

Two experiments.

The phenomena of “Noise” in Music has become a topic of interest not only to musicians and their audiences but to wider groups within the arts including philosophical inquiry and even participation ¹. Along with the practices, performances and discussions of “Noise Music” and “Noise” ² other terminologies have been deployed, in particular a re-appearance of the expression “experimental music”. A term that evokes a comparison with scientific procedures, one that might be regarded as confusing or inaccurate if we think music is essentially expressive. If however this “music” or “non-music” is analysed as ‘noise’ it ceases to be an “expression” bound to human phenomena and can be understood as the realisation of “objects” that exist independently of human experience. The ability and relevance in producing such an analysis lies in the link between the digital data in which these new and non-musics are produced and are to be found, and in a radical non-musical exegesis using concepts from computer science. Computer science otherwise known as cybernetics, a term that for Heidegger would replace metaphysics. The consequences of such an analysis are that works in their denial of representation cease to be objects of signification, of something other, and can be regarded as signifieds without meaning. In doing so these works share a commonality with a much greater set of objects, as objects for themselves, or in Kantian terms “*Ding an sich*”. Such objects are of particular interest to a group of philosophers who critique Kantian correlationism and who speculate about materialism and realism not confined to immediate perception ³. This connection between sound works and speculative materialism might appear to be odd as music is essentially a perceptual ‘event’, we hear it. Within what is called by some the musical genre of noise two particular forms and terms for these forms have emerged, Harsh Noise and Harsh Noise Wall (HN and HNW). These works represent an extreme to the extent that their “musicality” has been and continues to be questioned. In Harsh Noise (HN) and Harsh Noise Wall (HNW) the process of signification, of communication, expression, is essentially broken. This breaking in certain instances is deliberate, signalled by statements made regarding the work by creators and critics, but is not necessarily so. A breaking which occurs by methodologies and devices that are employed deliberately or not, that creates “noise” as an unwanted, confusing and obfuscating, that can be recognised by the sheer opacity of the works themselves. The properties of this noise are unwanted in music, and unwanted in communication as they prevent any useful structuring or possibility of articulation within a medium. It follows that Harsh Noise and Harsh Noise Wall’s ontology cannot be expression. The radical conclusion is that HN /HNW makes sense, can be understood and ‘properly’ experienced only when removed from perceptual and representational experience and seen conceptually as part of a set of objects that exist independent of human perception. Harsh Noise and Harsh Noise Wall’s significance lies not in their musicology but in their being part of a matrix of possible “objects” far in excess of human experience and cultural phenomena, they are objects that are to be experienced as part of Quentin Meillassoux’s “Great Outdoors” ⁴.

Anyone not familiar with the ideas associated with the very loose group of philosophers with which Meillassoux is associated will need at minimum to appreciate just one feature of the critique of philosophy they offer. To grossly paraphrase and simplify, they wish to break out of the “transparent cage” ⁵ of Kantian correlationism where objects are only regarded as knowable in relation to human perception. These philosophers, and others ⁶, seek to overcome the restriction instigated by Kant that we cannot know things in themselves but only know our perceptions of them. This is the “transparent cage” they argue that philosophy since Kant has been trapped in, whilst mathematics and the sciences were at liberty to explore objects and events such as the origin of life, the origin of the universe, its eventual end, sub atomic particles, infinitesimals and the ever larger sets of infinities of Cantor. Philosophy

accordingly was in these terms only ever able to appreciate objects as direct perceptions via categories or phenomenological experience, and all of the exotic realities of mathematics and science were lost to it. Philosophy was typified by the self prohibition of itself by Anglo-American positivism or limited to phenomenology and the human condition, experience, and existence. The ontology and practice of Art and especially music should be considered no different in its limiting correlationism as it seems 'obvious' that music cannot exist without its being perceived, music is fundamentally a perceptual 'object'. That may be true, but this is not true of noise, of HN, HNW, of "noise qua noise". "Noise qua noise" can have an ontology independent of human perception.

