physical distortion and disorientation within the vault, due in part to smoke, moisture and darkness, was fully registered in the hitherto intensity of industrial Techno in such a tight chamber. The trauma of the vault some fifty years after the trauma of the bunker was a self-

⁷⁸⁵ Turner 95.

⁷⁸⁶ Turner 95.

⁷⁸⁷ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* 261.

⁷⁸⁸ Steve Tee, “Mental Health and ill-health in Adults,” *Human Growth and Development in Adults*, ed. Jonathan Parker and Sara Ashencaen Crabtree (Bristol: Policy Press, 2020) 251.

induced and uncanny shock, a type of cathartic shedding by Berlin's youth of their collective trauma.⁷⁸⁹

The Tresor vault had all the fundamental spatial, organisational and atmospheric conditions to enable the new subcultural movement to develop; the architecture was an incubator for the Techno counterculture. Prior to uncovering the old Wertheim bank vault, Johnnie Stieler and Achim Kohlberger spent much of their time searching for a space and venue for the new successor to UFO 2. The words of Stieler poignantly illustrate how important the architecture was to the cultivation of this new social movement:

Achim and I spent most of our time driving around, looking for a location. We found so many great spaces, but we could never find the right person to talk to. We were always being told, "Please leave!" No one wanted anything to do with us. I had nothing else going on, so I often wandered through East Berlin and checked out houses. You could just walk in anywhere. One place I saw was a house on Gendarmenmarkt with an attic. It was absolutely amazing: ship-deck parquet flooring, panoramic windows on all sides and a balcony that encircled the entire house. We spent a long time trying to rent that, but to no avail. In Jägerstrasse there was an incredible ballroom that we were also interested in, but we were snubbed again. Aesthetically, of course, it would have been a whole different story. Maybe techno wouldn't have become such a basement culture if we'd got one of those locations.

Looking back, though, you have to say it wouldn't have been the right fit at all.⁷⁹⁰

The early pioneers deeply understood what Techno music was calling for spatially and aesthetically. Tresor set the standard and baseline for what Techno architecture would become; its relationship to the bunker typology is forever coupled.

⁷⁸⁹ *Sub Berlin: The Story of Tresor*, dir. Tilmann Künzel.

⁷⁹⁰ Hegemann, Hockenos and Baer, *Tresor: True Stories the Early Years* 277.

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Fig. 33. Tresor nightclub descending staircase.

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Fig. 34. Tresor nightclub, vault door and entrance.

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Fig. 35. Tresor nightclub vault. Antechamber with safe deposit boxes and main room beyond.

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Fig. 36. Tresor nightclub vault atmosphere.

Chapter 7. Berghain

In this chapter, as was done with the previous architectural case-study, Tresor, specific qualities of the uncanny and the sublime that relate to the Berghain are traced and documented. Some of the broader categories applicable to architectural analysis, namely, style, typology, tectonics, scale, space and program, are analysed in relation to the theoretical frame of the thesis. Illustrated in the analysis is how the uncanny and sublime manifest in the nightclub's architecture as well as some of its countercultural programming.

7.1 Rüdersdorfer Straße 70

The origins of Berghain trace back to a party called Snax, which was a men-only dance party and fetish night that had been hosted at different venues around Berlin in the 1990s. It began in 1992 at a Techno club called Bunker. Bunker was in fact a former Nazi bunker located on the corner of Albrechtstraße and Reinhardtstraße in the central district of the city. It was the venue that first hosted the party, and further indication that the architectural typology of the bunker is heavily embedded in the DNA of Techno. As part of the Führer-Sofortprogramm initiated by Adolf Hitler in 1940, the bomb-proof bunker was constructed with a sheltering capacity of 1,200 people. This specific bunker was called the Reichsbahnbunker Friedrichstraße, designed by Karl Bonatz and intended for the passengers and staff at the Friedrichstraße railway station.⁷⁹¹ It was Albert Speer who directed the program. The bunker was initially intended to serve the city during the war and then be converted into a stone-clad cenotaph to the 'Final Victory'. In the months before capitulation there were up to 4,000 local residents that took shelter in the bunker.⁷⁹² In 1945

⁷⁹¹ Timo Feldhaus and Raoul Zöllner, Boros Collection/Bunker Berlin # 4, trans. Andrea Scrima (Berlin: Distanz Verlag, 2022) 14-15.

⁷⁹² Feldhaus and Zöllner 14-15.

after the war, the bunker was occupied by the Red Army and used as a prisoner-of-war camp. Subsequent to this, with the establishment of the GDR, the government saw no great use for the building. It was converted into a storage facility for tropical fruits, for the State-owned VEB Obst Gemüse Speisekartoffeln (VEB Fruit Vegetable Potatoes), hence its nickname ‘Banana Bunker’.⁷⁹³ In 1992 after the fall of the Wall it was transformed into one of the hardest Techno clubs on earth. The weight of the building’s tectonic mass is dizzying; it was a smoke and sweat-drenched dark space animated by Techno, fetishism and fantasy. The original dark rooms (that have been carried forward into the Berghain) were designated spaces within the building. With their walls purposely painted black, these void spaces of darkness were where the counterculture was free to act out their wildest sexual fantasies. The last Techno party inside the bunker was held on New Year’s Eve of 1995. Afterwards the authorities intervened and sealed the building off, deeming it no longer fit for public use. In its present-day form the building is home to the private museum known as the Boros Collection.⁷⁹⁴

The organisers of Snax were looking for a permanent location to host the party and were offered a warehouse “on a vast industrial lot in the district of Friedrichshain in former East Berlin”.⁷⁹⁵ The space was a railway warehouse between Warschauer Straße and Ostbahnhof train stations, originally used for train repairs. The club promoters Michael Teufele and Norbert Thormann operated the warehouse venue from 1998 to 2003; they named the club Ostgut. In German, ‘*Ost gut*’ is directly translated as the ‘good east’. Its name is significant because it is a commentary on the political perceptions and positions of the period coming out of Die Wende in a newly reunified Berlin. The concept of Ostalgie is often framed as a nostalgia for specific values that were foundational in communist East Germany. While this is

⁷⁹³ Feldhaus and Zöllner 14-15.

⁷⁹⁴ Feldhaus and Zöllner 14-15.

⁷⁹⁵ Mats Wurnell, *Berghain: The World’s Most Legendary Techno Club*, trans. Jonas Vesterberg, eBook (Mats Wurnell, 2017).

in part true, it is not explicitly nostalgia for something that is missing, but rather a form of identity politics.⁷⁹⁶ Highlighted here is the fact that not all aspects of reunification were considered optimal, or that East German politics was wholly negative; Ostalgie is another frame that provides detail with respect to the perceptions of the time. The youth of the period had grown up with specific customs, morals and cultural values in former East Berlin which were evidently still important to them in a reunified city. Ostgut can be seen as a commentary and type of identity politics that discerns the pitfalls of capitalism; the East German youth were now forced to operate under a new political and economic system that was foreign to them. Just as the Tekknozid party, with its attendant aesthetic of dance floor socialism, provided a foundation for the new Techno landscape, Ostgut appeared to be reinforcing those same values which are symbolic of the East.

Although the Snax party continued to be hosted at Ostgut, most nights offered “quality techno to an audience that was both gay and straight. It had all the qualities that people associate with Berghain today; the dark nooks and crannies, the mixed crowd, and—of course—techno music.”⁷⁹⁷ Ostgut was therefore the foundation and precursor to Berghain. A few years after Ostgut began, it expanded with the introduction of an upper dancefloor. From the space “you had a terrific view over surrounding warehouses and factories. The new section was named Panorama Bar and focused on house and softer techno that drew somewhat of a more mainstream crowd”⁷⁹⁸ relative to the Snax parties. Panorama Bar was a separate party or club-in-club at the Ostgut venue. Concurrent to these parties, another event was introduced into the mix, called Lab.oratory. It was again a party and club-in-club that was run in the same space as Ostgut. “This club was primarily dedicated to a gay male clientele, with a focus on sexual

⁷⁹⁶ Ina Merkel, “Alternative Rationalities, Strange Dreams, Absurd Utopias: On Socialist Advertising and Market Research,” *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, ed. and trans. Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008) 324.

⁷⁹⁷ Wurnell.

⁷⁹⁸ Wurnell.

activities that were a bit too extreme to coexist with the mainstream crowd.”⁷⁹⁹ Thus the original Ostgut space had four different parties or club-in-club spaces known as Snax, Ostgut, Panorama Bar and Lab.oratory that were carried forward to the new Berghain location. The Ostgut nightclub closed on January 6, 2003 due to a redevelopment scheme proposed for the broader site. The industrial lot was developed into a sports stadium called the O2 World Arena.⁸⁰⁰ Berlin was yet again victim to a process of gentrification that obliterated many of the fundamental sites of cultural production in the city, post-Wende.

After the closure of Ostgut it would be almost two years before the club’s successor was realised. On October 15, 2004, Teufele and Thormann took over a decommissioned power plant owned by the Swedish energy company Vattenfall; the building became the home of their new nightclub called Berghain. The name referenced the Cold War division of the city throughout the latter part of the last century. The club’s predecessor, Ostgut, had been located on the border of Friedrichshain in East Berlin and Kreuzberg in West Berlin, adjacent to the river Spree. *Berg-hain* is therefore a portmanteau of these two names, the two districts that were adjacent to each other but divided by the Berlin Wall. The Berghain sits halfway between the Spree and Karl-Marx-Allee, one of the major boulevards of the German Democratic Republic. The name, similar to Ostgut, is another nostalgic prompt that points toward a place and period of great trauma during the unusual history of the city. The word *Berghain* is a way of preserving the memory and underscoring the importance of a space in the city that was on the frontline of Cold War division.

During its transformation to a nightclub, the building underwent an architectural intervention carried out by a Berlin-based firm called Karhard Architektur (originally

⁷⁹⁹ Wurnell.

⁸⁰⁰ Wurnell.

Karsten + Veit) for their client, OstGut GmBH.⁸⁰¹ The building complex in its contemporary configuration as the Berghain nightclub is divided into four main spaces, called Berghain, Panorama Bar, Lab.oratory and Kubus/Halle. There were some additional spaces that were added afterwards. Säule, another club-in-club located on the ground floor of the building, has become a space for more experimental blends of electronic music. Kantine am Berghain is a restaurant and live music space located on the same grounds in an adjacent structure next to the main building. The various parties or what can be referred to as club-in-club venues are spread across these major areas of the building. The architectural intervention retained much of the original building; the focus was on adaptation of functional elements and development of architectural program that served the specific needs of Berghain. The dilapidated building was updated in order to receive the public and function as a Techno club. On the opening night,

The great hall that would later become [the] techno club Berghain was not yet completed, so the guests congregated in the new Panorama Bar, which in many senses followed down the same path as its predecessor. . . .

A month after the opening of Panorama Bar, it was time for the steel doors that lead to the great turbine hall to finally open. It was called Berghain after the two neighborhoods that flank the club—KreuzBERG and FriedrichsHAIN. Just like the great floor of Ostgut, the musical focus was dark, hardcore techno that ripped up the concrete dust and roared the ground.

The floor was filled with dance-hungry revelers, setting their innermost selves free. The ceiling height, the industrial ambiance and the powerful bass created a force of nature making itself felt far beyond the city of Berlin.

⁸⁰¹ The official architectural documents that were retrieved from the Bezirksamt Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg indicate the name of the architectural firm that submitted the plans to the city planning department. The firm has since changed its name to Studio Karhard.

A legend had been born.⁸⁰²

Berghain became what is commonly referred to as the greatest Techno nightclub in the world; it has established a new paradigm in Techno, both culturally and musically. The club is now renowned for its “austere techno, industrial architecture, and clean sound system”.⁸⁰³ Berghain “has often been treated with the same reverence as fine art”.⁸⁰⁴ The nightclub is categorised as an arts venue and taxed accordingly; it pays a lower rate of tax, the same as an opera house or museum.⁸⁰⁵ Its high art status and cultural significance has recently been recognised by the city after a court case in 2016, where it was argued that its DJs are comparable to the conductors of an orchestra.⁸⁰⁶

7.2 The Building and its Site

The building, located at Rüdersdorfer Straße 70, was constructed between 1953 and 1954, and was originally called the VEB Fernheizwerk der Stalinallee. Located in a semi-industrial zone of the city, it was built as a remote heating and power station for the district of Friedrichshain. The site was configured in a large rectangular shape and comprised not only the main building but various other outbuildings and adjunct structures. The building compartments and outbuildings were originally the *Turbinenhaus* (turbine hall), the *Kesselhaus* (boiler room) and the *Maschinenhaus* (machine room). Adjacent to the building was the *Kohlenlagerplatz* (coal yard) and a series of additional smaller structures such as the *Kühlturm* (cooling tower) and the *Pförtnerhaus* (gatehouse). Initially the building only functioned as a remote heating station, but by 1957 it was extended to also produce electricity. To the east of the main structure was the *Kohlenlagerplatz*, a large open area

⁸⁰² Wurnell.

⁸⁰³ Andersson 451.

⁸⁰⁴ Andersson 451.

⁸⁰⁵ Andersson 451.

