

ACID UTOPIANISM: MARK FISHER, ERNST BLOCH
& ONEOHTRIX POINT NEVER
*ESSERS Kasper***Abstract*

How can music help, or enable, us to formulate ways of being and understanding that move beyond our current imaginative constraints? This paper examines the relationship between music, temporality, and political imagination through an analysis of Daniel Lopatin's (Oneohtrix Point Never) album *Again*. The album is brought into dialogue with the work of Ernst Bloch and Mark Fisher. This essay engages with Lopatin's description of his work as a 'speculative autobiography', to reflect on the imaginative and critical relevance of music. I subsequently examine how music can following Mark Fisher, serve as a mode examining unactualized revolutionary potentials from the past. By turning to Fisher however, one quickly runs into theoretical problems regarding temporality, specifically the future. To circumvent these issues I draw on the work of Ernst Bloch, who elaborates a vision of the present as composed of multiple and contradictory temporal layers. Music then becomes a central medium for exploring the non-synchronous existence of time. I conclude that Lopatin's work, when read through Bloch rather than Fisher, demonstrates how musical practice can articulate futural possibilities without being constrained by either nostalgia or a negation of the present.

Keywords: Acid utopianism, music, imagination, political philosophy.

But the note flares out of us, the *heard* note, not the note itself or its
forms. Yet it shows
us our way without alien means, shows us our historically inner path
as a flame in
which not the vibrating air but we ourselves begin to tremble ...

Ernst Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*

What does it mean for music to change the way one perceives the world? What is it specifically about music that allows it to do so? In what manner do the registers of aesthetics and politics relate within the context of musical practice?

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And, more presciently, can we manipulate sound objects to form stipulations of worlds beyond our current imagination? It is at this intersection that the current inquiry sits. The central question which orients the upcoming text is, how can music allow us to formulate ways of being or perceiving that lie beyond our current comprehension?

To provide an entry point into the discussion a specific musical work will be analysed namely the recent record by Daniel Lopatin better known as Oneohtrix Point Never, *Again*. Said album will be examined due to its emphasis on *temporal reconsideration*. Lopatin aims to reinterpret his younger self in order to reenchant his current musical practice. Being an interesting method of speculation on its own accord one has to question how it can acquire political relevancy? Following these considerations Lopatin's work will be brought into dialogue with the work of Mark Fisher, specifically his ruminations on the concept of *acid communism*. It is by means of Fisher that revitalising the past becomes relevant within a political atmosphere, as a way to find unactualized revolutionary potentials. However, whilst being thoroughly occupied with music Fisher neglects a thorough examination of music *as such*, in other words he does not provide a coherent theory of the musical medium. In addition, this lack of conceptualisation causes theoretical problems within Fisher's notion of time. In the interest of examining the intersection between formal qualities of music, temporality and political engagement, the inquiry will turn to the work of Ernst Bloch. Bloch's theories regarding the *nonsynchronism* of the current moment provide the tools to grasp how music relates to time and, subsequently, to political imagination. Within the final part these considerations will be applied to the work of Lopatin, to examine how its methodology stands in relation to the previous authors.

Temporal Re-Consideration in Oneohtrix Point Never's Again

Within the varied oeuvre of electronic composer Daniel Lopatin, one can distinguish a common narrative thread namely a questioning of the relationship between memory and music. When asked in an interview about the nostalgic nature of his work, Lopatin replies:

The past is inarticulate because it's hard to remember. That's a weird function of humanity; we have some capacity from the past, but it's foggy. I am leery toward

nostalgia. I am leery of heightening history so that it would seem better than the present. But an object or an idea, it's all pliable and all things that I can enmesh in this latticework of materials that generate new work.¹

Lopatin's engagement with the past or memory in general, is best exemplified by one of his earliest works *Eccojams Vol. I* which was released under the pseudonym of 'Chuck Person'. The album shows Lopatin's aesthetic approach and its conjunction with memory, as he attempts to critique the ever-accelerating capitalist commodification of technology. *Eccojams* does this by taking pop-songs and drenching them in distortion and reverb. For example, the first song takes Africa's Toto and dismantles it to a mere motif reminiscent of music played in shopping malls.² In this manner Lopatin shows a sense of comfort which is found in the past, whilst also showing the lost futures or speculations that defined those times.³ Despite the groundbreaking and influential nature of his early work⁴ Lopatin has progressed and grown in a direction different from his early years, shifting his attention from lost futures to the revitalisation of the present in the movement of time passing by. The tension between ageing and the present grounds his latest work, *Again*, which will form the focal point of the investigation.