The English word "experiment" is translated into French as *expérience* and is the word for both the English word 'experiment', and 'experience'. There are certain implications in this that are perhaps more surprising to Anglo-Saxon certitude in the certain and precise difference between 'experience' and 'experiment'. One that if re-evaluated shifts the "concept" of experimental music from something other than the scientific / pseudo-scientific and into the world of experience. In the first instance the experience of the "sensational" in recent post-modern art, but more radically in a genre or non-genre that fails to achieve anything more than experience of particular experiences of the non-generalized - non generalized individual, act, event of music, that has no human limit or even physical limit.

During the 1950s and 60s within descriptions of modern art practice and particularly music, the term "Experimental" became popular ⁷. The use has recently re-surfaced in an attempt to explain, label or provide an account for certain contemporary music which is in actuality not related to this original practice at all. The original use was borrowed from science. Modern Art often "borrowed" not only scientific terminology but also attempted to borrow its methodologies, for example such naive ideas that art was about "discovery", that art was about discovering truths. The term "Experimental" however as borrowed from science is more than inappropriate to the ideas of the avant garde, it simply doesn't work. Karl Popper's ⁸ preferred use of the purpose of an experiment in genuine science is not to supply additional information, more experiences that support a hypothesis, but that the experiment should attempt to invalidate a hypothesis by producing results counter to those which the hypothesis maintains should be the case. In simple terms, Popper's idea was that experiments could not prove a hypothesis but only support the hypothesis. No matter how many positive results are produced from experiments it requires only one experimental outcome that is counter in order to invalidate or at least question the validity of the hypothesis. You only need one black swan to invalidate the "All Swans are white" hypothesis. A hypothesis which has no possible invalidating experiment in Popper's terms was not a scientific hypothesis but a pseudo-scientific hypothesis. Popper's theory has problems of its own but there is a famous misuse of "experiment" in modernity that demonstrates the difficulties with "experimentalism" within the arts. This is the "experimental" work of John Cage's "4'32" and the supposed rejection of the notion of silence. Why music should bother with such ideas as truth propositions is a borrowing from science, and there is a whole history of High Modernist theory which maintains that truth is related to beauty. Theories of truth and beauty in the ideology of "western art" and within modernity have become a capitalization of truth. Truth was regarded as having a value, a survival value, a socio-economic value, a monetary value. These ideas are now no longer as clear or as simple. Modernity's "truth" and "beauty" have been seen to be discredited by the failed social engineering of post-war development and the slow march of minimalism until nothing was left either on the walls or floors of art galleries, that in turn was replaced by naked capital exploitation of the arts in the simplistic sensation and ugliness of the post-moderns. If the Cage work has credentials as in the truth of a hypothesis, "The impossibility of silence" then a refutation would be a simple experiment in which "silence" as an

object is produced. It is important to note the 'position' not only in cultural history of 4'32" but also in that here silence means - the inaudible for humans. Silence in Cagean terms is a correlation between sound or no sound and hearing, conscious hearing. Silence is therefore impossible in Cagean and Kantian terms, the object or non-object of silence is removed from us as in correlationism we can only know via our perception, therefore we can only "hear" likewise, we can only know sound likewise. To perceive non-perception is an impossibility, Cage's hypothesis is "proved" prior to any experiment by the assumption of what music and sound apriori are. Yet as Meillassoux points out science and mathematics can and does have objects that no human can experience, sub atomic particles, The Big Bang, infinities... that can be regarded as real even if removed from human perception. Therefore, there is a silence, the digital zero in a compact disc's data for instance. It is now well known that an audio CD is stored binary data, and so it would not be a surprise to argue that a string of zeros is effectively a cybernetic "silence". However, there are digitally 65536 possible silences on an audio CD ⁹. Any set of numbers where no change occurs is a "silence", the equivalent of an Absolute Zero. In physics absolute zero of the Kelvin scale, is -273.15° Celsius, and 4 minutes 33 seconds is 273 seconds, and maybe this fact tells us the seriousness of Cage's work was not scientific, which could be invalidated by the above, but is something altogether different. So we have I think removed sound from correlationism if not music, and we have shown that some forms of noise are also sound but not music. Within the digital realm, there is not only an absolute silence of zero but many silences. Over sixty-five thousand in the data used for recorded CDs, and elsewhere how many, possibly infinite? The "new" digital media like Riemannian geometry and Cantor's infinities are beginning to find greater realizations and demonstrations of potential objects including sound-objects that were once thought to be possible ¹⁰. The pseudo-scientific authority of High Modernity workers sort to set limits, absolutes of truth and aesthetics just as certain totalizing philosophies and movements did generally in culture; 4'32" is one example. The restriction was of denying our knowledge and experience of the real in favour of propositions, of truth and falsity, right and wrong, the grammatical and the non-grammatical, of good sense rather than bad sense, common sense rather than uncommon sense. The arts became a victim of the possibilities and impossibilities of a philosophy that sort to vindicate science but in fact closed itself and any derivative theories of aesthetics from the outside world. Propositions that have in the arts and music replaced the lived experience with a dead concept e.g. 'There is no such thing as silence' 'Art is Art and nothing else' or dare I say, 'We cannot know these objects as things in themselves'.

