REALISING NOISE – OR HOW TO CREATE SPACE FOR UNKNOWN EXPRESSIONS

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ABSTRACT

This speculative essay considers noisy expressions as potential space holders to defer an anticipatory attitude of classification. It questions how our accustomed aurality prevents us from listening to emergent voices and noises around us. Feminist new materialism is combined with critical readings of information theories to examine and undo the negentropic exclusion of noise for knowledge production.

Noise causes reverberations not only because of its contribution to information, but also because of its unavoidability as an interference pattern. Due to Western modernity's one-sided interpretation of agency, noise's affectivity has been rendered dismissable. Western metaphysics has suppressed, distorted, or declared to be incomprehensible interferences that must therefore be taken into account if noise is to be both a destructive and creative force.

Even if reverberating interferences are perceived as but noisy signals, their material-affectivity shifts the affordance of response/i/ability. Thus, it is argued that noise fundamentally contributes to the frequencies of meaning/mattering for the pressing tasks of un/learning

Key words: noise; listening; unknowing.

INTRODUCTION

The realisation that noise per se provides an event that in first instance should assigned a non-valued judgment cannot occur without taking one's own movements and ensuing interferences into consideration. Despite the negative connotation that is associated with noise's interfering behaviour, which is that it disturbs the status quo by contributing to change, it must be stressed that interference is generally inevitable. Commonly no account is taken of the pebbles that my feet move with each step, the molecules of body and other matter that are pushed and moved by each breath that is inhaled and expelled, or even if merely a butterfly or snail gets in the way of my movements. Noise both forewarns and follows such interferences, which always signal both the destruction and growth of something else. Generally, it does not come with an evaluation.

In a sense, noise is a sign that something has gone beyond acceptable limits but seeks to maintain contact nonetheless through affective vibrations. (Barad, 2012: 208). Karen Barad uses the expression "to stay in touch with the material-affective dimensions of doing and engaging science" despite going out of bounds of predefined fields. In this speculative essay, I would like to reverse the implication: noise, understood as the signal of affective touch, transports the generated interferences, or their reverberations, by sound or light waves into, in this case, the range of human perceptibility. Here, sound refers to signals emanating from something beyond the established bounds, such as possible squeaks or other communication signals registering as audibly or visually uncomfortable. The question of what happens if sound is set to be equivalent with noise will be considered in a later part of this text. For the moment, the emphasis is on the fact that noise communicates by establishing tactile events on a vibrational level of affect for the eye or ear, despite emerging from beyond predetermined boundaries - thus being perceived as disruptive and noisy.

Certainly, noise has the potential to cause disturbances in addition to its generating qualities. But what to make of its capacity as warning indicator for what is usually determined as unworthy of deciphering and thus dismissible? Might these noisy signals not be rather warnings or calls from the yet not known? As examples from space research demonstrate, noise can even draw attention to the barely audible and decipherable messages from outer space.[1] My intention, however, is

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[1] https://science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2013/01nov_ismsounds/,
https://www.dw.com/en/is-there-noise-in-outer-space/av-57089095 [accessed 22.06.2022]; see also cosmic noise (CMBR).

more earth-bound and aimed at what is deemed to be a not audible signal, frequently through repression or even extinction through a desired affordance of sameness. I am addressing here a fostering of (systemic) redundancy that builds its acceptance on what is claimed to be in the zone of the known. The diminishment of noisy elements, humming insects or possibly stinging like some of the wild growing 'weeds', can then be read as the extension of sameness. In a metaphorical sense, however, this reads indifference toward missing or dying noises or voices (like the hum of insects) as disregarded signals of knowledge loss due to zoonotic overflow and extinction induced by such sameness. My writing is not, by any means, a defence of the status quo or a commitment to maintaining it; rather, it is a call to reconsider the cost of the unending extension of comfort for some.

The issue of information overload, which is frequently brought on by media connectivity and triggers psychic reactions like regression, may be interesting in this aspect. Such assumption possibly can be drawn from Sands' and Ratey's interesting, though pre-social media, article on noise as a clinical symptom causing stressful confusion that incites regressive attempts of reorganization on a 'lower' or known level (1986: 294). This hints at a societal psychogram indicating a shift regarding the factors of gain and loss in societies formed by technological posthuman extensions. In the evaluation of an assumed outside or other does not handle self-induced noises and non-human interconnections when determining a closure towards what is seen to be too noisy. The idea of an entanglement with nature and technology is still sorted by prejudice towards the non-(capital)Man made (Wynter), which includes the dehumanization of women, indigenous peoples, refugees, and lower income groups. Together with so-called 'natural' sounds, these are being regarded as unworthy or too confused to be considered voices, whose contributions to the background hum are declared marginal.