⁸⁰⁶ Tobias Rapp, author of *Lost and Sound Berlin, Techno und der Easyjetset* was commissioned by the nightclub to produce a report arguing the case that DJs were equivalent to orchestra and opera conductors. Philip Oltermann, “High culture club: Berghain secures same tax status as Berlin concert venues,” *The Guardian* 12 Sep. 2016: 27 Sep 2023 < <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/sep/12/berlins-berghain-nightclub-classed-as-culturally-significant-venue>>.

where the coal was stored and processed before being conveyed into the building's boiler room. The site was also serviced by its own railway coming off the city line for the transportation of coal and other material. In its contemporary configuration, the site is somewhat different in that the *Kohlenlagerplatz* has been reduced in size due to adjacent urban development. Despite this, the main building complex remains intact; the site's original scale was reasonably large, measuring roughly 22,000m².

There was significant separation between the building and the surrounding urban fabric due to the scale of the site. The urban area around the site moving in the direction toward Stalinallee was, and remains, predominantly residential. Stalinallee was the neoclassical flagship development of East Berlin, modelled on classical Greek proportions with a mixed-use design. It was conceived as the new grand boulevard of the East that echoed Moscow's Gorki Street.⁸⁰⁷ The long boulevard, that extends 2,300 metres, was originally called Frankfurter Allee. It was renamed Stalinallee, but is now called Karl-Marx-Allee; the shifting political landscape is captured in the city's struggle over its identity. The design embraced "local architectural traditions and adhere[d] to socialist-realist tenets of urban design" in line with the "newly drafted 'Sixteen Principles of Town Planning'."⁸⁰⁸ The district of Friedrichshain was one of the worst bombed areas in Berlin: the tenement buildings that lined Frankfurter Allee were levelled during the war and what remained in their wake has been described as a "desert landscape".⁸⁰⁹ Hans Scharoun led much of the urban planning after the war in what was still an undivided city. The reconstruction of Friedrichshain began quickly after the GDR was formed in October 1949.⁸¹⁰ Directly opposite the Fernheizwerk, at Rüdersdorfer Straße 57, sits the Feuerwehr Friedrichshain

⁸⁰⁷ Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) 42.

⁸⁰⁸ Till 42.

⁸⁰⁹ Anders Aman, *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era: An Aspect of Cold War History*, trans. Roger Tanner and Kerstin Tanner (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992) 119.

⁸¹⁰ Aman 119.

which was constructed as the district fire station. The building is configured as a large square with an internal courtyard and stood as a showcase building for the GDR after its inception. Its front facade faces the front facade of the Fernheizwerk; the buildings are separate but have much of the same formal architectural language. The Feuerwehr is a more modest and muted neoclassical building with very similar ornamentation and detailing to the Fernheizwerk. The buildings clearly form part of the same family and create an architectural continuity that was of high importance under Socialist Realism.⁸¹¹ The site of the Fernheizwerk and its surrounding area of Friedrichshain can be seen as the infrastructural heart of the district at that time. It was the engine room that supported the reconstruction of the district and the new flagship boulevard of Stalinallee.

Today the building has two main compartments, the *Kesselhaus* and the *Turbinenhaus*. Its initial function required large spatial volumes that would house the various types of equipment associated with a heating plant and a power plant, namely, boilers, turbines and coal distribution lines. These spatial demands resulted in a structure that was large, cavernous and monolithic. The internal organisation of the building in its original state rendered a sequence of spaces that were compartmentalised in line with the building's function. The building materials are predominantly monolithic reinforced concrete, infilled brick masonry and glass that facilitated its industrial usage. It was designed to support significant structural loads imposed on the architecture due to extensive industrial machinery within large spaces. This is exemplified in the forest of concrete columns that supported the original boilers and turbines. The cavernous internal volumes were necessary to house the coal hoppers and conveyors transferring material into the boilers.

⁸¹¹ Paul Stangl, *Risen from Ruins: The Cultural Politics of Rebuilding East Berlin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018) 18.

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Fig. 37. VEB Fernheizwerk der Stalinallee. Berlin. 1953-1954.

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Fig. 38. VEB Fernheizwerk der Stalinallee. Kohlenlagerplatz (coal yard).

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Fig. 39. VEB Fernheizwerk der Stalinallee. Mobile coal hopper.

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Fig. 40. VEB Fernheizwerk der Stalinallee. Kohlenlagerplatz (coal yard) and Kühlturm (cooling tower).

The Fernheizwerk was designed in line with the Socialist Realist style of architecture, an architectural style and ideology originating from Stalinist Soviet Russia. Socialist Realism within the domain of architecture was a set of architectural ideals, rolled out in the six countries that formed what was known as the ‘people’s democracies’ during the 1950s: the GDR (German Democratic Republic, or East Germany), Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.⁸¹² The movement, broadly speaking, embraced a traditionalist aesthetic which sat in contrast to the modernist aesthetic that was burgeoning in the west. Each of these aesthetics was connected to political ideology; Modernism aligned itself to the political right while the aesthetic of Traditionalism veered to the political left.⁸¹³ Socialist Realism was not imported from the Soviet Union to the people’s democracies; instead, the Soviet Union was the *precondition* that was overlayed with different national traditions to form a synthesised aesthetic form in architecture.⁸¹⁴ The way this translated into architectural form was of course unique in each country. The predominant formal characteristics of Socialist Realism are monumentality, symmetry, neoclassicism and traditionalism (although not in relation to vernacular architecture which was seen as working class and a product of capitalist oppression).⁸¹⁵ Socialist Realism is in part defined by what it is not; namely, Constructivism, Functionalism, Formalism and Modernism to name a few.⁸¹⁶ It did, however, embrace technology, standardisation and industrialisation,⁸¹⁷ paradoxically the core components that formed the basis of the International Style. However, politicians and some leading architects insisted that “technologically advanced building techniques would be artistically employed to express social and national ideas.”⁸¹⁸ As Modern architecture implemented concepts of function and form, the corresponding idea in Socialist Realism was that “A building—like a novel or a symphony—had to be ‘socialist in content and national in form.’”⁸¹⁹

⁸¹² Aman vii.

⁸¹³ Aman 3.

⁸¹⁴ Aman 4.

⁸¹⁵ Stangl 19.

⁸¹⁶ Aman 5.

⁸¹⁷ Stangl 90.

⁸¹⁸ Stangl 89.

⁸¹⁹ Aman 50.

This would prove to be elusive with respect to conveying “any concrete idea of what architecture ought to look like.”⁸²⁰ Classicism, with its attendant ideas of form and town planning, would prove to be the fundamental organisational and aesthetic mechanism that was employed in the quest for new architectural form within Socialist Realism. The classical principles that informed much of the movement were ornamentation, architectural detail, the façade via the street, the square and the block as artistic entities within the city, the ensemble and the silhouette (monumentality).⁸²¹ The VEB Fernheizwerk der Stalinallee can be formally read according to these design ideas and principles. The building is monumental, its internal and external architectonic elements convey a robust physical weight and gravity, its façade addresses the streetscape and forms a dialogue with the city block and its adjacent buildings, and its neoclassical ornamentation and architectural detail convey the requisite artistic substance for which Socialist Realism called.

7.3 Style

As outlined in Chapter 3, the aesthetic categories of the uncanny and the sublime (the branches of aesthetic theory where feelings of dread, fear, transcendence and awe are evoked) are visible throughout the Berghain, both in its original and contemporary form. Not only is the architecture understood through these aesthetic categories, but so too is the building’s contemporary function as an underground Techno nightclub. Although the building was originally planned for a utilitarian function, its use of Social Realist aesthetics was nonetheless specific as a projection of State power. Given its context within the Cold War climate, where State infrastructure was used not only as something utilitarian but also (literally) as an instrument of State power,⁸²² the building operated as an architectural expression of the State’s hegemony in a divided city.

⁸²⁰ Aman 50.

⁸²¹ Aman 50.

⁸²² The Berlin blockade of 1948 and the ensuing proxy Cold War over Berlin’s infrastructure system concretised the typology of the power station more broadly, as a hegemonic symbol and another weapon in the ongoing ideological battle between the East and West. Bewag, the city’s electricity utility, was located in the eastern sector of the divided city. In West Berlin, the rationing of electricity due to the blockade meant that sewage pumping stations were left with no other choice than to dump sewage into the city’s watercourses. See Timothy Moss, *Remaking Berlin: A History of the City through Infrastructure, 1920–2020* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2020) 168-176.

A discussion of power and how it relates to architecture is fundamental in revealing the embedded meaning and narratives of the case-study in question. There is a vast body of knowledge that discusses how meaning is conveyed in architecture; for the purposes of this study it is important to outline this, at least in principle, as it subsequently underscores the relationship between meaning and power in architecture. Buildings generally convey meaning in four ways: denotation, exemplification, metaphorical expression and mediated reference.⁸²³ Power is typically construed in two fundamental ways. The first approach “follows a functional logic: buildings, urban design, and in particular official architecture for governmental use find a form which reflects both the underlying purposes and the underlying ideology of the political regime”.⁸²⁴ Architecture is thus regarded as a sign of power, idealism and wealth.⁸²⁵ Monumental architecture that was prevalent under the totalitarian regimes of the interwar period in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union was founded on this notion and forms a broader condition to which the principal case study belongs. The second approach operates as the inverse of the first: “architecture, like art, contributes to the shaping of images that constitute the political world in which we live: . . . In this way, architecture can be seen not only as providing visual and spatial means of legitimation for a political regime or elite, but also as a genuine act of constituting political reality.”⁸²⁶ In this case, architecture is a reflection and intention of both the ideology and designer but is also interpreted through the discourse on its meaning, via the process of acculturation.⁸²⁷

When discussing power and its relationship to architecture, it is important to establish what the notion of power constitutes. Michael Minkenberg distinguishes that power refers to political

⁸²³ Nelson Goodman and Catherine Z. Elgin, Reconceptions in Philosophy and Other Arts and Sciences (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1988) 34.

⁸²⁴ Michael Minkenberg, introduction, “Power and Architecture: The Construction of Capitals, the Politics of Space, and the Space of Politics,” by Minkenberg Power and Architecture: The Construction of Capitals and the Politics of Space (New York: Berghahn, 2014) 2.

⁸²⁵ Wolfgang Braunfels, introduction, Urban Design in Western Europe: Regime and Architecture, 900–1900, by Braunfels, trans. Kenneth J. Northcott (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988) 3.

⁸²⁶ Minkenberg 2-3.

⁸²⁷ Lawrence J. Vale, Architecture, Power, and National Identity, 2nd ed. (Oxon: Routledge, 2008) 7.

power, political authority and the assertion of the regime: “In this sense, public architecture, official buildings, and the urban design of official places can always be interpreted as ingredients of the establishment of political legitimacy.”⁸²⁸ The totalitarian regimes in Italy, Russia and Germany devoted much attention to architecture and urbanism as a means of ideological legitimisation.⁸²⁹ In relation to this, William Curtis notes that “The pretence had to be maintained that official taste was a conduit, so to speak, for broader communal impulses.”⁸³⁰ Modern architecture for these regimes was viewed with great scepticism: it was “at best marginal, at worst a dangerous threat in need of extermination”,⁸³¹ even if, ironically, they saw value in Modern architecture’s structural and technological economy. The neoclassical architecture of Socialist Realism was employed in the design of the VEB Fernheizwerk der Stalinallee to operate as an expression of State power. It incorporated ideas such as decoration, monumentality, allusion, axuality and grandiose scale. Neoclassicism was utilised as a means of metaphorical expression, reviving the formal characteristics of Classicism; the regime was silently solidifying its imperial image.

In order to trace and unpack the complex web of aesthetic connections, the building’s style is the ideal place to begin. The southern façade of the building was originally the rear façade; however, it is now utilised as the entrance to Berghain and as such has been reframed and is understood as the front of the building. The reorientation of the façades in this sense is an act of inversion; this shift is the first subtle sign of incongruency in the architecture. The original front façade and streetscape is no longer activated as a space of entrance and circulation. This modification renders the original front façade void of movement and life, evoking a ghostly aesthetic condition of lifelessness. The southern exterior facade mimics the regimented symmetry of columns that would have formed a colonnade in classical architecture. These columns are cruciform and accentuate the vertical

⁸²⁸ Minkenberg 3.

⁸²⁹ William J. R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture: Since 1900*, 3rd ed. (New York: Phaidon Press, 1996) 351.

⁸³⁰ Curtis 351.

⁸³¹ Curtis 351.

dimensions of the façade as they are uninterrupted by horizontal elements. In between the columns are slender windows that sit back from the face of the column allowing for a modulation in the depth of the façade. The windows are rectangular and narrow, again drawing attention to the vertical dimensions of the architecture. In between the windows are horizontal square and rectangular concrete planes. They are set back from the face of the columns, providing a reference point for the horizontal concrete floor plates behind. The planes were decorated with simple circular relief ornamentation on the original northern façade facing Rüdersdorfer Straße. On the southern façade (now the front of the building) these elements are unadorned. This was due in part to the fact that the *Turbinenhaus* was an addition to the original structure of the *Kesselhaus*. The columns are captured above by an entablature that is unadorned, lacking any ornamentation. Instead, there is a series of punched windows mimicking a sequence of openings reminiscent of fortified buildings and above-ground bunkers. The building has no pediment, a classical element that was either proportionally different or dispensed with completely in the neoclassical system. The exterior columns sit on a horizontal base that clearly completes the tripartite division of the façade in line with the classical system of architecture. The neoclassical façade with formal hints of fortified architecture carefully mediates the degree of exposure through its proportions. As with other architectures throughout history that attempted to signify State power, the dimensions of the façade symmetrically mediate the openings of windows and doors to the solid exterior walls. In this case the building's openings are minimised and the entry door small relative to the scale of the architecture, which is one way it makes a monumental effect. The lack of porosity physically and ideologically separates the internal space from the external environment. The façade's neoclassical language has all the embedded historical iconography of Cold War architecture, more specifically the covert and fortified stance of the structure protecting its internal contents while projecting power and monumentality.

