

**The Call For Sonic Thinking: Gilles Deleuze and the Object of Sound Studies**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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**Abstract**

This thesis proposes to define and to dramatize a relation between Deleuze studies and sound studies in terms of a conception of theoretical work as an experimental practice that bears not upon objects but upon Ideas—or rather, that reconfigures the sense of object in relation to a renewed conception of the Idea. This relation between two discourses will proceed through an engagement between the work of Gilles Deleuze and that of John Cage, constituted as an “interference between practices”, with the intent of furnishing, to sound studies, a meta-theoretical reflection on the problem that sound poses to thinking, and on the conditions under which theory can respond to such a problem without, thereby, reducing it to something all-too-recognisable.

## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used throughout; see the list of works cited for full references.

- WP** Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*  
**DR** Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*  
**KC** Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*  
**LS** Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*  
**PS** Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*  
**SPP** Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*  
**C2** Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*  
**TM** Gilles Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*  
**DI** Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974*  
**NP** Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*  
**F** Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*  
**AO** Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*  
**LB** Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*  
**FB** Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*  
**CC** Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*  
**D2** Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*  
**TP** Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*  
**DP** François Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A Philosophy of the Event*  
**WT** Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*  
**BW** Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*  
**DT** Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*  
**BT** Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*  
**BQ** Martin Heidegger, *Basic Questions of Philosophy*  
**T1** Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*  
**T2** Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 2: Disorientation*  
**CPR** Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*  
**S** John Cage, *Silence*  
**FTB** John Cage, *For the Birds*

- YM** John Cage, *A Year From Monday*
- MC** John Cage with Joan Retallack, *Musicage*
- CWC** Richard Kostelanetz, *Conversing with Cage*

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## Introduction: The Contemporaneity of Sound Studies

### 1. Dramatizing the Sonic Idea

This thesis is intended as a contribution to the fields of Deleuze studies and sound studies with regard to the question of *practice*. That is to say, it offers, on the one hand, an analysis of Deleuze's early work in terms of his interrogation of what it means to think, and, on the other, considers how this analysis might function as a methodological intervention in sound studies; yet it is not simply a question of what a "Deleuzian" sound studies would resemble, but of the ways in which Deleuze's work allows us to reconceive the practice of studying as such. What is at stake, then, is the status of theoretical work as a concrete activity, and the ways in which this work may or may not intersect or engage with a particular object; if sound constitutes a privileged case, in this respect, it is insofar as, as I will show, the disciplinary constitution of sound studies is inextricable from this very problem, a problem immanently posed *by sound to thought*. Finally, then, if Deleuze offers a renewed conception of thinking as a form of activity, this conception will allow us to pose to sound studies the nature and status of its own practice—as well as, ultimately, the "object" of this practice.

As the title suggests, then, my interest, principally, is in approaching sound as what John Mowitt terms a 'disciplinary object', where this designates the 'volatile zone of indistinction between the world [...] and the institutionally organized production of knowledge' (2011, 2), an indistinction that manifests in the ambiguity of the referent itself: when we refer to the object of sound studies, do we refer to that which it is "about", or to its 'aim or purpose' (1)? Do these two senses correlate, or do they diverge? Not only is this ambiguity constitutive for sound studies, with regard to the seemingly essential indeterminateness of its own object, as well as the uncertainty over how we might come to scrutinize said object, but it also constitutes a central and defining theme of Deleuze's oeuvre. If Deleuze's work is defined by its continual intersection with "other" domains—references to literature, visual arts, music, mathematics and the physical sciences, amongst many others, abound throughout his work—then, on this basis, it is also preoccupied with the question of philosophy's specificity. Famously, Deleuze's "solution" was to define philosophy as a specific

*practice* with its own *object*: ‘philosophy is the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts’ (WP 2). It is this art of conceptual creation that Deleuze and Guattari<sup>1</sup> had been “doing all their lives” (WP 1), under the name of philosophy (amongst many others).<sup>2</sup>

On this basis, I want to present this thesis as, on the one hand, an investigation of the implications of such a claim with regard to sound studies. The claim that philosophy creates concepts falls back not only on the concept of the philosophical object itself (as we will hear in Chapter Two), but also, in a related sense, the *object* of philosophy as that toward which it is oriented: at the same moment, the object of philosophy is positioned internally to philosophy itself, in the form of the concept, and projected out of the present, becoming its “goal”; philosophy as the ‘system of the future’ (DR 142). If philosophy is the creation of concepts, then, what of those other objects of philosophy—the objects of philosophy’s “others”? How might philosophy encounter the sonic work, for instance, if its true focus is the concept?

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<sup>1</sup> This thesis focuses largely on Deleuze’s early texts, principally his work on Kant and Nietzsche in the early nineteen-sixties, and the elaboration of this work in *Difference and Repetition*. For this reason, I will largely refer only to Deleuze, and when discussing the collaborative texts I will focus on their continuity with Deleuze’s work. While I acknowledge that, until recently, Guattari has undergone a ‘problematic subsumption’ as Deleuze’s ‘partner’, as Garry Genosko puts it (Genosko 2002, 1), and that, as Genosko puts it elsewhere, this subsumption has led to the treatment of the collaborations ‘as a whole determined by Deleuze alone’ (Genosko 2012, 154), nevertheless I justify my decision for two related reasons. Firstly, Deleuze himself remarked upon differences between his and Guattari’s understanding of certain concepts, such as the body without organs (TM 238) and on this basis, as Daniel W. Smith notes, one could read the concepts of the collaborative works as bearing distinct senses according to whether one reads them within the ‘trajectory’ of Deleuze’s work or of Guattari’s (Smith 2012, 124). Secondly, the relation of the collaborative works to Deleuze’s single authored works is complex, and a great deal of care is required in order to prevent reductive readings that fail to attend to the differences specific terms and concepts undergo between texts; to this end, I will largely avoid reference to *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* in particular, insofar as, within the scope of this thesis, I am unable to provide this due attention.

<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, Deleuze is quite explicit in his rejection of attempts to proclaim the end of philosophy, whether it is in favour of the Heideggerian ‘task of thinking’ (BW 431-449) that would achieve what philosophy could not, or an attempt to step outside philosophy as such. Yet, on the other, Deleuze and Guattari, in particular, offer a range of alternate names under which their practice passes, later to be recuperated under the name of philosophy: ‘RHIZOMATICS = SCHIZOANALYSIS = STRATOANALYSIS = PRAGMATICS = MICROPOLITICS’ (ATP 24).

This problem will be a central topic of this thesis, insofar as it is vital to any conception of theoretical work as a practice—and therefore is implicated in the constitution of sound studies itself as a discipline. Yet an initial response, as a means to clarifying my own method, can be stated at the outset: that philosophy does not, in a strict sense, take sound as its object does not entail that it cannot engage with sonic practice; to the contrary, this “incapacity” forces us to move beyond the notion of philosophy as reflection upon an object, and the limitations of the concept of objecthood more generally, in order to present philosophy’s “others” as practices in their own right. Thus, rather than philosophy attempting to reflect upon a static, inert object that it scrutinizes from without, philosophical practice relates to *other practices* by means of what Deleuze terms an ‘interference’ (C2 268). If philosophy is creative, so too are those other domains with which it intersects:

theory too is something which is made, no less than its object. For many people, philosophy is something which is not ‘made’, but is pre-existent, ready-made in a prefabricated sky. However, philosophical theory is itself a practice, just as much as its object. (C2 268)

How is such an interference to be constituted? What are its conditions and its limits? These are the questions I wish to ask in relation to both sound studies and sonic practice—and, indeed, it is this relation itself that I ultimately wish to interrogate. If sound studies is to no longer reflect upon sonority as its object, how else might it proceed? Moreover, how might it do so in a way that affirms its own creativity at the same time as preserving that of the practice with which it hopes to interfere?

On the other hand, this thesis will be not a description but rather a *dramatization* of such a (re)conception of philosophical and theoretical practice.<sup>3</sup> I use this term in both a general and specific sense. In the first case, I mean to suggest that this thesis will possess a performative dimension with regard to its argument: rather than simply

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to note a distinction between philosophy and theory that relates not only to their institutional framing and historical lineages but also, by extension, the very conception of thought as a practice implied in each case; on this topic, see Osborne 2011. For my purposes in this thesis, however, I will take as read the fact that, as Osborne states, ‘the current empirical answer to the question ‘What is theory (in the Anglophone humanities) after “Theory”?’ is most definitely ‘Philosophy’ (22), and on this basis, simply note that, in the preceding quotation from *Cinema 2*, Deleuze also invokes such an equivalence; nevertheless, this is topic that must be thematised more fully with regard to the question of theory and/or philosophy as a concrete activity.

providing an account of Deleuze's conception of philosophical practice as a creative activity, and its possible application to sound studies, I wish to perform such an activity *between* Deleuze's work and that of sound studies. The nature of this performance can be clarified by considering the more technical sense Deleuze gives this term: dramatization designates a renewed and distinctive relation between thought and sensation, between the Idea<sup>4</sup> and its spatio-temporal effectuation; that is, ultimately, between thought and what it thinks or, in our case, between sound and its study. The drama is the concrete unfolding of the Idea, its determination in space and time, in a manner akin to the Kantian schema (DI 99), but divested of Kant's appeal to a predetermined identity of the concept and the corresponding presupposition of a *harmonious* relation between thought and sensation. Deleuze's 'method of dramatisation' seeks rather to explore the synthetic 'power' through which the schema is constructed beyond such limitations (DR 271), and thus implies not only a renewed conception of essence, but a 'new image of thought' (NP 96-98): thinking operates *between* the (differential) determination of the Idea in thought and its dynamic unfolding, its actualization in space and time, but, in so doing, does not presuppose a correspondence or harmony between the two—rather, it *constructs* or *creates* this relation through a synthesis of difference that does not appeal to a pre-established identity.

Needless to say, this account requires much clarification, which this thesis will provide as it proceeds. Initially, however, I wish to simply emphasise, on this basis, what this thesis intends to achieve: on the one hand, a reconfiguration of sound studies' relation to sound *qua* object, and, on the other, a concrete demonstration of sound studies as a theoretical practice constituted on the basis of such a reconfiguration. In sum, this thesis will attempt to produce in practice that which it describes in theory, while overturning the distinction between the two: a creative, constructivist theoretical

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<sup>4</sup> This term, a vital one for Deleuze, is effectively Deleuze's reformulated conception of essence; thus, it refers both to Platonic forms and to the Kantian Idea—as that which (though differently in each case) provides the ground or unity for the diversity of what appears—but is divested, by Deleuze's act of conceptual invention, of its presupposition of identity or stasis; the Idea becomes simultaneously differential and dynamic. This conception of essence will be outlined more fully in Chapter Three. To this end, I will primarily use the essence, rather than Idea, throughout; though it is generally not in keeping with Deleuze's own usage, it will allow me to emphasise the continuity (and, thereby, the conflict) between my discussions of Deleuze, Heidegger, and sound studies.

practice that operates in relation to, but not in reflection “on” or “about”, sonority. As a dramatization, this entails the differential production of an Idea of sound—that is, an account of *what sound is*—in and through an exploration of and experimentation with particular concrete cases in which this Idea has been effectuated. Importantly, however, these cases will themselves be conceived as “objects” of a distinctive practice, rather than simple cases subject to the imposition of a conceptual framing.

Ultimately, the distinction between the critical and creative aspects of this thesis manifests in its oscillation between two related but distinct objects: the discourse of sound studies itself, on the one hand, and the work of John Cage, on the other. This coordination of objects is intentional: indeed, I wish to stress that sound studies has articulated its positions and defined its parameters in and through a continuous, conflictual and contested dialogue with the work of Cage. Thus, my critical engagement with sound studies both enables and demands a creative “interference” with the work of Cage, to the degree that it is in and through the latter that the former will receive its fullest justification. It is as a creative response to the demand of Cage’s work that this thesis ultimately offers a contribution to sound studies, insofar as such a response functions not as a solution to the uncertainties around which sound studies has continually turned, but as a reframing of the very problem of how thought responds to what it must think. Finally, then, this thesis functions as an experiment: it asks, what would sound studies be if it understood itself as a creative practice whose task was to produce the concepts that correspond to the work of musicians, sound artists, technologists, and all those whose concern it to explore and intervene in the capacities of sound?

With this in mind, the bulk of this introduction will outline the concrete basis for such analyses—not only their validity, but their *necessity*; that is, it asks *why* sound studies is an object of concern, “today”? What is more, in what sense does the relation between sound and its study *call for* a response? In order to offer an initial defense and justification of my approach, then, I will turn to the discourse of sound studies itself, in order to assess its status and its contours, and, in particular, to emphasise not simply the particular problems upon which it has focused, but rather the fact that it has insistently pursued a meta-theoretical reflection on its own problematic status. It is on this basis that, in the first instance, I will claim sound studies directly and immanently

demands an interrogation of theoretical practice—and it is this demand that, in fact, constitutes the *contemporaneity* of sound studies.

## 2. A Disciplinary Emergency: Sound Studies “Today”

This thesis takes its initial orientation, then, from the questionable existence of a field called *sound studies*. The direction in which I will begin to pursue the sense of sound, or, put otherwise, the effectuation of the sonic Idea, will, first of all, follow the path traced out by this avowedly novel and contemporary discipline; yet this path, between sound and its study and back, will not be, as indicated above, a “merely” *spatial* figure, a static and stable abstract machine to map the conjunction of sense and sensation; it will be, simultaneously, a *temporal* one, in which this conjunction, whatever its conditions of success or failure, will be subject to an ineradicable dynamism, the *dramatization* of the Idea. How can sound come to be thought, under what conditions, and in which moments? As we will hear, this coupling of sound and thought, of sensation and sense, will necessarily oscillate between delay and anticipation, between a past in which we were *not yet thinking* sonority, and a to-come in which it “will have been” thought; each moment arrayed around the present, in which this delay and this anticipation modulate one another, and in which sound calls for us, as the *unthought within thought*, to take up the path of thinking.

This dynamism is inscribed within sound studies itself to the very degree that it offers itself as a *con-temporary* discipline; that is, a field of study within which multiple temporalities are at play, and in which this very multiplicity is a mark of its intellectual *currency*.<sup>5</sup> Sound studies perpetually marks itself as *new*, and thereby as meriting attention, precisely to the degree that it is *overdue*; what is more, it is continually *re-*marked in this way, as always not quite done with the delay within which it is inscribed. In a 2005 review entitled ‘Is There a Field Called Sound Studies? And Does It Matter?’, Michelle Hilmes expresses this position with great clarity: ‘the study of sound, hailed as an emerging field for the last hundred years, exhibits a strong

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<sup>5</sup> I draw this sense of con-temporaneity from the work of Peter Osborne, in particular his recent text *Anywhere or Not At All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art*, where he describes it as the ‘disjunctive unity of present times’ (17).

tendency to remain that way: always emerging, never emerged' (249). Hilmes' remark indicates that not only is the study of sound still *not yet* a fully established discipline, but that it may even have some inherent, essential tendency to remain in abeyance—perpetually awaiting those who would claim this disciplinary space, and occupy this point of intersection *between* sound and its study.

If we have heard, in subsequent years, steadily increasing amplitude in discussions around sound, a mass of publications and conferences articulating themselves under the name of *sound studies*, this is not to say that this space has finally been made habitable. Rather, sound studies' occupation of this space situates itself upon explicitly uncertain ground, unsure of where precisely it is located, or of the security of its position. As a way to immediately evidence this, we can note that Jonathan Sterne, in his introduction to 2012's *The Sound Studies Reader*, finds it necessary to cite the above remark from Hilmes, marking, even from within what John Mowitt calls 'the decisive avatar of any and all new fields' (that is, the "reader"), this moment of uncertainty, arrayed ambiguously between a history of perpetual emergence and its endlessly-delayed completion (2011, 10). The elapse of seven years may have made sound studies a *recognizable* field of academic endeavor, yet it has done little to erase its oscillating, elliptical temporal dynamic. The presents/presence of sound studies are, it seems, continually undercut by delay and deferral, in which sound studies has always *not quite yet* emerged.

Such, then, is the *present* of sound studies—a present indexed, immediately and persistently, to an elsewhere, or, rather, an *elsewhen*. In this introduction, I aim to mark out the contours of this ambiguous disciplinary space, to trace the rhythms of its dynamic, in order to isolate the way in which this discourse has marked for itself an uncertain territory—or rather, a territory of uncertainty, in which the *status of studying itself* is at stake. As I hope to show, sound studies' attempt to formulate itself as *new* and as *pressing*, to the very degree that it is *belated* and *uncertain* as a mode of analysis, forces us to take up a set of questions around the very activity of analysis itself. To echo Michelle Hilmes, we must ask: what is it, and what is it for? We who wish, today, to pursue and preserve the motivating impetus of cultural studies as a field of analysis—to wit, the desire for a mode of analysis that would bear simultaneously upon 'projects' and 'formations', text and con-text, but in such a way

that this analysis itself must be understood as *both project and formation*, rooted within a historical conjuncture and possessing the necessity imparted to it by that very conjuncture—must take up the question of why, *today*, sound demands study.<sup>6</sup> As Stuart Hall puts it, in cultural studies there must always be something ‘*at stake*’, something upon which we are willing to wager our theoretical intervention (278). This is a further sense with which I want my opening remarks to resonate—the direction we are to take is not simply that of thinking subjects towards the object of our knowledge, but of *practitioners of the concept* directing our work towards what we hope it may still be possible for thinking to do. Why, then, does sound *call for thinking*? At play is the spatio-temporal topography of thinking itself: how can we *think about sound*, and why has such thinking *still not* taken place?

As the preceding remarks have hopefully indicated, I do not wish to pose these questions in abstract, to the degree that this latter adjective has some pejorative sense—signifying thinking performed in a detached manner. Rather, I want to show how abstraction itself—which is to say a *distance* inherent to thought itself—is demanded by any concrete encounter with the questions themselves, posed and reposed within the discourse of sound studies; it is within this context that abstraction becomes something more than detachment, and within which its true power becomes evident.<sup>7</sup> I will begin, rather, from the *material*, in the sense that one refers to “course materials”; I want to track, through the field of sound studies as it exists, (perhaps) today, the points at which its self-understanding manifests in an uncertainty over the very thinkability of sound—sound as that which cannot be thought, but must be thought, and whose paradoxical status *qua* (non)object of a discourse forces us to take up, as a problem, the very activity of thought itself, and the construction of its “objects”. To appeal, once again, to Stuart Hall, we must approach theoretical work as something that ‘historical conjunctures *insist on*’ (283, my emphasis)—which is to

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<sup>6</sup> My reference is to two highly significant texts reflecting on both the past and the future of cultural studies: Raymond Williams’ “The Future of Cultural Studies” and Stuart Hall’s “Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies.”

<sup>7</sup> I am alluding here to Deleuze and Guattari’s claim, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, that linguistics does not miss its object (which is to say, language as a practical reality, or, in Marx and Engel’s words, ‘practical, real consciousness’ (49)) by being too abstract, but rather by being ‘not abstract enough’ (156). Clearly, there is a revision of the concrete/abstract relation taking place here, but, at this preliminary stage, I rely upon the more general and familiar sense of this opposition.



say, *call for*—but which, for this very reason, is itself only ever a tentative and uncertain response to something that both exceeds and precedes it.

I want to begin by situating my method, in this diagnostic reading of sound studies, in relation to that of a major figure within this “emergent” discourse: the above-cited John Mowitt. Mowitt’s work has not only contributed, in a sense we have yet to determine, to sound studies as a discipline, but has done so in a manner that positions the question of disciplinarity itself as central to any possible “contribution”. My own attempt, then, to map the terrain of sound studies according to what I have called the dramatization of the Idea is necessarily indebted to Mowitt’s pioneering work. I want to approach the “material” of sound studies by way of this work, to the very degree that this work raises the question of material itself as a disciplinary problem: a problem of delimiting a field, circumscribing an object, and determining the conditions under which the practice of thinking *materializes itself* in, first and foremost, a set of texts.