2. Can 'we' become a thing amongst others and imagine to be listened to?

In the search for how to explore voices as (noisy) interference patterns, the performance project's orientation was taken from a poem by Mary Oliver, which contained the lines about wild geese's call announcing the writer's/reader's place "in the family of things" (1986: 14).

In addition came the question if it is not possible that basic things considered trash, like throw-away cups and other so-called single-use packaging, could, by virtue of their widespread use, contribute to this general orchestra of sounds that generates a general (planetary) humming, may be in a very high (human inaudible) pitch? If 'we' become things among them, would this not indicate that 'we' do not listen because it would overwhelm 'our' established system of action and thought? What was undoubtedly going to produce issues was the uncritical adoption of "thingification" at that time and was one of the failing components of this constellation.

Using noise as the expression of marginal voices within an experimental performance piece was guided by the intention to extrapolate the position of generally objectified things (human and non-human) to consider one's own inevitable interferences to incite a possibility of change in response-ability. In this case, working with

movement meant not only the diffractions stirred in the ongoing move to movement on a molecular basis (blood flow, breath), but as well those enhanced on a macro-level commonly considered as intentional. To dissolve their exclusive status, these were amplified as to become a noise among others. In some sense these amplifications were intended to become the noise/sound to act/dance upon. However, if noise becomes sound its meaning shifts towards mattering. While this was in part intended to make them recognizable as sounds 'we' orchestrate for the performance context, the outcome was not aiming for a purely pleasurable audio experience. The question if noise can stay noise when elevated into the auditory domain of the performative (music or else) has been generally denied (Hainge, 2014: 53-59). However, what remains with the not clearly translatable is a certain undecipherability, a feeling of resonance and the general situated experience. In this sense the project referred to the question whether an awareness for these noises can induce a way of listening and responding on the level of mutual exchange, accumulation, and possibly as interdependent interference.

Built on a shifted definition of agency towards a new materialist doing-being (Barad) such exploration attempts to think towards pluriverse and multi-levelled entanglements to break "the delusion of stability, the phantasy of omnipotence" (Braidotti, 2012: 174) built into western metaphysics. Agency's one-sided assignment to certain humans, selectively defined by a capital M huMan (Wynter) exclusivity, exemplarily depicts this deformation which seems to stem from an unsatiable desire for control and the ensuing self-assignment of exceptionality. This again brings back to noise's co-constitutive role in the formation of knowledge and away from the Cartesian indebted method of "an ideal knowledge without noise" (Malaspina, 2018: 9-10).

3. The sense of the touch in noise

Developed within my recently finished practice-based PhD, the engagement with methodological and conceptual implications that movement (i.e. motion) brings to experiences of moving and affectively being moved meant to determine the specificity of 'our' situatedness in the appraisal of eventual responses caused by and to 'our' interferences. The 'we' and the 'our' in quotes here marks my own situatedness within a knowledge production largely based on western metaphysics. The quotes intend to intercept the common universalising attitudes.

Generally, the question emerged whether these interferences could be made tangible despite their common neglect within the western modernity's episteme. Of further interest was if and how could an embodied mode of being-knowing possibly also bring forward arguments supporting an interpretation of movement more towards being moved to moving. This objection intended to attempt an undoing of the steadfast belief in the absolute control over a self's doing as commonly expressed in the episteme of western metaphysics through the notion of agency. Considered from this angle, any possible response in either direction for 'us' to be moved or for 'us' moving (interfere) others beyond immediate intent, stirred against the general impulse to interpret human motion as solely will-powered action.

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In fact, most verbal expressions of human locomotion neglect the general (inter-)dependency with certain conditions and engagement with so-called objecthood, such as the ground for walking or the horse, bicycle, car or train for riding or driving. Even considering these objections only touches on a level mostly based on human visual perception but ignores anything outside the visual and also audible range of most humans. An understanding of being motivated to move rather than an incitement to move without affective inducement may correspond more to the types of cognitive patterns Christopher Watkin labels "prepositional thinking" in Michel Serres. Prepositions hence describe "the possibility of a relation, a bending, a declension" that due to their procedural attitude declare "'almost nothing' while they 'affect the destiny of all whom they visit'" (2020: 172-173). The line to Serres is drawn via the "cybernetic figure of the disruptive, transformative parasite", which occurs as noise again. Marie Thompson's Spinozist reading and writing, however, intertwines Serres' approach of the ambiguous parasitic position with Shannon's information theory in the attempt to provide a "disruption of the definitive correlation of noise, 'unwantedness'" (2017: 42) by characterizing noise through its immediate affectivity.

