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Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

***The Rhythm of Our Lives: Popular Music and Cultural
Memory in the Age of the Internet and Retro Culture***

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Summary of Contents

This thesis examines how popular music listening facilitates cultural memory through retro culture and the affordances of the internet and mobile listening technologies. The theoretical framework is comprised of a blend of approaches, namely, Hesmondhalgh's (2005) 'none of the above' thesis, Mannheim's (1928) concept of the 'generation unit', Williams' (1961) 'structures of feeling', the concept of hauntology and a soft technological determinism. This framework is used to interpret the empirical data emerging from thirty-eight semi-structured interviews conducted with a cross-generational sample of male and female fans of older popular music aged between eighteen to sixty-two years of age and based in the greater Dublin area.

Using theoretical and empirical evidence, then, the thesis argues that while popular music is continually associated with youth culture in academia, there is a developing trend of retro culture and nostalgia in recent years that demands more attention. It is found that the specific generation unit of younger fans in this study listen primarily to rock and indie music of the mid-to-late twentieth century and possess memories of and nostalgia for these particular genres and decades in their quest for authenticity and the desire to connect through music to a generation and time period that is not theirs. This is found to be the result of cultural developments such as changing generational relationships, the continued production and consumption of popular music by older generations, the structure of feeling shared by the generation unit, new means of retrieval, storage and distribution and also the revival of older formats.

In short, the findings show that cultural and technological trends enmesh to influence the ways in which musical tastes and memories are constructed. There has been some work completed on this topic by journalists but little in terms of academic work and so my original contribution to existing knowledge arises from my analysis of the concept of retro culture through a theoretical and empirical study of music listeners.

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Introduction

Popular music in the mid-twentieth century marketed itself as being the voice of a generation that was never going to grow up and grow old like their parents' generation, a sentiment expressed in the lyrics from The Who's 'My Generation', for example – "hope I die before I get old." However, both artists and fans have grown up and older together and this continuing pertinence of popular music to ageing generations has not gone unnoticed in sociological research with Bennett (2000, 2001, 2006, 2009; Bennett and Hodkinson 2012; Bennett and Taylor 2012), de Zengotita (2005), Hesmondhalgh (2005), and Kotarba et al. (2013 [2009]) all commenting on it. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, popular music has become more revivalistic and nostalgic for an earlier version of itself. This is expressed through various occurrences such as the spate of reunion tours in recent years, the access permitted to older popular music through the internet, artists releasing anniversary edition albums, the vinyl revival, and younger artists mimicking old styles of music. It has, in short, become a haven of retro culture.

This thesis arises out of a curiosity about why this is happening and about how popular music listening works in relation to cultural memory, particularly through the trend of retro culture and new methods of storage, distribution and consumption. This topic has been dealt with recently by the journalist Simon Reynolds (2011) in his book *Retromania* and by the academic Mark Fisher (2014) in his book *Ghosts of My Life*, the latter of which is comprised of entries from Fisher's blog but this project represents the first concerted theoretical and empirical academic study on the topic and therefore promises to make a very important contribution to existing sociological thought and to the field of popular music studies.

This research examines the way in which popular music listening shapes cultural memory through ‘retro culture’ which is defined here as the practices of listening to older popular music often on older material formats, and also through the affordances of the internet and mobile listening technologies. To do this, the thesis merges three fields of study, namely, those of popular music, memory and technology. Chapters one and two establish how these three areas interconnect theoretically while also at the same time foreshadowing the content of the empirical chapters. Chapter three discusses the methodological approach and methods adopted while chapters four, five and six relay how the three areas fit together empirically through interview data which deals with the participants’ musical tastes and listening practices as well as the meanings of popular music for them.

To highlight the peculiarity of the retro culture phenomenon in popular music today and the trend for looking back and remembering, I decided to commence by showing that historically the study of popular music was allied to the study of youth culture. It was presented in this literature as a youthful and forward-looking cultural form. In chapter one, I discuss how the genesis of research on youth culture in the field of British cultural studies evolved around issues of popular music consumption specifically focusing on subcultural groups associated with popular music genres such as mods, skinheads, hippies and punks (Hall and Jefferson 2006 [1976]; Willis 1978; Hebdige 1979). From these classic subcultural studies of the 1970s right through to Thornton’s (1995: 165) post-subcultural work on ‘club cultures’ in the 1990s, popular music was regarded as a source of generational conflict between parents and progeny because each new movement in popular music served to crystallise a new distinct generational culture. However, it has been noted by Rojek (2011: 30), for instance, that it would be difficult to pinpoint a new genre within popular music today that is capable of

spawning such generational conflict. I argue in chapter one that the reason for this is due to the phenomenon of retro culture which is influenced by changing generational relationships which partly permits the popularity of older generations of artists to extend to a new generation of fans.

It is argued that popular music is no longer the exclusive domain of youth culture and has not been for a very long time. As a result, there is an urgent need to develop a new way of theorising the relationship between popular music and its audience. Because popular music is no longer the preserve of youth there is a need to develop a theory that accounts for people of various ages. There have been calls in recent years for more research on related topics such as that of post-youth audiences (Bennett and Taylor 2012: 232) as well as a need to revamp existing visions of youth and popular music (Beer 2008a: 234). To develop a new way of theorising popular music and its cross-generational audience, I adopt Hesmondhalgh's (2005) 'none of the above' thesis in chapter one which has not been applied empirically in this way before. Rather, Hesmondhalgh's (2005) article was composed of his ruminations on how one might begin to move on from the old master concepts within subcultural and post-subcultural theory. This thesis takes these ruminations as a starting point and moves beyond them in the way outlined below.

Firstly, Hesmondhalgh's (2005) approach holds that none of the existing concepts within subcultural and post-subcultural theory adequately reflect the composition of popular music's audience in the twenty-first century. His approach marks a refusal, then, of the idea of theoretical purity and master-concepts like 'subculture', 'tribe' and 'scene'. He advocates dispensing with subcultural and post-subcultural theories and

returning instead to the structural categories of sociology, namely, age, gender, class and race.

This idea permits me, then, to wipe the slate clean of existing notions of popular music and its youthful audience and adopt a theoretical framework comprised of a blend of approaches which I develop over the course of the first two chapters. Age is the principal variable that is foregrounded throughout this project because generation membership proved to be a pertinent factor in my data analysis due to its role in relation to popular music listening and the construction of cultural memory but also for reasons of practicality given my limited resources in carrying out the research and, hence, my inability to also explore gender, class and race in the same depth. However, I do reflect briefly in chapter four and in the empirical chapters on what the gender, class, and racial composition of the sample as well as the student status of the sample means for the findings and their generalisability and also what it means in terms of musical taste, subcultural capital and memory.

Having discarded the earlier theorisations of popular music and its audience and having established 'age' as a key variable, I extend Hesmondhalgh's (2005) idea of merely examining the structural categories to adopting Mannheim's (1928) concept of the 'generation unit'. Generation unit is a concept that allows me to cater more fully for the social composition of the sample featured here in terms of their age, gender, class, racial and student status and their specific socio-historical location. The notion is discussed in chapter one as a means of conceptualising different age cohorts and this is later employed in the methodological chapter and empirical chapters to the age cohorts that constitute the research sample. I liken a generation unit to a 'peer group' representing a subdivision within the overall generation. The generation units exhibit

sensibilities and dispositions that communicate their specific location within their generation. The three generations¹ constituting the research sample are discussed and split into two distinct age groups of eighteen to thirty year olds (millennials) and those aged over forty years of age (Generation X and babyboomers). The logic of this division is that there were clear differences emerging in the responses expressed by the participants aged over forty years of age compared to the responses of the younger participants. This is, I suggest, because different time periods may be said to possess a different zeitgeist and so being born in and growing up in a particular period may mean that the zeitgeist or structure of feeling governing these time periods may exert an influence upon generational culture and the way in which generation units listen to and remember popular music.

Chapter two begins then with a discussion of Williams' theory of the 'structures of feeling' which allows me to expand on the idea of the zeitgeist. Structures of feeling is interpreted in this project as the zeitgeist and it is used in conjunction here with cultural memory and the idea of the generation unit. Structures of feeling is the immaterial yet shared knowledge which constitutes the culture of a lived period for a particular community such as a generation unit and it is most strongly expressed through the artistic works of that time period (Williams 1961: 64-65). It is, in other words, the intangible glue that holds generation units together and cements their generational cultures and memories. The structure of feeling shared by the generation unit of younger participants in this project is interpreted as a sense that "there is no Now" (Fisher 2011b) and I argue that nostalgia for the future (also known as 'hauntology' (Hatherley 2011: 11)), that is, nostalgia for a more futuristic past, arises from this sense

¹ 'Babyboomers' – defined as those born between 1946 and 1964 or those aged fifty plus in this sample. 'Generation X' – defined as those born between 1965 and 1979 or those aged between forty and forty-nine in this sample. The 'millennials' – defined as those born between 1980 and 2000 or those aged between eighteen to thirty in this sample. (See, for instance, Morgan and Kunkel 2011: 283)

of disenchantment with the present and a feeling that there is no unique definitive mood, that is to say that there is no Now but also from their harmonious intergenerational relationships with older cohorts such as their parents as discussed in chapter one.

However, it is also explained in chapter two that technology is inseparable from these cultural developments. Indeed, technological developments are in themselves cultural developments. I am primarily interested here in soft technological determinism and examining the extent to which new music storage, retrieval and distribution technologies enable and perhaps encourage this retro culture phenomenon by providing access to older popular music. However, it is also worth pointing out the potential of older material formats such as vinyl, which has experienced an increase in sales in recent years, and CDs in facilitating retro culture. It was found in the data that participants sometimes inherited vinyl from their parents or older relatives while sometimes they reported actively choosing to purchase old albums on old formats having discovered the music online. These older formats are perceived as symbolic of the time periods they yearn for and are therefore considered more authentic formats to use. This chapter thus foreshadows these findings by incorporating a debate about materiality versus immateriality which has featured in recent literature. However, my contribution here is to discuss this issue with specific reference to soft technological determinism and the way in which material and immaterial formats have been discussed as either heightening or depreciating memory. In chapters six, I explore the extent to which this is determinist and the extent to which the participants perceive themselves to exercise agency in the process. These two chapters thus delineate a unique theoretical framework that takes account of both techno-cultural factors in facilitating the retro culture phenomenon.

In chapter three, I discuss the methodological approach used in this project and the methods employed in the process of data collection. I explain why I adopt a qualitative approach and the social constructivist stance which underpins this. The steps taken in recruiting participants and the composition of the sample are then discussed. I also outline the practical considerations for the sample featured in the project and the method used which was the semi-structured interview. Through this approach I gained important insights from the participants on their musical tastes, listening practices and memories. The emphasis was on eliciting narratives from the participants and permitting them to speak at length. Attention is also given to ethics and the procedure of ensuring the participants are informed of their rights in relation to the research. This involved obtaining informed written consent to use the data emerging from the interviews and the steps taken in anonymising the data and storing the resulting discs. I then outline the process of analysing the data focusing on the steps of transcribing, coding and reporting. On conducting the analysis, the younger participants aged between eighteen to thirty years of age became a core focus for my empirical chapters due to there being a larger number of them and also because of the peculiarity of them enjoying older popular music and formats and even possessing memories of and nostalgia for older technologies and texts. In analysing this data and what it exhibits about the ways in which listening to popular music influences the production of cultural memory through retro culture and the opportunities afforded by the internet and mobile technologies, I explore a number of themes and issues over the final three chapters.

In chapter four, I focus on the participants' musical tastes and the meanings of music for them in relation to their generational cultures. The older participants generally report listening to the contemporaneous music of their formative years and can clearly

identify the different subcultural trends associated with the popular musical trends of their youth. The younger participants, by contrast, are much more omnivorous in terms of taste though they mainly discuss what I here describe as guitar-driven music (indie and/or rock music) and they also report primarily listening to music from 'pre-biographical' time periods, that is, time periods from before their year of birth typically music from the 1960s to the 1980s. Thus, they are fans of retro culture, that is, older popular music and styles. Indeed, the younger participants often listen to the same music as the older generation and this lack of generational conflict is discussed in this chapter also. Reflecting on this issue, I argue that the reason for this is partly changing generational relations owing to the 'child-centeredness' of Western culture which manifests here in an exchange of musical tastes and memories between generations meaning popular music should no longer continue to be allied to youth culture in academic literature but I do speculate also on whether it has something to do with the student status of the sample and also give more information on the context of the listener and how this may have guided their cultural taste.

I acknowledge also that the comments expressed by the younger participants regarding their taste and their pursuit of arcane musical knowledge reflects elements of Thornton's (1995) arguments on capital in her work on club cultures. However, I explain that the problem in applying Thornton's ideas to the data is that none of the participants reported being members of any musical collectivities. Following Hesmondhalgh's (2005) argument, as already discussed in chapter one, they are, I argue, already members of non-musical communities such as generation units and this identity is reflected and extended in their musical identification. They are, of course, also members of particular gender, class and race communities and these three variables are discussed albeit to a lesser extent than age. Indeed, these variables are part and

parcel of what a 'generation unit' is. In effect, then, I map how the structural category of age in particular correlates with musical taste and the meanings and memories derived from music. More specifically, the chapter shows how the social profile of this specific generation unit in the younger age group of white, middle class, students who engage in quite gendered discourse correlates with musical taste and the meanings and memories derived from older popular music and retro culture. The social status of these participants, being predominantly white middle class students, partly influences their belief that older music is more authentic and highbrow because as Peterson (1997; 2005) shows cultural taste may be correlated to social status.

In chapter five, structures of feeling is used to understand the zeitgeist which partly informs the participants' generational cultures that are discussed in chapter four. It is argued that the structure of feeling experienced by the younger participants is the sense that "there is no Now" (Fisher 2011b) and that this is represented in their comments which communicate a sense of disillusionment with contemporary music and a desire to retreat into retro culture. Structures of feeling has not been used in this way before with generation units and cultural memory. This sense that there is a lack of a defining zeitgeist gives rise, I argue, to the hauntological spirit which is characterised by a paradoxical longing for a more futuristic past as expressed in the younger participants' vicarious memories and nostalgia. As a result, this chapter makes an important original empirical contribution as existing empirical studies in the sociology of popular music by Bennett (2000, 2001, 2006, 2009; Bennett and Hodkinson 2012; Bennett and Taylor 2012) and Kotarba, Merrill, Williams and Vannini (2013 [2009]) assume that the appeal of twentieth century popular music and formats is the preserve of the babyboomers and Generation X whereas this data highlights the role of the millennials

in supporting the continued popularity of twentieth century popular music and formats such as CDs and to a lesser extent vinyl.

It is shown, however, that the younger participants report that there is always *something* missing from their experience but this is typically remedied by using old formats such as vinyl which help them “physically grasp” the past (James [20] chapter six section 6.3) and attending reunion gigs which provides them with a sense of “relief” (Ian [26] chapter five section 5.3). I suggest that what is missing is the authentic structure of feeling which the original generation of listeners possess by virtue of their actual presence in the particular time period in question and which the technologically mediated presence of the younger participants does not equate to. However, technology does at least facilitate interest in the past and equips the younger participants with the next best thing until they are afforded the opportunity to buy the material vinyl record or attend the reunion gig.

Hence, chapter six then explains that the retreat into retro culture is not just facilitated by the structures of feeling and changing generational relationships but also by new technologies which enable and encourage the popularity of older music providing access to the vast back catalogue of popular music. Simply, there is a feedback loop between the generation unit the younger participants belong to, intergenerational relationships, the structures of feeling, hauntology and soft technological determinism that cannot be separated out. It is found in the data that new music storage, retrieval and distribution technologies have partly aided and abetted the retro cultural phenomenon, according to participants, as they have given the participants access to the entire discography of popular music.

The chapter then tests determination and agency in relation to the participants' claim of exercising agency by choosing to use old material technological formats. It is concluded that despite the participants' claims to agency, the listening and remembering process actually appears highly determined by the form of the technologies in question once they have chosen to use that technology. This is apparent when participants make comments claiming that "the internet has made [people] very spoilt" (Fiona, [24] chapter six section 6.3), for instance. The chapter particularly examines soft technological determinism in relation to material and immaterial technologies on a number of issues, namely, listening practices, ownership, memories and amnesia and finds that the participants perceive material music formats to serve as a stronger store of memory. This is, however, paradoxical in the sense that the participants also report that new technologies associated with immateriality such as the internet have resurrected the past by giving them increased access to older music. However, it is the case that material music formats are considered more authentic because the pre-biographical music that the younger participants' listened to was originally released on these formats. These formats are thus considered superior to immaterial forms such as streams and downloads which are associated with inauthentic contemporary music. These empirical chapters thus make a very significant original empirical and theoretical contribution as they show how technology is inextricably linked with retro culture using an empirical study of music listeners.

Finally, in the conclusion, I summarise the key findings of this research and outline their theoretical and empirical significance. I discuss the findings which show that the particular generation unit of younger fans featured listens principally to older popular music on older material music formats in search of what they perceive to be a more authentic music experience and to connect with what they perceive to be a more

original time period in history, namely, the mid-to-late twentieth century. I argue that this project makes a considerable contribution to existing knowledge by showing how culture and technology fuse in shaping the production of cultural memory through retro culture. This is a topic that has been dealt with in recent years in journalistic work primarily by Reynolds (2011) and Fisher (2014) but there is currently a lack of academic research on the topic. The thesis therefore represents an important attempt to understand retro culture through an empirical analysis of a limited and unique sample of both ageing and younger music fans. It is also the first study of this kind to be conducted in Ireland and thus has the potential to make an important contribution also to Irish academia.

Chapter One: Popular Music, Youth, and Ageing Populations

1.1) Introduction

In light of the retro craze that has swept through the popular musical landscape in recent years, this project seeks to elucidate the reasons for this phenomenon while also seeking to delineate how popular music listening enables the creation of cultural memory through retro culture and new technologies. To do this, three areas of study are explored and woven together over the course of the following two literature review chapters. The three areas examined are popular music, memory and technology. These three facets will be shown to be inseparable as we move through the two chapters.

However, a good place to start to address the peculiarity of the current trend for retro culture and nostalgia in popular music is to examine the more traditional connection which has existed for decades between the study of popular music and the study of youth culture. This involves charting through subcultural and post-subcultural theory both of which I deem inadequate to deal with musical collectivities and taste in the twenty-first century. I argue that there is a necessity to dispense with these theories because their concern for youth culture makes them inapplicable to retro culture and to the fact that popular music is no longer the sole preserve of youth and has not been for a very long time. Instead, popular music is shown to now often be the site of intergenerational sharing in terms of musical tastes and memories partly because artists and fans keep producing and consuming popular music well into their dotage and also because of the democratisation of generational relationships such as that between parents and children. This then contributes to the shaping of vicarious memories and nostalgia for a younger generation for the time periods of their parents' youth and these time periods are symbolised by older popular music.

The chapter thus sets out an alternative perspective which allows us to conceive of musical collectivities in terms not of subcultures or post-subcultures but in terms of a more traditional sociological concept, that of ‘generation units’ (Mannheim 1993 [1928]). This approach is inspired in the first instance, however, by Hesmondhalgh’s (2005) ‘none of the above’ which promotes the idea of discarding one-size fits all theories and master concepts such as ‘subculture’, ‘scene’ and ‘tribe’ and instead suggests a return to the key structural categories of gender, class, race and age. Hesmondhalgh (2005) did not apply this idea empirically and so this thesis represents an early example of how to make use of his idea empirically. Age is the specific variable highlighted in this chapter and indeed throughout the project because, being guided by an iterative process, age patterns were most clearly discerned from the interviews. Gender, class and race are, however, brought into the frame albeit to a lesser extent and at various points in the chapters. In the analysis of the interviews, age patterns were identified between those participants aged over forty years of age and those aged between eighteen to thirty years of age. This chapter concludes with these groups of participants being conceptualised as representing ‘generation units’, that is, peer groups who each share a similar socio-historical location and, as a segue into the next chapter, I briefly explain that this common socio-historical location is governed by a particular “structure of feeling” (Williams 1961) and technologies which in part enable and encourage musical taste and memories and that this will be discussed in the next chapter.

1.2) Theorising Popular Music and Generations

1.2.1 Subcultural Theory, Post-Subcultural Theory and Generations

As Hesmondhalgh (2005: 21-22) puts it, the study of popular music has been closely connected to the study of youth culture over the past few decades and this relationship

between the “sociology of youth and the sociology of popular music” reached its zenith in the 1970s with the work carried out by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham. Hesmondhalgh (2005: 36) further explains that even though this material may today be considered anachronistic there is a tacit obligation within academia to “trawl back through the subculturalist work time and again in studies of popular music” in order to pay homage and chart the trajectory of the sociology of popular music. However, the reason for trawling through subcultural and, indeed, post-subcultural theory here is not one of mere academic obligation but rather one of highlighting how popular music was once connected to youth culture which serves to illuminate the novelty of the current trend of retro culture, memory and nostalgia which is at the core of this project. Thus, the discussion of subcultural and post-subcultural theory and their linkage to youth is connected to the larger debate here as they serve to show how much the popular musical terrain and the composition of its audience has changed since these theories were originally conceived. They serve to show that there is a need to move beyond the traditional connection between popular music and youth in academia and indeed a need to develop a new way of theorising the relationship between popular music and its audience which is not solely constituted of young people but, rather, people of all ages.

Firstly, then, the chapter discusses subcultural theory primarily to highlight the alliance of popular music and youth culture and also to highlight its linkage to the idea of an ‘authentic’ subculture as opposed to the ‘inauthentic’ mainstream as these themes run throughout the larger debate in the thesis. *Resistance through Rituals* (1976) was one of at least three major texts that outlined the specific theoretical and methodological features of subcultural theory along with *Profane Culture* (1978) by Willis and

Subculture: The meaning of style (1979) by Hebdige. Although popular music was neither the original impetus nor the central focus for the CCCS, it was still commonly present in many of the emergent texts such as Jefferson's (2006 [1976]) exploration of teddy boys; Hebdige's (2006 [1976]; 1979) work on mods and punks; Clarke's (2006 [1976]) analysis of skinheads; and, finally, Willis' (1978) examination of hippies. The catalyst for these studies was actually the development of a new social group known collectively as 'youth'. The post-war period represented the first time in which consumerism became a standard feature of everyday life. This development was both economic and technological in its genesis. As Bennett (2001: 9-10) states, the West experienced an economic boom in the post-war period which in turn induced a growth in consumerism. Young people represented a lucrative consumer group for the cultural industries who duly began producing an array of commodities specifically designed for this new youth market. These included commodities such as fashion clothes, cosmetics, transistor radios and, as Bennett (2001: 10) points out, the most popular of all, the 45 rpm record and record players.

However, the CCCS did not view 'youth' as a mere consumer group. As Clarke et al. explain in the original introduction to *Resistance through Rituals* (2006 [1976]), the core focus of their research was not 'youth cultures' but rather 'youth subcultures'. 'Subculture' was a concept borrowed from the second coming of the Chicago School and specifically from the work of Howard Becker in his text, *Outsiders* (1975 [1963]), which focused on deviant subcultures, namely jazz musicians and drug-takers (Hall and Jefferson 2006 [1976]: xxxii). As Clarke et al. (2006 [1976]: 6) explain, 'subculture' was used in order to illustrate the disjuncture between youth culture and the 'youth market industry', the subculture and the mainstream. Subculture was considered a more

appropriate term to signify the oppositional behaviours and practices of the supposedly disenfranchised individuals that collectively comprised the social category of 'youth' (Clarke et al. 2006 [1976]: 6-8). Disillusioned and disempowered in terms of their productive capacity but supposedly 'resistant' in terms of their consumption practices, young people presented as a convenient group for subcultural theorists to depict as active social agents. As Bennett (2006: 222) puts it, youth provided "the perfect vehicle for subcultural theorists to interpret popular music and its attendant visual style as politicized resources in the power struggles that characterize late capitalist society."

This division between inauthentic mainstream culture and authentic subculture is reflected in the various case studies presented by the CCCS in *Resistance through Rituals* (1976). For example, Hebdige (2006 [1976]: 75) refers to the bell boy protagonist in Pete Townshend's rock opera, *Quadrophenia* (1973), which documents the mod subculture. This character, Hebdige (2006 [1976]: 75) states, represents the "archetypal mod ... resigned to an insignificant and servile role during the day, [and] all the more determined to make up for it at night ... existing purely for and through his leisure-time." The "archetypal mod" imagines that his escapades - such as popping pills and reappropriating the Union flag - serve to subvert established conventions but, as Hebdige (2006 [1976]: 77) points out, these conquests merely amount to an "imagined victory" while the true victors remain unperturbed by the supposed 'threat' to their reign. As Hebdige puts it:

the mod ... underestimated the ability of the dominant culture to absorb the subversive image and sustain the impact of the anarchic imagination. The state continued to function perfectly no matter how many of Her Majesty's colours were defiled and draped around the shoulders of skinny pill-heads in the form of sharply cut jackets (Hebdige 2006 [1976]: 77)

Simply, the mod is merely acting within the hegemonic order that he or she can never truly elude. This is a sentiment that arises again in Hebdige's subsequent work on the punk phenomenon where he concludes that no amount of subversive consumption can transcend the capitalist origins of cultural commodities:

...youth subcultural styles are meaningful mutations capable of embodying a symbolic refusal of the social consensus upon which western democracies depend but in the end no amount of subcultural incantation can alter the oppressive mode in which the commodities used in a subculture have been produced (Hebdige 1979: 130-131)

However, Willis (1978) presents a more buoyant perspective in his analysis of hippies and the bike boys with a penchant for 1950s popular music as he celebrates how members of these subcultural groups "do not follow the guidelines of the official culture, nor do they obey rules provided from outside or above" as he charts their "heroic fight to produce meanings and their own cultural forms in the face of a larger society dominated by the capitalist media and commercial provision." It is this celebratory discourse that has, however, been one of the criticisms of Willis' (1978) work and of subcultural theory in general (McGuigan 1992).

Related to this point, a number of theorists began to highlight problems with the tendency of the subcultural accounts to distinguish cultural practices in terms of the 'authentic' subculture versus the 'inauthentic' mainstream. For example, in the case of Hebdige's (1979) work, Laing (1985) points out the problem of presenting punk as a form of resistance against the conformist mainstream when actually the most popular groups associated with the genre were signed to traditional capitalist record companies. There is thus a need to acknowledge that youth subcultures do not simply act against the dominant mainstream culture, rather they may act *within* it. Similarly, Carter (1984: 198) claims there is a need for more acknowledgment of the connection between youth

culture and consumer culture. Clarke (1981) also rejects the subcultural theorists' contention that subcultures function independently of corporate culture. Further, he repudiates the intimation that the co-opting of subcultural styles by the mainstream is the end of their relevance, stating instead that researchers should interpret the breakthrough of a style as its starting point (Clarke 2005 [1981]).

The relevance of this previous discussion for the wider debate here is the youth aspect but also the idea of the dichotomy between the rebellious authentic subculture versus the inauthentic mainstream culture. This latter idea relates to Peterson's (1997) work which is employed in the empirical chapters as the notion of authenticity often appears to underlie the younger participants' decisions to listen to older popular music on material formats. Despite this being a criticism of subcultural theory, the binary carries on into certain strands of post-Birmingham² work particularly in Thornton's (1995) study on 'club cultures'.

Thornton (1995: 3) employed Bourdieu's (1984) concept of 'cultural capital' stating that the clubbers featured in her ethnography were not united by a shared experience of social class as in the work of the CCCS but rather by a shared taste in music and shared ideas concerning the connotations of subcultural capital. For Bourdieu (1984), 'cultural capital' is a means of social stratification, linked to class, and based on symbols of distinction such as taste in music, dress, and language. It refers, in other words, to a currency based on taste. While the distinction between 'high' and 'low' (popular)

² Thornton (1995) refers to her work as "post-Birmingham" rather than 'post-subcultural' because like the CCCS she still utilises the concept of 'subculture'. However, her work can be described as distinctly "post-Birmingham" because 'subculture' in her conception refers to a culture predicated on taste as opposed to class. She saw members of subcultural groups as relating to each other over a shared idea about taste as opposed to their shared experience of being white, working class, and male as in the CCCS work.

culture is discussed with the concept of 'cultural capital', Thornton (1995: 7) claims that there are also "hierarchies *within* popular culture." The participants in Thornton's (1995: 11) study are concerned with "being hip [and being] 'in the know'" which are qualities that they can then convert into "subcultural capital" and this is what then distinguishes them from the commercial and 'unhip' mainstream.

This division is gendered just like in the earlier subcultural studies which were criticised for the complete absence of women (McRobbie and Garber 1976). McRobbie and Garber (1976) suggest that the reason for the omission is likely due to the research sites and groups chosen by many of the researchers which tended to be public spaces and visually striking expressions of subculture. By comparison, they claim that the female acculturation process tends to take place in the context of the family and/or in the domestic sphere (McRobbie and Garber 1976). The domestic sphere and, more specifically, the bedroom is said to serve as a key site of cultural expression for teenage girls. This is apparent in what McRobbie and Garber (1976: 221) term 'bedroom culture', that is, a culture characterised by practices such as reading and discussing girls' magazines such as *Jackie*, a shared interest in 'teenybopper' male pop stars, and the displaying of their posters on the bedroom wall. However, this also means that the scope for cultural expression by teenage girls is perceived as being much more limited as it is hidden in the privacy of the home and it also appears to be strongly linked to consumer culture. As McRobbie and Garber (1976) lament, this is a highly commercialised and hidden subculture.

However, in the 1990s there emerged a growth in literature on the 'riot grrrl' phenomenon perhaps most notably by Gottlieb and Wald (1994), Kearney (1998) and

Piano (2002) that pointed towards a more visible and alternative expression of femininity. Added to this, the sociologist DeNora (2004 [2000]) later set about attempting to redress the gender imbalance present in the existing literature by interviewing women only for her influential study on the role and function of music in everyday life.

For Thornton (1995: 13, 104), however, the division is thus: there is a feminised mainstream and a masculine ‘underground’, the latter of which is associated with a much higher level of subcultural capital. This stance is corroborated by Bannister (2006: 126) and Leonard (2007: 47) also for whom the music ‘connoisseur’ is commonly characterised as an insular and socially inhibited male. Bannister (2006: 126), for instance, discusses the ‘otaku’ which is a term used in Japan to describe “socially retarded young men” obsessed with the minute details of a single field such as computer games or TV programmes. His subsequent discussion demonstrates the similarity with the common portrayal of the knowledgeable male music collector. Likewise, Leonard (2007: 48) discusses the music enthusiast as being male though she does make reference to the work of Davies (1995: 134) and her comments on the emerging visibility of women in the mid-1990s “at gigs, in the press, and in bands.” It is ultimately concluded, however, that in guitar-based music culture the dominant image of the music connoisseur remains masculine.

This discussion here foreshadows analysis in the empirical chapters where the music being listened to in the sample is principally guitar-based music such as rock and indie which is perceived as being masculine. It is also mainly older rock and indie music typically dating from the 1960s to the 1980s. To have knowledge of this music and to

‘remember’ it carries capital for the younger participants in this project but what carries even more capital in an age where anyone with an active interest and a broadband connection can acquire knowledge and memories is seemingly (in the empirical chapters) attendance at reunion shows and listening to music on material formats. It is also the case that all of these ideas are spoken about in a highly masculinised way as being more authentic than contemporary and ‘mainstream’ ‘mass produced’ music and contemporary modes of consumption such as streaming and downloading.

While the previous section has discussed gender and authenticity and capital, I would also like to point out that there is a class dimension to this debate despite Thornton’s contention that subcultural capital does not possess a class based division like cultural capital. This is relevant for me because though age is my primary focus in terms of the structural categories explored, I do also probe how the other variables intersect with age and how they work in relation to taste and ideas about what signifies subcultural capital. For instance, in terms of the correlation between class and popular musical taste, I show that though the working class participants in the younger age group in this project did not differ in terms of their taste in genres and formats to their middle class counterparts there is the potential that they adopted what might be described as more middle class tastes as a result of inhabiting the rather middle class environment of the university (which is the site from which participants were recruited). For instance, Jack [19] who is from a working class area in Dublin reports that he used to listen to rap music but since moving to the suburbs and attending university he has taken to listening to Pink Floyd as he appreciates their commentary on politics and history viewing rap now as more concerned with rather less noble issues such as money and possessions. However, it is not straightforward as Jack’s father who still works in a working class

occupation was also a Pink Floyd fan but there is potentially an age division to the correlation of class and music; what was once potentially working class could become middle class as is pointed out later in the discussion of Bradby's (2014) commentary on the changing class structure of rock music. To an extent, Jack also inherited his interest from his father but also seemingly partly by university and the suburbs. This is discussed in more detail in chapter five section 5.2.1. The basic point here is that I disagree with Thornton's (1995: 12) contention that class is not important in taste cultures and subcultural capital. Other scholars such as Rojek (2011: 168) and, most recently, Bradby (2014), have shown that the genre of popular music listened to continues to be linked to class.

What does this mean for my project? The main genres being listened to by the participants are rock and indie which are generally male-dominated genres but also, as Bradby (2014) points out, more middle class. Bradby (2014) states that in Britain and Ireland rock is more middle class than pop both in terms of the class of its performers and also in terms of its perceived meanings. She further comments that rock was not always so middle class but has increasingly become so over the years and this is mirrored in a way with the older fans of the genre in this sample who all hail from working class backgrounds and the younger fans who mostly hail from middle class backgrounds. There is the potential that younger fans of older rock music are in general more likely to be middle class but I cannot generalise this beyond the sample of twenty-six eighteen to thirty year olds here. It is simply the case that the younger middle class participants in this sample gravitated uniformly towards older guitar-driven genres of music. This is the music that appears to carry a higher level of subcultural capital for this sample of people. Similarly, there is likely a relationship between the all white

composition of the sample and the genres of music listened to and the white artists listened to with one or two exceptions. However, the variable that I am most interested in throughout the project is age and its role in retro culture and particularly the case of younger people listening to and possessing memories of and nostalgia for older music and formats.

In recent years, Bennett, whose work is part of the post-subcultural strand of research, has perhaps been the most prolific figure dealing with this topic of age. However, Bennett's work invariably tends to focus on post-youth populations and their consumption of older music as opposed to younger fans of older music. Indeed, a host of figures from Bennett (2001; 2006; Bennett and Taylor 2012), to Beer (2008a), and Hesmondhalgh (2005) have in recent years posited that the focus on youth in studies of popular music is now somewhat outdated. Bennett (2006: 223) specifically blames the use of the concept 'subculture' for the unique focus on youth in these studies. He states that 'subculture' tends to be typified in terms of its "visual style, face to face gatherings, and a publicly articulated collective identity" while he suggests that those over the age of twenty-five tend to tone down their appearance for employment while increasing family and work commitments may also make the attendance of face-to-face gatherings, such as music concerts and festivals, more cumbersome (Bennett 2006: 223). However, this does not negate their fandom nor does it trivialise their experiences and opinions. Indeed, Bennett (2001: 154) argues that the target audience for popular music has shifted from the traditional youth market aged between fifteen to twenty-four years old to the more affluent twenty-five to forty-five year old age group. Bennett (2001: 155) cites the persistent marketing of reissues and new releases from "golden oldies" as evidence of this trend and, indeed, one might add the resurgence of interest in

vinyl and the series of reunion tours in recent years as further evidence that popular music is no longer solely marketed to fifteen to twenty-five year olds.