This is not a critique of science, but a critique of a certain idea of "experimentalism" in experimental-music, that of a pseudo-scientific doxa, or orthodoxy that has been challenged by the experience of "noise" as experience of a living process rather than a dead or alive hypothesis. One cannot after all live 'hypothetically', life is an engagement, and an engagement with something, once called 'the real'. If the "Common Sense" of Difference and Repetition is applied to the doxa of "Experimental-Music" in the tradition of Cage et. al. then this music fails to be radical, just as it fails to be truly "Scientific", for its doxa is a tradition that already dictates its worth, its outcome from a long tradition of western culture in which music played its part. In institutions - especially of performer, audience, composer, already produced its integrity (towards music, the truth, beauty etc.), on the taken as read idea of "a natural upright thought" ¹¹ the basis of the (unshakeable) cogito, that "opposes the idiot" ¹² and of someone or something (Noise) who opposes "experimental-music" not as a critic might but from the consequences of "an individual full of ill will who does not manage to think either naturally or conceptually" ¹³ who we can fully identify with that diverse group of individuals producing "noise" - a pejorative term that is so apt here. The "group" or groups associated with 'noise' are far from coherent, ranging from philosophers to the mentally ill and criminal, academics and academic dropouts.

Maybe “Experimental Music” is something “that everybody knows [a] “this” that everybody recognizes”¹⁴ and the acceptance of this knowledge of “Experimental Art”, of Modern Art, New Music, in all its forms, has become understood, recognized - even before the event, thus denying the possibility of an event. We are never surprised in any “new” musical event, and what is recognized as “Experimental-Music” and what is then, in all good nature, discussed, is music’s meaning, limits, ground and so on. For the idea (or image- fixed image) of “experimental-music” once fixed, with a logos, a doxa, gains an orthodoxy and so those of ‘good will’ will represent the same (old) image of the new and never repeat the ‘event’ of the new. The representation of the “experimental” lacks any vitality of the ‘thing that appears that no one has ordered’, it is not a Bastard, a stranger arriving unwelcome at the feast, the Alien, or illegal immigrant, the excluded type, the excluded individual the “error” the “they”. The “experimental” has authorities and border guards, such a music is recognized immediately as one of us, it has no capacity to challenge. Experimental Music as that which is (immediately) re-cognized will never be unwelcome - as it is already present, already in our heart and soul, understood, accounted for and effectively inside assimilated into our “being”, it cannot become part of our ‘becoming’, as a becoming of anything new as we already know ‘it’ as the proper word ‘music’ and not some indefinite pronoun. It is not that “IT” which in science fiction comes from outside of our world, from outside of our space, from outside of the safe and respectable spaces provided for musicians to play in. ‘Representation is the heart of democracy’, the endless representation of anything is good democratic thought and deed. “For Kant as for Descartes, it is the identity of the Self in the “I think” that grounds the harmony of all the faculties and their agreement on the form of a supposed same object”¹⁵ so the “experimental” even as ‘pushing the boundaries’ is empire building. “Recognition thus relies upon a subjective principle of collaboration”¹⁶ in Experimental-Music as much with the perceived forces of any occupation - in this case the culture and etiquettes of liberal western democracies. We are safely bound in the self of individualism, we can relax in a liberal understanding that is far more fundamental than any fundamentalism because it is taken for granted that it has the Good sense and the Good will. No one right minded would welcome disease, a thief, the untrustworthy alien or something not comprehensible! So even experimentalism at its most extreme has become already recognized, and as such, those best efforts to be radical and challenging are already anticipated by any audience, and are the heart of the frustration in those musicians and artists who are working with some strange name as a genre, or seeking to challenge an old and proper name. The strategies by some in such thematics as Jarrod Fowler’s “non-musicology” challenge this doxa and parallels Laruelle and Non-philosophy, this is obvious, too obvious. By these and other strategies of challenging the audience via “noise” it may well appear that the translation into experience from experiment frees a practitioner from the orthodoxies of the past century, from the restricted “Blind Alleys” of minimalism or the pseudo-science of conceptual art as tautology,¹⁷ however there appears a new problematic¹⁸.