The question how a response-ability of other matter(ings) could be transported into a perceptible range, though eventually only on a metaphorical level, guided the experiments throughout the practice-based research. For the first performance, Gabriela Guasti Rocha's responsive textile INTUERI (2018) pieces provoked my interest. The German-based interface designer from Brazil had developed these fashion objects first as tactile induction transmitters to make electro-magnetic waves palpable on the skin of the wearer. Based on our exchange, she developed a version which allowed to transmit signals via bluetooth devices to small speakers or other amplifying extensions making them audible. In the INTUERI version, which was activated throughout the 2019 performance, *signalling - at the molecular level*, the focus of affectivity was set towards both directions, as to affect as well as being affected. As no specific selective filter was introduced, basically any interference to and with electro-magnetic waves in the performance space became audible, including those caused by the audience and nearby devices. However, this high sensitivity despite being only to one type of signal, was at that moment in accordance with the thought of a general situation-based background hum (Robinson, 2020; Thompson, 2017: 4). It further depicted the unavoidability of causing interferences for any others, as well as when reacting (like dancers) to those reaching 'us'/our matterings as the 'sound to dance to'. As the sound caused by interferences became the score for the movements, these were, to a certain extent, directed by their own feedback momentum. While this is not an unusual aspect for live performances, here it was intended to reverberate the attention towards the events (gestures) that were the cause of irritations (signals/noise).

In the follow-up piece, *reverberating interferences – explorations into thingness*, the original aim was extended towards the employment of a more traceable noise/interference transmission. That meant for both the dancers' and the audience's sake the gesture/move causing disturbance should be more clearly expressed by a more poignant signal release. However, the interference of the pandemic meant we were only able to perform and record a 'clinical' (without audience) Covid version. Nevertheless, these circumstances added new impulses in regards of thinking through the constellations of noise vs sameness (redundancy).

4. knowing / unknowing – noise as the expression of unknowing

As mentioned, the consideration of 'our' situatedness was essential for the self-understanding of the project and in some ways can relate to what Dylan Robinson's resonant theory for Indigenous Sound Studies describes as a positionality depicting listening as an intersection of perceptual habit, ability, and bias (2020: 2, 37). However, I was not familiar with Robinson's book at that time and part of the purpose of this essay is to engage more profoundly with his insights. A crucial connection point is that any awareness respecting a critical listening positionality in Robinson's sense must include attention to cultural coinage and in many cases the inability to value and respect different attitudes towards hearing. In Robinson's understanding of a critical listening positionality, such hearing complies to a practice of "guest listening, which treats the act of listening as entering into a sound territory" (2020: 53). Such conscious or open form of listening not only includes a feeling for the transference of the heard but intersects with the temporality of the act and event. It contrasts what Robinson translates from indigenous meaning as 'hungry listening' that "consumes without awareness of how the consumption acts in relationship with those people, the lands, the waters who provide sustenance". A practice that attempts to move towards an anticolonial impetus "requires that the "fevered" pace of consumption for knowledge resources be placed aside in favour of new temporalities of wonder disoriented from antirelational and nonsituated settler colonial positions of certainty" (2020: 52 – 53). Such possibilities for a different hearing-reading are opened up when established narratives are broken, giving way for different possibilities.[2]

As such, considering the background hum that inform(ed) the performative experiments and also actual theoretical excursions as 'our' listening abilities (in the widest sense also including reading), these must be evaluated as immersed within the realm of an eurocentric educational framework. Being regarded as a partly unconscious, partly comfortable habit of the suppression of the affective background as inaudible (Thompson, 2017: 4), this has to be accounted as providing limitations that accompany this specific positionality and the attempt to cross into the yet unknown(able). The unknown here refers not to a voluntary state of ignorance, but rather describes a "defenselessness of not knowing yet". The writer Emily Ogden defines this as "a capacity to hold the position of not knowing yet", even possibly never reaching knowing (2022: 6). A position of opening that creates a gap or a momentary glimpse onto a different interpretation, i.e. understanding.

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[2] Eyal Weizman at the conference *Die Zivilisationsfrage: Day 1* in the talk "Material Histories: Evidence Against the Standard Narrative" at the HKW, Berlin, 27.05.2022; https://hkw.de/en/programm/projekte/veranstaltung/p_188723.php [accessed 22.06.2022].

Here the new materialist thinking of Barad's Agential Realism generally excludes an appropriating 'outside position' but holds opportunities towards openings for a different moment of knowing, which only can be reached as exteriority-within-phenomena. That means situatedness cannot be neglected and the new or added knowledge must be referred to through enacted intra-actions. This movement of thought or knowing in some ways corresponds with Haraway's idea of pushing the boundaries from within. It thus supported our intention to learn from other knowledges rather than to appropriate them into the dominant episteme. That principally means a reworking of current ways of thinking by addressing the basis of its epistemic foundations, which I usually express as an un/learning of the known towards making space for different insights and narratives. Results that indicate 'failures' or better inaccuracies in 'our' thinking throughout the stagings of experimental performances are in this regard considered successful experiments as they confront 'us' to become aware of yet undecipherable unknowings. In this sense, for example, the above-mentioned failure or short-sighted idea of thingification as a thing amongst other non-human items without paying attention to the ongoing colonisation of nature and other humans (Césaire; Wynter) of the human within the western metaphysics had laid bare its snares.