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Fig. 41. VEB Fernheizwerk der Stalinallee. Decommissioned Kohlenlagerplatz (coal yard).

The separation between inside and outside suggests another reading of the interior as a secret space. As outlined in Freud's theory of the *Unheimliche*, the interior space of the domestic home where private acts occur was to remain secret and hidden. Parallels can be drawn here with respect to this specific piece of State infrastructure. The facades were designed to conceal the function inside. The original architecture's fortified and monumental aesthetic was a metaphorical projection of power. However, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the GDR, the architecture's signification changed. There was a shift in the interpretation of the architecture's meaning and the messages it now conveyed. The monumental projection of State power became the remnants of a vacant regime and a shadowy fantasy, no longer a representation of the grandiose eastern ideologies but of their ideological deficiencies. The new meaning, however, was an ephemeral one. As the building took on a new life in its contemporary configuration, what it represented changed once again. The Berghain nightclub can now be read as a monument to a failed regime, but also as the symbol of a new underground culture. The nightclub's secrets are kept private and hidden behind the monumental walls. Counterculture, and the subculture of underground Techno in this instance, subsume and occupy an industrial architectural relic. In the contemporary configuration of the building the various meanings that have historically applied collapse on one another simultaneously. One does not only see the Berghain in its contemporary signification but also a decaying artefact and what was once a grand and powerful piece of State architecture. The conflation of these varied meanings into one homogeneous reading is indicative of a haunting, uncanny aesthetic.

Within the aesthetic category of the uncanny, the concept of estrangement adds further detail to the reading of the building. Vidler establishes that for Benjamin Constant estrangement was evident in the dislocation of individuals from their birthplace, while for Karl Marx the

term was grounded in class struggle and alienation.⁸³² For Freud, estrangement was not simply not belonging; it was the idea of defamiliarisation, the presentation of something familiar in an unfamiliar way.⁸³³ In the modern iteration of the building the front and rear façades are left largely untouched. The building during the day, unless known otherwise, could be seen as a decaying architectural relic. There is a disconnection between the building's form and function, a defamiliarisation. However, with the activation of the building at night, the openings in the façade signal to a life inside that is unknowable from the outside and unfamiliar to most Berliners because of the activities that occur there. The façade of the building mediates the interior world from the external environment. It presents a hint of an unfamiliar world within, mediated through something familiar but historically distant. There is a spatiotemporal collapsing and embedded aesthetic of indeterminacy.

The concept of a haunted house holds particular significance within the arena of an architectural uncanny. The Berghain, given its siting, scale, stylistic appearance, decay over time and relationship to the Cold War political climate, takes on the formal qualities of a haunted house or a haunted architecture. Against the backdrop of Romantic literature that underpins the uncanny, "The house provided an especially favored site for uncanny disturbances: its apparent domesticity, its residue of family history and nostalgia, its role as the last and most intimate shelter of private comfort sharpened by contrast the terror of invasion by alien spirits."⁸³⁴ The occupation of a Socialist Realist architecture by a highly sexualised countercultural cohort is a subversive act that solicits an uncanny disturbance on the architecture's original state.

The building's siting also conveys a feeling of haunting due to the negative space of the

⁸³² Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 4.

⁸³³ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 7.

⁸³⁴ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 17.

missing *Kohlenlagerplatz*. Once a space full of movement, machinery and material, indicators of life and productivity, it was transformed into a space that was dormant, vacant and desolate. The remnants of an industrious and productive building can be seen in the leftover city infrastructure. The railway lines that acted as the transportation arteries for essential material are now symbolic of the lifelessness left in their wake. This lifelessness, or *terrain vague*, is the destabilising effect of the uncanny. While the building does not possess any fundamental elements that are untoward, it nonetheless evokes dark fantasies that are projected onto the architecture. Embedded in the architectonic elements are the collective memories and traumas of 20th-century Berlin. Its neoclassical motifs return in a subtle way via both the Nazi and Soviet architectural languages. This return is yet again a presentation of the uncanny.

7.4 Typology

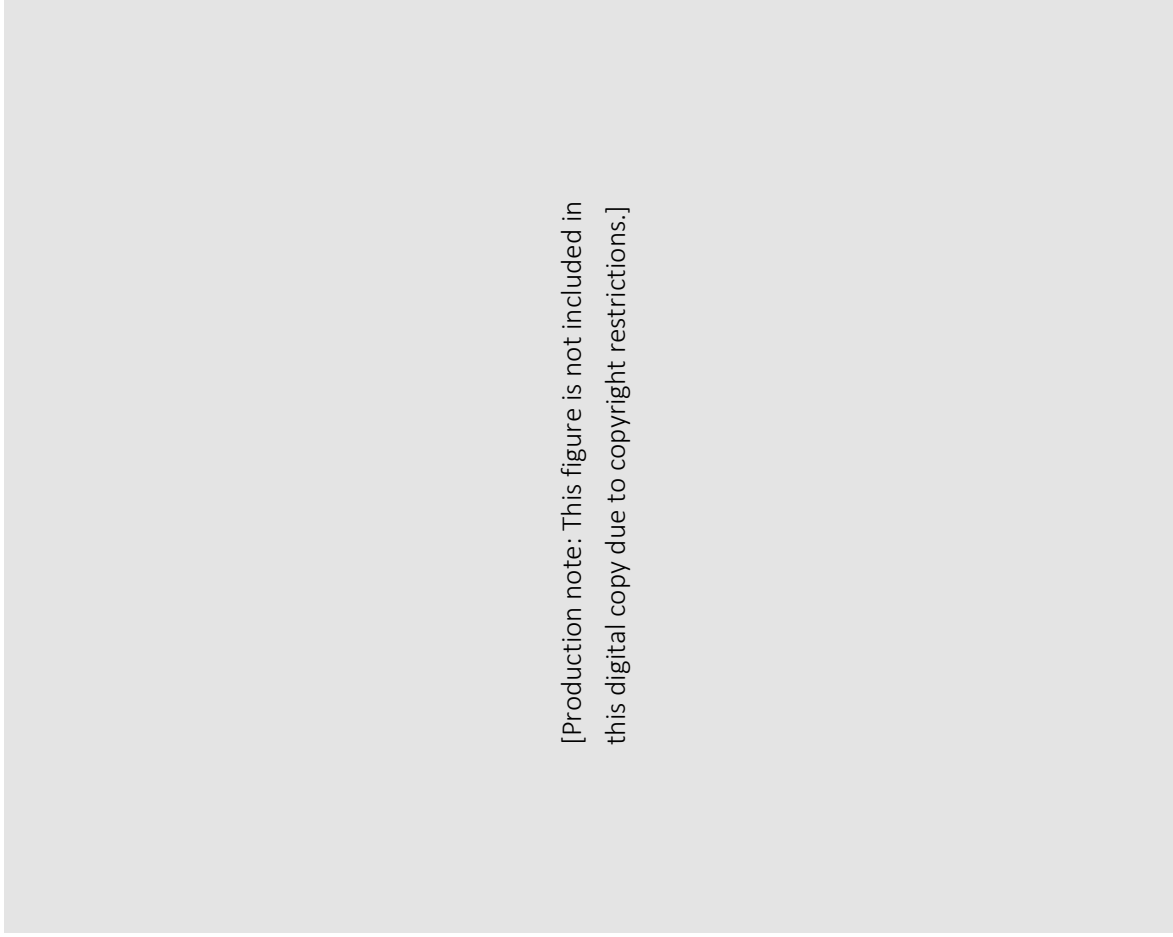
The building can be classified as an above-ground industrial building. Like many buildings of this kind, it depends on a rational method of planning and organisation to fulfil its original use as a remote heating and power station. Like other power stations, it relies on certain fundamental components, such as coal storage and distribution, boiler rooms, turbine halls, cooling towers, chimney stacks and the infrastructure that connects these elements. Buildings of this type operate like large machines; they are sequentially organised into compartments in line with their fundamental components.

As stated, the *Kohlenlagerplatz* was a large external depository for coal. It contained large mobile hoppers supported by steel truss structures that collected and transferred coal into the boiler room compartment of the building. The *Kesselhaus* was the first major compartment of the building in the sequence of spaces. Its primary purpose was to house the boilers that were fed with coal via large in-situ concrete suspended hoppers. It was the front part of the building that

faced Rüdersdorfer Straße and facilitated the production of remote heating for the district.

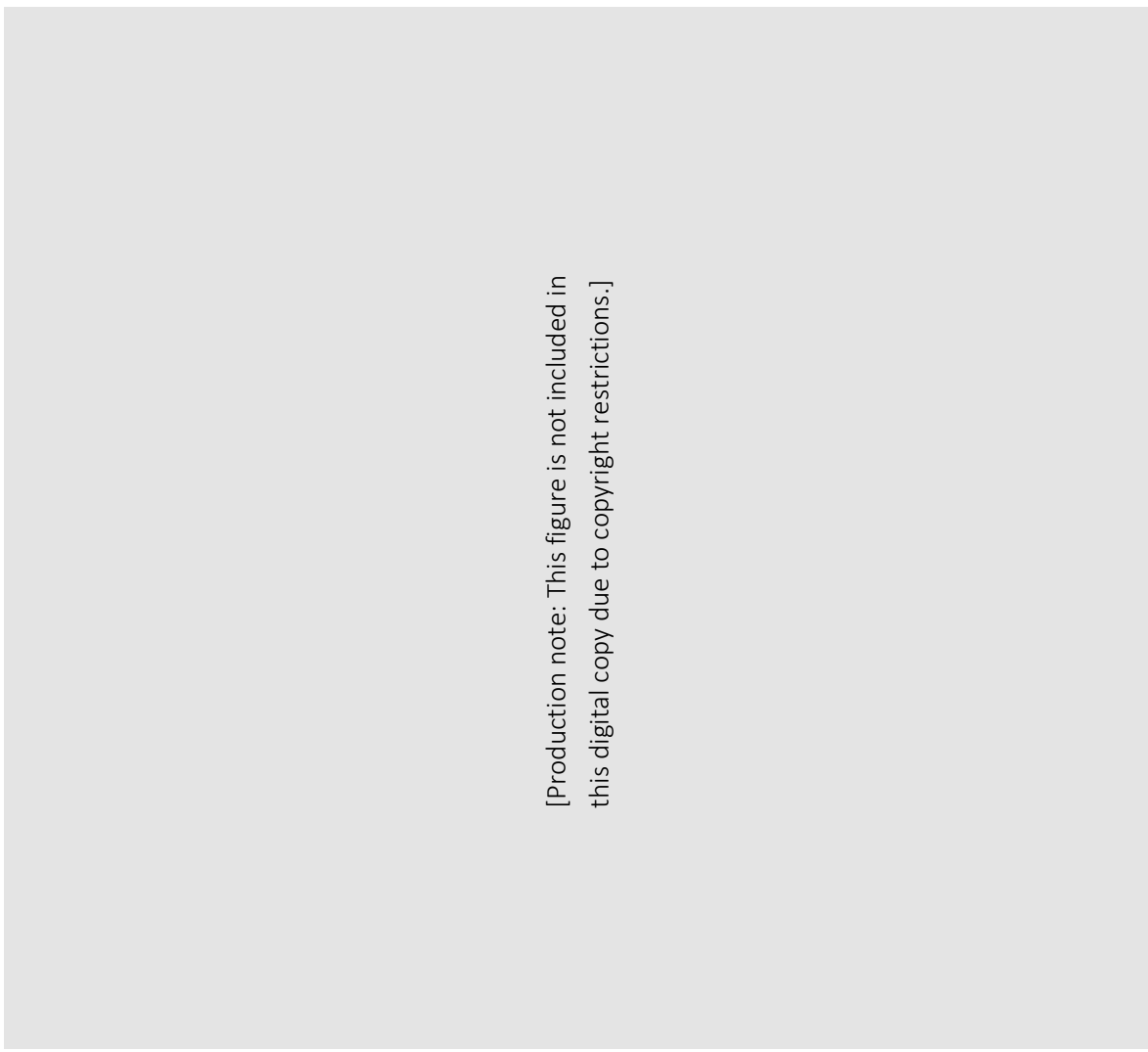
The *Kesselhaus* as a compartment is divided into three main spaces. The first space, measuring 22.5 metres wide and 36 metres long, with an average height of 19 metres was an open and cavernous room spanning from the first-floor slab (where the boilers were) to the roof. The second space, which runs parallel to the first, is where the in-situ coal hoppers are suspended; it measures 15.5 metres wide and 36 metres long. The central axis of the *Kesselhaus* contains two rows of square reinforced concrete columns distributed on a grid of 6 metres by 8 metres. These columns are the central support for the building compartment from the ground floor to the roof. The third space is located on the ground floor of the building compartment. It consists of a series of columns and beams supporting the first floor above where the boilers were located. The column grid under the boilers runs at approximately 4 metre centres, with varying column sizes, the largest of which measures 5 metres by 1.7 metres. The first two spaces of the *Kesselhaus* are now designated to the area known as Kubus/Halle; a large spatial volume that is ideal for the types of functions that occur in it, ranging from art exhibitions to ballet performances. The third space of the *Kesselhaus* accommodates an area, a club within the club of the Berghain, designated for Lab.oratory. As established, in the previous iteration of the club (Ostgut), Lab.oratory was the party where the more extreme sexual activities occurred. The party and its unique activities have been carried forward in the Berghain. This space is compressed and dense with structure. With the reconfiguration of the building into a nightclub, further compartmentalisation was realised in this area by introducing new walls in between the large structural elements. This allowed for the creation of smaller private spaces which are discreet, and necessary to serve the architectural program in Lab.oratory.