Lopatin's newest record takes a different point of departure, whilst at the same time functioning as a continuation of the occupations that have defined his practice. The terms Lopatin has attributed to this album appear at first glance as strangely contradictory, as he describes it as a *speculative autobiography*. In an attempt to reignite the enchantment of his early fascination with music Lopatin delves into his own musical history.⁵ He states: "In this record, I wanted to investigate [the past] in a speculative way – to imagine that through these other choices, I could have ended up in a

¹ K. Micallef, *Oneohtrix Point Never*, In *Electronic musician* (Vol. 31, Issue 12, pp. 34-37) (2015), Future Publishing Ltd.

² J. J. Jacobson, *Fast Forwarding the Past (on Pause): Daniel Lopatin's Memory Vague and the Hauntological Aesthetic of Vaporwave*, *The Velvet light trap* 90 (2022) 28-37 <doi:10.7560/VLT9004>, p. 30.

³ *Ivi*, p. 30-1.

⁴ Lopatin's work is often described as being fundamental to the development of the vapourwave genre. See: A. Petrusich, op. cit.

⁵ C. S. Pejcha, *The Perennial Reinvention of Oneohtrix Point Never*, *Document Journal*, December 14, 2023. <https://www.documentjournal.com/2023/12/0pnoneohtrix-point-never-opn-interview-again-album-review-nightmare-paint-music-video>.

different place ...".⁶ In this manner the record *differs* from his previous temporal endeavours. Whilst always being engaged with archives and the status of the past⁷ these musical modes of inquiry were oriented towards showing the disenchantment of the current state of things.⁸ Or, in a more hauntological vein, with showing those forms of life which may have been lost.⁹ Taking into account how *Again* is also focused on the past and lost futures, the *orientation* is nevertheless vehemently different from Lopatin's earlier work. *Again* is aimed at revitalising the imagination within the present. Lopatin expresses a burning desire to become a fan once again and consequently builds a sonic dialogue with his younger self. By means of this form Lopatin is able to examine those potential roads lost within time and redeploy the possible modes of expression that lay dormant within his own work. It is an act of the imagination oriented towards *possible* worlds.

One must be wary at this stage as taking the past as a point of departure for musical practice may reinforce a sense of conservatism or a reactionary stance, through the idea of nostalgia. In short, returning to the past to find a *true* idea of how the world should be. Lopatin adds that he does not pursue nostalgia for the sake of it:

I get a lot of people saying 'Your music is so nostalgic,' but I don't agree. I'm interested in memory, in archives, and in preserving things, [but] I've never wanted to go back to the past to capture something better than where I am now.¹⁰

By stressing his reluctance to romanticise the past Lopatin shows an awareness of and an attempt to circumvent a mere repetition of the past in search of a Rousseauian world that once was better.

Lopatin opens music up towards a form of speculation. Nevertheless, one has to examine the *critical relevance* of said speculation. How can it form a counterpoint to our current understanding of the status quo? In other words, can Lopatin's work be extrapolated into a broader political schema to assert its value as a form of critical speculation? The political weight of Lopatin's work can be drawn out by bringing it into dialogue with another author, namely Mark Fisher. Fisher claims that delving through time to *re-articulate*

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ Cfr. A. Petrusich, op.cit.

⁸ J. J. Jacobson, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

specific liberatory modes of being lost to time, is exactly what allows for the construction of political action in the present.¹¹

Sounding Out the Past / Mark Fisher's Acid Communism

In the last pages of his influential work *Capitalist Realism*¹², Fisher begins to reflect upon the nature of opportunism within the current form of capitalism. In the previous sections of the work, however, Fisher was occupied with portraying the pervasiveness of capitalism within the spheres of work, culture and education. Consequently, he deemed capitalism to be an all-encompassing constraint on our cognitive capacities and practical abilities.¹³ Considering the plasticity of the capitalist entity it becomes all the more strange that the final line of his work emphasises that: "From a situation in which nothing can happen, suddenly everything is possible again."¹⁴ At this point Fisher stresses the disproportionately strong political relevance of alternatives to capitalism. Whilst these moments are rare, Fisher states that even the smallest event can *in fact* subvert the current state of things. But, following these passages, one has to wonder how and where one can find and foster such events? In order to grasp Fisher's account of these course-altering events one has to consider a different work of his, namely his unfinished introduction of his to be written work of *Acid Communism*.¹⁵

