

The ontographology of noise.

It may or may not be Kant, Descartes perhaps, but certainly the ghost of Hume, (sic), caused philosophy to attempt to shake itself free of metaphysics, by which we mean extravagant speculation which privileged man, white European Anglo Saxon men, German philosophers, in particular with a divine insight. Metaphysical nonsense masquerading as truth which colonised not only other races, but other cultures, other thoughts with the ability to fabricate a truth around prejudice. The universe was thus, for us, which still lingers, like a dominant virus, in the anthropocentric ideas of Tippler and Barrow et al. The realization that the world is not the centre or man the centre, the Copernican revolution, has continued in science despite all attempts to halt the tide. As the Universe expanded in thought at each point a totality was sought in which humanity could at least have a percentage, though with each paradigm this grew ever smaller. Cantor's work reduced it to nil, but this is still largely ignored for Phallogocentric reasons.

The world event, reality, life world, in many philosophies, for instance Deleuze, is seen as an actualization of a virtual plane, where virtual is a possibility and not a cybernetic emulation or simulation. This plane is infinite, and in terms of conceptual thought moves at infinite speed. And whilst its true that many in the arts have mistaken this for a laissez-faire for their preoccupations nothing could be more mistaken, a mistake the cultural glitterati often make, its romancing of Heidegger for instance. And its true that some contemporary musicians are taken with such philosophies, wrapping tonical exercises in flimsy post-modernist pretence which is in actual fact nothing more than at best good old metaphysics and at worst solipsistic gobbledegook. Only belatedly has philosophy and non philosophy begun to see just what an epistemic gap but more importantly ontological gaps have arisen between science, mathematics and cultural theory and practice, a gap which now many in the arts are falling into, a self centred oblivion of subjectivity. Attempts to corral the expansion of science, even give it the ace philosophical card, Badiou's ontology of set theory, Brassier's heat death nihilism, is at times either naively mistaken or willful selection. The fact, FACT, is that this gulf is so large its not possible to span. A glib nod at Cantor's infinities is not sufficient, he understood these well, and it caused him a psychotic breakdown. Or the end games, infinities and multiverses in which even mathematics has so expanded that the likes of Penrose cant see across the room, he admits to not understanding string theory, whilst artists freely use it in installations.

I'm addressing music here, MUSIC, but this can be equally leveled at other arts, I suppose, let me explain first what I'm attempting to do, to show what the task of art is and that this is both real and possible in a genuine manner. Art like Philosophy and like Science attempts to address the real. If it does not then you can stop listening and go and play in the sand pit. That is, these, art et al. address, interrogate, associate with The Real, the world, the life world, being, being in the world, consciousness, the event, the One, the Other, and so hence the distrust in angels on pin heads, unicorns, spaghetti monsters, father Christmas and the rest of the metaphysical characters now camped in Shrek's swamp, though some are I'm afraid still alive and well and living in the never never land of the arts.

I'll use a very simple example, not an analogy, analogy and metaphor are great but we need something even simpler than hermeneutics, otherwise the children will once again start playing with matches.

An audio CD stores music by patterns of bits, everyone and his dog knows this. Each sample is 16 bits, and each second has 44100 samples, so 16×44100 gives us a second of sound. Multiply by two for stereo, and then by 60, for a minute then by, 74, 74 minutes being the old specification of the maximum duration of an audio CD, you

can go longer these days, but that is unimportant. Multiply $16 \times 44100 \times 2 \times 60 \times 74$ and we get 6265728000. That's bits, and if you convert this to bytes, you get around 740 megabytes, which is about right. You can Wiki all this, knowledge isn't the problem, it's what follows, and what does is that there are 2 to the power 6265728000 possible CDs. In Deleuzian terms you could call this the virtual plane of all possible audio on CD, of which what you find in HMV are realizations, actualizations, events etc. 2 to the 6265728000, is approximately 10 to the 2000000000, is a big number, but not that big, a googolplex is bigger, and Hilbert's Hotel, is infinitely bigger, but we don't need to go there. We needn't bother that the given universe of 10 to the 118 particles is too small to realize all of these potential CDs, all MP3s are also in our universe physically unrealizable. What we now have is the virtual possible real, and the actualized real. If we randomly sample this virtual real we will find that most of its actualizations present themselves to us humans as noise. And this is the problem, why then does what is in HMV in the main, and including the classical and even contemporary 'classical' sections sound like. MUSIC? Well because it was made by men and women intentionally to do so, which seems Okay, but isn't. Out of a possible virtual universe what is actualized in MUSIC is very very very very.. non typical. A tiny minority of events are placed at the centre of our culture, just as the pre-Copernican thinkers placed the earth at the centre of the universe, and Man at its centre. That just wasn't true, and so as a reality neither is the pre-Copernican music, or MUSIC. It has a reality, sure each piece is a real actualization from the virtual, but the virtual here if not infinite is much much larger than all of these actualizations. An audio CD in HMV isn't false, it can't be, just as any statement is a true realization of a virtual possibility, but it's a bad representation from a non prejudicial viewpoint. A view which above we have established is possible, and one that science has worked with since the enlightenment. Of course there is the alternative, privilege the word of man as of God, and the problem is solved, with the sword. But if we want a 'true' picture, which is at best provisional, contingent, even if we can't see the absolute, or something infinitely smaller, 2 to the 6265728000, we can get a handle on its reality. Just as allowing 5 random images to represent to us a desert, a poor sample could show 5 beautiful oases, but a 'truer' picture of the desert would not be a cool oasis, though they exist. Our 'truer' view, random images, of wastes of sand and rock, is not an actualization of the entire desert, but it's more "realistic" in its randomness, even if this realism is contingent, because it lacks a certain egocentrism that a tourist brochure might present, where whole countries are centred on just me and my enjoyment. A random 'picturing' is not prejudicial, even though it lacks completeness, I've simply used what is known in mathematics as the Monte Carlo method in dealing with such monstrous structures as deserts and virtual sound worlds.