Yet there remains, Bennett (2006: 221-222) explains, a tendency for researchers (Calcutt 1998: 6; Weinstein 2000: 111; Ross 1994: 8) to pathologise the ageing music fan. For example, Bennett (2006: 221-222) refers to Ross (1994: 8) who states that, “It is not just Mick Jagger and Tina Turner who imagine themselves to be eighteen years old and steppin’ out; a significant mass of baby boomers partially act out this belief in their daily lives.” This comment seems to suggest that popular music cannot or should not be performed by anyone of a certain age nor should it be consumed by them. This, Bennett (2006: 221) states, is an odd stance to take given that popular music and, more broadly, popular culture, has a history spanning at least “fifty years” at the time of his writing. As such, the first generation to grow up with popular music is now aged fifty or over meaning that almost every generation alive today in Western society has grown up in a consumer society:

Indeed, as Savage (1990) notes, every generation in the westernized world born during or after the 1940s has been effectively trained in the age of consumerism, their lifestyles and identities based around a series of consumption practices of which music fandom is a key element. One might reasonably expect then, that where investment in a musical style has been particularly intensive during one’s teenage or 20-something years such investment may continue past 30, into middle-age and perhaps later life. (Bennett 2006: 221)

It is worth noting, however, that Bennett is drawing here from older material from the 1990s when he claims there is a tendency to pathologise the ageing fan. There is now more recent work including his own recent texts such as that written with Jodie Taylor (Bennett and Taylor 2012), as well as Kotarba et al.’s (2013 [2009]), van Dijck’s (2007) and de Zengotita’s (2005) that acknowledges the ageing fan and even their relationships with younger generations in terms of shared taste in popular music. For

instance, van Dijck (2007: 86) finds that popular music now incorporates an “intergenerational transfer” of musical preferences and memories. Likewise, Bennett (2001: 155) gives the example of two parents and their children attending an Eric Clapton and Bob Dylan concert together, stating that parents may be eager to pass on to their children their “musical heritage and the nostalgic moments it inspires.” Kotarba et al. back up Bennett’s (2006: 221) assertion that it makes sense for people to carry on their musical interests throughout the life cycle stating of the babyboomers:

...if rock’n’roll affected the way they dated, mated, and resisted, then one would reasonably expect rock’n’roll music to shape the way they make their roles, that is, the way they work, parent, construct and service relationships, and in other ways accomplish parenthood. (Kotarba et al. 2013 [2009]: 47)

Kotarba et al. thus find that there is less of a generation gap between babyboomer parents, and, I would add, Generation X parents and their offspring. There is greater potential for these generations to share musical interests because of changing generational relationships and also technology. For instance, de Zengotita (2005: 34-35) reports that his daughter shares his interest in the Drifters, Roy Orbison and the Indigo Girls while his son knows more about Bob Dylan and The Beatles than he does and, even further, his children reportedly experience nostalgia for this music and the time periods the music represents. For de Zengotita this is not simply the result of him passing down his taste and memories to his children but also the result of technology such as the internet which mediates these borrowed memories and tastes from previous generations to younger people. This specific issue of technology, however, is more fully explored in the following chapter while this chapter continues to look at generational relationships more fully.

The acknowledgement by scholars of a new and democratic parent-child relationship is part of a broader trend in the literature on childhood and, indeed, de Zengotita (2005: 79) states this as he cites the influence of key figures in the history of childhood studies (Ariès 1962; Christensen and Prout 2002; Fraser 2004; Jenks 2005) who trace the movement from the early deterministic and functionalist models which perceived children as occupying a more passive role in comparison to the more recent interpretive model as espoused by figures such as Corsaro (2014) which regards young people as knowledgeable and competent actors. De Zengotita (2005: 45) himself comments on what he calls the ‘child-centeredness’ of Western culture which applies not only to the indulgence of the child’s desires but also the nurturing of the ageing adult’s inner-child which finds form in de Zengotita’s (2005: 80) image of the twenty-first century adult hurtling towards thirty years of age and yet still “hanging with their crew” and “playing video games.” It is this extension of adolescence throughout the life cycle that in part facilitates the closing of the generation gap and that also in part facilitates retro culture through the sharing of older music from parents to children.

Beamish (2010: 6) points to the fact that millennials, that is those born between approximately 1980 and 2000, in Western societies also tend to hail from small families with fewer siblings than in previous decades which, he claims, contributes further to the close-knit relationship with parents. He further claims that this has resulted in a high level of parental involvement in the upbringing of this generation which has, in turn, led to a generation more likely to seek parental approval than disapproval. The ‘child-centeredness’ of contemporary Western culture means parents may indulge children their music while adult children may indulge parents their music. For instance, in the empirical chapters those in the eighteen to thirty year old category often reported

accompanying their parents to see their parents' favourite bands in whom they had subsequently inherited an interest.

This continued popularity of older music is also found by Bennett (2009) to be influenced by the narrative constructed by members of the babyboomer generation now in power in cultural industries. He finds that babyboomers now wield power over the memory of popular music. They do this, Bennett (2009: 478) claims, by awarding historical status to the rock music of the 1960s and 1970s through "prestige-granting" institutions such as Rolling Stone magazine, Mojo magazine, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and television programmes such as Classic Albums Live. He states that this is because the babyboomer generation, who were the first to grow up with popular music, now occupy positions of power in cultural industries and have thus devised a canon of 'classic' and 'authentic' albums and artists from their youth (Bennett 2009: 478). It seems here that this narrative has been bought by the generation unit of younger fans interviewed for this project and this is partly the result of their close relationship with their parents but also potentially due to their social profile. This causes them to seek out music of the past in search of authenticity and the desire to connect through older popular music to a generation and time period that is not their own.

In this previous discussion I have been considering how generational relationships can contribute to retro culture. The issue in the next section becomes focused then on how to actually theorise these types of multigenerational musical audiences in contemporary society. The main form of musical collectivity experienced by the generation unit of eighteen to thirty year olds in this project involves shared interaction and participation with an older generation as opposed to their own and, indeed, existing research

(Bennett 2000, 2001; De Zengotita 2005; Kotarba et al. 2013 [2009]) would suggest that this lack of generational conflict is a broader trait characterising the contemporary parent-child relationship between the millennials and their babyboomer or Gen X parents. There is a need, then, as Hesmondhalgh (2005: 37) states, for a theory of collective musical identity that accounts for *people* as opposed to simply ‘youth’.

1.2.2 None of the Above

Hesmondhalgh (2005) makes it clear that ‘subculture’ will simply not work in contemporary times but nor will concepts associated with post-subcultural theory such as tribes and scenes, he claims. As already stated, the criticisms levelled against subculturalism range from its bias towards white working class male participants (McRobbie and Garber 1976; Frith and Horne 1987; McFarland 1988) to its romanticisation of the alleged subversive action of subcultural groups (Clarke 1981; Carter 1984; Laing 1985) and its exaggeration of the numbers involved in these groups (Clarke 2005 [1981]: 170). Conversely, Hesmondhalgh (2005: 34) finds that a problem with post-subcultural theory is that it manages to do the opposite in playing down any subversive action while he claims post-subcultural concepts such as ‘tribes’ (Maffesoli 1996; Bennett 1999) and ‘scenes’ (Straw 2001) make social roles and interactions seem so fluid and weak that one is left questioning whether any social interactions take place and whether any social roles exist at all. In other words, musical taste and identification is reduced to the individual whim. Society is reduced to a collection of individuals:

...the uncontroversial idea that people like different musical genres does not sustain a theory of neo-tribalism, which in Bennett’s version implies that all relations between taste and identity are pretty much contingent, or at least dependent on the whims of individuals. The much more difficult and controversial questions about musical taste, and cultural taste in general, have tended to concern the degree to which sets of musical likes and dislikes can be correlated with other key variables, such as age, class, gender and ethnicity. (Hesmondhalgh 2005: 26)

As Hesmondhalgh (2005: 26) observes here, the hard questions in relation to musical taste centre around the classic sociological variables of gender, class, race and age but post-subcultural theory in attempting to temper the rigidity of the focus on the white working class male in the work of the CCCS actually ended up writing these categories out of the picture altogether. To attempt to move beyond this, Hesmondhalgh (2005) therefore points to other concepts that have emerged since the turn of the century, namely, the discussion of 'genre', 'articulation' and 'homology' by Toynbee (2000). Toynbee's (2000) work, he claims, represents a thrust back to the structural categories of gender, class, race and age in the sense that he posits that communities are indeed real and are often reflected and extended in musical cultures (Hesmondhalgh 2005: 32, 35). For instance, in direct contrast to the post-subcultural strand of research, Toynbee (2000: 114) maintains that some types of community possess a social formation that may be mirrored and extended in 'musical genre'. Giving the example of rap music and 'black music-makers', he cites Tricia Rose to show how rap conveys a sense of community:

Talk of subways, crews, and posses, urban noise, economic stagnation, static and crossed signals leap out of hip hop lyrics, sounds and themes (Rose 1994 cited in Toynbee 2000: 114).

Rap music thus expresses a sense of communal experience typically for the black urban working class. However, rap music is, of course, produced and consumed by various communities but Hesmondhalgh (2005: 34), in his review of Toynbee's (2000) work, claims that the point is that it is usually produced and consumed with reference to its relationship to "the social group that is central to its meaning", namely, in this case the black urban working class. Prior to carrying out the empirical interviews for this project one might have assumed the social group central to the meaning of retro culture in popular music and the memory of older popular music would be older people who had

lived through the eras that are pastiched and caricatured in retro culture. However, it emerged in the specific sample featured here that the social group was often millennials. Further, the social group central to the meaning of older popular music, principally twentieth century rock and indie music, here appeared to be white, urban, mostly middle class, both male and female millennials currently attending university.

To begin to theorise this, then, I borrowed from Hesmondhalgh's 'none of the above' which, in turn, takes its cue partly from Toynbee's idea that maybe it is not a case of people being from musical communities as much as being from particular pre-existing communities that correspond with structural categories which are then reflected and extended in particular genres. For example, people are already members of particular gender, racial, class and generational communities which may influence their appeal to certain genres. I agree with this idea that musical cultures may still reflect communal experience particularly in relation to the experience of specific generation units such as the generation unit of white, middle class, eighteen to thirty year old students as will be presented in the empirical chapters. So, advancing Toynbee's (2000) and Hesmondhalgh's (2005) rebuttal against the post-subculturalists' idea that taste and identity are simply a matter of the individual's whim, we might add that the retro trend here would seem to have a specific social composition too or at least it does in the sample featured here.

However, there was still a need to develop a concrete idea, something more than simply 'structural categories' in order to comprehend the cross-generational composition of the sample and the peculiar case of younger people liking and even feeling nostalgia for older music from time periods they did not live through. So while Hesmondhalgh's

(2005) idea is useful it is not the end of the matter. Rather, it is only the starting point. It is primarily useful in so far as it permits me to firstly discard subcultural and post-subcultural theory and to start again. My extension to Hesmondhalgh's idea is to go beyond simply the structural categories and instead to adopt a concept that caters neatly for the various structural categories in a particular socio-historical location. That concept is 'generation unit' and I use it to understand the group of young, white, middle class male and female retro fans here and the group of older, white, working class male and female fans of the contemporaneous music of their youth. The characteristics of gender, class and race are different in different places and at different points in time. In addition, the characteristics of a generation are not universal. Generation unit is thus a concept that permits me to consider all the categories in a very specific spatial and temporal context and the participants' position in and response to that context. However, like Hesmondhalgh I do not believe there is any one size fits all theory or concept that can adequately reflect musical collectivities and identifications in totality and so this concept is allied to others; it is but one part of a framework comprised of a blend of concepts and theories which I am explaining over these two chapters.

The younger participants represent a group of people that inhabit a similar socio-historical location due to their social status (white, middle class, Irish, students) and who exhibit a similar response to this shared location (an expression of disillusionment with contemporary music and a decision to retreat into popular music, primarily rock and indie music, of pre-biographical eras). They share the same structure of feeling which I argue has given rise to the hauntological spirit explored in the next chapter which is in part caused by the way music is accessed and consumed today owing to new technologies. Firstly, however, I want to expound on my adoption of the concept

of generation units in more depth and outline the characteristics of the generations that feature in this study.

1.2.3 Generation Units

The research sample is composed of three generations: the forty plus category comprises two generations, namely, the babyboomers and Generation X, who have previously been characterised as discrete in terms of their musical tastes and experiences (Bennett 2001: 156). The babyboomers - born between 1946 and 1964 (Morgan and Kunkel 2011: 268) - are usually romantically presented as politically engaged revolutionaries:

...among the 'sixties' generation...there is a tendency to romanticize the extent of social and political activism deemed to have characterized the decade. This in turn promotes belief in a youth cultural 'golden age' as babyboomer writers and journalists reminisce about their youth, using this as a yardstick by which to compare the youth of the present day. (Bennett 2001: 156)

By contrast, Generation X - born between 1965 and 1979 (Morgan and Kunkel 2011: 268) - have commonly been depicted as "apolitical and disaffected", a characterisation which conveniently ignores that it was only ever a "minority" of babyboomers who were in any way involved in radical politics (Bennett 2001: 156-157). It could be argued, however, that history is repeating itself with Generation X and the current romanticisation of their youth and their music icons. This is apparent in the presence of 1980s pop stars touring the nostalgia circuit in the late 2000s and the 2010s such as The Cure, ABC, and Depeche Mode, to mention three. Cook has tentatively broached this subject but has been met with the idea, as summed up by Michael Hirschorn, executive vice president of programming for VH1, that 1980s nostalgia is not the straightforward version of nostalgia sold to the babyboomers:

The '80s nostalgia boom is real...it applies to a...self-mocking, slightly ironic thing...you can't give them straight nostalgia of the sort of baby-boomer, 'everything was wonderful and great when we were kids' feel. People Gen X and younger know that things weren't great. We never thought that Motley Crüe was saving the world. We identify with them passionately, but with a certain wink. (Leeds 2005: 1 cited in Cook 2009: 45).

Cook (2009: 45), however, maintains that this was not the case in his interviews with members of Generation X finding them just as prone to sentimentalising their youth as the babyboomers stating: "they did not express significant negative or sarcastic sentiments when discussing Eighties music nor did they speak of their appreciation as a guilty pleasure." The findings of this project correlate with Cook's (2009) in this regard finding that no age group was immune from the temptation of sentimentalising their youth except perhaps for the eighteen to thirty year olds who may or may not engage in this process in years to come though it seems perhaps unlikely given that many of them are already listening to music produced years before they were born. It is perhaps now the turn of the millenials – born between 1980 and 2000 (Beamish 2010: 5) - to carry the tag of 'apolitical' and 'disaffected'. These characteristics are similarly applied to a younger generation of artists and the artistic endeavours of this time period more generally – and beyond - with claims of a cultural slowdown (Fisher 2011a) and the popularity of the pastiche (Jameson 1998 [1985]: 7).

While I have been discussing broader generational traits to obtain a general sense of the different age groups that compose the research sample, it is more useful to consider the characteristics of the smaller groups that comprise generations because the participants here are a very specific and unique self-selecting sample of people and so I find it more profitable to refer to them as 'generation units', which is a concept to which I now turn to discuss in more depth.

According to Mannheim (1993 [1928]: 378-379, 386), a 'generation' is comprised of three scaffolds, namely, a "generational location" which represents the life chances of a generation, that is, the circumstances and climate of the time and place the generation is born into; this is followed by the "generation as actuality" which refers to the shared set of experiences and responses to the social and historical generational location; and, finally, within a generation there exists many "generation units" which express 'structures of knowledge', that is to say they exhibit sensibilities and dispositions that communicate their specific location within their generation.

To put it simply, a generation unit might be perceived as being rather akin to a 'peer group' representing a subdivision within the overall generation. For instance, Edmunds and Turner (2002: 5) refer to Cohen's (1972) work which suggests that "mods" and "rockers" in post-war era Britain may be perceived as generation units; they were both largely members of working class youth who shared common generational experiences but yet they represented distinct generation units being divided on issues such as lifestyle, attitudes and values, not to mention music. Mannheim (1993 [1928]: 379) himself uses the example of "romantic-conservative youth" and "liberal-rationalist youth" belonging to the same 'actual generation' but clearly indicative of separate 'generation units' offering a different set of responses to the set of circumstances that confront their actual generation. Mannheim defines generation unit thus:

...the generation unit represents a much more concrete bond than the actual generation as such. Youth experiencing the same concrete historical problems may be said to be part of the same actual generation; while those groups within the same actual generation which work up the material of their common experiences in different specific ways, constitute separate generation units. (Mannheim 1993 [1928]: 379)

For example, then, the millennials featured here might not share much in common with their broader generation. Rather, they represent a distinct subset or unit within their

wider generation. They are of the same age, the same race, and mostly from the same class but they are also all students, living in an urban area, and part of a unit of fans of older popular music. These are the qualities around which the “concrete bond” that Mannheim talks about in the comment above is formed. It is more difficult to make similar claims about the older participants as there were far fewer participants in the older age category and, as already stated, the younger participants became more central to the focus of the research as it progressed. However, what can be said about the older participants is that they are all white, all working class, all residing in an urban area, ten of them are Irish, one is American and one is English and eleven of the twelve are mature students at university. These participants were also still fans of the older music that was popular in their youth.

The main point is that generation units express sensibilities and dispositions that pertain to their specific location within their generation. Different time periods possess different zeitgeists and so being born in and growing up in a particular era means that the zeitgeist which characterises a time period may influence generational culture and the ways in which generations listen to and remember popular music. These ideas are extended in the following chapter in relation to Raymond Williams’ notion of ‘structures of feeling’ which is used in order to comprehend the intangible yet shared knowledge that cements these generation units and their cultural taste and memory.

1.4) Conclusion

This chapter introduces one of the contributory factors leading to the popularity of retro culture in popular music in the twenty-first century, that is to say it reflects on the generational composition of the audience and the continued involvement of ageing artists and fans in the production and consumption of popular music and the changing

generational relationships of the past few decades which has led to the exchange of musical taste and memories between generations.

The chapter did this by firstly illustrating how the study of popular music was allied to the study of youth culture in subcultural and post-subcultural theory though this eventually progressed in the latter particularly in Bennett's work on post-youth audiences. The almost exclusive focus on youth is no longer accurate given that at least three generations have grown up to the soundtrack of popular music and given that older popular music is still listened to. This chapter thus considers how we might go about theorising the multigenerational composition of the audience particularly for older popular music. This is where Hesmondhalgh's (2005) work came in. I share Hesmondhalgh's view that the linkage between the study of popular music and youth no longer makes sense. He therefore advocates returning to the structural categories of gender, class, race and age to assess how they correlate to musical taste given that post-subcultural theory declined to mention these factors. I agree with this idea of returning to these categories because the existing concepts theorising the relationship between popular music and collective identity did not work in relation to the data gathered in this project because the participants did not report being members of music groupings. They are, however, already members of specific communities whose identity can be reflected and extended in musical genres, as Toynbee (2000) counsels, that is to say, they are already members of class, racial and generational communities, for instance, who share a common structure of feeling of disenchantment with the present music scene and a desire to retreat into older popular music. This chapter thus falls back on the sociological definition of 'generation units' to comprehend the particular age

cohorts featured here and ‘structures of feeling’ to comprehend the intangible connections between them.

I thus take Hesmondhalgh’s idea as my starting point in order to clear the deck of the earlier theories and in order to examine the structural categories but I extend his idea by going further than the structural category of age and back to the concept of generation units to show how these groups can be rather like a peer group even if they sometimes report being alone in their love of older music. The next chapter explains structures of feeling and how it works with generation units and cultural memory giving rise to the hauntological spirit and the feeling of nostalgic longing for older popular music which is perceived as being authentic in comparison to mainstream contemporary popular music and how new technologies have aided and abetted this and what role old technologies also play in the process.

Chapter Two: Memory, Technology and Retro Culture

2.1) Introduction

Having outlined the applicability of Mannheim's 'generation units' as an alternative means for understanding the cross-generational composition of the retro audience, this chapter commences with a discussion of Williams' theory of the 'structures of feeling' in order to elaborate on the idea of generation units bonding over their shared knowledge and views of the setting they are inhabiting. Structures of feeling is discussed in this chapter as the spirit and mood of the current time period for a specific generation unit. Generation units are understood here as a group of people that share a common structure of feeling, that is to say they share a cultural taste and memory which connotes subcultural capital. This is quite an innovative use of Williams' idea which has not been used to redefine generation units before. For the white, middle class, students from the generation unit of millennials featured in this study the structure of feeling they share is characterised by disillusionment with contemporary popular music which I argue here explains their 'nostalgia for the future' (also known as 'hauntology' (Hatherley 2011: 11)) which is expressed in the data through their nostalgia for older popular music which is perceived as more authentic. This shows that the literature reviewed here does not just emerge from theory but from an iterative process involving a movement back and forth between literature and data. In turn, the questions in the interviews were also shaped by the debates in the literature and this was particularly the case with probing the role of new technologies in facilitating retro culture as discussed in this chapter.

Though existing studies on retro culture and hauntology by Reynolds (2011) and Fisher (2014) mention the involvement of new technologies in making the back catalogue of

popular music easily available and though they do make the point that this potentially hampers the success of new music and the coronation of a new generation of artists, they do not consult theoretical debates in the academic literature on technology to comprehend this more fully. I contend that it is no coincidence that Reynolds (2011) manages to trace the current retro phenomenon back to the turn of the twenty-first century. This is precisely when the first file-sharing website Napster was established in 1999 (Knopper 2009) and so I argue in this chapter that new technologies such as the internet and mobile technologies are part and parcel of facilitating the retro phenomenon and the structure of feeling that ‘there is no Now’ because they provide easy access to the vast discography of older popular music and potentially temper the emergence and/or awareness of new music. This is where I weave in technological determinism into the overall argument. This approach was employed – partly also as a response to data – where the younger participants spoke about material and immaterial music formats in discrete ways with older material formats being perceived as more authentic and partly because it appeared to tacitly underlie Reynolds’ (2011) and Fisher’s (2014) work.

In this project, I specifically adopt soft technological determinism because though I argue that the form of the technology exerts influence over music listening and memory particularly in relation to materiality and immateriality, the participants maintained that they possessed a level of agency in choosing the technologies and texts they used. This is more fully debated in the empirical chapters but the theoretical approach is outlined here. This is a very unique theoretical framework, then, combining approaches from the fields of popular music, memory studies and technology studies to understand cultural memory in relation to retro culture. The point is that retro culture, the structure of

feeling that promotes hauntology, technology, and the changing generational relationships from the previous chapter all go hand in hand.

2.2) Theorising Generations, Memory, Technology and Retro Culture

2.2.1 Structures of Feeling and the Generational Cultural Memory

This section elaborates on ‘structures of feeling’ in conjunction with generation units and their cultural memories. ‘Structures of feeling’ are the intangible and fleeting “felt sense” of a “lived culture” as experienced at a specific place and point in time. They are essentially the spirit or zeitgeist of a particular temporal and spatial context and are experienced through the shared knowledge, values and taste of a social group such as, I argue, a generation unit and are said to be most strongly expressed through the art and literature of a particular time and place (Williams 1961: 65). However, art and literature (of which popular music is a part) is subsequently subject to what Williams (1961: 66-68) calls the ‘selective tradition.’

Williams (1961: 66-68) explains that when a culture is no longer being physically lived, it actually continues to live in the recorded format and that by very careful analysis we may attempt to obtain a sense of the general overarching structure of feeling from this recorded culture. However, we must acknowledge that this analysis is often coloured by the current context and our division of records into ‘selective traditions’. The selective tradition is a process which begins within the period in question itself as specific works are extracted for foregrounding while others are pushed to the background. This process of re-selection continues infinitely once this cultural period has passed but the natives of this period will always feel some significant aspects have been forgotten. Williams (1961: 67-68) points out that this is perhaps most clearly illustrated when older generations lament younger generations who they perceive as being unappreciative of

particular cultural works from pre-biographical eras. Because a structure of feeling refers to the ‘lived culture’ and the ‘living experience’ of a time and place, it is a ‘native style’, an *authentic* style perhaps, that no-one but those born and bred in the specific cultural period can know and communicate and we notice this most, Williams (1961: 65) states, when an outsider attempts to speak about a social group or community to which we belong. Williams elaborates:

...a particular sense of life, a particular community of experience hardly needing expression, through which the characteristics of our way of life ... are in some way passed, giving them a particular and characteristic colour ... a particular and native style ... it is as firm as “structure” suggests, yet it operates in the most delicate and least tangible parts of our activity. In one sense this structure of feeling is the culture of a period ... and it is in this respect that the arts of a period ... are of major importance (Williams 1961: 64).

A structure of feeling implies, then, an implicit knowledge and sensibility shared by members of the same generation unit. Younger generations must rely largely on the selective tradition in order to attempt to tap into the mood of previous time periods leading ineluctably to an incomplete memory of the past, a point taken up in chapter five section 5.2.2 by some of the participants in relation to the topic of ‘selective memory’. It is this ability to link structures of feeling to selective memory, the zeitgeist of a period, and specific generation units that makes it such a useful concept for this particular project. The notion that it survives in some form in the ‘selective tradition’ dovetails comfortably with the idea of the selective memory and with the disjuncture between having lived through a particular time period in reality versus a technologically mediated presence and living through it vicariously. It is suggested in the empirical chapter five section 5.3 that what is missing in the vicarious experience is the authentic structure of feeling of having been a member of the original generation unit that enjoyed this music the first time around. There are other reasons, however, for the use of structures of feeling; it is particularly useful in conjunction with the idea of

generation units and their cultural memories. I will now elaborate on how these ideas fit together following an introduction to the sociological literature on memory and nostalgia and the concept of cultural memory.

The ‘classic’ work in sociology on the topics of memory and nostalgia which still tends to be consulted today as a starting point for current scholars writing about either topic is the work of Maurice Halbwachs and Fred Davis respectively. Memory became the subject of sociological scrutiny perhaps most notably with Halbwachs’ (1950 [1926]) seminal work on the social context of memory. Halbwachs’ conception of memory was premised on the Durkheimian notion of the importance of social integration. This meant that Halbwachs was particularly interested in the collective nature of memory stating that individual memories must be understood primarily in terms of the individual’s connection to social groups. Halbwachs’ notion of stable formations of memory by stable social groups remained influential for much of the twentieth century but it was subsequently declared too linear and, therefore, outdated to deal with the contested nature of memory in late modern society (Huyssen 2000: 28). Likewise, the sociologist Fred Davis (1979) refused to acknowledge vicarious nostalgia as a credible form of sentimentality referring to it instead as a vague and unsubstantiated “antiquarian feeling.” It is perhaps worth noting that Davis’ (1979) work, like Halbwachs’ (1950 [1926]), borrows from the Durkheimian logic of stable linear formations of memory and is thus perhaps ill-equipped to deal with the complexity of nostalgia in the twenty-first century, that is, a time period in which de Zengotita (2005) confirms ‘imagined nostalgia’ very much exists. As a result, cultural memory, as will be explained in the following paragraph, serves as a much more appropriate concept for this project in which vicarious memories and nostalgia are shown in the data to very much exist. Also,

in this way, this project adds important empirical data and makes an important theoretical contribution to the topic of vicarious memories and nostalgia in sociology.

The concept of 'cultural memory' is distinct from its predecessor 'collective memory' in the sense that it allows us to consider memories mediated through popular cultural forms such as popular music on cultural artefacts such as CDs, DVDs, and, more recently, through MP3 files and streams, as legitimate forms of memory (Misztal 2003: 13). These artefacts provide generation units who did not live through a particular time period and who did not witness events first-hand with a vicarious technologically mediated presence in that time period. For instance, in terms of popular music, Susan Fast (2006) refers to the vicarious cultural memory of the rock group Queen and what has come to be remembered as their legendary performance at Live Aid in 1985. This performance and other iconic moments such as Elvis Presley's appearance on the Ed Sullivan show in 1956 and David Bowie's retiring of Ziggy Stardust at the Hammersmith Odeon in 1973, to take two, have become staples of popular music history 'remembered' by music fans even if they did not witness the events first-hand and even if they were not born during these time periods. Cultural memory is, for its acceptance of the legitimacy of second-hand memories that have been technologically mediated or otherwise and for its common usage in relation to popular culture, then, the most applicable concept for this project where in the empirical chapters the younger participants report possessing memories of and nostalgia for older popular music from pre-biographical eras.

Contending that popular music represents a form of cultural memory means that it can serve as a shared cultural reference point for generation units, both those who lived

through the time period in which the music was originally released and for those who did not. Identifications with generation units are forged through generational cultures that provide a shared set of practices, tastes, attitudes and dispositions, which are maintained by generational memories. The importance of these collective cultural experiences in making sense of the term ‘generation units’ permits the use of Williams’ (1961) ‘structures of feeling’ to convey the distinctiveness of a particular generation units’ memory. Using Williams’ structures of feeling, we may revise Mannheim’s (1993 [1928]: 378) notion of a ‘generation unit’ which states that a ‘generation unit’ consists of those individuals born within the same cultural and historical context and exposed to the same events during their formative years. Instead, we may conceive of a generation unit as a cohort of people who share a common structure of feeling. Sharing a common structure of feeling and a collective culture furnishes members of a generation unit with shared memories which ultimately facilitate the integration of the group through the passage of time. From the stance of the generational structure of feeling, all significant political, historical and cultural events that a particular generation unit experiences first hand can be considered part of the social sphere in which that generation now manifests its collective identity.

My original addition to this, however, is to add that there is much greater potential today in the context of retro culture and shared intergenerational relationships for generation units who experience events second-hand to attempt to grasp the authentic structure of feeling eventually and it is shown in chapter five section 5.3 that they appear to do this (in their minds) not through a technologically mediated presence but through attending reunion gigs after which some felt “relieved” (Ian [26] chapter five section 5.3) and through the vinyl revival and the continued purchase of CDs (some of

the pre-biographical albums discussed by the participants were originally released on CDs in the 1980s) which appears to be interpreted by the participants as a more authentic mode of consumption. The technologically mediated presence of the past which is facilitated by the internet, though it appears to pale in comparison to attending a live concert, is often vital in stimulating interest in the first place and/or in facilitating the younger participants' interest in older popular music. As a result, even though in Williams' original conception of structures of feeling he maintained that it could not be passed down or experienced in quite the same way by outsiders such as the next generation, it seems for the younger participants in this project that in their minds they manage to leap over temporal boundaries by technological and cultural means to perhaps even obtain a better experience than the previous generation. For instance, Simon [25] points out in chapter five section 5.2.2 that he attended a Specials reunion concert knowing all of their back catalogue, b-sides, demos, autobiographies while his mother saw them in the 1980s at a time when they only had one album and were inexperienced. This comment and others suggest that attending reunion concerts, purchasing material formats, accessing and possessing knowledge of all of the b-sides, demos and autobiographies are arguably the means by which this younger generation unit attempt to authenticate and validate their memory of artists and bands they missed out on the first time around.

So far I have been discussing how structures of feeling can help us to comprehend the cultural memory of generation units but now I want to give some concrete examples of this. In terms of popular music, 1950s rock'n'roll would be an example of a structure of feeling which emerged in babyboomer consciousness out of the development of the popular music industry. Indeed, the classic subcultural studies by figures such as Hall

and Jefferson (2006 [1975]), Clarke (1976), and Willis (1978) illustrate how popular music served as a store for the spirit of the times communicating the zeitgeist of its relevant time period for its relevant generational subculture. Over the past decade, Bennett (2000; 2001; 2006; 2009; Bennett and Hodkinson 2012; Bennett and Taylor 2012) has perhaps been the most prolific scholar dealing with this topic of generational cultures and popular music. His focus hones in mostly on the babyboomer generation and rock music (2001; 2009) and, to a lesser extent, Generation X and their association with rave and post-rave cultures (2001) followed by an article on middle-aged punks in 2006.

I would argue that what Bennett is dealing with is really specific generation units within the broader generations featured in these studies. We can consider rave and house, for instance, a structure of feeling for members of a particular generation unit within Generation X; there would equally have been a generation unit within Generation X who were and perhaps still are Morrissey acolytes and so their structure of feeling is formed through indie music.

With this project, similar generation unit patterns are identified in the empirical chapters with those aged in their late fifties and early sixties conversing specifically about the rock music of the 1960s and 1970s while those aged in their forties spoke more specifically about the punk and post-punk music of the late 1970s and 1980s. Regardless of the genre of music, these participants were listening to the contemporaneous music of their youth in part because the music of previous eras was not so easily accessible. Another reason for the shared locus for these older participants is revealed in the empirical chapters to be due to the music technologies available in

these time periods with many older participants referring to the presence of one or two shared music devices in the household for collective listening with siblings and/or peers. This resulted in the sharing of music tastes with their siblings and/or peers. These participants also referred more to the sharing and swapping of albums with peers in their neighbourhood (Christine's [58] comments on this in chapter four section 4.2.1). These practices - collective listening and the sharing of albums - are partly, I argue, what led to the linear collective cultural memories of music from biographical eras for this age group featured here. By comparison, those aged in their forties began to converse more about the introduction of personal mobile listening devices such as the Walkman and the presence of a variety of music TV shows which permitted them to break away from their older siblings' taste potentially leading to more personalised tastes and memories. However, it did seem for those in this age group that collective sharing with their peers still persisted to a greater extent than with the specific sample of eighteen to thirty year olds featured in this project.

It was in the conversations with the eighteen to thirty year old participants that the sense of perhaps a deeper rupture in their generational culture became apparent. Rather than simply providing a shared locus between peers, popular music now appeared to communicate an "intergenerational transfer" of musical preferences and memories (van Dijk 2006: 364) with this specific group of participants typically listening to popular music from pre-biographical eras usually the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. This appears to be the corollary of their relationships with their parents and the sharing of musical taste, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also due to new technologies which stimulate and/or facilitate interest in older music by permitting increased access to it. Part of the reason also for the apparent weakening of a shared cultural locus with their peers was

due to the plurality of technological devices and sources at their disposal. So, for instance, while those aged over fifty spoke about vinyl record players and transistor radios, *Top of the Pops* and Radio Luxembourg, and those in their forties added to this list the Walkman and Vince Hanley's *MTV Ireland*, the eighteen to thirty year olds reported a much wider range of devices and sources from record players, tape decks, CD players, the Walkman, CD Walkman, MP3 players, smartphones, countless music TV channels, radio stations and countless websites on the internet. As a result, while they did discuss sharing some collective listening with siblings and parents, there was very little reference to shared listening and taste with peers. Aside from the family context, then, their interest in popular music was a largely individual pursuit.

This individualisation is explained in Kibby's (2009) work by reference to personal music players. Kibby (2009: 434, 437) makes a direct association between the personal mobile MP3 player and the heightening of individualisation in terms of musical taste and memories as she refers to the proclivity of users to dispense with official album tracklists in favour of constructing personalised playlists and the tendency to listen alone and on-the-move as opposed to listening collectively in a fixed location with peers. This, to me, suggests a technological determinist stance even though this is not explicitly referred to in her article. I thus query later in this chapter whether new technologies do indeed stimulate and/or facilitate retro culture and cultural memory in relation to older music which, in turn, potentially leads to the breakdown of a distinct new generational culture formed around contemporary music for this younger age category. The main point here is to reiterate the central point of the thesis that these various factors, from generational relationships to retro culture and technology, are inseparable.

First, however, I want to elaborate on how this pattern of younger participants listening to older music and their inability to identify new music trends distinct to their generation led me to the concept of hauntology and the idea that hauntology and the sense that “there is no Now” (Fisher 2011b) may well be the structure of feeling for this particular generation unit of eighteen to thirty year olds featured in this study. Again, recalling the structural categories of the previous chapter, the appeal of older popular music perhaps correlates to their being white, middle class, students based in an urban area and this is probed a little more in empirical chapters. A more mixed sample in terms of race and class recruited from a different location such as a music venue, for instance, might have resulted in quite a different structure of feeling, perhaps one that may have dealt more with genres of the twenty-first century such as grime and dubstep. The former, for instance, is a genre which Shlaim (2011) and Hancox (2011) – again journalistic work - state is typically associated with the black urban working class in Britain. For the participants here who enjoyed older popular music, there appeared to be a link to a wider and very present ongoing debate about retro and hauntology by Fisher (2014) and Reynolds (2011) primarily and by Hatherley (2011) to a lesser extent. Thus, the next section expands on exactly what hauntology entails.