Fisher's text opens with a quote from Herbert Marcuse, who speaks of " ... a spectre of a world that could be free."¹⁶ The idea behind the quote concerns the constant impeding movement on the side of the capitalist status quo necessary to keep a different order of things at bay.¹⁷ In other words, in contrast to the ever-engulfing cloud of capitalist realism which presents itself as *the* natural state of things, Fisher follows Marcuse in proposing that this subsumption requires a constant form of repression to maintain this ideological edifice.¹⁸ Said theoretical claim has far reaching implications with regard to the understanding of history. The condition of capitalist realism,

¹¹ M. Fisher, *Acid Communism (Unfinished Introduction)*, Essay. In *K-Punk: The Collected and Unpublished Writings of Mark Fisher* (2004-2016), 776–97, Repeater, London 2018, p. 778-82.

¹² Id., *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*, Zero Books, Winchester 2017.

¹³ *Ivi*, p. 16.

¹⁴ *Ivi*, p. 81.

¹⁵ Id., "Acid Communism (Unfinished Introduction)."

¹⁶ *Ivi*, p. 776.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ *Ivi*, p. 777.

mediated by the political project of neoliberalism, did not usher in through ridding itself of those ideologies which were at odds with its own ideas.¹⁹ On the contrary, Fisher states: “neoliberalism is best understood as a project aimed at destroying — to the point of making them unthinkable — the experiments in democratic socialism and libertarian communism ...”.²⁰ The effacement of alternatives resulted in a thorough naturalisation of the capitalist present, or as discussed above, the condition of capitalist realism.²¹ Whilst political in terms of outcome, the capitalist methods to limit the possible alternatives took place mostly within the area of culture. Based on Marcuse’s work Fisher explains that it was specifically the aesthetic dimension that needed to be repressed as those very spaces articulated modes of being which were: “radically incompatible with everyday life under capitalism.”.²² Those very forms will be grasped as the fundamental elements of the political project that Fisher advances in this text.²³

Fisher begins his subterranean historical reading by examining the counterculture of the 60’s and 70’s. Based on the argument sketched above, the capitalist situation *presents* itself as natural whilst it requires constant readjustment and inhibition to maintain itself. So whilst: “the Sixties have come to seem at once like a deep past so exotic and distant that we cannot imagine living in it, and a moment more vivid than now ...”.²⁴ It is nevertheless the case that the formulation of this historical epoch hinges upon the capitalist present. So, the neo-liberal state of things articulates the 60’s in a manner that shows its own birth as a natural progression from said historical situation. As Fisher states: “Those aspects of the counterculture which could be appropriated have been repurposed as precursors of “the new spirit of capitalism”, while those which were incompatible with a world of overwork have been condemned ...”.²⁵ In stark contrast with the natural progression of history, in which neoliberalism appears as the immanent victor, Fisher proposes a re-examination of the cultural atmosphere of the 60’s. And one not as the height of contra-capitalist modes of organising, but as a possible articulation of a world that could be free which still haunts us to this very day. In this vein Fisher introduces the concept of *Acid Communism*, referring to

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² *Ivi*, p.778.

²³ *Ivi*, pp. 781-2.

²⁴ *Ivi*, p. 779.

²⁵ *Ivi*, p. 780.

the spectral entity stemming from the 60's. Moreover, it is informed by the idea that the current social formations are dependent on the repression of other modes of being. Those alternatives seem impossible from the current historical vantage point, nevertheless at another point in time they were graspable. The project Fisher proposes is to reinvigorate those alternatives and, subsequently, to open up their possible transformations.²⁶ For the current inquiry, it is relevant to further examine Fisher's relationship with those latent alternatives, specifically within the realm of music.

Music plays a very significant role within Fisher's argumentation. One could even go as far as to state that it is in music that the new imaginations of alternatives to capitalist realism come to their fullest fruition. Fisher writes on music of the 60's: "music such as this was an active dreaming which arose out of real social and cultural compositions, and which fed back into potent new collectivities, and a new existential atmosphere, which rejected both drudgery and traditional resentments."²⁷ Fisher ascribes two essential characteristics to music of this era. For one, it does not function as a form of bourgeois imagination but comes from the active struggle of the working class. Stemming from this class it can feed back into those classes and provide them with new forms of organisation away from the capitalist status quo. It is these characteristics that Fisher emphasises at various points in his text. Music according to Fisher "... apprehended the anxiety-dream toil of everyday life from a perspective that floated alongside, above or beyond it ..."²⁸ It provided the possibility to articulate a world beyond dreadful repetitive work and explore new landscapes.²⁹ Moreover, it was not fully dominated by the logic of capital so there appeared to be a rift between aesthetics and politics, allowing for the former to express itself in a manner which did not merely replicate the material conditions of the latter.³⁰ Music becomes an active political force in the hands of Fisher. Despite these hauntingly beautiful ruminations Fisher does not fully explicate how music *specifically* is able to bring about these very "... luminous new landscapes ...".³¹ Fisher writes extensively, and positively, about the nature of music within the historical context which he analyses and, in his hands, music becomes a mode of exploring political alternatives. The limitations of Fisher's analysis however,

²⁶ *Ivi*, pp. 781-782.

