Review: Spook Country

I appreciated *Neuromancer*. But how do I describe William Gibson's book *Spook Country*? There is only one word:

Incomprehensible. Completely incomprehensible.

After two chapters I felt like I needed to do what you had to do with one of those text-based adventure games on PC — get out a pen and scrap paper and draw a map of the plot so I knew where to go in the equivalent semantic darkness of "You see a forest with a path running through it." The plot is probably not insipid or tenuous, is just that I couldn't disentangle it from the thickets of memories, anecdotes, insertions of the landscape into the metaphor of the moment, and words, words, lots of words.

The scene and character descriptions are rich, very rich, but so much so that you don't know what information is important to retain or leave on the page. Taking what you think you need to remember from a scene you realise a couple of chapters later that all Gibson was doing was describing a kitchen appliance or something.   And meanwhile you feel presumptuously narrated into an arc where there's an apparently primary character who feels like a complete stranger.

I think the book is about "locative art" — a form of augmented reality. Which is a cool, and interestingly associated with the virtual reality of *Neuromancer*. And there's a woman that

used to be in a band as one of the characters — although I'm not sure if the band is important. It wasn't by Page 159, which is where I gave up.

Perhaps someone will turn it into a movie. Or five — not sequels, but five completely different whole movies. You wouldn't be able to tell.