2.2.2 Hauntology

‘Hauntology’ is the contemporary equivalent of Jameson’s ‘nostalgia mode’. Briefly, Jameson’s concept was exemplified in his notion of the ‘nostalgia film’ which emanated from the idea of the ‘pastiche’. The pastiche, as conceptualised by Jameson (1991: 16-25), is symptomatic of a cultural lethargy marked by the inability to represent the present time in original terms or to predict possible futures. The pastiche emerges, then, as a stylistic device in which elements, usually ‘dead styles’ from the past, are

removed from context and reassembled: “the artists and writers of the present will no longer be able to invent new styles and worlds – they’ve already been invented; only a limited number of combinations are possible; the most unique ones have been thought of already” (Jameson 1998 [1985]: 7). Simply, postmodern culture is not a culture of creativity but rather a culture of mimicry. Further, the imitation and mimicry present in postmodern culture is not the same as ‘parody’ in modern culture which at least has the “ulterior motive” of seeking to satirise. The ‘pastiche’, by contrast, is a ‘blank parody’; it is a case of style without substance and this itself is a characterising feature of postmodern culture which is said to be the ‘culture of the image’. Postmodern culture is thus said to be composed of recycled ideas from the past with little sense of the historical referent which results in a dehistoricisation of experience. As there is no clear sense of historical development, all sense of time melds into a series of ‘perpetual presents’ (Jameson 1983: 125).

This is demonstrated in the example of the ‘nostalgia film’ which Storey (2010: 62) states could refer to films produced in the 1980s and 1990s such as *Back to the Future I, II and III* (1985, 1989, 1990), *Peggy Sue Got Married* (1986), *Rumble Fish* (1983), *Angel Heart* (1987), and *Blue Velvet* (1986), which aim to recreate the stylistic and atmospheric aspects of past eras - even when they are meant to be set in the future - because the aim of the nostalgia film is, according to Jameson (1985: 116), not to “reinvent a picture of the past in its lived totality” but to recreate “the feel and shape of characteristic art objects of an older period.” Jameson (1984: 67) states that the focus is usually on recreating the styles and signifiers of the 1950s because it is said that, for Americans in particular, the 1950s was a period of stability, prosperity and, at the same time, the possibility of alternatives: “for Americans at least, the 1950s remain the

privileged lost object of desire – not merely the stability and prosperity of a pax Americana, but also the first naïve innocence of the countercultural impulses of early rock and roll and youth gangs.” The nostalgia film does not represent a real past but rather reinforces cultural stereotypes and fictions regarding particular historical periods and so essentially eschews ‘genuine historicity’ in a “random cannibalization of all the styles of the past” to create an imagined past (Jameson 1984: 66). The postmodern condition is thus characterised by a blurring of historical boundaries or, in Jameson’s (1991: 6) terms, a “weakening of historicity.” The sense of time that prevails in the era of late capitalism, then, is “out of joint” (Jameson 1991: 283) or “dyschronic”, as Reynolds (2011) puts it (also see, for instance, Fisher 2014: 14).

Coined by the French philosopher Derrida in his book *Spectres of Marx* (1994), the related concept of ‘hauntology’ indicates a paradoxical harking back to a lost future. Written after the ‘end of history’ in a land where nothing happens forever, Derrida (1994) posits that the “spectre of communism” will continue to haunt Europe eventually prompting its inhabitants to become more nostalgic for the futurism and utopianism of the recent past. Since 2005, the term has been deployed by Reynolds and Fisher to refer to the consortium of British artists signed to the Ghost Box record label (Reynolds 2011: 328) and also, more broadly, to highlight the idea that popular culture and, most specifically, popular music has lost its forward momentum meaning that “pastiche and retrospection are now normalised” (Fisher 2011b). This is the key distinction between the ‘nostalgia mode’ as conceived by Jameson in the 1980s and ‘hauntology’ as re-conceived by Reynolds and Fisher in the 2000s; when Jameson spoke in the 1980s of retrospection and pastiche as key traits of postmodernism, Fisher’s (2014: 14) perception is that there was still a modernist culture to contrast retro

culture with but he claims that futurism has faded in the twenty-first century meaning that retrospection and pastiche are now the dominant forces in contemporary culture and have become so pervasive that they almost go unnoticed. The problem, Fisher (2011b) explains, is that in the twenty-first century “there is no Now” to compare retro culture to.

Thus, as Fisher (2011b) puts it, hauntology is the closest we have come to achieving a distinct ‘cultural moment’ (or structure of feeling) in the twenty-first century encapsulating as it does a longing for futures that never quite materialised. Hauntological music promulgated by groups signed to the Ghost Box label such as The Focus Group, Belbury Poly, and The Advisory Circle is distinguished from the mainstream retro of Arctic Monkeys and Adele in the sense that the former foregrounds its longing for the Britain of the 1960s and 1970s and, more specifically, for the potential futures that were born but never fully matured during those periods (Reynolds 2011: 330). As Reynolds puts it:

Ghost Box...conjures a Britain unaffected by Americanisation...Ghost Box are obsessed with the past of technocratic utopianism that flourished in the period between the birth of the welfare state and the ascent of Thatcher. Optimistic and forward-looking, this was the era of new towns and ambitious urban redevelopment projects, the age of polytechnics, the Open University, and the sixties paperback explosion spearheaded by Penguin Books... by the early 2000s, these bygone ideals of progress started to acquire the romance, pathos and honour of a lost future. (Reynolds 2011: 338)

So it seems from Reynolds’ comments that hauntology or nostalgia for the future as it is also known developed in the late twentieth century. ‘Nostalgia for the future’ is, Reynolds (2011: 368) explains, a phrase often incanted but difficult to source. On further exploration, Reynolds (2011: 368) attributes the term both to Asimov’s book *Future Days* (1986) and to Baudrillard’s text *America* (1989) which contrasts what

Baudrillard views as the vacant American optimism that assumes we have already reached utopia in late modern society with the rational European disappointment that we have, if anything, reached dystopia. Nostalgia for the future is not, then, as Hatherley (2011: 11) explains, a straightforward form of revivalism. Rather, it is nostalgia for the idea of Futurism. It is, in other words, nostalgia for a time period when viable alternatives to capitalism last seemed to exist and a time when popular music was immersed in the present not just mirroring but also foretelling new social trends. This, Hatherley (2011: 10) argues, means the concept has a greater social and political charge than standard revivalism.

Similarly, listening to older popular music represents a form of socio-political action for some of the younger participants in chapter five section 5.2.2. However, even for those who do not explicitly frame their vicarious nostalgia for older popular music as a form of socio-political action, the general sentiment is that they still view this music as emblematic of something much more original, authentic, new and exciting compared to contemporary music which they regard as inauthentic and redolent of older music. They discuss older popular music as symbolic of a time period which they regard as more forward-looking, futuristic and more socio-politically aware. My original addition here is that Reynolds and Fisher are discussing artists and production whereas my project is focused on fans and their consumption of older music and how this is guided by the hauntological structure of feeling.

I have just been discussing structures of feeling and hauntology but I now want to move on to other factors that facilitate this such as technology. This preference for this particular era (usually the 1960s to the 1980s) and genre (usually indie and rock) of

older music, I contend, stems not simply from the structures of feeling but from new technologies. Indeed, the structure of feeling that there is no Now, I argue, partly arises from not just the changing generational relationships of the previous chapter but from new technologies. These technologies, namely, the internet and mobile technologies are, I suggest, inextricably linked to retro culture and nostalgia for older musical eras and genres because they afford and may even promote access to these eras and genres. This leads me on to the perspective of technological determinism which I perceive as underscoring Fisher's (2014) and Reynolds' (2011) claims though they do not explicitly mention or borrow from the perspective. It therefore appeared to me that technological determinism could facilitate my interpretation of the development of retro culture so I decided to also test this in the interviews partly probing the questions: 'to what extent do new technologies permit and perhaps promote retro culture?' and 'how do music technologies work in relation to the production of cultural memory?' The next section thus moves on to firstly discuss technological determinism and then how we may see it at work in Fisher's (2014) and Reynolds' (2011) texts. I conclude the section by reflecting on how technological determinism, in my view, may be profitably employed to comprehend the phenomenon in conjunction with the structures of feeling for a particular generation unit.

2.2.3 Technological Determinism

In its most basic form, technological determinism interprets the relationship between technology and society as involving a one-way flow of relations with technology being the causal agent impacting on society. For instance, in *Understanding Media*, McLuhan (1964) traces a genealogy of technologies from the tribal age to the electronic age highlighting how the defining technology of a particular time period tends to stimulate specific sensorial responses as well as facilitating the development of a particular type

of cultural milieu. For example, the book - which is defined by McLuhan (1964: 31) as a 'hot' medium, that is, a medium that engages one specific sense (in this case, the sense of sight) in order to digest content – was said to have encouraged the creation of an individualised and scientific culture due to the solitary nature of reading which promoted abstract and linear thought. Television, on the other hand, was categorised by McLuhan (1964: 22) as a 'cool' medium, that is, a medium that engenders a multi-sensorial experience (that of sight and hearing) and facilitates the development of a tribal culture due to its prompting of non-linear thought and its creation of a terrain in which many events take place simultaneously. Thus, the medium - be it the written word or recorded visual footage - is the message (McLuhan and Fiore 1967). This is a perspective that is potentially central to the thesis because in the empirical chapters various technologies and material and immaterial formats are shown to have impacted in different ways upon how the user listens to and remembers music meaning one could argue that the music is not the message but, rather, the format or medium - be it the MP3 file or the CD - is the message.

However, soft technological determinism is preferable for this project as it offers a more nuanced approach granting more agency to music listeners who in the empirical chapters reveal that they perceive themselves to, at times, exercise agency in terms of their choosing which technologies to use. Perhaps the most recent purveyor of this approach would be Sally Wyatt (2014 [2007]) who shows that soft technological determinism deals more with the notion that technologies offer *affordances* to users, that is to say that, for instance, the internet and mobile technologies afford people greater access to older popular music which may facilitate the popularity of retro culture but they do not cause retro culture of their own accord. It permits then for a

level of choice and agency and even permits that there may be other factors such as the structures of feeling and generational relationships that perhaps prompt people to research older popular music on the internet in the first place but the form of the technology being used will likely still exert some level of influence upon the ways in which music is being listened to and perhaps how it is being remembered.

It is my view that this general idea of determinism is present in both Reynolds' (2011) and Fisher's (2011b; 2014) work on retro culture and hauntology. Both Reynolds (2011: xxi; 114) and Fisher (2011b) agree that the reason for the retro cultural phenomenon is that the axis of innovation has shifted from the cultural sphere to the realm of technology. Fisher (2011b) and Reynolds (2011) argue that since the turn of the twenty-first century the main innovations in popular music have related to technological changes such as the opening up of the vast archive of music history, the channels of distribution, and the increased portability of entire music collections than to the creation of new musical genres. Reynolds (2011: 75) questions whether young artists can produce original music when they are so engulfed by the history of musical influences now so readily available on the internet. The logic of Reynolds' (2011) argument is that having access to such a vast archive of styles on the internet makes it attractive for young artists to hybridise old styles as opposed to constructing something entirely 'new'. The option now exists to disconnect from contemporary music in order to slip through the internet wormhole and engage instead with the music and events of past time periods.

Fisher (2011a) similarly states that technology has been responsible for a 'cultural slowdown' over the past decade. What he means by this is that technologies such as the

internet and the MP3 player have altered the methods of consumption and distribution but not the content. Fisher (2011a) highlights the current slow pace of cultural development by referring to the fifteen year gap that took us from the Beatles to The Sex Pistols and, subsequently, the fifteen year gap that transported us from The Sex Pistols to Goldie. However, the fifteen year gap between the drum'n'bass music of artists such as Goldie in the mid-to-late 1990s, Fisher (2011a) laments, has given us Arctic Monkeys and Adele - artists whose records could have been produced in the 1960s. Like Reynolds (2011), Fisher (2011b) sees this as being because the internet apparently creates an amorphous non-time zone in which the icons of popular music history may virtually live forever: "There's a crisis of overavailability — nothing dies. It comes back as a box set retrospective or on YouTube." This leads to a cluttered popular musical landscape which Reynolds (2011: 407) finds hampers the emergence of new music. Hence, I would argue that cultural development has become entangled with technological innovation.

Even though Reynolds (2011) and Fisher (2014) tend to treat technology and culture as separate stating that innovation has moved from the cultural sphere to the realm of technology I conceptualise it in a slightly different way finding that the technological changes of recent years represent cultural changes in themselves because technological devices are also cultural artefacts. They cannot be spoken of as separate or distinct since music has always been mediated by technology of some form (even musical instruments are in themselves techno-cultural artefacts (see, for instance, Toynbee 2006: 265)).

In addition to my differing perception of the intermingling between culture and technology, the focus of my project also differs in terms of my focus on consumers rather than producers. My perspective is that through its ability to make the past so present, the internet has equipped consumers, such as the generation unit of millennials in this study, with vicarious cultural memories and nostalgia. Simply, time has lost its forward momentum and, courtesy of the internet, it increasingly moves sideways meaning on YouTube, for instance, Jimi Hendrix exists in the same temporal sphere as Adele (Reynolds 2011: 85). This also means, however, that Jimi Hendrix can be an equally urgent and essential part of the contemporary popular music landscape for a generation unit who missed the 1960s by a few decades. It means that this generation unit can also read about the history of older artists and watch videos of them while also potentially interacting with fellow fans of any age some of whom have lived through the time periods in question and, therefore, a younger generation unit may come to possess a vicarious memory of and even nostalgia for pre-biographical eras.

This example demonstrates the way in which the form of the technology can influence retro culture and cultural memory. Similarly, the younger participants in the empirical chapters cite ‘access’ as a reason for listening to older music. This often involved being encouraged to listen to older music through YouTube recommendations which appear in the margin of the screen when they are watching a different video. This suggests determinism when the form of the website promotes and encourages the user to consume the website’s recommendations. This situation of being presented with and even bombarded with older music links back to the structure of feeling that there is no Now in the sense that being encouraged to listen to older music in this way potentially makes the present lose some of its urgency and nowness. It potentially results in a

blurring of time periods and a glutted environment in which it is more difficult for new and young artists to be heard.

This feeling of disenchantment and sense that there is no distinct new music potentially contributes to shaping the sense of nostalgia for the future which is expressed in the participants' comments when they opine in the empirical chapters that the popular music from time periods before their birth was more original, authentic and futuristic. The idea that the past was more futuristic is partly a social construction, however, because as Reynolds (2011: 370) claims, nostalgia for the future is nostalgia for a time that never really materialised because in truth the pre-biographical eras the younger participants yearn for also contained popular music and genres that they may consider inauthentic and the popular music industry was a capitalist industry in the mid-to-late twentieth century just as it is now. In other words, they appear to possess a selective memory from the selective tradition discussed at the start of this chapter and some of the participants even suggest this in the empirical chapters. This selective tradition appears to be inherited from both parents and from YouTube recommendations on the internet.

These are not the only factors, however, influencing the shaping of cultural memory. Within the technological aspect of the retro culture phenomenon, there is also the issue of material formats versus immaterial formats. Both material and immaterial formats facilitate cultural memory through retro culture albeit in different ways. Immaterial formats may provide greater and easier access to older popular music but it was found that the younger participants often regarded these formats as providing a supplementary method for convenience listening. They would often subsequently purchase the music

they liked on material formats which tend to be regarded as providing more authentic methods of listening. This materiality versus immateriality debate is reflected to an extent in Reynolds' (2011) work. It is my view that technological determinism underlies the debates in Reynolds' (2011: 412) work even though he does not explicitly mention determinism in any depth besides one paragraph which refers to McLuhan's aphorism 'the medium is the message' stating that the new developments in dissemination, storage and access have not spawned a new form of music and that this might corroborate his maxim. I will now explain in the following section how I think determinism underlies much of what Reynolds says throughout his book about materiality and immateriality.

Running throughout Reynolds' (2011: 74) text is the idea of the "cultural economy of dearth and delay" which alludes to the scarcity of music and the measured pace at which music was released in times past when material culture dominated. Simply, this refers to the way in which access to music was previously limited by what one could afford and also typically by what was available in the local record shop. Bannister (2006: 128) picks up on this point remembering how difficult it was to source a 1960s album in a local record shop in the 1980s. This is because albums were sometimes deleted after a period of time and also because record shops would usually stock contemporary music. This, I argue, contributed to the more cohesive generational memories formed around contemporaneous music that is expressed, for instance, by the older participants in this project who did not have access to the vast archive of popular music at their fingertips when they were growing up. I perceive this as indicative of technological determinism because it reflects McLuhan's contention that technologies facilitate a particular type of cultural milieu. In this case, material formats afforded a

cultural milieu of “dearth and delay” which I contend resulted in a more stable and distinct locus from which generational memories could blossom. An environment where the previous generations’ music was not so accessible meant there was more space on the shelves for new music and for a new generation comprised of various generation units to express themselves and their distinct sound and culture.

The cultural economy of dearth and delay contrasts greatly with this cultural environment of ‘glut/clot’ (Reynolds 2011: 74) which has been afforded by the internet and mobile listening technologies. What Reynolds means by the phrase ‘glut/clot’ is the wealth of music now available online. Simply, the internet and new mobile technologies permit access to a vast proportion of the discography of popular music meaning contemporary music now must vie with older music for the attention of younger generations. The difficulty Bannister reports in finding an old 1960s album in the 1980s is no longer an issue in the twenty-first century. If anything, the issue now is the wealth of information available at the click of a button and the cluttered cultural environment it fosters potentially leading to less distinct generational memories. There have always been various generation units within any generation but they were likely listening to contemporaneous music as opposed to their parents’ music. The situation now is that it is not just a case of there being different generation units and genres within one generation competing for attention but that there are also various eras competing for attention making the old slogan “the music that defines a generation” now seem rather pointless for the millennials. This generation are shown to be more omnivorous in the data not just in terms of genres but also in terms of eras and they are arguably encouraged to be so in part by these new technologies which make the past so accessible.

This increased access to the history of popular music is, I argue later in the empirical chapters, partly why old material formats have potentially increased in subcultural capital and authenticity. It is more difficult to use knowledge of the history and trivia of music as a badge of cool in an age where anyone with a broadband connection has access to these reference points. As a result, subcultural capital has to be obtained through other means. It is found in the empirical chapters that attending reunion gigs and using material formats has heightened in value for the attainment of subcultural capital in this particular generation unit. Material formats are discussed by some, for instance, as the “proper” way to listen to music (Steve [19] chapter six section 6.3.1) and as a means of “physically grasping” the past (James [20] chapter six section 6.3.1). Material formats are, in general, regarded as heightening memory while immaterial formats are equated with forgetting which is paradoxical given that they are simultaneously cited by many as providing access to older music which permits people to ‘remember’ older music. This idea of memory as a material phenomenon has a long history in academic literature and can be traced back to Walter Benjamin’s essay “Unpacking My Library”, for instance, in which he deals with the process of book collecting. For Benjamin, the materiality of the book is the attribute that conserves the memories that he finds are resurrected every time he considers his collection; when he sifts through his books he is reminded of the city streets, the people and the places encountered while on the hunt for new books (63, 68-69). Benjamin’s sentiments can, of course, be applied to the practice of record, CD and tape hunting and have been by David Beer (2008b). This sentiment chimes with what was found in the empirical chapters while the immaterial nature of the internet and new mobile listening technologies and the ease of access they permit is said to result in amnesia. To suggest

that the nature of the technologies results in heightened memory or amnesia bears a resemblance to the determinist perspective.

I have just been discussing the issue of materiality and immateriality in relation to technological determinism. I now want to clarify again how this links with the earlier discussion on generation units and their common structure of feeling and cultural memory and their relationships with older generations. Simply, having a broadband connection is not the answer to retro culture on its own; there has to be a desire also to seek older material and there is a necessity to probe where that desire emanates from. If this was not the case then every internet user would be listening to older music by the mere fact that it makes older music available. This is, again, why soft technological determinism makes more sense than hard technological determinism because there has to be some level of agency involved, that is, some level of interest independent of technology on the part of the users for seeking out older material or for pursuing the recommendation by YouTube when older videos appear in the margins while watching a different video. As Lynn White (1978: 28) puts it, “a new device merely opens a door; it does not compel one to enter.” In other words, there is an intersection of technical and social factors involved in the developments hastened by new technologies. My particular focus, then, regarding this debate centres in the empirical chapters on the issue of determination versus agency in the case of retro culture and the extent to which the participants report exercising agency versus the extent to which new technologies encourage their interest in retro culture.

The purported sense of agency in choosing to listen to older popular music and to use material formats may actually be influenced and shaped to an extent by other factors

such as the influence of older siblings and of parents and the way in which younger people sometimes inherit taste and music collections from older relatives which calls to mind the changed generational relationships discussed in the previous chapter, and/or from the structure of feeling and the sense of disappointment with the contemporary music scene which is sometimes prompted by these relationships. It is also the case perhaps that musical and technological taste arises from the actual social composition of the generation unit of millennials featured here being white middle class students. The point, then, is that it is an intersection of various factors which shapes cultural memory in relation to popular music listening. Existing research on retro culture has not taken account of the ways in which new and old technologies merge with hauntology in the production of cultural memory in relation to music and so this research makes an original contribution by doing so.

2.4) Conclusion

Following on from chapter one where it was stated that no one theory or master concept was capable of adequately reflecting the composition of musical collectivities in the twenty-first century, this chapter began with a discussion of ‘generation units’ and their shared structure of feeling. The structure of feeling experienced by the generation unit of millennials in this study is characterised by a sense of disillusionment with contemporary music and modes of consumption and I argue that this is represented by their nostalgia for the future. Nostalgia for the future here refers to their belief that the pre-biographical past of the mid-to-late twentieth century was a more futuristic and authentic age. This structure of feeling is likely partly influenced by the changing generational relationships discussed in the first chapter where babyboomer and Gen X parents may pass on musical tastes and idyllic memories to their millennial children

while this chapter here shows the role of new technology in influencing this. Soft technological determinism is used here to show that even though new technologies permit access to the back catalogue of popular music, technology alone cannot explain fully the popularity of retro culture and how it works in relation to popular music and cultural memory. There has to be some level of interest also guiding the user's decision to access older music online. The basic point is that these factors can scarcely be separated out and current research on retro culture has failed to adequately account theoretically for how these various factors might intersect.

The overall argument pertains to the idea that there is a desire for authenticity demonstrated by the generation unit of millennials here and a desire to connect through music to a generation and time period that is not theirs. In other words, the generation unit of millennials in this study are understood as a group of people who share a common structure of feeling characterised by a particular type of cultural taste and memory which for them denotes subcultural capital. For this generation unit, exhibiting a memory of and preference for older and, therefore, more authentic popular music and material formats is what bestows capital. Finally, it is important to note that this is a study of a very specific sample of people and so the next chapter details how the sample was recruited, the composition of the sample and ponders the implications of this for the findings. First, however, I want to recap in the next section on how the focus of the research emerged from an iterative process by providing a conclusion to the literature review. The next section functions, then, as a segue from the literature review into the empirical component of the thesis.

Conclusion to Literature Review

The idea for this project stemmed from a curiosity about the retro culture phenomenon in popular music today and the desire to explore why this was happening and how popular music listening mediates cultural memory through retro culture and the affordances of new technologies. The study of popular music has traditionally been linked to the study of youth culture. Indeed, the connection still persists in academia today (Hesmondhalgh 2005: 36). This presentation of popular music as youthful and forward-looking is, however, increasingly peculiar given the trend in popular music in recent years for looking back and reflecting nostalgically on previous eras. This is apparent, for example, in the series of reunion tours in recent years, anniversary edition albums, contemporary artists mimicking old styles of music, and in statistics which show us that there has been a resurgence in vinyl and back catalogue sales (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry 2014; Nielsen Soundscan 2012). While these observations and statistics show us that the retro phenomenon is occurring, there is a lack of academic research explaining precisely why it is occurring and what is happening in terms of the cultural memory of popular music and the technologies that enable and encourage it. This project began from the realisation, then, that there was a gap in the market for a concerted theoretical and empirical qualitative exploration of why this was happening and what fosters it.

I will now chart the trajectory of how I went about conducting this examination showing how the research involved an iterative process in which the focus of the research was cemented more cogently from debates in the literature and how the empirical research gathered adds to and tests some of the literature. This section functions as a conclusion to the literature review as the process of showing how the

focus of the research developed involves recapping on what has just been discussed in the literature review albeit in a much more summarised form while also pointing to what is to come in the empirical chapters and how this relates back to the literature.

I commenced by reviewing the empirical research that existed on generations, music and memory which led me to Bennett's work and his then recently published articles on post-youth punk audiences (2006) and heritage rock and the babyboomers (2009). From Bennett's work, I established that there was a developing canon of work examining older generations and their continued consumption of older music. However, from informal observations I recognised that the oversight in this existing research was its omission of the role of younger people in the consumption of older music. I therefore made the decision early on to conduct qualitative research with a cross-generational sample in order to fill this gap in existing empirical research. The younger participants were thus a group that I was particularly interested in from the outset and they did become the group that I focused more on throughout the project due to the peculiarity of their consumption of pre-biographical music and their memories of and nostalgia for these eras as mediated through the music. I subsequently found a number of texts which mention the intergenerational sharing of musical tastes and memories (Kotarba et al. 2013 [2009]; de Zengotita 2005; van Dijck 2006) but they still lacked the empirical angle of my research and also my broader focus on the topic of retro culture and cultural memory. This section summarises my empirical contribution and some of the discussion from chapter one and how I began the research. I will now begin explaining the theoretical contribution and how the review of literature in chapter one progressed.

In terms of theory, Bennett's work emanates from a post-subcultural perspective and as a result he comprehends the generational groups of music fans in his work using concepts such as tribes (1999) and scenes (2006) which, as explained in chapter one, treat social interactions and categories as so weak and fluid that they do not seem to exist at all. My approach was more that sociology is predicated on the variables of gender, class, race and age and so I decided to look at what had been done in terms of post post-subcultural research and found that Hesmondhalgh (2005) had put forward a proposition that worked with my perspective. He favours a return to the structural categories of gender, class, race and age and assessing how these are reflected and extended in musical genres. For me this applies to the participants' ideas about what connotes capital and how this relates, for instance, to the participants' age, gender, class and race and this is covered more fully in the empirical chapters.

I began conducting interviews early in the research process having completed approximately nine months of research for the literature review and from the very specific self-selecting sample of participants I was encountering I decided that I needed a concept more specific than simply the 'structural categories'. Mannheim's work on generations is generally the first port of call for researchers on the topic of generations in sociology even today (Edmunds and Turner 2002: 1) and so his work had been consulted early on in the process. The concept permits me to neatly cater for the various structural categories of the participants in this sample but also the very specific socio-historical location they inhabit and their very specific response to that context. This is why the concept is so useful for me but I extend it by using it in conjunction with 'structures of feeling' and cultural memory which takes me into the second chapter.

In the interviews, I wanted to explore what role retro culture - as evinced in the form of reunion gigs, the vinyl revival and new technologies which permit access to older music - might play in terms of cultural memory. In asking the participants about this, the theme of vicarious memories and nostalgia came up frequently in the interviews with the younger participants. There was reference made to an intangible quality that meant their experience of older music was somehow lesser than that of their parents' generation who had lived through the time periods when the music was contemporary. I label this the 'structures of feeling' which is defined as the intangible and fleeting felt sense of the lived culture of a particular time and place. To me, it is rather akin to the zeitgeist of a time period and place for a particular generation unit. Reynolds' (2011), Hatherley's (2011) and Fisher's (2014) journalistic texts in particular – all of which were published while I was in the process of carrying out my research - helped me on returning to my literature review to pin down and put a name on the structure of feeling experienced by the younger participants. I interpreted their structure of feeling as reflecting 'hauntology' in the sense that they spoke of the older rock and indie music of the pre-biographical past as representing a more authentic time. As such, they wished to connect to pre-biographical eras through older music and though the internet was useful in enabling access, it was reunion gigs and material formats that appeared to authenticate their experience and their structure of feeling the most.

Chapter two thus explains that technology is an intrinsic part of this retro phenomenon with immaterial technologies facilitating unbridled access to the past and with material formats providing a means to physically grasp the past and to authenticate the experience. Simply, one means of connecting to pre-biographical eras and older music was through new technologies such as the internet and mobile listening technologies

which permit access to older material. In addition, vinyl records emerged also in the interviews as a means of physically grasping the past and this introduces also the material versus immaterial dimension to the debate and how these different types of formats relate to memory, retro, structures of feeling and authenticity.

Prior to conducting the interviews I had speculated that technology might be part and parcel of the retro culture phenomenon and might be actively involved in facilitating the cultural memory of older popular music. So, in part, I wanted to test soft technological determinism in the interviews and the extent to which technologies control and influence how people listen to and remember music and the extent to which people have control. I did this by probing how the formats used might impact on the formation of memories by asking the participants to compare buying and listening to music on various formats. I also wanted to test soft technological determinism and its potential role in helping to explain this phenomenon because it seemed to me that underlying then recent texts by Kibby (2009), Reynolds (2011) and Fisher (2011a; 2011b) was an element of determinism, that is to say a correlation between retro culture, cultural memory and technology even though these texts do not explicitly mention the perspective. It is soft technological determinism that is employed because it offers a more nuanced perspective permitting users a level of agency and the participants in this project do perceive themselves to have a level of agency in choosing which technologies to use though their agency appears to diminish somewhat after this initial choice has been made as the form of various technologies is cited as controlling and influencing how they listen to and remember music.

I have just recapped on what the literature review involved and I will conclude now by restating that this thesis makes an original contribution not just empirically as stated earlier but also theoretically by the unique framework which has just been discussed and which takes account of the synthesis of techno-cultural factors in facilitating retro culture and cultural memory. The most related work that has been conducted on retro culture in recent years stems from a journalistic background (Reynolds 2011; Fisher 2014) and deals with production and artists rather than consumers. This thesis thus promises to make a very important academic contribution to understanding the topic. I will now move on to discuss the methods and the empirical component of the thesis.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Methods of Data Collection

3.1) Introduction

This thesis theoretically and empirically explores how the practice of listening to popular music shapes cultural memory particularly through retro culture and new technologies. This chapter discusses the methodological approach used and the methods employed. Firstly, I explain why a qualitative approach was adopted and then I detail the iterative process which means I moved back and forth between the literature, the collection of data and the readjustment of literature. I then outline the various phases involved in the recruitment of participants and reflect on what the limited and unique sample means for the findings of the project. The method of the semi-structured interview is then discussed. Through this method, I elicited narratives from the participants on their musical tastes, listening practices and memories. I then discuss the ethical issues involved and how written consent was obtained, the data anonymised and the resulting discs stored. Finally, I explain how I analysed the data by elaborating on the stages of transcribing, coding and reporting. During the analysis, the younger participants became a key focus for the empirical chapters because there was a larger number of them and also because of the peculiarity of their listening to and possessing memories of and nostalgia for older music and using older formats. I conclude by explaining how themes are extracted from the data for reporting and analysis over the final three empirical chapters.

3.2) Qualitative Research

Recent statistics from the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) have shown us that global vinyl sales are increasing in recent years and reached their highest sales since the 1990s (IFPI 2014) while Nielsen Soundscan (2012) recorded that

for the first time ever in the US old albums outsold new albums in their mid-year report for 2012. Such quantitative reports show us that twentieth century music is still popular though these statistics obviously emerge in the context of vastly reduced sales in comparison to the heady days of the twentieth century; for instance, the IFPI (2014) reported that the global recorded music sales for 2013 stood at \$15 billion which is less than half of its all time high in 1999 of \$38 billion (Knopper 2013). 2012 has been the only year since 1999 that reported a global increase albeit an increase of just 0.3% (Knopper 2013). We have a wealth of statistics, then, on recorded music sales but there has been a marked lack of qualitative research explaining precisely why older music remains so popular along with a lack of empirical research revealing exactly who comprises its audience. While quantitative research might enable us to establish both that a phenomenon is occurring and the extent to which it is occurring, qualitative research enables us to get to the root of *why* it is occurring. Simply, qualitative research exhibits a predilection for the meanings and reasons people ascribe to behaviour, rather than the behaviour itself (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 8). So the impetus for the qualitative approach was that I wanted to elucidate what was happening in terms of retro culture and cultural memory with a cross-generational sample of people as I knew from informal observations that the audiences at reunion concerts were cross-generational and that younger people also purchase older music sometimes on older formats such as vinyl. However, none of this had been discussed in existing academic research and so I sought to fill this gap through qualitative research.

Qualitative research is typically underscored by the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm which holds that there is no single objective external reality but, instead, there are multiple subjective constructions of reality and that it is the researcher's aim to

elucidate these constructions of reality and to attempt to view the social world through the eyes of the participants (Bryman 2004: 4; Merriam and Associates 2002: 4; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 8). Still, there is a structural element involved in the approach in the sense that the participants' revelations take place within the parameters of the interview set by the researcher, who governs the topic of the interview and the questions asked. This is discussed in more depth later in this section. Suffice it to say for now that while the researcher has a degree of control, the participant also has scope to direct the interview in a way that is arguably not possible in quantitative methods such as surveys. As Howard Becker, famed for his interpretive sociological work on jazz musicians (1963), explains in his article, 'The Epistemology of Qualitative Research', one major asset that qualitative researchers can offer as a key epistemological and ontological advantage is that qualitative methods enable them to grasp the subjective viewpoint of the participant. This often presents qualitative researchers with unanticipated information and surprising results by comparison to quantitative work where the researcher always presumes in advance the extent of the information that can be acquired:

If you do a survey, you know in advance all the information you can acquire. There may be some surprises in the connections between the items you measure, but there will not be any surprise data, things you didn't ask but were told anyway. (Becker 1996: 56)

The aim of the qualitative approach is to permit enough space in the line of questioning for unanticipated responses to emerge. This is illustrated even more powerfully in this excerpt from Becker's work:

...a consequence of finding out about the details of everyday life is that many events and actions actually turn out to have mundane explanations seldom accounted for in our theories. A student in a fieldwork class I taught in Kansas City studied letter carriers. Under my prodding, he tried to find out what sorts of routes the carriers preferred: which parts of town did they choose to work in when

they had a chance to make a choice? Having done his research, he invited fellow students to guess the answer and, budding social scientists that they were, their guesses centred on social class: the carriers would prefer middle-class areas because they were safer; the carriers would prefer working class areas because the inhabitants would be on fewer mailing lists and thus there would be less mail to carry; and so on. All these clever, reasonable guesses were wrong. What the carriers he talked to preferred were neighbourhoods that were flat. Kansas City is hilly and the carriers preferred not to climb up and down as they moved from street to street. This is not an explanation that would make sense from a “stratification” point of view; a follower of Bourdieu, for instance, might not think to include such an item in a survey. But that was the reason the carriers gave, a homely reason waiting to be discovered by someone who left room for it come out. (Becker 1996: 63)

Becker thus highlights the perils of the quantitative approach by showing how the quantitative researcher might not think to include a particular response category on their survey. What should be apparent from the preceding discussion is that there are strengths and weaknesses to the various methods and their attendant paradigmatic associations but what is important is that these approaches fit the aim of the research. This section has discussed the qualitative approach. The next section deals with putting this into practice through the sample, how they were recruited followed by a discussion of the interview method and ethical issues.

3.3) Research Sample, Methods and Ethics

3.3.1 Sample

The participants were recruited through two means: an informational post placed on a social media forum of a tertiary level institution with the permission of the forum moderator in July 2011 and through brief informational announcements prior to a number of randomly selected tutorials at a tertiary level institution in the greater Dublin area with the permission of the relevant Head of Department, module lecturer, and tutors from February 2012 to April 2012. It was emphasised in the calls that participants could be any age as I wished to carry out a cross-generational comparison and they must possess an active interest in popular music.

My sample was comprised of thirty-eight participants with twenty-six participants aged between eighteen to thirty and twelve participants aged between forty-four and sixty-two. My selection of participants was led partly by practical considerations, that is to say that using a third level institution as a target site was an efficient way of gaining access to a large number of prospective interviewees. The sample developed from this site was thus purposive in relation both to age (two age groups to enable comparison) and ‘an active interest in music’ (meaning fans). Because the sample was recruited from a third level institution it was white, mostly middle class (there were eight working class participants in the younger sample and all of the older participants were working class) but close to even in terms of gender (there were twenty-one men and seventeen women in the sample). I give the relevant contextual information when introducing a new participant in the empirical chapters.