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Fig. 43. Kesselhaus, Kubus | Halle concrete hoppers.



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Fig. 44. Kesselhaus, Kubus | Halle concrete hoppers.

The plan of the *Kesselhaus* in the first two areas of the building compartment is an open plan with no load-bearing walls internally. In the cross-section, the space comprises a series of interconnected voids, a spatial openness necessary for the infrastructure of the boiler room. The sequencing of space in section is a direct response to the utilitarian requirements of the infrastructure. Both the plan and section of the third space on the ground floor of the compartment are predominantly occupied by structure. The plan is no longer open; it is dense with structure and load-bearing walls. The section in this area is compressed and low, relative to the other two areas of the compartment. There are no voids here either.

The *Turbinenhaus* was the second major compartment of the building. It consisted of two main sections, the first of which is the central space where the turbines used to be housed. It measures 16 metres wide and 25 metres long with an average height of 13 metres to the underside of the roof. The area is located on the first-floor level, with a large open void to the space below measuring 9 metres by 11 metres. The area underneath the space, on the ground floor level, has a series of columns supporting the first-floor slab. The columns vary in size, the largest of which measures 1.3 metres by 2 metres. These columns are distributed on different grids and the largest of these grids measures 5 metres by 5 metres. This section of the building compartment is designated for the main Berghain dance floor and club. The second major section is the space along the southern and western sides of the building compartment, consisting of four main storeys with varying slab-to-slab heights. Originally it housed infrastructure used to support the operation of the turbines. In the current configuration this volume of the building houses the service areas for the Berghain on the ground and first floors. On the second floor the space is designated to Panorama Bar, the other club-in-club space, while on the third floor are situated the administrative offices for the staff at the Berghain. This area of the building has a major staircase for vertical circulation running from the ground floor entrance area to the third floor of the building. The stair

provides direct access to Panorama Bar enabling the individual clubs Berghain and Panorama Bar to operate independently if required; hence the club's ability to have opened Panorama Bar one month before the great turbine hall of the Berghain began operating.

The *Turbinenhaus* plan in the first area of the building compartment is open with few load-bearing walls internally. The service areas along the western side of the compartment behind the DJ booth have load-bearing walls for the segregation of space. In section, the space is comprised of a large internal void, a spatial openness necessary for the original infrastructure of the turbines. The void spans from the ground floor to the roof and is connected by a large steel staircase between the ground and first floors. The plan of the second space in this compartment on the southern and western sides is far more broken up. There is a primary structure and additional load-bearing walls segregating the space with a central spine of columns organised on a 5-metre grid running east to west. In addition, there are numerous brick masonry walls organising the sequence of rooms. The section in this area of the compartment varies on each level and along the east–west axis with respect to spatial sequencing and sectional heights.

The *Maschinenhaus* was attached to the western side of the *Kesselhaus* and consisted of a three-storey structure measuring approximately 26 metres long and 16 metres wide. It has an internal column grid of 4 metres by 5 metres and a central connecting staircase on the western side of the building. This part of the building consists of a concrete structure and brick masonry walls. The façade of the *Maschinenhaus* also has a tripartite division.

While the building is a representation of Socialist Realism, it also has a direct connection to the architectural typology developed under the Third Reich's air defence fortification program. The program was "intensely studied by the Allies after the war and served as the

inspiration for many Cold War bunker programs.”⁸³⁵ The Third Reich’s fortification program was varied and extensive, as outlined in the previous chapters. The building that is of particular interest is the *Leitturm I*, a fire control tower (*Leitstand*) within the family of buildings called *Flaktürme*. The first of these buildings was erected in the Tiergarten at the Berlin Zoo, and its “primary role was to provide fire direction for the gun tower”.⁸³⁶ The building’s structure, materiality, proportions and composition of the façade were similar to the VEB Fernheizwerk der Stalinallee. It used a reinforced concrete structure internally and externally. The outer walls were constructed of reinforced concrete, varying in thickness from two to three metres. It was a five-storey structure with a rectangular footprint and was a concrete monolith with slender punched rectangular openings in the envelope, creating a regimented façade composition. The front door was centrally located and minimised in size relative to the façade. At the top of the building there was a horizontal concrete slab that projected out past the line of the building envelope to create a very simple entablature. On the roof was an abstracted rectangular pediment set back from the façades that provided access to the roof and operated as the final storey of the building. Evident in the building’s overall composition was a simplified tripartite division; however, there was no applied ornamentation. The *Leitturm I* “surrendered at 0500hrs on May 2, 1945 and it was demolished by British engineers on June 28, 1947.”⁸³⁷ The resemblance of the Berghain to *Leitturm I* elicits the quintessential sense of the uncanny, through the mechanism of the double or *Doppelgänger*; the viewer literally senses that he or she has seen the building before. The building no longer exists – what returns is a ghostly re-presentation of its image.

As established in the previous chapter, one of Paul Virilio’s first impressions upon seeing the bunker structures along the French littoral was that they called in cultural memories of the

⁸³⁵ Zaloga 4.

⁸³⁶ Zaloga 47.

⁸³⁷ Zaloga 47.

Egyptian mastabas, Etruscan tombs and Aztec structures. These monumental and religious archetypes are coupled to the bunkers along the coastline; Virilio states that these artillery fortifications “could be identified as a funeral ceremony, as if the Todt Organization could manage only the organization of a religious space”.⁸³⁸ Virilio proceeds forth from this statement with a question that he posits rhetorically: “Why this analogy between the funeral archetype and military architecture?”⁸³⁹ The presentation of a military architecture prompts within us the suppressed dread of our existential finality, of our corporeal lives here on earth. It evokes the repressed Freudian death drive appearing by way of destructive and aggressive structures of war that act as the source of an uncanny anxiety. The funeral archetype, however, operates differently; it has the capacity to elicit aesthetic qualities of the sublime, an aesthetic that is both compelling and conflicting in equal measure. It prompts the same recognition of an existential finality but ultimately yields to a sense of security in one’s own humanity. By setting up an analogy between the funeral archetype and military architecture, Virilio conflates the two aesthetic categories of the uncanny and the sublime in relation to the modern bunker. The bunker, according to Virilio, “is one of the rare modern monolithic architectures.”⁸⁴⁰ As established, through the typological connection to the Nazi fortification program, the Berghain presents formal architectural attributes of an above-ground bunker. Documented throughout the chapter are the various ways in which the aesthetic categories of the uncanny and sublime present themselves in the architecture of the building. Virilio’s reading of the bunker as both a funerary and military architecture is fundamental to establishing the interconnected nature of both aesthetic categories in the bunker typology.

While the question of temporality is explored further in subsequent sections, the typologies associated with fortification bring to light unique temporal conditions and referred meanings.

⁸³⁸ Virilio 11.

⁸³⁹ Virilio 11.

⁸⁴⁰ Virilio 37.

As Virilio states, “The fortification is a special construction; one does not live there, one executes particular actions there, at a particular moment, during a conflict or in a troubled period. Just as you put on your armor for combat, or your raincoat in the rain, you go to the fort when the peacetime conditions of the environment yield to wartime weather conditions.”⁸⁴¹ The bunker typology finds renewed meaning in the contemporary context of the Berghain and the underground Techno movement. The building can be viewed as a metaphorical fortification, a shelter and a bunker that is entered in order to escape the mainstream social and political conditions of our time. The Berghain in its contemporary configuration operates as a protective bunker for the subculture of Techno, a countercultural movement with no faith in mainstream ideology as a mechanism of change, and a site that facilitates the liminal ritual.

7.5 Tectonics

Tectonic theory as outlined by Gottfried Semper establishes four principal elements: hearth, enclosure, roof and mound in every building type. As already discussed, the two major compartments of the Berghain are the *Kesselhaus* and *Turbinenhaus*. The *Kesselhaus* is organised around the main function of burning coal in a boiler; the boilers are the centrally located spatial focus of the architecture and therefore their position in the building is analogous to the hearth in a traditional structure. The *Kesselhaus* originally provided remote heating for the district of Friedrichshain, making it both the literal and metaphorical hearth for the district. The *Turbinenhaus* was also organised around the central function of the turbines that received steam from the *Kesselhaus* boilers. The turbines and their organisational position in the building compartment are representative of another hearth. When coupling of the two major building compartments occurred, it produced two discernible hearths in the architecture. This is another form of doubling and evidence of an

⁸⁴¹ Virilio 42.

architectural uncanny.

The building's enclosure is a monolithic envelope with punched openings. The two main building compartments have an enclosure made of a reinforced concrete shell with few openings, giving the building its bunker-like quality. The enclosure is a *Mauer*, or wall, in the traditional sense of the term as developed by Semper. It is a solid load-bearing stereotomic mass that recalls massive fortifications. Internally, the building is comprised of an exposed tectonic structure that sets out the internal spatial matrix. However, unlike the traditional tectonic structure that would have been lightweight, the structure is comprised of relatively heavy reinforced concrete giving it a massive quality.

The orthographic drawings provide the necessary material for understanding the mound or foundation of the Berghain. The external elevation of the building clearly presents a horizontal base. This component of the architecture is the anchoring element upon which everything sits. The building's base is not simply the ground upon which it sits, but rather is the sectional and plan space of the entire first storey of the building (the ground floor). The mounding in Semper's model was the foundation for the hearth. As stated, in the Berghain there is a hearth in each of the two major building compartments; these are carried by the building's base which comprises a dense forest of concrete columns supporting the first-floor slab above. The mounding in this instance is not simply a foundation for support but is also a habitable zone. One way that the aesthetic category of the sublime presents itself in architecture is through the concept of dark space and its relationship to death. An architecture that speaks of death "should be low and compressed in proportions—a 'buried architecture' that literally embodied the burial it symbolized."⁸⁴² The mounding of the building is a buried space. The user moves through the mounding before circulating above. Similar to

⁸⁴² Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 170.

Boullée's famous sublime design for Newton's Cenotaph, at the Berghain the promenade begins by moving through a virtual space of burial. However, unlike Newton's Cenotaph, the spaces are not simply long and linear; rather, they are maze-like spaces that have a liminal quality.

Tectonic theory and theories of the primitive hut establish a connection between architecture and nature; a nature that is harmonious and a representation of the aesthetic category known as the beautiful. The sublime is the competitor to beauty. Beauty has traditionally framed the landscape and nature in a harmonious way. The sublime as an alternative to beauty frames the natural world as something terrifying, ungraspable but ultimately wondrous. The architecture of the Berghain as an abstracted representation of nature (by way of tectonic theory and the primitive hut) presents the natural world, and ultimately its architecture, according to the features of the sublime; an architecture that is physically powerful given its monolithic proportions, scale and material properties. The architecture's aesthetic properties are an embodiment of the *monumental* sublime.

7.6 Program

The architectural program in the three club spaces, namely, Lab.oratory, Berghain and Panorama Bar, caters primarily to the core requirements of a Techno party. However, the individual spaces also have unique sets of user activities that differ from one space to another and that are in turn informed by the countercultural underpinning of the club. In the fourth space of Kubus/Halle, the architectural program is not defined – the space functions as a place that caters to different events and is adapted accordingly.

In the first area of the building designated for the Berghain club, the functional requirements consist of areas for dancing (dance floors), bars, toilet facilities, service areas, dark rooms

(where sexual activities can occur), smaller ancillary or breakout areas that are not definable in terms of function and an external garden space accessible only after entering the building and filtering back out. Berghain operates with a high degree of privacy from the external world because of its closed nature. Once inside there is a certain freedom for people to engage in private acts normally reserved for the protected and private space of the home. From the perspective of the uncanny, the internal space that would traditionally remain semi-public in the context of nightclubs is transformed into a large domestic environment where private acts can occur out in plain sight. Private acts usually confined to private spaces are now public; acts that are meant to remain secret and hidden are now revealed, triggering the uncanny. While the primary program of the nightclub is strategically located in accordance with the functional requirements of the building, there are additional interstitial and liminal spaces that operate without designated function. Program in these spaces is created by the users because there is no prescribed function. They are leftover spaces sprinkled throughout the building, often in places with interesting atmospheric conditions that influence use.

In the second area of the building where Panorama Bar is located the space is divided into two main compartments. In the first space there is a dance floor area, DJ booth and bar. In the second space there are the toilet facilities, entrance to the staircase leading down to Berghain and the secondary stairs leading down to the ground floor entrance of the building. In both spaces of the Panorama Bar there is a long rectangular area that is used as an access corridor. This corridor has leftover infrastructure from the power station. It modulates the space in three dimensions, creating small nooks and relief areas that are used as semi-private areas. Program and function in this scenario are partly determined by an unconscious endowment. Oversized transition zones throughout the building between one dancefloor and another may be used as a breakout space for people seeking some reprieve or privacy from the main dance floor. Such areas often double up as zones of congregation; they are the programmatic margins of the building.