²⁷ *Ivi*, p.795.

²⁸ *Ivi*, p. 783.

²⁹ *Ivi*, p. 784.

³⁰ *Ivi*, p. 786.

³¹ *Ivi*, p. 784.

come to the fore in his very discussion of music, as he does not discuss *how* music is able to formulate these alternatives. His position lacks an articulation of the sonic and temporal components that constitute the specificity of music as a medium opposed to others. Music is inextricably linked to politics and revolutionary sentiments, however, the actual aspects of music itself which contribute to its political relevance remain unexplored.

Fisher's lack of conceptual clarity regarding music eventually culminates in an inability to explain how it relates to the present and, furthermore, to thoroughly ground a view on temporality as such. Fisher does not fully explain how music works, and moreover, in what way it mitigates between the present and future. Fisher's strange position vis-à-vis time and its relation to politics, is highlighted by McKenzie Wark as she criticises Fisher along these very lines:

There's something too retro about the desire for communism, as if it
wasn't defeated,
again and again. It's a desire to live in a future to a past that history
sliced off, leaving its
scar ... The desire for communism is a desire without the present, a
sacrifice of life now
to a time that did not and can now never come³².

Wark contends that Fisher's desire to articulate a communist project involves a necessary negation of the present. In addition to this, Fisher does not provide a reading of the political weight of music, which depends on a notion of *futurity*. A position ultimately informed by his earlier writings on contemporary music's inability to articulate something radically new.³³ Fisher's analysis hinges upon the explication of music's influence in the present, however as he negates the present and does not engage with the futural dimension of music it remains stagnantly unclear how music creates the possibility of different futures. Fisher's relation to the future becomes clear in his comment on utopia. He states: "Yet "Psychedelic Shack" describes a space that is very definitely collective, that bustles with all the energy of a bazaar. For all its carnivalesque departures from everyday reality, however, this is no remote utopia. It feels like an actual social space, one you

³² M. Wark, *Raving*, Duke University Press, Durham 2023, p.31.

³³ M. Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*. Zero Books, 2014, p. 13-14.

can imagine really existing.”.³⁴ In this manner the conceptualisation of utopia following Fisher remains out of bounds, due to the resistance it shows to engage with the dimension of futurity or beyond. However, it is the futural dimension which shows the critical dimension of utopia. Gary Wilder, for example, elaborates the notion of *concrete utopia* which: “seeks to identify possibilities for radically different arrangements that may already dwell within or be emerging from an actually existing situation. It is at once grounded in the present and is future-oriented.”³⁵ Wilder, in turn, borrows said term from the work of Ernst Bloch whose seminal work *The Spirit of Utopia* thoroughly elaborates on the utopian dimension of music specifically. Positioning Bloch at this juncture may allow for exploration of the specifics of music, its relation to the present and the veritably overflowing utopian possibilities that constitute it.

Non-Synchronous Now's

Fisher's analysis of the political relevance of music is thoroughly mediated by his understanding of the historical moment. Within the context of lost futures, one turns to latent revolutionary moments to reinvigorate the current moment. Bloch's position differs from the former, specifically through his notion of *nonsynchronism*.³⁶

In his essay *Nonsynchronism and the Obligation to Its Dialectics* Bloch opens with a set of spectacular phrases. Namely: “Not all people exist in the same Now. They do so only externally, by virtue of the fact that they may all be seen today. But that does not mean that they are living at the same time with others.”³⁷ Bloch introduces the term of nonsynchronism as an explanation for the temporal discrepancy between groups. Building on Marx' concept of *uneven development* Bloch sees how certain groups developed differently through historical epochs. Consequently, the groups in question continue to operate in accordance with the specific logic of their time, whilst sharing the same present. The social sphere is therefore ridden with temporal contradictions.³⁸ Bloch, in this way, complexifies the orthodox Marxist reading of the contradiction central to society: between labour and capital.