Consider the move made by Kosuth long ago that is in “music” currently re-gaining an interest as an attempt to free “music” from aesthetics - as described in Seth Kim-Cohen’s “In the Blink of an Ear”,¹⁹ and other practices that Kim-Cohen nicely calls “Non-cochlear Sonic Art”. Such ideas for instance of Peter Osborne’s return to definitions²⁰ through an interest in continental philosophy that would avoid the problematics associated with conceptual art’s association with the Anglo-American analytical tradition. These problematics might just be replaced by those of a philosophy that is “founded” on phenomenologies of Husserl and Heidegger. Here “experience” Vs “experiment” is obvious, clearer still in Deleuze’s attraction not just to Heidegger but also to Nietzsche. And these philosophies in turn are both in question by object oriented philosophies, and are material for Laruelle’s Non-philosophy. Noise as well as music has the danger of becoming failed philosophy or empty self

expression. So thinking the way out of this problem with conceptualist strategies might be as dangerous as the reverse, the adoption of sensation. Historically in the plastic arts, the art form that was conceptual, and so called, collapsed but the name remained and was simply transferred to the sensationalist art of the YBAs and similar works, Jeff Koons et. al. via association with (e.g.) Gilbert and George, Bruce Nauman and Joseph Beuys' pseudo conceptualisms. Conceptual Art might originally have been considered as "thought experiments" in the tradition of Science, especially Physics, was seen so by its practitioners, just as 4'33" was and has become - "seen" for instance in the exhibition at the Diapason Gallery of Non-cochlear sound ²¹ as the origin of "thought experiments" in music. However the experience in the plastic arts post 1970 became less a "phenomenological" or "conceptual" exploration and more an auto-biographic presentation of shock and sensation in and for a new public, a popular art and a source of fame and income for practitioners and super-collectors such as Charles Saatchi, an industry of a "conceptual art" that boiled down both experiment and experience into a 'whatever it means to you is O.K.' typified in the "Sensation" exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1997. Such "phenomenologist" art presents music with the opportunity for an orgy of narcissistic demonstrations and autobiographical exegesis that is yet to happen, though not from want of trying by some 'exponents' of Noise. Such is the 'current state of play' in the arts, one that could be summed up as 'an art of experience' contra to any conceptualism or any experimentalism. The problem as always is of audience and artist. This is the site of what many think is at stake, the position of artist and audience, entertainment, education or something far more radical. However even at its most radical as sensations of perception, such music or noise is still essentially a correlationist event.

The radical move by Quentin Meillassoux 's "Correlationism"- as critique of philosophical thinking from Kant onwards, as being limited by virtue of human categories, has a similarity in the challenging of the idea of an artist centred art in the activities of "musicians" and non performances of artists such as Mattin et. al. Though even this in its "politics" is still a very human enterprise. The more radical idea of Music without sound might sound strange, just as a time before temporality might, or an infinity of not just one but an infinite infinities. I do not suppose for a moment that this difficult - in-human, exo-human space will be popular, yet I do propose a "music" or a "something" there.

