Noise Thinks the Anthropocene: An Experiment in Noise Poetics

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INTERPRETING NOISE

How to interpret noise? Or even noise? The interpretive strategies that enable the strange and unique property of a discourse that organizes the economy of its representation such that it is always noise, that it remains noise, remains in motion, fleeing the rigorous application of meaning to its meaninglessness, yet avoids being or being labeled mere pointless nonsense, are not trivial. The rare force of this text is that you cannot limit it to saying this is that, this is the subject, this is not the subject, this is the same, this is the other, this is noise, this is noise, this is silence, this is silence. Remain undaunted; these words are citations. They are fragments gathered up because of a certain relationship to noise, a certain turn of phrase or poetic language that explicated the concept, abductively linked, conductively associated. But as fragments pulled from previous context, previous clarity, they already resist interpretation, resist transplanted clarity. Only a certain practice of theoretical fiction or experimental theory can work against the frame, make it play against itself, derange all the archival and indexing spaces and condense this undecidable writing into a fixed and semi-permanent form.

However preliminary, a deciphering or interpretation of noise cannot be neutral, neuter, or passive. Even as noise-in-itself is neutral, any interpretation of it will not be. Interpreting
noise demands the full acknowledgement of noise, of noise-as-
noise, and thus the inevitable failure of any interpretive project. This is the failure that noise abatement has yet to acknowledge and thus why it tends to campaign in bad faith. The question astir here, precisely, is that of presentation. This text induces by agglutinating rather than demonstrating, by coupling and decoupling, gluing and ungluing, rather than by exhibiting the continuous, analogical, instructive, suffocating necessity of discursive rhetoric. In this way, this text is able to articulate an interpretative process that does not hide from its inevitable failure, that accepts noise as ungraspable, neither grasped nor retained but continually bringing the unknown back to the known, breaking up its mystery to shed light on it. The result of the interpretation is never an ontology of noise-as-such but rather of noise. This noise recognizes the fragmentary nature of its interpretation as well as the fragmentary nature of its construction and does not hold these fragments as marginal. Only in the fragments, the citations, the ()holes, the gaps, the aporias, the ruptures can noise be interpreted, only there, because noise is negatively defined (i.e., by what it is not—not acceptable sound, not music, not valid, not a message or a meaning) and because it is also a negativity, can noise be provisionally grasped as noise and articulated into thought, into philosophy, into action.

Noise goes on. It advocates the possibility of autonomy and self-knowledge through the creative process of reorganizing the ordinary to understand its extraordinary quality and to impress upon readers and listeners how incomplete the world is and how to coexist within it. That coexistence requires a case of reinventing how we understand the role of the human and our being-as-noise. It supports, through thorybology, following the detours of thought to the point of annihilating or rendering indeterminate all the distinctive signs of a prior identity, beginning with the very border between sense and nonsense. The motif of the limit, of the frontier, of the parting line has furrowed the whole text. Noises are not only interference but they tend to interfere at random. They work to trans-
form the limit, obliquely, by surprise, always filled with chaos and chance, filled with every possibility, and as a consequence it is impossible to divide and predict. Noise is the nomadic producer of differences.

Each fragment of this text, each fragment that went into the construction of this text, has its own network with its own intentions, times spaces, and histories. Divergences or conflicts necessarily appeared and new things were made from the conjunction and juxtaposition of these conflicting and divergent fragments. The presence of noise forces us to give up knowing with certainty. Interpretative strategies proceed, then, by seeking out the edges, the inner walls, the passages, the fragments, the margins, the divergences, the transformation to come, and the unpredictability of new knowledge, new techniques, and new political givens, all the better to spark change and create relationships, preferably between all things in the world.