In both of Mowitt’s two books on sound to date, *Percussion: Drumming, Beating, Striking* (2002) and *Radio: Essays in Bad Reception* (2011), there is an attempt to reflect upon the problem of how theory might “respond” to sound, on the one hand, and how such a response might coordinate itself as part of a field, as one response amongst many, on the other.<sup>8</sup> I want to take up, initially, not only this question of method—of the *how* of studying sound—but also Mowitt’s own manner of posing this question in *Radio* in particular. As noted previously, in the introduction to this text there is an imbrication between the question of whether, and in what sense, radio could become an object of study, and what the object of such a study would be; in the first case, he refers to that which the study is exercised upon, and in the second, that which such a study hopes to achieve. What is more, as Mowitt indicates, each of these two questions, with their respective senses of the object, is inextricable from the seemingly more mundane question of the *institutional* determination of a field. Mowitt, having

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<sup>8</sup> Mowitt’s most recent book on sound, *Sounds: The Ambient Humanities*, was published in July 2015 and, as such, will not be considered directly here. However, it should be noted that Mowitt himself, in the introduction to this text, performs his own extension of the logic of the texts discussed here in relation to sound studies—though the texts he “samples” are different to my own choices (with the exception of Hilmes) and his interest and emphases, in doing so, are also distinct.

set up this relation between two senses of the ‘object of radio studies’, finds it necessary to ask, as Hilmes did before him: ‘what evidence is there that something called radio studies has emerged as a field of academic endeavor?’ (7). What I want to take, principally, from this text is the way in which Mowitt draws these considerations together, demonstrating that the question of disciplinary *emergence* is of necessity connected to the object and objective of study; it is on this basis—a *material* basis—that sound studies can be said to offer us some initial *orientations* for an attempt to think the sonic. This last point is key, for it is the very paradoxical *dis-orientation* of the paths sound studies has traced out that is, as I hope to show, the motivating impetus behind my own analysis.

With this in mind, let us consider how Mowitt responds to his own version of Hilmes’ question—what evidence could we offer that radio studies might have emerged as a discipline? Evidently, an answer to this question points us towards what Mowitt refers to as ‘something like the conditions of emergency themselves,’ conditions whose ‘signal’ he hopes to attune to by ‘cycling back and forth between radio and its study’ (4). Once again, the question of object, study, and field is articulated in terms of a distributed space across and between which we, as scholars, must navigate and upon which, I would suggest, thought itself takes (or perhaps *makes*) place—and the question of disciplinary emergence is a question of *how* this space is arrayed, how its distinctive topography is established; ultimately, that is, how the dynamism of the Idea (as the discipline’s specifically *problematic* object) is traced. As noted, I want to take up Mowitt’s method for investigating this space, in the case of radio studies, in order to transpose them to that of sound studies; however, I also want to take up something of the nature of this space Mowitt uncovers in his examination of radio studies—it possesses, as I have insisted upon above, a peculiar *temporal* dynamic which we can recover in sound studies itself. With this in mind, I will begin by outlining more fully Mowitt’s method, but with an eye (or rather, an ear) towards the specific conclusions his investigations draw.

For Mowitt, the evidence for radio studies’ emergence is not to be sought in terms of some theoretical *advance* that would have, at last, made radio into an object of thought in the narrow sense, orientating the field towards the subsequent accrual of knowledge of this object. It is not (exclusively) a question of ‘debates and controversies triggering

paradigm shifts’, but rather the ‘apparent banalities’ that form the ‘institutional micropractices of academic social reproduction,’ such as ‘conferences, [...] publications, [and] reviews’ (7). Again, the lesson of cultural studies is well-learned: these two moments, the theoretical and the institutional, are entirely inextricable when it comes to determining the conjuncture within which we, as theorists, are operating—or, put otherwise, the terrain upon which we navigate. On this basis, the evidence Mowitt adduces for radio studies’ existence is drawn from two articles in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and the introduction to a reader entitled *Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio*; texts whose function, institutionally-speaking, is to describe, to summarise, or to otherwise account for the stakes and status of the field itself. What Mowitt is seeking here, however, is not simple description; rather, he casts his ear towards what he terms, following Derrida, the ‘logic of iterability’ as it presents itself within the practice of *citation* (9). That is to say, these texts, which in their distinct ways attempt to account for and to describe radio studies as a discipline, in fact *perform* its very emergence by citing and re-citing certain names, texts, and concerns. As Mowitt puts it, the practice of citation ‘co-produces something like the factual density of [the] scholarship’ that is cited, as well as both affirming and ensuring its ‘centrality’ (9).

Such texts, then, indicate the strong sense in which we can refer to ‘institutional micropractices’ in all their materiality; what is indicated is the sense in which they actively produce, as opposed to merely describing, the ‘factual density’ of scholarship, within and alongside a set of institutional conditions, limitations, and *orientations*; they do so not within the domain of an intellectual activity supposedly decoupled from the material conditions within which it is performed, but rather through an active working on and in those conditions. The space of radio studies, as an emergent field, is therefore irreducibly material, in the sense in which Marx and Engels deploy the term in their materialist conception of history; it is the active *working* of this material—textual, institutional, and otherwise, taken in both a subjective and objective sense—that conditions the theoretical armature by means of which the field apprehends its object.<sup>9</sup> Nowhere is this relation more clear than when Mowitt turns to the particular

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<sup>9</sup> The invocation of Marx and Engels here raises, implicitly, another of cultural studies’ central questions—that of the relation between base and superstructure. The sense in which the former can be said to “determine” the latter has been subject to much negotiation, not least by

contours of radio studies' emergency; and it is this point where my interest shifts from Mowitt's method of enquiring into the field's existence, to the specific conclusions he draws about its distinctive topography. Before bringing Mowitt's own method to bear upon sound studies, and thereby making *material*—in the sense of *significant*—the claims with which I opened regarding the particular dynamic of sound studies, I want to consider this institutional-theoretical intersection as it operates within radio studies, insofar as this operation draws attention to the distinctive temporality of this intersection.

Mowitt hears the first subtle murmur of this temporal dimension in Peter Monaghan's text for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Monaghan's text situates radio studies, on the one hand, through a form of retrospection: '[Monaghan] makes it clear that the pursuit of the cultural studies of radio remedies a deficiency, it supplements a lack' (8); it is a case, as Monaghan puts it, of the field 'rectifying a deficiency' (quoted in Mowitt, 8). That is to say, radio studies is situated in relation to a past marked, pejoratively, by the *absence* of such study. This deficiency and lack, in turn, allow us to figure radio studies as an intellectually ameliorative project, deriving its very positivity, its *significance* as a mode of study, precisely from this negative moment, in relation to which it functions as a timely response. To this end, Monaghan's account deploys, in Mowitt's words, "'intensifiers"' like *fast-growing*, *most-cited*, *spate*, and the ever-reliable if utterly exhausted *new*' in order to 'perform the sudden, irreversible advent of a breakthrough' (8, original emphasis), stressing the way in which it is precisely this belatedness of radio studies that provides it with its theoretical force.

What must also be stressed here is that, according to the logic of iterability referred to above, the citations to which Monaghan applies these "intensifiers"—in this case, the work of none other than Michelle Hilmes—achieve their 'factual density' precisely through the act of citation itself, and, in particular, the capacity for such citations to be continually re-cited. When Mowitt turns to Thomas Doherty's subsequent article for the *Chronicle*, he notes that Doherty's specific characterization of the field of radio

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Raymond Williams in his influential "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory." I do not intend to intervene in the debate here, except to indicate that the sense in which I use "condition" here is not to be understood in a narrowly linear fashion, but one which is sensitive to the nuancing of this relation that cultural studies has done much to both demand and offer.

studies is less important than the ‘reiteration, or repetition, of coverage itself’ (9). One might ask, on this basis, where this leaves the relation between the two objects of radio studies with which Mowitt and I both began—that is, that which it is “about”, and that which it intends to pursue. Mowitt is careful to counter any impression that this iterative (re)production of a field is intended to cast doubt upon the field’s substantiality, or to suggest that it is a matter of reverberations within the academic echo chamber; to the contrary, its significance is precisely that it forces us to trouble this distinction between what constitutes the theoretical “content” of a discipline, as opposed to its institutional “form”; put otherwise, we could say it is a question of the *work* of theory itself, in the fullest sense, and the way in which it *produces* its object. Mowitt suggests, in a manner that will become extremely significant for my engagement with sound studies, that, far from being an extraneous concern, ‘iterability can be shown to belong to the very object of radio studies’ (10).

When Mowitt turns to Hilmes’ introduction to *Radio Reader*, this temporal dynamic of iteration, citation, and repetition is given an even greater significance by means of an allusion to Freud in one of the text’s subtitles, ‘Return of the Radio Repressed’. For Mowitt, this allusion, perhaps ‘unwittingly,’ provides us with a way of figuring more pointedly the relation of delay and iteration he tracks through these texts, and which he identifies as key to not simply the *description* of radio studies but rather, as indicated above, to its performative production as a field in and through such scholarly ‘micropractices’ as, in this case, reviews and readers. For Mowitt, what the invocation of repression makes clear is the way in which the structure of delay figured by Monaghan into the very disciplinary logic of the field—in particular, the way in which the field, to invoke Hilmes’ review cited previously, *matters*—is not an empirical fact of intellectual history that can be separated from the theoretical content of the field, but is rather caught up with the very conditions under which this (or any other field) can emerge at all. For Mowitt, the iterative nature of the study of radio, by analogy with Freud’s account of repression, is not a case of merely re-covering an object previously overlooked, turning our scrutiny upon that which has been left too long in the dark; if this were the case, the belatedness of radio studies would derive, simply, from the socio-cultural and technological fact that radio was rapidly superseded by television as the central mass-broadcast medium of Western consumer capitalism in the mid-twentieth-century, and, as such, was never subject to the scholarly

engagement it deserved. To the contrary, Mowitt remarks, ‘[i]f radio can return as the repressed, according to Hilmes, it is because the event of its advent and perhaps even more of its decline has acquired meaning, for the *first* time, with its return, its reiteration, *in* radio studies’ (12).

As such, the delay through which the very re-iterative dynamic of radio studies’ emergence is conditioned is fundamental to both the existence and the significance of its object—in both senses. This dynamic is not merely one of retrospection—turning our eyes upon a lost object to uncover its cultural significance—but of *retroaction*, in which the significance of the object is produced *across the distance* that marks it: ‘In other, albeit somewhat cryptic words, radio must always have mattered twice in order to matter once’ (11). What clues, then, does this analysis offer us with regard to the similar dynamic we began to discern in relation to sound studies? To presage my own conclusion, I want to show how, in the transition from the specific concern of radio studies to the broader attempt to engage sonority “as such”, precisely the same spatio-temporal dynamism of *studying* emerges—the studying of “studies” as marked, in relation to sound, by a structure of delay in which thought only ever comes *later*, in the form of an *après-coup*.<sup>10</sup> The broader question I wish such an analysis to raise is that of how, within this dynamic constitution of the field across and between sonority and its study, we are forced to consider the very practice of studying itself, in order that we might begin to discern, if only in the faintest of whispers, what calls for us, today, to begin, at last, the task of thinking sonority—and what capacity we might possess to respond to such a call.

### 3. Diagnosing The Delay: On “Not Yet” Thinking Sound

As noted, then, I want to take up Mowitt’s own methodological procedure, and consider my own set of source texts, sounding them for their own iterative logics in

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<sup>10</sup> I use this term here not only to draw further upon the Freudian dynamic of retroaction within the uncovering of the repressed and traumatic content—with *après-coup* being the French translation of Freud’s *Nachträglichkeit*—but to gesture forward to the work of Bernard Stiegler, whose engagement with the intersection between time, thought, and technicity deploys this term in order to indicate the fundamentally retroactive nature of thought’s response to its technico-temporal conditions.

relation to the production of something called sound studies, with its own distinct “object”. First of all, I will return to Michelle Hilmes’ review, cited at the outset. It must be noted that, for Hilmes, the perpetually deferred completion of sound studies’ emergence has an explicitly pejorative sense; she goes on to suggest this deferral indicates that ‘it simply does not matter to enough people in enough disciplines that the study of sound consolidate and declare itself’ (249). Not only does this imply that this tendency implicitly demands a negative response to the second of her titular questions (that is, it indicates that sound studies does not, at least yet, *matter*), but also highlights the criteria by which, for Hilmes, emergency would be measured: sound studies would have to both *consolidate* and *declare* itself—functions which, following Mowitt, we could attribute to the very genre of publication in which Hilmes is operating here. Clearly, for Hilmes not only must the field’s territory be clearly circumscribed, and made consistent, but sound studies must also stake a claim for itself, for its existence and significance—it must make a noise. A failure to do so would render it definitively marginal: ‘Perhaps sound study is doomed to a position on the margins of various fields of scholarship, whispering unobtrusively in the background while the main action occurs elsewhere’ (249). What, we are impelled to ask, is the source of this tendency, which is pushing sound studies towards this unfortunate outcome? Why has the study of sound *not yet*, after a century of trying, managed to make itself heard? Only on condition of diagnosing this failure will we be able to, at long last, heed the call of sonority—even if such audition will, as we have heard above, be of necessity marked by its retroactive orientation.

Hilmes herself proffers an explanation for sound studies’ delay—though, in the spirit of the iterative logic of citation identified by Mowitt, she claims to merely ‘echo the position that most writers on the topic attribute to sound,’ serving to both consolidate and declare a general position that we could identify under the name of sound studies, albeit a position that, paradoxically, declares sound studies to centre upon a fundamental incapacity (249). This explanation relates precisely to the paradoxical object of sound studies itself: ‘sound itself,’ as object of study, is, according to this generally-held position, the source of sound studies’ tendency to remain so much background noise, insofar as it is ‘constantly subjugated to the primacy of the visual’ (249). Sound “itself” is thereby contrasted to a sensory modality—vision—in relation to which it is subordinate. As such, the connection between object and study, which I

have insistently figured as the central concern this thesis, is positioned as one that is necessarily mediated by a particular form of sense experience—a key attribute of sound would be, precisely, the sensory modality of audition that determines what sound *is* as object of analysis. What is more, this sensory modality would be, in some way we have yet to define, less satisfactory in supporting this relation between object and study, with the effect that sound studies is less capable of sustaining itself as a field.

It remains to be heard the extent to which this incapacity of audition manifests itself as a spatio-temporal phenomenon—which is to say, a concrete dynamism marking the Idea of sonority—but even a casual glance at the way in which the distinction between audition and vision is commonly parsed within sound studies indicates the priority of the different temporal and spatial dynamics accorded to each: vision, as static and distanced, is contrasted to audition as immersive and dynamic.<sup>11</sup> Do we not find here, incarnated in the sensory modality through which sound studies, of necessity, articulates itself as a field of study, the problem faced by the field’s conceptual self-orientation: that is, an inability to get a *clear view* of the object it hopes to scrutinize, caught instead continually within a disorientating set of oscillations affecting the topological and temporal parameters of the field itself?

This is no doubt a promising line of explanation, but one that leaves us beset with difficulties as budding sound students, to borrow Jonathan Sterne’s phrase. How would it be possible for sound studies to have done with its long emergency if the very way in which study can be brought to bear upon sound relies upon a mode of sensation whose capacity to produce knowledge is perpetually in question? Clearly, sound studies must diagnose more precisely the nature of this incapacity in order that it might ameliorate it; otherwise, the field itself will remain, as Hilmes fears, only a marginal concern. Yet it also seems that, for those working in the field, it is precisely the secondary, marginal nature imputed to audition, and thereby to “sound itself,” that provides sound studies with its significance and its contemporaneity. It is, as with radio studies, the very interplay of delay and retroaction that determines the object—in

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<sup>11</sup> For an exemplary case, see the opening of Aden Evens’ *Sound Ideas: Music, Machines and Experience*: ‘Partly because sound is dynamic, Western intellectual traditions show a marked preference for vision as the figure of knowledge. We articulate more effectively the fixed image than the dynamic sound’ (ix). I will return to this example in Chapter Two.



both senses—of sound studies; in a certain sense, then, the resolution of this delay may serve only to eliminate the very ground upon which sound studies established itself as a *contemporary* concern for cultural theory. We must not be too hasty to have done with the questionable nature of the sonic object—nor, it follows, with the emergency of sound studies itself.

In order to unfold this argument more fully, I want to consider an almost exact repetition of Hilmes' claim in David Suisman's introduction to his edited collection *Sound in the Age of Digital Reproduction*. For Suisman, sound studies is a pressing concern for scholars today insofar as it may in fact mark a break within the history of Western knowledge itself. This history, according to Suisman, has relied upon a 'hierarchy of the senses' in which audition is subordinated to vision; the citation of Aristotle to substantiate this claim suggests the degree to which the suppression of audition may in fact be coextensive with this history, putting the structural delay of sound studies at around twenty-five hundred years and counting (4). Vision, Suisman elaborates, 'informs our knowledge of the world much more than the other senses,' to the extent that 'visual metaphors [...] suffuse everyday language' (4);<sup>12</sup> such remarks are virtually identical to those offered by Hilmes, though she herself, to recall, professed merely to echo the position of 'most writers on sound'. If Suisman therefore invokes the 'unique possibilities that thinking about sound can open up,' this is to the degree that, in some as-yet-undetermined way, thinking about sound—which is to say, the coupling of sound with its study, of thought with what it must think—must resist the dominant frame of reference through which such couplings have been articulated since the very origin of Western thought. For these bold and significant aspirations to be achieved, however, thought itself must somehow *become aural*. What could this mean? What relation might such *sonic thinking* have, moreover, to the spatio-temporal dynamic of studying itself? It is not easy to see what would enable us to constitute sound studies as a field at all—particularly so long as we continue to strain our eyes in looking for an answer, rather than attuning our ears to the call of thinking.

This last remark must remain ambiguous for now. Prior to elaborating it more extensively—and returning, to that end, to my initial remarks regarding the spatio-

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<sup>12</sup> For an instructive illustration of this fact for the English language, see the opening page of Martin Jay's *Downcast Eyes* (1). Jay also notes that the very term *theory* has its root in the Greek *theoria*—as does *theatre*—indicating a visual scrutiny (23).

temporal dynamism of thought itself *as a practice*—I want to turn my third and final example through which I aim to illustrate the centrality of delay and deferral to the very contemporaneity of sound studies: Jonathan Sterne’s “Sonic Imaginations,” the introduction to his 2012 edited collection *The Sound Studies Reader*. Once again, we are taking up an exemplary case of the ‘micropractices of academic social reproduction’; as John Mowitt puts it, and as we noted above, the reader is ‘no doubt the decisive avatar of any and all new fields’ (2011, 10). Again, we find here more evidence to suppose that the subsequent years have heard sound studies emerge from its marginality—could there be any clearer form under which a field could both consolidate and declare itself, as Hilmes demands? Yet Sterne’s introduction itself is replete with uncertainties around the very act of consolidation and declaration; it even affirms the very *incoherence* of both the object and the method of study whose conjunction would, as we have supposed, constitute sound studies as such. In seeing (or rather, auditing) why, we can begin to shift the angle of our analysis further towards the very nature of this conjunction itself.

To begin, it is worth noting that Sterne himself is dubious about precisely the claims we have seen Hilmes and Suisman articulate above: that is, the notion that vision and audition are to be opposed according to a set of mutually-exclusive criteria, with one set being more suitable to the procedures of knowledge than the other. Sterne refers to this opposition as the ‘audiovisual litany,’ first elaborated in his 2003 book *The Audible Past*—one of the objects, as it happens, of Hilmes’ review cited at the outset (15-18); by this term he means to indicate this position’s implicit invocation of a universal, transhistorical essence for each of the senses. For Sterne, such an essential distinction between sensory modalities fails to attend to the historicity of the senses themselves, as gestured to by Marx in the *1844 Manuscripts*: ‘The forming of the five senses is a labour of the entire history of the world down to the present’ (Marx, 353; quoted in Sterne 2003, 5). It was on this basis that the purpose of Sterne’s earlier study was, in part, to establish the relationship between advances in recording technology and practices of listening, within the ambit of a broader account of something like an aural modernity. This project presumes, of necessity, that claims such as those articulated by Hilmes and Suisman are reliant upon an unexamined premise: that the senses themselves remain static throughout history, with merely their relation at stake. That is to say, the claim that we must begin to think sonority, *at last*, from the vantage

of a delay marked principally by our incapacity to do so—ultimately, then, the claim that we must finally begin to *think (about) sound*—makes a set of assumptions about both sense experience and the relation of sensation to knowledge that, for Sterne, we are not entitled to make.