³⁴ Id., “Acid Communism (Unfinished Introduction)”, p. 788.

³⁵ G. Wilder, *Concrete Utopianism : The Politics of Temporality and Solidarity*, Fordham University Press, 2022.

³⁶ E. Bloch and M. Ritter, *Nonsynchronism and the Obligation to Its Dialectics*, *New German Critique*, n. 11 (1977): 22–38. <https://doi.org/10.2307/487802> .

³⁷ *Ivi*, p. 22.

³⁸ G. Wilder, op. cit., p.153

The temporal contradictions do not depend on the central contradiction hence bringing non-or pre-capitalist moments *into* the present, which contradict the status quo.³⁹ The capitalist present thus has a dynamic multilayered temporal structure. A central question ought to now be addressed, namely in what manner do Bloch's meditations on the present moment relate to music?

Bloch paints a picture of reality which is opposed to the concept of identity. The overflowing of the present with contradictions in fact opens us up to what is *not-yet*. Said concept figures heavily within Bloch's writings, referring to a reality which is not yet fully articulated. Following these considerations Bloch builds his own perspective as oriented towards the future.⁴⁰ The present is therefore built up from evolving tensions which produce interstices and fault lines through which something new can come to the surface.⁴¹ In the confrontation with such a contradiction humans have the capacity to imagine the aforementioned 'not-yet'. Contrary to Fisher, Bloch describes a utopian figment which can actualise itself in the foreseeable future.⁴²

Following Bloch said realisation comes to the fore in the experience of *amazement*, an aesthetic experience which in the first instance takes us by surprise. However, secondly it acts as an impulse, a motor behind the construction of a new truth beyond mere representable reality.⁴³ It is precisely in music, according to Bloch, where the experience of amazement or the intrusion of contradiction into the present, can take place.⁴⁴ The prioritisation of music in Bloch's philosophy hinges upon various characteristics of the medium itself. For one, it is difficult to understand it as synchronic due to the fleeting nature of musical performance. Additionally, said temporary existence enhances the immediacy of musical expression and

³⁹ E. Bloch, and M. Ritter, op. cit., p. 22; S. Schuller, *Time Is (Not) out of Joint: Inquiries on Non-Synchronicity in Times of Late Capitalism*, PWD, December 21, 2020. <https://www.philosophy-world-democracy.org/articles-1/time-is-not-out-of-joint>.

⁴⁰ D. Kellner, and H. O'Hara, *Utopia and Marxism in Ernst Bloch*, *New German Critique*, no. 9 (1976): 11–34. <https://doi.org/10.2307/487686>, p. 22-23.

⁴¹ F. Rampinini, *Utopia, Sound, and Matter in Ernst Bloch*, *ESPES. The Slovak Journal of Aesthetics* 12.2 (2023): 125-140, p. 128.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ E. Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press 2000, pp. 191-2; Rampinini, Federico. "Utopia, Sound, and Matter in Ernst Bloch.", p. 129-130.

⁴⁴ Id., *The Spirit of Utopia*, p. 192.

necessitates the engagement of oneself with music.⁴⁵ In this manner one comes to feel the nonsynchronism, and allows for the emergence of utopian imagination. Having laid out the foundations of Bloch's perspective, it is now necessary to relate these reflections on music and sound to Lopatin's work to extrapolate the utopian possibilities of his *temporal collage*.

Sonorous Imagination

The discussion above highlighted a tension within the work of Mark Fisher pertaining to his lack of conceptualisation of music, which in turn affected his understanding of the political valency of music in general. The work of Bloch, however, allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of music and elaborated its futural dimension in a manner that the Fisherian account evaded. How does said lens allow one to (re)evaluate the work that founded the current inquiry, namely Oneohtrix Point Never's *Again?*

At first glance the aim and project of Lopatin seem perfectly in line with the account of Fisher. Considering Fisher's emphasis on the past to reinvigorate action within the present, one can see that Lopatin's examination of his influences to rekindle his own musical practice matches the approach of Fisher. The movement through the past shows the latent potentialities which were not fully actualised within the current state of things, whilst they still haunt the present. As Lopatin states: "I didn't really realise that the fan part of me remains incredibly strong to this day – it's like my router. It's how I determine the music I want to make, anyway, so it was only sensible to go back to that person and interrogate him, spiritually: 'How do we become a fan again?' ".⁴⁶ He acknowledges the presence of his old dream-like imagination within the present, whilst at the same time mentioning the *reconsideration* necessary to draw out its potential. In spite of the resonances, it does not fully cover the breadth and depth of Lopatin's music.