In the third area of the building, Lab.oratory, the architectural program is heavily driven by sexual experimentation and fetishism that were well-established user activities prior to the space being reformulated for use. A discussion of the architectural program in Lab.oratory is forthcoming in the next section as it is better understood in relationship to the counterculture of the nightclub.

When looking closer at the patterns of use within the nightclub, there is a connection between the building's program and its typological underpinning in bunkers. During World War II, there were between seven hundred and a thousand large and small-scale bunkers designed for the accommodation of Berliners as part of the defensive effort.⁸⁴³ The city's bunkers became a place where people "forged subterranean communities, each with their own 'quirks and regulations' and rituals of belonging. These coordinated steps, reenacted nightly, communicated a sense of common experience, local identity, and dwelling in these extraordinary times".⁸⁴⁴ The bunkers served as distilled subterranean cities. "The goal was to replicate life above ground as accurately as possible."⁸⁴⁵ This condition is mirrored in the Berghain; the building acts as a fortified bunker that protects the community within. Berghain therefore can be read as its own unique and self-sustaining environment – a city within the city. Unlike previous Techno clubs, typology, program and scale have been exploited for the accommodation of a diverse programmatic assemblage. The Berghain's program is what sets it apart from its predecessors. If the Tresor nightclub was architecturally successful principally due to the typology of the vault, the Berghain can be read as a sequence of vaults at different scales, with varying degrees of privacy and porosity, mediated by liminal spaces that are housed and contained by the haunted neoclassical envelope of the building.

⁸⁴³ Evans 12.

⁸⁴⁴ Evans 13.

⁸⁴⁵ Evans 14.

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Fig. 45. Berghain entrance.

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Fig. 46. Berghain reception.

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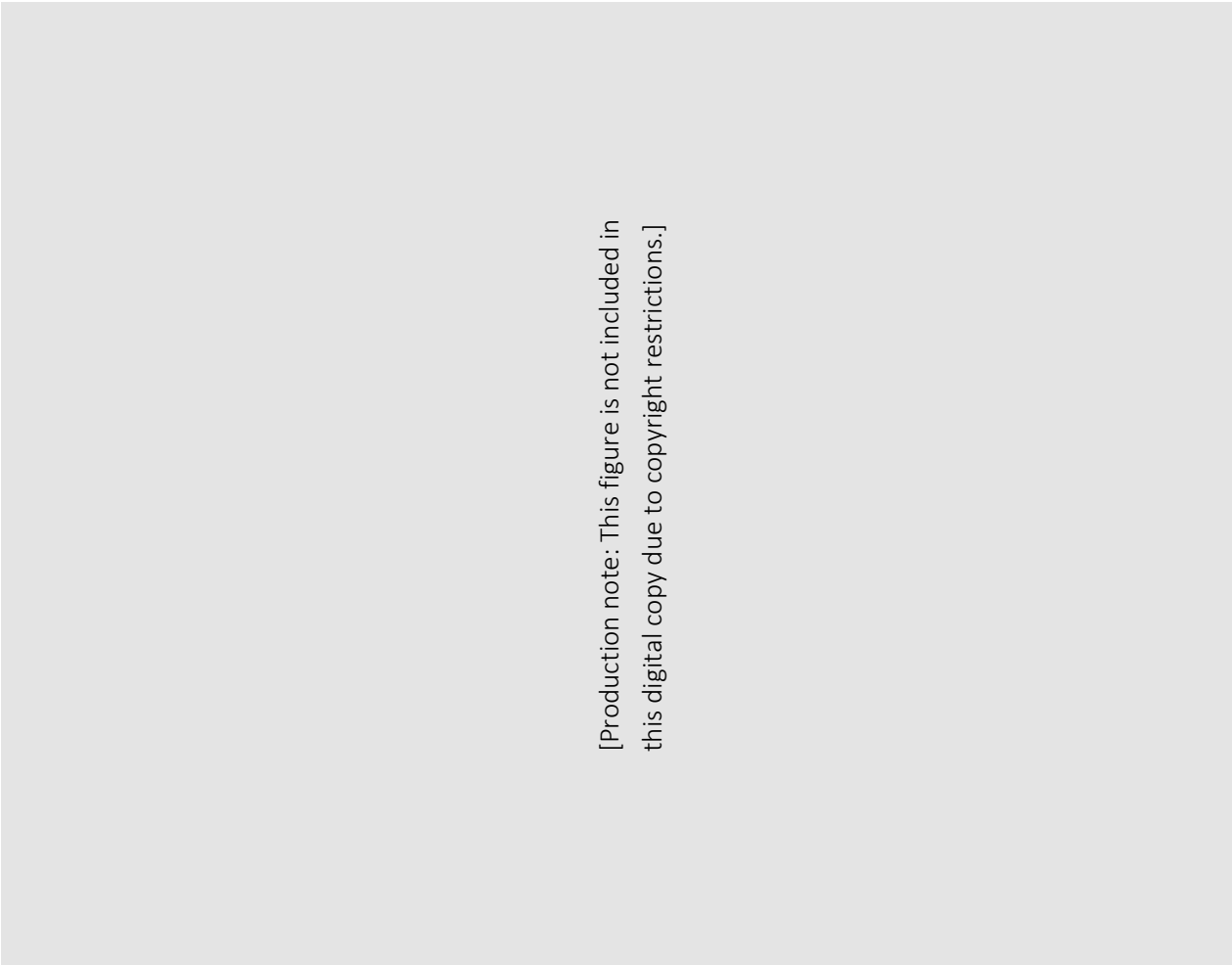
Fig. 47. Turbinenhaus. Berghain ground floor.

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Fig. 48. Turbinenhaus. Stairs to Berghain dance floor.

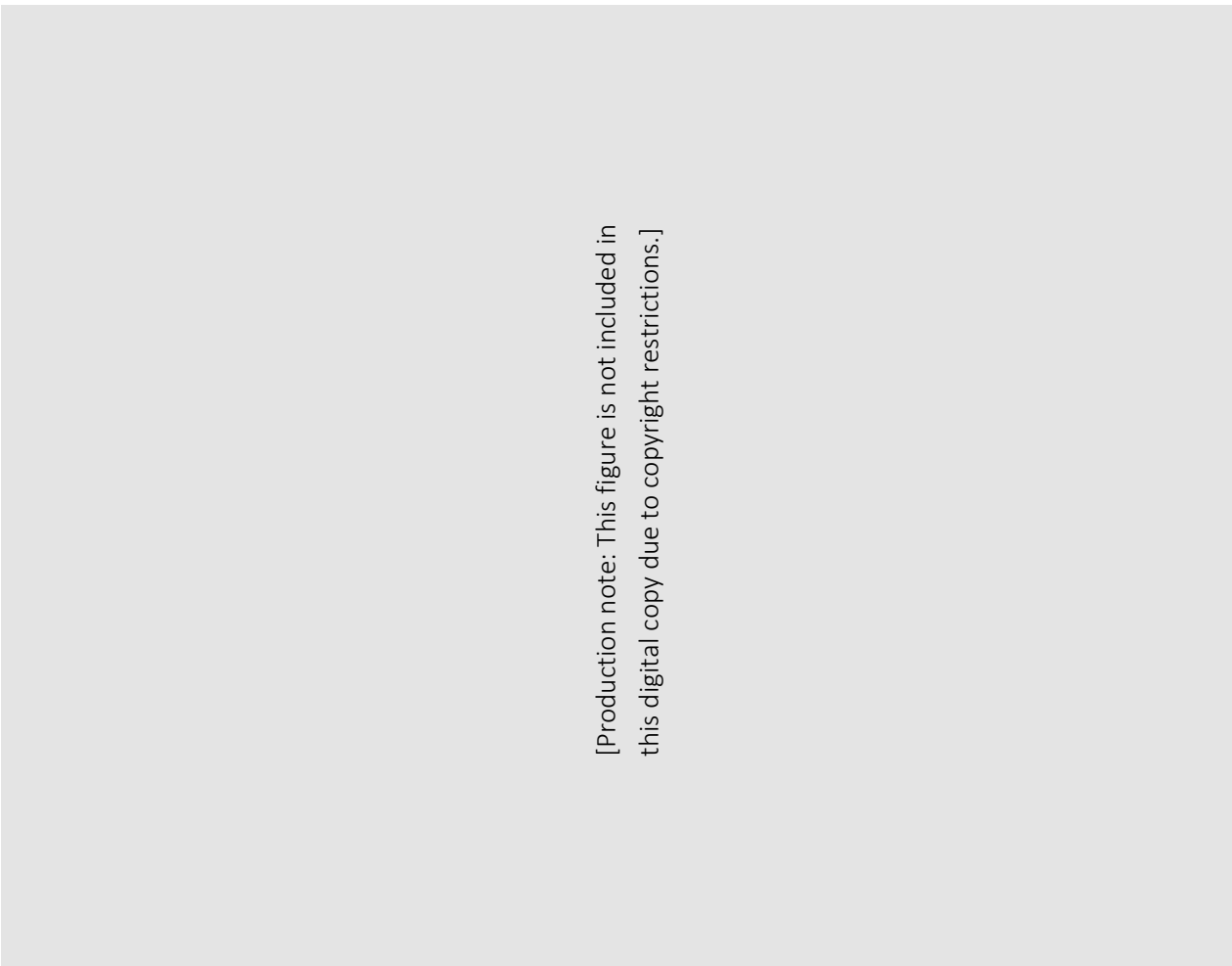
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Fig. 49. Turbinenhaus. Berghain dance floor.



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Fig. 50. Turbinenhaus, Berghain bar (Kesselhaus rear facade).

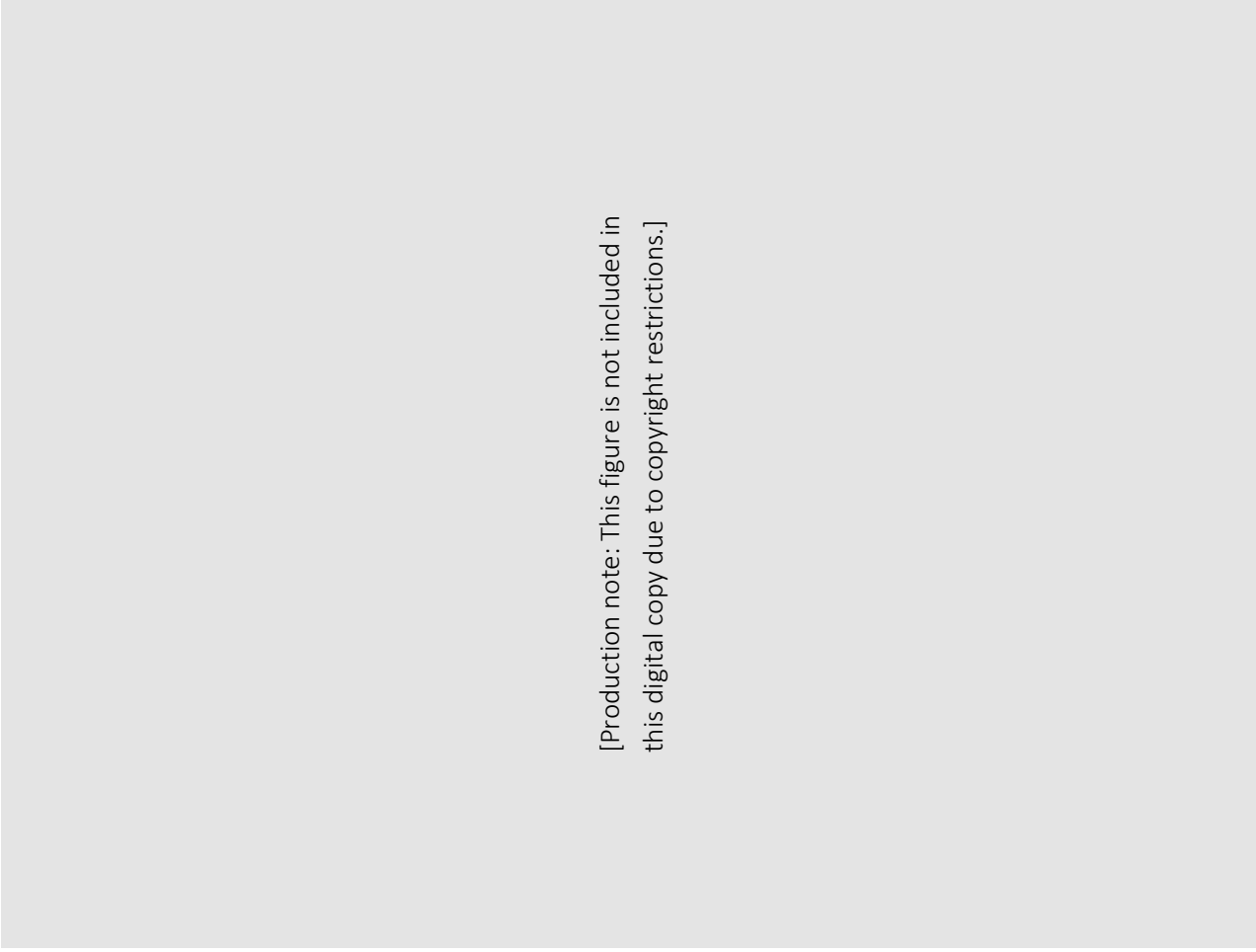


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Fig. 51. Turbinenhaus, Berghain DJ booth.