Be that as it may, we can only note at this stage that, regardless of its consistency, the claim of a structural delay in our sonic thinking, related to some disjunction between sonority and thought itself, is present within the literature to the degree that Sterne himself must acknowledge it within his introduction, however much he might dispute its premises. What is most significant is that, in doing so, he must embrace within the ambit of sound studies a plurality of both objects and approaches to the degree that the very unity he is, at least implicitly, seeking to articulate in presenting the field's very first reader is radically threatened—as we will hear, it is not even clear what sound “itself” might even be, *qua* object of analysis, nor how this object might become thinkable, at last. In concluding my account of the sound studies' emergency, then, I want to emphasise the way in which the field not only finds itself incessantly caught in a dynamic of delay and suspension, at whose core is the very relation of thought and audition itself, but that this dynamic serves to undercut the very sense of the terms that the field hopes to conjoin. We are left, at last, with the question not only of how we might study sound, but also that of what both sound and its study might *be*—or might become. It is on these terms that I will ultimately circle back to the work of John Mowitt, to uncover in his work a suggestion as to how we might begin to probe this uncertain relation, having at last suspended the question of whether sound studies exists and matters in favour of the prior question—logically speaking, though in fact the question that only comes *at the end* in practice—of how, and in what sense, sound itself might *call for thinking*, to the very degree that it calls thinking itself into question.

With this longer-range goal in mind, let us turn to Sterne's introduction. In his presentation of the state of sound studies, as a means to introduce the texts the reader gathers together, Sterne is clearly well aware of the phenomenon that we have already audited: in defining itself as *new* to the very degree that it is marked by a *delay*, the emphasis of sound studies comes to be placed, insistently, upon the very possibility (or lack thereof) of finally submitting sound to study. We can read in Sterne's account, if

only implicitly, an acknowledgement of the ways in which this uncertainty oscillates between object and subject, between sound and its study—and it is this *between* that I want to insistently emphasise as the locus of my interest, the point at which I take sound studies to have identified, albeit rarely in an explicit way, a question of the practice of thinking itself.

To this end, we can observe how Sterne notes, as we have in the preceding, the way in which ‘even the most basic attempts to define the one of the [sound studies]’s central concepts, “sound”,’ have forced the field to take up ‘abstract questions’ of an ontological, epistemological, and methodological nature (2012, 7). I want to focus attention on one such question mentioned by Sterne that is exemplary for my present concerns: the question of whether sound must be thought of in relation to a specific set of auditory capacities (as Sterne himself argued in *The Audible Past*), or if, on the contrary, we can figure sounds as ‘having their own “ontological” existence’ irreducible to any particular phenomenon of audition (7). That is to say, is sound to be thought *for us*, or *in itself*? Here, the relation itself occupies centre stage, the space of theory itself brought within the ambit of sound studies’ analyses: how might the thinking subject articulate sound? Must it be as something that it encounters from without, or as a phenomenon always-already indexed to the capacities of the thinker (however essential or contingent these may prove to be)?

Sterne’s (necessarily brief) account of this question hedges his earlier commitment to the former option in *The Audible Past*,<sup>13</sup> in order to stress the plurality of responses offered within the field itself, such that we can sense, at the heart of sound studies itself, a dissensus as to what it is that is to be studied. Most importantly, however, Sterne is unequivocal in claiming that it is not viable to simply opt out of this debate, even if the field itself has failed to identify an agreed-upon solution: ‘No sound student can write anything of substance without at least implicitly taking a position in these debates’ (8). The truth of this claim is borne out just as easily as Hilmes’ remark on the prevalence of the vision-sound opposition through a consideration of the literature

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<sup>13</sup> In this text, Sterne argues that the very concept of sonority only makes sense in relation to human capacity for audition, as it is only this capacity that distinguishes audible vibrations from inaudible ones, and therefore those that we call sounds from those that we do not: ‘Sound is a very particular perception of vibrations. You can take the sound out of the human, but you can take the human out of the sound only through an exercise in imagination’ (11). I will discuss this position further in Chapter Two.

in the field—something that I hope to demonstrate as I proceed. Thus, the field itself, just as in Hilmes’ case, is invoked within the ambit of a debate that we might situate at the transcendental rather than empirical level; that is, it is not that this or that particular analysis of sound, or some fact of sonic history, that is a matter of fundamental dispute within sound studies, but rather the very nature of the discipline itself: under what conditions can sound be studied? The indisputable existence of the field itself should not be taken to mark an answer to this question, but rather to indicate the intractability of the question itself.

I will return to this specific problem in sound studies at various stages of this thesis, insofar as it marks a vital intersection between the concerns of sound studies and Deleuze studies and, therefore, a privileged point for my own intervention. For both discourses, this question is the site of a struggle increasingly articulated as one over the *future* of theoretical and philosophical work as such: have we reached the limits of the implicitly idealist and phenomenologically-determined approaches that have (it is claimed) characterized cultural theory since the advent of the so-called “linguistic turn”, and is there, therefore, a necessity to formulate a form of theory that would be resolutely realist and/or materialist in its premises and its practices?<sup>14</sup> My response to this, that will be unfolded both directly and implicitly during the course of this thesis, will be to seek to undermine this forced choice, and the presuppositions upon which it is based—which will pass under the name, central to Deleuze’s work, of the *image of thought*. Immediately, however, we can hear how what is fundamentally at stake in either formulation is the relation of a practice of thinking to the object upon which it reflects; it is, as indicated above, precisely the terms of this problem that Deleuze’s work brings into question, insofar as the problematic Idea of sound will take on a sense that radically reconfigures the sense of both *object* and *essence*. I will return to this point subsequently, and throughout.

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<sup>14</sup> Such a claim is well summarized in the introduction to the 2011 collection *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, “Towards a Speculative Philosophy.”

#### 4. Calling and Responding: Sound as Provocation

In sum, then, this brief detour through the literature *on* sound studies (rather than, strictly, the literature *of* sound studies) gives us some indication as to how the field itself has been constituted over the last decade. Perhaps the most concise summary of this material would be to say that it indicates Michelle Hilmes offered us, in certain respects, a false choice (related to, but distinct from, the forced choice between the *in itself* or the *for us*, as I will indicate): sound studies exists precisely to the degree that it is still emerging, and not yet emerged. What is more, sound studies' existence relies upon a meta-theoretical (re)cognition of this process, a reflexivity of the discourse in which emergency is not simply brought to a close but examined as it continues to take place; sound studies remains, as a field, in a state of emergency, and it is this state that gives the discipline its *sense*. From this, I draw the following conclusions. Firstly, sound studies is irreducibly and fundamentally caught in questions of the temporality of study itself, marking itself as 'always emerging' to the degree that it is always functioning *across and within* a temporal delay that is, in fact, constitutive for it as a field; put otherwise, sound studies is operating with a present that is always simultaneously pulling toward a past in which sound was *not yet* thought, and a future in which it *will have been*. As such, the study of sound raises the question of the temporal relation of study itself: the delay of the study becomes a study of delay. This leads to the second point: sound studies, by virtue of this temporal dis-orientation, raises the question of how, and in what ways, the conjunction of study and its object *takes place*—or *makes a place* for itself. I re-invoke, then, my opening remarks about the spatio-temporal dynamics of thought itself, but here as observations—or perhaps acts of listening—called for by sound studies itself.

It is at this stage that I wish to recast these analyses in terms that are, once again, drawn from the work of John Mowitt. My aim here is to reformulate this general problem of sound and its study within the conceptual thematic of *call and response*, in a way that I hope draws greater attention to the specifically sonic dimensions of this spatio-temporal dynamics of studying, to which I take sound studies to be insistently drawing our attention. In *Percussion: Drumming, Beating, Striking*, Mowitt invokes this figure of call and response in the context of an account of what specifically constitutes a theoretical engagement with, in this case, music. Mowitt's own

theoretical practice, in this text, involves the construction of what we might say, bearing in mind the above-cited remarks from *Radio* as well as the opening discussion of Deleuze, is a specifically theoretical object—in Deleuze’s terms, a concept—which he terms the ‘percussive field’ (5); to foreground what will be a key concern of this thesis, we can note that on a preceding page he specifically refers to the activity of ‘construct[ing] the concept of the “percussive field”’ in order to indicate the theoretical *work* his text is doing (3). This constructivist emphasis is designed ‘to imply both that [the concept] is imported into the domain of musical practice from elsewhere and that it is solicited from this elsewhere by what is taking place in musical practice’ (5). On the basis of my preceding formulations, then, we can say that the activity of studying involves the production of a specifically theoretical construct that is, on the one hand, exterior to that object that it is designed to study, and, on the other, is ‘solicited’ by that object. Or would this be, perhaps, to speak of two distinct objects whose correlation is at stake in the attempt at some grounding of theory’s analytical efficacy?<sup>15</sup> As noted previously, Mowitt himself refers, in *Radio*, to a ‘volatile zone of indistinction between the world—whether physical or psychical—and the institutionally organized production of knowledge [...] about that world’ in order to indicate this uncertainty surrounding the nature of the object in theory (2).

I will return to this problem of the object at length in subsequent chapters, but firstly I wish to note that it is in attempting to clarify the sense and scope of this ‘solicitation’ made by music to theory that Mowitt invokes the figure of call and response. He remarks that, in the ‘idiom’ of rock-and-roll in particular, his analysis of the percussive field is ‘predicted or *called for*’ (5, my emphasis), and goes on to suggest that, in making such a remark, ‘part of [his] aim [is] to raise the issue of theory’ (12).

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<sup>15</sup> I use the term “correlation” deliberately here in order to bring within the ambit of my account recent debates within cultural theory and continental philosophy over the idealist inheritances of questions such as those I pose here. As mentioned previously, a re-turn to materialist and/or realist commitments on the part of philosophers and cultural analysts has been proposed as a way to move beyond the supposedly outplayed problematic we inherit under the moniker of the “linguistic turn”; the latter, to use a term coined by Quentin Meillassoux but now granted currency far beyond his initial usage, is incessantly focused on the “correlation” between the knowing subject and that which it knows, to the degree that what Meillassoux terms the ‘great outdoors’ of the world in-itself is excised from the bounds of the thinkable (7). To this degree, twentieth-century cultural theory and philosophy would be inescapably Kantian in its scope and significance. Needless to say, my remarks thus far should suggest that I do not take the problem of correlation to be so easily done with, though, as will become clear, I would seek to reframe the terms of this problem in such a way that the forced choice of idealism/materialism would be undercut.

Part of the ‘issue’ of theory, for Mowitt, is the unfortunate fact that ‘theory often remains “for external use only”—that is, for application,’ wherein the ‘theoretical work is brought to the music, which is then illuminated through it.’ How might theory be written such that, rather than being applied from without, it rather ‘responds to the call of musical practice’?<sup>16</sup> For Mowitt, it is a question of giving music ‘the authority to provoke theorizing’; theory responds to this provocative call by ‘discovering in this encounter other possibilities of elaboration, other orientations.’ From what we have already heard, we are gradually attuning ourselves to the possibility that music, and sound more generally, is ideally suited to make such a demand; not only is it something that insistently calls to us, as scholars, without, as yet, receiving a definitive response, but, in doing so, it raises ‘issue[s] of theory’ that reach as far as theory’s very nature as an activity, or a *practice*, of thought.

On the one hand, this reformulation allows us to develop more precisely the suggestion, made above, that it is the very difficulty theory faces in relation to sound that grounds both the existence and significance of sound studies—it indicates, precisely, that sound is a *provocation* for theory, and the fact that theory is incapable of simply ‘smothering’ this provocation ‘like a salve,’ making sound all-too-thinkable by lowering the amplitude and eliminating the feedback, is, in fact, a marker of the *necessity* for attempting to think it. Sound, as seems clear from our preceding analyses of Hilmes, Suisman and Sterne, is calling for something that theory has, as yet, been unable to proffer; therefore, theory itself must discover ‘other orientations.’ Yet, on the other hand, there is another reading this reformulation may allow us to make of the current state of sound studies: we might ask why, for so long, this call has gone unheard, much less answered, and whether theory is capable of offering any response at all. As Sterne indicated, it is unclear what it is in sonority that calls for thinking—does sound itself transmit the signal, or is it simply our own auditory capacities that

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<sup>16</sup> In this text, Mowitt is focused specifically on music, and hence some of the concerns we are dealing with here do not fall within the frame of his enquiry. The way in which the concerns and doubts of sound studies over the analysability of its object can be heard to emerge in concert with the progressive decoupling of sound from music in the realm of cultural practice during the twentieth century will be a central topic of Chapters Two and Three; at this stage, I would simply note that the very generality of the sonic is central to its problematic status as object of enquiry, and this generality is foregrounded precisely at the moment when the division between musical and non-musical sound ceases to be binding in the definition of a specific medium of cultural production. It is on this basis, historically speaking, that “sound itself” becomes a problem for thought, and hence John Cage is accorded a priority in defining this latter term.



are making themselves heard to us? Moreover, from Hilmes and Suisman we encountered the possibility that theory itself simply cannot operate in this register—that is, we have encountered the continually re-iterated claim that, whether essentially or through the historical trajectory of Western knowledge, theory simply cannot listen at all. How, then, are we to proceed?

As I have indicated previously, I do not consider these two interpretations to be mutually exclusive—that is, I take the provocation of sound studies to be precisely the demand to rethink our very capacity to respond, theoretically, to any call whatsoever. Moreover, I consider the very emphasis on the call and/as provocation within Mowitt's text to indicate an initial line upon which to pursue this suggestion. In *Radio*, Mowitt draws briefly upon a philosopher for whom thinking is inseparable from *calling*: Martin Heidegger. Moreover, as we will see, Heidegger's account of the relation between the call and thinking is one marked by delay, deferral, and an insistent uncertainty over our capacity to hear the call, to listen to what it tells us, and to respond accordingly. As such, I want to begin my account of what the provocation of sound might do to theoretical work, in particular, and thought, in general, by taking up a question I have posed insistently thus far in a Heideggerean register: why, today, does sound call for thinking? In pursuing this question, we will have to rewind and replay many of the insights sketched out above, renewing their meaning in a different key. Ultimately, it will be a question of resituating what has been presented above as a narrowly disciplinary affair—even if we can extend this discipline as far as the ever-widening ambit of cultural theory in general—at the level of contemporary thought itself. As such, if we wish to ask, on the basis of sound studies' provocation, why sound today might call for thinking, we are also obliged to ask what thinking might be today, and what it might still yet become. In doing so, we must investigate the contours of the con-temporary itself, in order to see precisely what new (dis)orientations thought, under the strain of making sound's call audible, might be forced to pursue.

## Chapter One: The Tele-Phonic Call of Thinking

How can the theoretical *work* of sound studies be (re)figured as the response to a call emanating from the “object” of such studying—that is, from “sound itself”?<sup>17</sup> Moreover, what would constitute the objecthood of this object, if it no longer occupies the focal point of our subjective scrutiny, our act of *theoria*? Finally, what would be the nature of the renewed relation between that which calls and the work of the response? Both the distinct terms and their conjunction remain in question. It is these questions that we have inherited from John Mowitt’s investigation into the conditions of disciplinary emergency, and together they function as both a provocation and a task: we are incited to pursue the work of theory otherwise than as the extrinsic application of a pre-existing conceptual framework to an object supposedly given, to instead place thinking in contact with that which *calls for* theorization. This amounts to a re-orientation of the fundamentally representational nature of the theoretical act as such, in which thought, the operation of the subject defined as thinking thing, apprehends and masters its object; thought, as we will hear, must become a *passion*, which, by the same token, will constitute its paradoxical becoming-active.

In our survey of the field of sound studies, we discovered a set of animating constraints with which any attempt at such a reformulation contend: it seems that sound calls for theorization today to the very degree that it has *still not* been theorised, its emergence as a field predicated upon a perpetual emergency stemming from the resistance of sound itself to the prevailing theoretical models—or perhaps, at its limit, to the very *image of thought* itself. How are we to at last hear the call for theorisation that sound itself emits, today more than ever, if thought registers only optical stimuli? On the one hand, it is clearly a question of diagnosing the nature and the source of this theoretical deafness, upon which much of the most interesting work within sound studies bases its own significance. Are our limited capacities of response to blame, or is it perhaps the nature of the call itself? What strategies would offer themselves to us

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<sup>17</sup> As noted previously, the sense and the value of this term is the source of much debate in sound studies, insofar as the discipline finds itself upon the theoretical negligence of sound itself as an object—as distinct, for instance, from music, or even from sonic experience more narrowly. The emphasis upon this term—either to embrace or to repudiate its status as *the* object (in both senses, as Mowitt reminds us) of sound studies—is linked to the priority of the work of John Cage in such debates, insofar as “the sounds themselves” were Cage’s own lifelong focus. This topic will be discussed at length in Chapter Two.

for ameliorating this incapacity, based on the diagnosis proffered—what theoretical ear-cleaning techniques, what amplificatory conceptual devices, would aid us in at last making the call audible, in at last broadcasting an appropriate response?<sup>18</sup>

The task of this chapter is to begin answering such questions through an interrogation of the figure of the call itself, sounding out its auditory resonances and testing its capacity to function as an *immanently sonorous* figure of theoretical work—a figure, moreover, that puts sonority as the service of a re-visioning (or, rather, re-auditing) of what it means to think. Yet, for this very reason, the call functions as an opportunity to sound the depths of philosophy’s resistance to audition, to which sound studies itself has so frequently alluded; in what ways might the figure of the call be susceptible to such noise-dampening tendencies, and what might it tell us about the possibility for resisting them? It is these questions that this chapter hopes to explore.

### 1. Answering the Call: Heidegger’s Silence

As noted in the introduction, the figure of the *call for thinking* deployed here is adopted from the work of Martin Heidegger, whose lecture course of 1951-52 *Was Heisst Denken?* poses the question of what *calls for* thinking and, simultaneously, of what *is called* thinking; that is to say, the title articulates the contiguity of the questions of thought’s definition, of what essentially passes under the name of “thinking”, and of its source, of that which solicits thinking from us—questions which are thereby taken to be inseparable. This figure of the call proposes to us, then, the necessity of articulating thought through the framework of a demand, in relation to

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<sup>18</sup> At the level of metaphor, such remarks display an unfortunate ableism, not uncommon in texts that indicate the relative inattention to sonority within the history of cultural theory and philosophy. I deploy them here in the hopes that my subsequent argument will help to mitigate these discriminatory implications, in two ways. Firstly, I wish to show that, in constructing what Deleuze refers to as an image of thought, the metaphorical-literal distinction does not hold—or, rather, that *everything becomes literal* in the act of laying out a plan(e) upon which thought can “take place” (see, on this point, François Zourabichvili’s account of Deleuze’s ‘literality’ (DP 139, 142)). Secondly, and in relation to the particular status of this plane as *real* as well as *ideal* (which is to say, in Deleuze’s parlance, *virtual*), both sensory and conceptual capacities are always-already determined by concrete technical “supports” that determine their nature and range (and here Deleuze and Guattari would refer to a ‘machinic assemblage’); therefore any pre-given distinction between natural and artificial, innate or enhanced, is untenable.

which the “activity” of thought would itself become a passion—thought would be defined, essentially, in response to that which calls for it, rather than through the (representational) act of the subject *qua* thinking thing, the *cogito sum*. It is this calling that would mark out that which *essentially* passes under the name “thinking”, from all the forms of pseudo-thinking that, in Heidegger’s account, endlessly bedevil it.