The composition of the sample (white, mostly middle class, students living in an urban area) likely had an impact on the findings and this is referred to over the course of the empirical chapters. For instance, the class of the participants probably had an impact on the findings in terms of taste and cultural capital and their ideas about what connotes highbrow taste. For example, Tanner (1981) found that in Canada middle class students preferred progressive rock whereas working class preferred music that was currently in the Top 40. As discussed in chapter one, Bradby (2014) also associates rock with the middle class. In terms of gender, Thornton (1995), as discussed in chapter one, finds that mainstream pop is feminised. There is thus the possibility that the older rock and indie music discussed is perhaps perceived as more highbrow and intelligent music than contemporary pop music and similarly vinyl and CDs are perceived as superior to

contemporary modes of consumption such as streaming and downloading. The genres of music discussed by the participants are also male-dominated forms and so there may be a relationship between masculinity and what is considered highbrow which is reminiscent of Bannister's (2006) claims as discussed in chapter one. For instance, if the sample was comprised of thirteen year old girls their ideas about what connotes capital would probably have been different. The point is that this is a self-selecting sample that is biased towards a particular genre and era of music and is likely influenced by the site in which the participants were recruited and also the social profile of the participants.

As such, the findings of this research are thus representative of the very specific, limited and unique sample of people who elected to take part and are not generalisable beyond this sample. Population inference, however, is typically not the central objective of qualitative research anyway (Flick 2006: 12-13). It is much less concerned with sample size and generalisability than it is with the development of a rich, rigorous and detailed description of the research problem at hand in a much more specific spatial and temporal context and for a specific group or groups of people (Merriam and Associates 2002: 4; Bryman 2004: 275). The next section takes a look at how rich, rigorous and detailed data was generated through the method of semi-structured interviews.

3.3.2 *Interviewing*

If you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk to them? ... The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations. ... An interview is literally an *inter view*, an inter change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest. (Kvale 1996: 1-2) [emphasis in the original]

In these opening remarks to his book *Interviewing*, Kvale (1996: 1-2) succinctly summarises the purpose and nature of the interview. The purpose of the qualitative interview is to gain access to the participants' attitudes and values through the use of open-ended and flexible questions. The nature of the interview, however, is that it is an interactive process involving a mutual construction of knowledge and meanings between the interviewer and the interviewee (Silverman 2006: 119). However, the power dimension between these two actors is slightly imbalanced in the sense that even if a flexible semi-structured approach is adopted allowing the interviewee to meander and introduce new topics for discussion, the interviewer still steers the conversation and chooses which answers to investigate further and which to wind down. The interview is therefore not an everyday conversation but rather a conversation with a purpose and a set of procedures to be followed (Kvale 1996: 6-7). As Kvale (1996: 84) puts it, "interviewing is a craft that is closer to art than to standardized social science methods" involving a technique that was only honed through repeated practice and particularly through the conducting of a pilot study.

Pilot studies or 'feasibility studies' as they are also known refer to mini versions of a full-scale study offering the opportunity to pre-test research instruments such as the interview schedule (Van Teijlingen and Hundley 2001). To this end, twenty semi-structured interviews and approximately ten music diaries were completed with a sample of fifteen to seventeen year olds in a community school in North Kildare during March and April 2011. This sample was approached as it was considered that it would be an efficient way of gaining access to a large population of young people in one setting.

The pilot study enabled the assessment of the project feasibility and of the recruitment strategy (Janesick 2003: 58). It granted space to not just practice the interview technique but also to revise and review which interview questions worked for eliciting broad narratives and which questions elicited one sentence answers. This preliminary study also permitted the testing of different types of methods. For example, after the interview, participants were invited to keep a music diary for one week. The diary was a modified version of Devereux's (2007: 36) media diary which sought to explore the place and function of media in the everyday life of participants. Participants were asked to list the music content they listened to, the format they used, the duration of their listening, the place in which they listened, the people they were with, whether they were using other media at the same time and what else they were doing at the time. There were occasional differences between what people claimed in the interviews and what they documented in the diary and so the purpose of this method was to increase validity and to engage participants in reflexively examining their use of music and technology in everyday life. However, there were problems identified with this method, namely, the fact that only half of the participants completed it and they also often failed to elaborate or fill in all of the sections fully. It was also difficult to prompt the participants to elaborate on their answers during the interviews, a problem which was not helped by the limited time available with the participants and by the fact that mediation between the students and the researcher prior to the interviews was minimal.

This experience nevertheless provided invaluable insight and ideas for readjusting the research plan. Following this pilot study, I concluded that I had underestimated the importance of ice-breaker activities particularly when dealing with a young age group in a hierarchical environment where adults are generally perceived as authority figures.

In addition, I needed to work on rephrasing the interview questions in the aim of asking open-ended and simple questions. Of equal importance was the interview venue, a factor which Byrne (2004: 189) discusses in her text urging the researcher to consider the location and ensure that the conditions are suitable for interviewing. Researching young people obviously limits greatly the venues in which interviews can be conducted as they have to be carried out in a supervised environment which, as already suggested, is typically a hierarchical environment. With the end of school term approaching in April 2011 I decided not to return to interviewing minors but to begin what I thought would be another pilot study in July 2011 with participants aged over eighteen but because the data emerging from these interviews was much more detailed this was to be the start of the interviews which ultimately made the final edit.

On the basis that coffee shops and pubs are designed precisely for social interaction it was suggested to prospective participants that we could meet in either venue that the participant preferred. Given the relatively benign subject matter of this research it was perfectly appropriate to conduct the interviews in semi-public venues but for more sensitive topics it would undoubtedly be more appropriate to choose a more private venue. The very first interview of this sample was conducted in a pub at which there incidentally happened to be a record fair in progress. While walking around this fair with the interviewee prior to the interview we engaged in informal chat about music which helped build a rapport, a quality which was lacking in the pilot study owing to the lack of contact afforded prior to the interviews. As Spradley (1979: 78) states, rapport is important because it implies “that a basic sense of trust has developed” and this permits “the free flow of information” between interviewer and interviewee (see, for example, Silverman 2006: 110; Bailey 2007: 106). I did not necessarily possess the

same views or interests as the participants but I am knowledgeable about music in general and so this enabled me to talk to the participants informally prior to the interview about whatever genre, artist or band they liked and this may have helped to create rapport between us. Obviously there would not always be a record fair in progress and so in order to mimic this rapport building exercise I, in most cases, met participants at a meeting point close to the venue and we walked together to the location where we had agreed to conduct the interview. This afforded us more time to make small talk and to engage in social niceties before sitting down to engage in the more formal process of conducting the interview. Emailing back and forth in order to arrange interviews also gave time to build up a connection, something which was unfortunately lacking in the interviews with the school sample due to the inability to have any form of contact prior to the interviews.

The semi-structured interview was the only method used in the creation of data in this study. The interviews consisted of eight set questions which were asked in every interview in order to achieve a level of standardisation and reliability (Flick 1998: 76; Silverman 2006: 110). Generally questions focused on issues such as the music being listened to, the memories embedded in music and the technologies used. However, the semi-structured approach also permitted the reordering of this sequence of questions and also the deviation from this list of questions depending on the ideas communicated by the interviewees in their responses and, as such, the participants maintained some level of power in directing the conversation.

Both Kvale (1996: 133-135) and Kane and O'Reilly-de Brún (2001: 206) note that interviews comprise many different types of off-the-cuff 'questions'. This indicates a combination of 'follow-up questions' such as "what do you mean by that?" or simply

repeating a word the interviewee has just said in an inquisitive tone. This type of question is also a form of ‘validation’ within the interview, according to Kvale (1996: 134), because it helps ensure that the interviewer has understood what the interviewee means and may also encourage them to elaborate further. Related to this line of questioning, Kane and O’Reilly-de Brún (2001: 206) advocate the use of ‘validating questions’ such as “Let me see if I understand this correctly?” Alternatively, a ‘probing question’ may be used which directly requests them to elaborate further such as “can you tell me more about that?” (Kvale 1996: 134) and “can I bring you back to something you said earlier?” (Kane and O’Reilly-de Brún 2001: 26). This may be followed by ‘specifying questions’, ‘direct and indirect questions’ and, in the semi-structured interview, ‘structuring questions’ such as “Moving on to a different topic then...” or “Linked to something you said earlier...” This stratagem was employed on occasion to keep the interview on the topic of music and memory. As important as the questions were, it was also equally important to remain silent at times so as to permit the interviewee the opportunity to reflect or elaborate on their answer (Kvale 1996: 134-135; Mason 1996: 46).

Once in the practice of conducting interviews on a regular basis, the interview guide was rarely consulted and notes were very rarely taken except in some cases to discreetly write down a note in shorthand in order to remember to return to a specific topic or topics with the participant as multiple pathways for discussion were often presented in each detailed response. The interviews were all recorded on an IC recorder (digital voice recorder) which was always set to its ‘high quality’ function due to the typically noisy environments in which the interviews were conducted. The interviews were generally free-flowing and unproblematic owing to a number of measures,

namely, the pilot study which served to fine-tune my interview technique, followed by the construction of broad and simple questions, the consideration given to choosing interview venues conducive to conversation, and due to the research sample; reflecting on why people take part in time-consuming qualitative research, Clark (2010: 399-404) comments that the participants are usually people with a subjective interest in the topic being researched and this leads to natural and free-flowing interviews. The interview method was the only one used in the final instance because it was considered that the data created was more than sufficient to answer the research questions as will be evinced in the often lengthy responses featured in the discussion chapters.

3.3.3 Ethics

Ethical approval was granted by the National University of Ireland, Maynooth to conduct this research. In keeping with the guidelines of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth and the Sociological Association of Ireland (SAI) (no year provided: 6), participants were supplied with sufficient information upon which to base their decision about whether or not to participate. A number of measures were taken: firstly, when prospective participants expressed an interest in taking part they were emailed an information sheet explaining the nature, purpose and aims of the study and a consent form bearing a synopsis of the research topic as well as information on how the data would be stored, who would have access to it, and how it would be presented. Informed written consent to use the information provided was secured from all of the participants prior to the interviews. There was then a briefing and debriefing process to preface and conclude the interview so that the participants would not feel “abandoned” after sharing their stories or apprehensive about how their comments would be presented (Creswell 2007: 44). The process of ‘briefing’ commonly involves explaining the purpose of the interview to the interviewee, explaining that a recorder will be used, and then affording

them the chance to put forward any queries that they may have before proceeding with the interview (Kvale 1996: 127-128). This helps to frame the interview and place the impending interaction in context. The process of ‘debriefing’ takes place after the interview and again affords the interviewee the opportunity to ask questions and/or raise concerns. Most likely because of the non-sensitive nature of the research topic in question there were no issues or concerns expressed.

Finally, while participants commonly stated that I had permission to use their real names, I explained that in the interest of upholding the standard ethical procedures of the SAI (no year provided: 7) and protecting their privacy that pseudonyms would be used. As the privacy of participants is of the utmost importance, the resulting discs and transcriptions from the digitally recorded interviews were stored in a locked cabinet in my supervisor’s office.

3.4) Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research consists of a number of common steps: firstly, it involves the development and organisation of data for analysis. Secondly, it involves “reducing the data into themes through a process of coding”, and then finally it involves “representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion” (Creswell 2007: 148). In this project, the first step was converting oral speech from the recorded interview into textual data in the form of a transcript. As Kvale (1996: 160) points out, this is often erroneously considered to be a “simple clerical task” when really it is an interpretative process. The act of transcribing the data from the recorder is a form of analysis in itself. Indeed, the stance taken in this project is that analysis begins during the actual interview itself prior to transcription. The process of transcribing then represents the second phase of analysis, and this is followed then by the coding of data and, finally,

the representation of the coded data in a discussion. The next section thus focuses on the issue of transcribing.

3.4.1 Transcribing

As Kvale (1996: 178) puts it, “the ideal interview is already analyzed by the time the tape recorder is turned off.” This links back to the previous point made regarding the stratagem of seeking validation during the interview itself. This is also a form of analysis “as you go” making the resulting swathes of data less cumbersome to wade through and also more valid. Once the interviews are all recorded the process of data organisation begins where the recorded interviews are transcribed into written texts in order to reduce data into a more manageable form. Kvale (1996) and, more recently, Hammersley (2010), have written on this topic of the chasm between oral speech and written text and the implications of this in representations of the participants’ views.

While transcripts may be mistakenly regarded as the final results, there are lots of technical and interpretational issues involved in the construction of transcripts. As Silverman (2006: 119) puts it, interviews do not tell us about experiences, rather they offer us a *representation* of that experience because the interview is mutually constructed with the interviewer. Similarly, the resulting transcripts must be interpreted and, as Kvale (1996: 169) points out, there is a lack of hard and fast rules governing the interpretational issues involved in qualitative analysis. There are, he argues, “standard choices”, however, and these include issues such as whether the statements should be “transcribed verbatim and word by word, including the often frequent repetitions, or should the interview be transformed into a more formal, written style?” (Kvale 1996: 170). Hammersley (2010: 556-557) raises a similar point regarding the issue of whether to attempt to convey pronunciation through deviant spelling or to edit the participants’

speech by presenting their words in a more readable form. He also questions whether to include non-word sounds like ‘hm’ and laughter, as well as movements, gestures, what names to label participants, and where to begin and end the quote to be used in the final research report.

The approach taken in this project was not to attempt to represent participants’ speech in the vernacular but rather to make the text more readable for a wider audience (Kvale 1996: 267). Repetition was also removed from the final quotes as this can raise some ethical issues. For instance, Kvale (1996: 172-173) refers to a study in which he produced the transcripts verbatim but on seeking respondent validation one particular respondent was distressed on viewing his transcribed speech which was full of stops and starts and repetition. Being a teacher, he was concerned that it appeared as though he had a poor grasp of the language and requested for the transcript to be altered. The transcription in this project simply observes standard orthography, that is to say it does not attempt to represent pronunciation or to document non-word sounds. The transcription process itself then involves a form of analysis but once the transcripts are fully completed the next phase and, indeed, the core phase of analysis, is the practice of coding.

3.4.2 Coding

Each one hour interview generally yielded approximately twenty-five single-spaced pages of text. Multiply this by thirty-eight and one has a large amount of data to structure, interpret and frame. The purpose of analysis is to enable the researcher to move from the descriptive level to a theoretical level and to enable the development of theoretical ideas grounded in data. This is achieved by bringing order to the data, developing codes and concepts before producing the final account (Hammersley and

Atkinson 1995: 209). There is, however, Creswell (2007: 150) claims, a lack of standard official procedures to guide the qualitative researcher through this process leading critics to argue that qualitative research is “intuitive, soft, and relativistic,” perhaps resembling art more than science. As Corbin and Strauss (2008: 71) remark, “there is no right or wrong about [qualitative] analysis...analysis is, for a large part, intuitive...” Creswell (2007: 15), however, proceeds to demonstrate that though qualitative analysis is indubitably governed more by the ‘serendipitous’ and “writers craft each study differently”, the analysis process does obey a general trajectory.

Creswell (2007: 150), for example, identifies the first general stage as ‘data management’ and this is the stage in which the data is transcribed and organised into file-folders or computer files. The second stage involves developing a “sense of the whole database” by reading transcripts a number of times and writing memos in the margins as one sifts through the transcripts. Creswell (2007: 151) recommends that the researcher should disregard the predetermined questions and genuinely attempt to “hear” what was said and from this then begin to form codes taking into account the context of the setting, the person, and the place as relevant. Coding is “the process of organizing a large amount of data into smaller segments” (Bailey 2007: 127). Creswell (2007: 153) notes that code labels may emerge from three main sources: from precise words used by the participants which is also known as ‘emic coding’ or ‘folk terms’ (Patton 1987: 150); from computer programs (‘in vivo codes’); or, finally, from names the researcher chooses which is also known as a form of ‘etic coding’ or “observer identified codes” (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 211).

This research used emic coding developed from the words used by participants in their interviews. The three major categories identified were ‘memory’, ‘formats and

technology', and 'identification'. These categories were comprised of a number of various codes; for example, the main category was 'memory' and this was divided into four codes, namely, 'nostalgia: for golden age and future', 'personal and cultural memories: made-up and lived memories', 'ownership', and 'physical memories'. These codes correlate to specific words used by participants. 'Golden age' and 'made-up memories' were terms that were used while there was substantial reference to 'owning' and 'not owning' memories as was the idea of a 'physical' memory.

The aim was to use sufficiently large contextualised quotes, finely explored and chosen thereby favouring a more hermeneutic form of analysis rather than the 'code and retrieve' form of analysis made popular by computer programs. It was my view that coding is perhaps overemphasised in qualitative computer programs to the point of pulverising data into nodes which undoubtedly makes data more manageable but can also work to divest qualitative data of its context and emotion when context and emotion is often precisely why one chose a qualitative strategy in the first place. Bolstered by Creswell's (2007: 165) and Kvale's (1996: 174) views that computer programs may also interfere with the researcher's thought process and create a distance between the researcher and the data, this project returns to the older and more time-consuming technique of manually coding and cutting and pasting albeit without the physical scissors and paper.

In order to code, I reread the transcript, ascertained whether any patterns could be identified including patterns in terms of what was *not* mentioned, took note of any inconsistencies and contradictions, and then sought to develop codes for the data. Coding was completed using Microsoft Word's 'Review' function through which I devised my own manually operated colour coded scheme using different colours to

highlight different sections of the interviews. The ‘comment’ resource was used to type in memos in the margins. It was found that this mechanism made it easier visually to match similar codes to their broader categories. Having drawn connections between codes and their larger categories, the final step was to then consider how to report these findings in the discussion chapters (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 213).

3.4.3 Reporting

The aim when reporting the findings was to construct a coherent storyline by weaving the data in with existing literature while also extending this existing narrative by pointing to new insights and ideas. Holloway and Brown (2012: 1930), for instance, comment on the need for a narrative or story in qualitative research reports: “a good story rooted in the data helps to produce a good research report.” They remark that a “good storyline” presents a ‘thick description’ (Geertz 1973) meaning a description involving a detailed and rich analysis of the “actions, behaviours, and words of people, including processes, intentions, and feelings” (Holloway and Brown 2012: 1929). Thin descriptions such as those found in “early observational reports” and surveys are, by contrast, more concerned with reporting facts and ‘objective truths’ (Holloway and Brown 2012: 1929).

This research, however, is less concerned with uncovering and presenting ‘objective truths’ and facts than it is with exploring the reasons and meanings people ascribe to their actions and, as such, it involves interpretation on the part of the participant and then also on the part of the researcher. In short, the forthcoming empirical chapters always aim to tell the story as it is for the participants but being an example of qualitative research the report inevitably involves interpretation on the part of the

researcher. There is a need, then, to be reflexive and remember that the participants' views are being filtered through the researcher's account.

Being reflexive, while efforts were made to communicate the views of the participants (the emic perspective), the worldview of the researcher (the etic perspective) always inevitably exerts a level of influence over the reporting of the findings. In this study, for example, the findings have been interpreted using a theoretical framework comprised of a blend of perspectives and this emerged from an iterative analysis alternating between an emic and etic focus meaning rather than grounding the meaning in emergent data only, I also reflected on the literature and theories to understand this data. As Tracy (2013: 184) puts it, iteration is a "reflexive process in which the researcher visits and revisits the data, connects them to emerging insights, and progressively refines his/her focus and understandings." This process of adjustment is known as "progressive focusing" where the plan may be adjusted and re-adjusted depending on the content emerging in the developing data (Schutt 2004: 416). It is indeed an expected part of the qualitative research process, as Rubin and Rubin remark:

Adjusting the design as you go along is a normal, expected part of the qualitative research process. As you learn how the interviewees understand their world, you may want to modify what it is you are studying and rethink the pattern of questioning. Such flexibility is much better than persisting in a design that is not working well or that doesn't allow you to pursue unexpected insights. (Rubin and Rubin 1995: 44)

So the research follows this process of alternating between research and data and so on and so forth and attempts to communicate the participants' views as best as it can but the researcher can never be completely objective as there is simply no way of standing outside of the social world to approach the participants and interpret their comments in

a neutral way as the participants' comments also have to be interpreted through the frame of existing research which also has its own biases:

There is no way in which we can escape the social world in order to study it. Put simply a relationship always exists between the researcher and those being researched. (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 17)

Both the researcher and those in the research carry with them a history, a sense of themselves and the importance of their experiences. (May 2001: 21)

What matters however is the ability to be reflexive and acknowledge this influence. This means, for example, acknowledging that the research topic, interview questions and framework for analysis have been controlled to a large extent by the researcher. At the same time, the interviewees did alter the focus of the research, the interview questions were kept purposefully broad and validation was often sought during the interview itself. This latter practice involved a form of analysis "as you go" and was predicated on Kvale's (1996: 178) suggestion of using phrases such as "I understand that the meaning of what you just said is..." during the interview in order to clarify the respondents' meaning and heighten validity. What will also be evident is how the participants often meandered down avenues that appear at times completely unrelated to the questions asked. To illustrate this, the interview question is always listed along with the response in the following discussion chapters. This shows that the participants were allowed to speak freely and were permitted the space to offer their ideas and views on what was important for them in the configuration of the music and memory relationship. Added to this, the presence of such spontaneous answers heightens the validity and credibility of the data. As Schutt (2004: 427) puts it, the researcher must ask themselves: "Were statements made in response to the researcher's questions, or were they spontaneous? Spontaneous statements are more likely to indicate what would have been said had the researcher not been present." It is my contention, then, that

while the researcher holds influence owing to their subjective worldview so too does the participant and efforts have been made to ensure dissemination of the participants' viewpoint by asking broad and open-ended questions, by allowing them to shape the focus of the research, and by seeking validation within the interviews.

Still, being not just reflexively sound but also ethically sound, the researcher needs to be careful to present the data in a way that adequately represents the participants' views. I believe we can have faith in these findings, however, because of the validation techniques mentioned above. Also, while this data is filtered through the researcher's outlook and selection of literature, some of the participants did express an interest in seeing the findings and so I have been mindful of the readership and of representing the participants' fairly without extrapolating too much from their responses.

3.5) Conclusion

There is a lack of empirical research on the topic of how popular music facilitates cultural memory through retro culture and the affordances of the internet and mobile listening technologies. Statistics from the IFPI and literature from scholars such as Bennett (2001; 2009), Reynolds (2011) and Fisher (2014) highlight that twentieth century music and formats are as popular as ever but there is a lack of qualitative research explaining why and identifying who exactly is fuelling the retro and nostalgia sector of the popular music industry. Being an example of iterative qualitative research, this project provides answers on the topic from the viewpoint of those involved in the phenomenon and from literature. Semi-structured interviews were used in order to allow participants to put forward their point of view and share their insights on how they understand and conceptualise their interest in twentieth century popular music. However, as May (2001: 29) puts it, it is not always a case of "*what* we produce, but

how we produce it.” A convincing and upstanding social research project must be underscored by a well reasoned methodology which demonstrates awareness of the need to be reflexive, the importance of ethical issues, and the measures of validity and reliability both during the process of carrying out the research and also in analysing the data. This project was shaped by a keen awareness of these various factors, even carrying out a pilot study and revising and readjusting the research design as necessary. In the following chapters, the data is analysed in relation to the existing research discussed in the preceding chapters and new ideas are developed and the existing research extended.

Chapter Four: Generation Unit of Retro Fans

4.1) Introduction

This thesis seeks to examine how popular music listening contributes to the construction of cultural memory through retro culture and the opportunities afforded by new technologies such as the internet and mobile listening technologies. In chapters one and two, I set out how this is dealt with theoretically whereas in chapters four, five and six I will explain how this is dealt with empirically which involves also weaving in the theoretical material from chapters one and two. I also show how I add to existing research both empirically and theoretically.

To do all of this, I firstly, in this chapter, set about examining the participants' musical tastes and the meanings of music for them in relation to their generational cultures. I contrast how the older participants discuss listening to the contemporaneous guitar-based music of their youth with how the younger participants report listening to the guitar-based music (usually rock and indie) of their parents' youth (typically music from the 1960s to the 1980s). I analyse the older participants' quotes which detail how they bonded with peers over a shared taste in music and compare this to the younger participants' quotes which detail how any shared musical experiences tend to be with older male siblings or parents particularly fathers rather than peers. As a result, the memories mediated by this music for the younger participants' tends to reflect their relationships with older family members while, more frequently, it reflects vicarious memories and nostalgia for the pre-biographical eras in which the music was originally released. This specific topic is discussed more fully in chapter five. By contrast, the memories for the older participants are of their actual youth and their relationships with peers.

The reasons for the younger participants' consumption of older music is revealed over the course of the three empirical chapters to be partly a result of changing generational relationships, the continued production and consumption of popular music by older generations, structures of feeling, and also new technologies. I discuss the latter two topics more fully in chapters five and six and I discuss the former two topics more fully here. This chapter is about showing how despite the traditional connection in academia of popular music to youth there is now a need for a theory that accounts for the often intergenerational audience of particular genres such as the older guitar-based music discussed in this project. While post-subcultural work by Bennett has dealt to an extent with this, his work tends to airbrush out the sociological variables. I therefore use Hesmondhalgh's 'none of the above' and then the idea of 'generation units' to argue that there is a need, as evinced in the data, to examine how the structural categories of gender, class, race and age are reflected and extended in the type of music the younger participants are listening to.

The younger participants, who I focus on more than the older participants, are white, mostly middle class, and they are also all students living in an urban area. They are thus a very specific generation unit within their overall generation and this is reflected in their musical taste which is predominantly older guitar-based music. This music is used by them as an indicator of authenticity and capital and so the main argument overall is that these participants are trying to connect through music to what they see as a more authentic time period. In the next chapter, I go more in-depth into this process of these participants' attempts to transform their own structure of feeling that 'there is no Now' by attempting to grasp the authentic structure of feeling and trying to authenticate their own experience.

4.2) Empirically Explaining Popular Music and Generations

4.2.1 Older Participants

I wish to deal firstly in this section with the composition and characterisation of the older sample outlining how their social profile may relate to their taste in music and the way in which they listened to music collectively and forged relations with peers through music as they were growing up. The older sample of participants is composed of twelve people. They are all white, all working class, ten are Irish, one is English, one is American, and all but one are now students. There are seven men and five women. These participants range in age from forty-four to sixty-two. Following Morgan and Kunkel's (2011: 268) definition of generations, this would mean that there are actually two generations within this one age group. Those aged between fifty and sixty-two would be classified as babyboomers while those aged between forty-four and forty-nine would be categorised as members of Generation X according to this definition.

It follows through that generational structures of feeling can indeed be seen in terms of the genres cited by the participants and the technologies available in their youth; for instance, those aged between fifty and sixty-two conversed about The Beatles, the rock'n'roll music of the 1950s and 1960s and/or the rock music of the 1970s. Those aged between forty-four and forty-nine spoke about punk and post-punk. This seems at odds with Tanner's (1981) finding that working class students listened to the Top 40 while middle class students listened to progressive rock and lower middle class students listened to punk and ska. Still, the rock music the participants were listening to was contemporary when they were originally listening to it and much of it would have been in the Top 40. It is arguably only now that this music is no longer in the Top 40 that it becomes of higher value and capital for the younger participants in this sample and this

is discussed in section 4.2.2. Generational structures of feeling can also be seen in terms of the technologies used with those aged between fifty and sixty-two speaking about transistor radios and vinyl records while those aged between forty-four and forty-nine speak more about cassettes, the Walkman and CDs.

However, because there are only twelve participants in this age group, it is difficult to expand on their generational differences in great depth so these participants are interpreted in this project as representing one age group because they shared more in common than differences in terms of the music they liked and how they listened to it collectively with peers when they were growing up. All of the participants in this age group listened to the contemporary guitar-based music of their youth when they were growing up rather than pre-biographical music and so this composes their particular structure of feeling. As a result, the cultural memories communicated for them by popular music relate to the lived memories of their actual youth. When this age group was listening to music in their youth it was not concerned with retro and nostalgia, it was more grounded in the present. This is all contrasted in section 4.2.2 with the younger participants who listen to pre-biographical music and who share musical tastes and memories with their parents.

I have just been introducing the older sample of participants detailing who they are and how their social profile might pertain to their taste in music and the way in which they listened to music in their youth. I will now begin weaving in their comments and showing how these lead to findings which add to some of the existing literature discussed in the literature review chapters particularly in chapter one. To this end, I firstly want to re-introduce the issue of how popular music was once uniformly

associated with youth and was not the intergenerational and often nostalgic cultural form that it is today. As explained in chapter one, the study of popular music has traditionally been allied to the study of youth culture and reached its pinnacle with the work of the CCCS in the 1970s. This work viewed young people as part of rigid subcultural formations predicated on class. The typical focus was on white working class males who were said to be part of authentic subcultural groups versus inauthentic mainstream groups associated with musical genres. If this perspective is accurate then it should correlate with the comments and memories of the older participants who would have been children and teenagers when this theory was contemporary. However, while this older age group in general demonstrate a much greater ability to identify the distinctive subcultural groups and musical genres of their youth, only one of them (Martin, [48]) was actually involved in a subcultural group. This finding corresponds with Clarke's (2005 [1981]: 170) criticism that subcultural theory overstated the numbers in any generation who were actively involved in subcultural groups.

Martin is from a working class area in Liverpool but he has been living in the greater Dublin area for the past ten years. His parents are Irish and he is the eldest in his family of six siblings. Though he liked punk music growing up he was too young to go to punk concerts in the late 1970s and so he ended up being a post-punk fan, particularly of the band Killing Joke. This finding in itself points to issues of access in the past where even though not a pre-biographical example, Martin reported missing out on The Sex Pistols and waiting until 1996 to finally see them at their first reunion gig at Finsbury Park in London in 1996. This point highlights just how inaccessible older music was until more recent years. Though Martin was a teenager - approximately thirteen or fourteen years old - when The Sex Pistols emerged he was too young to become fully immersed in the

genre and before the advent of the internet the past, even the immediate past, was not so easily restored so he had to make do with post-punk. Martin's interview contrasted greatly to the ten Irish participants in this age group and the one American participant in the sense that he reported being part of a subcultural group that dressed in correspondence with the type of music they liked and that congregated around a record shop in the city. This is demonstrated in the comments below where he discusses his collective experience with his peers and attending a well-known club in the city and also a local record shop:

You said you were sixteen - what era was that?

It was 1980 so I just missed out on the punk thing by about two years so we were kind of myself and my friends we would still be listening to The Sex Pistols, The Clash, The Damned, bands like that. We followed that, we dressed in that way with the leather jacket, dye in the hair, bondage trousers and all that, you know, and we'd hang around this club called Eric's cos this is where all the bands would play, The Pistols and all that when we were too young to see them so that's how we discovered Killing Joke cos there'd be a band on today and we'll go watch them. We went in and said 'these are good' and I kind of followed them since.

And it sounds to me like it was a collective experience. Were all your friends into [music]?

Very much so. It was like a mini kind of...I don't know what you'd call it...like a New Orleans part of Liverpool. It was just music and people would be going by, you know, all the tourists and they'd look up and they'd see this shop [Pete Burns' record shop Probe] that was set back [off the main street] and it was kind of punks and skinheads hanging 'round it so they wouldn't venture up there but unless you were part of the music scene and grew up there...growing up in Liverpool there was a big influence on music. I mean I've met people who didn't like football but I've never met anyone from Liverpool who didn't like music. (Martin, [48])

There are a number of important dimensions to the comments above. Firstly, it is evident that music was a collective experience for Martin in his youth; he had friends who liked the same genre of music and they went to concerts, dressed in accordance with the type of music they liked, and spent time socialising in and outside their local record shop and a club in the city. Popular music thus appears to be a collective and

youthful cultural form in this comment which contrasts with the younger participants who will be discussed later and who listen to older music and who report not knowing any peers who like the same music. Secondly, it is evident from the comment that for Martin his memories of popular music are quite strongly linked to his hometown of Liverpool. This city is represented as possessing a rich popular musical heritage particularly in Sara Cohen's work (see, for instance, Cohen 2007; 1991). After recording, Martin pointed out that the success of The Beatles and also Liverpool's geographical location and industry is partly what created this heritage. He stated that, prior to The Beatles even, many early rock'n'roll records would have been imported from the US by the men working on the docks and this inspired groups like The Beatles.

This point about geographical location is important because it shows that generations are not universal which calls to mind the discussion of Mannheim's work in chapter one where a generation is not merely an age group with universal traits but relates instead to specific socio-historical locations. This also arises, for instance, in terms of May's [62] interview. May is from New York but has been living in the greater Dublin area since the late 1990s and is married to Liam [53] (another participant in the project). May is not a student but was recruited through snowball sampling from Liam who elected to take part in the project. Liam is from the greater Dublin area but met May when he was living in New York for a period of approximately twenty years from the late 1970s to the late 1990s. May's interview was also quite distinct from the ten Irish participants in this sample in the sense that not only did she grow up in a different country and so tended to listen more to American acts than British acts but she was also the oldest participant in the sample and she had three older siblings born in the 1930s

and 1940s. As a result, May was familiar with some pre-biographical music such as jitterbug which she says her three older sisters listened to but she mainly listened to the contemporary music of her youth or the music that was “typical” for her age as she comments below:

Could you tell me about, say, who would be your favourite artists still?

...the Beach Boys, Four Seasons, Elvis...basically the periodic songs of my age group that would be the sixties...I went through a Beatles phase. It was typical for my age group...my sisters were born in the 1930s and they were more jitterbugs and stuff... (May, [62])

Like the other participants in the older sample, then, May listened mainly to the contemporary music of her youth. In addition, she also conversed about the contemporary music technologies of her youth and her specific socio-historical location. She spoke about eight-track tapes, for example, as did Liam when speaking about his time spent living in the US. Collective listening for these two participants usually entailed listening to eight-track tapes or vinyl records in the car. When I mentioned this to the Irish participants they had never heard of cars that had vinyl players. Listening to music in cars when they were growing up was not referred to either by any of the other participants in the sample. Again, this illustrates Mannheim’s point that generations are not universal and there will be nuanced experiences for members of the same generation living in very different locations.

The participants based in the greater Dublin area were more likely to talk about vinyl records and transistor radios in their youth which served to demarcate their generational space from their parents’ space. The older Irish participants commonly recalled a soundscape shared with older siblings and peers. For instance, Christine [58] who is from a working class area in Kildare discussed how she would swap LPs with friends in

her estate as they could not afford to buy new albums regularly and so the common practice was to possess three or four albums which would then be exchanged with peers living in the same estate. She also noted that another common practice was to congregate to listen to a newly purchased album together with her friends. As they could not all afford to buy the album individually, they would congregate to listen to it together in the house of the person who bought the album. In later years, then, it became a possibility to tape songs from the radio when cassettes and music radio shows became more commonplace:

You'd record songs?

Yeah, we'd record stuff but that was a bit later when radio shows started playing more music...before that [my siblings and I would] be listening to the radio upstairs on Radio Luxembourg and our parents would be downstairs watching the telly....you see with me now I'd have been swapping LPs and stuff like that. For instance, now, I remember the Eagles well and I would've had their albums but I wouldn't have necessarily owned them albums. I mean I would've been swapping them with my friends. Like I was big into Led Zeppelin and Queen as well, you know, and I would've swapped any records I had on them. Those records would've done the rounds in my area cos you'd swap them with friends and you'd have about three or four albums to bargain and swap with people cos you couldn't afford to keep buying albums...if one of your friends bought a new record you'd go over and have a party sort of thing listening to it (Christine, [58])

The implication here by Christine is that the consumption of popular music was a collective experience in her youth and it was crucial in the creation of a youth culture distinct from that of the parental age group and this is the central point here in this section; even though the participants in different regions discuss using different technologies and their cities might possess a different musical heritage, the one universal theme for all twelve of the participants in the older sample is that they listened with their peers to contemporary music using contemporary technologies and so their memories as mediated by music were not of pre-biographical eras but, rather, they were of their actual youth. They did not share musical taste and memories with

their parents but instead shared music with their peers and they did not have access to pre-biographical music.

