METHODS I: DEVELOPING THORYBOLOGY

The only threats from noise are oblivion and interruption—one of the fundamental devices of all structuring. The goal of this text is to work towards interruption and away from oblivion, to use noise to interrupt the possibility of domination towards oblivion or erasure (a looming political reality). In that effort, along that path, the text will give rise to several theories and hypotheses. These competing theories will rise to the surface of the text as it meanders in a semi-cyclical and repetitive manner only to once again submerge and then possibly reemerge later on. The experimental nature of this textual production meant never knowing the results in advance.

The cracks, edges, fissures, noise, and renegade flows in thought processes, hidden by streamlined or mainstreamed views, methods, and dissemination techniques, are often rendered visible by such experimental actions. It was the goal of this experiment to render visible (or, more appropriately,

1 But what is interrupting? Is not a vector required before a digression can be recognized? And threats to whom and who is threatening? Are we, as humans, the threat, the threatener, or the threatened? Perhaps a nonuniform admixture.
audible) the cracks and fissures within the concept of noise, a concept defined through its cracks and fissures. The notions pulled from these formations of knowledge are indications and symptoms for a theory (hereafter, thorybology), rather than for a dogmatic or apologetic position of the problem of noise experimentation. This project seeks to use noise against dogma, against the systemization of knowledge. And yet it must not seek to systematize itself, to present its articulation of noise as the articulation of noise. This text and the theory it generates (and that generates it) will always remain provisional, indeterminate, incomplete. Rather, this text is guided by the assumption that those that seem diffuse and disparate are linked as elements of a synthesis, but a synthesis that is less concerned with certainty and instead focused on pragmatic results. Without noise, no real creativity. With it, no tight system or consummate human control. Noise, especially in its most effective political articulations, is as a bulwark against the constraints of control (both internal and external) rather than a claim for complete chaos and the breakdown of all systems of meaning and communication. This is a consideration that is often ignored or absent from conventional understandings of noise and its related concepts and will bear repeating.

Noise, as pursued and interrogated by this experimental project, desires to disarticulate, unstitch, or undermine form. That is not to say that this text is without form. As a matter of necessity, it conforms significantly to the rules and guidelines that define an experimental Ph.D. dissertation such that it was able to qualify as one—though modifications have

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2 This is, of course, an impossible choice. One cannot choose creativity over control or vice versa. They exist in an uncertain equilibrium. Certain systems offer more control and others more noise and individuals maintain preferences for systems that mark the balance in terms that they find favorable. As should be apparent given the form and content of this text, I prefer a system with emphasis on creativity and noise and a limitation on efforts toward control but, as should also be apparent, I do not favor the complete abandonment of control or structure in the favor of a constant impenetrable noise state.
since been made. However, even in possessing a form, it will argue against the necessity of specific forms, of formalism. Noise provides a metaphor for the as if of all that is possible yet unthought. Thus noise, as the content of this work of experimentation, also provides the theoretical framework that suggests its anti-formal possibility.

Is this question of noise as disarticulation of form a deliberate misreading of a concept colloquially accepted as simply some version of unwanted or unacceptable sound? Perhaps. This text is based on a distinct process of misreading and quoting out of context (a practice also known as contextomy) as well as an expansive multi/interdisciplinary understanding of “noise.” Noise, as it is provisionally understood here and following, exposes the nonsense in every articulation of sense, but, more relevant for this text, the sense in every nonsense. Noise may seem free to be anything because it cannot be definitively defined as any single thing—its ontology is particularly fraught—but is this part of the ontology of noise or the limitations placed on the concept by ordinary language? Instead, this text highlights the possibility that noise is able to interrupt seemingly fixed and constrained systems of meaning and knowledge, because it exists outside them as ground and remainder. In this sense, noise must strive, by way of the concept, to transcend its concept, to undermine, to change the focus of a remark, of a performance, of a body, in order to reverse altogether the enjoyment (jouissance) we might have taken in it, the meaning we might have given it.

Noise indicates the untruth of identity—the fact that the concept does not exhaust the thing conceived. Indeed, noise, as a concept, highlights this breakdown in a manner that is more elusive in other philosophical concepts. It is thus readily discerned that any conception of noise is inherently limited in its descriptive capacity. Noise is always noise, is always disruptive, even in its own definitions and conceptual framework. There are always exceptions, limits, or caveats to any specific definition of noise. Any single or singular definition of noise is exhausted before describing any noise-as-such,
but echoes of the definitions remain present, dormant, even as the noise-as-such continues on, indifferent to our attempts to grasp it in thought.

The architecture of composition in this text is based in repetition, change, improvisation, nonobjectivity, and contamination. It involved mixing new pages with older writing, cutting up everything to write an as-yet-unimagined future. Perhaps in places, certain fragments seem to follow one another by some affinity—tracing the possibilities of those affinities (as evidenced in the Introduction and Afterword) was a prime motivation for the experiment. But the important thing is that these little networks are not connected, that they not slide into a single enormous network which constructs the structure of the text, its meaning.