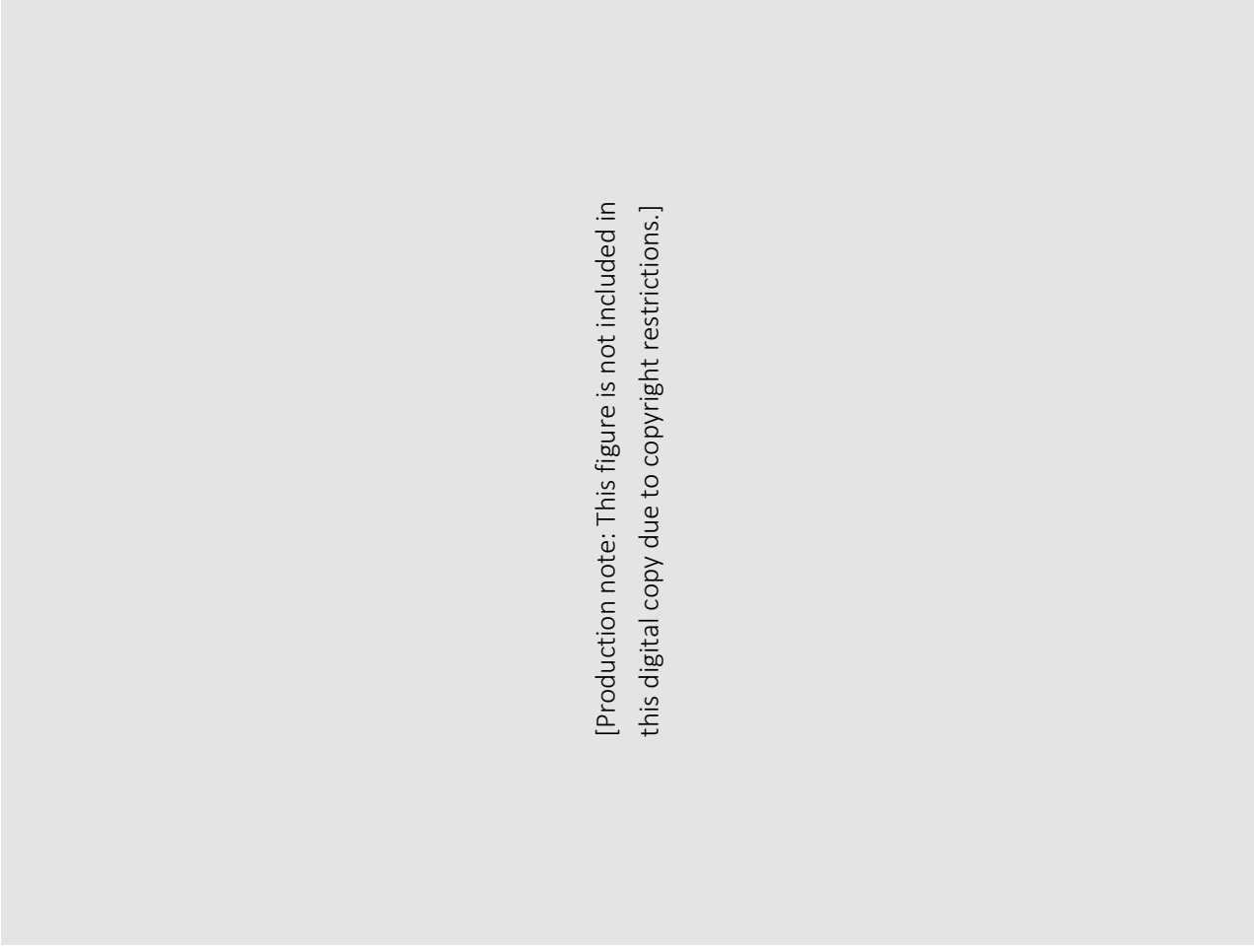
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Fig. 52. Turbinenhaus, Panorama Bar dance floor and DJ booth.



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Fig. 53. Turbinenhaus, Panorama Bar electrical grid boxes.



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Fig. 54. Turbinenhaus, Panorama Bar stained glass window panels.

7.7 Scale, Space and Light

The architectural promenade in the Berghain unfolds in a very particular way. The first major sequence of movement occurs when crossing the architectural threshold of the building from the external to the internal environment, revealing a unique interior. What becomes apparent is how the two aesthetic categories of the uncanny and sublime collapse on one another, rendering an aesthetic environment where they both coexist. Entering the building there is a spatial compression of the architectural form across the threshold. The initial sequence through the entrance and service areas (acting as a vestibule) contrasts with the expansion of the space into the main cavernous volume of the *Turbinenhaus*. The uneasiness that is experienced externally when presented with the haunted neoclassical façade continues inside; however, the effect is generated by the scale and space of the building that is dark and overwhelmingly saturated with the sound of Techno. The entrance area below the main dance floor is a large and dark void space. This space has a liminal quality because the architectural program is ambiguous; it presents as an eerie space of transition where one feels dislocated in the sequence of movement both in plan and section. Adjacent to this space there is a view into a forest of columns that support the Berghain dancefloor. The sequencing of these columns was purely a product of the building's structural requirements as opposed to being organised according to any architectural program.⁸⁴⁶ Consequentially, the view into the group of columns also creates a haunting, overpowering and eerie effect. As stated, in the Romantic tradition of literature, obfuscation of view due to smoke or darkness was a tool used to elicit an eerie feeling. The same visual mechanism is at play in the liminal and ambiguous entrance area of the Berghain. Adding to the sense of ambiguity is the disjunction between the interior and exterior of the building. Passing over the building threshold, there is a shift from the neoclassical exterior that exudes a certain elegance and formality to the inside of an industrial and machinic architecture. The space is raw,

⁸⁴⁶ The ground floor space underneath the Berghain dancefloor with the forest of columns was later adapted to house Säule, another club-in-club space.

utilitarian, unadorned and proletariat. The contrasting nature of this transition adds to the experience of uncertainty and suspense; it is hard to understand what the space and architecture are doing. Such formal and spatial ambiguities render indeterminacy and are quintessentially uncanny.

The second major sequence of movement occurs when transitioning from the ground floor entrance area vertically to the first floor. There is a sense of anticipation about what will be revealed in the next sequence of the architecture, both horizontally and vertically. Moving from the reception and service area into the main dance floor of the club is via a large industrial steel staircase that rattles with the reverberation of the music. The staircase guides the visitor upward through darkness, slowly revealing the space above. The stair treads and handrails are made of steel; they are cold and hard to the touch. This reinforces the visual registration of a cold, hard and machinic materiality. Arriving onto the first floor where the main dance floor is located, there is a sense of release and openness; the ground floor, dense with structure, is contrasted with the large open cavernous room of the great turbine hall. At this point there is an aesthetic shift where transcendent qualities of the sublime take over in an environment rich with sound, smoke, human bodies, Techno music and movement. The sublime presents itself in the proportions of the structure that are powerful, and in the proportions of the space that are cavernous inside the *Turbinenhaus*. The sublime was historically related to landscapes that had a powerful size and scale. In this instance it is the size and scale of the architectural space, coupled with ominous darkness and saturation of Techno, that produce a sublime effect. Upon reaching the first floor, there is a release from the feelings of ambiguity and terror in the preceding space to a sense of wonderment and transcendence on the main dance floor of the Berghain.

Standing on the main dance floor, the orientation of the space is toward the west where the DJ booth is located. It is perched up higher than the level of the dance floor and is horizontally

countersunk into a large wall. It is a small cube relative to the rest of the *Turbinenhaus* and provides an intimate nook and vantage point from where the DJ can operate. Standing on the dance floor facing west, there is a tall glass wall on the right, running in an east–west direction. This separates the dance floor from the main bar area of the building. The space beyond is framed like a gallery by the glazing. The material properties comprise a series of concrete columns with steel and glass framing in between. This glass wall has a light feeling compared to the rest of the materiality in the main space of the *Turbinenhaus* and initially presents as a tectonic anomaly. Upon looking into the framed space from the dance floor, one can see a series of concrete columns that mimic the external façade of the building. Initially it seems like a detail that has simply been carried through from the outside to the inside. However, after a more careful inspection, it registers that these columns and the wall spanning from the first floor to the roof is in fact the former external façade of the original *Kesselhaus*. This junctional point in the building is where the new construction of the *Turbinenhaus* was attached to the first building compartment of the *Kesselhaus*. Here the defamiliarisation and disjunction of the uncanny are foregrounded again as the predominant aesthetic condition. There is an inversion of the architecture, the external facade is now inside the building, which again produces an effect of return, doubling and the *Doppelgänger*. This architectural revelation is haunting and ambiguous as the viewer does not generally fully comprehend the architectural intricacies and sequencing of the building both spatially and temporally. Adding to the sense of ambiguity is the fact that the external façade that is seen internally is a copy of the front facade of the building, the façade that faces Rüdersdorfer Straße. It is not a copy of the facade on the southern side of the building, the back of the original building that is now the front and main entrance to the Berghain.

The third major sequence of movement occurs when transitioning from the main dance floor of the building on the first floor, vertically, to the second floor where Panorama Bar is located. The main access to the space is via another staircase that sits to the side of the *Turbinenhaus*. This

staircase is smaller and feels steeper because it moves the visitor vertically while being open visually to the main cavernous room of the Berghain. There is a unique vantage point of the space at the top of these stairs. The visitor can see down into the main room of the nightclub and through the gallery space to the external façade of the original building. From this point the various aesthetic mechanisms are all operating simultaneously, conflating and collapsing on one another. Moving into the area designated for Panorama Bar the architecture changes in scale. The vertical dimension of the space as one enters is far more compressed and intimate, relative to the preceding space. There are two rooms in the Panorama Bar: the services on the left and the main room and bar on the right. The space in this area of the building is more differentiated. It is less open and, in some areas, has a labyrinthine quality due to the leftover infrastructure of the original building which doubles as a habitable zone. The electrical grid boxes remained after the building was abandoned. The architects specifically chose to reincorporate some of the residual equipment into the contemporary renovation, thus preserving and highlighting the original elements.

When analysing the composition of spaces in the overall building, it becomes apparent that the cavernous internal volumes sit in contrast with the envelope of the building. Externally one reads the various building levels in a systematic way, in repetitive rows of windows stacked on top of each other. However, what is revealed inside is a negative space, an internal void with a scale that cannot be inferred through reading the regimented façade. What presents is the heterogeneity of internal spaces against the homogeneous orthographic reading of the building's faciality; that is to say, the symmetrical and orthographic exterior against the asymmetrical sequence of internal spaces. There is a disjunction, therefore, between the envelope of the building and its internal spaces, rendering an unorthodox spatial rhythm. The building's internal organisation is comprised of an assemblage of spaces at different scales catering to the architectural programs. This contrast or incongruence of architectural space can be read again through the lens of the

uncanny. The compartmentalised quality of the internal space shares a historical connection with respect to the bunkers and rubblescape of Berlin in the post-war environment. As Jennifer Evans describes, “Given the haphazard application of the law against homosexuality, it is not difficult to understand why rent boys and their johns believed to find at least shelter if not protection in the cavernous insides of the city’s bombed-out bunkers and ruins.”⁸⁴⁷ These spaces were large in their overall scale but differentiated internally; they operated historically as havens for street youth engaging in forbidden sexual acts.

Another fundamental quality of the Berghain is the relationship between space and light. As discussed previously, the spatial phenomenology of darkness and the way in which darkness creates an uncanny feeling is of practical significance in this context. The 17th-century building designs by Étienne-Louis Boullée demonstrate how the Burkean sublime can also function in architecture, given Boullée’s obsession “with absolute darkness as the most powerful instrument to induce that state of fundamental terror claimed by Burke as the instigator of the sublime.”⁸⁴⁸ In Boullée’s design, entitled Newtown’s Cenotaph, mentioned above, there is a radical manipulation of darkness and light. It is the calculated way in which Boullée modulates the space from light to dark and from compressed to open that creates the dramatic effect. In Newton’s Cenotaph, Boullée inverts architecture’s relationship to the heavens and the earth. Externally a globe represents the earth; internally the sphere represents the universe. This inversion is utilised for dramatic effect. The processional nature of the Cenotaph’s entrance is a commentary on the infinite nature of the space and the darkness of the universe, which in practical terms is conveyed via a seemingly endless passageway of darkness. At the end of the passageway the visitor moves up into the sphere where transcendence is suggested by being located in the centre of the universe’s infinity. Where the exterior is light-filled with a shadowy architecture as backdrop, the interior is darkness surrounded by points of light. Architecturally it is the oscillation between day

⁸⁴⁷ Evans 18-19.

⁸⁴⁸ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 169.

and night coupled with an imposing and grandiose scale that renders the sublime.