I, finally, just want to give one example of generation units affiliated with particular contemporaneous genres of popular music in the Irish context with Donal [49] commenting on generation units in Dublin. This is rather akin to Martin's recounting of the generation unit to which he belonged in the English context. Donal, who is from a working class part of Dublin, comments on the different generation units in various parts of Dublin during his youth who listened to various contemporaneous genres. Bob Dylan was Donal's favourite artist and while Bob Dylan might be associated with the 1960s because this was his breakthrough period he is an artist who has released new material in every decade since the 1960s. Donal also listened to other contemporaneous music of the 1970s as detailed in the comment below when he states that he liked various types of music and, as a result, he did not belong to a particular subcultural group. It is also clear in this comment again that though the majority of participants in the older age category never personally participated in any subcultural group they were nevertheless able to identify the significant popular music genres and subcultural trends of the various decades as they came and went:

You said you went to see [Bob Dylan] with your friend but were you largely on your own in your interest of Bob Dylan because you know in that particular time period was everyone into listening to punk or disco?

Yeah, it's funny...the way that it kinda broke down...where I grew up and maybe it was just the generation of people that I was hanging around with on the road that I grew up with - they were all into Bob Dylan and they all started getting into reggae and, you know, there was lots of stuff going on. Then if you went around the corner, everyone was into punk and they were all into The Clash and The Sex Pistols and The Dead Kennedys and I think if you went somewhere...if you walked a bit further up the road everyone was into kind of some kind of reinvention of the teddy boy thing which was kind of...they were rockers and then there was mods, you know, Coolock...or was it Darndale had it's fair share of

mods so and there was all these small little local scenes. I never really belonged to any of the scenes cos I liked all of them, all the different types of music, but I'd say if you asked the question who is my biggest influence or my favourite artist it would definitely be Bob Dylan (Donal, [49])

It is apparent from the comment above that Donal listened to Bob Dylan with his peers and this group could be classified, I would suggest, as a generation unit along with the other groups he identifies in his comment, that is to say they are particular peer groups reacting in a particular way to the socio-historical location they inhabit. They possess a particular structure of feeling which emerges from this location and finds form through the popular music they listen to.

To conclude this section, then, the central point here is that the consumption of popular music was collective and shared between peers. In other words, it was an interaction between peers within a generation. It was separate from their parents' generation. Listening to the contemporary music of their actual youth means that these participants did not discuss vicarious music when they spoke about the memories communicated by their favourite music. By contrast, the participants in the next section report listening to pre-biographical music and sharing this music with parents and older siblings rather than with peers. The next section thus seeks to characterise the group composing the sample of younger participants and contrasts their experience with that of the older participants featured in this section. This relates to the overall thesis argument by showing how popular music moved from being about all things youthful to retro and nostalgia for a generation unit of millennials in recent years.

4.2.2 Younger Participants as a Generation Unit of Retro Fans

In this section, I wish to characterise the younger sample of participants and examine how their social profile pertains to their musical taste and ideas about capital. This sample is comprised of twenty-six people (fourteen men and twelve women). They are all white, eighteen of them are middle class, eight of them are working class, and all of them are students. These participants, I argue, represent a very distinct generation unit within their overall generation, that is to say they are a particular group who predominantly listen to pre-biographical rock and indie music on material formats. They report that they do not typically listen to music with peers because they do not share the same taste as other people in their generation. Instead, their main source of interaction regarding music appears to be with older siblings and parents. As a result, their memories as mediated by popular music tend to be either of their family members or of pre-biographical eras. More commonly, the memories mediated by this music were found to be vicarious memories of pre-biographical eras. This section probes how their preferences might be used as a form of capital and power and how it might correlate to their being mainly middle class students.

By contrast to the older participants there was an inability in the younger sample to pinpoint new genres distinct to their generation. Simon was the only participant to refer to any 'new' genre, namely, dubstep but he also stated that this had in recent times lost some of its newness and nowness because it had been adopted by mainstream artists such as Britney Spears. He explains this in the comment below:

Do you think that looking back on this period, are there any distinguishing features in music or fashion in this decade?

The only, I think, the new music in the actual word 'new' that's come out has been dubstep which is an amazing electronic genre that came out of young black and white kids in their bedrooms in South London in Croydon which is like a mixture of UK garage kinda grime-y hip-hop and reggae-dub and that kinda started in

2005/2006 and peaked around 2008/2009 and now people like Britney Spears and all kinds of people [are] using dubstep so that's how music happens; it's underground and then it kinda hits its peak and it goes overground or whatever the word is where it's become very popular and now it's finding itself in different genres but that's dubstep is, I'd probably argue is the only new music. If you go around town on a Friday night you can go to a punk gig, you can go to a ska gig, you can go to a reggae gig, you can go to a dance gig but that's all, that's old music, most of it's been done before. Dubstep is the only actual new music in that it's a new idea of a genre... (Simon, [25])

Simon is from a working class area in Dublin and writes for a local history blog. There is arguably a gendered dimension to his comment with dubstep being perceived as losing its authenticity when it was adopted by a pop artist such as Britney Spears and went "overground", in Simon's words, that is to say it went 'mainstream' which is perceived as inauthentic. Simon's comments call to mind both Thornton's (1995) and Bannister's (2006) work which was referred to in chapter one and their claims that pop music is perceived as being feminised and inauthentic. I suggest here that being a blogger on the topic of history and a student might lead Simon to consider music to have more authenticity when it is "underground", as he said. To like music that is not popular or is "underground" arguably possesses more capital for Simon in his social circle and the other participants in the younger sample.

There may also be a racial dimension to the comments in the sense that other commentators have pointed to new music genres but these genres pertain to a different generation unit. For instance, in a blog post for Verso Books in the wake of the UK riots in 2011, Tamar Shlaim suggests that grime functions as a new and urgent genre functioning as the contemporary equivalent to punk but it does so he says particularly for the young, black, urban, working class in Britain. This is a very different generation unit to the one presented in this sample. Grime may indeed represent the structure of feeling for a specific generation unit of young, black, urban, working class people in

Britain but it does not appeal to the young, white, urban, mostly middle class students in the greater Dublin area as featured here. Their preference is for guitar-driven music from the 1960s to 1980s as purveyed mainly by white middle class artists.

Amanda [27] carries on the sentiment that her generation's music culture is characterised by a lack of distinction stating that "there aren't really any scenes anymore" as she comments on the lack of loyalty to genres today. Amanda is from a working class background stating in the interview that she does not come from "an educated family." However, she credits The Smiths with guiding her education; in the early 2000s when she was sixteen she discovered The Smiths through her male friend of the same age who found their music online. Amanda liked the literary references in their work and this prompted her to look up the books cited. Amanda, in the comment below, refers to the way in which there used to be distinct subcultural groups associated with new music genres and how it was more common to be loyal to one genre. By contrast, she views people as becoming more 'omnivorous' now (Peterson 1997) and that it is perceived to be negative and uncultured to be loyal to one genre:

Do you think people align themselves to a particular genre?

...I mean, even if you look at, like, it's really funny watching old music documentaries and they talk about all these different groups like mods and how they would actually fight and how it was all these tribes sort of and to them it was such an identity and they dressed in the way they listened to this music and they hung out in these scenes and it was totally their life and it was what they identified with and now it's just not like that anymore

Why is that do you think?

I don't know I mean I guess it's just like I was saying a further breakdown or it's more seen as a bit old fashioned or something to be, to not have this really eclectic taste and not be able to kind of get all these really wide range of cultural references and, you know, I think it's kind of seen as not being really sophisticated or something, you know. (Amanda, [27])

Stressing the importance of appreciating a wide range of genres and styles, popular music may appear, in Amanda's comment, to function less as a way of life and more as a checklist of sorts for this generation unit with key genres and artists that must be ticked off the list in order to appear culturally "sophisticated." It would seem that gone are the days of the CCCS's class-based subcultural groups such as mods and skinheads who fought over differing values and opinions and in are the days of being 'hip', in Thornton's (1995) terms, and exhibiting subcultural capital. However, the problem I have with applying Thornton's work is that the participants here report that they are not members of any musical collectivities. When I asked the participants, they claimed that they did not listen to music with their friends and that they did not know anyone in their age group or circle of friends who would agree with their views.

However, as I argue in chapter one, they are already members of particular communities which may be reflected and extended in terms of their musical taste and identification. This idea owes much to Hesmondhalgh's (2005) work as discussed in chapter one which permits me to discard the earlier one-size fits all theories emerging from the subcultural and post-subcultural strands of research and instead return to the structural categories of gender, class, race and age and examine how these categories might be mirrored in the genres of music listened to. Going further than Hesmondhalgh's idea, then, I finish chapter one by adopting 'generation units' which allows me to cater for these categories in a very specific spatial and temporal context such as the greater Dublin area in the 2010s. My point here is the status of these participants as mostly middle class students is possibly linked to their views on the banality and unoriginality of new popular music in the 2010s. They possess very specific ideas about what constitutes taste and capital and view older music as more

authentic and highbrow and in some cases even like that this music distinguishes them from their peers.

For instance, Rachel reported being alone in her appreciation of pre-biographical music and even celebrated this as a sign of her individuality. Rachel is from a middle class background and, like Amanda, her taste in music was partially guided by a male influence, in this case it was Rachel's older brother and her father who guided her taste in music. This is commented on in more depth in section 4.3. However, this factor of male influence is possibly relevant in her comment below as well in terms of her distinguishing herself from "everybody" else who likes pop music. This is arguably quite a gendered form of discourse which seeks to portray everyone else's music taste as inferior:

You were saying you wouldn't be interested in the artist that you're more of a song person so would you ever look up the history of the actual bands at all?

...I love finding new music and new bands not necessarily 'new' but new to me, people I haven't heard of or songs I haven't heard of before ... I like the idea of knowing bands that other people don't. I kinda like the idea of, maybe that's one of the reasons I don't like so much pop cos everybody likes that. I know that's a silly reason but it's sort of, yeah, I like finding a band and talking to my friends about them and being like: "I've no idea who you're talking about" and I'm like: "yeah, I know"

Why?

I suppose cos it kinda feels more personal then, you know. It's like they're singing for me rather than anybody else. (Rachel, [18])

Even though Rachel here suggests that she is on her own in her interest of older rock music, it is revealed in the following section that she was influenced by her older brother and her father. Rachel's statement was a common one and makes a good deal of sense against the backdrop of the heightened sense of individualism that Beamish

(2010: 8) claims is characteristic of the millennials. He claims that the “power of the individual” and the idea of the individual being in “control of [one’s] own destiny” is highly important for this age group. This is not to say that these participants do not belong to any groups but it did seem that the groups they belonged to were not defined by music. Rather, the group they belonged to (white, mostly middle class, students) led them to the genre (and era) of music they listened to and identified with. For instance, Amanda elaborates on this idea of how it is no longer important in her view to share musical taste and identification with peers. She suggests that in the days before the internet became a pervasive feature of everyday life she would have felt excited about the prospect of meeting someone else who appreciated the same music and that it would have been a real “bonding experience” but that the accessibility of music now has lessened its centrality and importance in forming friendships and the novelty of listening to music with peers:

The other thing that I was wondering if you could just elaborate on, you were saying that you’re nostalgic before your time and I was wondering why is that because you still are very young

... I guess I’m nostalgic because I miss the kind of time when you could if you, you know, if there’s, I mean now there’s no such thing as an obscure album but at the time if you liked a really obscure album and you listened to it all the time and you knew every word and it really meant something to you and you met someone else who also knew it and who also loved it, you knew that you had that shared experience whereas now if somebody told me that their top five bands, top five albums, top five movies and so on and they were all exactly the same as mine, every one, I wouldn’t even care, I’d just think “lots of people like that stuff” whereas back [before the internet] it was like a real bonding experience (Amanda, [27])

Amanda remarks later in her interview that she knows her attitude is “elitist” but with music becoming more accessible there is no longer any rare album and no longer any excitement in meeting people who like the same music. It is perhaps this opening up of the annals of music history to the masses that compels participants like Rachel, for

instance, to seek ever more esoteric knowledge and capital in order to differentiate themselves from others. This point is touched upon by Reynolds (2011: 106) in his reference to what he terms the ‘anti connoisseurs’, that is, a group of people who inhabit the “taste wasteland” deliberately seeking out the trash of yesteryear now that the treasure has become commonplace. Reynolds (2011: 106) uses the example of the “whimsical, softly bearded student” who professes to “*genuinely* love Andy Williams and Perry Como” as the epitome of the anti connoisseur. This links to my adoption of technological determinism when I query in chapter six in particular to what extent the form of the internet encourages people to listen to older music. However, technological determinism is insufficient on its own to explain what is happening. There has to be a level of interest and a desire to seek older material through the internet or to click on a YouTube recommendation when it is offered and so on. This chapter suggests that this level of interest and desire stems from changed generational relationships (as discussed in the next section), the older male influence and being a student (as discussed in this section), and from structures of feeling as discussed in the next chapter. These factors cannot be separated out as it is an entangled mix of cultural and technological factors that facilitates retro culture and the practice of listening to and remembering older music.

In this section, the younger participants in direct contrast to the older sample did not listen to music with peers, did not listen to contemporary music, and could not identify anything distinct about new music. It is thus not possible to apply any of the existing concepts theorising the relationship between popular music and collective identity to these participants because they did not report being members of any music groupings and they did not listen to popular music with peers. They are, however, already

members of specific communities, as per Hesmondhalgh's (2005) work, that is to say, they are already members of a particular generation unit that shares a common structure of feeling of disenchantment with the present music scene and so this chapter falls back on the sociological definition of 'generation units' to comprehend the particular age cohorts featured here and 'structures of feeling' in the next chapter to comprehend the intangible connections between them.

The main form of musical collectivity experienced by this generation unit of eighteen to thirty year olds seems to involve shared interaction and participation with an older generation and, indeed, existing research (Bennett 2000, 2001; De Zengotita 2005; Kotarba et al. 2013 [2009]) would suggest that this lack of generational conflict is a broader trait characterising the contemporary parent-child relationship between the millennials and their babyboomer or Gen X parents. There is a need, then, as Hesmondhalgh (2005: 37) states, for a theory of collective musical identity that accounts for *people* as opposed to simply 'youth'. This research provides empirical data which may be used as a starting ground for the development of such a theory demonstrating as it does the interrelation between generations.

4.3) Intergenerational Relations

This section elaborates mainly on one of the reasons for the appeal of older music to a younger population and that reason is changed generational relationships with parents. Again, there is also the influence of older male siblings. As I am explaining the reasons for the younger participants' liking older music, I also weave in comments from the older participants and contrast them. The older participants report that they did not share the same intergenerational relationships with their parents, they also claim that popular music was a relatively new cultural form and so there was not such a history of

music in their youth and, as a result, new music did not have to compete with older music and styles, and also they did not have access to the back catalogue of music which again brings us back to the technological aspect.

Firstly, I want to show that the younger participants often shared musical tastes and preferences with their parents. As explained in chapter one, this is likely a result of the ‘child-centeredness’ of western culture in late modern society which de Zengotita (2005) says permits parents to still listen to their favourite popular music as they age and share this with their offspring. As Beamish (2010) notes, there is also the possibility that the often “close-knit” relationship between parents and offspring today may be the corollary of smaller families meaning there is more interaction between parents and offspring as parents have more time to give attention to their smaller number of children. Ciara [25] is a participant who may directly relate to these points being an only child and, as a result, she had a close relationship with her parents and shared the same taste in music with them. She reports accompanying her parents to see Bruce Springsteen who they share an interest in. She also reports that her parents used to put their CDs on when they were completing household chores together and so she inherited an interest in her parents’ favourite artists:

Do you listen to much music produced before you were born and if you do what image does it conjure up?

... I suppose [Bruce Springsteen] kinda means a lot around our family. Around our family he means a lot cos me, my mam and my dad would, I think it’s three times now we’ve gone to see him just the three of us so it’s that kind of togetherness-meaning, you know?

Would your parents have made an imprint on what you listen to?

Oh, yeah, definitely, yeah. ... At weekends, I remember we used to get up on Saturday and put the CDs on the stereo and you’d just listen to them doing the housework or whatever you’d be doing... [Mother’s] favourite bands would be

Queen and David Bowie as well so any time I listen to them it reminds me of her ... My dad, his favourite is Rory Gallagher so I'd listen to him a bit as well and that would just remind me of my dad and that's it (Ciara, [25])

Rachel also refers to her shared interest in music with her father and older brother. However, she does not mention her mother. She thus brings in an interesting and more explicit gender dimension to the intergenerational sharing of music. In her comment, Rachel's mother appears to be on her own in her interest of opera music and some chart music. By contrast, Rachel's father attends concerts with both Rachel and her older brother and she clearly credits her brother and father with influencing her taste in music:

Yeah, that's interesting when you were talking about the fathers and sons [at the Noel Gallagher concert] and I don't know would you have that kind of relationship with your parents, would you listen to similar music as they would?

Yeah, well, in relation to classic rock, I listen to a lot of classic rock and, for instance, Rush is one of my favourite bands as well and my dad absolutely loves Rush. He's seen them, like, a million times in concert so that's really nice ... I can listen to Rush in the same way that my dad would. My mum, I'm not sure, she kinda likes opera and stuff which I'm not really into but then she does find in the charts there might be a song played on the radio that she might like and she'll ask me to go and find it for her. But, yeah, there's a band called the Rasmus, they're from Finland, and I've seen them live three times but I went with my brother and my dad. It was sort of like, my mum never really liked them but it was sort of like and that's another thing cos I was quite young when we went, it was like I was sort of not forced or anything but I was sort of driven into that direction of music because my brother and my dad liked that music and even at those concerts there were not many girls at all, it was all sort of male. (Rachel, [18])

It was only in retrospect when attempting to identify patterns in the transcripts that one trend became conspicuous by its absence, namely, the 'missing mother' in the participants' narratives. Ciara was unusual in her citing of her mother's influence on her musical taste and participation in accompanying Ciara to concerts but perhaps this was because Ciara did not have a sibling and so she perhaps socialised more with both

of her parents more. Rachel's account in which her older male sibling and father influenced her musical interests was much more common particularly for the participants in the eighteen to thirty year old group.

Rachel elaborates on this issue of gender in more depth in the passage below and reveals some interesting thoughts from the point of view of a female fan of male-dominated genres. Rachel firstly explains that she was socialised into liking what she views as "masculine music" by her older brother and also her father. She speculates on the thought that if she had an older sister she might not like rock and drum'n'bass music. She then comments on being one of the only women at a male dominated concert and how her and her female friend's behaviour contrasted with that of the father and son pairs at the concert. She finally, then, reflects on how most of her female friends do not like the same type of music as her preferring pop music or r'n'b while she shares more in common with her male friends:

Do you think that [having an older brother] had an influence on the type of music that you listen to?

I think that definitely cos my sort of, my interest in music is rock, classic rock, and indie and drum'n'bass which is...I know I probably shouldn't say this but it's more stereotypically sort of masculine sort of music maybe so, yeah, I think it does mean, there's a big difference. Like if I had an older sister...I only have one older brother and that's it, just the two of us so I'm sure if I had a sister my music would be different cos you sort of, even if you don't want to you sort of unintentionally look up to your older siblings so I think cos he was listening to that kind of music I wanted to listen to that kind of music and that got me into it

Yeah, that makes sense but what has been your experience of that; have you found that, you know, when you go to gigs is it male dominated?

Definitely. Actually I have a good example; quite recently I went to Noel Gallagher, he was in the O2 and...I actually went with my [female] friend...but we found it very funny that we seemed to be the youngest for starters and also it was all fathers and sons, it was that sort of a gig, and there was a lot of older males who were getting drunk and it was that sort of a gig whereas we were there dancing but, yeah, I find it, it is sort of, it is stereotypically male

Have you got any views on why you think that is cos I often wondered about that myself?

Yeah, I'm not really sure cos you get female headbangers, you know, that sort of thing cos I'm not, I don't think I'm very, I'm not like a tomboy or anything like that and yet my taste in music is quite masculine so, yeah, I don't understand why there should be that, you know, I think all music should be for whoever wants to listen to it, you know, whereas if I talk to any girls they prefer maybe r'n'b music or pop music and then there's me. Like if I'm with my group of friends, I'd probably be the only girl that would like that sort of music, it would always be the lads that like that sort of music, they're the ones I have the most in common with in relation to my music taste so, yeah. (Rachel, [18])

Rachel raises interesting points contrasting herself and her female friend's dancing antics with that of the father and son pairs who apparently favoured standing stationary and/or drinking. It is potentially the case that, as Bannister (2006) notes, certain practices may be considered more feminine in masculine music cultures. He talks, for instance, about how it is important for the male connoisseur not to appear too gushing when conversing about his favourite music as to be too fawning is perceived as being feminine. It may be the case here that dancing is perceived as a more feminine activity and in the male-dominated environment of a Noel Gallagher concert the favoured practice is considered to be perhaps a more reserved masculine coolness. Again, Rachel distinguishes herself in the comment above from her female friends that like pop music and aligns herself instead with her male friends who prefer rock music. There is a gendered tone to these comments that suggests masculine forms of music are more authentic and indicate a higher level of capital than feminised mainstream pop music.

Moving on from the gender aspect, then, I want to refer to the peculiarity of the intergenerational relationships enjoyed by the younger sample of participants by referring again to the older participants. The older participants did not enjoy the same intergenerational sharing of musical tastes with their parents. For instance, Donal refers

in the comment below to his parents' dismissal of the music that he used to listen to as they preferred older jazz and swing music:

I was just wondering as well obviously you were influenced by older siblings but would you have listened to what your parents listened to or pre-biographical eras stuff?

The Glenn Miller stuff and that would've been the stuff that my mother and father would've listened to or, what's his name, Fred Astaire, that kinda stuff. They liked swing and jazz so, yeah...as far as they were concerned for all of their kids it was "turn off that stupid music. Sure they just sound like a bunch of apes jumping around" or, you know, "that's not music", the typical kind of thing... (Donal, [49])

So it seems perhaps there was potentially a wider generation gap between these two generations than the current generation of parents which links again to the idea that the child-centeredness of contemporary western society permits the older sample to continue indulging their interests and listening to popular music throughout the life course. They continue listening to the popular music of their youth and even to some new music and, as a result, there is not the same generational gulf or tension between them and their offspring as there was for previous generations.

Margaret [56] - who is from a large family with five siblings - also offers another reason why her generation did not share an interest in music with their parents. She reasoned that the popular music of her parents' generation was not quite the same and certainly not perceived to be as fashionable or modern as the contemporary music of her own youth. For example, she recounts a specific song which her mother used to sing titled 'Little Boxes' which she states was more akin to a novelty song than a contemporary pop song. Noel [48] - who is, again, from a large family of six siblings - similarly pointed to the novelty aspect of the music from pre-biographical eras like 'The Laughing Policeman' suggesting that a new type of popular music was born in the

1950s. He refers to this in the comment below and also makes reference to his view that, as a result, his generation did not have such a large history of popular music to wade through in order to get current and new music during his youth was not engulfed by older music and did not have to compete with older music in order to be heard:

...you don't like your son's rap music?

Well, my boy, he's only gone six. I was born in 1963 so rock'n'roll, if you want to call it that, only came about when Elvis sang 'Blue Suede Shoes' or 'You Ain't Nothing but a Hounddog' or whenever Elvis had his big hit and they say that that's the start date of rock'n'roll. Although some people claim Ike Turner's 'Rocket444' or something like that pre-dates Elvis' claim to be the inventor of rock'n'roll or Bill Haley maybe. Anyway, we'll say it started in the mid-1950s so there was only seven or eight years of it before I was born so by the time I became three we'll say there was only ten years of a back catalogue of lots of music but now there's fifty odd years of a back catalogue of rock'n'roll music so I suppose it's become something else. It's not as urgent as it was. (Noel, [48])

Noel's suggestion here is that popular music is now quite an old cultural form whereas he perceives it as having been quite a new cultural form when he was a child. He reasons that this means it is not as urgent as it once was and also suggests in his interview that young people have more distractions now which popular music must compete with for their attention. He talks about, for instance, how his son and his son's friends prefer computer games to popular music. This is a pertinent point that perhaps popular music is not as urgent as it once was because there is quite a large back catalogue of it now that is widely available courtesy of the internet and there are also newer cultural forms such as computer games and social media with which it must vie for attention.

This is, I think, a key reason aside from the shared relationships with parents for the participants in this sample listening to older music. For instance, Martha [19] – who is from a middle class background and is an only child – discussed how she discovered

The Beatles on the radio (illustrating how a band from the 1960s were still being played on the radio during Martha's childhood in the early twenty-first century) and subsequently started listening to other artists from this time period such as Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash and Jimi Hendrix. She explains that she then became concerned that she was not really a part of her generation because she was listening to popular music from her parents' childhood and so she decided to purposely search for better contemporary music online but remarked that she failed and ended up listening to Black Rebel Motorcycle Club who formed in the late 1990s:

Can you tell me who your favourite artist or favourite group is and what they mean to you?

...I kinda got immersed in that whole sixties era cos once you kinda start listening to one band then you get into Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash and Jimi Hendrix and I'm living *in my parents' time* for a few years and it's really good music but I actually made a conscious effort to come back to *my time* cos you kinda realise when you're listening to all those bands from that generation you kinda get into that concept of these bands are talking about the sort of things going on in their time and then you kinda get it back on yourself, like, "what's going on with me and my generation that I'm not even a part of it, I'm listening to this older music" so that's how I got into Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, I was looking up bands online purposefully looking for a band to like...but I failed with that because they're not really that new (Martha, [19]) [emphasis added]

In this comment, Martha shows that she would like to be interested in more contemporary music and that she regrets that there is no contemporary music that she likes. She therefore does not appear to be driven by elitism or a desire for authenticity so much as a simple coincidental preference for older music because it happened to be playing on the radio and she subsequently made the choice to pursue it. She then deliberately tried to source new music so she could feel as though she really belonged to her own generation but she could not find any new music that she liked or identified with. Martha is thus perhaps distinct from some of the other more pervasive sentiments

expressed by the other participants in the sample about a desire for authenticity through older music.

Coming back to a related point concerning Martha's statement of discovering The Beatles because they were being played on the radio, Derek [22] – who is from a working class background and who writes a blog with Simon – remarks in a comment featured in the next chapter that older music is still played regularly today in clubs and pubs and that, as a result, people may not know what time period the music is from. It is thus a mix of techno-cultural factors that results in the continued popularity of older music with this sample of younger participants; there is the technology that makes older music so much more easily accessible and arguably breathes new life into older music and this is why I bring in this dimension to the debate more explicitly later on in chapter six along with determinism and test whether there is any agency involved in this process. Coming back to this chapter, there is also the point that older populations never stopped listening to the popular music of their youth and they have evidently passed it on to their offspring. This is where I will conclude this chapter and I will probe the issues of structures of feeling and technology in the following two chapters.

What can be ascertained from this chapter is that the changes in the relations between generations demand that youth research and, indeed, post-youth research be updated. Bennett and Taylor (2012: 232), for instance, call for more scholarship addressing the continuing importance of popular music for “ageing, post-youth audiences” and while this project helps to fill this gap it is on the whole more focused on younger music fans who, as Beer (2008a: 234) points out, are also not adequately served by existing youth research in the social sciences. There is evidence here of a generation unit that forms its

identity through the popular music of previous time periods. They are a very limited and unique sample but attendance at reunion gigs confirms that the audiences are often cross-generational so it is a phenomenon that is genuinely occurring and there is a need to move beyond the theories and concepts that only address young people. My view is that this can be achieved by letting go of the need for theoretical purity à la Hesmondhalgh, and opting instead for a return to the structural categories and how these are mirrored and elaborated in terms of musical taste and identification.

This is not enough, however, in my view and so I go further by adopting the concept of ‘generation units’ which allows me to cater for the structural categories in a very specific spatial and temporal context of the greater Dublin area in the 2010s. So the findings pertain to a very specific generation unit of white, mostly middle class, students living in an urban area in the 2010s. I, then, in the next two chapters explain that this idea of a generation unit must be allied to other approaches also in order to comprehend retro culture and cultural memory in relation to popular music. It is not enough to say that these people are fans of retro culture and older music simply because they are students and because their parents and older siblings guided them. These factors facilitate a particular structure of feeling for these participants and that is this sense that there is no distinct contemporary mood or spirit. The younger participants in this sample represent a particular generation unit who share a particular structure of feeling which is characterised by their prevailing sentiment that there is nothing unique about contemporary music and so they chose instead to listen to pre-biographical music and this gives rise to vicarious memories and nostalgia for what they consider to be a more futuristic past. This is what I term the ‘hauntological structure of feeling’ as

hauntology pertains to the paradoxical harking back to a more futuristic and authentic past.

4.4) Conclusion

This chapter examined the participants' musical tastes and the meanings of music for them in relation to their generational cultures. The older participants were shown to discuss the contemporaneous guitar-based music of their youth while the younger participants reported listening to the guitar-based music (usually rock and indie) of their parents' youth (typically music from the 1960s to the 1980s). In addition, it was shown that the older participants listened to music more with their peers while the younger participants reported listening more with their older male sibling or parents, particularly their fathers. This accounts in part for the comments in the next chapter where the older participants' musical memories are of their actual youth, their peers and the music that was out when they were younger whereas the younger participants discuss more vicarious memories and nostalgia because the music they are listening to is pre-biographical.

The reasons for the younger participants' consumption of older music emerges here as the result of changing generational relationships with the parents of the younger participants more likely to listen to music. By contrast, the older participants explain that their parents did not listen to popular music. There is also a technological dimension to this with the older participants being more likely to have had to share music devices and swap and exchange records whereas the younger participants had more technological devices in their household while growing up on which they could listen to their own choice of music and also they had their own music collection and did

not have to share with peers. The role of technology is discussed more fully in chapter six.

The point of this chapter has been to show that the intergenerational composition of the audience here demands a new theory to understand musical collectivities in the twenty-first century. Subcultural and post-subcultural theory is inadequate to deal with the intergenerational audience here as they focus on youth formations. Instead, I adopt Hesmondhalgh's 'none of the above' in the first instance to advocate a return to the structural categories of gender, class, race and age in order to comprehend musical taste and ideas about capital. This is an early attempt to apply Hesmondhalgh's idea empirically and so adds to existing research in this sense. I go further than this though taking Hesmondhalgh's work as just the starting point for my framework to then adopting 'generation units' which helps to neatly cater for the structural categories in this specific socio-historical location. The younger participants are part of a generation unit of white, mostly middle class, students and these factors lead to their interpretation of the socio-historical location they inhabit. Their interpretation is the structure of feeling that there is no Now and so they attempt to transform this by retreating into the music of pre-biographical time periods which they perceive as being more authentic. The next chapter examines the structure of feeling of this generation unit and how it shapes their cultural memories in more depth.

Chapter Five: The Hauntological Structure of Feeling

5.1) Introduction

The previous chapter shows how the social profile of this specific generation unit of younger, white, middle class, students who engage in quite gendered discourse corresponds with musical taste and the meanings and memories deduced from older popular music and retro culture. The social status of these participants partly influences their belief that older music is more authentic and highbrow. In this chapter, the notion of ‘structures of feeling’ is used in order to comprehend the zeitgeist which partly guides the participants’ taste and ideas about cultural capital in the previous chapter.

It is argued here that the structure of feeling experienced by the younger participants is the sense that “there is no Now” (Fisher 2011b) and that this is expressed in their comments which exhibit a sense of disenchantment with contemporary music and a predilection for older music. This is an innovative use of structures of feeling which has not been used in this way before in conjunction with generation units and cultural memory. The younger participants’ sense that there is a lack of a defining zeitgeist gives birth, I argue, to the hauntological spirit which is defined by a paradoxical longing for a more futuristic and authentic past as expressed in the younger participants’ vicarious memories and nostalgia. In this way, this chapter makes an important original empirical contribution as existing empirical studies by Bennett (2000, 2001, 2006, 2009; Bennett and Hodkinson 2012; Bennett and Taylor 2012) assume that the appeal of twentieth century popular music and formats is the preserve of the babyboomers and Generation X whereas these data illuminate the role of a generation unit of millennials in sustaining the continued popularity of twentieth century popular music and formats such as CDs and to a lesser extent vinyl.

However, it is found in this chapter that the younger participants find that there is always *something* missing from their experience of older music but this is typically ameliorated by using old formats such as vinyl which help them “physically grasp” the past (James [20], chapter six section 6.3.1) and attending reunion gigs which provides them with a sense of “relief” (Ian [26], chapter five section 5.3). I suggest that what is missing from their experience of older music is the authentic structure of feeling which the original generation of listeners possess by virtue of their actual presence in the particular time period of their favourite music. The younger participants by contrast possess a technologically mediated presence which seemingly does not quite equate to actual presence. However, technology does at least enable and encourage interest in the past providing the younger participants with the next best thing until they are afforded the opportunity to buy the material format and/or attend the reunion concert.

5.2) Empirically Explaining the Hauntological Structure of Feeling

5.2.1 Vicarious Cultural Memories

This section deals with the younger participants’ vicarious cultural memories which are transmitted through the older popular music that they listen to. This chapter makes an important empirical contribution to existing sociological research by Halbwachs and Davis which fails to acknowledge vicarious memories and nostalgia and also to Bennett’s canon of work which fails to address younger fans of older music focusing instead on older fans only. I argue that these ‘structures of feeling’ sum up the zeitgeist which partially guides the participants’ ideas about musical taste and capital and what is highbrow and authentic. The participants strive to use their knowledge and ‘memories’ of older times as a form of capital and as a means to connect to what they view as a more authentic and futuristic time period.

The popular musical knowledge of the eighteen to thirty year old participants ran the gamut from the 1950s to the 2010s but the common discourse was that the old songs were the best particularly the songs from pre-biographical eras. Concomitantly, the ‘memories’ emanating from these pre-biographical eras were largely impersonal and detached. However, two of the eighteen to thirty year old participants did buck this trend by assimilating 1980s ska and punk into their generational history. These two participants were Derek and Simon who, as I stated in the previous chapter, have their own historical blog on which they report about local history which includes a history of the popular music of Dublin. Given their interest in history, these two participants thus possess knowledge of previous time periods and the context in which particular songs and artists emerged. This is why, for instance, Derek can draw parallels between The Specials’ song ‘Ghost Town’ and its context of the 1980s and Thatcherism with the current recession in Ireland. He suggests that his friends who might “be less historically aware” may not understand this context when they hear the song but that they may think the song is new because of its content which relates to the destruction of communities in the 1980s which is likely what these participants are witnessing happening in their own communities in the 2010s:

So do you feel yourself as a younger fan of a band like The Pogues or The Specials...do you think can you partake in the same meanings that those older fans would have of the band?

That’s a good question. It’s funny how things become relevant again. If you take the likes of ‘Ghost Town’ by The Specials... if you look at the song when it first came out it’s against the backdrop of Thatcherism in England, mass emigration, the closing down of local dancehalls and stuff like that. To young people today that song could mean just as much as it did then and if that came on the jukebox and some of your less historically aware friends heard it, some of them wouldn’t even know who The Specials were but they’d probably connect with it in the same way as people did when they first heard it back then so some of the songs do, sometimes come back around. There wasn’t a lot of people listening to ‘Ghost Town’ in 2003, they were sitting on a Celtic Tiger beach somewhere on the

southside but now that song is definitely something I could relate to so, yeah, sometimes songs do come back around in a big, big way. (Derek, [22])

Because of his historical knowledge, Derek is able to point out similarities between the original context in which ‘Ghost Town’ emerged and the current recession. Rather than the song reminding him of a pre-biographical era, then, he sees it as very pertinent in the contemporary context. Likewise, Simon makes connections between the original historical context in which The Clash’s music was released and the current context suggesting that their music thus potentially possesses just as much relevance for his generation as it did to his parents’ generation who lived throughout the original context in which the music was released:

And you talked as well about how your parents liked them, would your connection be any different to that of your parents’ generation?