The concept was introduced on the basis of a flat ontology, with the implication to stick with the westernized description of being called to "our" place among things, rather than working through the appropriation of an idealised anthropomorphic presupposition of the indigenous world depictions. Referenced here is the indigenous narrative, where "everything is human, the human becomes a wholly other thing", as described by Viveiro de Castro, which seemed to offer a quite daring, barely thinkable undertaking, especially when approached from within the bubble that exceptionalises certain huMans. Such "a world of immanent humanity, where the primordial assumes a human form" is radically opposed to a worldview that constructs the human, or at least some, as outside of the primordial which is considered nature (2014: 62-63). The persistent anthropocentric effort in Western philosophies insists to exclude the huMan from the background hum, while it renders anything it dehumanizes inaudible. To address the nucleus of this persistent bifurcation, we naively aimed at learning to hum with things.

5. noise, the outsider, both guarding and invading the knowable (comfort) zone

This leads back to the point what contributes to this background hum, what makes it inaudible (despite including noises like that of the annoying construction site noise next door) and why did we chose to refer to noise in 'our' project? These questions bring up the more specific question 'what then is the meaning of noise'? The neglect of sounds, when regarded as beyond the threshold of the normative, which if perceived become excluded as noise, are only one side of redundancy's deafness. The other lies in the manifestation of the hum of daily consciousness - all these common sounds that are enjoyed or endured by being regarded as belonging, which become imperceptible through socio-cultural coinage. Martin Daughtry's appliance of the palimpsest, though usually considered for textual layerings, seems helpful in this regard.

Daughtry, who like Robinson comes from sound studies within musical context, invoked "the palimpsest metaphor [...] to situate music listening within the sonorous matrix that accompanies and complicates it, and to take this matrix seriously as a rich cultural artifact in its own right". His intention of blurring "the line between the musical object and the sonorous world" to allow in "the cacophony of the world [...] and to place the politics of navigating through this complex and noisy world at the center of discussions of listening" (2014: 10-11) provides a step into a similar direction as Robinson does, yet the latter requesting the more radical impetus of opening towards listening in/to other worlds.

Nevertheless, not hiding the limitations of his metaphorical appliance, such as historical unidirectionality, the obscuring of listening's radical situatedness, and its hyperliterate western impetus, a.o. Daughtry's interest aims to encourage "to think of audible phenomena as complexly layered and to imagine the traces of human activities that have been silenced." Thereby this imposed noiselessness becomes imagined "as faint but legible presences rather than nonentities" (2014: 28-29). Despite this intention, such omni-directional conception assumes a "privileged vantage point from which all sounds can be heard" (Daughtry, 2014: 29) that thereby discloses its roots in the "antirelational and nonsituated settler colonial positions of certainty" (Robinson, 2020: 53). Daughtry's attempt to think through certain barriers by the "conception of the palimpsest's layers as ghosts of the manuscript", can however be directed "toward aural traces of history: echoes, whispers, and voices that become audible momentarily". Such lingering, ghostly noises "may productively haunt" listening as "a decolonial practice of critical listening positionality [that] actively seeks out (or allows itself) to become haunted" (Robinson, 2020: 62). When stating that "[e]very concept is haunted by its mutually constituted excluded other" Barad takes recourse to Derrida's reference to the necessity of speaking to ghosts "in the name of justice" (1994: xix). The relational thinking she further introduces throughout this thread orients itself along Niels Bohr's concept of complementarity (2010: 253) and exceeds linear conceptions of space and time.

In a later text Barad extends this different sense of temporality towards a multi-directionality where then certain positionings of historical markers live inside each other as relational occurrences. In her specific example it is the beginning of European colonization, reoccurring or even enhanced by the horrific (atomic) explosion of technological fantasies "1492 as […] inside 1945, for example, and even vice versa?" (2017: 57). This important insight locates positionality as situated multi-directionality not just in space, but also in time providing another critical aspect for Dylan Robinson's request for "temporalities of wonder disoriented from antirelational and nonsituated" (2020: 53) readings to acknowledge the background hum of positionality in its radically differing multi-linearity always according to the complex layerings a specific position.

Attempt to switch your mental image: look down at yourself, see the tar, concrete, or grass around you. Realise the assigned (cultural) attributions and

explanatory necessities to the diverse matter(ings). Perceive again in an affective way. Is there a difference in what things are defines as and your immediate experience? Is there any noise interfering the bland definitions?