The phenomenon of Noise is not one of any coherence (sic)- and its chaotic structures and forms, its ability to both endorse and attack or ignore theory is part of its experiential nature. This might be the experience of failure, failure of its ability to be anything more than noise a failure to establish meaning and so value of any significance, a failure in its opaqueness into perceiving any actual difference between audience and practitioner. Noise is about as easy as it can be in creating a sound; it was after all accidental and unwanted prior to individuals deliberately going out of their way to make it ²². As Vomir's remarks make clear "no dynamics, no change, no development, no ideas" it is a remarkable predicament. That such a state or non-state of affairs is possible is not in any doubt, that philosophy can account for it, I am in no position to say, but it has a direct explanation in computer science. Noise here is simply a signal with no data, typically caused when binary strings lose their context, then instructions will become addresses or data and visa versa. Once context is lost then so is meaning and processing activity, the program will be aborted for attempting to access an illegal address or attempting to perform an illegal instruction. The operating system recognizes this alien activity, and aborts the program. In simple terms, this experiential event is a challenge to the computer system, it is not an anticipated event, it is not a "known" and its threat lies in its lack of any meaning, in its noise.

The second feature of noise is more difficult to explain, and is often confused with contingency and what endless time and randomness will allow or not. In order to explain this feature we will use a finite matrix of possibilities, and here the surprise is nothing will or can be a surprise.

All possible CDs... an audio CD stores music by patterns of bits, each audio sample is 16 bits, and each second of sound 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. The fact you can get longer and different formats is for my purpose irrelevant here. Multiply $16 \times 44100 \times 2 \times 60 \times 74$ and we get 6265728000. That is bits, and if you convert this to bytes, you get around 740 megabytes, that is about right, it is the storage capacity of CDRs. What follows is that there are 2 to the power 6265728000 possible CDs, and no more (in this format). Written mathematically $2^{6265728000}$. What we have done in effect is to create a fixed universe of finite objects. This "thought" experiment although based on real "physical" objects can be treated as a simple mathematical object and so allows us to explore some of the consequences of this object or objects. The important feature is that any finite series is fixed, so greater sized disks, blue ray, whatever, is not significant to the idea, that is in a finite universe there are a finite number of finite objects. Keeping these to binary helps us see this more clearly, so in a "2 bit" universe, (literally a very cheap universe) there are 4 and no more possible objects, 00, 01, 10, 11. Those who know a little maths will see that the expression is quite simple, you have 2 bits - the possibility of all combinations are 2 to the power 2, 2×2 , that is 4, with three bits (a 3 bit universe) you have $2 \times 2 \times 2$, so 8 in total finite objects ... this is 2 to the power 3, with a 4 bit universe 2 to the power 4 objects, with 5 bit 2 to the power 5 objects etc. The size of the bit strings set real limits on the number of possible objects; web pages typically use 24 bits to encode colours, 8 bits for red 8 for blue and 8 for green that gives $256 \times 256 \times 256$ or 16,777,216 possible colours, and no more. In Deleuzian terms, you could call this the "virtual plane", in the case of 2 to the power 6265728000 of all possible audio on CD, and that actual physical CDs are actualizations, intensities in Deleuze's terminology. Actual CDs are not mere copies, re-presentations of the virtual for they have many more properties, many physical properties just as in the Deleuzian Virtual/Real. It is possible to use an actual CD for all kinds of things.... In Laruellean terms this matrix could be regarded as a very small finite model, not clone, of The Generic Matrix as this matrix is a very small subset of bigger possibly infinite matrices. Using this as a model we can "experience" actualities that are physically unlikely for humans if not in practice impossible, for 2 to the power 6265728000, is approximately 10 to the power 2000000000, and although the creation of these CDs yet alone a store to put them in, a Mega Store no doubt, in our universe of 10 to the power 118 particles is not possible, we can still think of the experience of these 'things' despite the woeful lack of matter in our universe that would be needed to create all of these objects²³.

The realization of all the experiences of the thought 'Experiment' of 'All possible CDs' is also an impossibility, but a different one to the actualization of the objects as physical objects. This impossibility is a theoretical impossibility, for although superficially (and logically, simple binary logic at that) the number of objects here is fixed and finite, it does not follow that the number of experiences of these objects is fixed and so also finite. And it is important to note that what speculations, experiences that follow from this trivial (mathematically trivial and scientifically uninteresting) set of finite CDs will be true also of any other larger sets of objects that contain these, for instance the totality of all possible objects whether finite or infinite. The set of all possible CDs we have said is mathematically trivial and scientifically uninteresting; however, it is not for the "musician"²⁴. The set would contain every possible recording in this format, all Sinatra's hits, Bach, Mozart etc. It thus has many