Beginnings: let us digress for a moment; let us begin with a swerve (clinamen). Noise is marked and remarked by digression and this text is no exception. This text is not designed to function as an authoritative articulation of noise, a singular or final definition of an elusive concept. Instead, this text is directed at (current or future) practitioners as a how-to book, helping them to find their bearings once they are bogged down in noise, attempting to find patterns, meaning, and coherence in a world indifferent to human convention. Constructing a discourse in this fragmentary manner presents an intriguing problem: How do you find the words (on noise) that are not there? How do you find a noise that cannot exist because there is no noise-as-such, universally or even provisionally agreed upon? How do you make meaning from the meaningless and, once having done so, how do you justify the foundations of that meaning? The effort to contextualize noise is thoroughly

There is no single univocal position articulated in this wilderness. Nor, obviously, can there be whether such a pattern is apophenically recognized or not. While my editorial additions and subtractions do craft this text towards specific positions on noise, noise politics, noise theory, and being-as-noise, my positions continue to grapple with the quoted fragments and the vectors of thought they retain.
alive and extremely changeable. What escapes theorization on noise (including even this experiment) is the impossibility of fixing, once and for all, noise in theory or practice. Even this text, despite its desire and attempts to leave the question and definition of noise open and in flux, will succumb to its limitations, to its formal constraints, and necessarily put forth a constrained and incomplete noise.

Noise is an anti-teleological project; it can never reach an end, is continually in motion and flux, resisting fixity just as the residues of a dream world. The project is thus to learn to write with patterns that function more like music than like concepts (especially the fragmentary remixed assemblages of noise music). It will present its concepts arranged, like poetry, for their generative possibility rather than attempt to pin them down like a butterfly in a collection. This project may never be understood or approach conventional models of understanding. That is a risk of any project in experimental and avant-garde poetics. But misunderstanding need not be feared. Misunderstanding and misrecognition have the potential to generate unthought and unimagined futures. The noise poetics articulated here reclaim (or seek to) misunderstandings (misrecognitions, misquotes, mistakes) as essential to its generative project.

How valid is this experiment or its possible conclusions? The validity of the conclusions is borne out in the efficacy of the project and its ability to open up new lines of thought and flight. The implications of moving from content orientation to problem orientation are profound. Consider the inversions of conventional philosophy in favor of a discourse as a differential field of issues, gaps, and struggles. If philosophy is to remain true to the law of its own form, as the representation of truth and not as a guide to the acquisition of knowledge, then the exercise (or disarticulation) of this form—rather than its anticipation of knowledge—must be accorded due importance. Thorybology, the study of noise, must be as concerned with the form of its pronouncements as it is with their content. Now that thorybology has been defined, has emerged, it oc-
cupies, must continue to occupy, a fecund zone of indiscernibility. Now the truly important thing is to apply thorybological thinking and methods to discover the conditions of life, including those forms and articulations of life that provide the means for coexistence with human and nonhuman others, because we wish to deliver ourselves from the stranglehold of knowledges that root us in the world under fixed authority.

This work, in its effort to be noisy, to incorporate diverse noises on noise, has to develop to the highest degree the art of citing without quotation marks. It knowingly appropriates and mangles the work of others—many, but not all, are works on noise—and presents them (with the assistance of indeterminate processes) as the seeds of thorybology. Its theory is intimately related to that of montage. Noise is not singular but legion. Thorybology is unified but not unitary, because the theory is also intimately occasional; its axioms are semi-stable, but the practice of the theory is utterly dependent on the material available at any given time and revisable upon the availability of new material. Thorybology is a theory for what happens in confusion, when the path forward isn’t obvious. The gambit is that if we construct a place for an insight to appear, it will come. The goal: to cultivate fields where, until now, only madness has reigned. Thus the present text is a speculation on the making of a noise into a theory and praxis prototype: thorybology.

How does one who does not know make theory about a concept that cannot be fully or completely known? Carefully. I do not mean to imply that the way forward will be harmonious or easy. How could it be, courting dissonance as it does? The way forward and the theory to map the way are found by playing the game. Without the proven result of a previously made methodology as a foundation, this text must prove the value of its own result. The resulting writing itself is often improvisational, nomadic, and surfing on the elliptical edge of its own possibility. It is no longer a blank slate seeking a pure or purified definition, but an experimental chamber containing yet other chambers, often unusable, and displaying too much
tendency toward uncertainty. In its most effective articulations, this text abandons restricted forms of knowledge and knowledge production and replaces them with explorative methods, makes usable lost connections of meaning for the new crossroads of thought. When improvising, form is not important. Flux is. This is an intentional point of the text in this case, an example of its noise and the possibilities therein. It is also, however, proof that one should never trust what writers say about their own writings.