6. a voice, not noise

Barad's Agential Realism attempts to think across the bifurcation that in western modernity assigns muteness to nature and credits only culture as articulate. However, even within this framework, the divide between nature and culture is in the more recent posthumanist thinking a fundamentally entangled one, which further intersects with technological means. Matter's "ongoing hauntological transformation" is thus not just inscribed in colonising and terraforming projects of western modernity, but as well in the human and non-human bodies impacted by these (2010: FT11, 298; Robinson, 2020: 54). Noises such as by scorched earth, eroded hills, plastic islands, the push of certain humans and non-humans towards extinction have been integrated into the quasi inaudible, by being argued as belonging to efforts of sameness (i.e. effects of globalisation). Such extensions of the 'ordinary' background humming set up a framework of knowledge production that only provides subsumption for experiences within certain acknowledged categorisations. Certain sounds thus depreciated as noise paradoxically become inaudible/ undecipherable, as what can be heard, i.e. defined as audible, depends on cultural coinage. 'Non-belonging' disturbances are thus extrapolated as noises into the intolerable of disorder, thus into the impossibility of a definable existence. However, this does not eradicate noise, as it is impossible to separate

> "the content of expression [..] from the immanent plane out of which it is formed and the differential process through which it comes to be - 'meaningful' expression becoming such only by contracting noise into a form that no longer seems noisy. When we attend to the noise of expression, such delusions are dispelled and the apparent matter of factness of existence fades away, matter itself being unveiled as expressive" (Hainge, 2013: 18).

Regarded under these aspects noise clearly delineates a made rather than a given category that establishes what counts as the normative (Bassier in Malaspina, 2018: xi). As a rule, though, "beyond the reference to unwanted sound, [noise] reveals itself to be conceptually polymorphous", Cécile Malaspina states. Rather than to provide a framework to classify or measure "phenomena that qualify noise as a particular type of disturbance" the assessment of something as noisy is "about the relation between contingency and control" (2018: 203). Malaspina thus references the parasitic element noise is attributed by being "associated with the absence of order, of work or of the norm – be it the statistical, moral or aesthetic norm". At worst, noise may be "identified as a threat to the norm and subversive of work and order" (2018: 3). Noise cannot be avoided, but cuts through all matter (Serres in Hainge, 2013: 12). In a sense that exceeds the literary it "slips between different disciplinary fields: it carries through the walls that separate science, acoustics, economics, politics, art, information theory and law" (Thompson, 2017: 1).

Both, Thompson, as well as Malaspina, take as point of departure for the engagement with noise Shannon and Weaver's information theories and its initially counterintuitive designation of noise as "an inextricable component of not just communication systems but also material relations more generally" (2017: 57). Thompson, whom I cited here, applies a by-default transdisciplinary oriented approach that attempts to reworks noise's stigma through affectivity. While Thompson develops her argument in the wider frame of sound studies, Malaspina's work attempts an epistemological evaluation that problematises noise as "polyvalent and polymorhous" (2018: 9) across various fields by taking recourse to influential redefinitions in cybernetics. Consequently, her interest focuses less on "the knowledge of diverse phenomena understood as noise, but with the idea of noise in the relation between the known, the unknown and the differently known" (2018: 11).

7. the sense of mastery in Shannon and Weavers information theories or the virtue of unprecitability

As Thompson observes, the classical information theory by Shannon and Weaver focuses on the correction of deviation to increase and ensure the reliability of an originally sent message. Both developers acknowledged noise's contribution to the 'readability' of the supposed signal and its generative potential, although the purpose or value of information is commonly associated with a reduction of noise-induced uncertainty (Thompson, 2017: 51, 56; Malaspina, 2018: 23). This could be due to the fact that at the time of publication of their theories both researchers were working for telephone companies. Their focus was therefore set on the reduction of transmission proneness rather than exploring the possible variations that are inherent to the transference process.

The "uncontainable complexity" of noise had already caught the interest of the masculinist, "proto-fascist" Futurist movement at the beginning of the 20th century, only to be immediately controlled and contained by their "strict taxonomic categorisation", as Hainge excavates. (2014: 49). Similarly, although not for artistic or aesthetic reason but rather communication efficiency, Thompson realises there is also in Shannon's theory "a desire to have mastery over noise" (2017: 55). As such, on Hainge's indication, a coercive connection can be drawn to the modernist impetus of control. The contained noisiness by which the Futurist's movement embraced "triumphalist modernism" designated "an underlying insecurity or fear in front of such radical breaks, changes and new modes of production" rather than an enthusiasm of noise's "ability to evoke or bring into being the mysterious and unknown" (2014: 51). Such indication of a "more general malaise" is repeated in Katherine Hayles emphasis that Shannon's "distinction between signal and noise had a conservative bias" (1999: 63; Thompson, 2017: 56) due to a rigorous setting that excluded any remainder "of the received message [as] the 'not' signal or noise" (Stroud in Hayles, 1999: 63). The enforcement of a dichotomous set of consistent in- and exclusions to, whether rigorously account or negate, aims for a static – once and for all – situation that contradicts all generative and developmental systemic insights that Malaspina stresses as essential distinctions "between information and noise [as] always *a process in the making*". Rethinking the process of information transference as fundamentally enmeshed with uncertainty, as expressed by Shannon's

'information entropy,' she argues for a definition of noise "outside the channel of communication" (2018: 25-26, italics in the original).