similarities to Borges' *La biblioteca de Babel* ²⁵, however if as Borges indicated this library is a product of randomness ²⁶, the set of CDs is different as it is neither infinite or the product of randomness and contingency, and so it is also not the necessity of contingency that Quentin Meillassoux uses as a source of an Absolute and as potential future God in his recent work ²⁷. I'm not claiming any "originality" for the idea of such a collection, in the Borges' library many volumes can be regarded as nonsense, a literary equivalent to noise - Vomir's "no meaning". The CD collection in comparison to such possibilities as Meillassoux's future deity is trivial, yet it has some interesting properties and differences. One significant difference is as it is a binary matrix it avoids the criticism or "mathematical" difficulties of randomness and contingency. From contingency, even its necessity, and given infinite time, it is still not a necessity for all contingencies to be actualised. Simply put, the famous chimp typing forever need never produce Hamlet, such is probability and randomness that the chimp is allowed to type AAAAAAAAA forever, or miss Hamlet or Shakespeare altogether. No such problems occur in the CD collection, firstly it is finite, and secondly it is all of the possible permutations, it offers, or should offer no surprises. Simplistically my first thought was that most of these CDs would sound like noise, though this might not be so simple, with more thought more properties emerge, for instance not only would Beethoven's Symphonies 1 through 9 be there but also Beethoven's 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th, any recordable "Beethoven" work that both exists or could possibly exist would be present, and that seems very strange. And of course all audio books, in all possible (to record) languages, and presumably all CD ROMs, all computer games and software that would fit on 1 or more CDs would be present. The chimp may never get to Hamlet, but with the 'total number of possible CDs' Hamlet - all recordable Hamlets in CD format - or using 6265728000 bits (or less) would be there. All possible Shakespeare - but again it seems odd as one would think that the total of possible Shakespeare plays would be infinite!? The data on an audio CD is numeric, a CD player interprets, decodes these numbers as sound, but it is possible to decode these in other ways. Given an actual audio CD its common practice to "rip" this data to computer memory and then re-code in other formats, for instance MP3. It is also possible to display this data as an image in some format, Jpeg or Gif, and it is possible to load such data into a word processor or even attempt to execute the data as a program or computer application. For instance a CD of Sinatra's Hits - would or could be loaded as a picture or software - and most times this would be rubbish, unplayable, un-runnable nonsense, or "noise", but there is in principle nothing to say an Audio CD in some operating system, on some playback device, might not happen to be (also !) a computer game or software as well as being a Sinatra L.P. when played on what we call a conventional CD player. The binary data in effect could represent 'anything' representable in binary data. What does this mean? I suspect that any single audio CD has the potential to be an infinity of things captureable in bits, as though the number of bits is fixed - how these are interpreted, and by this I think we mean 'how they are experienced' is not fixed, is not limited and is not finite ²⁸.

This might be seen to mean that knowledge or experience of these (or any) objects is a hopeless task. Kant removes the experience of the thing in itself from us, and by virtue of Derrida amongst many others; the totality of experiences of this "thing" are made infinite. However, I feel here if we once again resort to the trivial nature of our model the situation may not be quite completely like this. Reverting to a "2 bit" universe, 00, 01, 10, 11, we have 4 possible states or 'objects', and following the argument above these give a potential infinity of representations or experiences, for instance 00 could represent the colour red, 01 = green, 10=yellow, 11 = blue, or 00 = CAT, 01 = DOG, 10 = BIRD, 11 = FISH, or 00 = W, 01 = X, 10 = Y, 11 = Z... where W, X, Y, Z, are infinitely variable. Just as above. However in our 2 bit universe the things in themselves are 00, 01, 10, 11, and I see no reason why we cannot perceive or experience them as just that, and as such they are meaningless, they no longer

Notes:

1. In particular Ray Brassier who is associated with the origins of Object Oriented Philosophy has collaborated with the sound artist Mattin and others in both writing about noise and performing with these artists. Ray Brassier, Jean-Luc Guionnet, Seijiro Murayama, Mattin - Idioms and Idiots - audio CD (w.m.o/r, 2010). Free download here <http://freethemusic-olatunji.blogspot.co.uk/2011/02/ray-brassier-jean-luc-guionnet-seijiro.html>