...I still think [The Clash] meant as much to [my parents’ generation] as they did to me especially when we go through this whole global recession and the songs that they’re singing. Like ‘Career Opportunities’ is one of my favourite songs and it’s about literally having no career opportunities. Songs like ‘Stay Free’ about your friend going to prison, ‘London Calling’, ‘London’s Burning’, you know, all those great songs mean so much now as they did then so the way they listened to them, the difference between my parents and me though, you know, them physically seeing them and physically listening to them is different the same message still resonates today. (Simon, [25])

Derek and Simon were quite unique, however, in terms of their historical knowledge which they acquired independently of the music. For most of the other participants, they obtained their historical knowledge from the music itself and so they did not seem to possess the same ability to apply the memories emanating from the music to the contemporary context or to reappropriate twentieth century music into their generational histories. Instead, they referred to the vicarious cultural memories evoked by older music. For example, Ian discussed how the music of Jimi Hendrix and Bob Dylan summons memories of the “Georgetown student riots” and “puts him in the

mind” of the socio-political issues of that time and place. Ian mentioned in his interview that he learned about historical and political events through popular music and so, contrary to Simon’s and Derek’s situations, Ian’s knowledge of historical and political events does not exist independently of the music for him. He discovered about events through music rather than independently of it. This is perhaps the reason why he does not make connections between music and the contemporary context but instead the older popular music that he listens to communicates vicarious memories for him.

This notion of vicarious cultural memories is summed up succinctly by Sarah [22] – who is an only child and claims to have discovered The Smiths online - who states that while the ‘memories’ she possesses of 1980s Britain do not proceed from her lived experiences she has immersed herself in representations of Britain in the 1980s to such an extent that she can confidently classify what she has learned as a form of memory nonetheless. Sarah, again like Ian, did not report possessing an independent interest in history or politics but, rather, it was a case that listening to The Smiths prompted her interest in and knowledge of events in Britain in the 1980s:

Just to go back to something else about memory and that question of do you listen to a lot of music produced before you were born and if you do what memories or images does it conjure up?

...[The Smiths] definitely would make me more interested in finding out about what went on [in 1980s Britain]... you know there was Morrissey singing about like, you know, ‘Margaret on the Guillotine’, so I was, like, I didn’t really know what happened so it made me more interested in finding out about it and so now because I’ve found out about it I would think, I would have memories...well, obviously I know they wouldn’t be real memories because I wasn’t there but they’d be memories of kind of I suppose made up memories, I don’t know what the word is (Sarah, [22])

With participants like Sarah and Ian possessing vicarious cultural memories of pre-biographical time periods and listening to older popular music, it raises important

questions concerning our memory of the present time period; how will the current music scene and time period be remembered or will it be remembered at all?; what lived memories and influences will this generation pass on to the next?; and what is the marker of this generation's culture? When they were asked how they thought the present music scene and time period would be defined or remembered, the eighteen to thirty year old respondents generally cited commercialism as a key defining feature. For example, Jack speculated that the present scene will be remembered for its commercialism and lack of depth. He takes the view that older music had more depth and dealt with what he views as more pertinent topics such as political events but Jack is a participant who had developed an interest in history and politics when he started university. As I stated in chapter one, Jack comes from a working class background. He used to listen to rap music when he was younger but he later began listening to rock music. His father who is from a working class area was a Pink Floyd fan since his youth. This is a band that might be expected to court a more middle class following if one was to follow Bradby's (2014) and Tanner's (1981) theories. There is the potential that Jack developed this taste to fit into the adopted middle class environments of the suburbs and the university respectively. In the comments below, he suggests that older music is distinguished from contemporary music by its lyrical content which he believes dealt more with political issues:

...why are you listening to older music and do you think the next generation will be interested in music that was out when you were young?

...my mate and I, we both like The Black Keys. They're getting decent enough big now, 'bluesy' sound and that's, like, I'm listening to them now cos I like the sound but then again if they were made in the sixties I'd still listen to them

Yeah, well that leads me onto another thing - would you be able to distinguish the music that's out now if they're kinda 'bluesy' and that?

Would I be able to distinguish them?

Yeah, would you have known that Black Keys were a new band or would you have thought ‘oh, this sounds like a sixties band’?

...I'd definitely know that if someone's singing about something important like a world event or something really deep, nine times out of ten, it's from back then. It's very commercial now... ...Kanye West is singing about money and how he has a billion hummers [whereas] Roger Waters is singing about World War II and his dad dying in World War II (Jack, [19])

Kanye West's music may, of course, possess different meanings and perhaps a political dimension for a different generation unit such as middle class African-Americans which is the background which West himself comes from. There is arguably again the gendered facet to the comments suggesting that one type of music is better than the other and this is carried on in Dave's [27] comments in which he similarly pointed out how popular music has become even further subsumed into commercialism. Dave is from a middle class area, is a postgraduate and possesses left-wing political views. Instead of rap music, he targets reality TV shows and Lady GaGa which are arguably perceived as more feminised forms of music. He is a participant who again acknowledges later in the interview that his views are "elitist." His core point, however, is that when one looks back on this time period he does not believe there will be many icons to remember:

And just what you were saying about Lady GaGa and the music produced now, do you think [the reason you don't think they are as good as the past is just] you getting older and more cynical or is it the technology or is it something else?

Oh, there is great music out there like on 'Groovespark'... there's loads of great stuff there but I don't have time to go through it. ...we're at this point in 2011 where most independent music producers and with the situation with the internet being miles ahead and file-sharing they're all getting squeezed out and the major companies are the only ones that have the money to pump into things to go into the general equation which is the sort of mass-produced shite that we see, like TV shows like X Factor, American Idol, ...and that is music now, you know, the X Factor, with exceptions. Like how many big bands are in the world now at this

current moment? I would say there's less than there ever has been before in terms of big bands that can fill out stadiums. ... (Dave, [27])

Thus, for Dave, it is the case that in the era of excess free music there is extra pressure perhaps to appeal to what he perhaps dismissively terms the “general equation” in order to be heard and this requires the financial backing of major promoters while also necessitating tried and tested song structures and non-controversial topics especially for family entertainment shows such as the X Factor and American Idol which it is worth noting are predicated on the performance of cover versions as opposed to original material. As a result, the past decade, he claims, lacks the major pop icons of previous eras. It is true that there are country acts such as Garth Brooks and pop acts such as One Direction selling out stadia but Dave's comment perhaps pertains more to the genre of music that he likes, namely, rock music and that there is a lack of bands from this genre selling out stadia today compared to previous eras.

Another defining feature of the past decade aside from commercialism, overabundance, and the absence of major stars, as cited by the participants, is its lack of distinction. This returns to sentiments raised in the previous chapter. Echoing Fisher's (2011b) claim that “there is no Now” - meaning there is no defining mood or spirit - the participants remark that the present music scene is characterised by a certain banality and will be remembered or, more likely, forgotten as such. For example, Amanda states that she does not relate to any particular music scene because “there aren't really any scenes anymore” commenting earlier in her interview also on how it is hard to believe that there once existed groups such as mods and skinheads who actually fought over music and values. Simon similarly points to the absence of originality when compared to previous eras. For instance, he refers to how new genres which emerged in every

decade since the 1950s right up to the 1990s. However, besides dubstep he has difficulty pinpointing any new genre in contemporary society:

Do you think that looking back on this period are there any distinguishing features in music or fashion in this decade?

I think when you look at every generation it seems had a...new youth music culture, whether it was rock'n'roll in the fifties, hippies in the sixties or mods, and then seventies you've punk and then you've the skinheads and then you've right up into reggae and then you had, like, the last big one was probably acid house and the rave scene. When you look at now...there's nothing in comparison, there's nothing that you can compare those amazing new movements to. The only...new music in the actual word 'new' that's come out has been dubstep... ..this generation, I don't think, has seen anything like the originality or the feel of a new youth movement like punk or like acid house...but maybe it might happen next week. You don't know. They usually take you by surprise anyway (Simon, [25])

As always, this belief that there is no new original music arguably carries on from the social profile of these participants being white and mostly middle class students. This social profile may lead to particular ideas about what constitutes good taste and capital and for these participants older music is seen as more highbrow and more authentic because they see it as dealing more with socio-political issues. They find themselves disappointed with contemporary music which they view as unoriginal and/or as dealing with commercialism.

In sum, the structure of feeling shared by these younger participants is characterised by a clear trend of disillusionment with the present music scene. Disenchantment is said to be the basic premise from which nostalgia flourishes (Boym 2001: 41). A disappointment with the present, Boym explains, prompts one to yearn for an earlier time which they imagine was superior to the present. Thus, I argue that the structure of feeling experienced by the participants here gives rise to nostalgia for what they consider to be the more futuristic and authentic past. As a response to their distaste for

the present, these participants have generally chosen to reject contemporary artists and have begun to embrace popular music's earlier self-revelling in nostalgia for the times they never had the fortune to experience nor the misfortune to endure.

5.2.2 Nostalgia for the Future

Nostalgia for the future – also known as 'hauntology' (Hatherley 2011: 11) - is a theme that emerged frequently in the interviews with the participants aged between eighteen to thirty years old. This sense of nostalgia for the mid-to-late twentieth century gives credence perhaps to Derrida's (1993) prophecy that Marx's spirit would continue to haunt Europe eventually resulting in its occupants becoming melancholic for the utopianism of the futuristic past. In seeking to restore the social and political terrain of the past, nostalgia for the future is a political form of nostalgia rather than simply a personal form of nostalgia. The participants generally suggested that they listened to older music because it was more authentic and politically aware.

For instance, both Laura [19] and Jason [27] view their predilection for the past not as a mere incidental personal preference but as resistant consumption, a conscious socio-political statement and a refusal to engage with the cynical brand of consumer capitalism aimed at their demography. Laura is an only child and Jason has a younger sister. Both are from middle class backgrounds. Neither participant reported being influenced by older people. Instead, Laura reported finding Janis Joplin on the internet through YouTube recommendations while Jason discovered R.E.M while watching *Top of the Pops* as a child and this prompted him to begin listening to other older acts. Through reading about R.E.M and Michael Stipe's friendship with Morrissey he began listening to the music of The Smiths also and developed a particular preference for 1980s indie music. In the comments below, these participants make quite similar

remarks; Laura laments being born in the 1990s and coming of age during the era of reality music TV shows. She views older music produced “twenty/thirty years ago” as having more “soul” and dealing with more utopian politics and ideas of “revolution.” Jason also takes reality music TV shows to task suggesting that there is “nothing creative about them” as they involve people performing cover versions. He thus views himself as taking a form of socio-political action by choosing not to watch these programmes:

And what about new music, is there any new stuff that you’d listen to?

...when you’re my age you’re born into a world where you’re listening to this stuff made twenty/thirty years ago and they’re singing about all these things like there was going to be this big revolution and you’re thinking, ‘yeah, it might sound a bit silly now but at least it had soul’... ..I’ll make a point of not looking at American Idol or the X Factor or any of that, I’m so sick of that stuff... (Laura, [19])

Why the preference for the eighties in particular?

...there’s nothing really creative about [the X Factor]. It’s mainly people doing cover versions, you know, and bad ones at that...I know that sounds totally elitist but it’s...it’s just there’s no-one making the effort or no-one making a vision to do something a bit different and definitely not within the scope of that, like with the X Factor you can’t cos they don’t allow that freedom, it’s not in the format of the show to allow people to be creative and do their own thing or sing about the more unsavoury issues in life so...I’d make a point of not watching that, those reality shows, and just getting back to when there was more sincerity in the music I suppose... (Jason, [27])

Both participants communicate nostalgia for the future by yearning for a pre-biographical time period which they believe was more futuristic, had more “soul” and was more “sincere” than contemporary music. Even when the participants did not explicitly refer to their vicarious nostalgia as a form of socio-political action, they still viewed their preferences as indicative of a time period that was more authentic and socio-politically aware.

Commonly the participants reported a yearning to return to pre-biographical time periods in order to sample their favourite sounds during their original airing because they suspected that there was an authenticity to hearing the music then that has since expired. For example, Joanna [19] discusses how “superior” it must have been to hear *Sgt Pepper* when it was a new album in the 1960s and in its “natural habitat.” Joanna is referring here to how the album may have sounded different when it was originally released perhaps because there was no other music that sounded quite like it and so it sounded new. It seems that listening to what are considered original and authentic albums in the contemporary context pales in comparison to listening to them in the time period in which they were originally released perhaps because there had been nothing like them heard before. When one listens to these albums today they can likely name a dozen other albums that sound similar that have been produced in the years since. There is also the lack of excitement due to the fact that The Beatles, for instance, are not a young group currently touring and there is a lack of people in Joanna’s age group with whom she can share the experience of listening to their music. Joanna is a participant who discovered this album through her parents’ record collection and there is potential that seeing the album in its original vinyl format and asking her parents about it also prompted her curiosity and nostalgia for pre-biographical time periods.

James [20], likewise, also mentions how difficult it is today to imagine the impact of hearing *The Wall* in its original context. James was an only child but he reported that he inherited an interest in older music from his father who listened to Rory Gallagher records frequently when he was a child. James [20] goes further than Joanna in terms of the issue of nostalgia as he states that given the option of time travel he would not return to relive any of the musical feats of his own lifetime – because he does not

believe there are any – but would choose instead to visit the earlier time period he is most nostalgic for, that is, the 1970s. There is seemingly an authentic quality to seeing Pink Floyd in the 1970s that does not exist in seeing Roger Waters performing *The Wall* again in the 2010s in all likelihood because Waters is performing without the rest of the band and again the idea of concept albums and big stage shows is not such a novel thing in the 2010s as it perhaps was in the 1970s:

Obviously bands like Pink Floyd span the decades but I'm just wondering what would be your favourite period in their work, if any?

Definitely the Seventies... ..it's not just Pink Floyd there was lots of good music around then and in that genre especially. ...It's like the guy in *Quantum Leap*, you know that programme...and he goes back in time and fixes everything cos like when people ask that question 'what would you do if you could go back in time?' and there's people saying crap like 'oh, I'd like to change the world' or 'change history' and I'd just be like 'go back to the seventies and be there for the music', you know ...it's a nostalgia trip really to see Pink Floyd doing *The Wall* in Los Angeles... ..even just to hear [*The Wall*] when it came out cos it's hard to imagine now what it was like to hear it then...

...that's interesting because I think with [*Quantum Leap*], the idea actually was that your life is a sort of a time loop so like you couldn't go back further than the year you were born...so how would you feel about that?

...there's been nothing since I was born really and I don't really think music's going to get any better... ..all the music I like is purely old, from the seventies mostly, and I missed out on that so I'd love to go back to that cos that's when everything happened...from the sixties to, say, the eighties is when you got the best music and programmes and even films really... (James, [20])

James draws a clear line from the 1960s to the 1980s as a time period of originality and authenticity and this is the general sentiment in the project with the younger participants listening mostly to popular music from the 1960s to 1980s. The reason this time period in particular is pinpointed as original is probably partly because of the participants' parents whose favourite music stems from this period. There is, in James' notion that popular culture was once more innovative and exciting, a prevailing sense that the future has already been and gone and that the best and most original music has

already been made. This is a sentiment which was similarly expressed by other participants who also felt like they had missed out on a “golden age” (Derek, [22]) of music. For instance, Simon reiterates similar points to Joanna and James about the authenticity of listening to older music in its original context stating that new punk bands can never be as good as the first punk bands and a new reggae band can never be as good an old reggae band. His reasoning for this is that there is an urgency to music when it first originates. There is a sense of excitement which emanates from it being new which attenuates somewhat as time goes on and the sound is no longer fresh and new:

...when we were talking about the older music potentially being better and do you have an opinion on why that might be or do you think that new music is just getting lost in the quantity of music available?

Well, it's also the case that new music today, a lot of it is just regurgitated stuff that happened in the past. So any punk band today, it can never be as good as a punk band in the seventies, a new reggae band can never be as good as an old reggae band and no, everything, a lot of music today is regurgitated from what it was so I would like to listen to the first rock'n'roll, the first jazz, the first mod, the first punk, and the first whatever cos obviously it's best when it's beginning and it's like anything when it first starts it's most special so that's probably why a lot of the music is better because it was new and now bands are just trying to be bands from twenty years ago with the obvious exception of things like dubstep and certain electronic genres which are completely new and no-one did them before so that's why they're very special (Simon, [25])

Simon's comments here also suggest that contemporary music is premised on mimicry at the expense of originality and depth. However, what complicates this idea of mimicry even more in the 2010s is that it is no longer merely a case of young pretenders mimicking old styles and sounds; rather, it is now the case that the innovators have become the excavators engaging in the plundering of their *own* past and so in 2014 Roger Waters is re-building his Wall, while The Who are talking about their (re)generation, and Mick Jagger still can't get no satisfaction. The self-referential

nostalgia of ageing pop stars is perceived by the participants to have taken the parody of postmodern culture to new lows, as was noted by some of the participants. For instance, Ian in the comment below valorises youth by suggesting that there is something “sad” about seeing Mick Jagger attempting to channel the 1960s youthful version of himself. There is a sense here that popular music should be youthful despite the fact that Ian actively consumes older music. Perhaps it is a case that Ian would like to have seen The Rolling Stones in the 1960s when they were younger and in their prime and he suggests these sentiments later when he refers to how he never feels like he “owns the right” to remember older bands because he did not see them perform live in their heyday and he did not live through that time period:

...do you have any particular view of all the reissues and reunions of bands?

.... The Rolling Stones are kind of notorious for this...it seems to be every five to six years they do a comeback tour or whatever. ... there’s a certain point where you see Mick Jagger trying to be Mick Jagger. I know it sounds ridiculous to say he’s trying to be Mick Jagger but he’s sixty or seventy almost and there’s a point you get to after a while where you go “this is a bit sad now”... (Ian, [26])

Eoin [27], who is from a middle class background and has a younger brother who is over a decade younger than him, expresses similar ideas when he discusses seeing Pulp on their reunion tour but contrary to Ian’s comments he did not mind that Jarvis Cocker was channelling the younger version of himself on this tour:

What feelings did you have when Pulp reunited?

...at one point I thought Jarvis’ moves were even more 1995 than 1995 itself...when Jarvis wiggled his hips and showed his cabaret, camp side at Primavera [festival in Barcelona], I’d seen enough of old Pulp footage to recognise it only too well. There had only been fleeting glimpses of it when I saw them on the We Love Life tour and, of course, during the This Is Hardcore tour he came up with the fantastic idea of getting a look-a-like Jarvis from Stars In Their Eyes to “do the Jarvis moves” while he could concentrate on the downer-anthems they were serving-up at the time. So, Jarvis 2011 was, to my mind, certainly diving back into the silliness of the halcyon days but it was hard not to blame him.

It's what most of the festival crowds expected, the show drew largely on their most successful album with the classic line-up in tow for the first time in fifteen years ... His first words to the crowd that night were careful to underline that the show was a celebration of now and he had a point. There were plenty of young people in attendance...who were too young to see Pulp in their heyday. In my hostel room that evening an eighteen year old Mexican girl told me that she had come all the way just to see them! I imagine the vast majority of people who watched their headlining/second from headline slots at the festivals had missed out on Pulp first time round... (Eoin, [27])

In a new twist to the postmodern pastiche and parody, artists now appear to not only mine other people's pasts for inspiration; rather, ageing pop stars have started to caricature themselves with Jarvis Cocker, in the comment above, attempting to channel the mid-1990s classic version of himself during Pulp's 2011 reunion tour. However, as Eoin points out, for all the 1990s nostalgia there was something uniquely twenty-first century about the reunion tour owing to its audience which was often comprised of people who had missed the band the first time around but who, despite this, had since absorbed every nuance, every gesture, and every word of every song which they obtained through a mediated experience through recorded culture.

As I stated in chapter two, recorded culture administers a selective tradition and never fully communicates the original authentic structure of feeling. It never delivers the full experience, according to Williams (1961). The act of selectively remembering through the selective tradition was a point picked up on by the participants who actually remember the mid-to-late twentieth century. When these participants were asked why they did not demonstrate nostalgia to the same extent as the eighteen to thirty year old age group they commonly suggested that it was due to the fact that they had lived through the eras in question and, therefore, possessed a fuller lived memory of how it really was whereas people who were not there inevitably possess an impersonal, homogenised, and selective memory "minus the bad bits", as Anne [44] put it.

There was also, however, an acknowledgement by some of the eighteen to thirty year old participants that the past may not have been quite as idyllic as they sometimes imagined. They concede that they may at times have engaged in the act of selective memory. For instance, Chris [25] who is from a working class area in Dublin soberly points out that there are good and bad albums in every decade and that it is simply the case that when we look back we are only remembering the good albums because the ‘bad’ ones will not be foregrounded in the selective tradition:

And what does that older music mean or what images does it conjure for you?

...it’s very tempting to be very rosy eyed about it... good albums are few and far between at any time in history so when you’re looking back you’re thinking of every good album that was brought out... (Chris, [25])

Sarah concurs with Chris’ sentiment. Even though, in her comment below, she claims how she would have loved to have been around in the 1960s to listen to The Beatles then she is also aware that popular music gives what she terms “idealistic views” of time periods such as The Beatles dealing with love, peace and drugs in their work but perhaps saying less about other aspects of life in the 1960s. She suspects that one has to live through a particular time period to really obtain a fuller picture perhaps of that time period:

Just to go back to something else about memory and that question of what memories or images does that older music conjure up?

... I like the Beatles and everyone likes the Beatles but I wouldn’t love them but their songs always make me think like the sixties sounds so fabulous, you know, I’d have loved to have been around. Music tends to give you idealistic views of it...It’s just like the Beatles and the sixties cos I’m sure the sixties wasn’t all peace and love and drugs and everything... I think you do from listening to bands like that you do get memories like that but you get an idealised view of the era, you don’t get a true thing cos you can only get that by living through it. (Sarah, [22])

These comments raise really interesting points concerning the chasm between a technologically mediated memory and the memory that is derived from an actual lived presence. I seek to elaborate on this division in the next section. This divide brings the technological aspect to the fore more and links on to next chapter which focuses more fully on technology and its role in retro and memory. Despite her earlier claim to the possession of mediated memories borrowed from recorded material (all of the recorded music discussed so far emerges from recorded culture, that is to say it is communicated through some form of technology), Sarah's comment suggests an inability of a technologically mediated presence transmitted from recorded culture to equal the intensity of actual presence. She is referring, for instance, to the difference between being at a concert versus watching it on YouTube. This was a topic which came up frequently in the interviews with the eighteen to thirty year old participants when they persistently mentioned that they felt as though they did not "own the right" to the memory of pre-biographical music (Ian), that it was not theirs to feel nostalgic for (Amanda), and that the connection and memories must be much more personal for the original generation of listeners (Sarah [22], Sam [20], James [20], Rachel [18], Steve [18], Jack [19], Joanna [19], Laura [19]).

The next section explores these comments in more depth. I suggest that what is going on here is that the younger participants' lack the authentic structure of feeling which, as discussed in chapter two, can only apparently be obtained by actually living through a particular time and place. The structure of feeling is the fleeting spirit of a particular time and place and while we may, Williams acknowledges, attempt to tap into this unique structure of feeling some years later through the selective tradition of recorded

culture we can likely never experience it in its fullest form. This is quite an original use of ‘structures of feeling’ which has not been allied in this way to generation units and their vicarious cultural memories obtained through a technologically mediated presence. In the next section, then, I examine how the participants’ expression of vicarious memories and nostalgia is part of their attempt to attain a sense of the authentic structure of feeling but that they find a way to authenticate their own experience through attending reunion shows and, in the next chapter, purchasing material formats. I want to signal very clearly here, then, that I am now moving into a section which begins to bring the intersection between the various factors – intergenerational relations, generation units and their structures of feeling, memories and nostalgia, and technology to the fore and this continues into the next chapter.

5.3) In Pursuit of the Authentic Structure of Feeling

I’m losing my edge to the Internet seekers who can tell me every member of every good group from 1962 to 1978...I’m losing my edge but I was *there*.
(‘Losing My Edge’ by LCD Soundsystem [2002] 2005)

This quote from the song ‘Losing My Edge’ deals precisely with the issue of the actual presence of the older music fan versus the technologically mediated presence and knowledge of the younger fan. The song centres on the ageing fan frightened of losing his status to the “kids coming up” (they are the also “internet seekers” in the quote above) who possess in minutes the knowledge and reference points that took him years to assimilate in the days of material music culture. As a result, the protagonist in the song constantly falls back on the refrain “I was there.” This is his last weapon to wield as a form of power and to appear knowledgeable and relevant to the “kids coming up.” There was only one instance of a comment that related to this issue and that was with John [53] who had been an avid collector of David Bowie bootlegs which in the days

before the internet he had paid up to two hundred and fifty pounds for per bootleg. All of these bootlegged concerts are available for free now on the internet prompting him to comment on how “galling” it is that people now can access this material for free in minutes:

What’s your opinion of younger Bowie fans who are getting into him now and discovering him online maybe?

This is something you’ll probably find funny and makes me sound like a grumpy old man but this other guy, a Bowie fan I know from Carlow, said to me and it’s right: we spent years, twenty years, collecting these bootlegs and now someone your age can sit down and in ten minutes have everything that we spent twenty years getting. I mean how is it so easy for them now? You just type it into a search engine, that’s the galling aspect but it was a lot slower before. (John, [53])

Even though John finds it annoying that younger people can now access material that he paid so much for so easily, there is no attempt to use the refrain ‘I was there’ to make his experience seem superior. This sentiment was not expressed by the older participants at all. When I asked the older participants about younger generations liking older music, they were generally pleased and believed it showed how good the music was and that good music in any era will survive the test of time. So the conflict of ownership seemed to be something that existed more in the younger participants’ minds and amongst themselves. They were the ones who were concerned about not ‘owning’ the music of the past. They seemingly invented a conflict over who has the right to assert ownership of the memory of the past suggesting that older fans of an older artist automatically have the right by having been there and having grown up with the artist staying loyal to them throughout the years. I argue that this is all very akin to ‘structures of feeling’ which is, as I said in chapter two, defined by Williams (1961: 65) as a ‘lived culture’, that is it is the lived experience of a time and place that no-one but those born and bred in the specific time and place can know and communicate. This is

then why the participants state that their experience of not having lived through the time period when the bands were young (again, there is seemingly this perpetual expectation that popular music should be young and that when it is not there is something not quite the same about it) and the music was new is different.

To illustrate these ideas, I refer below to two comments by Rachel and Steve. Rachel claims that her father would have had a different experience of the band Rush by virtue of the fact that he actually lived through the time period when they were at their peak and contemporary. She comments on her technologically mediated presence which she obtained through viewing pictures and interviews of Rush and claims that this is not as “personal” as her father’s experience. Part of the difference seems to be that her father grew up *with* the band. Steve then adds another aspect to this pointing to how the songs of Pink Floyd sometimes deal with events that were happening when the music was out and so there would potentially be a greater ability for people who lived through the time period in question to identify with the content. They both share the view that they do not feel fully connected to the music in the same way as older people who were fans in the time period in question must:

Yeah, well that’s interesting what you said that you wouldn’t necessarily have an image of what [Rush] looked like but would you have looked it up?

Oh yeah, I would know what [Rush] look like but you know how actually being there in that time and actually seeing them and that memory of what they looked like whereas I’ve only seen a few pictures or interviews maybe and it’s not the same as actually living through it and actually growing up with the music it’s much more personal than just sort of coming into it now in the last couple of years like I have. Don’t get me wrong, I love them but it’s definitely different than dad who grew up with them and had that memory and that. (Rachel, [18])

Would your experience of Pink Floyd be different to people who might’ve been with them all along, who grew up with them?

...yeah cos bands like Pink Floyd did have political commentary so they did represent much more back then, like the lyrics probably clicked with people much better back then cos I'm not into history that much and I don't know really a lot of the things they talk about so I'd say they do definitely and the music as well cos like it's not music of my time so it's not going to be associated with now if you get me whereas for people like my dad's age, yeah definitely (Steve, [18])

The common trend in the interviews with the younger participants, then, was that there was *something* missing from their experience and it is argued here that the missing component is the authentic 'structures of feeling.' It was Williams' (1961: 65-66) contention that while a structure of feeling survives in a "narrower" form for some years after the event through recorded culture, the original sense of intensity and fervency cannot be maintained and the structure of feeling inevitably atrophies somewhat. For example, in Euan Ferguson's (2009) review of a reunion concert in April 2009 by the 1980s group The Specials the songs are said to define a particular "time, sound and mindset" inducing the feeling that no time had passed. It is suggested, however, that those in attendance "who hadn't been born the last time [the Specials] toured" could not partake in the original listeners' "shared knowledge" of how significant the group had been. The 'shared knowledge' referred to here would seem to be a quality similar to the structures of feeling. While the remark is rather presumptuous, it does raise the question of how exactly listeners comprehend music they missed first time around.

The answer appears to be that many younger listeners comprehend the context of the music but yet they do not believe they are entitled to the memory of it and nostalgia for it in the same way that the original listeners are because as in 'Losing My Edge' they were there. The younger participants generally express the view that they cannot ever have the same experience because though they have absorbed the audio, written and

visual material they were not there in the flesh so to speak. For example, Amanda expresses an interest in vinyl but states that she cannot develop a real connection to it because she did not grow up with it. Similarly, in relation to the music of bygone eras she reiterates that it is not hers to miss and that she does not have an “actual memory” of The Smiths’ singles coming out so it would be “wrong” to go out and buy the re-issued versions of these singles that were released around the time this interview was conducted:

And you just mentioned about vinyl being pretty and that and I’m just wondering do you have any vinyl or did you ever get into vinyl?

I never did. I mean I tried to. My dad bought me a really lovely record player once and that kind of made me want to get into vinyl but I never did. I mean it just seems like everything now is retro, you know, and I didn’t grow up with vinyl. I’m not the right age to have grown up with vinyl so it’s not my era to be nostalgic about...I really want to [buy The Smiths vinyl reissues] on the one hand because they look so nice but I mean I just have to face up to the fact that I’m the wrong age to have lived through The Smiths so I’ll never have the actual memory of seeing those singles come out (Amanda, [27])

These sentiments about not being the right age to have an actual memory of the vinyl format also extends to the live show with Ian similarly stating that it was the older members of the audience who had the ‘biggest right’ to attend Pulp’s reunion tour. There is something about listening to a band when they reunite that potentially appears like jumping on the bandwagon for the good times rather than actually growing up with a band or artist and sticking with them through thick and thin. Ian comments on not feeling like he truly owns the experience because he only began listening to Pulp after they had gone on hiatus (they never actually split up as he states). The idea seems to be that there is a moment when a band is at their pinnacle and for Pulp, as members of the group have since said, this was Glastonbury 1995. This was only a fleeting moment so naturally for Ian he feels that to have been there would have greater currency and

capital because it is something that only a select number of people witnessed in the flesh whereas anyone with a broadband connection can watch the videos of this performance on YouTube. Someone Ian's age could not possibly have been to see Pulp during their heyday unless accompanied by an adult as he was only ten years old in 1995:

...what were your feelings on seeing [Pulp] back together again?

...I never feel like I truly own it. I tend to get into bands after they've broken up, like an idiot, I always do, and I'm looking forward to the day when I can go to a reunion of a band that I was into when they were out cos obviously Pulp were huge and I was watching countless videos of them on YouTube playing Glastonbury 1995 and going "I can't wait for this, it's gonna be a great gig, it's gonna be amazing" and it was amazing, they delivered on everything, it was a great gig but I'm looking at the eighteen year olds in the crowd at Glastonbury in 1995 and I'm looking at them and I'm going "I'm jealous of you even though you're now forty", you know, even though I'm still young and now you're thirty-four, thirty-five, whatever it is, you know, you were there, you were there for it, this is your band. This was your band, this was your age group, you were eighteen when they were huge, you have the biggest right to be at this gig. You always feel like you're going to get caught out... (Ian, [26])

At odds with what Ian is saying here, others like Derek and Simon countered that they simply possessed a different connection to the music and that their experiences have been granted validity in recent years through their attendance at reunion concerts. For example, Derek suggested that recent gigs by "Blondie 2.0" and "Leonard Cohen 2.0" were arguably even better than during their heyday owing to sobriety and superior setlists and musicianship. Similarly, Simon suggested that his generation's experience could potentially be even better than that of his parents' generation as he contrasts his mother's attendance at a Specials concert in the 1980s when they only had one album to his attendance at their reunion show where they had more albums and more experience. He thus poses an interesting question as to who has had the better experience:

So do you think actually that physically being there...is it the gig that's missing? Is that the thing not actually seeing them live, is that what makes it really different or is it the format?

...my other favourite band would be The Specials who, again, my parents would've seen in Dublin in '79/'81 but who me and [friend] went to see two years ago in the Olympia and from what I hear from people who were at both times they were as good if not better two years ago because obviously they have so much time and experience and reflection and they had time to practice as well...I always thought that was fascinating. Like my mam went to see The Specials and they would've only released one album at the time...I don't even know if she had the album. She probably didn't know the names of the band members. She went to see them at a great time but when I go literally thirty years later nearly to the day I've read a book about them, I've read three of the autobiographies from different band members, I have every single song they've ever released, every demo, every b-side, so you're experiencing it completely differently. ...So who had the best experience? My mam who got them at their best or me who, you know, heard more songs cos they'd released albums in the meantime? (Simon, [25])

This to me suggests that the younger participants have in their minds found a way to authenticate their experience; if the authentic structure of feeling cannot quite be grasped through the technologically mediated presence then at least a new unique structure of feeling can be created by this generation unit reasoning that they have a wealth of experience, having read all of the autobiographies, listened to all of the demos and b-sides and that they have the unique experience of bringing all of this knowledge and memory with them to the reunion tour. They are thus finally in their view achieving a sense of ownership over memory and fandom and the right to remember and be a fan of equal standing in the process. The attendance of these reunion gigs finally afforded the eighteen to thirty year old fans the chance to upgrade their status from 'passive observer from the Future' to fully fledged 'active participant' in a lived fan culture. What I mean by 'lived fan culture' is that the structure of feeling is a lived culture and so the participants feel that they wanted to be part of the lived fan culture and this is what was missing before they got to attend the reunion shows. There was always a sense for them that *you just had to be there* and now having attended the

reunion shows they can finally say that they were. For instance, Ian eloquently expresses this idea of the ‘memory tourist’ just experiencing a time period in a very shallow way through the technologically mediated presence when he speaks of his “relief” at finally being able to say he had seen Pulp and the Smashing Pumpkins in the flesh on their reunion tours and that this moves him from being a tourist to a resident in a sense (this parallels somewhat with his comments in chapter six on the gulf between renting music as opposed to owning it):

...what were your feelings on seeing [Pulp] back together again?

...if you’ve a band that you care enough about anyway your big thing is you want to see them live. ...it’s like when it’s over and done with it’s almost like a relief, it’s like I can finally say, “now I’m part of that as well, now I can say I’ve seen them live, I’m in there, I’m in that”... ...when I saw the Pumpkins, I was like “OK, it’s not the full Pumpkins but now I’ve seen Jimmy, I’ve seen Billy, I’ve seen that live”, you know, I’ve not just watched a video about it or talked about it to a thirty year old guy who went to see them when he was seventeen and he was smashed. I’ve been there, I’ve done it too, you know. (Ian, [26])

The participants’ remarks regarding their relief at finally seeing their favourite bands in concert raises an interesting point concerning the structure of feeling in relation to actual presence versus the technologically mediated presence. It seems here that attending the live shows provided the participants with an authentication that could not be garnered from simply watching and listening to recorded material. There is also a material versus immaterial dimension to this particular issue with the younger participants also suggesting that the technologically mediated presence administered via material formats is closer to the authenticity of the time periods they are nostalgic for than the presence mediated via immaterial formats which they regard as being cold and ephemeral. This links back to the idea of the participants being members of a very specific generation unit that has particular ideas about what denotes taste and capital. These participants privilege older music but also older formats such as vinyl and CDs

over new music and new forms of consumption such as streaming and downloading. As we see in this section with Ian's comment about watching Pulp on YouTube, it seems to be the case that because anyone with a broadband connection now has access to all of the reference points, attending the actual shows and purchasing old formats increases in terms of capital and authenticity.