The privileging of MUSIC over noise then becomes a distortion of the truth, just as only allowing white males the vote, only white males count, only organized sound counts. A privileging which is racial, sexual, political, which argues that out of two million cars made, one is made just for us, well actually, just for ME. A privileging which is capitalism's commodification of matter, flesh, knowledge and spirit towards the gratification of the individual.

Okay, let's allow in a little noise, John Cage and a few avant gardists. Or allow a token black representative, the truth is that in the sound world's virtual universe noise would predominate MUSIC such that we would need a record shop the size of the galaxy or more, before we found amongst the noise CDs, The White Album. Now the only justification for putting back all the music is to prejudice reality, and to privilege certain art forms on the basis of anthropomorphism. Which is to say the universe exists for us, where us, could be as narrow as me now, my family, tribe, white males or humanity in general. So you don't even find an un-privileged view of humanity in Art and art galleries and its institutions, just as you don't in HMV. You might in the more so called left wing, radical art spaces find some un-ease, though there are

many exceptions to this, especially in the swankier galleries as well as HMV. But the exceptions, and the unease, is everywhere a privileging of colonialism, sexism, racism, exploitation and capitalism. This is why the source of this un-ease is never quite located, as it exists in the privileging of the very things and practices in the gallery performance, pieces of MUSIC, works of art, in the first place.

There is however in contemporary culture something called Noise, and varieties including HARSH NOISE WALL. Now there is an enormous amount of negative prejudice and misunderstanding regarding Noise and HARSH NOISE WALL in particular, even from its adherents. A confusion that it is somehow nihilistic, a commentary, a statement, another oasis, somehow anthropomorphic. Whereas in simple matter of factness it should be obvious from above that Noise and HARSH NOISE WALL in particular, represents the reality of the world, universe, reality, sound world far more than any music or anthropomorphism, no matter why or what, its producers intend or think. This is not to say here, in the first instance, its better, or good, or bad, but it is more "real". It is a 'just' fair, representative 'cultural' sample of the virtual reality. A virtual reality of which the current actual stock is a very small fraction, and should if justified be in most cases noise, and HARSH NOISE WALL at that. What accounts then for the non-representative nature of all the stuff in HMV, even in the classical and contemporary 'classical' sections, is that it is privileged. And what is wrong with that, well nothing, perhaps, but it implies that humanity is privileged and I thought we had dumped this idea post Copernicus? i.e. most of Non Noise is nothing other than metaphysical nonsense masquerading as being meaningful and important, masquerading, and not being representative of reality at all. Modernity argued, and I don't particularly think you have to follow this line, that beauty is truth, and truth is beauty, ergo, from above, HARSH NOISE WALL, is beautiful, it's a more accurate representation of the factuality of the world, a world or universe which we now know is not centred on, and made for humanity. If you don't think this then you need to believe that the 14 billion years of evolution, and 10 to the 118 particles, were made in order for you to hold that privileged belief. Strikes one as even more fantastic than Genesis, in which we only had a garden made for us, it's a fantastic metaphysics or religion, a vast waste of time and space, in order to create 'rhythm and blues',

And given this fundamental nature of noise its not surprising that Darwinian accounts for the privileging of music can also be made. Sound in inorganic nature is noise, tonality is strange, and so marks out the individual, as un-real, super real, the blackbird's song for instance attempts to fill the universe and drown out its virtual multiplicities in favour of the one small bird, in a cosmos which may be infinite. This may sound cute, but its only a replication of a mugging in order to buy new Nike's. Music as a "special case" is a justification for the superiority of MAN and the enslavement and exploitation of everything else, where reality itself is dissolved.

Noise and HARSH NOISE WALL are good examples of truth and reality, so in modernist terms are beautiful, and in lacking privilege, even lacking a denial of critique, is not deconstructable. it is JUSTice, (sic) It is both a Modernist, and Post-Modernist reality. If MUSIC is beautiful, good, truthful, worthy, its because it, its advocates, sees humanity as, in a vast universe, of sound, divinely privileged, in Gods image, why else does it single out such minorities to actualize in a given virtuality. Musicologists and pop-pickers alike are all dreaming of angels dancing on pin heads, wearing Nikes and driving limited edition Fords.

How long before music and the arts wake from THEIR "dogmatic slumbers"?

The ramifications are that the life world, universe can also be an actualization, hence the non specificity of this world, this science, this logic, is atypical. A 10 to the 118

particle universe, gives 2 to the 10 to the 118 possible universes the same size as this, but different.