2. The arguments about the status of "Noise" as a musical genre or as an "Anti Music", its uses as a vehicle for political critique, occultism, nihilism and much more are outside of the scope of this text. The phenomenon "bleeds" into Punk, Power Electronics, and other genres. Two forms of noise, Harsh Noise and Harsh Noise Wall, whose origins are in the work amongst others of Sam McKinlay and a French 'practitioner' Vomir, HN and HNW (as they are known) are typified by monolithic blocks of sound and a total rejection of any signification. It is in this form of the phenomenon that particular musicological issues arise that I attempt to expose and explore here. For those unfamiliar with HNW Vomir is perhaps one of the most extreme, describing his work as "no dynamics, no change, no development, no ideas" and in practice can be seen and heard here <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3zeYV4oN2A> . A praxis whose problematics are explored in this text.

3. Speculative Materialism or Speculative Realism, Object Oriented Philosophy Object Oriented Ontology (OOP, OOO) originated in its name of Speculative Materialism from a conference held at Goldsmiths College, University of London in April, 2007. The members of that and others, as the numerous titles above indicate, are not as much a 'group' or 'movement' but philosophers who have an interest in a metaphysical realism as critique of the dominant forms of post-Kantian "correlationist" philosophy. Original conference members being Ray Brassier, Iain Hamilton Grant, Graham Harman and Quentin Meillassoux.

4. "mathematics' ability to discourse about the great outdoors; to discourse about a past where both humanity and life are absent" Quentin Meillassoux, *After finitude*, p.26.

5. *ibid.*, p. 16.

6. The OOO, OOP group is larger than the four above, but also see Adorno e.g. *Lectures on Negative Dialectics* "The programme of 'Back to the things themselves'.... should be carried through, but without replacing the objects with epistemological categories" p. 192 .

7. The term has uses and origins in the mid 20th Century, Pierre Schaeffer's "musique experimentale" Cage's, "experimental action", and a large group of associated musicians - Christian Wolff, Earle Brown, Meredith Monk, Malcolm Goldstein, Morton Feldman, Terry Riley, La Monte Young, Philip Glass, John Cale, Steve Reich, Gavin Bryars, Toshi Ichiyanagi, Cornelius Cardew, John Tilbury, Frederic Rzewski, Keith Rowe et. al.

8. Karl Popper, (1902 -1994) Philosopher of science.

9. Jliat - Still Life #5: 6 Types Of Silence edition xi released: 2000. Also 10 seconds of all 65536 possible silences on audio CD can be downloaded here <http://www.jliat.com/silence/>

10. "The discovery that there can exist logically self-consistent geometries that are different from Euclid's was a landmark. It showed that mathematics was an infinite subject." John Barrow The Book of Nothing p.158 Barrow also shows that there are many different zeros, or null operators. In addition zero is 0, as $4 + 0 = 4$. In multiplication zero is 1! 4×1 is 4. $4 \times 0 = 0$. In multiplication 0 is not a null operator, it has an effect.

11. Difference and Repetition Gilles Deleuze, Paul Patton
Continuum International Publishing Group, 1994 p.170.

12. *ibid.*, p.165 .

13. *ibid.*, p.166 .

14. *ibid.*

15. *ibid.*, p.165.

16. *ibid.*, p.169.

17. Joseph Kosuth 'Art after Philosophy' Studio International October 1969.

18. Strategies outlined in Seth Kim-Cohen's book In the Blink of an Ear: Toward a Non-Cochlear Sonic Art, The work of Mattin, www.mattin.org, Taku Unami, Exhibitions and performances, notably Arika <http://arika.org.uk/> amongst many others.

19. *ibid.*

20. *ibid.*, p. 245.

21. <http://noncochlearsound.com/>

22. There are any number of methods or means to making "noise" from applying distortion to existing sounds, recording noisy processes, using purpose built machines and modified musical devices. All of these require little or no skill, little or no learning. Examples could be as simple as recording radio static, the noise between stations on a F.M. radio caused by interference from electrical circuits and from cosmic radiation. This might be routed through guitar effect pedals or not. Using a computer it's a simple case of downloading Audacity, a free sound editor, using the generate tab to generate noise and then applying the Bass Boost effect, and any others.

