And now let us digress in experimentation through a long detour. I draw my argument crookedly, making conceptual detours, drifting in and out of remote subjects, and, occasionally, running into dead-ends. Noise may not be the secret of life, but there may have been no life without it. Noise accepts the risk of being wrongly understood, wrongly interpreted, sanctified, demonized, or else interrupted point-blank, and thus the risk that the discourse can be driven off its course, to inaugurate a dialogue where nothing was planned. I would like to salute the audacity that leads a philosophical utterance to make us desert those dwellings of the mind where reason lives as master, when for an instant astonishment makes reason a guest.

Hospitality, as it is used within this text, is derived from Jacques Derrida’s formulation of the term. It is understood as an openness to and acceptance of the other, of the foreign, of the unknown. An openness without condition to the Other who is received as guest even as the Other arrives without warning. While Derrida did not make the connection to noise fully explicit, Michel Serres’s concept of the parasite (which does) draws much of its theory from the same exploitation of the French term hôte—meaning both guest and host. The extension here from a concept of hospitality to noise is thus not a jump without precedent.
Noise is immersive because there is nothing outside of it and because it is in everything. Noise is the part of the ontological nature of humanity. We have recognized in ourselves, in humanity, a proclivity for excess, waste, disruption, interruption, and unpredictability throughout our existence as far back as causing the extinction of megafauna through hunting, to the domestication of plants and animals through agriculture, through to the creation of modern technology (especially nuclear), the burning of fossil fuels, and the destruction of a habitable climate. All of these events and more are examples of our being-as-noise. We are not just loud, though we certainly are capable with our technology to be louder than anything else, but inherently disruptive in a manner that few other species are able to address or adapt to. Only recently have these issues been addressed in earnest and then often as unrelated or divergent and competing concerns (thus underpinning the importance of this experiment on noise directly addressing existence and ecology). What this text argues for instead is that we recognize the commonality in these contemporary and historical events and acknowledge the upsetting reality of our human being-as-noise. This recognition of our being-as-noise asks us to go through the experience of the loss of meaning, the loss of control. The recognition forces an existential crisis, but a crisis from which can flow the authenticity of philosophical thinking, a crisis which we can move through and use to reshape our being-in-the-world. It may still be a being-in-the-world-as-noise but not noise as domination, destruction, contamination, and control. Instead, it is an open and hospitable noise of coexistence. A noise that disrupts our own control and

The destruction of a habitable climate is part and parcel with anthropogenic climate change and the Sixth Extinction. The Sixth Extinction is the name given to the current spike in the extinction rate in an effort to connect it to the five previous major extinction events in Earth’s history. Human disruption of the global climate is directly connected to the destruction of the climate conditions necessary for the survival of many species, of which we may eventually become one.
totalizing desires for control and replaces them instead with hospitality. If I welcome only what I welcome, what I am ready to welcome, and that I recognize in advance, then I refuse to recognize noise, the parasite, the unexpected, and there is no hospitality. Instead, we must attempt to think the thorybological thought, this hospitality towards noise.

No context can entirely enclose a hospitality of noise, as noise represents an impossible excess, an excessive excess. Noise overflows all bounds, crosses all borders and frontiers. No matter what effort is expended, there will always be noise and never any perfect meaning or complete control. The aporia of noise is the condition of this text, but it is also the condition of all thought and communication. The edge-line of the text, the boundaries of what it set out to contain are thus threatened, threatened from its first tracing of thorybological possibility. Thorybology adapts Derrida’s account of a hospitality that must await and expect itself to receive the stranger, the stranger as parasite, as noise, as interruption. In being open to noise, to the possibility of interruption, in offering an unaccountable hospitality towards noise, we open ourselves to the possibility of coexistence with the unknown and the other. This is not, as it might at first glance seem, an argument that claims that we cannot protect the barriers and boundaries of our space and our comfort, that we must accept any and all intrusion no matter where it might come from or when it might arrive. It is not argued here that a neighbor’s 4:00 am party during the workweek must be accepted with open ears or that the viral or bacteriological guest should be welcomed without medication.

But what does accepting the stranger (as noise) mean? Advocates of noise abatement put forth the idea that noise is localizable, knowable, and tamable. For them, noise is most often just loud sounds, harmful to health and peace of mind, measurable in decibels, and limited by law. This is not noise as the stranger, the *arrivant*. While loud sounds should continue to be regulated and limited, as hearing loss and other health and quality of life issues are worthy political concerns, loud sounds are not examples of the creative efficacy of noise as
interruption, as the unexpected and unexpectable arrival of the unknown. This project does not oppose noise abatement-as-such, but rather makes the claim that noise abatement is (almost) always enacted in bad faith—even though there are healthy levels of sound, there is no possible end to noise (even defined reductively as loud sound), and in practice abatement is often the movement (rather than elimination) of noise from locations with power and influence to those populated by the disenfranchised. Instead, this inquiry traces the cyclic restatement of several themes: noise as both creation and destruction irrevocably interlocked, endlessly reenacted; noise as the ontological underpinning of humanity; and noise as a means of understanding and addressing being-as-coexistence. It is the relation of these repetitions of noise and their varying interplay and interaction that provide productive tension in this text and in noise politics.