Having said all of this, the participants use 'immaterial' forms such as the internet and MP3 players on a daily basis and these are the technologies that have given the participants access to older music (beyond their parents' collections). Sometimes the internet is what partly encouraged the participants to listen to older music but yet they maintain that the internet and mobile listening technologies are employed just for convenience and to sample music and if they really like a band and/or an artist they will then buy a material format. The material formats are discussed as possessing a much greater link to memory. The next chapter deals with these issues particularly in relation to a soft technologically determinist approach because participants state that they choose to use material formats even though for some the internet is the medium that opened up the archives to them. Even in terms of the participants who inherited their interest in older music from their parents, the internet still permitted more access and facilitated them to pursue their interests further and with much more ease than having to hunt down material records. I therefore wanted to test to what extent the internet is encouraging and enabling retro culture and cultural memory in relation to music. I also found the approach useful in understanding the participants' comments about how the form of the technology – material and/or immaterial - is credited with making them remember or forget. This suggests that though they perceive themselves to have agency

in deciding which formats to use, their agency then diminishes in their use of the formats.

In this section, the eighteen to thirty year olds have explained that the reunion tour helps them to authenticate their fandom. The next chapter shows that the use of material formats is also employed in this way to authenticate their fandom as vinyl and CDs are the closest they can get to physically grasping the past in their hands.

5.4) Conclusion

This chapter carried on from the last chapter by showing how the social status of the participants discussed in the last chapter and their preference for older music is in part informed by the structures of feeling. The particular structure of feeling experienced by the generation unit of younger participants is characterised by a sense of disillusionment with contemporary music. This is an important contribution to the theory of structures of feeling which has not been used in this way before with the concepts of generation units and cultural memory. It is used in this chapter to understand the younger participants' sense that there is no distinctive spirit defining the present time period and contemporary music and so they retreat into vicarious memories and nostalgia for pre-biographical eras. This is emblematic of what I call the 'hauntological structure of feeling'; it is characterised by a longing for a more futuristic and authentic past. In discussing the vicarious memories and nostalgia of the younger participants, this chapter makes an important original empirical contribution to existing empirical research which has so far only focused on the appeal of older music to older populations (Bennett 2000, 2001, 2006, 2009; Bennett and Hodkinson 2012; Bennett and Taylor 2012).

Despite their vicarious memories and nostalgia, the younger participants still felt that they did not “own” the right to older popular music or to the memory of it and this is interpreted here as their inability to adequately grasp the authentic structure of feeling which the original generation of listeners possess by virtue of their actual presence in the time period when their favourite music was released. The younger participants attempt to authenticate their experience by other means such as attending reunion gigs and also as we will see in the next chapter practices such as purchasing material formats such as vinyl and CDs because the older music they listen to was originally released on these formats and it represents a more authentic means of consuming music for them; going to the record shop, buying material formats which are then listened to attentively in a fixed location is considered superior to new modes of consumption such as streaming and downloading and listening on-the-move which are perceived as intangible, cold, fleeting and inauthentic practices.

These very technologies which are seen as inauthentic are simultaneously credited at the same time with facilitating access to and even encouraging the consumption of older music but the participants prefer to then buy the material formats for the bands and artists they really admire. Again, the formats used are representative of authentic and highbrow taste and capital for this particular generation unit of participants. They perceive themselves as exercising agency in terms of their choice of technologies but subsequently in their use of technologies their agency appears to atrophy as they make direct correlations between the form of particular technologies and the way it makes them listen and/or remember. It is to these technological matters that we now turn in the next chapter.

Chapter Six: The Technological Determinism of Retro and Hauntology

6.1) Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the pursuit of the authentic structure of feeling through attending reunion gigs and in this chapter this idea is extended to the purchase and use of material formats. Older material formats are seen as symbolic of the more futuristic and authentic pre-biographical past and to listen to material formats in a fixed location appears to represent a more authentic way to listen to music for the younger generation unit in particular. It is argued that because the discography of music is so easily accessible now it becomes more difficult to use musical taste and memory as a form of capital and so attending reunion gigs and buying material formats becomes more important in terms of acquiring and expressing capital for this particular group. There is thus an immaterial and material dimension to the debate in this chapter with the older material formats being perceived as more authentic and more likely to maintain memory and the immaterial being viewed as inauthentic and more likely to hasten amnesia. However, there is a paradox here in the sense that new immaterial technologies such as the internet were actually perceived simultaneously (in the last chapter, for instance) as enabling and encouraging the memory and consumption of older music by providing access to it.

So, in addition to the last two chapters, the retreat into vicarious memories and retro culture by this generation unit is facilitated not just by the changing generational relationships discussed in chapter four and the structure of feeling discussed in chapter five but also by new technologies. This is the key original contribution of the research to show how technology and culture intersect in facilitating cultural memory and retro culture through an empirical study of music listeners. Technological artefacts are

cultural artefacts and so technology is an inherent part of retro culture and cultural memory. The various reasons for the younger participants' retreat into the past cannot be separated out. For instance, in chapter four the reason the older participants shared music with their peers was partly due to the lack of technological devices at their disposal and the lack of access to music while young participants have been shown to have had a surplus of technological devices at their disposal and much greater access to music from a young age courtesy of the internet.

I argue that there is a technological determinist angle to all of this and this chapter looks at how technologies influence the way people listen and remember and particularly how new technologies enable and encourage retro culture and vicarious memories. However, it is soft technological determinism in particular that is used because the participants claim they exercise agency by choosing to use old material formats. It is concluded, however, that despite this claim to agency, the listening and remembering processes actually appear to be highly influenced by the form of the technologies in question once the participants have chosen to use a particular technology. This is apparent, for instance, when participants make comments claiming that "the internet has made [people] very spoilt" (Fiona, [24]). I address soft technological determinism, then, in relation to materiality and immateriality on a number of issues in this chapter, namely, agency, listening practices, ownership, memories and amnesia finding that material formats are considered more authentic and more likely to heighten memory.

6.2) Empirically Explaining Technological Determinism in Relation to Retro and Hauntology

6.2.1 Technological Determinism and Cultural Memory in the Cultural Milieu of Glut/Clot versus the Cultural Milieu of Dearth and Delay

In this section I argue that the preference exhibited by the younger participants for the particular genre of rock and indie music from the particular era of the 1960s to the 1980s proceeds not simply from structures of feeling and generational relationships but also from new technologies. Indeed, it is the argument here that the structure of feeling that there is no Now and the inability to even hear new distinctive sounds, as discussed in the previous chapter, partly arises from not just the changing generational relationships of chapter four but from new technologies.

As was shown at the end of the last chapter, technology is intimately involved in the shaping of the structure of feeling in terms, for instance, of administering a technologically mediated presence even though this was perceived by the participants as ultimately falling short of actual presence at a concert. Going to the reunion concerts and using material formats were strategies employed in order to authenticate fandom in a way that a technologically mediated presence supposedly could not. However, the point about a technologically mediated presence is important because it relates to the issue of 'access' and access was a key reason cited by participants when pressed about why they were so interested in older music. This was obviously sometimes in addition to having influential older siblings and parents. However, in some cases where participants such as Sarah and Laura, as mentioned in chapter five section 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 respectively, discovered music through YouTube recommendations it is the case that the software is arguably replacing influential family figures and peers in influencing the music listened to. Technology thus has a hand in shaping the structure of feeling.

The influence of technology in shaping the structure of feeling for the older age group is evident, for instance, in the older participants' comments in chapter four when they report having limited and often shared technological devices on which to play music while also referencing the cultural economy of dearth and delay associated with material culture (for instance, Christine's comments in chapter four section 4.2.1 regarding only being able to afford three or four albums for bartering). This inaccessibility of music and shared devices means the older participants typically listened collectively with their peers and also tended to listen to contemporary music because older music was not so instantly available. This chimes with Bannister's (2006: 126) comments in chapter one about how difficult it would have been to find a "classic 1960s Velvet Underground album in 1980s Manchester or New Zealand." By comparison, the younger generation unit featured here have grown up with multiple technological devices at their disposal and also music from all time periods has been instantly available to them from a much younger age than the older participants. There is thus a tendency reported to simply listen to older music because it is there.

This tendency to listen to older music simply because of access was cited by many participants. For instance, Julie [29] comments on this particular issue in the quote below. Julie is from a working class area in inner city Dublin and commented in her interview on her lack of confidence in downloading music because she did not have the skills to do so. Her reasons for continuing to purchase material formats are therefore at odds with some of the other participants who choose to buy material formats even though they know how to download. Julie does have an MP3 player but she imports the content from her CDs to this. She speculates in her comment below that the internet and in particular YouTube and also the media are all responsible for younger people's

interest in older music. Her point about the media gives credence perhaps to Bennett's (2009) suggestion as mentioned in chapter one concerning 'prestige-granting' institutions such as Classic Rock magazine which promote older music. Ciara makes similar points concerning 'access' when asked why she thinks some younger people listen to older music. Her comment suggests that YouTube has become so pervasive that she cannot even remember how people sourced music prior to the internet and YouTube as she says "how did [our parents' generation] even know what music was out without the internet?":

Why do you think people are interested in older bands?

I'd say...the internet, you know, and YouTube would be very much influential on people. ...you'd even see, like, youngsters wearing [The Beatles] t-shirts and they weren't even thought of at the time...and I think...it's kinda hard to know where they're getting the influences from but it could be YouTube...probably a lot is the media as well (Julie, [29])

Why do you think some people our age are interested in the past then?

I think maybe cos we've got so much access to everything, like, everything imaginable and we have everything...we kind of have things [our parents] didn't have. I mean how did they even know about what music was out without the internet? And they didn't even have YouTube and they just had *The Rolling Stone* [magazine]... (Ciara, [25])

I argue that these comments illustrate an element of determinism in relation to technologies, particularly the claim that the internet directly influences the music people listen to. There is a direct correlation made by the participants in the comments above between the internet and people listening to older music. I sought to test this further in the interviews directly asking people to compare the experience of downloading and streaming to purchasing material formats as there was a resemblance to determinism in Reynolds' (2011) and Fisher's (2014) work despite them not directly referring to the perspective and I wanted to test this. For instance, Reynolds (2011: 75)

queries whether young artists can still produce original music when they have a wealth of musical influences available at their fingertips. He comments on the ‘cultural economy of dearth and delay’ cultivated by material formats which were not so readily available and which thus created a slower and more paced cultural milieu. The drip-feed of information in the cultural economy of dearth and delay, Reynolds (2011: 74) contends, allowed more time for it to be processed and enough time to mount anticipation before the next instalment whereas now the consumer is said to face a constant barrage of information which ultimately leads to a more distracted and disenchanted experience. He calls the contemporary environment created by the internet ‘glut/clot’ and claims that the wealth of information available tends to curb the emergence of new music or at least makes it more difficult for new music to be heard because it must compete with a vast back catalogue of popular music. I perceive this to resemble McLuhan’s technological determinism because it mirrors his view that technologies engender a particular type of cultural environment.

Fisher (2011a) similarly claims that new technologies have fostered a ‘cultural slowdown’ since the turn of the twenty-first century. Like Reynolds (2011), Fisher (2011b) finds that the internet has created a structureless non-time zone which has breathed new life into older music as he states that there is a crisis of “overavailability” because nothing dies anymore as it is inevitably resurrected on YouTube. This leads both authors to conclude that the internet manifests a cluttered popular musical landscape in which new artists must vie to be heard with older music. What I add to Reynolds’ (2011) and Fisher’s (2014) work is an empirical focus on consumers and a theoretical contribution in terms of my blending of techno-cultural approaches to comprehend retro and hauntology. Reynolds and Fisher, by contrast, focus on

producers and artists and their texts stem from a journalistic premise. My view is that through its ability to make the past so present, the internet has equipped consumers, such as the generation unit of millennials, with vicarious cultural memories and nostalgia and has made it harder for them to hear new music.

To get back to the data then, in terms of access and listening to older music because it is so widely available, Martha commented on the impossibility of keeping up with contemporary music. She discusses how she thinks it will be difficult for new artists to have the same longevity as older artists who made their name in previous times in a much less clogged landscape. She goes on to say that she believes the internet has altered the value of music because one can access so many different genres of music from so many different eras instantly. She contrasts this with times before the internet when music was scarce and so it was more easily remembered and perhaps more valued:

Do you think the music that's out now will continue into forty or fifty years?

...it's hard to answer, but there's so much coverage of every band now that it's so hard to be the one that's remembered...it's in a much bigger pool now...

...you said about the amount of people that are out there now but you also mentioned earlier about the increased access that we have on YouTube and that to bands so do you think having all that access to music, has that changed the way you use music in any way?

Value-wise...probably. I mean I can go on the internet and get all sorts of music from all sorts of genres instantly. It's not like you just find them magically, you know what I mean, or in a great moment you come across a band and you really like them. It's like you can look for them, find them, and get all the bands they were influenced by and all the bands that they're gigging with at this time so there's loads of access to it. I suppose in the past maybe there would've been less access, you would've seen what was on the TV if you had a TV and you only would've heard what was on the radio and maybe catch the name of the band and went to the effort of going to the record store and taking out the money to pay for that record. Now it's not like that so I suppose there is a different value. I think having a favourite band is harder now than it was in the sixties just cos you have

so many bands and I think that's...a lot of people collect songs now rather than bands cos of all the different songs they can access (Martha, [19])

There are a number of interesting points to make about Martha's comments. Firstly, there is the issue of new artists potentially losing some of their urgency by being so available. There is also a sense that new artists may never even be heard because there is so much competition not just from other contemporary artists but also from the older established artists and the back catalogue of popular music which now spans decades. There is the sense that a clotted environment has been created which blurs temporal boundaries and makes it more difficult to remember anything or commit to any one artist. Secondly, in stating that it is "harder to be the one that's remembered", Martha implies a connection between over-saturation (glut/clot) and memory. The cultural environment of glut/clot has, in other words, gone hand in hand with a culture of amnesia. There is a paradox here, however, in the sense that though the internet is perceived as heightening memory of the past by providing access to older music, the information acquired through the internet seems to be just as easily forgotten by many of the participants.

Material formats were regarded by most participants as representing a more stable means of preservation than virtual formats. The notion that material formats sustain memories more effectively corresponds with Benjamin's (1999 [1931]) ideas regarding the process of book collecting. Benjamin (1999 [1931]) asserts that tactility is the attribute that creates the material biography resurrected every time the collector sifts through his/her collection. The purpose of the tangible book collection thus stretches far beyond its utilitarian function playing a key role also in memory and identity construction. Similarly, in terms of music, Beer recounts how his CD collection acts as

a portal to the past and to the reservoirs of memories which re-emerge through the personal relationship he possesses with the artefacts:

...I have CDs in my collection that still have stickers on the case from a small independent record store in Derby city centre. These labels bring to mind memories of times spent, during my youth, rifling through the shelves of the store, an experience that is recalled merely through the presence of these sticky labels. These labels also have the price and short messages from the record store staff (about the content of the CD) written on them; this recalls the relations and moments of connection between me and the staff over shared interests in the music. This is without opening up the memories of nights spent dancing to the music, social gatherings where the music was played, or quiet moments of contemplation soundtracked by the volume (Beer 2008b: 75)

In both Beer's (2008b) and Benjamin's (1999 [1931]) examples, physical formats are shown to facilitate the construction of tangible biographies that serve to exhibit the travails and trajectories of our personal histories as well as the socio-cultural movements and events of our collective histories. The memories proceed not solely from the content of the CD or the book but from the unique relations the listener or reader has with the material object. This is perceived here to indicate technological determinism because there is the implication here that the materiality of the CD is the property that is responsible for affording memory construction. This notion that the properties – the materiality and tangibility – of a medium can impact on the user's construction of memory suggests a level of determinism. Like for Benjamin and Beer, then, tangibility was a key facet for many in this project of their relationship with their music collection not least for the memory construction it enables. For instance, Ian comments on the ephemerality of music in immaterial form despite the fact that it is permanently available and can be re-accessed so easily. His point is that each time an MP3 file is re-downloaded it is not the same one as before and so there is something more impersonal and detached about MP3 files for Ian than material formats. Julie and

Derek likewise commented on the personal quality of material formats as being a key reason for their continued purchase of them:

You did mention someone scrolling through an iPod and seeing that you like all these bands...why are you buying the CD when you have the file?

...You get about four or five years out of an MP3 player and then it's void...the battery is worn away on it and it's not going to work anymore but you can have that same CD that you got when you were ten and you can have that when you're fifty but that individual MP3 file, it's been refreshed so many different times on so many different iPods as you go through the years as each one falls into water or gets lost or gets stolen...it's like these are the specific individual engravings on the song that I've been listening to for thirty years, this is *the* CD, this is *the* one that my girlfriend bought me when I was fifteen, you know, this isn't the MP3 file that my girlfriend bought me or downloaded for me when I was fifteen. ...Computers and MP3 players - they're built in obsolescence. They come, they go...CDs, vinyl records, tapes - they last. Obviously they can be destroyed but only by physical means...you can download [the song] as many times as you want, you can re-download it to your account as many times as you want cos you've paid for it already but then it's like 'what did I pay for?' Like I can lose it and get it back at no cost so what did I buy? Did I buy anything?...It's like with iTunes what they're doing is they're allowing you to listen to a song whereas with a CD you own it, it's there, can't take it away from you (Ian, [26])

Ian's comment points to a paradox concerning the synchronous permanency and ephemerality of digital data; while music is perpetually available online it is still considered less permanent than the material embodiment of memory in the form of a CD. A single CD and the attendant memories it evokes can survive a lifetime whereas an individual MP3 file is more prone to loss and deletion and while a file may be easily replaceable a memory is not. There is also a point in Ian's comment about the difference between renting or accessing music versus ownership and this point is taken up in more depth in section 6.3 in relation to this particular generation unit of music fans.

While Ian's comment pertains more to personal memories, many of the participants reported that not only was the digital experience more fleeting and unmemorable in

terms of their personal memories, it also hastened their amnesia regarding the memory of the music itself with, for example, Dave and Donal stating that new technologies and methods of listening caused them to forget the sequence and even the names of the tracks on albums leading them to conclude that memory is often a physical phenomenon. Again, these results are interpreted as indicating technological determinism as the participants are making explicit connections between particular formats and the creation of memory and the hastening of amnesia. In the comments below, Dave conceptualises memory as a tangible phenomenon as he compares the experience of buying albums on CD to downloading them. He remembers how he used to spend hours pouring over every lyric and liner note and therefore had a stronger memory of the albums that he purchased on material formats. He contrasts this with albums that he has downloaded in recent years such as *In Rainbows* by Radiohead and comments that because there was no booklet to accompany this MP3 file he cannot even remember the names of the tracks on the album. Likewise, Donal, in the comment below, refers to his inability to remember the names of songs on albums that he has downloaded:

You mentioned you have all your CDs in a storage place is it?

...memory isn't always as easy as just hearing something; it is physical things as well so having some things to look back on and flick through...the introduction of MP3 players is really, it's been bad for music cos if you asked me 'what's the fourth track on *In Rainbows*?' I wouldn't be able to tell you cos my MP3 player's in my pocket when I'm listening to it. I couldn't tell you the names of any of the tracks of any of the albums that I've listened to in the last few years cos I don't sit there looking at the thing the whole time whereas if you're listening to a CD you have that moment where you flick through it...you have to take it out of the CD so therefore you look at it and there's more of a memory...I could name most of the tracks on the older Radiohead CDs that I actually would have had but now with downloaded albums no...in terms of learning the names of tracks, looking up names on a Wiki page you just look at it once, you're not sitting there leafing through the lyrics with the little booklet. I think that's more, the time spent, the time that was invested, is a little bit more perhaps and you would've done that maybe the first five or six times you listened to the CD... (Dave, [27])

Do you miss any of [the artwork] with the iPod?

Not really. It's a different thing. What I've noticed is when I was a kid and you had an album you knew, you'd let the album play, you know, all one side of an album, flick it over and put on the other side of the album on and you knew all the names of the songs and you knew the running order of them and stuff like that but now you just know 'track one' and 'track two' and you wouldn't know the names of them, you're not really that concerned really (Donal, [49])

The participants make a direct connection between immaterial technologies and amnesia. This links to the sensorial aspect of McLuhan's technological determinist perspective. In his work, McLuhan traced a genealogy of technologies from the tribal age to the electronic age highlighting how the defining technology of a particular time period not only facilitated a specific type of cultural terrain but also stimulated specific senses. For example, the book is said to engage one specific sense (sight) in order to digest content and so it promotes the creation of an individualised culture due to the solitary nature of reading (McLuhan 1964: 31). Television, on the other hand, stimulates a multi-sensorial experience (sight and sound) which prompts non-linear thought because it creates a terrain in which many events take place simultaneously (McLuhan 1964: 22). It could be argued that this process has continued into the digital age due to the internet's further advancement of non-linear thought through the stimulation of multiple senses at once with, for example, the distracted twenty-first century inhabitant listening to music on YouTube while writing an essay on Microsoft Word while simultaneously checking their emails. I argue, then, that from this perspective of determinism, the environment of 'glut/clot' also leads to a sensorial experience of 'glut/clot' in which nothing can be remembered. Simply, excess information creates a distracted experience because there is simply too much information vying for our attention all at once and so we potentially end up remembering nothing. It is worth noting also that many of the participants reported that

they multi-tasked when listening to music in immaterial form online or on their MP3 player whereas listening to material formats seemed to court a more attentive listening experience perhaps because it is used less frequently now by the participants even though it is preferred. It is perhaps considered a novelty, then, by participants and becomes more of an “event” (Jack in section 6.3.1) and is appreciated more. This is discussed in more depth in the listening section in 6.3.1. In sum, the argument from the determinist perspective is that different technologies enable and encourage certain types of sensorial experiences and cultural environments.

It is apparent from the comments above that the common sentiment is that immaterial formats prompt amnesia but yet some of what the participants say seems to belie this. For instance, in the last chapter it is clear that many of the participants actually obtained their vicarious memories from the internet and that the internet shaped the hauntological spirit so perhaps it is more a case of the participants wanting to portray themselves as preferring material formats in the aim of demonstrating more highbrow taste and a higher level of capital. Most of the participants did not actually buy material formats very often as they could not afford to but they did report buying material formats for the artists that they liked the most because immaterial practices such as streaming and downloading are considered inferior to material formats. It is perhaps because the immaterial is used every day that it is considered as more commonplace and less special. The participants speak about mobile listening technologies and online listening as a form of convenience listening. For instance, Jason compares listening to music on his MP3 player to the consumption of convenience food stating it is “often taken but rarely enjoyed” in section 6.3.1. Listening online and to MP3 players is regarded as a supplementary form of listening despite these being the technologies that

are used on a daily basis. However, as already stated, the participants contradict themselves at times in the interviews because it is the case that many in the previous chapter reported that they acquired their vicarious memories from reading about the background context of music online. I thus wish to punctuate this section with a comment from Steve who despite being a vinyl collector maintained that the internet actually heightened memory creation.

Steve revealed in his interview that for “ethical reasons” he had never downloaded anything. He argued that artists do not get paid enough money from downloads and streams compared to the sales of material formats in the past. As a result, he continued to purchase CDs and imported the content to his MP3 player. However, vinyl was his favourite format, an interest which he had inherited from his father and he also spoke in his interview about how vinyl records facilitated a greater memory of pre-biographical eras permitting him to tap into the authentic structure of feeling to an extent. He found especially that sifting through his father’s vinyl records from the 1970s provided a portal almost into a bygone era like James says in section 6.3.1. At the same time, however, Steve explained how the internet facilitated memory by affording an opportunity for greater research of the background context of music and, as a result, enabled the ability to ‘remember’ far more than in times past. He states, for instance, in the comment below that through researching the album *Rumours* by Fleetwood Mac online he learned about the internal conflicts that were raging in the band during the production of the album and that this gave him a greater memory and knowledge of the production of the album and enabled him to hear it in greater context whereas in times past he would not have had such easy access to this information:

And what music websites do you use?

...if I'm looking up a band, I'd use [Last.FM] to see what they sound like, or Wikipedia to look up their history cos I think it gives some context, like, say, if I now listen to *Rumours* [by Fleetwood Mac], for example, I know that there was a lot of in-fighting at the time that can give a kind of a rawer edge. I can kind of know that it'll impact on the music. I can know that they were at each other's throats so I think it is important... (Steve, [18])

As I stated though, Steve, at the same time also claimed that material formats heightened his memory of pre-biographical eras. Participants thus seem to contradict themselves at times. The general point, however, is that they prefer material formats. The next section therefore comes back to the point that this is a very specific and select group of people with very particular ideas about what constitutes taste and capital and this does not simply apply to content but to the formats used. The next section therefore expands on this idea of the generation unit of retro fans and why they prefer listening to older music on material formats rather than immaterial formats. I refer to a number of themes such as listening, ownership, attempts to physically grasp the pre-biographical past, and death, to do this and I also examine the gendered aspect of record collecting.

6.3) Popular Musical Capital in the Digital Era

In this section I draw the key argument together showing that this particular generation unit of white, mostly middle class, students possess particular ideas concerning taste and capital which extend not just to the genre and era of music listened to but also the formats used. This generation unit of younger participants are shown in this section to use material formats as a means to tap into and connect to previous time periods through not just listening to older music but through listening to it using the formats on which it was originally released and listening to it in a fixed location attentively as they imagine the original generation of listeners did. The participants could easily download this music for free and in minutes and listen to it on-the-move but yet there is a desire

to make the time and effort to purchase material formats from physical shops, and then to listen to these formats attentively in a fixed location. It appears, then, that for the participants the purchase of and the practice of listening to material formats is a means of remembering a previous time period and temporarily inhabiting that time period or at least attempting to connect to that time period which for them holds more authenticity and a higher level of capital. Firstly, however, I wish to comment on the role of agency in selecting which formats to use in relation to soft determinism.

6.3.1a) Agency and Soft Technological Determinism

The younger participants perceive their decision to use material formats as demonstrative of their agency. Soft determinism is thus applicable as it offers a more nuanced approach than hard determinism by suggesting that users have a certain level of agency in their engagement with technologies. Because using older formats is perceived as an active choice, it seems that the use of immaterial formats is perceived to be symbolic of an unthinking consumer who is completely controlled. However, two of the participants, namely, Fiona and Amanda give a more nuanced account of this where they demonstrate how the use of immaterial formats is not completely a choice for them. For instance, Fiona who is from a working class background in Kildare makes the point that though she is an avid downloader she had always purchased her favourite artists' CDs because she likes to keep them as "part of history" and as a physical record of their music and her life but she laments that this is sometimes not a possibility anymore because CD singles have been phased out of production.

Amanda similarly mentions how she has only grudgingly made the switch to downloading music herself because she feels it would be "ridiculous" at this point to travel into town and "pay fifteen euro for something which [she] could get in minutes

for free.” Likewise, she refers to her friend who similarly feels it would be ridiculous to pay for CDs and so he downloads the music he wants in MP3 format and then burns it to a CD because he cannot let go of the material format. He still actually wants to listen to music on CD. This suggests a level of determinism in which technology rampantly progresses and is adopted by people even those who do not want to adopt it but feel they have no choice because either the technology they want is unavailable in Fiona’s case or it is too expensive especially when there is a free option available. There is the issue as well in Amanda’s case of being from a working class background and therefore perhaps possessing more of a tendency to not waste money when there is a free alternative:

Yeah, you mentioned about wanting to find the Darren Hayes CD single?

Yeah and I can’t find it...I know he has a new single, I’ve heard it online but I can’t find it in any music store so needless to say I have to try and find it online which is such a shame cos I’d rather buy a CD, have it, and keep it as a part of history, and now I can’t cos nobody’s selling any and I think that’s a shame (Fiona, [24])

You were saying that you’re ‘nostalgic before your time’ and I was wondering why is that because you still are young?

...everyone else has just adapted to the different format but I haven’t quite done that. I’ve done it a bit grudgingly because I feel it would be ridiculous to have to go into town and pay fifteen euro for something that you could get in minutes for free...I know only one other person my age who sees eye to eye with me on this...He actually downloads things and then burns them onto CD and puts them in a CD player cos he can’t quite let go of the format that he grew up with... (Amanda, [27])

The use of immaterial formats in the cases above was not interpreted as a choice and indeed this was the common sentiment exhibited by the younger participants. However, there are undoubtedly other generation units who choose to use new technologies and pride themselves on owning the latest gadgets. The generation unit featured here, however, viewed themselves as exercising agency only in their purchase and use of

material formats. However, there did not appear to be much agency exercised after the choice to use material formats was made. Instead, the participants speak about the form of the CD and vinyl as having a direct impact on the way they listen to and remember music. Making a direct correlation like this between the form of the technology and its impact does not appear to leave much room for agency but it is nevertheless the participants' view that they are active in their use of material formats. I have just been discussing determinism and agency in relation to the use of immaterial and material formats. I now want to go on to delineate the various themes emerging from the participants' explanations of why they prefer material formats.

This generation unit of retro fans explained that they preferred listening to older music on material formats because: (1) it was the "proper" (Steve) way to listen and it contributed to a heightened listening and memory experience, (2) they provided the participants with a greater sense of ownership which again contributed to memory and a more tangible experience. It is contrasted to accessing music in immaterial form which is depicted as cold, fleeting and unmemorable, (3) it enables them to tap into pre-biographical eras. I also reflect here on the gendered aspect of record collecting, (4) they provide a mnemonic device through which the participants will be remembered by other people in the future. The participants express a desire to be remembered for their "good taste" (Joanna) which perhaps sums up the self-awareness of this generation unit and their expression of taste and capital that even after death they would like to be remembered for these attributes.

The next section addresses the first theme of listening contrasting the participants' views on listening to music on material formats versus immaterial formats and listening in a fixed location versus listening on-the-go.

6.3.1b) Listening

There is a proper procedure for taking advantage of any investment.
Music, for example. Buying a CD is an investment.
To get the maximum you must

LISTEN TO IT FOR THE FIRST TIME UNDER OPTIMUM CONDITIONS.

Not in your car or on a portable player through a headset.
Take it home.
Get rid of all distractions, (even her or him).
Turn off your cell phone.
Turn off everything that rings or beeps or rattles or whistles.
Make yourself comfortable.
Play your CD.
LISTEN all the way through.
Think about what you got.
Think about who would appreciate the investment.
Decide if there is someone to share this with.
Turn it on again.
Enjoy yourself.

These notes, taken from the promotional clip for Gil Scott-Heron's 2010 album, *I'm New Here*, highlight the tendency of some to exalt the protocols of "proper", and perhaps more traditional, listening "procedures." This trend is further evinced in the recent resurgence of interest in vinyl (IFPI 2014) and the new phenomenon of 'record clubs' where music listeners convene for uninterrupted and attentive album appreciation (see, for instance, David Sillito's (2011) BBC Arts article for a detailed explanation of the trend). It is as if there is a 'proper' way to engage with the technological format of the CD and/or the vinyl record and a 'proper' way to listen. This stance is reflected in the participants' comments. For instance, Steve suggests that there is a 'proper' and superior way to listen to music, that is, a way that tends to be

associated with older music formats that had to be listened to in a fixed location even though he had his MP3 player with him and his headphones around his neck as we spoke:

Could you compare the experience of listening to a CD or record to listening on-the-go?

...you're supposed to sit down and listen to [music]. You're not meant to listen to it walking down the street... (Steve, [18])

Steve's comment characterises listening to music on-the-move as a supplementary and 'improper' method of listening. The participants in general preferred the more ritualistic and "committed" (Jack) method of listening to material formats in fixed locations. The participants typically characterised the listening experience associated with older physical formats as more gratifying and enriching than listening to music on-the-move on an MP3 player or even on a computer in a fixed location. This sentiment commonly seemed to originate firstly from the ritual of sourcing a vinyl record in a shop, removing the vinyl from its sleeve or the CD from its case, lifting up the lid of the vinyl or CD player, dropping the stylus onto the correct point on the record or selecting the track on the CD, all of which involved more effort than a few simple clicks on a computer or an MP3 player. This, in turn, apparently led to a more attentive and "committed" listening experience because when he listens to music on vinyl he is more likely to be "engaged" with the music paying more attention to the words whereas he tends to multi-task and become more distracted if he is listening to music on his computer:

And what [albums] are those?

They are *Animals*, which is a great album, and *Wish You Were Here* [by Pink Floyd] and I listen to them when I...you actually have to prepare yourself to listen

to them. Like you actually have to clear your space and stuff and put it on the vinyl player so...

And do you like vinyl as a format?

Oh yeah...I just think it's a lot more passionate. The fact that it's properly stamped and you can see the grooves and you can feel the grooves and I like the crackle when you start it up and, like I said, it takes a long time to set it up. I've all my music on a computer so I just go and click and I can listen to it but with vinyl...I've to lift up the lid and then put it in, make sure the sleeves are ok and everything and then properly put it on the point that I want it and so...and the whole fact that you can't readily pause it, you know, just say if someone comes into the room, you can't just, like, it's not just, like, pause it, you're more committed, that's it, that's the word you're more committed to listening to it than if it's... it's much better on vinyl. I'd enjoy the music a lot more, you know. I'd engage with it a lot more. I'd listen to the words a lot more cos if I'm listening to music on the computer I'm definitely gonna be doing something else but with vinyl that's all I'm doing. I'm strictly just listening to it so... (Jack, [19])

Jack spoke about listening to vinyl as an 'event' of sorts in the comment above stating that it is necessary to "prepare" for the vinyl listening experience. This idea is carried on in other comments by John, for instance, who similarly stated that to listen to music on vinyl was more of an "event" while listening to songs on the radio was, by comparison, a casual process. Amanda also echoes these views about the non-event of music streaming. In her comments it seems that there is no ritual to downloading or streaming and it is simply a more transient, anti-climactic and unmemorable experience even though streaming music is her most common method of music consumption today for convenience. She acknowledges that her sentiments are "elitist" but nevertheless maintains her view that being able to access any music she wants instantly has taken away some of the fun involved in finding new music in the past and meeting others who liked the same music. She points to the amount of work that goes into producing an album and the impact that it used to have on perhaps a generation and laments that in her view this cannot happen anymore because of the availability of music. In her view the accessibility of music and the ability to listen anywhere and anytime lessens its

value. She punctuates by remarking that when one had to put in more effort to find the music they wanted that they would do nothing else but listen to it persistently for a period of time afterwards making it a more special and memorable experience:

What way do you really use music now?

I mostly listen online really. I don't listen to nearly as much music as I used to and when I do it tends to be music that I already own, you know.

Why is that?

I don't really know, I mean, I think in a way the downloading, the way that downloading kinda changed music culture and the way people listen to music kind of, kind of changed my feelings about music in a way. I mean it's totally elitist, I know it is, but I mean it really used to be something that, something that people really related to one another over and it used to be something that, a collector's thing and it was such a, even the effort that it took to find things just meant that it just meant more to you basically. I mean not everyone, I mean probably nobody, or very few people would agree with me, certainly people of my own age, but that's just the way I felt about it at the time and I kinda felt everything was instantly available there was no fun in finding things anymore, you know?

...would you still use a lot of the record shops?