To this extent, the figure of the call is already implicated within the texture of sound studies’ disciplinary constitution, as sounded out in the introduction: the call articulates the way in which some “object” *solicits* thinking from us, just as, according to sound studies, sound itself does “today”—and, to recall, the status and significance of this “today” remains in question. There is, with regard to this temporal dimension, a further key aspect of Heidegger’s account of the call of thinking that makes it a privileged vector for (re)formulating the demand of sound studies: for Heidegger, that which is called thinking has *not yet* taken place. As he famously puts it: ‘Most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time is that we are still not thinking’ (WT 6). Thus, the very contemporaneity of “our time” is defined, by Heidegger as by sound studies, in accordance with a *delay*—thought is to be, at last, provoked in us to the very degree that we are marked, collectively, by its ongoing deferral, in and through a paradoxically constitutive “still not.” The question for Heidegger, much as for sound studies, then, is that of *how to begin thinking, at last*. This “at last” is not incidental, or pejorative; as Heidegger puts it, ‘[t]hat which is primally early shows itself only ultimately to men’ (BW 327), a claim that could equally mark the significance of sonority as of thinking within our to-be-determined contemporaneity.

As prospective sound students attentive to the sonic richness of Heidegger’s discourse, then, we must ask: how are we “at last” to pick up the call to think sound, to make it audible, and to interpret that which it calls on us to do? It is in investigating the significance of such a demand that my own analysis will begin—a beginning that will ultimately only serve to bring into focus the question of beginning itself.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> To this end, Chapter Two will begin with this same question taken up in a new sense—one demanded by the results of Chapter One—and will therefore, effectively begin the thesis again, repeating this opening with a difference whose distance should be taken to mark the movement of thought itself. It will hopefully be made clear that this structural device is inseparable from the content of what is argued during the course of this thesis.

To begin with a repetition, let us consider the statement around which Heidegger's lecture course of 1951-52 turns: 'Most thought-provoking in our thought-provoking time is that we are still not thinking' (WT 6). Whatever it is that might be called thinking, then, and whatever might call for it, the present to which Heidegger addresses himself is defined by its absence—'our thought-provoking time' is the time of the 'still not.' Initially, then, we are incited to pursue this determination of our present—if, indeed, it remains "ours" sixty years later—as one which is thought-provoking to the very extent that it is still not thinking, called to think insofar as the call continues to ring out, unanswered. Formulated in this way, thinking is, we can surmise, a question of transmission and reception—of picking up the call, at last.

Given this, two questions press themselves upon us, as Heidegger's deferred auditors (and the situation of the lecture hall must itself be borne in mind throughout): firstly, *why* is "our time" marked by this 'withdrawal' of thought, which is 'not nothing' (WT 9) but which rather 'draws us along' with it; and, secondly, how might we begin to hear the provocation our time offers to us precisely in and through the drawing of this withdrawal? In tracing Heidegger's response to these questions, we will be able to discern how the figure of the call is pushed towards a *tele-phonetic* problematic—that is, a question of *transmission* and *audition*—that will, at the same moment, find itself repressed, divested of significance and consigned to a superficial level of his text.

In taking up this question of 'our thought-provoking time', we are pursuing a *diagnostic* function for philosophy, or, perhaps, for the "studying" of studies in general—the philosopher or theorist as clinician of civilization, in a Nietzschean vein (see DI 140). We are attempting to articulate the present as a moment that *lacks thinking*, in the hope of ultimately curing ourselves of such thoughtlessness in and through this very articulation. Inseparable from Heidegger's articulation of the call, then, is a critical engagement with his—and perhaps still our—*present*. In relation to sound studies, in particular, any engagement with the Heideggerean call must articulate this aspect of historico-temporal diagnostics. Thus, prior to asking how and why the call of thinking remains unanswered, it aids our investigation to seek some general account of this present in Heidegger; what, for Heidegger, was the nature of this "thought-provoking time" that may still be ours?

His answer is clear: “our time” is variously referred to as a ‘technological age’, an ‘age of the machine’ (WT 24), an ‘atomic age’ (DT 49) and an ‘industrial age’ (BW 436), to pick out a few instances that are roughly contemporaneous in his writings. It seems, then, that our time is equally defined, for Heidegger, by the *presence* of particular forms of technology as by the *absence* of thinking. Are these two moments, positive and negative, related? For Heidegger, this is certainly the case; and I want to offer a brief (and, therefore, somewhat schematic) account of this connection between thought and technics in Heidegger for two related reasons. Firstly, my argument that the figure of the call in Heidegger demands a tele-ponic articulation directly implicates a relation between thought, technics and audition; yet, as I will show, the con-temporaneity of ‘our thought-provoking time’ is defined, precisely, by the reciprocal exclusion of two of these elements. Secondly, as a longer-term goal of my analysis in this chapter, I wish to claim that, following Bernard Stiegler, any attempt to define “our time”—that is, any attempt to articulate a collective temporality—must in fact appeal to a technicity that is necessarily constitutive for such a temporality; the reasoning for this will develop out of the tensions inherent in Heidegger’s own attempt to suppress such an articulation. In both these cases, I am to show that sound studies, in its very con-temporaneity, is bound up in the problem of *thought and technics*, a problem that, as I hope to indicate, turns upon the very status of the “and”.<sup>20</sup>

With these goals in mind, let us take up the relation between the absence of thought and the (omni)presence of technology in Heidegger’s account of ‘our thought-provoking time.’ As with thinking, however, we face an immediately *hermeneutic* problem: what is called *technology*? Though, as with thinking (and, famously, with Being), we might appeal to a generally-available sense of such a term, nevertheless Heidegger’s approach will not and cannot be satisfied with an appeal to common sense. The hermeneutic in Heidegger is always allied to the ontological; the question, more precisely, is: what is technology *in essence*? From Plato onwards, Western

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<sup>20</sup> As Lee Braver notes, for Heidegger, “and” was the ‘most important word in the title of *Being and Time*’ (Braver 2014, 26).

philosophy has known that particular things cannot be offered as solutions to the question of essence; Heidegger himself retains this premise.<sup>21</sup> Consider the following:

Modern technology is not constituted by, and does not consist in, the installation of electric motors and turbines and similar machinery; that sort of thing can on the contrary be erected only to the extent to which the *essence* of modern technology has already assumed dominion. Our age is not a technological age because it is an age of the machine; it is an age of the machine because it is a technological age. (WT 24, my emphasis)

Clearly, though “our time” is both ‘a technological age’ and ‘an age of the machine,’ these characterizations are not equivalent; rather the latter is *derivative* in relation to the former—and not simply in the sense that the machine is a subset of the broader category of technology. The key term here is *essence*, and everything hinges on understanding its function; without doing so, the superficially exclusionary relation between thinking and technology in Heidegger’s account of “our time” will remain obscure.

To stress this import, let us consider a related, famous claim of Heidegger’s: ‘the essence of technology is by no means anything technological’ (BW 311). This quotation, from “The Question Concerning Technology,” is repeated almost verbatim in *Was Heisst Denken?*: ‘The essence of technology is above all not anything technological’ (WT 22). Needless to say, though Heidegger will invoke the classic metaphysical distinction between a thing and its essence—just as the essence of a tree is not itself a tree, in Heidegger’s example—he is not merely reiterating the traditional definition. For Heidegger, the essence of a particular being, or set of beings, is that by means of which it appears as what it is<sup>22</sup>—which, for Heidegger, must be rooted in Being itself, as distinct<sup>23</sup> from all particular beings. A sufficient engagement with Heidegger’s account of the ontological difference (that is, the difference between Being and beings) is far beyond the scope of this thesis; I will only establish,

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<sup>21</sup> Deleuze engages with this argument in an important way at NP 71; see Chapter Three for a discussion. For a famous instance Plato (and one to which Deleuze is implicitly referring in the above-cited passage) in, see *Republic*, 200-202.

<sup>22</sup> As the introduction to *Being and Time* indicates, this conception of essence is central to Heidegger’s definition of phenomenology as investigating precisely the means by which things show themselves as what they are: the phenomenon is the self-showing of a thing, and the logos is that which lets something be seen as it is (BT 51-58).

<sup>23</sup> Distinct, but not *separate*: ‘Being is always the Being of an entity’ (BT 29).

schematically, a few necessary points. For Heidegger, Being is “that” in and through which any particular beings appear to us, but is not itself a being—Being is that which *gives* beings to us, and Heidegger will insistently play on the homonymy between “it gives” and “there is” in German: *es gibt*. However, this giving of Being is covered over and concealed in the very beings that are given to us: Being itself, as Heidegger will put it elsewhere, ‘shows itself and withdraws at the same time’ (BQ 178); it shows itself as *beings*, but withdraws as *Being*. It is on this basis that we can understand Heidegger’s famous re-formulation of truth as *aletheia*, un-concealment: being withdraws *in and through* the very entities that it discloses to us, hence we “forget” Being itself in favour of those entities, or articulate Being as merely one (particularly significant) being amongst others. This occlusion of the ontological difference is, for Heidegger, at the core of Western metaphysics.

With these general points in mind, we can intuit that, for Heidegger, the *essence* of technology must relate to the givenness of Being, rather than just to particular technical beings, such as ‘electric motors and turbines and similar machinery’ (WT 24); these latter beings, as Heidegger notes, can be ‘erected only to the extent to which the essence of modern technology has already assumed dominion.’ This essence is defined, in Heidegger terms, as a ‘mode of revealing’ (BW 319); that is, a particular way in which Being is disclosed to us in and through a set of beings that are appropriate to this disclosure. A mode of revealing thus determines the *kind* of beings we can encounter; as such, technical beings are possible solely on the basis of the mode of revealing that constitutes technology’s essence, without which we would be unable to encounter them. Returning to the figure of the call with this in mind, we can note that, in Heidegger’s work, man is persistently positioned as *passive* in relation to Being, which *gives* beings to us (and references to Being in terms of a gift abound in *Was Heisst Denken?*). As Heidegger puts it, a particular way of revealing is initiated not through the activity of man, but through a ‘sending’ or ‘destining’ of Being (BW 329). All the ‘technological activity’ that man engages in, and through which we might characterize industrial modernity, in fact ‘merely responds’ to this sending (BW 326). The response, importantly, always *comes after*—in relation to that which calls to us, or that which gives to us, both thinking and technics can only ever be an *after-thought*, an *après-coup* as Bernard Stiegler has it.



We are seemingly validated, then, in our initial intimation that problems of transmission and reception are central to Heidegger's work with regard to Being as much as to thinking; and this proximity between the two is borne out when we ask, finally, *was heisst denken?* What is called thinking, and what calls for thinking? For Heidegger, both question are asking after the Being of beings. It is Being that 'gives us [...] the gift of what must properly thought about' (WT 17), and thinking itself can be defined as 'relatedness to Being' (WT 110); thought's 'proper trade,' moreover, is 'to rip away the fog that conceals beings as such' in order to reveal them in their Being, to establish a 'real openness in [man's] relatedness to Being,' an 'essential relation' without which man could not be 'save[d]' (WT 89). Heidegger is even more explicit on this point in the "Letter on Humanism": 'Said plainly, thinking is the thinking of Being' (BW 220). Thus, what *calls* out to us to be thought is Being itself; thinking would be our response to this call. Yet, was not the essence of technology itself a *sending* of Being, and technological activity our response to it? It is once again a question, then, of two *types of connection* or two *relations of transmission* between Being and man—one of which does not deserve to be called thinking.

This reading is borne out by the fact that in certain instances Heidegger will articulate the conflict between thinking and technology in terms of two kinds of thinking; technology is itself allied with what Heidegger calls 'one-track thinking' (WT 32), or 'calculative thinking' (DT 46). In elaborating this distinction, there are two points I want to make. Firstly, that the contrast between the two demands to be articulated in terms of the problem of transmission and mediation, wherein the latter is distinguished from the former by a failure to hear the call sent to us by Being in an authentic way. Secondly, I want to indicate how this problem itself leads us to the question of the meaning of "thinking", and how we, as auditors, are to hear what is essentially named through that word, as against those resonances it bears in our unthinking technological age. Drawing together these two points, I hope to indicate that Heidegger's discourse repeatedly draws us towards a *tele-ponic* account of the call of thinking—while nevertheless rendering such an account impossible. Ultimately, I want to indicate that, in a manner that cuts contrary to Heidegger's own language, and even to the topology of his conceptual framework, the call of thinking is neither *transmitted* nor *audited*.

Taking up the first point, then: in what sense is the ‘one-track’ or ‘calculative thinking’ that characterizes the essence of technology somehow exclusionary of genuine thought? In order to observe the broad thrust of Heidegger argument we need to clarify the nature of the ‘sending’ or ‘destining’ of Being that constitutes the essence of technology. Heidegger defines the mode of revealing proper to modern technology as *enframing* (*Gestell*), and what it reveals to us is not any particular technical object (which is to say, it is not determined by, for instance, machinery as opposed to handicrafts, even if Heidegger sometimes seems to be suggesting this), but rather beings as a whole as a *standing-reserve* (*Bestand*); that is, beings are revealed as something on-hand for our usage, ready and waiting to meet our needs. As Heidegger puts it: ‘The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging, which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored as such’ (BW 320). Subsequently, he qualifies this storing as a form of “standing-by”: ‘Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering’ (BW 322). *Enframing*, then, is the name for the mode of revealing in which all beings appear to us as ‘the objectlessness of standing-reserve,’ that pre-ordered and always available set of indistinct “things”, no longer even objects, on which we may rely and of which we may make use without ever explicitly thematising their nature, their significance, or even their existence.

In sum, then, enframing, as the essence of technology, discloses all beings as standing-reserve, as an indistinct mass, ordered and maintained on-hand to meet our needs. This ordering places man in a position of *apparent* dominance: ‘...the illusion comes to prevail that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct’ (BW 332). This is necessarily an illusion, for Heidegger, insofar as, to recall, all revealing, even that of enframing, is ultimately a sending or destining of Being, to which all the activity of man ‘merely responds’ (BW 326); as Heidegger repeatedly emphasizes, ‘the unconcealment itself, within which ordering unfolds, is never a human handiwork’ (BW 324); hence, not only is the essence of technology not anything technological, it is also ‘not anything human’ (WT 22). It is in this sense that enframing ‘conceals revealing itself’ at the same moment as it ‘drives out every other possibility of revealing (BW 332-33); enframing *essentially* conceals revealing by making revealing into an apparent activity of man.

Let us return, with this in mind, to the characterization of thinking from the “Letter on Humanism”: ‘Said plainly, thinking is the thinking of Being.’ This remark is particularly instructive insofar as it requires of Heidegger a clarification regarding the status of the genitive, a clarification that will allow audition to intrude into thought itself:

The genitive says something twofold. Thinking is of Being inasmuch as thinking, appropriated by Being, belongs to Being. At the same time thinking is of Being insofar as thinking, belonging to Being, listens to Being. As *the belonging to Being that listens*, thinking is what it is according to its essential origin (BW 220, my emphasis).

Thinking must *listen* to the call of Being in order to be that which is genuinely called thinking; the one-track thinking that marks the essence of technology does not do so, insofar as it does not attend to its own status as a *response* to that which calls. Rather, it positions all beings as effectively determined in and through human activity, and subordinate to the immediate demands of the latter. It is therefore ‘one-sided,’ because it does not register the call coming from afar—from Being—and remains only with and alongside beings; it does not register that these beings are, in fact, a *gift* of Being, for which we must give thanks. It should be no surprise, on this basis, that one of Heidegger’s first attempts to characterize authentic thinking in the ’51-’52 lectures passes by way of an etymological connection between *thinking* and *thanking* (WT 159).

Such formulations indicate that, for Heidegger, if we are at last to begin thinking, then thought must become a *passion* at the same moment as it becomes *audition*; that which calls for thinking can only be heard through recognizing that man himself receives the call, and does not send it, and in listening closely to both that which calls to us, and what it calls on us to do. For Heidegger, humanity can become ‘truly free’, and so escape the ‘supreme danger’ with which technology, *qua* enframing, confronts “us”, ‘only insofar as he belongs to the realm of destining and so becomes one who listens’ (BW 330).<sup>24</sup> We are in a position to ask, then: how we are at last to *begin* thinking, for

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<sup>24</sup> I will return to the problem of the collective subject in Heidegger later in this chapter; at this stage, I use scare quotes to indicate that the status of this subject is ambiguous.

Heidegger? How are we to (re)establish our essential relatedness to Being, and overcome the fact that ‘man does not yet turn sufficiently toward that which, by origin and innately, wants to be thought about’ (WT 7)? To do so, we must *listen* to that which calls for thinking, and to *hear* what is truly named in that call; yet, I hope to show that, for Heidegger, such an authentic encounter with the call of thinking is itself not audible but rather necessarily silent, and that, for the same reason, it must bypass any and all forms of transmission and mediation—that is, any insinuation of the technical. In spite of the insistent tele-phonic formulations that we have already encountered sustaining Heidegger’s discourse, it will emerge that, if we are finally to begin thinking, the call to which we must attend must be stripped of its *tele-phonic* character. Tracing out both *why* this is the case, and *how* it is achieved in Heidegger’s text, will be highly instructive for my broader argument.

## 2. Listening Without Sound

I have established that ‘our thought-provoking time’ does not yet think insofar as the dominance of modern technology, or, more precisely, the mode of revealing which underpins this dominance, prevents us from attending to that which calls for thinking: namely, Being itself. How, then, are we to at last pick up this call? Moreover, upon picking it up, how are we to understand what it is calling on us to do—that is, what is called thinking? We know that Being calls upon us to think; we know that thinking involves a form of relatedness to Being that technology, *qua* enframing, covers over. It would seem, in the first instance, that we are being invited to finally *listen* to the call that Being addresses to us, and to attend to the sense of this hailing; that is, we are incited to hear that which calls to us, and to understand that which is addressed to us in and through this call. Moreover, we must register, above all else, that this call comes from *afar*, from somewhere *beyond* us: it is neither our doing, nor our possession. The problem of beginning to think is a *tele-phonic* one, a problem of transmission, mediation, and audition—or so it would seem.

Above, we have heard Heidegger articulate thinking in both *sonic* terms, through references to listening, and in terms of *transmission*, through the dynamic of sending and receiving; these two moments are linked in and through the figure of the call,

wherein thinking would necessarily be *called for*, and this calling would indicate an appropriate response. Insofar as the problem faced by those who would authentically learn to think today is the dominance of modern technology, which reduces the giving of Being to the imposition of order upon beings, this figure, with all its tele-ponic resonance, serves to re-position thinking in terms of the priority of that which calls for it, and which ‘gives food for thought’ (WT 17). Yet this tele-ponic dimension is at risk of introducing into thinking a technical dimension that, for Heidegger, is not even the central threat to thinking in ‘our thought-provoking time’, but a superficial manifestation of this threat. For the problem of the tele-ponic is the problem of the medium, of the *means* of communication—that is, the problem of the *instrumental*, precisely the problem that any questioning concerning technology must surpass in order to reach the essential confrontation between technics and thought, as the opening moves of “The Question Concerning Technology” indicate. Instrumentality itself lies outside the true confrontation between calculative and meditative thinking, between that which is simply called thinking and that which authentically passes under this name. Therefore the medium, the milieu and the intermediary, cannot and must not be able to insinuate itself into that authentic ‘relatedness’ which would establish, *at last*, what is called thinking—or else thinking itself would become irreducibly technical, in a sense that, for Heidegger, is fundamentally *inessential*.

It follows, then, that though the relation between thinking and technics may be implicitly staged as a contrast between two types of connection and two forms of transmission, Heidegger will find it necessary to eliminate all forms of mediation from not only that which will authentically be called thinking, but even from the *essence* of technological activity itself, effectively consigning both transmission and audition to a “merely” ontic register, *outside* the terrain upon which the struggle for the future of thinking would take place. Doing so, as may be apparent, will immanently unsettle Heidegger’s attempt to deploy the figure of the call as a model for thought: a call without *distance*, that covers no space or time, and institutes no gap between sending and responding, is not a call at all, and cannot, therefore, successfully characterize what is called thinking. Heidegger is effectively caught in a double-bind: in figuring Being as something that addresses itself to us from afar, to which we must hope to finally respond but which we are nevertheless capable of misunderstanding, Heidegger hopes to depose the subject-centred account of Being as something inherently related

to or dependent upon man; yet in seeking to eliminate all (inevitably ontic, irreducibly technical) forms of transmission and mediation from this calling, he is forced to posit, if only implicitly, that the call of and for thinking can be apprehended im-mediate-ly. To do otherwise would be to introduce technicity (and, as I hope to argue, *audibility*) into the essential relation between Being and thinking—a point that Bernard Stiegler will embrace in his reading of Heidegger, as I will go on to elaborate—yet resisting this possibility risks reintroducing precisely the self-contained *cogito* against which the figure of the call is directed.