We now, briefly, turn to the idea of silence. Often presented as the contrary of noise, as well as the ideal of noise abatement (though “quiet” is the more accurate term in that field), silence is a term, like noise, that is difficult to pin down or fully articulate yet maintains through ordinary language a broad range of colloquial uses. This silence, this inaudibility

Emergency vehicles will continue to make loud sounds as a necessary part of their functioning. Though studies have begun to show that even warning sirens have become common enough that some people are finding it easier and easier to tune them out. This would seem to necessitate even louder or noisier sounds to continue to stand out or an entirely new protocol for indicating warning and emergency. Vehicles in general will continue to make loud sounds as even electric vehicles are being designed to produce unnecessary sound—that is sound not necessary for the car to work as a car—because cars that are too quiet are both disconcerting to drivers and dangerous to pedestrians (especially the hearing and visually impaired) who cannot hear their approach. Construction will also continue to make loud sounds, as certain practices are often not possible and more often not cost effective to quiet. While there are many areas in which abatement can and should proceed because the project is, by nature, impossible, the gains that are often made are at the expense of other more entrenched forms of social inequality.
that calls itself, that is allowed by, death, is not the contrary of noise, but rather a companion term. Noise is connected to the sounds of life: heartbeats, respiration, vocalizations, speech. Silence is connected to thought, to meditation, to contemplation. And while noise is often understood in a more agonistic way, both terms are understood as the interruption and disruption of signals, as marking a void or an absence. Contemplating silence as death, though, thinks beyond the limits of the Anthropocene, allows the possibility of imagining a reality where the existence of mankind no longer has a stratigraphic impact on the planet and whether such a being-in-the-world is possible or whether it implies our extinction. Noise and silence are thus always linked, always together, always haunted by each other, by the presence/absence of the other. They always imply supplementary failure, promise risk, emptiness, and annihilation.

Characterized by an intermittent, clanking, juddering, and halting forward motion, this text is both metaphorically and literally marked by a constant machinic buzz and whirr, the sound of the juxtaposition of unrelated fragments striving for continuity (as well as accompanied by a soundtrack of the same). Its seams and sutures are left partially open and exposed in an effort to highlight the form of noise interacting with the content of noise. This is the space and field of thought that thorybology seeks to open and explore. This experimental methodology that explicitly denied the historical specificity of

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4 Silence and death are routinely connected. One might note the straightforward biological implications a body that does not make sound (heartbeat, breath, etc.) is not alive. But one should not forget the political ramifications. Notably, the Gay Rights advocates of Act Up used the phrase “Silence is Death” as a slogan during the AIDS crisis when being silent politically lead not to mere metaphoric “death,” as in disenfranchisement, but to literal bodily death.

5 See the bruit jouissance project, which has been produced concurrently with this book under aegis of the Delta Brainwave Society: https://deltabrainwavesociety.bandcamp.com/album/bruit-jouissance & https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLS6PKCS99i8ByNYcu7gqnCSVwb65X4Lj.
its materials and insisted upon their subjugation to the composition produced lines of thought and research that remain rigorously undecidable. Thorybology suggests infinite paths to investigate. Its theoretical framework allows the research to abandon one train of thought to become entranced by an alternate all the while demanding we consider the remainders.

Philosophy has always insisted upon this: thinking its other. Its other, its noise: that which limits it, and from which it derives its essence, its definition, its production. In the research of noise, however, the difference between what is self and what is other, what is inside and what is outside, becomes increasingly indistinguishable, and any frame becomes a temporary, easily violated boundary opening into adventure without reserve. There are many methods that might take advantage of these violated boundaries. An obvious example is a work that was made only from references—tangling, intertwining elements reacting with one another magically and tragically. The goal in this noise inquiry, in thorybology in general and in a hospitality of noise, is to see more noise patterns as signals whether or not we like those signals.

Noise is that which unmoors the world from the illusory fixity to which we tie it down in an attempt to keep it in place, to separate its elements out from each other and elevate ourselves above the “natural world,” subjecting it to our will and mastery as though we were somehow separated from nature. By making us aware of our inability to decipher it, noise alienates us. Noise functions as a powerful enacting of Brecht’s Verfremdungseffekt. It forces an alienation, a separation from the accepted and established norm, a jarring away from pattern and habit that can bring about new thinking. We are all no one in front of noise. We cannot find reaffirmation of our accepted positions and are offered instead only waste, expenditure, and sacrifice. It is only after noise breaks down entrenched posi-

6 This event of coming to understand human cosmic insignificance (relationally to the whole of existence anyway) can be both powerfully liberating and damaging. This text follows a certain reading of existential
tions, after we have offered it unconditional hospitality, that it can become generative, creative, fecund. In an attempt to keep pace with the ideas generated, the mind is required to flit nimbly from arousal to contemplation, puzzlement to delight. The results more than reward the mental gymnastics necessary to follow such an evasive prey.

philosophy in this matter and reads noise as enabling radical freedom, and sees the liberating potential in insignificance.