The theme of darkness or shadow in the Berghain, in a most uncanny way, hides its meaning behind a veil of utilitarianism. It presents as a simple atmospheric prerequisite common to any nightclub space. However, dormant beneath the surface is its true aesthetic value and agency in the shaping of an atmosphere. The interior environment of the Berghain uses spatial darkness for dramatic effect. What would be described as a spatial transparency within the lexicon of Modern architecture is inverted in this instance. The interior space of the *Turbinenhaus*, where the Berghain dance floor is located, eliminates any trace of external daylight, rendering the space one of abstract darkness. Windows are either covered or transformed into opaque surfaces that do not transmit light in the service of darkness. Any artificial internal light is for utilitarian purposes and occurs in concentrated and discrete amounts. As with other nightclubs it has a system of lighting for the dance floor that is used to modulate the atmosphere as desired. However, the space is kept predominantly in darkness. In this way registration of a spatial or material transparency is virtually impossible. Darkness is powerful because it obfuscates vision; it evokes disorientation and fear, and is associated with death. Boullée's application of the sublime allowed him to develop a "notion of an architecture that would speak of death. . . . It should express the extreme melancholy of mourning by means of its stripped and naked walls, 'deprived of all ornament.' It should, finally, following the model of the architect's shadow, be articulated to the sight by means of shadows".⁸⁴⁹ The Berghain is faithful to the model of spatial darkness that Boullée championed. Its interior environment is stripped of ornamentation, except for the external wall of the *Kesselhaus* visible from the main bar. The architecture's material composition of raw concrete and steel, materials that subsume light, render the architectonic elements such as columns, floors and walls as naked and stripped. They cease to be reflective, which is the fundamental way architecture is visually registered. The building's space is articulated by means

⁸⁴⁹ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 170.

of shadows. The spatial condition is quintessentially negative, a void space in the truest sense of the concept. This space of darkness is tethered to the bunker typology of Berlin described earlier, an architecture cultivated under the conditions of war. Acting initially as instruments of protection, they were subsequently transformed into chambers of trauma given the “wave of rapes that gripped the city” when the Russians arrived.⁸⁵⁰ Spatial darkness in the context of Berghain acts as a metaphorical representation of trauma and death; an architecture of death, and, in the tradition of the uncanny, a means of suppressing the collective traumatic memories of a city.

Light and spatial darkness in the case of Panorama Bar operates differently to Berghain. The windows along the southern facade of the building overlooking the city from the Panorama Bar dance floor are covered with shutters that eliminate daylight when the *Klubnacht* (detailed further in the next section) is active. The space, like Berghain, also operates according to the phenomenology of darkness. However, there is the capacity to open the shutters either during the day or night with views out to the city beyond, something that does not occur in the Berghain. There is a ritual that occurs in the space of Panorama Bar centred around the windows and the dramatic use of light. At certain times during the early morning or afternoon, when the music is at a crescendo, the shutters are opened momentarily for theatrical staging. The space that is dark is instantly flooded with daylight. The room and the people inside are illuminated by the light rushing in; their dilated pupils constrict, trying to deal with the sudden saturation of light. After a few seconds the shutters are closed and the space returns to darkness. This ritual uses the dual mechanisms of the uncanny and the sublime. There is a moment when the light that has been suppressed by the architectural elements returns into the architectural space, similar to the way that repressed memories return to the conscious mind, rendering an uncanny sensation. However, with respect to the sublime, the aesthetic feeling is registered through the extreme manipulation

⁸⁵⁰ Evans 15.

of light and dark or chiaroscuro. The conflation of both aesthetic mechanisms is operating again in this example. For this reason, the contemporary environment of the building can be thought of in quite paradoxical and dualistic terms; utopian and dystopian, *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, transcendent and eerie. The visitor has the feeling of being immersed in a machine, a machine that represents the ontological demise of 20th-century ideology. These inversions, subversions, incongruencies and ambiguity are quintessentially uncanny.

The Techno counterculture and its retreat into the literal and cultural underground can be interpreted as a commentary on the social and cultural predominance of the period during Die Wende. Endemic to the counterculture is a distrust of the sanctioned order of things; diverging from the mainstream narrative and *modus operandi* operates to establish a new baseline where meaning and truth are both unstable and contingent. At its base, there is a pessimistic, dystopic and acute view of the world. The dualism that is so poignantly represented in the aesthetic of the contemporary underground Techno context is symptomatic of a fractured collective psyche. Retreat into the darkness therefore is a logical repercussion of the 20th-century post-traumatic urban condition in Berlin, where the shadows and fortification are more comforting than the blinding glare of the light. The literal and symbolic functions of darkness and light work in tandem with the conscious and subconscious apparatus of the mind. The dramatic use of light and dark can be viewed as both a representation of the collective psyche and a toolset to mediate the *Unheimliche's* psychical apparatus of repression and return. Truth and meaning in the context of Berlin are elusive and difficult things to bear; architecture therefore operates as a mediating prosthetic to the physical and psychical apparatus.

In Panorama Bar there is another moment where the architecture and the dramatic use of light reconfigure the aesthetic quality of the space, rendering an almost spiritual sensation. In the area

that sits adjacent to the main dance floor, there is an oversized corridor that is lined on one side with the leftover electrical grid boxes. At the end of the corridor there is a rectangular window that is thin and tall with translucent coloured panels that form a coloured patchwork of glass. During the day, the windows filter the daylight, similar to a stained-glass panel. The space, although dark, is washed with a diffuse coloured light creating a unique atmospheric quality. The architecture and light recall the soul stirring and spiritual aesthetic of Gothic architecture. This part of the building operates like a small chapel inside a large cathedral. It is a peripheral space that is quieter and sits apart, often used as a place for rest, reprieve, and sometimes fornication during the long *Klubnacht*. The latter use, however, operates as the ultimate act of metaphorical deconsecration and subversion. The space therefore oscillates between these competing states, rendering again an indeterminacy.

The shift in the building's structure from open to closed, and in scale from large to small, again renders a spatial and programmatic uncanny. The space changes from large open spaces to smaller spaces; congested with structure, they adopt a maze-like and labyrinthine quality. The labyrinth, which sits as the antithesis to the panopticon⁸⁵¹ (an architecture of surveillance), renders unorthodox spatial sequencing that reconfigures the architectural promenade and provides a unique potentiality and generative capacity for unorthodox social interaction. The labyrinth configures the interior space of the building and mental space of the user. The architectural program also shifts from spaces that are clearly definable to ones that are ambiguous, repetitive and liminal. The building's liminal spaces are configured in such a way as to form continuous circulation loops, creating a movement pattern of unintentional return. Freud uses the example of unintentional return as the source of an uncanny anxiety when he describes a voyage of discovery through a small Italian town. As he walked the streets, he found himself

⁸⁵¹ Andersson 461.

returning again and again to the same place.⁸⁵² In order to locate the affective nucleus of this particular uncanny sensation, Freud references Jentsch when ascribing the central factor to intellectual uncertainty: “For him the essential condition for the emergence of a sense of the uncanny is intellectual uncertainty. One would suppose, then, that the uncanny would always be an area in which a person was unsure of his way around: the better oriented he was in the world around him, the less likely he would be to find the objects and occurrences in it uncanny.”⁸⁵³

Within the Berghain, there is a coupling of unorthodox spatial sequences (space derived from an architectural program based on machinic utility), a phenomenology of darkness and the saturation of the atmosphere with loud, repetitive industrial Techno. This ensemble of elements, both architectural and atmospheric, renders an environment of disorientation. As explored in the previous chapter, architecture operates not only on the visual dimension but also on an audible one. The perception of space is attained in part via the reverberation of sound. In the case of the Berghain, the invisible waves of sound saturate the architectural space, affecting one’s perception; it renders the environment uncanny due to a false sense of atmospheric perception on the audible, visual, spatial and programmatic planes.

7.8 Time at the Berghain

Temporality is a significant consideration in the Berghain. It is a building that operates predominantly at night; however, throughout the week there are various events that take place in the different parts of the sprawling building. There may be concerts in Halle and Kantine, fetish nights in Lab.oratory and experimental music in Säule.⁸⁵⁴ The “big weekly event is Klubnacht when the three main floors are open. Klubnacht, which starts at midnight on Saturday and builds up towards its crescendo – the final ‘closing’ set that normally ends

⁸⁵² Freud, *The Uncanny* 144.

⁸⁵³ Freud, *The Uncanny* 125.

⁸⁵⁴ Andersson 451.

around noon on Monday”.⁸⁵⁵ The internal rhythm of the nightclub, therefore, purposefully sits in opposition to the external conventional timescale of the city. The building allows for the subculture of Techno to thrive and live outside society’s normal timescale. The extensive architectural program and temporal rhythm of the building enable the space to operate as a permanent autonomous zone, functioning like a city within the city. To add complexity here, the Berghain does not operate like a typical nightclub which opens only after dark. It sometimes operates continuously for days on end. This continuous operation means that users can cross the architectural threshold not only during the night, but also during the day and evening. However, inside the building it is always a virtual night-time. This temporal ambiguity aligns neatly with the uncanny, an aesthetic that has a strong connection with darkness and the night. Architecture is no stranger to the inversion of day and night. As described above, it was used as far back as the speculative and visionary architecture during the 17th century. In Newton’s Cenotaph, the interior space sits in temporal opposition to the natural rhythm of day and night. The inside of Newton’s Cenotaph is dark during the day and illuminated at night. The Berghain is not exactly a temporal inversion as such but still retains the core idea of manipulating the natural rhythm of daylight in the building. The central chamber of the *Turbinenhaus* is kept perpetually in darkness. The window openings are covered so that natural light never enters. This type of temporal manipulation is not only servicing a utilitarian objective but is a subversive act in the context of the Berghain. It rejects the rhythm of the natural world and consequentially creates its own alternative universe providing a place from where the Techno counterculture can operate and thrive.

The manipulation of time in the Berghain also has profound effects on the human body and mind by altering the users’ circadian rhythms. The architecture purposefully induces a hypnagogic consciousness, an obscure state of mind between wakefulness and sleep. The body and mind are arrested by the architecture and by the powerful repetition of hypnotic Techno music. The

⁸⁵⁵ Andersson 451-452.

nullification of natural time and the repetitive nature of the interior atmosphere absorb and captivate the user to remain in the club for days. As evidenced by Vidler,

The uncanny, however, was perhaps the most subversive of all, not only because it was easily trivialized but also because it seemed at times indistinguishable from the sublime.

Burke himself had included this ill-defined but increasingly popular sensation among those associated with the obscurity that provoked terror, along with the night and absolute darkness.⁸⁵⁶

Foregrounded here is the critical relationship between the uncanny, the night and darkness. The Berghain, in a subversive and trance-like manner, arrests the user in what can be viewed as a chamber of hypnotic and abstract repetition.

7.9 Counterculture

Within the subculture of Berghain, three distinct countercultural histories coalesce: the counterculture of sexual subversion developed in the rubblescape of Berlin after World War II, the nascent Techno movement from Detroit and the Techno movement during Die Wende in Berlin. The Berghain is therefore a microcosm of these histories. The architecture, anchored by the typological DNA of the bunker, provides the perfect platform for a subversive subculture with a very particular set of sexual practices.

The relationship between sexuality and space is one of the main distinguishing features of the Berghain, as compared to previous Techno nightclubs. Jennifer Evans outlines the following: “Berlin’s ruined bunkers and bomb cellars served as emblems of the chaos and lawlessness of defeat. But they also played host to the reflowering of Berlin in terms of irregular sexualities and transgressive identities.”⁸⁵⁷ The pattern of the building’s shifting identity over time is mirrored in the shifting meaning of Berlin’s subterranean world, “first as a hybrid military and civilian space

⁸⁵⁶ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 21.

⁸⁵⁷ Evans 12.

designed to engender support for the war, then as a site of chaos and disorder, and finally as part of an underground economy of cruising and the sex trade”.⁸⁵⁸ The bunker initially served as a site of protection, it was transformed into one of sexual violence and finally into a place of sexual subversion.⁸⁵⁹ The Berlin bunkers became sites of communal identity for the youth and those who were either orphaned or homeless. “More than a physical shelter for Berlin’s large number of street youth, the bunkers provided emotional relief from the quotidian challenges of life after Hitler with black marketeers, rent boys, and fallen women camping out together in subterranean cliques and gangs.”⁸⁶⁰ Similarly, the Berghain is a site for Berlin youth. The subculture that emerged from this urban condition in the post-war era challenged the mores of German sensibilities.⁸⁶¹ While there was an attempt to suppress this type of behaviour by the authorities, they were unsuccessful. The renegades, exiles and fugitives chose “their subcultural identification over official attempts at buttressing the family and channeling ideological renewal.”⁸⁶² Irregular sexualities and transgressive identities are a key component to the cultural identity of the Berghain. Latent in the typology of the bunker is the cultural DNA of this specific history in Berlin; the Berghain’s architecture has the embedded memory and DNA that if activated enables it to operate as a site of cultural subversion.

The Lab.oratory space is the core area and club within the Berghain where the more extreme sexual activities occur. It is a place where the boundaries of sex and fetishism are pushed to their limits. When the Lab.oratory party initially operated from the Ostgut location, it paved the way for what would develop in the Berghain. Anecdotal stories recounted by patrons and DJs convey the types of activity that occur in the space and ultimately help frame the subculture, one that is notoriously difficult to investigate. Daniel Wang, a DJ who played at the party, remembers,

⁸⁵⁸ Evans 12.

⁸⁵⁹ Evans 15.

⁸⁶⁰ Evans 16.

⁸⁶¹ Evans 19.

⁸⁶² Evans 20.

“There were dark rooms, chains, swings and corners where men and women—mostly men—explored each other sexually.”⁸⁶³ When Lab.oratory moved into the Berghain it fortuitously gained its own dedicated space and was no longer a party that was simply hosted by another club. Given the opportunity for a permanent home, the party was able to finally have a space that was permanently organised around the specific activities that occurred there. It is a space where liberal sexual expression and extreme forms of sexual experimentation that underpin the particular counterculture of Lab.oratory can occur.