Before proceeding to consider that other major figure of calling in Heidegger's work, the call of conscience in *Being and Time*, wherein the difficulty of Heidegger's positioning on this point is most evident, I want to examine the way in which it already introduces a *practical* difficulty into the situation of the lecture course—that is, how it troubles the relationship between Heidegger and his auditors. For if we are to begin to learn thinking, as Heidegger hopes we might, we are faced with the titular problem of what is called thinking—but this problem, in context of the lecture hall, is an *auditory* problem. What are we to understand in and through this sound Heidegger articulates and directs towards us: *thinking*. Although, of course, Heidegger does not say this, Heidegger says: *denken*. We must set this aside for now. Not only does Heidegger say *thinking*, he says *we are still not thinking*. As Heidegger's deferred auditors, we must listen, and respond, to that which the statement names under the word “thinking”; what is it that we are still not doing exactly? Heidegger is well aware that one might object to his claim, perhaps pointing to ‘a lively and constantly *more audible* interest in philosophy’ (WT 4, my emphasis), or the fact that ‘there were at no time such far-reaching plans, so many inquiries in so many areas, research carried on as passionately as today’ (DT 45). Needless to say, this is not the thinking to which Heidegger refers—to the contrary, this voluble activity is the aforementioned ‘one-track thinking’ or ‘calculative thinking,’ to the degree that it attends only to beings and not to Being, and has ‘the same essential origin as [...] the precision of technological process’ (WT 54). What is at stake here is *what is called thinking*—what does this word name, and how are we to hear it, in a way that is not that of enframing, in a way that does occlude the giving of ‘that which, by origin and innately, wants to be thought about’ (WT 7)?

The most pressing of Heidegger's ear-cleaning exercises, then, propaedeutic to at last receiving the call sent to us by Being, are those that would prevent us from hearing only what is typically signified by the word "thinking"; if 'we can learn thinking only if we radically unlearn what thinking has been traditionally' (WT 8), this means that we must be careful not to hear too readily that which is 'named in the call', too quickly understand 'what it calls on us to do' (WT 127). When the call calls on us to think, it is of no use to note that '[a]ll of us already have some ideas about the word "think",' since it is precisely such ideas that are to be placed in question. Thus, if we wish to begin learning to think, 'it has become necessary to improve our ability to listen' (WT 55) in order that we might, at last, *listen* to Being: '...thinking is of Being insofar as thinking, belonging to Being, listens to Being. As the belonging to Being that listens, thinking is what it is according to its essential origin' (BW 220). In sum, then, for Heidegger we must not only hear what is truly called thinking in and through all the ready meanings we might attach to this word, but what we would hear is itself an *injunction to listen*.

However, Heidegger himself will indicate to us that, whatever it may seem, this is simply not an *auditory* problem at all—that is, the confrontation between two *senses* of the word *thinking* bears no relation to the sounds that the listener may hear and subsequently misinterpret. Indeed, the very conception of discourse as involving 'terms' that 'first appear spoken when they are given voice,' that are 'at first a sound [...] perceived by the senses' to which 'signification attaches,' is, for Heidegger, entirely false (WT 128-29). This *instrumental* conception in which 'terms are like buckets or kegs out of which we can scoop sense' (and note that Heidegger equates sound with tools here) misrepresents the true experience of audition. For, in fact, Heidegger's (phenomenological) conception of discourse *bypasses* the 'mere resonance' of the 'purely sensual aspect of the word-sound' (WT 150). It is worth quoting Heidegger in full here:

In order to hear the pure resonance of a mere sound, we must first remove ourselves from the sphere where speech meets with understanding or lack of understanding. We must disregard all that, abstract from it, if we are to extract, subtract only the sound and resonance from what is spoken, if our ears are to catch this abstraction by itself, purely acoustically. Sound, which in the conceptual field of this supposed "at first" [that is, when words are taken as terms] is regarded as immediately given, is an abstract

construct that is at no time perceived alone, by itself, nor ever at first, when we hear something spoken.

The supposedly purely sensual aspect of the word-sound, conceived as mere-resonance, is an abstraction. The mere vibration is always picked out only by an intermediate step—by that almost unnatural disregard. Even when we hear speech in a language totally unknown to us, we never hear mere sounds as a noise present only to our senses—we hear unintelligible words. But between the unintelligible word, and the mere sound grasped in acoustic abstraction, lies an abyss of difference in essence. (WT 129-130)

From within the ‘sphere where speech meets with understanding or lack of understanding’—that is, the sphere in which, we, as Heidegger’s auditors, may succeed or fail in understanding what he means by “thinking”—the ‘mere vibration’ of sound is ‘an abstraction,’ to which we would have to proceed by a mental effort. Sound is separated by ‘an abyss of difference in essence’ from meaning; as he goes on to state, ‘[a]s hearers, we abide in the sphere of what is spoken, where the voice of what is said rings *without sound*’ (WT 150, my emphasis).

My claim is that the equivalence between sound and instrumentality indicated here demands Heidegger suppress the tele-phonetic nature of the call for thinking, insofar as this call cannot be reliant on the necessarily, irrecoverably *ontical* nature of the technical object. What is thereby excluded and suppressed is the question of the *medium* and of *transmission*—a question that, as we will hear from Bernard Stiegler, is the instrumental question *par excellence*. However, in evading these questions in order to prevent their encroachment into the essence of the call itself, Heidegger finds himself forced to shore up the channel between Being and humanity, to make it direct and immediate in a way that cuts directly against the very function of the figure of calling itself. This is nowhere more apparent than in the structurally related figure of the call of conscience deployed in *Being and Time*, to which I will now turn.

### 3. “It” Calls: Conscience Between The *Who* and The *What*

In the context of my analysis here, the central question of *Being and Time* is the question of the *who*—that is, *to whom* does Being address itself? As I hope to establish, this *who* is the *essential* recipient of the call for thinking, and is



distinguished thereby from the *what*, that is, from all other entities which do not have this capacity, at least potentially, to listen to Being—including, significantly, technical objects, named in *Being and Time* as the ready-to-hand. As my above remarks indicate, my intention is to demonstrate that Heidegger is forced to eliminate the telephonic character of the call from his work, and introduce a direct line between Being and its addressee; in turning to the account of this addressee in *Being and Time*, where it is termed Dasein, we will be able to observe that not only must the *who* be preserved from the *what* in the guise of technical objects—that is, the instrumental—but that the figure of the call in this text operates to *reaffirm* this distinction, *re-calling* Dasein to its essential relatedness to Being, over and against those entities which do not have such a privileged connection. On this basis, we might suggest, setting aside the perils of the “turn” separating *Being and Time* from the later texts, that the call of conscience would serve the function of putting Dasein on the line with Being itself, allowing us to at last begin thinking.

Whatever the validity of this proposition within the Heideggerean corpus, in offering an account of this possibility we will once again hear how the figure of the call cannot help but insinuate both technics and audition into the very essence of the relation between Being and Dasein, and thereby into thinking itself, engendering a tension at the core of Heidegger’s existential analytic that will ultimately frustrate the divide between the *who* and the *what*. Ultimately, exploiting with tension will allow us to not only define the recipient of Being’s call in technical terms, but to reinstitute the technicity of this calling as such.

To begin, then, let us ask: *who* is Dasein? I will outline some key aspects of Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein in *Being and Time*, in order that my subsequent account of the call of conscience is sufficiently clear; however, it should be noted that this is not by any means meant to be an exhaustive account of that analysis, emphasising only a very small number of key points.

Dasein is the being that *understands* Being, insofar as it has an essential relation to its own Being: ‘Dasein, in its Being, has relationship towards that Being,’ and thus ‘Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein’s Being’ (BT 32). What is most significant, however, is the manner in which Dasein is related to itself:

Dasein is ‘ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it.’ This is as much to say that ‘Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it is ontological’; it is the being that, in essence, can encounter Being’s transmission across the gap that separates beings from Being. Yet the claim that Dasein understands its Being as an *issue* indicates a further vital point: Dasein’s Being is an issue for it insofar as it understands its Being as *indefinite and incomplete*, not in fact but in principle. That is, the ‘issue’ Dasein encounters in relation to its Being is what Heidegger will later, significantly, refer to in terms of *nullity* (BT 329), an absence of determination that Heidegger famously relates to the indefiniteness of death; until Dasein reaches this always-receding point of termination, at a moment that can never be fully foreseen nor rendered in experience, it will be perpetually ‘ahead-of-itself’, projected towards this ‘not-yet’ of its end (BT 303).

However, contrary to the Sartrean handling of this point,<sup>25</sup> Dasein does not simply approach the ‘issue’ that is its own Being in a free and undetermined manner; rather, if Dasein is ‘ahead-of-itself’, and therefore ‘understands itself in terms of a possibility of itself’, this possibility is derived from the world into which it is, in Heidegger’s term, ‘thrown’—that is, the world that it encounters as preexisting it, already established and providing a set of limitations and constraints upon the ways in which it can “deal” with the issue that its own Being provides. Far from freely choosing amongst an endlessly open series of possibilities, Dasein is confronted by a relatively circumscribed set of choices that it is able to make. As Heidegger puts it, ‘[i]n existing as thrown [...] Dasein constantly lags behind its possibilities,’ which are set out for it in advance (BT 330).

It is on this basis that Dasein is essentially temporal for Heidegger, and the investigation of Dasein’s understanding of Being will be, of necessity, an investigation of temporality. As Stiegler puts it:

Dasein is temporal: it has a past on the basis of which it can anticipate and thereby be. [...] Dasein is in the mode of “having-to-be” because it never

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<sup>25</sup> The “Letter on Humanism” constitutes, in large part, an attempt to refute Sartre’s interpretation of the claim from *Being and Time* that existence constitutes the essence of Dasein (see Sartre 1989, 26). Interestingly, according to Dosse, Deleuze attended Sartre’s presentation of “Existentialism is a Humanism” in Paris in 1945 (Dosse 2010, 94).

yet totally is; inasmuch as it exists it is never finished, it always already anticipates itself in the mode of “not yet”. Between birth and death, existence is what extends itself between “already” and “not yet”. (T1 5)

Insofar as Dasein ek-sists in ‘perpetual incompleteness,’ it is ‘incomparable with a *what*,’ and it is this status that ‘gives it a privileged and exemplary status among beings by its having access to Being’ (T1 214). That is to say, Dasein, as the *who*, is related to Being, uniquely, insofar as it stands outside of itself. In Heidegger’s own terms, Dasein ‘stretches along between birth and death’ (BT 425).

The context in which this standing out “takes place”, in which this “between” is determined, continually and without fixed resolution beyond the deferred inevitability of death, is what Heidegger terms the *world*. In standing outside of itself *as temporal*—and Heidegger here makes use of the term *ec-static* to characterize this self-externality at the root of temporality (BT 377)—Dasein is essentially *in-the-world*. This is not to say that Dasein is “in” the world as water is in a glass (BT 79), nor alongside it as a table stands by a door (BT 81); rather, Dasein as *Being-in-the-world* is a ‘unitary phenomenon’ that must be ‘*seen as a whole*’ (BT 78, my emphasis), and Dasein, in a certain sense, *is* the world “in which” it exists. Rather than a subject set against an object—or the world as totality of such objects—Dasein is, again, *between* subject and object, as ‘the Being of this ‘between’’ (BT 170).

Having established these preliminaries, in a cursory fashion, we are now in a position to ask: how is Dasein’s relatedness to Being dependent, in this case, upon the receiving of a call? In answering this, we have simply to ask: how does Dasein understand the possibilities amongst which it is able to choose, and how does it make such a choice? In indicating Heidegger’s answer to this question in *Being and Time*, we see once again the tragic dimension figured into man’s essential relatedness to Being—all too often, Dasein simply abdicates the necessity to choose, and allows choices to be made on its behalf, just as, in the later texts, it will fail to listen to the call of Being through the dominance of enframing as a mode of revealing. In doing so, it fails to listen to the address essentially made to it by Being, failing to acknowledge the essential understanding it possesses of its own significance, its status as a *who*. As we will hear, the function of the call of conscience is to re-call Dasein to this essential status—that is, once again, to put Being on the line.

To establish this, let us consider the way in which Dasein gives up its own essential capacity to choose amongst possibilities, to acknowledge and take up the essential indeterminacy of its own Being. As noted above, insofar as it is thrown into a world that it did not choose, it is inevitable that Dasein will encounter a set of pre-established possibilities; what is more, this encounter will take place primarily through its engagement with Others. Dasein's "there", its world, is populated by Others who it recognizes as also having the character of Dasein, and *through whom* Dasein is able to understand itself—'Knowing oneself is grounded in Being-with' (BT 161). It follows from this that Dasein does not always apprehend itself in terms of its essential indeterminacy—rather, as with what is called thinking, Dasein is liable to *misunderstand* its essential nature, by interpreting itself only according to a set of generally-available possibilities embodied in Others. Though Heidegger's argumentation on this point is elaborate, I will be schematic of necessity: having been thrown into a set of pre-established possibilities by which its world is always-already determined, and which in fact grounds any possibility of Dasein's having-a-world,<sup>26</sup> Dasein tends to become absorbed within this world and to live it vicariously through the possibilities already revealed through those Others: in its 'everyday Being-with-one-another,' Dasein 'itself *is* not; its Being has been taken away by the Others. Dasein's everyday possibilities of Being are for the Others to dispose of as they please' (BT 163-64).

These Others are not particular people who Dasein comes across; rather, they are what Heidegger refers to as *das Man*, and which Macquarrie and Robinson translate as 'the "they"', in the sense of people in general—what "they" do, say, or think, perhaps better rendered by the pronoun "one". Living this way ensures that each Dasein is interchangeable, and that 'every Other is like the next' (BT 164); the "they" demands a "leveling down" of all possibilities of Being' into 'averageness' (BT 165). In and through this leveling down, Dasein avoids any encounter with its own, necessarily unique possibilities of Being, the distinct and unsolvable *question* that is its own Being

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<sup>26</sup> Heidegger cautions against any interpretation wherein Dasein's involvement within a pre-established world, and the "falling" that results from this, can be surmounted once and for all; Stiegler is particularly critical of such interpretations in the first volume of *Technics and Time* (T1 208).

in/as time; in Heidegger's parlance, Dasein does not encounter itself *authentically* (*eigentlichkeit*): 'Everyone is the other, and no one is himself' (BT 165). Thus, as noted above, Dasein generally fails to understand itself *qua* Da-sein, the Being who ek-statically stands out into the there and which, on this basis, lives itself as yet-to-be-determined. In order to understand itself authentically, Dasein must somehow recover its Self from this lostness in the "they": 'As They-self, the particular Dasein has been *dispersed* into the "they", and must first find itself' (BT 167). How is this finding to be achieved?

It is the *call of conscience* that, for Heidegger, enables Dasein to find itself—through the call (*Ruf*), Dasein is 'summoned [*aufgerufen*] to itself—that is, to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being' (BT 318); it 'summons Dasein's Self from its lostness in the "they"' (BT 319). Having established, briefly, this structural role for the call of conscience, we can note immediately that the same question obtains as with the call of thinking: *how* does this call reach Dasein, and how is Dasein to interpret what the call transmits to it? In exploring these questions, I want to note how, yet again, the figure of the call pulls Heidegger towards a tele-phonic problematic, while once again demanding the tendential suppression of both mediation and audition; moreover, in *Being and Time* this tension even more clearly implicates the problematic location of technics within Heidegger's work. Thus, expounding the contours of the call in its earlier incarnation will allow us to turn, subsequently, to the work of Bernard Stiegler, whose work will explore and, ultimately, exceed, the limits Heidegger sets upon his own conception of technicity, in a way that is highly significant for my overall argument.

To begin, then, we can note that, if the call of conscience is a 'mode of discourse' (BT 316), and 'gives us 'something' to understand' (BT 314), then we once again face the question of meaning and communication—how does the call transmit this information to us? In this instance, Heidegger is even more explicit in the centrality that hearing has in discourse: 'Hearing is constitutive for discourse' (BT 206). Beyond this, 'hearing constitutes the primary and authentic way in which Dasein is open for its ownmost potentiality for Being.' Thus, we need not be surprised that Heidegger would place such emphasis on the 'voice of conscience' (BT 313). Yet, once again Heidegger is forced to strip out any auditory dimension from this essential hearing. In fact,

Heidegger's position here is no different from that we have heard him articulate to his auditors in 1951 and '52, as is evident from the following:

What we 'first' hear is never noises or complexes of sounds, but the creaking waggon, the motor-cycle. We hear the column on the march, the north wind, the woodpecker tapping, the fire crackling. It requires a very artificial and complicated frame of mind to 'hear' a 'pure noise'.

[...]

Likewise, when we are explicitly hearing the discourse of another, we proximally understand what is said, or—to put it more exactly—we are already with him, in advance, alongside the entity which the discourse is about. [...] Even in cases where the speech is indistinct or in a foreign language, what we proximally hear is *unintelligible* words, and not a multiplicity of tone-data. (BT 207, original emphasis)

Once again, the distinction between meaningful words and meaningless sound is taken as secondary; when we discourse with Others, we 'already' and 'proximally' understand what is said, in a manner that is not dependent upon audition. Thus, Heidegger will distinguish *hearing* in an physiological sense from what he terms *hearkening*: defined by Heidegger as 'more primordial than what is defined 'in the first instance' as "*hearing*" in psychology—the sensing of tones and the perception of sounds' (BT 207), hearkening 'has the kind of Being of the hearing which understands.' Harkening, then, indicates Dasein is 'essentially understanding,' and 'already dwells *alongside* what is ready-to-hand within-the-world,' without 'first hav[ing] to give shape to the swirl of sensations.' Thus, Heidegger goes on to remark, didactically: 'Only he who already understands can hear' (BT 208).

Yet this hearing-that-understands is itself beset with difficulties, insofar as, as indicated above, what Dasein usually understands about its Self and its world is what "they" understand—it is, in fact, on the basis of this established understanding that it is possible for Dasein to understand "in advance" in the first place; that is, if we understand *immediately*, without passing through an encounter with the medium of communication (in this case, sonority), it is insofar as Being-in-the-World and Being-with-Others involve being immersed in an existing set of significations: 'Proximally, and with certain limits, Dasein is constantly delivered over to this interpretedness, which controls and distributes the possibilities of average understanding and of the state-of-mind belonging to it' (BT 211). As a result, the vocal communication in

which Dasein is generally immersed is referred to by Heidegger as *idle talk* (*Gerede*). Through idle talk, Dasein discourses with others in terms of a pre-established and shared horizon of intelligibility that is itself never brought into question or explicitly thematized: it possesses an ‘average intelligibility’ such that what is discussed ‘is understood only approximately and superficially’ (BT 212); it is a form of ‘gossiping’ or ‘passing the word along.’ As Frances Dyson notes, this form of discourse demands to be figured as *noise*: ‘*Gerede* [idle talk] approaches the archaic sense of rumour: a continuous, confused noise, clamour, or din’ (89). Yet, as we have established, it cannot be noise in any acoustic sense, which lies wholly outside of understanding; indeed, the issue here, as with what is called thinking, is that understanding has been established *in advance* of hearing—‘[h]earing and understanding have attached themselves beforehand to what is said-in-the-talk as such’ (BT 212). It follows, then, that however the call of conscience is to cut through the noise of idle talk, it cannot do so at an auditory level, for the inauthentic understanding of Being expressed in the discourse of idle talk is *already* within the ‘sphere where speech meets understanding’ (WT 129).