Therefore, considered from a systemic point of view, noise can have a diminishing impact on the functioning of a system, yet at the same time be an irrefutable element to add something new and unpredictable to information. Malaspina's conceptual reworking of noise's epistemic grounding is oriented towards "the co-constitutive role of noise in the formation of knowledge" (2018: 9). It is the generative ability that is enforced by the omnipresent and unavoidable interference (noisiness) causing unpredictable events that bring "systems to reorganize with greater complexity and variety, increasing their capacity to act" (Thompson, 2017: 56). However, no rule can be drawn, as up to now extensions are only thought through in strict linear directions distinguishing between too much information, or the flatness of redundancy. Noise's generative impulse for the emergence of "a new system [though] is more complex than the simple chain" (Serres, 1982: 14), thus the binary containment of noises' characteristics bring forward a "curious reversibility" (Malaspina, 2018: 2) terminating at both ends in unreadability. This indicates that certain bits "of unpredictability and hence uncertainty" must be allowed to spread throughout information/exchange transmission. As stated, this is not in the sense of general disorder but as what Shannon calls 'information entropy' or Weaver's 'freedom of choice' is noise's contribution to an opening towards "an unthinkable" variety to choose from (Malaspina, 2018: 4, 12).

Malaspina's contribution adds the insight, that the binary sorting Hayles criticized, is in fact the neglect of the free floating 'loss' that marks opportunities of choice "relative to the unpredictability of a message" (Malaspina, 2018: 4; see also Thompson, 2017; 51). Shannon himself employed the term of 'information entropy' without indicating a "conceptual opposition between information and noise". However, as Malaspina shows, the threat of disorder allowed the neologism of negentropy to be imposed as an understanding of information "as the negation of entropy, and more generally as the negation of disorder, meaning negation of everything contingent or unpredictable". This definition has been especially applied across the natural and human sciences by the prevalent embrace of Norbert Wiener's "cybernetic theory of selfregulating systems with feedback", which conceptualised the value of entropy in information transference as "measure of unwanted variability, imprecision or error – in any case, a value to be eliminated for the sake of efficiency and certainty: entropy henceforth becomes synonymous with noise" (2018: 4). Malaspina thus concludes that, in cybernetic terms, "any system, can be put [...] as a set of organized constraints on contingency, in other words, as the organized negation of noise". (2018: 4).

8) noise erasing / breaking a narrative to create space for a different versions

As previously stated, the idea of giving 'a voice to objects,' or rather assigning them and us (the performers) in the intra-action equally with sensors capable of transferring the affective virtue of unpredictable interference noise, raised a number of different epistemic issues rooted in western

metaphysical matrix (Jackson, 2015: 216). One of these is the assignment of different agency levels within the western episteme, which I have elsewhere (2021) attempted to gain access to through the notion of capability as defined by Frank Wilderson. Though Wilderson developed his definition of capacity in the US context, I consider it a relevant umbrage within the production of dominant epistemes seeping back (as example of redundant echoing) into the Eurocentric framework.[3] Wilderson's notion of capacity defines how other cultures (human, as well as non-human) are assigned specificities and then demarcated as de-, in- or non-human realms. These definitions are informed by a double-bind definition provoking a certain connection to noisiness in its assignment of subaltern and exalted. Again this 'otheredness' causes a specific deafness regarding possible entangled responses by those within the audible realm. It clearly defies listening as a reflective act on one's own listening and "also how this bounces back from the other".[4]

Such 'settled states' of a certain redundancy create a consistent problematic in terms of how the occurrence of knowledge that pushes, or blurs currently established boundaries can be fostered if the undecipherable (i.e. noise) is neglected. The acknowledgement of the generative abilities of noise as traced by Malaspina are essential for any transformational event that arises through an unconditioned acceptance of "the irreconcilable tension between the destruction and generation of form. This judgement, constituting cognition against the backdrop of its dissolution, is a function of the noise that enables the process of thought" (Bassier in Malaspina, 2018: xii-xiii). In the context of Dylan Robinson's resonant theory for indigenous sound studies, the term "settled state" holds an ambiguous twofold meaning, that of the status of indigenous peoples in today's Canada, but also the settled state of perceiving and thus knowing, which then again exceeds the region and thus criticizes the colonisation of knowledge production.