No, I mean, like I say, I don't really listen to that much new stuff now so and when I do it tends to be online and it's very fleeting. Like, say, I'll have a song in my head and I'll have an urge to hear it and then I'll go home and listen to it and then my urge is gone and that's more or less it. It's not like, if you think of the amount of work that goes into an album and the massive significance an album can have on a culture, on a whole generation, you know... I mean it's such a huge thing and to just be able to press a button and have it... I mean it's just so wrong, you know? If you actually had to go and search for it and it was such a discovery and when you got it you would actually do nothing else but sit down and listen to it (Amanda, [27])

These comments by Jack and Amanda, I argue, relate to the desire to connect to a previous time period and attain authenticity and capital. Amanda's comments here are representative of the many participants who favoured fixed listening methods and material formats. Her process of "discovery" relates to the way others spoke about buying material formats as a "journey" (Jason). Jason compares accessing music online to the consumption of convenience food which ultimately fails to sustain the consumer

in the long term. It appears that one would receive more sustenance from the “journey”, as Jason puts it, or the process of “discovery”, as Amanda puts it, involved in persevering with an album. Simply, the roughage of an album contrasts to the sugar rush of the pick ‘n’ mix style modern music diet constituted not of whole albums but of individual hits from various artists. Jason perceives it as a genuine craft to go through the more arduous process of sourcing the material album in a shop and returning home to listen to it in full and persevere with it. This is perceived as involving more commitment and effort than downloading individual songs:

But why [do you not download]? I mean you’ve got all this music there...

Yeah, but it’s cos you miss the whole journey then cos you’re just picking a song from here and there and you’re not getting all the songs. I mean it’s like, put it this way, right, it’s like the pizza cos it’s like *now* you’re buying the fifteen minute pizza and you just shove it in the oven, you eat it, and it’s gone but *before* it was, you were going out getting the ingredients to make the pizza... The albums were the ingredients and you were getting all the albums, like, you’d get all that band’s albums... (Jason, [27])

Some of the other participants, such as Fiona and Martin, expounded on this issue of the ‘journey’ and the process of ‘discovery’ by referring to the attendant element of surprise which they explain is a key facet involved in the purchase of the material album format. Consumers never quite knew what the experience would entail nor where they would reside emotionally when the stylus slipped into the run out groove on the record and this was part of the appeal. As Martin puts it, purchasing a vinyl album was akin to purchasing a “lucky bag” meaning it was filled with mystery and unknown pleasures. It seems that the MP3 consumer is, by comparison, perceived to follow a preordained path entering into an exchange always knowing what the outcome will be as he/she tends to download the one individual song they desire having listened to it multiple times on YouTube already. Fiona similarly comments on how in times past

one had to purchase a full album often just to obtain the one song that they liked and that, in a rather perverse way, this was perhaps more rewarding in the end as they would subsequently find other songs on the album that they also liked. She regrets that in an era of heightened access to music on the internet people have become “spoilt.” This comment suggests a high level of determinism as Fiona makes a direct connection between the internet and people becoming less appreciative of music stating “[the internet] has made them very spoilt”:

Yeah and you’ve mentioned the cover artwork and that, have you any particular favourites?

No, not really just there’s no particular favourite. It’s just you’d never know if there was something wrote on the inner sleeve or, I don’t know, it was like buying a lucky bag when you bought an album cos you wouldn’t know exactly what was on it (Martin, [48])

Do you think...has the internet [impacted how you listen]

I’d say it has, a certain aspect of it, yeah, cos people... what’s the word for it... say you went and you bought a cereal box... they used to have toys in cereal boxes, and you’d want the toy, you’d buy the cereal even if you didn’t like it cos you wanted the toy and in that way you’d buy the album cos you liked the song and then you’d find other songs you might like. I think the internet has given people...there’s a word for it and there’s an expression for it...like a quick-fix, it’s made them that they’re very spoilt, that they get whatever they want if they want it and then that’s it. There’s no... it’s like “ok, I want that, I’ll get it”, there’s no “I have to get this to get that” and therefore and in that way I miss that, I miss that you’d have to buy a whole album to get a song you liked (Fiona, [24])

From the comments above, it is clear that the participants privileged listening to the whole album rather than individual songs and, again, this came up when Fiona and Paul spoke about how they found themselves distracted when they listened to music on their MP3 players. They also both claim that they feel compelled to skip songs when they listen on their MP3 players. For example, Fiona reflects on how iTunes causes her to skip songs without giving them the opportunity to impress whereas she claims that she used to listen patiently to the entire album when she listened to CDs even if she may

have initially purchased it for one particular song. Similarly, Paul – who is from a middle class area in Dublin and had an older brother who he says influenced his taste in music - found that he could no longer maintain concentration since acquiring an MP3 player and instead found himself compelled to spend the duration of each song scrolling through his collection in order to choose the next song:

And so did you ever feel the need to collect all the stuff?

...it's the fact that they put songs on albums that you don't always hear. 'Scandal' [by Queen] was a song on [their *The Miracle* LP] that not everybody knows but I think you appreciate it more. Sometimes you have to listen to the whole album and, like I mean, iTunes is great in the sense that, yeah, you can pick the songs you like but you might not necessarily pick all the songs cos you think 'no, I don't like the name of that song' or 'that looks stupid' or 'the beginning of that sounds stupid' but whereas with an album you would've let it play, you wouldn't have skipped, you wouldn't really skip to the songs you like...more likely you'd let the whole thing play and you'd hear something you like more than others

Do you prefer listening to albums then?

Yeah, cos I remember Brandy had an album where her first song was 'Interlude' and it starts off with, I don't know if the song is 'The Boy is Mine' or 'Never Say Never', and if you don't listen to 'Interlude', you can listen to the second song first but 'Interlude' actually has music at the beginning of it that fits with the next song so if you listen to it in order it actually suits the whole thing so in that way that's cool rather than have it on random and pick out songs (Fiona, [24])

So would you be inclined to make playlists or do you prefer to listen to albums in full?

...I find I'll select one song and then spend my time flicking looking for the follow-up and I could end up even just playing thirty seconds of one song and then clicking on another... (Paul, [26])

Fiona's comments highlight the plight of the album format in the twenty-first century with websites such as iTunes and YouTube offering consumers the option to purchase or access individual album tracks as opposed to the full album. She comments on the fact that when one had to purchase an entire album to obtain one song they would then subsequently find other songs that they liked such as the little-known single 'Scandal'

which she found on Queen's *The Miracle* album which she had to purchase on CD back in the early 2000s in order to get the other little-known song 'Was It All Worth It?' which she had heard a snippet of on a TV documentary about Queen. However, in the days before broadband access there was no way to acquire the song but through purchasing the material format. Though this may have been cumbersome it actually worked out profitable as she discovered she liked other songs on the album with 'Scandal' becoming one of her favourite songs of all time. She also explains that the proclivity to download and stream songs individually also potentially disrupts the narrative of concept albums such as Brandy's album which she explains worked as a whole with each song tending to segue into the next.

This disruption of the concept album by new practices such as streaming and downloading has prompted, for example, Pink Floyd to attempt to combat the fickleness of consumers in the digital age by taking legal action to ensure that their albums can only be legally downloaded in full (Garvey 2010) while it has prompted Ash to sample releasing a song a month rather than an album (Murray 2009). Both Fiona's and Paul's comments point to a form of boredom brought on by an abundance of choice and so Paul finds himself flicking impatiently through the sea of available music files never settling for more than one minute on any one song while, conversely, a participant in Kibby's (2009: 437) work stated that they now became easily "bored" by the limited quantity of music on a CD and, as such, preferred to have the opportunity to pick and choose songs at will. This suggests that if consumers are not bored by choice then they are bored by lack of choice which is a point picked up on by Reynolds (2011: 74-75). Internet optimists might interpret the ability to pick and choose positively finding that it indicates a new era of consumer empowerment but Fiona

points to the downside of this development, namely, the impact on an entire art form, that is, the album and, more specifically, the concept album. All of this is taken up by Reynolds in his ‘tl dl’ point which he explains thus:

...a flighty state of distraction is the appropriate response to the superabundance of choices. The horrifying (to a writer) meme ‘tl dr’ (too long, didn’t read) has yet to be joined by ‘tl dl’ and ‘tl dw’ (too long, didn’t listen; too long didn’t watch), but it can only be a matter of time, because as many of us can attest, we’re already at the point of, for instance, dragging the scroll bar ahead when checking out a video on YouTube. Attention-deficit disorder is the name of this condition, but like so many ailments and dysfunctions under late capitalism, the source of the disorder is not internal to the sufferer, not his or her fault; it’s caused by the environment, in this case the datascape. Our attention is dispersed, tantalised, teased. So far there is no real equivalent in music to skim-reading; you can’t speed up listening itself ... But you can listen while doing other things: reading a book or magazine, or surfing the Web. Carr’s ‘shallows’ refers to the experiential thinness of music or literature consumed in this multitasking fashion, the fainter imprint it leaves on our minds and hearts. (Reynolds 2011: 73)

To take the viewpoint that the ‘datascape’ is *causing* distraction and impatience is to take a determinist-influenced stance. It is my view that in all of the participant comments above there is a level of this determinism at play as people suggest that various technologies have influenced their listening habits in various ways from Amanda’s claims that downloading has “changed music culture”, through Fiona’s comments that the internet has “made people very spoilt”, and on to Paul’s comments that he song-hops while listening to music on the MP3 player.

In this section, the participants suggest that there is a proper and superior way to listen to music; it is their view that listening to a material album in its entirety in a fixed location is the best way to listen to music. It is said to produce a more memorable and committed experience. These views pertain to this particular generation unit featured here and their specific ideas about what composes taste and capital. Other generation units would possibly take the view that immaterial forms of music are superior and

would possibly appreciate the newfound ability to pick and choose which songs to listen to. The generation unit here are much like the music connoisseurs in Bannister's work who fetishise music and this carries on into their attitude to renting music on streaming sites versus owning a material collection. The next section probes this particular topic of ownership.

6.3.1c) Ownership

The fetishising of commodities for their materiality, packaging, and artwork hinges on the exchange of money and so the concept would seem rather problematic in the digital age where music is increasingly obtained in the form of illegal and intangible MP3 files or in the form of listening on free streaming sites such as YouTube. As music in this form is typically not paid for it would not seem to circulate in the same value economy as tangible music products such as CDs, vinyl records, and tapes. The involvement of money automatically alters our relationship to items because when we purchase an item we become owners of it and by owning the product we subsequently possess power over it - an idea that is bolstered by the notion of 'consumer rights'. The relationship between music and money has existed for hundreds of years at least but the conversion of music into a material commodity through recording technologies was a process unique to the twentieth century and this caused changes, according to Attali, to the way in which music was listened to, valued and appreciated:

... [the] function of music gradually dissolves when the locus of music changes, when people begin to listen to it in silence and exchange it for money. There then emerges a battle for the purchase and sale of power, a political economy... (Attali 1985 [1977]: 26)

From this viewpoint, the introduction of money alters our relationship to music transforming it into a product that we buy and own. Indeed, many of the participants

exhibited a preference for the physical format as they felt that it provided a greater sense of ‘ownership’ than a digital collection. This, in turn, created a feeling of security which was seemingly absent in the practice of downloading with Ian characterising the practice of downloading as being rather akin to the perilous position of a tenant engaged in the act of ‘renting’ music. Steve similarly preferred to be the ‘owner’ of the music as he highlighted the ephemeral nature of MP3 files and their susceptibility to loss and accidental deletion. The participants perceive ownership as a more desirable state than renting music which, again, likely correlates to the particular generation unit that they emanate from:

And just when you can get it...all the content that you buy, you can get for free...

I know but I wouldn’t feel like I’m owning it if you get me...cos, like, the hard drive could just break down... (Steve, [18])

Do you generally buy CDs now or what way do you get music?

When I do go out and buy a physical album it’s because I want to physically own the object, feel it in my hand and appreciate it fully. An album is a whole package – the size, shape, weight, feel of the case, the rendering of the artwork, the colour of the CD – it all adds to the overall experience. (Ciara, [25])

These findings correspond to Cunningham et al.’s (2004: 7) observation that a collection of MP3 files does not rouse the same “sense of ownership” that a physical music collection does which, in turn, is a key facet of Benjamin’s (1999 [1931]: 69) work in which he states that “ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have to objects.” Sarah provided an interesting point of departure on this topic, however, conceiving of MP3 files as tangible. It was streaming sites that Sarah had an issue with as she viewed them in much the same way as Ian had viewed downloads, that is to say that she conceived of downloads as physical entities that she owned

whereas she conceived of streamed music as merely an intangible sound that she had no “connection” to:

Just about the physical format and that and, say, the format and artwork, do you like the cover artwork and booklet or would you access that information online?

If I’m looking for cover artwork, I like to have it...if I wanted to look at the artwork I wouldn’t look it up online. If I really wanted to look at it I would buy the album instead of looking it up online because I like to have the book in front of me. It’s like that with anything - reading articles for college or whatever I like to have the actual physical format as opposed to an eBook or whatever. ...

What is it do you think about the tangible thing then? What is it that’s different?

...it’s like people like owning stuff. I like having, for example, I have a ridiculous amount of books, I like having them, I like owning them. I think people would be like that with CDs as well. It’s just like owning and having part of it. Downloading isn’t as disposable as streaming because although it is disposable, you do still have, albeit just files, so it’s only just a bit of binary at the end of the day but you still actually have it. Like I have an external hard drive full of music so if I lost my external hard drive I would lose all my music collection so it is... I do have... I do ... my music collection is connected to my external hard drive so I do have the physical form of it albeit just a black box with a USB connector so whereas if I’m streaming it I don’t have anything, it’s just nothing, it’s just bytes online. I don’t have *any* connection to it. (Sarah, [22])

Sarah’s statement that she feels she does not “have anything” when she streams music points to the persistent desire to ‘own’ commodities whether in material or immaterial form despite the internet providing access to most of these products. Simply, in all of the comments in the listening and ownership sections the participants suggest that there is a much more intimate connection and memorable experience enjoyed with material formats. In the next section, I look at how the material format is perceived to be a portal into the pre-biographical past as it is considered to be symbolic of the more authentic time period that the participants wish to connect to. The gender aspect to all of the discussion in section 6.3 is also reflected on.

6.3.1d) Material Formats as a Portal to the Past

As I said at the start of section 6.3, this generation unit of younger participants use material formats as a means to tap into and connect to the structure of feeling of previous time periods through listening to older music on material formats because these are the formats on which it was originally released. The participants do this as a means of attempting to connect to a time period that they perceive to be more authentic and futuristic due to their nostalgia for the future and which they also believe communicates a higher level of capital. For instance, James values the degradation of sound quality, the scuffed sticker prices and the writing on the sleeves of his father's old records. This is a point which Ciara also mentioned when talking about her mother's Queen records which were emblazoned with messages such as "Mary loves Freddie." Ciara remarked that this helped her to "remember" her mother's youth in more depth. Like Ciara's mother, James refers to his father as having written his name on the inside sleeve of his records. He also shares the view that having these original records serves as a stronger link to the past than buying newly pressed records today. Vinyl is appreciated by these participants as a mechanism for restoring the romance of the past. Like a form of canned atmosphere, this format represented the closest one could get to physically grasping the structure of feeling of those unlived eras:

And would the music then that your parents listened to have had an influence?

...I love going through my da's old records, it's all mostly his stuff so, and he's got all the price stickers still stuck on them still or it's embossed onto the cover and he's even got his name written inside some of the sleeves...and you kind of, it serves as a better link to the past I suppose than a CD of Rory Gallagher or whoever would or especially than an MP3 file would cos, you know, like, that stuff wasn't originally brought out on CD so it was really on vinyl so when you pick up a vinyl record now and especially one from back then, that was bought back then, you can imagine when you look at it, you can imagine more what it was like... (James, [20])

James finds that his father's old vinyl records serve as a portal to the era in question more strongly than if he looked the music up online or purchased it on CD even. Analogue formats such as vinyl are particular susceptible to the vagaries of time and it was this depreciation of condition that made James cherish the worn LPs even more. It is as if the cultural memory of the 1970s is a tactile phenomenon ingrained in the patina of the record. As I said in chapter four, there is a masculine quality to the music discussed here but also to this discussion of formats. Again, Ciara is unusual in the sense that she refers to her mother's record collection but, as I said in chapter four, perhaps her being an only child led to her sharing a closer relationship with both of her parents as the three of them appeared to enjoy activities together such as going to see Bruce Springsteen together and conducting the household chores together on a Saturday morning while listening to CDs. It was more common, however, that the exchange of music and formats would occur between fathers and their sons with Steve, Simon and Derek, to take three, inheriting vinyl collections from their fathers and in Simon's case also from one of his uncles. As such, there is a gendered dimension to this topic of material music collections and I will now discuss this in more depth.

The female participants were less likely to engage in the type of obsessive collecting that some of the male participants did. Though they did, like the male participants, generally prefer to purchase a material format for artists they particularly admired they were much more likely to purchase CDs than vinyl. Further, no female participant reported purchasing picture discs or special editions of CDs and records. Fiona's comments below sum up the sceptical attitude more likely to be expressed by female participants:

Would the cover artwork or the imagery ever have been important to you in the music?

As a kid I probably would've looked at something more so because the picture's on the front of it but as an adult I really don't, it would be much more the sound of the music... I remember when Britney Spears' CD came out... I'm so old now... her CD album and her CDs were all different colours so you could have a pink one, a vanilla looking one, all different colours, and everybody in class would be like "oh, I got the pink one", "I got the vanilla one", and as a kid that was great cos you'd be like "oh, I got this one" and "I got that one", I guess like Pokémon cards and "I'm special cos I got this or that" but now I'd say if that happened and Darren Hayes' album was all different colours I would see it probably more as "ok, you're just releasing all these so people go and collect them and waste more money on the same CD." I'd be more cynical than if I was a kid where I'd be like "oh, I want this one and this one and this one" and then you have to think 'well, is that a marketing ploy?' and I just wouldn't be bothered. (Fiona, [24])

Straw (1997) and Reynolds (2011) have speculated on possible reasons for the "gendered, masculinist character of record collecting" (Straw 1997: 4). Reynolds (2011: 101) refers to the work of Susan M. Pearce (1994) to offer a female perspective on the topic. Pearce (1994) found that female participants in her work did collect items such as art, antiques, vintage clothes and dolls but, as Reynolds (2011: 101) comments, she found that the "obsessed, out-of-control, living-to-collect collectors were generally male rather than female." Straw (1997: 5-6), meanwhile, refers to the work of Frederick Baekeland (1994) who confirms Pearce's claim that women collect different types of objects to men, namely, shoes, bags, dresses, perfume – items which tend not to be granted the same prestige as the items which Baekeland claims men collect such as cars, guns, stamps, and records. Indeed, Baekeland (1994: 207) states that the items collected by women tend not to be even labelled 'collections'.

Straw (1997: 15) extends this idea stating that shopping for records is often termed 'record *hunting*' - a phrase which serves to masculinise what would otherwise be perceived as a feminine activity. Straw (1997) concludes that collecting provides an

outlet for men who do not fit the traditional masculine ideals such as physical strength and leadership to construct an alternative form of masculinity premised on knowledge. To compensate for this, they apparently develop an impressive knowledge of their chosen area of cultural expertise and this knowledge functions as an alternative form of masculinity. The material music collection serves as evidence of “homosocial information-mongering which is one underpinning of male power” (Straw 1997: 15). Having this knowledge serves as a form of power which is found more fundamentally in particular genres of music such as the rock and indie music discussed by the participants in this project: “masculinism of popular music as the general valorisation of technical prowess and performative intensity more typically seen to be at its core” (Straw 1997: 15).

Straw’s (1997: 14-15) conclusion appears to explain more why men collect records as opposed to why women do not probably because the lack of female participants in music research tends to make it difficult to ascertain precisely why they appear less inclined to collect records. Here, the prime reason put forth by the female participants tended to be simply that they perceived various editions of the same album to be a marketing ploy though they did appear in the previous chapter just as driven to acquire arcane musical knowledge as their male counterparts contrary to what Straw (1997) claims. Though the female participants refused to buy various editions of the same album most of them did, like the male participants, report possessing affection for material music formats.

I have just been discussing the gender aspect inherent in the participants’ preference for material formats. I now wish to finish by referring to a theme which only five

participants mentioned – Joanna, Dave, Ian, Sharon, and Paul – which demonstrated how the issue of material versus immaterial conservation concerned the participants in terms of how they would be remembered by other people in the future. In communicating a desire to be remembered for what they consumed they demonstrate a level of self-consciousness that suggests they are indeed a select group conscious of how they are perceived and they wish to demonstrate taste and capital in their consumption of music.

6.3.1e) My Regeneration

The final pattern of response in relation to this question of material versus immaterial conservation was that a small but still significant number of participants revealed that they hoped the tangible format would operate as a mnemonic device through which they themselves would be remembered by other people in the future. Attali (1985 [1977]: 101, 126) referred to this process years earlier stating that the “stockpiling of use-time in [recordings] is fundamentally a herald of death”. Simply, people endeavour to deny the power of death by accumulating the artefacts they wish to find the time to cherish but knowingly will never manage to do so. Material formats are in this way commonly employed as an amulet guarding against our own inevitable dissipation. Collecting material goods is, Reynolds (2011: 88) claims, a method of mourning ourselves in advance of our demise as we try to ingrain our memory, energy and being into physical commodities in order to preserve a presence from beyond the grave. A number of participants made explicit comments related to this issue where they revealed a desire to conserve themselves through their material music artefacts commonly stating that the immaterial is too precarious and ephemeral to entrust with the task of administering the afterlife despite the fact that Facebook memorialisations, for example, are a developing phenomenon as documented in Cann’s book *Virtual*

Afterlives: Grieving the Dead in the Twenty-First Century (2014). Joanna, in the comments below, shows that she is already very consciously creating, classifying and preserving herself so future generations will look back and remark on what “good taste” she had:

And why do you persist in buying the few CDs?

...you’d like to think that your children or great grandchildren would take out your CDs and go like ‘oh yeah these are those CD things we read about’, kinda like the way we do with records now in a way, you know?

Yeah, that’s interesting and could you do that, say, with the internet though like, say, leave them the password to your iTunes account or something?

...the chances are your iTunes will disappear cos you know the way if you haven’t logged into your email for so long it closes itself so your iTunes and Facebook and all would probably close up so that’d be gone whereas the CD is there and they’ll remember you through that...I’d like them to listen to the records again and hear that I had good taste and maybe it’d make them think like I said about what life was like [years ago]... (Joanna, [19])

There is thus a desire demonstrated by some of the participants to leave behind material evidence of their existence. Despite the fact that these possessions may subsequently be pawned off at an auction or donated to charity as Ian stated, it seems there is relief in the idea that at least the memory of one’s life has been embodied in some *thing* and will eventually be granted a new life. The intangible, on the other hand, is considered by the participants to be condemned to disappear into the ether, never to be accessed again, leaving no memory of the consumer or evidence that they ever existed. It is perhaps telling, however, of the awareness of taste and capital for this generation unit that they should try to immortalise themselves in commodity form and crave to be remembered for the things they consumed and for their epitaph to declare that they had great taste. The logic to the participants’ sentiments can be understood in the sense that they are music fans and so the formats they used and the music they consumed communicated

their identity, beliefs and values and so this is fittingly the legacy that they wish to pass on.

6.4) Conclusion

This chapter shows how older material formats are seen as emblematic of the more futuristic and authentic pre-biographical past by the younger participants. The accessibility of music through new technologies such as the internet and mobile listening technologies has made it more difficult to use musical taste and knowledge of music as a form of capital because anyone with a broadband connection and the skills to use the internet can access the vast discography of music and reference points. As a result, attending reunion concerts in the last chapter and purchasing material formats such as vinyl and CDs in this chapter, are shown to function as a means of obtaining capital and attaining authenticity for this generation unit. These concerts and formats enable these younger participants to validate their fandom. Prior to attending reunion gigs and using material formats, the participants reported feeling as though they did not own the right to remember older music because they were not alive when the music was contemporary whereas the older participants in this project were. The technologically mediated presence afforded by new technologies such as the internet and YouTube videos appeared to be a poor substitute for actual presence and material formats which enabled them to “physically grasp” (James, [20]) the more authentic pre-biographical past.

There is thus a division here between material and immaterial formats and their relationship to cultural memory and retro culture. While new technologies are typically cited as providing access to the past and encouraging the consumption of older music,

they are regarded as inauthentic and cold and paradoxically more likely to hasten amnesia. Material formats by contrast are viewed as more authentic and more likely to augment memory. There is thus, I argue, a level of soft technological determinism at play where participants view themselves as active in choosing to use particular technologies but yet the way in which they then listen and remember appears to be highly controlled by the form of the technologies used. In addition, it is evident from chapter four, for instance, that the technologies available often influenced the way in which music was listened to with the older participants frequently listening together because there were no personal mobile listening devices until the late 1970s and they were primarily listening to contemporary music partly because the music of the past was not so accessible as it is now through the internet. The structure of feeling of the last chapter is also influenced partly by the technologies available with the internet in this chapter being shown both in this chapter and the previous chapter to create a sense of boredom and disillusionment with the present.

The overarching point is that these techno-cultural factors are inseparable in explaining retro culture and cultural memory in relation to popular music listening. This is where this project makes a key contribution to existing sociological thought as though the topic of retro culture and hauntology has been dealt with in recent years in journalistic work by Reynolds (2011) and Fisher (2014) there is currently a lack of academic research on the topic. The idea to construct a framework comprised of a blend of approaches was instigated in part by Hesmondhalgh's argument suggesting a need to move beyond theoretical purity and one-size fits all theories in order to comprehend musical audiences in the twenty-first century. This thesis therefore represents an

important early attempt to comprehend retro culture through an empirical analysis of a limited and unique sample of both ageing and younger music fans.

Conclusion

This project was particularly interested in understanding how popular music listening relates to cultural memory, particularly through the phenomenon of retro culture and the affordances proffered by the internet and mobile listening technologies. The findings point to a disintegration of generational and temporal boundaries with the younger participants tending to express extensive knowledge of and nostalgia for the music icons, technologies and texts of their parents' youth. It is argued that these participants view this expression of nostalgia as their way of resisting the contemporary modes of consumption and the contemporary artists that have been foisted upon their generation by technological and music industry moguls. Though they are cognisant of the workings of the nostalgia industry, these listeners nevertheless view their reappropriation of twentieth century artists and formats as their way of restoring the romance, utopianism and sense of futurism that they feel has been lost or, rather, stolen from them in an era of downloadable music and reality music TV shows. Thus, in seeking to restore the past these participants are actually seeking to remember the future. The key argument this thesis makes is that the generation unit of millennials featured here wish to connect through music to a generation and time period that is not their own because of their feeling of disenchantment with the present and their nostalgia for the future, their relationships with older generations and also due to new technologies which permit and encourage access to older popular music. The thesis thereby shows how culture and technology intersect in relation to the production of retro culture, that is, the practice of listening to and remembering older popular music.

The thesis argues that though the study of popular music is still commonly connected to youth culture, retro culture is in vogue and has been since the turn of the twenty-first

century and this needs to be addressed more cogently in theoretical and empirical terms. At present, there exists only journalistic work on the topic by Reynolds (2011) and Fisher (2014) and so this project has filled a major gap in existing research by providing the first attempt in academic research to theoretically and empirically illustrate how culture and technology merge to shape cultural memory in relation to music through data gathered from a study of retro fans in the greater Dublin area. There is a dearth of research on popular music in the Irish context and so this research also provides much needed empirical data on the topic.

The findings show that retro culture is the corollary of cultural developments such as the weakening of generational conflict, the continuing production and consumption of popular music by ageing generations, the hauntological structure of feeling of the twenty-first century, and also the result of new technologies such as the internet and mobile listening technologies which facilitate access to and even encourage the consumption of the vast back catalogue of popular music and that these developments shape the cultural memory of music often providing vicarious memories and nostalgia to younger people. In other words, there is a feedback loop between these different elements and this is reflected in the theoretical framework adopted to interpret the findings.

The theoretical framework is composed of three scaffolds (popular music (which intersects with the sociology of youth), memory and technology) and the intersections between these areas are illuminated throughout the thesis. In the first instance, Hesmondhalgh's (2005) 'none of the above' thesis is adopted in order to move on from the subcultural and post-subcultural literature which dominated the sociology of popular music and youth from the mid-twentieth century to the early twenty-first

century. These theories were predicated on the belief that popular music is consumed by collectivities of youth who listen to contemporaneous music. This raised the question for me then of how to conceive of a group of older people listening to older music and a group of younger people also listening to older music. There was also the issue that despite these participants being united by their love of retro culture most of them reported not being members of any musical collectivities. This is where I borrowed from Hesmondhalgh's (2005) idea in order to comprehend this batch of people. The thrust of Hesmondhalgh's (2005) argument is that we should return to structural categories such as gender, class, race and age and examine how they correlate to musical taste. All of these variables are ruminated on in the empirical chapters but age is foregrounded as a very clear split emerged in the different age groups comprising the research sample.

It was profitable then to conceive of the participants as being members of 'generation units' (Mannheim 1993 [1928]) which I interpret in the thesis as being akin to a peer group characterised by a shared social and historical location and their similar responses to that setting. The generation unit of older participants is of white, working class, male and female participants, some of whom are students and some whom are not. These participants generally conversed mostly about the popular music of their youth and, therefore, they possessed very straightforward linear formations of memory. However, it was the younger participants who I came to focus on in greater depth due to the peculiarity of their listening to older popular music and even claiming to possess vicarious memories of and nostalgia for pre-biographical eras represented by older popular music. The younger population is a generation unit composed of white, mostly

middle class male and female students with a penchant for older popular music, that is to say they are fans of retro culture.

On probing the reasons for this penchant for the past, it was found that the younger participants often shared musical tastes and cultural memories with their parents and sometimes with older male siblings. This finding chimes with Bennett's (2000) and Kotarba et al.'s (2013 [2009]) as both explore the intergenerational sharing of musical taste and meanings within the family context. However, the focus of this research was not framed around the family context and nor were the younger participants' reasons for their predilection for older music limited by this context. The younger participants also reported feeling a sense of disenchantment with the popular music of the present which I interpret here as indicating the structure of feeling which cements their generation unit.

The structure of feeling for this generation unit of white middle class students is the sense that "there is no Now" (Fisher 2011b) and, as a result, they retreat into cultural memories of what they consider to be the more futuristic past which is symbolised by older popular music from the mid-to-late twentieth century. As such, the concept of hauntology, which deals with the contradictory longing for a more futuristic past, was consulted to interpret this finding. I also comment on how these sentiments arise potentially from the fact that this generation unit of younger participants is composed of white middle class students who often employ a gendered tone in their comments and who appear to possess a particular type of "cultural taste" (Peterson 1997; see also Bannister 2006) characterised by what they consider old, authentic and highbrow music as distinct from contemporary "mass produced shite", as Dave [27] put it in chapter five

section 5.2.1. These sentiments are extended also to the formats the music is contained on with the participants imputing material formats such as vinyl records and CDs with a level of authenticity, memory, and nostalgia that immaterial forms of music such as streams and MP3 files lacked.

There is a contradiction here, however, in the sense that the younger participants also claimed that the internet in part triggered and enabled their interest in older music. Soft technological determinism is thus employed to reflect the structure and agency dynamic involved in the participants' comments which show that they appear to be guided and influenced on the one hand by the form of the technologies they employ but yet at the same time they perceive themselves as exercising agency in terms of their choice to use particular technologies and to listen to particular texts. Having made their choice, however, on which technologies to use it appears that the process of listening and remembering is strongly influenced by the form of the technology in question as the younger participants associate immaterial formats with a more fleeting experience and with the heightening of amnesia while material formats are associated with a more attentive listening experience and with the heightening of memory. The younger participants would often discover older music online and then subsequently purchase it on a material format for authenticity and memory purposes. Though taste and knowledge of the history of music can still be used as a form of capital it is more difficult to use it in this way in an era where the back catalogue is so accessible. As Amanda [27] put it in chapter four section 4.2.2, she would no longer be impressed if she met someone who liked the same top five albums, artists and singles as she did because this content has become so easily accessible. As a result, what has heightened in capital is arguably the connection to and memory of previous time periods and artists

through attending their reunion concerts and through purchasing their wares on the ‘original’ material formats such as vinyl and CDs.

The central point that the previous discussions come back to is that none of the reasons about changing generational relationships, the zeitgeist of the time period, reunions and new technologies are enough on their own to sufficiently explain the popularity of retro culture and the impact on cultural memory for this sample in the twenty-first century. Instead, there is a need to recognise that it is an inseparable mix of all of these reasons that engenders retro culture and that shapes cultural memory. To return to White’s (1978: 28) comment from chapter two, “a new device merely opens a door; it does not impel one to enter” and so while technology permits access to older popular music there must also be a desire to seek older popular music.

This thesis has thus made a significant original contribution by interconnecting three areas of study (popular music, memory and technology) and highlighting the various interconnected reasons for the popularity of the retro cultural phenomenon for the particular sample of people featured in this thesis. In this project, however, the generation units researched are composed of ageing and younger fans of older popular music drawn from a tertiary level institution in the urban greater Dublin area and so they represent a very limited and specific sample of people who share similar tastes and ideas regarding capital. They are fans of primarily older guitar-based music which is argued to be the preserve of a quasi highbrow minority in terms of the younger participants in particular. Future research could perhaps explore related issues using a more representative sample and also perhaps a sample of ‘digital natives’ born in the

twenty-first century to test whether they have any connection to material music formats and twentieth century popular music.

Appendix I: Research Consent Form

Sample Consent Form

Title of the Study: The Rhythm of Our Lives: Popular Music and Cultural Memory in the Age of the Internet and Retro Culture

Name, Address and Contact Details of Researcher: Jean Hogarty, Department of Sociology, Room 29 Auxilia, NUI Maynooth, Co. Kildare. Telephone (Dept. of Sociology Office): 017083659, Researcher: JEAN.HOGARTY.2011@nuim.ie, Supervisor: Dr. Colin Coulter, colin.coulter@nuim.ie

Purpose of Research Project and Requirements of Participant:

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between popular music and memory. I am organising interviews in which participants will be asked to answer questions about their use of music and music technologies, their favourite songs and what these songs mean to them. The interviews will be approximately one hour long.

Methods of Use, Storage and Disposal

The researcher will use the material from the interviews for analysis in their thesis and follow up academic publications.

The recordings will be stored in a locked cabinet in the Department of Sociology office in the university.

Confidentiality of Data – Who Will Have Access to Data

The data is retained by the researcher in confidence only to be used and accessed by the researcher and their supervisor.

Pseudonyms will be used in the final document

What Will Happen to the Project Results?

The material from the interviews will be used for the thesis and follow up academic publications after completion of the thesis. Again, I emphasise that pseudonyms will be used. Please note that the interviews do not constitute any kind of counselling or medical treatment. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me by contacting the Department of Sociology at 017083659 or by email JEAN.HOGARTY.2011@nuim.ie or by contacting my supervisor Dr. Colin Coulter at colin.coulter@nuim.ie. Thank you for your co-operation.

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process please contact the Secretary of the National University of Ireland Maynooth Ethics committee at research.ethics@nuim.ie. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Participant Signature and Date: _____

Appendix II: Interview Guide

Sample Interview Questions

1. Who is your favourite artist/group and what do they mean to you?
2. Can you tell me how you gathered up their back catalogue?
3. (If applicable) Why do you persist in buying the physical format when you can access all the information online for free?
4. Could you compare the experience of listening to a CD (or tape or record) to listening to music online or on an MP3 player?
5. Would you normally listen to albums in full or would you make playlists or pick out individual songs?
6. (If participants are discussing music from pre-biographical eras and they have not already answered this then ask:
'What kind of images does that music conjure up given that you were not born then?'
(or ask them to elaborate on the memories they may have already been discussing)
Also, at some point ask 'why do you think music from the past is still so popular?'

Those aged over forty:

'Do you listen to music that was produced before you were born?'

'Did you listen to music produced before you were born while you were growing up or was it contemporary music?'

'Why do you think some young people today might listen to music that was out when their parents were coming of age?'

7. Gigs are now populated by many people recording videos and taking pictures to upload to YouTube or their Facebook page and so on. Do you engage in any such practices and if so why? (If not, what is your opinion of these practices? Do you look up such videos and pictures?)
8. What does music in general mean to you?

These questions are asked in every interview but not necessarily in this order. Extra questions will also be asked and will be based on the responses given.

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