For Heidegger, then, Dasein often finds its ‘possibilities [...] presented to it by the way in which the “they” has publicly interpreted things,’ and the ‘presenting of these possibilities’ is itself ‘made possible existentially through the fact that Dasein, as a Being-with which understands, can *listen* to Others’ (BT 315, my emphasis). In ‘[l]osing itself in the publicness and the idle talk of the “they”, it *fails to hear* its own Self in listening to the they-self’ (my emphasis). Yet, given that such listening is itself *already* not an auditory phenomenon as such, we should not be surprised to discover that the call of conscience, the function of which is to precisely *call Dasein back to its Self* from such lostness in the “they”, does not retain any auditory dimension. In fact, for the call of conscience to address us, to call us back from our lostness in the “they”, it must in fact proceed in the opposite direction—it must bear even less connection to sonority than the discourse of idle talk. Following his account of hearkening, Heidegger goes on to outline another ‘essential possibility of discourse’ of which the call of conscience will make use: ‘keeping silent’ (BT 208). Such silence stands against the ‘speaking at length’ or the ‘talking extensively’ that ‘does not offer the slightest guarantee that thereby understanding is advanced,’ but which rather ‘brings what is understood to a sham clarity’—a clarity of the sort that the all-too-recognisable

signification of thinking brought to those too busy proclaiming ‘everywhere a lively and constantly more audible interesting in philosophy’ (WT 4) to attend to the provocation that we are *still not thinking*. Thus, when articulating the ‘mode of discourse’ of the call (BT 316), Heidegger remarks: ‘*Conscience discourses solely and constantly in the mode of keeping silent*’ (BT 318, original emphasis). It is this constitutive silence that ensures conscience is able to serve its function of ‘summon[ing] Dasein from its lostness in the “they”’ (BT 234), drawing Dasein beyond not only hearing in the narrowly “psychological” sense, but even hearkening as a hearing that is immediately meaningful in relation to the everyday significations passed around in the idle talk of *das Man*.

In spite of this disavowal of the role sonority might play in the calling of conscience, and of meaning in general—a view which, as we have heard, does not change when Heidegger goes on to take up a different call in the early nineteen-fifties—nevertheless, the call of conscience continues to demand a tele-ponic figuration. Not only do auditory metaphors insist in Heidegger’s account of how we “hear” the call through the din of idle talk, but the very fact that the call *exceeds* us—that is, it comes from outside us and catches us unawares—suggests that it is somehow *transmitted* to us by means of some medium. Nevertheless, as in the call of thinking, these tele-ponic resonances must be suppressed, at risk of fracturing the architecture of Heidegger’s text. In making this claim, I want to turn to the work of Avital Ronell, whose *The Telephone Book* traces the persistence of the tele-ponic within the auto-dialling by which Dasein hails itself in an uncanny silence. In considering her work on this aspect of Heidegger’s thinking, we will hear how the problem of *mediation* insistently resurfaces in his attempt to figure the silent call, and how such mediation places Heidegger in an untenable position: either to make the call immediate, and thereby appeal to a self-contained and self-present *cogito* against which *Being and Time* insistently directs itself (see BT 46, 95 and 122-134 for Heidegger’s critical engagement with Descartes in particular), or to introduce technicity into the call itself by accepting that the self-relation essential to Dasein can only be established *instrumentally*.

It is important to indicate, initially, the significance that the telephone does and does not possess for Ronell: it is ‘not equivalent to its technical history,’ and ‘more than a



mere technological object' (13); it is, ultimately, a 'synechdoche of technology,' if perhaps not of technology's essence. The tele-phonic structure has certain key functions which we have already observed operating within the call of thinking: in answering the telephone, '[y]ou don't know who's calling or what you're going to be called upon to do, and still, you are lending your ear, giving something up, receiving an order' (2). To the degree that we are still not thinking, and especially to the degree that this not-thinking is dissimulated through our preoccupation with a calculative, technologically-determined pseudo-thinking, then the call to think can only address us from a space beyond our capacity to reckon or to predict—we cannot yet know, prior to picking it up, what we are to be called upon to do, and Heidegger himself will ultimately only invoke a certain readiness with which we can prepare ourselves. Doubtless, this is precisely the aspect of the call, as a figure of thinking, that attracted our attention initially—in relation to sound studies, its functions to draw together both the reorientation away from ocularly-determined subject-centred scrutiny as a model for theoretical activity, and the way in which sound seems to demand to be thought, to call upon us to engage in the task of thinking it.

Yet, of course, Heidegger himself cannot explore this structural relation implicit within the call, insofar as he 'elaborates an idea of *techné* that largely stands under the shadow of the negative. It has a contract out on Being...' (16). Nevertheless, Ronell will suggest that the call in Heidegger—*der Ruf* of *Being and Time* but also, particularly in a highly suggestive footnote to be discussed subsequently, the call of and for thinking—is 'readable in terms of a telephone call' (25), a fact that has important implications for the consistency of his text. Effectively, Ronell's reading opens up the point at which Stiegler will seek to intervene—the point at which Heidegger's articulation of a techno-phonic problematic (calling and responding, sending and receiving) exceeds his own delimitation of the sphere of the technical.

In reading Ronell's work on this point, we must return to our initial characterization of Dasein as the *who* over and against all possible *whats*. Ronell takes up this aspect of the text by noting that Heidegger's thinking on technology depends, from its very earliest formulations, on the attempt to distinguish, within the analytic of Dasein, the Other (as an-Other *who*) from the Thing (as mere *what*): 'Being toward Others is ontologically different from Being towards Things which are present-at-hand,'

primarily because this ‘Other’ that Dasein encounters ‘has itself the same kind of Being as Dasein’ (BT 163; see Ronell, 53). Dasein’s Being-with is dependent upon this relation to the Other that would also have ‘the same kind of Being as Dasein,’ and is therefore central to Heidegger’s attempt to articulate Dasein against and beyond the interiority of the subject affirmed within the classical tradition—thus, the famous analysis of Being-in-the-world, for Heidegger, ‘[shows] that a bare subject without a world never ‘is’ proximally, nor is it ever given. And so in the end an isolated “I” without Others is just as far from being proximally given’ (BT 152). Yet this Being-with-Others, as an ‘autonomous, irreducible relationship of Being,’ must also be distinguished from the relation to those ‘Things’ which form elements within ‘a ready-to-hand, environmental context of equipment,’ insofar as the former is in fact constitutive for the latter: ‘such Things [that is, tools] are encountered from out of the world in which they are ready-to-hand for Others—a world which is always mine too in advance’ (BT 154). Being-with-Others, for Heidegger, precedes and determines the possibility of all instrumentality—for the same reasons as it also precedes and determines any encounter with “mere” sound. That is, in each case the worldhood of Dasein is pre-saturated with meanings and significations, collective in nature, that predetermine any possible engagement with the ready-to-hand at the same moment as they exclude a non-meaningful sonic experience.

Yet, when we turn to the call of conscience, as Ronell notes, we are faced with a question that seems to undercut this vital distinction between the Other and the technical object, between an-Other Dasein and a ready-to-hand piece of equipment: *who or what* makes the call, and *who or what* is called by it? Is it the Other who calls us up, or is it a Thing that transmits the call to us tele-phonically? Or is it perhaps something else, which would frustrate this very division? In order to clarify the stakes of these questions, let us recall the nature and significance of the call of conscience for Heidegger, extending the brief outline given above. Conscience is not, as might readily be imagined, merely an empirical figure for Heidegger—the “voice” one “hears” when one feels guilty, as a social or psychological phenomenon; the ‘fact’ of conscience, as Heidegger himself notes, is disputed (BT 313). Heidegger aims to thematise conscience, rather, in a ‘purely existential matter,’ as a ‘*primordial* phenomenon of Dasein’ (BT 313, original emphasis). What this phenomenon consists in is a ‘summons to [Dasein’s] ownmost potentiality-for-Being-its-Self’ (BT 318)—

and we can note that here, as elsewhere, the term “summon” is, in German, *aufrufen*, whose connotations include *to call up*, *to place a phone call*.

If Dasein requires that such a summoning subsists as a ‘*primordial* phenomenon,’ it is insofar as the Being-with-Others indicated above tends to take on a particular form, in which Dasein ‘stands in subjection to Others,’ such that ‘[i]t itself *is* not; its Being has been taken away by the Others. Dasein’s everyday possibilities of Being are for the Others to dispose of as they please’ (BT 164). ‘Others’ in this case are precisely ‘*the “they”*’ encountered above as purveyors of the call-disrupting noise that separates us from that which is authentically called thinking (BT 164). Dasein’s lostness within this generic set of ‘everyday possibilities,’ as opposed to its own authentic potentiality-for-Being, is here (re)figured as the problem of an auditory fascination, in a way that our previous encounter with idle talk seemed to forbid:

Losing itself in the publicness and the idle talk of the “they”, [Dasein] *fails to hear* its own Self in listening to the they-self. If Dasein is to be able to get brought back from this lostness of failing to hear itself, [...] then it must first be able to find itself—to find itself as something which has failed to hear itself, and which fails to hear in that it *listens away* to the “they”. This listening-away must get broken off; in other words, the possibility of another kind of hearing which will interrupt it, must be given by Dasein itself. (BT 315-16, my emphasis)

The function of the call, then, is to summon Dasein from this lostness, to cut through the noise of idle talk in order to allow Dasein to ‘hear its own self’ once again. Yet in this formulation we already encounter the tension between the call’s tele-phonetic resonances and their ultimate elision—clearly, this call is tied to the auto-affection of *hearing oneself*, as against all transmission emanating from an external source within-the-world that Dasein has become lost in; we can also note that such formulations, on Heidegger’s part, sit uncomfortably with the previously cited insistence on the primordial nature of Dasein’s Being-with-Others.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Derrida critically analyses the function of ‘hearing-onself-speak’ as ‘absolutely pure auto-affection’ in the work of Husserl, grounding the self-presence of the subject (Derrida 2011, 68); this argument is later extended into his broader account of the relation between speech and meaning in *Of Grammatology*, where it is referred to as the ‘system of “hearing (understanding)-oneself-speak”’ (7).

If the call calls on Dasein to hear itself, rather than listening to the “they”, where does this call originate? Here, we can return to Ronell’s claim that Heidegger’s response to this question unsettles the distinction between Other and Thing, between *who* and *what*, upon which the entire conceptual edifice of the call of conscience is founded. It seems that it can neither simply be an-Other, as that Being who has the same Being as Dasein’s own, insofar as it precisely within the genericity of such Others that Dasein is caught in its lostness; but nor can it be the present-at-hand or ready-to-hand Thing, object or tool, whose very disclosure as entity is dependent upon Dasein always-already being situated within-the-world (Dasein’s *facticity*). To this extent, then, the call cannot and must not be tele-phonetic—it must be situated, immediately, within the compass of Dasein itself, and only on this basis could it call Dasein from the noisy involvements with the “they”, and the instrumental ensemble of ready-to-hand equipment which sustains these involvements. The call cannot be transmitted, and it must not be audible, at risk of reintroducing precisely these elements that Dasein is to be called *away* from. If we read the subsequent passage to that quoted above, we can see that this is exactly the case:

The possibility of [Dasein’s] thus getting broken off [from listening-away] lies in its being appealed to *without mediation*. Dasein fails to hear itself, and listens away to the “they”; and this listening away gets broken by the call if that call, in accordance with its character as such, arouses another kind of hearing, which, in relationship to the hearing that is lost, has a character *in every way opposite*. If in this lost hearing, one has been fascinated with the ‘hubbub’ of the manifold ambiguity which idle talk possesses in its everyday ‘newness’, then the call must do its calling without any hubbub and unambiguously, leaving no foothold for curiosity. (BT 316, my emphasis)

Listening *away*, then, is opposed to an im-mediate audition; the exteriority in and through which Dasein ‘fails to hear itself,’ drowned out by the ‘hubbub’ of ‘idle talk,’ is counterposed to a call which ‘arouses another kind of hearing’ whose ‘character’ is ‘in every way opposite,’ and which remains, in a sense that seems no less ambiguous than the noise through which it cuts, *internal* to Dasein. What, then, could this *other kind of hearing* be, which would be neither the psychologically-determined audition of mere sound, nor the immersion in the endlessly-circulating noise of the everyday? Beyond Thing and beyond Other, what might Dasein hear?

As we can recall, and now are in a position to better understand, this hearing is fundamentally related to the *inaudible*, to a ‘*keeping silent*’ (BT 318, original emphasis) by means of which Dasein hooks up to its Self, bypassing a detour through exteriority that may leave it contaminated with the ‘manifold ambiguity’ of the everyday ‘hubbub’ (BT 316). If calling is, for Heidegger, a ‘mode of discourse,’ he nevertheless asserts that ‘[v]ocal utterance [...] is not essential for discourse, and therefore not for the call either’ (BT 316): the ‘voice’ of conscience is ‘not so much [...] an utterance’ as a ‘giving-to-understand,’ operating in a sphere in which meaning is definitively decoupled from sonority—precisely that sphere which we must inhabit, as discussed previously, in order to hear sense in the call of and to thinking.

It seems, then, that this ‘summoning’ or ‘proclaiming’ (in both cases, the German is *Ausrufen*) seeks to pull Dasein back to itself *from itself*—but from modality of its Self that is caught up in and with the ambiguity of Being-with-Others: if the call ‘reaches the they-self of concerned Being with Others,’ nevertheless one is always called ‘[t]o one’s *own Self*’ (BT 317, original emphasis); we are left, then, with an ambiguity over this ‘they-self’ that seems to be, in some sense, not fully a self. On the one hand, it cannot be a question of calling Dasein *out* of the world, since Dasein is primordially within-a-world; and yet, Dasein must nevertheless *withdraw* from a certain aspect of the world which seems to manifest itself, insistently, in sonic terms—and thus, the call, for all its tele-phonic resonance, must push towards a metaphysics of silence and immediacy. However, Ronell’s emphasis on the question of the who and the what in Heidegger, the question of Thing and Other from which we began, allows her to ultimately identify a point at which this series of distinctions through which Heidegger seals Dasein off from the interpolation of techno-phonic noise begin to pull apart. All this turns upon the question that we have yet to face directly: if Dasein picks up the call of conscience, *who* or *what* is this they-self-outside-the-Self that is hailed, and who will she find on the other end of the line? *Who* or *what* calls Dasein back to its Self, and from *who* or *what* is it called back? If, as we have heard, the answer must be, in both cases, “Dasein”, it is also clear that for related reasons, it simultaneously *cannot* simply be Dasein; the call itself insistently pulls apart the figures at each end of the line, and, at its limit, risks introducing an *internal difference* into Dasein’s essential selfhood.

On this point, Ronell remarks: ‘The possibility of posing this as “what” or “who” may point to a technological contamination, suggesting Dasein’s uncertain properties (individualised, solitary self, or generally grasped) to resemble the effects of *techné* under study, which is to say that “what” or “who” suspends, if momentarily, the ontological difference of Thing or Other’—and does so from “within” Dasein itself (57). Supporting Ronell’s point, we can cite Heidegger’s own ambiguity on this question: ‘Conscience summons Dasein’s Self from its lostness in the “they”. The Self to which the appeal is made remains indefinite and empty in its “what” (BT 319). At the other end of the line, the same problem obtains: it cannot, as such, be our Self that calls us back to ourselves, insofar as this implies an act of volition whose ground would be undetermined; to the contrary, and as with the telephone call which Heidegger resolutely resists as a model, the call is

precisely something which *we ourselves* have neither planned nor prepared for nor voluntarily performed, nor have we ever done so. ‘It’ calls, against our expectations and even against our will. On the other hand, the call undoubtedly does not come from someone else who is with me in the world. The call comes *from* me and yet *from beyond me*. (BT 320, original emphasis; see Ronell, 31, 57)

Here we find all the tension of Heidegger’s account of the call manifested in a telephonic articulation—both from me and beyond me, from an ‘it’ that is ‘beyond me’ and yet is simultaneously within me, to my self that is both more than merely a *what* but seemingly less than a *who*, at least prior to picking up this interdiction, unexpected and unprepared-for, of the *it*. The play of immediacy and tele-transmission mirrors and reinforces that of audition and silence—and can we suppose that, if the *what* is not so easily separable from the *who*, then the noise of the ‘they’, and the ‘listening away’ that is enamoured of it, will not be so easily screened from the channel through which *it* calls *what*?

Bearing in mind the technico-temporal dimensions that insist within this calling, can we, in returning to the call of thinking from where we began, observe the same process, to the degree that this call was also heard to be arrayed against both sonority and technicity? That is, if, in the call of conscience, we found that Heidegger’s appeals to a silent immediacy were unsettled by the insistence of the *it* and the *what*, can we

hear, in that analogous attempt to make the call to thinking similarly non-sonorous, the same rumbling of a repressed tele-phonics?

In a pair of footnotes, Ronell suggests as much. She claims that ‘[i]n a sense, *What is Called Thinking?* presents itself as the drama of unprecedented long distance’ (419n25), a long distance that we have heard manifest in the constitutive delay through which, for Heidegger as for sound studies, the call is always registered retroactively—such that, though ‘thought generally responds to a call,’ it only does so ‘without naming it, or giving it thought, as such’ (WT 168, quoted in Ronell, 419n25). It is in this way that modern technology, as a mode of revealing and a destining of Being, covers over this essential nature, and thereby maintains its unthematized and self-concealing dominance; as Ronell notes, it is neither coincidence nor a mere external relation that ensures that ‘[a]t the heart of his calling structures, Heidegger never ceases to raise the question concerning technology,’ though he may never make ‘arrangements for an explicit hookup’ (420n25); the call is ‘situate[d] [...] ineluctably within a technological age’ to the degree that technicity inheres within its very telephonic structuring, a tele-phonicity irreducible, for Ronell as much as for Heidegger, to the technical object passing under that name.

The call, then, is for Heidegger ‘far from being incomprehensible and alien to thinking [...], on the contrary, it always is precisely what must be thought and thus is waiting for a thinking to answer it’ (WT 165; Ronell, 419n25). Yet this waiting seems, for Heidegger, to tend towards forming a *de jure* structure of thinking as such, rather than a *de facto* ‘condition of modern man’ (WT 7), and thereby becomes caught inextricably within a delay that demands to be formulated through the problematic of tele-technicity—an outcome that Heidegger himself must ward off, through inconsistent appeals to immediacy and silence. In turning now to the work of Bernard Stiegler, I hope to pursue a path out of the impasse Heidegger has led us towards, by affirming, following Stiegler’s lead, this inevitable imbrication of thinking and technics—and, what is more, their conjunction in the question of temporality, the question of the contours of “our thought-provoking time”. In so doing, I hope ultimately to return to the diagnosis from which we began—that sound calls for thinking today—and to ask, from within an account of that still-elusive contemporaneity, how we might at last be able to respond.

#### 4. Technics and “Our Time”: De-Severance and Disorientation

Beginning from the question of how, as sound students, we might respond to the call to thinking that seems to emanate from sound today—in the hope, ultimately, of reformulating the question of *thinking* as such away from an ocular model of subjective scrutiny—we have traced one articulation of such a figure, in the work of Martin Heidegger. In doing so, we have uncovered a set of proximities between Heidegger’s concerns and those of sound studies, mired nonetheless in a seemingly inextricable impasse. Certainly, Heidegger’s articulation of thought and, for want of a better term, the subject through the figure of the call sought precisely to attain that reversal of polarity we had sought at the outset, articulating thought as a passion dependent upon that which forces it to take place, that which solicits thinking in us; what is more, it did so as part of a more general questioning into the conditions of our contemporaneity, ‘our thought-provoking time’, in which the call might finally be received. Nevertheless, both in the writings of the early nineteen-fifties and in *Being and Time*, the auditory and the technical dimensions of calling—in both cases seemingly inextricable and ineradicable—were suppressed, consigned to a merely metaphoric register, subsisting as a (supposedly) superficial element of Heidegger’s discourse.

Yet our path thus far is not to be taken as simply the scouting of a “blind alley”, the better to affirm my own purported solution—or, for instance, to counterpose Heidegger’s failures to Deleuze’s success. To the contrary, what Heidegger has opened up is a fertile terrain for our own questioning, beginning from the problem he has left to us—how are we to affirm what Heidegger was unable to, that thinking and temporality each may be entwined with the *technical* and the *auditory*? Moreover, we must confront an unexamined aspect of the investigation thus far: why do these terms seem so insistently to intertwine? Must sound studies necessarily pursue the question of technics?