Crucial to Robinson's approach is a critical listening positionality which intersects with new materialism's emphasis on situatedness. While I fully acknowledge Robinson's point that assumed voicings of other matter(ings) as suggested in new materialisms has "long

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[3] "Whiteness is parasitic because it monumentalizes its subjective capacity, its lush cartography, in direct proportion to the wasteland of Black incapacity. By "capacity" I have meant something more comprehensive than "the event" and its causal elements and something more indeterminate than "agency." We should think of it as a kind of facility or matrix through which possibility itself—whether tragic or triumphant—can be elaborated [..] It is a far cry [...] from pure abject- or objectness: without thought, without agency, "with no capacity to move." In short, White (Human) capacity, in advance of the event of discrimination or oppression, is parasitic on Black incapacity: Without the Negro, capacity itself is incoherent, uncertain at best." (2010: 45).
[4] Kodwo Eshun, Interview for Mediatec, [online video], 1999, as found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RivGWj1LoQ via https://contemporaryand.com/magazines/collective-practices-a-sonic-essay/ [accessed 28.06.2022].

been a quotidian fact of Indigenous lives and epistemologies" (2020: 79) I, however, see the former as my route of access. I consider the reworking from the inside of my own cultural coinage as relevant, as to as much as possible avoid strategies of appropriation, i.e. integration on the basis of the dominant episteme. Feminist new materialism as proposed by Karen Barad's Agential Realism offers an engagement on the level of mutual affectivity in/through intra-action (2007). While firmly located within the discourse of western science due to its roots in physics, but Agential Realism offers a more opaque option towards phenomena accessible only through a situated exteriority-within. It thereby starts to undermine the ungraspable transparency of western modernity's metaphysics and appears to offer the most feasible option of intertwinement to different forms of knowing. In this regard, the noisy sounds in the performances are aimed where the researchers (performers) and a possible audience, must confront their inability to classify 'things' outside of their educational ken or cultural framework.

Despite the fact that Malaspina developed her extended understanding primarily in terms of systemic impact and/or contribution, her exploration of Shannon's term of ' information entropy' as all that lost noisy remainders brings up the point that "what we consider to be information must be carved out from noise" (2018: 110). Noise brings with it a "state of indecision and confusion" reminding us that "information and knowledge are temporary" and never fixed for all solutions. Noise as the reminder of "lived ambiguity, indecision and error" recalls the state of the unknown (Malaspina, 2018: 168).

9. Noise announces the unknown

Robinson describes his critical listening positionality also as a practice of guest listening which brings listening on the vulnerable level of entering an unknown territory with focus on the affectivity of the sonic (2020: 53). The suggestion entails to suspend the "belief in the certainty of knowing what the act of listening is" (Robinson, 2020: 72) reaches towards the acceptance what might be considered messy and unclear voices and noises. The problem of noise however is, as been laid out, also that of the acceptance of unpredictability a certain reach towards something located beyond the frame of the accepted knowledge conceptualisation. As been laid out - within the frame of current understandings - this cannot overshoot known boundaries excessively thus the suggestion for the allowance of a "conceptual resonance" in the sustenance of transdisciplinary noise in between fields of knowledge is introduced in Malaspina (2012: 71). However, in conjunction with his diffractive reading Robinson proposes a reworking of listening towards a non-judgemental affectivity that could be extended towards noise as a 'clearing spaceholder'. Accepted this way, a possibility for the ability to scratch off epistemological wrappings to enable opportunities to create listening abilities for and between worlds, trans-species and trans-planetary. The emphasis on guest listening in Robinson's concept is important in making oneself aware of being hosted on the occasion of a specific invitation. Certain parameters can be misunderstood and parasitically crunched on (as I may have done), and as we have seen, the parasite has the ability to influence an entire system. Nonetheless, it is a

system of interdependency that may inadvertently create feedback as the necessary "strategic margin of ambiguity" necessary for "the paradigmatic fluctuation that animates the circulation of concepts" (Malaspina, 2012: 71).

To address the multiple systemic crises (climate, racism, injustice, ..) which have been and are constantly further provoked by an abundance of redundancy within the dominate knowledge system that considers itself as singular and unrelated to side- or subsystems the acceptance of noise to create space for un- and then possible relearning. This rather generalising transference of the epistemological analysis of a singled out phenomenon (noise in Malaspina) towards a wider onto-epistemological frame may appear implausible, or risky at least, but it holds important aspects that seem to reverberate throughout the systemic. However, such insights also an essential opportunity to acknowledge the confusing or non-understanding states of a systemic crisis as implied by Robinson's Raven Chacon's report indicating

"a   crisis   for   listening's   settled   state
to   become   uncertain   of   what   listening   is
xwélalà:m,   the   willful   act
to   kick   colonial   listening   habits,
to shift structures of feeling" (20220: 109).