The fetish club, founded at Ostgut, was now brought back to life—this time in a larger space with more dark rooms, more toys, and more secrets. Here, nudity and leather reigns along with lustful imagination. The nights are arranged around themes such as “Friday Fuck,” “Yellow Facts” and “Fausthouse.” Just savor the descriptions, available on the web: “The perfect piss party without dress code. Let it flow.” “Fisting all over the Lab,” and last but not least: “Caviar, chocolate, turds... How many pseudonyms do you have for shit? From hard to soft stools, you’ll find the right taker for everything.”⁸⁶⁴

While the Berghain is a separate space to Lab.oratory, there is a recognition of what goes on in the other more extreme part of the building’s complex. The boundaries that are pushed inside Lab.oratory also add to the hedonistic quality of the Berghain’s main dance floor and the overall mythology of the nightclub.

The Berghain space is nowhere near as extreme as that of Lab.oratory in terms of sexual experimentation although sex still occurs out in plain sight. Sex is made possible through the architectural program of the dark rooms, in the leftover space of the building and in smaller solicitations of the act. Condoms are readily available at the bar, contained within a large bowl, uncannily unhidden from view. Although irregular sexualities and transgressive identities are a fundamental component of the nightclub, the focus is always a high-quality offering of avant-

⁸⁶³ Wurnell.

⁸⁶⁴ Wurnell.

garde Techno music. To call Berghain a sex club is misleading and simple; “it is a dance club with a sex-positive ethos where some people have sex and others don’t while the long opening hours mean people’s priorities fluctuate throughout the day and night.”⁸⁶⁵ The industry of electronic music globally has deified the Techno club and rendered it a mythological creature in the landscape of Techno. It is considered the most avant-garde Techno nightclub and institution in the world, a club where the best Techno DJs are free to perform extended sets that can sometimes span as long as ten hours. The architecture and atmosphere enable people to take these extended musical journeys. The space is complemented by a Funktion One sound system and the speaker stacks that envelop the dance floor are said to be up there with the best in the world. Developed in England specifically for the space of the *Turbinenhaus*, it is the conductor of Techno music and the means through which revellers find sonic bliss. While sex animates the space, adding to the hedonism and decadence of the club, the fundamental idea of Techno, grounded in Afrofuturism, is the opportunity it gives the counterculture to dream and imagine new, alternative and open futures.

The Berghain is a notoriously difficult club to get into, with a door policy that is as enigmatic as the architecture; it is often described as an unbreakable code. It is not a place that is open to everyone; its guardians ultimately determine who will see behind its countercultural veil and the façade of its ominous architecture. There is, however, an underlying aesthetic that is persistent with respect to how people dress and look. While the mix of people in the club is always varied, the head doorman Sven Marquardt is perhaps the best characterisation of this intrinsic aesthetic, with “Long hair, a wild beard, tattoos that run across the cheek and forehead, and more piercings and jewelry than you’ll have time to count before you’re either rejected or invited inside.”⁸⁶⁶ The punk aesthetic during the 80s in both East and West Berlin is the traceable thread and fundament of the well-established aesthetic in the contemporary underground Techno counterculture. The

⁸⁶⁵ Andersson 453.

⁸⁶⁶ Wurnell.

predominance of black in the garments of the people adds to the dark aesthetic of the space. Black has always been associated with the “no-nonsense look of the hardcore anarchos”.⁸⁶⁷ Interestingly, darkness that is a prominent feature of the atmospheric environment is reflected in the clothing of the counterculture, clothing that is accentuated by heavy silver jewellery and tattoos. The garb of the people is a sign that they are part of the counterculture and it is a first step to breaking the code of entry. Berghain is home to these outliers. As Vidler analyses a haunted house that was the central motif in *Les Travailleurs de la mer* by Victor Hugo, he states, “the house, as Hugo develops the narrative, becomes paradoxically secure for those unaffected by the haunting; it is the home of smugglers and renegades, exiles and fugitives. Only those on the margin would feel at home in so disquieting an abode.”⁸⁶⁸ The Berghain, as a space and atmosphere of extreme elements, attracts the outliers and renegades seeking an alternative paradigm; those that choose the vicarious taste for dangerous things away from the protected and cosy proverbial armchair of their safe domestic sphere.

⁸⁶⁷ Hockenos, *Berlin Calling: A Story of Anarchy, Music, the Wall, and the Birth of the New Berlin* 249.

⁸⁶⁸ Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* 20.

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Fig. 55. Sven Marquardt, Berghain head doorman.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

Tresor and Berghain are places of otherness. To cross their thresholds is to step into what feels like an alternative dimension where corporeal and cerebral boundaries are suspended. The fortified architecture acts as a protective haven; labyrinthine dark spaces that are drenched with hypnotic and abstract sonic textures reconfigure the mind and body. Techno as a genre is where “the most concrete experimentation on a new reconfiguration of the world is being conducted”,⁸⁶⁹ and the dissertation posits that the underground Techno nightclub is where the most concrete experimentation on architecture’s new possibilities is emerging. The Tresor and Berghain with their sustaining longevity operate as the quintessential contemporary embodiments of a convergence between the phenomenology of darkness and psychic space. They sit within an alternative, obscure and enigmatic lineage of architectural discourse known as dark space.

The phenomenology of darkness or dark space as a typological, tectonic, material, spatial, theoretical and aesthetic paradigm forms a broader frame in which this research locates itself. Dark and psychic space has therefore emerged as a new architectural language, with the generative potential to imagine and give rise to new futures. They should be understood as both a phenomenological and cerebral architecture, one that engages the body and unlocks the mind, ultimately transporting the user into contemporary places of other consciousness. Led by dark space, these places are embedded with qualities that promote a total corporeal and cerebral immersion. The architecture here decouples the

⁸⁶⁹ Gaillot 18.

mind from typical patterns of thinking and perceiving. This foundation has implications for future analysis and design work in architecture.

Dark space as an architectural approach has the capacity to undermine the dominant discourses of late Modern architecture that continue to shape contemporary architecture. It was and remains the physical embodiment of the countercultural Techno movement; it operates as an antidote to the micro tactics of power and dominant metanarratives that have shaped Modern architecture and its ideas of space, light and transparency.

Countercultural movements within underground electronic music sought out dark spaces that provided a home from where they could operate. In the context of Berlin, a new generation found a voice through these spaces and learned a new way to speak and express themselves. This opened the door for a generation to reconfigure their identity and ultimately the identity of the city, offering change that was not visible before.

Architecture in this context with its spatial and aesthetic agency has great value in the production of culture.

8.2 Framing and Methodology

Dark space and psychic space within the research have emerged as both a frame and tactic that together offer the possibility to reconfigure the discourse and practice of architecture. They are also of great value in the evaluation of the history of the city, and in the case of Berlin they retroactively reconfigured the urban, architectural and musicological history of the city as this thesis demonstrates. The analytical methodology in the case of this thesis uncovers new ways of interpreting architecture and the cultural matrix in which it finds itself. Within the body of work there is a necessarily wide surveying of theory, history, musicology, aesthetics, architecture and urbanism.

Combined with deep typological evaluation and nuanced sociopolitical and sociocultural

investigation, a new lens on the city and architecture emerges which is tested and developed through the reading of the case studies. The unorthodox systems of evaluation make evident that it takes space, Techno, counterculture and aesthetics combined to formulate a clear and nuanced architectural understanding of the principal case studies. In turn, this is where dark space and its potential to shape architecture into the future has emerged. This unique methodological approach emerged in the work because of the interdisciplinary nature of the primary material and importantly because of the elusive aesthetic terrain of the underground Techno environment and its buildings. While there are broader historical paradigms in which the research can be located, it is the localised and nuanced sociopolitical and sociocultural narratives that need to be fundamentally understood in order to be operative within such contexts. These localised narratives or *petit récits* sit in opposition to the metanarratives that have driven much of history, and by consequence architecture and urbanism. The *petit récit* highlights and emphasises the diversity and plurality of realities and possibilities. As an analytical methodology it has great agency beyond the context of this research in Berlin and can be extended to other urban and architectural contexts; it is not limited to the countercultural and post-traumatic urban conditions that contextualise this thesis. The implication here is that if architecture can become increasingly comfortable in the often unstable and interdisciplinary terrain of the localised narrative, it is possible to renew its agency within cultural and urban production.

8.3 Tactics and Design

The tactical application of dark and psychic space becomes operative through a series of principles and elements. The broad tactical principles that were uncovered in the architectural precedents and case studies corresponded to operations such as subversion, inversion, estrangement, return, doubling (*Doppelgänger*), chiaroscuro (dramatic use of

dark and light) and indeterminacy. These are subsequently applied to the constituent elements of the architecture, such as typology, tectonics, structure, materiality, program, spatial sequencing and aesthetic theory. The principles reconstitute and reconfigure the various elements. Through their unorthodox treatment, an indeterminate dynamic is rendered in the architecture. Indeterminacy works in this context to undermine the standard logic with which elements and ideas have traditionally been treated in architecture. This is done in service of a rich and unconventional matrix of architectural configurations. It corresponds in part to the avant-garde theory of defamiliarisation, things that are deliberately ‘made strange’ in the quest to gain novel perspectives and generate new future possibilities in design. There is a methodological approach in these tactics for architectural design problems that have great generative potential in the configuration of dark and psychic spaces, spaces that fundamentally engage, challenge and affect the user.

8.4 Multivalent Futures

The contemporary underground Techno nightclub is not a conceptually lineal space, but a rhizomatic system of disparate parts that emerged from the unorthodox cultural matrix and history of Berlin over the past 40 years. It is an example of a heterogeneous future, its genesis tracing back to the unconventional ethos of West Berlin prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall and to foundational ideas contained within Afrofuturism. In so many ways, the Techno nightclub has reshaped a reading of the city in contemporary times and is now emblematic of Berlin, superimposing itself over the histories and edifices that have typically functioned as representations of the city’s history and identity.

The dissertation’s most prominent contribution is the way in which it reframes the notion of meaning in and for architecture. Illustrated in the body of the work was how the

architectural case studies could not simply be read according to either their traditional historic or typological properties, but rather through the lens of the actors that inhabited them, which in this specific case are Techno and counterculture. Through this lens it becomes apparent that architecture is continually deferring its own meaning; it does not close off or finalise its own singular meaning, but rather explicitly refuses any single signification. Architecture in this case holds a space open for meaning to emerge; it steps back, allowing other actors to step in and configure meaning in a concerted set of relationships. In this, a new conception of architecture emerges, from one that is singular in meaning with a prescriptive moral position, to one that has a multiplicity of meanings with an emergent and generative potential. Modernism scripted a version of the future that was singular in meaning, but what has emerged in the research is a rescripting of the 'notion of the future'. The ever-repeating multiplicity of meanings in this context asserts no moral hierarchy but rather holds open a space for multiple potential futures to emerge. The architecture enables these divergent futures to exist in their multiplicity, simultaneously.

Architecture throughout its long history has forever attempted to confer specific messages and meaning. However, in this paradigm it does not attempt to confer any singular message or meaning but instead operates as an open scaffold to support the emergence of messages and meanings. It is no longer the signifier, but rather the environment of signification. Through the constant deferral and refusal of fixed meaning, the architecture invites and requires an active writing of meaning. This paradigm is the counterpoint to the modern history of architecture. What evolved from Enlightenment philosophy was an architecture that has constantly attempted to confer meaning rather than be a generative vessel for the emergence of meaning; a reconfiguration that this thesis suggests should now be one of architecture's prime focuses as it evolves into the

future. As subsequent iterations of the history and theory of architecture are written, it is these precise conditions that need to be further identified in the urban landscape.

Architectural historians and theorists should not be looking for singular meanings but rather looking for the open and generative vessel within which meaning has the potential to emerge. These architectures of difference are important because they offer a unique type of urban analysis, one that has not been hitherto realisable. Accordingly, with the design of new buildings, a space opens up not to embody meaning but rather design buildings that precisely step back from that task, in order to allow non-dominant cultures to develop their own spaces of becoming. Architecture needs to create the space for the possibility of the other to configure meaning, thereby facilitating the production of culture. Architecture would in that case have the capacity to at least facilitate, if not trigger, countercultural moments; recasting and rewriting cultural paradigms.

8.5 Outro

More than thirty years have passed since the fall of the Berlin Wall, since the inception of Techno, and since the genesis of the underground Techno nightclub. The momentum of this history has never been greater. Techno is entering a new phase of its life, and the underground Techno nightclub is at the epicentre of great cultural change in the contemporary world. The aspiration of the dissertation is to contribute to that history and landscape, and to be a meaningful body of knowledge for the future of Techno and its underground spaces. To preserve, reiterate and advance its history is paramount as new generations emerge within the scene. Techno as evidenced in its history and through the lens of this research has found a typological home in the reconfigured, indeterminate and unorthodox bunker, a heterotopic place of otherness that it now calls home, and a place that is home to its devout counterculture. Accordingly, the dissertation also holds aspirations for the discourse and practice of architecture with the concepts of dark and

psychic space, spaces that reconfigure the notion of meaning in architecture. These concepts are now both a frame and tactic for contemporary architecture and its discourse. Dark and psychic space has presented itself throughout this research with great efficacy and agency, concepts that are elegant, supple and powerful enough to chart a new course for the uneven and precarious terrain of postmodernity.

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Das Schaufenster der Wertheim Bank an der Leipziger Straße. 1905–1920. Stadtmuseum Berlin, Berlin.

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Blick in den Tresorraum der Wertheim Bank an der Leipziger Straße. 1905–1920. Stadtmuseum Berlin, Berlin.

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