Responding to these questions is the task of the remaining two sections of this chapter. Firstly, I will take up the intersection of the tele-phonic and the techno-phonic with the question of temporality in the work of Bernard Stiegler, assessing the possibility of



affirming ‘our thought-provoking time’—and the thinking that might finally take place within it—as irreducibly technical. Finally, I will turn to the contemporary soundscape, in order to sound out the specific intersections of technics and audition that situate, within our “today”, the call to sonic thinking.

In this section, I aim to treat two questions that have thus far remained both implicit and largely unanswered in my account of Heidegger and the call of thinking, and which offer us an initial way to approach the work of Stiegler. Firstly, though we have encountered the peculiar dynamics of the call of conscience, and its function as recalling Dasein to its essential relatedness to Being, nevertheless we have not asked *what*, in serving this function, is addressed to Dasein in the call. The first question, then: what does conscience say? Secondly, we have, thus far, only considered in any detail Heidegger’s quite specific (and, as I hope to have indicated, problematic) understanding of technology—or, rather, its essence—in his later works, though we have made a number of references to mediation and instrumentality, and to the ambiguous status of the ready-to-hand in *Being and Time*. The second question that must be asked, then: what do we mean by technology? As we will see, if answering the former question will take us into Stiegler’s significant and imaginative rereading of *Being and Time*, the second will focus us on a key aspect of this rereading: the questioning of the instrumental, so rapidly dismissed by Heidegger at the outset of “The Question Concerning Technology,” yet so powerfully entwined with his attempt to perform an existential analytic of Dasein.

Taking the first question, then: what does conscience tell Dasein in calling it out of its absorption in the “they”? Heidegger is clear on this point—or, rather, *direct*: the call of conscience says ‘Guilty!’ (BT 325). Such a claim returns us to the problem of *understanding*: it was necessary for the call to be silent insofar as understanding bypasses sonority, indeed bypasses all mediating support in order to convey itself immediately—at least, if such understanding is to be authentic. How do we understand this address from the call of conscience, then, that marks us as *guilty*? How are we to interpret what conscience is telling us? It is here that Heidegger again confronts the necessary decoupling of meaning and transmission that has so troubled his attempt to articulate conscience as a call. On the one hand, as with those auditors of his lecture course on the call of thinking, there is an uncertainty over how to understand the word

addressed to us—what is called “guilty”? Secondly, such an address cannot, as we have heard, pass by way of any sonorous element—whatever is conveyed, however it is to be understanding, this discourse must take place in silence.

Heidegger is able to resolve this dual problem by stating that if conscience must remain silent, then, even in saying ‘Guilty!’, it will in a certain sense say *nothing*, if this saying is correctly understood. As Heidegger puts it: ‘*What* does the conscience call to him to whom it appeals? Taken strictly, nothing. The call asserts nothing, gives no information about world-events, has nothing to tell’ (BT 318). If conscience keeps silent, then, it is insofar as it says precisely nothing: ‘The fact that what is called in the call *has not been formulated in words*, does not give this phenomenon the indefiniteness of a mysterious voice, but merely indicates that our understand of what is ‘called’ is not to be tied up with an expectation of *anything like a communication*’ (BT 318, my emphasis). Keeping silent and saying nothing, then, is necessary in order to bypass communication—eliminating, at one stroke, the tele-phonic, in order to address to Dasein the “nothing” that will call it back to its authentic Self.

What, then, is the relation between the fact that the call *says nothing* at the same time as it calls out to us as ‘Guilty!’? Again, this latter must initially be screened for all connotations that would tie it to ‘our concerned Being with Others,’ and therefore with our fallenness into the “they” (BT 317). As such, guilt is not to be defined as having committed a morally unjust act for which one now feels *responsible* and for which one is defined as *owing* some kind of reparation—it must be ‘detached from relationship to any law or “ought”’, which would ultimately frame guilt as a form of ‘lack—when something which ought to be and which can be is missing’ (BT 328). Here, Heidegger is drawing on the literal sense of the German *schuldig* as *debt*, as an extension of this sense of responsibility (BT 327). Such an empirical notion of lack or debt, related to some particular act, would imply the possibility of not being indebted, and therefore suggest that Dasein’s being-guilty is a contingent, empirical fact rather than an essential, ontological aspect of Dasein. This, of course, is not what Heidegger intends.

Against this all-too-empirical figure of responsibility-as-indebtedness formulated in relation to some particular (ontical) law one has transgressed, Heidegger appeals to the

“not” of the nothing that conscience calls to us as indicating something beyond empirical lack: ‘we define the formally existential idea of the ‘Guilty!’ as “Being-the-basis for a Being which has been defined by a ‘not’”—that is to say, as “*Being-the-basis-of-a-nullity*”’ (BT 329, original emphasis). Here, Heidegger is calling us back to our initial characterization of Dasein as the Being whose Being is an issue for it, insofar as it is fundamentally *undetermined*. This nullity that conscience re-calls us to is derived fundamentally from the aforementioned quality of Dasein as *possibilizing*—that is, Dasein’s Being is an issue for it insofar as it ‘understands itself in terms of possibilities’ rather than in terms of particular fixed states or determinate and stable characteristics (BT 331).

In understanding this relation between nullity and Dasein’s possibilizing, it is key to remember that these possibilities are to a certain degree determined in advance, not freely assumed by Dasein itself; Dasein is ‘something that has been thrown; it has been brought into its “there”, but *not* of its own accord’ (BT 329). Thus, Dasein ‘projects itself upon possibilities into which it has been thrown,’ and though Dasein ‘has to lay the basis for itself,’ it can ‘never get that basis into its power’ (BT 330); ultimately, Dasein ‘constantly lags behind its possibilities.’ This lagging-behind the possibilities upon which Dasein projects itself is precisely the nullity to which the call of conscience refers; the call of conscience can call Dasein back from its fallen involvement in the “they” insofar as ‘[t]his nullity is the basis for the possibility of *inauthentic* Dasein in its falling’ (BT 331); Dasein can always simply take up the possibilities into which it has been thrown, rather than actively choosing amongst them with anticipatory resoluteness. Dasein’s nullity is its essential incapacity to bring the foundation of its own Being into the ambit of its control—and, therefore, its nullity is simultaneously the very possibility of its fallen involvement in a world it has not chosen.

It is here that we can turn to Stiegler’s vital intervention. In the first volume of *Technics and Time*, Stiegler establishes an interpretation of the essential indebtedness of Dasein that is fundamentally *technical*, and which ‘undermines any possibility of placing in opposition authentic time and the time of calculation and concern’ (T1 187); indeed, Stiegler will propose the ‘hypothesis of a *technological time* (the time of *what*), constitutive of the temporality of *who*’ (T1 210, original emphasis). This is, as

may be clear, a pivotal point in my argument—that is, a point that allows us to change tack at a crucial juncture, preserving the initial impetus of my investigation but pursuing it in a new direction. If, as Stiegler proposes, the tension we have articulated in Heidegger’s work within the imbrication of technics, temporality and thinking—a tension that manifests itself in and through the problem of the tele-ponic—can be resolved insofar as we embrace a solution Heidegger himself renounced—namely, affirming the technical basis of the *who*—then we are in a position to reconsider the question of what calls for thinking, today, in a manner that *no longer must exclude auditory phenomena*. Instead, as I hope to claim, it will allow us to position the domain of sound as something that calls for thinking today to the very degree that it allows us to sound out the very scope and parameters of the to-day, the very collectivity of the con-temporaneity to which sound studies insistently appealed. This *pivot* will be jointed, operating in two stages: firstly, I will outline, briefly, Stiegler’s reading of conscience and guilt in Heidegger, and indicate how it allows him to defend his claim that the temporality of Dasein is technical through and through; secondly, and following from this, I will turn to the second volume of *Technics and Time* to assess his characterization of our con-temporaneity in terms of a fundamental *disorientation*. This will lead to the concluding section of this chapter, in which I assess the audibility of such disorientation through accounts of the contemporary soundscape drawn from recent music journalism.

To begin, then, let us consider Stiegler’s interpretation of Dasein’s guilt. As we have established, the guilt to which conscience re-calls Dasein is the guilt of its thrownness—that is, the fact that Dasein is always-already given over the possibilities it has not chosen, and that therefore it encounters itself in terms of a fundamental *nullity*. It is this nullity that underpins its very status as *temporal*, insofar as Dasein can never have done with determining itself in and through those very possibilities through which it is “what”—or rather *who*—it is. Stiegler puts it as follows: ‘Dasein is marked by facticity, in which Da-sein is there not in the sense that being is given to it but in the sense of its having to be, which means: Dasein is time. All that it is given is a feeling of having-to-be, of a de-fault of being...’ (T1 199). De-fault here translates *défaut*, which, as the translators note, indicates failure and lack, while also indicating that this “failure” is originary for Dasein; as in Heidegger, Dasein is guilty *by default*, and this default is its very nullity and, hence, its temporality (T1 280n12).

Stiegler's key intervention is to ask after the status and provenance of this having-to-be, and of the already-there to which Dasein may only ever respond through an *après-coup*, after the fact. If Dasein's facticity is derived from that fact that it's world is 'always already there, having always preceded the mortal who, whatever he or she does, arrives too late, inheriting all the faults of his or her ancestry, starting with the originary de-fault of origin,' then this *always already* manifests itself, necessarily, through *technics* (T1 199). That is, the only way in which Dasein can encounter this past which it *is* but 'which is not properly speaking *its* past since it did not live it' is through some technical support—the non-lived past of Dasein is 'a fault that is always *already there* and that is nothing but technicity,' and which Stiegler thinks under the name of *epimetheia* (T1 207). It is this problem of transmission that, as we saw, Heidegger insistently suppressed in the case of the tele-ponic, and that Stiegler seeks to reclaim; for, as Stiegler notes, the already-there upon which Dasein depends, given its essential nullity, its de-fault of origin, can only be given to it through *technical* means.

Though Stiegler's argument is complex, we can trace the salient points. For Heidegger, Dasein's capacity to anticipate—that is, to pro-ject itself into the future—involves a 'return to its past and its present' (TT1 232). As Heidegger, puts it, 'anticipation of one's uttermost and ownmost possibility is coming back understandingly to one's ownmost "been"', that is, apprehending the "already there" of the world into which Dasein is thrown in and through the possibilities encoded within it, from amongst which Dasein must choose (BT 373). Yet it is here that Stiegler sees technicity insinuating itself into Dasein's temporal constitution as ecstatic, outside-of-itself:

this return to its past and its present can only be the return to a past that is not *its* past [...] it can only be a pros-thetic return. [...] The past is transmitted to it: it is its own only insofar as Dasein *is* its past, that is, anticipates from it. [...] Dasein is *only* this past that it is *not*. (T1 232, original emphasis)

Stiegler asks after the conditions of access to this non-lived past, upon which the very *who* of Dasein, as the being in de-fault, is based, and hears only technics—that is, the

pros-thetic and the supplementary, the point where Dasein and technicity converge upon the ec-static, the outside-itself, that is, upon time as such:

Dasein is outside itself, in ec-stasis, temporal: its past lies outside it, yet it is nothing but this past, in the form of *not yet*. By being actually its past, it can do nothing but itself outside itself, “ek-sist”. But *how* does Dasein eksist in this way? Prosthetically, through pro-posing and pro-jecting outside itself, in front of itself. (T1 234)

Thus, on Stiegler’s reading, what conscience addresses to Dasein is not merely caught up in a metaphysics of technicity, through its tele-phonic resonances, but conveys, in and through this calling, precisely what Heidegger hoped to elude—the imbrication of the *who* and the *what*, the technical condition for Dasein’s self-relation evoked in the fundamental nullity that is its being-in-de-fault. Ultimately, technics is, for Stiegler, nothing but the ‘process of exteriorization’ as such, the ‘pursuit of life by means other than life,’ the standing-out of life as constituted in and through the inorganic (T1 17)—or, in sum, the ‘*what* that constitutes the very being of the outside of the *who* [...] that is, the ecstatic and temporal transcendence of Dasein’ (T1 219).

This, of course, is precisely the opposite of what Heidegger aimed at in his thinking of technics in the early nineteen-fifties—in his questioning concerning technology, not only does Heidegger counterpose the authentic relatedness to Being (which is called thinking) to the technological relation of enframing, but in doing so he bypasses the “merely” instrumental account of technics almost immediately and, as such, does not attempt to think the specificity of the *what*. In *Being and Time*, however, Heidegger pays close attention to the *ready-to-hand*, that is, to the set of entities that support an ‘in-order-to’ (and therefore, ultimately, all *pro-jection* and possibilizing) by being available for Dasein to use (BT 97). We do not have the scope to investigate Heidegger’s fascinating analysis of equipment as ready-to-hand in *Being and Time*, nor to assess the full scope of Stiegler’s engagement with it; however, we can investigate one central property that will return us to our consideration of our principal, auditory problematic—and which will push us towards a closer consideration of the relation between technics and time, in terms of the unresolved problem of “our time” opened up at the outset of this chapter.

With regard to instrumentality and equipment defined as the ready-to-hand, we are pushed towards the problem of the spacing of this *to-hand*: the capacity to “grasp” the tool is clearly not a question of physical proximity between two entities, for reasons we have already established regarding the distinction between *who* and *what* and, more generally, the spatiality peculiar to Dasein’s Being-in-the-World. On this basis, we should not be surprised for Heidegger to later articulate the distinction between the human and the animal by not only claiming that the latter are ‘poor in world’, but that they also, for related reasons, do not have hands (WT 16). It is on this point that Stiegler will make his intervention regarding Heidegger’s thinking of the instrument: though Heidegger ‘thinks the instrument [...] he does not think it fully through’ (T1 245); what he overlooks is the ‘dynamic of the what, irreducible to that of the who’ (T2 7). Pursuing a specific instance of this overlooking will allow us not only to move closer to both Heidegger’s account of equipment in *Being and Time*, and the understanding of technics that Stiegler, in part, extracts from it; it will also allow us to return to the auditory problems that technical objects introduced into Heidegger’s text.

It is with the question of proximity, of the closeness of the at-hand, that we will find Heidegger once again turning to an auditory example—and doing so in a manner the will, as Stiegler himself indicates, provoke a rereading of the above-cited passage on the sound of the motorcycle. The spatiality implied in the readiness-to-hand of equipment is connected to what Heidegger terms Dasein’s ‘essential tendency towards closeness’ (BT 140; see T1 250). This tendency manifests itself through a ‘bringing-close’ that Heidegger terms ‘de-severance’ (BT 139-40), a tendency that, needless to say, does not simply refer to bringing things into physical proximity. Rather, closeness refers precisely to the at-handness of equipment—the relations of proximity and distance are determined not according to ‘Objective distances of Things present-at-hand,’ but rather with the possibilities of engaging with and making use of the particular entity, incorporating its ‘in-order-to’ into one’s concernful dealings with the world in a given case (BT 141).

It is in offering examples on this point that Heidegger makes two highly significant claims—both for Stiegler’s analysis and for my own. Firstly, he offers the general point that if ‘[s]eeing and hearing are distance-senses,’ this is insofar as they are able to bring close things that are, in objective terms, at some remove from us—they ‘go

proximally beyond what is distantly 'closest' (BT 141). But this de-severance is supported by prostheses that are themselves, as Stiegler notes, *forgotten*: 'When, for instance, a man wears a pair of spectacles which are so close to him distantly that they are "sitting on his nose," they are environmentally more remote from him than the picture hanging on the opposite wall' (BT 141; see T1 251). As Stiegler puts it: 'Here we have, in primordial terms, the naturalized character of prostheses, through whose naturalization we see, feel, think, and so on' (T1 251). Re-calling the suppressed tele-phonics of the call of thinking, can we figure this as an instance of precisely this forgetting of the prosthetic?

Let us turn to the first of two examples deployed by Heidegger that suggest this argument. Firstly, and significantly for our earlier reading of John Mowitt's work, the radio:

All the ways in which we speed things up, as we are more or less compelled to do today, push us on towards the conquest of remoteness. With the 'radio', for example, Dasein has so expanded its everyday environment that it has accomplished a de-severance of the 'world'—a de-severance which, in its meaning for Dasein, cannot yet be visualized. (BT 140)

This passage is read by Mowitt as an implicit reflection on the acousmatic character of the radio—not simply 'in terms of the invisibility of the sound source', but in relation to a 'dilemma that arises as an ontological structure of Dasein' (2011, 41). In the first instance, on Mowitt's reading, this passage offers 'an insight into the essential spacing of the being of Dasein [...] that Heidegger virtually picks up through the radio' (41)—it is, as Stiegler would have it, the 'possibilities of the *what* [that] are constitutive of the very possibility of the *who*' (T1 253), and the *who* must therefore be thought *from* the '*dynamic* of the *what*' that determines these possibilities (T1 243). Without this dynamic, the 'essential tendency towards closeness' that marks Dasein would lack all support, anything that could give it a factual reality (BT 140).

With regard to the specificity of this technical and prosthetic constitution of the *who* in its essential spatiality, the radio not only supports and conditions Heidegger's thinking of this constitution, it enacts it in a manner that points us back to our opening concerns. Through the radio, Dasein's world is expanded to a degree that 'cannot yet



be visualized'; thus, the tele-technical prosthesis of the radio pushes the essential de-severance of Dasein to a degree where it '[points] to an asymmetry in the ontological structure of Dasein itself' (Mowitt 2011, 42). In Mowitt's terms, '[r]adio is thus obliging hearing to speed out ahead of seeing,' and, in doing so, 'may well cast the shadow of the acousmatic upon philosophy itself, to the extent that the source of its sounds, its rumblings, falls outside *its* construal of the visual field' (42). If, as Stiegler states, 'at its very origin and up until now, philosophy has repressed technics as an object of thought' (T1 ix), might it not be the case that this repression is coextensive with the elision of the sonic that, according to sound studies scholars, can be dated back to precisely this origin?

If we return to Heidegger's forgetting of the prosthetic character of Dasein's ec-stasis, both spatially and temporally, we can see that, at least in this case, such a supposition is not without merit. Let us consider, once again, the passage in which Heidegger dismisses the possibility of noise intruding into audition:

What we 'first' hear is never noises or complexes of sounds, but the creaking waggon, the motor-cycle. We hear the column on the march, the north wind, the woodpecker tapping, the fire crackling. It requires a very artificial and complicated frame of mind to 'hear' a 'pure noise'. (BT 207)

In "over-hearing" the sonority of the phenomenon in favour of its object-source, Dasein simultaneously forgets the technical status of both this source and its transmission. In keeping with phenomenological intentionality, one hears the sound *of* the motor-cycle, and at the same moment the tool and its sonic qualities are elided—both tool and sound refer to, in Stiegler's words, an 'already-there', a 'fore-having' whose technical and tele-ponic conditions are necessarily *forgotten* in the act of listening as such. The world, in its closeness and its immanent significance, must screen out its own tele-technical and auditory conditions in order to function. And are not this fore-having and this closeness precisely what enabled the call of conscience to reach Dasein immediately, and silently?