By transferring words from Dylan Robinson's performative writing passages into my text, I am not claiming any experience with that form of listening he refers to in his native language as xwélalà:m. It is defined as "a form of attention in which we are attentive not just to sound but to the fullest range of sensory experience that connects [an indigenous person] to place" (2020: 72). Yet, in trying to listen to (read) his resonant sound theory, I discover a sense of relationality in the attempt to undo noise as a strictly negative experience to Robinson's critical listening positionality. Acceptance for the experience of being invited to an unfamiliar sonic territory, where not everything can be immediately understood and classified, may have the ability to affect different routes of thinking. It could be a way to come to know something 'new' (unknown) created by knowledges eventually un/re/learning from each other.

Imagine how a baby, young animal may perceive the surroundings: Is it all noise - one unfiltered blur of visual and audible noise?

10. concluding - noise is a process initiating vibration across matter including that of thought

Noise, rather than being a permanent condition, is shifting, and the same can be said for listening, which, unlike hearing, is straining "toward a possible meaning, and consequently one that is not immediately accessible" (Nancy, 2007:6). In her investigation of the role of sound in new media, Frances Dyson references Michel Chion's realisation that "reduced listening requires the fixing of sounds". Even if this provides a rationale for the development of musical instruments towards specific sounds, it diminishes the sense of "process, of movement, change, and complexity" that is inherent to what is typically referred to as noise. As Dyson points out "Chion's solution was to think of sound as an event rather than an object", which paradoxically introduced the material mattering through the figure of vibration. "Vibration, figuratively and

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literally, fluctuates between particle and wave, object and event, being and becoming. Defying representation, it also gestures toward the immersive, undifferentiated, multiplicitous associations that aurality provokes" (Dyson, 2009: 10).

The aurality of the undefined that noise implies, however, is difficult to sustain, but it creates a desire for something to hold on to. The foreclosure of the strangeness in the orchestration of sounds 'we' produce and consider perceivable depicts a one-sidedness that reverberates throughout definitions of agency in the interpretation of western modernity. The fact that any movement causes interference is unavoidable; however, what is often neglected as unimportant for further consideration is the mutual affectivity by which it always causes and entails the reverberation of vibrational interferences. What thus is filtered out as 'information', as accessible knowledge, disregards these other vibrational signals of 'being listened to'. In some ways, these are related to the remainders lost in 'information entropy'.

An awareness of potential information lost in what is strictly considered noise, rather than excluding it as unnecessary for negentropic concerns, would necessitate a different listening and response-ability in general. Even if dismissed as 'noise' (whether audible, visual or otherwise), these reverberating interferences discounted as minor signals in the surrounding soundscape are 'read' as responsive voicings of material-discursive engagement in a processual reading. Not only does matter speak in this sense, but it also haunts through sedimenting murmurs, expressed as decline, expulsion, or extinction (a.o.) across time (Barad, 2017: 64; Robinson, 2020: 54). In terms of information theory, the ultimate background suppression of 'noisy' utterances may indicate a system shift towards one of its overflow points of crisis (of too much redundancy / too little noise).

Considering the emergence of noise through mutual (material) affectivity from intra-activity together with the signal in an agential doing-being (Barad, 2007), phenomena rather provides an indicator for ontological entanglement. An epistemological eradication of the entropic spread of noise as potential bits of signal that re-reverberate from encounters and potentially affect further in unexpected and undecipherable (sonic or visual) ways simply declares as marginal that which may be essential for an un/re/learning of yet unknown or not fully known entwinements.

As a result, interpretations of one-sided actions or non-entanglement can be argued to be based on 'settled states' considerations. These (fixed) assumptions are also transferred onto the increasingly common posthuman compositions that technologically combine nature-cultures, confounding information with data that is considered neutral. While data is not inherently information, it already interspersed with information bits due to early amplifying processes, which thereby ignores the transference of too noisy bits into the channel of the decipherable. The lines that separate "the contingency of both 'information entropy' and noise, [are] drawn solely by the intention with which a certain 'entropy of information' is chosen and transmitted as a message, against the backdrop of an accidental entropy that is discarded as noise" (Malaspina, 2018: 198)

Dylan Robinson's work introduces a critical listening positionality, which adds an interesting point of access to the sense-making of the previously mentioned experimental performance project of reverberating interferences - explorations into thingness. Similarly, this essay seeks an orientation that acknowledges the in-between, unresolved or unclear, and is regarded as marginal. Because of the shifting nature of noise, if such reverberating interferences are accessed as audible, even if 'unknown,' they are no longer negligible sounds but appear as affordance soliciting response/i/ability in their affective resonance.

Assuming uncertainty "of what listening is" eventually provides a chance to circumvent the closures already prompted by too much similarity (redundancy) with regard to the urging tasks of un/learning that are indicated by various crises on so many levels. Reassessing the role of noise in the phenomena of the currently developing system, of which "we" and "our" noises are a part, as well as the reverberations they produce, may essentially contribute to broadening the spectrum of the perceivable frequencies of meaning/matter.

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