Lopatin builds a sonic world as a form of exploration. However, whilst taking the past as a form of inspiration the composer immediately begins to dismember those very ideas. He states: "I'm not gonna regurgitate old ideas just because they're working. I distrust my own taste".⁴⁷ Said statement is reinforced by the enigmatic chaos and temporal meshwork which defines

⁴⁵ W. Marx and F. Matthes, *The Spirits of Utopia and of Disenchantment: Ernst Bloch, Hope, and Music in the Age of Post-Truth*, in *Edinburgh German Yearbook 13: Music in German Politics/Politics in German Music*, ed. Siobhán Donovan and Maria Euchner (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2022), p. 173.

⁴⁶ Cfr. A. Petrusich, op.cit.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

most of *Again*. For example, on the title track of the album Lopatin composes a structural layering of various synths and oddly pitched piano progressions over one another. Halfway through the piece the temporal crescendos are stacked upon each other in such a way to the point of feeling like one experiences different songs at the same time. In this manner Lopatin is very much in familiar territory, the glitchy composition is quite reminiscent of his earlier work like *R Plus Seven* or *Garden Of Delete*. After the point where all the synths engulf the listener however, Lopatin lays out a subtle and magical melody, which leads us out of the chaotic robotic samples and sounds of the first half. Lopatin in this manner, recomposes his old musical practice and pushes it beyond its own limits where a different sound may unfold. Similar to Bloch's intertwining of amazement and the not-yet, Lopatin through the pulsation of synths shows how his past work is teeming with new possibilities and non-synchronous temporalities. This structure finds another expression in the track *Plastic Antique*, whose title reinforces the malleable or synthetic nature of the past. In this song Lopatin takes on the timbre of a traditional waltz, but submits to an extreme form of temporal restructuring, pushing and stretching the rhythm until something quite alien comes to the fore. The track *Nightmare Paint* builds from a set of beautiful synths to a guitar progression stuck on loop only to later disintegrate into a chopped jungle percussion whilst a vocal sample struggles to work itself into the composition. His emphasis on the glitchy aspects of his compositions allows Lopatin to build an intricate collage, melting different genres, tempos, old and new ideas making each track a meshwork of various contradictions. This is only further reinforced by the fact that the ideas laid out by Lopatin only gain prominence for a brief glimpse, before being torn apart by another idea, or past, which rises to the forefront. Each track is built around such constant contradictions, around the inability of the present to fully coincide with itself. A veritable *temporal collage*.

The haunting music of Lopatin, is closely aligned with the way Ernst Bloch was described above. Bloch's emphasis on *nonsynchronism* showed how he understands reality to be composed of various interweaving and contradicting forms of time, all existing at the same time. Bloch finds a companion in music, as the medium par excellence to explore these non-synchronicities. Through establishing a temporal collage within his work Lopatin causes us to partake within the nonsynchronous nature of music. And as we are directly affected by the sound this partaking begins to extend to reality as such, following Bloch's observations. Accordingly, by reassessing the past forms of his practice Lopatin allows for various intrusions into the

present to take place by highlighting the contradictory nature of time and reality itself. Lopatin thus sets up the various nodes where the future is not yet fully constructed, where a utopian note may unfold itself. In setting out to a speculative autobiography, Lopatin hit on something more profound. Rather than a Fisherian spiralling analysis of the past Lopatin opens up his music for an articulation of the future.

Conclusion

In the work above the relationship between music and the construction of different ways of seeing was examined. Starting with a discussion of Daniel Lopatin's work *Again* the speculative nature of music was introduced. However, whilst valuable in a methodological sense the political aspect of the work had to be established through the work of Mark Fisher. The latter emphasised the relevance of examining the unactualized past for political action. Despite his efforts, Fisher's account does not focus on the nature of music as such. Said neglect is part of a larger problem in Fisher, regarding time. These concerns were addressed by means of Ernst Bloch, whose theory regarding nonsynchronistic present allows for an understanding of music as incorporating various layers of time and providing ground for utopian imagination. In the last part the congruence between Lopatin and Bloch was evaluated, showing the utopian possibility of a temporal collage as introduced by Lopatin, in his recent album *Again*. An aspect which has not been fully addressed, but points to further research, is the *communal* aspect of music. Individual explorations regarding nonsynchronous time are valuable as they can allow for the multilayered present to show itself. The question remains, how does one build a communal project around such aspirations?