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

23. 2 to the power 6265728000 ($2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \dots 6265728000$ times) might seem large, however mathematically its very insignificant. A googol is 1 followed by 100 noughts, and a googolplex is 10 to the power of a googol. This is a much bigger number and still mathematically insignificant. Infinities are 'infinitely' larger. Its possible to create infinities using null sets that forms the basis of Badiou's ontology. Our matrix of 2 to the power 6265728000 is not like this at all, its size is predetermined by the number of bits, and its contents are also pre-determined, there is no process in its formation, it arrives apriori with its contents, they are neither

possibilities or probabilities. For more on this see Rudy Ruckler's book 'Infinity and the Mind'.

24. "Musician" here is more like one who "muses" "to gaze meditatively or wonderingly" as compared to philosophize to "Speculate or theorize about fundamental or serious issues...".

25. Borge's book of 1941, Borges, Jorge Luis. *The Total Library: Non-Fiction 1922-1986*. Allen Lane The Penguin Press, London, 2000. Other similar themes are found in Democritus, Leucippus, Gustav Theodor Fechner, Kurd Lasswitz et. al..

26. From the 1939 essay 'The Total Library': " half-dozen monkeys provided with typewriters would, in a few eternities, produce all the books in the British Museum". In the 1941 book : "A blasphemous sect suggested [...] that all men should juggle letters and symbols until they constructed, by an improbable gift of chance, these canonical books".

27. Meillassoux makes an Absolute from contingency in that the future holds the possibility of a God. Quentin Meillassoux *After Finitude: An Essay On The Necessity Of Contingency*, trans. Ray Brassier (Continuum, 2008) and *Spectral dilemma*, in *Collapse vol. IV : Concept Horror*.

28. I cant help but think of Derrida's infamous "il n'y a pas de hors-texte" from of grammatology, or as expressed in *Signature, Event, Context*: "The semantic horizon that habitually governs the notion of communication is exceeded or punctured by the intervention of writing, that is of a dissemination that cannot be reduced to a polysemia. Writing is read, and "in the last analysis" does not give rise to a hermeneutic deciphering, to the decoding of a meaning or truth." *Signature, Event, Context*, Jacques Derrida, A communication to the Congrès international des Sociétés de philosophie de langue française, Montreal, August 1971.

From *Margins of Philosophy*, tr. Alan Bass, p. 307-330.

(29) See *Of Grammatology* p 23 "the presence of a transcendental signified is effaced.." "Derrida's (trace) is the mark of the absence of a presence [. . .] of the lack at the origin that is the condition of thought and experience." (Spivak, xvii, *Of Grammatology*).

30. These 'objects' are very simple compared to 'real' objects, the objects of that the OOP philosophers might wish to speculate. Graham Harman's objects for instance are far more complex and exotic. However I think we can really think the two bit's universe of 4 possible objects, as they are, as meaningless things in themselves, unlike perhaps the impossibility of thinking or experiencing real objects as they are without the multiple impressions we have of them or they give to us. 2 bit objects are really approachable in a kind of ignorance, such is their simplicity.

31. "The task of philosophy, pace Wittgenstein, would be to say what cannot be said" Adorno *Lectures on Negative Dialectics* p.186. "The philosopher's task is to make the effort required to transcend the concept through the concept itself" p.188.

32. Compare the above with Graham Harman's description of Meillassoux "His strategy is to transform our supposed ignorance of things-in-themselves into an absolute knowledge that they exist without reason.." Harman, Graham, "Meillassoux's Virtual Future" *Continent*. Vol. 1(2):78-91.

33. See 1.207 seconds of noise by James Whitehead & 2.575 seconds of noise by James Whitehead where the work is presented as printed digital data.
<http://www.lulu.com/shop/james-whitehead/2575-seconds-of-noise/paperback/product-15054188.html>
<http://www.lulu.com/shop/james-whitehead/1207-seconds-of-noise/paperback/product-14705022.html>
These are available as free .PDF downloads or as hardcopy.

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