Yet the dynamic of the what—for instance, the invention of the radio—undercuts this stability of the world, the closing-off of that 'sphere in which speech meets with understanding' (WT 129) and within which both audition and technicity are not

encountered except as always-already enmeshed in a set of meaningful relations. For if the extremity of the radio's de-severance frustrates the equivalence of sound and vision as 'distance-senses,' allowing their technical support to obtrude, it does so through its essentially acousmatic character, troubling, at the same moment, the intentionality of audition and the unity of Dasein's world. The radio's de-severant character relies on Dasein hearing the sound "of" whatever is transmitted, rather than the sound "of" the radio itself—I must immediately hear the motor-cycle, not the sounds it produces, nor the tele-technical apparatus that transmits them to me, in order for it to have a successfully de-severant effect. That is, in order for the radio to bring things close, the apparatus itself must remain remote, just as spectacles themselves are not seen when they bring into focus the picture on the far wall. But it is precisely the specific technical capacities of this *what*—in this case, the radio's capacity to present the sound of an object without that object itself being present (that is, to operate acousmatically)—that enable such bringing-close in the first place. What Heidegger's remark indicates here is that the dynamic of the what, in this case the invention of the tele-technology of radio, occasions a rupture in this relation of veiling and unveiling by which the technical support enables and extends our perception. The radio's bringing-close of that which is so distanced as not to appear at all has the potential to fracture the unity of the world as such—the unity that kept out both sound and technics, at the same moment—by 'accomplish[ing] a de-severance of the world' as such, a de-severance that 'cannot yet be visualized' (BT 141)

Bringing all of these threads together, we can simply note another, brief example that Heidegger makes us of in this section of *Being and Time*—as spectacles are to sight, so 'the telephone receiver' is for hearing. In de-severing the voice of the Other—whose meaning is im-mediately heard—the telephone receiver, though it 'slides itself, as it were, along certain portions of one's body [...] is farther remote than the acquaintance whom one encounters 'across the street' (BT 141-2). Even as it brings close that which, distantly, remains so far as to be unencounterable without technical supports and prostheses, the tool itself passes beyond the audible range as a very condition of its functioning. The repression of the tele-phonic that we have insistently encountered is here reframed as the necessary forgetting of the technical and the audible for Heidegger—at the same moment as the dynamic of the what

disrupts the very coherence of Dasein's world on which the tool's smooth operation depended.

In sum, then, for Stiegler Heidegger necessarily forgets not only the essentially prosthetic character of Dasein's world, but the way in which said prostheses, in and through their own histories, transform the status and scope of that world. What Heidegger forgets is that '[e]very epoch is characterized by the technical conditions of actual access to the already-there that constitute it as an epoch' (T1 236); thus, if our age is without doubt a 'technological age,' this is insofar as the entire possibility of an "age" is itself technical through and through. We can even find, in Heidegger's remark on the radio, a suggestion that could be turned against his own articulation of the call of thinking and 'our thought-provoking time': perhaps we are 'still not' thinking to the very degree that we have 'not yet' come to terms with the effect of radio, or of the tele-phonics of thinking as such? From the perspective of sound studies, we might say that the question is less one of finally being able to 'visualize' these effects, as to pursue another path—to claim that the real issue is we have not yet *made audible* '[a]ll the ways in which we speed things up' (BT 140). It is such a possibility that I will investigate in the following section.

### 5. "No Future": Sounding Con-temporaneity

In the second volume of *Technics and Time*, Stiegler takes up the refrain that weaved through the first volume while never coming explicitly to the fore: the cry of *no future*. Today we are perhaps more familiar with this notion through the formulation, first articulated by Fredric Jameson and taken up more recently by Mark Fisher, that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism; which is as much to say that the future oscillates between an indefinite extension of the present or a final collapse, a future that is the eradication of any future whatsoever.<sup>28</sup> If the possibility of at last beginning to think is itself indexed to the time of the "not yet"—a time that, as I

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<sup>28</sup> Mark Fisher cites this remark in *Capitalist Realism* and claims that it is 'attributed to both Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Žižek' (2). Jameson makes the claim in *The Seeds of Time* (1994, xii), though later he will repeat it with an uncertain attribution of 'as someone has observed' (2005, 199). Žižek, for his part, attributes the quote to Jameson (2011, 334).

hope ultimately to indicate, is not simply to be thought of as a present-to-come—then this eradication of the future is, simultaneously, the destruction of thinking itself, its final collapse from the “still not” into the “never”.

This time, as we have established, is for Stiegler inextricable from ‘techno-genesis,’ from the dynamic of the *what*; the future of thinking, in the double sense of the genitive, is bound to the history of technics. As Stiegler himself puts it:

Technics thinks, and must not the connection to the future be redoubled as the thought of technics, as what technics thinks? Isn’t it necessary to think what we think as technics, as it thinks? It thinks *before* us, being always already there before us, insofar as there is being before us; the *what* precedes the *who*, has always already pre-ceded it. The future—which is the “task of thinking”—is in the thinking of (by) technics. We must understand this “of” in two senses that, taken together, produce time: to think technics as the thought of time (re-doubled). (T2 32)<sup>29</sup>

Thus, in finally re-turning to the problem of *how to begin thinking*, we must ask after what remained implicit in our account of sound studies—the status of the contemporaneity to which it laid claim, and its necessarily technical conditions.

It is from within this nexus of temporality, technicity, and thinking that I hope to ground the claim from which this entire chapter has taken its impetus: that sound calls for thinking, *today*. If this is the case, then it is necessary for us to think the contours of this “today” both within and against those forces that, for Stiegler as much as for Heidegger, threaten to close off all possibility of a future for thinking. My claim will be, following from my analysis of Heidegger’s repressed tele-phonics, that the conjunction of temporality and thinking must pass by way of an account of *both* technics *and* audition as the repressed of philosophy. In pushing this doubtless speculative claim, I want to investigate more fully Stiegler’s own diagnosis of ‘our

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<sup>29</sup> Keith Ansell Pearson makes a related point in his work on Nietzsche: ‘given the technophobic nature of the philosophical tradition, thought today needs to embark on a new negotiation with technology’ (Ansell Pearson 1997, 4); insofar as Ansell Pearson reads Deleuze’s work on Nietzsche extensively in this text, as well as its accompanying volume *Germinal Life*, his work would provide a vital starting point for establishing, more fully than this thesis can, the connections between Deleuze’s work and that of Stiegler with regard to the problem of technics.

thought-provoking time’ as the time of *disorientation*, and to ask the extent to which its conditions might be audible as much as technical.

In so doing, I want to continue two related lines of thinking that have emerged from our initial consideration of the function of the call in Heidegger, and which will ultimately bring us back round to the question of thinking sonority today: firstly, the relation between the elision of technics and of audition from the history of philosophy, and their reintroduction through the question of the con-temporary—that is, through the production of a collective temporality; secondly, the sense in which all thinking capable of registering the tele-techno-phonic of “our thought-provoking time” must take the form of a *response*, a retro-action named by Stiegler as the *après-coup*. Concluding our analyses of this chapter, then, I hope to have indicated more fully what it might mean to begin thinking sonority, *at last, today*—that is, what might truly be at stake in the emergence of sound studies.

To be without a future does not mean simply to be aware of the imminent moment at which one’s life will end—such a knowledge is, in fact, constitutively impossible for the Heideggerean *who*, insofar as futurity is necessarily the ‘undetermined’ by means of which Dasein retains its capacity to possibilize (T1 6). Death, as the lack of a future, is always the not-yet, and always in question. Rather, to be without a future is to lack the ‘cardinal points’ that function as ‘directional markers’ for temporality (T2 2-3) while nevertheless retaining the future’s inherent indeterminacy that defines it *as futurity*; these cardinal points are what give us *particular* futures we can strive towards, pursue and seek out; they are the *possibles* amongst which Dasein can choose (and we therefore know, already, that they bear some relation to the world as *already-there*). If Dasein is essentially ‘stretched-along’ in time, then these points are the posts upon which it is stretched, determining the vector and the distance of its ek-stasis. How has “our time” come to be characterized by the loss of such points, and the correlative lack of a future—that is, through the unleashing of what Stiegler calls ‘disorientation as such’ (T2 3)? In order to answer this, we must reopen the question of the relation between the *who* and the *what*—for it is within this space that both orientation and its loss are negotiated.

For Stiegler, it should be emphasized that the *what* does not simply determine the *who*,

contra Heidegger, in some linear fashion; such a claim could too easily suggest a direct correspondence or isomorphism between the two, at risk of collapsing all distinction between them. This is not Stiegler's intent. Rather, his project is to locate temporality itself *in this very difference* that subsists between them:

The *who* is *nothing* without the *what*, since they are in a transductive relation during the process of exteriorization that characterizes life [...]. The *who* is not the *what*: a transductive relationship can occur only between different terms. There is a dynamic of the *what*, irreducible to that of the *who* [...], but that requires the dynamic of the *who* as its anticipatory power. (T2 6-7)<sup>30</sup>

This transductive relation '[spans] an irreducible tension, a tension that is time itself' (T2 2); it is within this tension that Stiegler observes an 'originary disorientation' proper to technics itself—the disorientation of the *who* in and through the dynamic of the *what*, the 'metastable' coupling of techno-genesis and socio-genesis. This originary disorientation between techno- and socio-genesis is 'converted', through the '[a]djustments' provided by cardinal points, into a 'space of difference [...]' between here and there, public and private, profane and sacred...—or, between now and then. These adjustments, and the points on which they rely, must be actively achieved: 'If such adjustments are the engine of all motivation, and if they must be *oriented*, it is because the orient (the other) is missing' (T2 3). That is to say, disorientation, as much as technicity, and the exteriority both imply, are originary; they must be adjusted after the fact, through an *après-coup*, in order that we may orient ourselves.

The emphasis placed on *socio*-genesis here, as coupled to techno-genesis, brings us back to a key issue put in play by Stiegler's reading of Heidegger on the relation of the *who* and the *what*: if we began by asking after Heidegger's diagnosis of 'our thought-provoking time,' and the significance of the absence of thought that marked it, we

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<sup>30</sup> The notion of a transductive relation refers to the work of Gilbert Simondon, discussed at length in *The Fault of Epimetheus*. Deleuze makes reference to Simondon at various points, most directly in the short review 'On Gilbert Simondon' collected in *Desert Islands* (86-89). For a discussion of the notion of transduction, see Combes 2013, 7-9; as Combes notes, one of the principal features of transduction is the way in which it 'metaphysics and logic merge' in and through it—it is 'applies to ontogenesis and is ontogenesis itself' and to this degree "'transgresses" the Kantian limits on reason' (8). As will hopefully become apparent, to this degree it bears a significant relation to Deleuze's reformulation conception of the Idea, and to its dramatization.

ultimately came up against *Being and Time*'s attempt to insist upon the distinction between authentic and inauthentic temporality, through the essential 'mineness' of Dasein. It was upon this premise that the entire analysis of conscience, both as a struggle between the individual and the "they" and between the who and the what, was found to turn. It follows from this that all forms of intratemporal relation—including the possibility of a *shared or collective time* by which we would be oriented—would be inauthentic, for Heidegger, in relation to the originary temporalizing of temporality performed by Dasein itself, in its singular relation to its own indeterminate Being.

Elements of this position remained audible even in the broader historical considerations implicit in the lectures of the early fifties: if calculative thinking was to be resisted, it was, at least in part, insofar as it relied upon a standardized and pre-formatted mode of temporality. As Heidegger himself puts it, calculative thinking 'reckons with conditions that are given [...]. We take them into account with the calculated intention of serving specific purposes. Thus *we can count on definite results*' (DT 46, my emphasis). Thanks to calculative thinking, we, mankind as a whole, can determine temporality collectively according to a coincidence between projection and occurrence, between act and result; the indeterminate working of temporalization itself is eliminated, not incidentally but as the target of calculation as such. Technics thus defines not only a modality of thinking but the collective determination of temporality itself, and we can read here a further clarification of the necessity, for Heidegger, of eliminating all transmission and mediation from Dasein's authentic self-relation: both the technicity of the instrument and the noise of the "they" must be purged from the connection, for they each mark an *inauthentic* determination of the time that is Dasein's essential Being.

It is on this basis of this broader problem within Heidegger's work that, in order for Stiegler to invoke the technical determination of a fundamentally collective temporality, Dasein—the Being whose exteriorization marks the temporalizing of temporality—must become an explicitly collective entity, a possibility that was, at best, only hinted at in Heidegger, and contradicted by his emphasis on its irreducible "mineness":

The being-toward-death and isolation that characterize Dasein seem to

indicate that only the *I* can be the instance of indeterminacy. And yet Heidegger sometimes refers to the *Greek Dasein*—which could not be an *I*. This is a genuinely primal question since if the *Dasein* must finally be a *we*, the opposition between intratemporality and authentic temporality would be problematic. Understanding the *Dasein* as a *we* would inscribe indeterminacy firmly within idiomaticity, which is consistent with Heidegger's last proposals but incompatible with *Being and Time*'s propositions. (T2 67)

As noted, then, the collective determination of temporality—*Dasein* as a *we*—would undercut the vital Heideggerean distinction between “mere” intratemporality defined fundamentally in terms of instrumental practices (the chain of “in-order-to” that impart significance to the ready-to-hand) and the authentic temporalization of temporality based upon *Dasein*'s own anticipatory resoluteness in the face of its essential finitude—its being-toward-death. Stiegler, in arguing for the co-imbrication of indeterminacy and idiomaticity, opens up an analysis of temporality that is essentially collective, while nevertheless retaining, as we will hear, a vital role for the singularizing processes by which the individual “gives themselves” their own time. Idiomaticity is, in this sense, precisely the *orientation* by means of which a collective time is derived from the originary, technically-conditioned disorientation that *is* the essential indeterminacy of *Dasein*—which is to say, its temporality. The loss of orientation, and the lack of future, is therefore a technically-conditioned crisis of idiomaticity, related, in a way we must establish, to the *calculation* of this indeterminacy that Heidegger so feared.

Stiegler's diagnosis of “our time” in terms of this problem of orientation is clear: ‘This cardinal orientation is not successfully occurring today; thus we are suffering from *disorientation as such*’ (T2 3). Originary disorientation, no longer orientated in and through the transductive relation between the dynamic of the what and the anticipatory capacity of the who, is ‘at its most extreme limit today’ (T2 2), a limit that may in fact be the limit of the “today” as such—that is, the capacity to produce a coherent temporal unity. It is experienced as *speed*: ‘Speed is our experience of a difference in forces [...] this differential of forces-as-potential is the difference of *rhythms* between human beings and organized inorganic beings (technics)’ (T2 11). Disorientation as such is *acceleration*, insofar as this differential relation, experienced as speed, continues to amplify—the who can no longer keep pace with the what, as the ‘speed of



technical development [...] dramatically widen[s] the distance between technical systems and social organisations, as if, negotiation between them appearing to be impossible, their final divorce seems inevitable' (TT2 3).

This final divorce is the loss of the future and, simultaneously, the loss of thinking, insofar as the two are coupled in and through the uncertain genitive: the future of thinking. As Stiegler reaffirms, what Heidegger allows us to think, even if he himself could not help but suppress it, is the way in which 'technological conditions for access to the already-there may condition the very possibilities of our anticipation' (T2 18); what is at stake, then, is 'the future of the non-lived past' (T2 3). Between these two, the 'presence of which "today" consists', the presence of the present, is in 'crisis': 'Today is thus an other time' (T2 61), a time without precedent. If this is the today to which sound studies appeals—the contemporaneity in which the call for thinking sound will at last become audible—then we must pursue the source and the status of this "otherness". Which amounts to asking—how has the transductive relation between the what and the who become decoupled to the point that disorientation as such has come to mark the uncertain contours of our "today"? We can identify two related aspects of this decoupling operating in the second volume of *Technics and Time: real time* and the *industrialization of memory*. Each must be thought through the other.

Let us begin from the former, and proceed to the latter. At the opening of this chapter, I suggested that Heidegger's attempt to extricate the figure of the call from all telephonic resonance—to make it silent and immediate—effectively demanded the eradication of the call itself, insofar as the call requires what Stiegler, following Derrida, terms *différance*: spatialising-temporalizing, differing and deferring. So too, as we have seen, does temporality itself—temporality stems from the *différance* that marks the transductive relation between the who and the what. In the phenomenon of "real time," Stiegler gestures to the same tendency taking place, not simply within the history of philosophy and its (conjoined) suppressions of technics and audition, but rather within the very dynamic of the what itself. Without this delaying-deferring, without the gap between call and response, there is no possibility of receiving the call—that is, no thinking, and no future. Thus, what is called "real time"—the way in which 'technical speed [...] confront[s] this delay' of *différance* through live

transmission and quasi-instantaneous forms of capture and distribution (such as, for instance, the radio broadcast)—may in fact be ‘the de-temporalization of time, or at least its occultation’ (T2 63).

If real time risks the erasure of the *différance* through which time itself is constituted, it is insofar as a process of selection is necessary for any event to “take place” as such—a process that Stiegler terms ‘event-ization’. It is here that real time is connected to the industrialization of memory: ‘All events are inscribed in a memory, and event-ization is memory’s functioning.’ It is selection which ‘gives information value’ (T2 115), insofar as ““what happens” only happens in not being “everything,”” and thus it is not simply the registration of a totality of things which take place but rather their active construction into a particular event through technical means. It is clear from this that the “today” we are seeking could never be the moment of presence between the past, as a former present, and the future, as a present to come. Rather it is this “between” in the very same sense that Dasein is the stretching-along between birth and death: it is nothing other than then tension of this disjuncture, operating in and through *différance*. The present, then, is that contested spacing-temporalizing *through which* Dasein returns to “its” non-lived past, as a condition of all anticipation. Thus, ‘[a]ll events are inscribed in a memory, and event-ization is memory’s functioning’ (T2 100).

What is distinctive about our “today” is therefore not the fact that it lacks simple presence, but the fact that this *différential* construction of the present is no longer possible when real-time’ becomes the ‘operator’ of the ‘transformation of the conditions of reification and event-ization’ (T2 100). This is to say that the condition of an event’s taking place, its “happening,” are increasingly subjected to its immediate or instantaneous dispersal, its ““direct” or “live” transmission’ which is premised upon an informatic temporality of ‘light-time’ (T2 114). The significance of real time, then, is the effect of the resulting compression of space and time on event-ization: under the auspices of “real time”, an event must happen everywhere at once, “instantaneously”, in order to be an event at all; as a result, ‘[t]elecommunications networks deterritorialize,’ through an ‘industrial decontextualisation [that] occludes *différance*’ (T2 143-4). The spatialising-temporalizing that allows for the construction of a present *between* the disjunctive dynamics of the *who* and the *what*—the *who* as

anticipation, the what as the non-lived past *from which* it anticipates—is eliminated.

It is here that Stiegler's remarks on real time—that is, on a form of tele-transmission that would be, as we have heard previously with Heidegger, an occlusion of the phenomenon of calling as such—connects to the more general focus of his arguments around disorientation and speed: the industrialization of memory. Ben Roberts has noted a shift of emphasis between volumes one and two of *Technics and Time*, from technics as exteriorization and pro-thesis, to technics as mnemotechnics (Roberts, 55), a shift borne out in my own reading; while the focus of the first volume, as noted above, was Dasein's capacity to exteriorize itself through pro-sthetic pro-jections, the second volume focuses more directly on the conditions for such projection within the already-there, the non-lived past that is preserved in and through technics—indeed, that is coextensive with technicity as such. As Stiegler puts it, 'Technics does not aid memory: it *is* memory' (T2 65). The thinking of technics therefore requires a 'politics of memory,' insofar as memory is 'always the object of a politics, of a criteriology by which it selects the events to be retained' (T2 9); that is, insofar as it determines the conditions of event-ization and, at limit, the contours of the "today."

It is the very possibility of such a criteriology that the combination of real time and the industrialization of memory threatens to eliminate: a quasi-immediate event-ization is made possible thanks not only to the possibilities of tele-transmission (e.g. satellite transmission or internet streaming) but also to what Stiegler terms 'analogic and numeric technologies', technologies that 'tend to efface [...the] deferred modalization of temporality' (T2 62). These technologies, such as the 'telephone, photography, phonography, cinema, [and] radio broadcasting [...]', have replaced the anticipatory dynamic of the who, in its transductive relation to the what, with the production of what Stiegler terms 'industrial temporal objects' (Stiegler 2011, 56). We can borrow Stiegler's own gloss on this term:

A temporal object—a melody, film or radio broadcast [and perhaps, therefore, the duration of a tele-phone call]—is *constituted* by the time of its passing [...]. It is an object that passes. It is constituted by the fact that *like the consciousness that it unites*, it disappears as it appears. With the birth of public radio (1920), followed by the first television programs (1947), the program industries produce the temporal objects that *coincide in the time of their passing with the time flow of the consciousness of which*

*they are an object.* This coincidence enables consciousness to *adopt* the time of these temporal objects. The contemporary cultural industries can thus make masses of viewers adopt the time of consumption of toothpaste, cold drink, shoes, cars, etc. (Stiegler 2011, 56; original emphasis)

Re-calling Dasein's de-severant encounter with the radio, then, what is at stake for Stiegler is not simply the im-mediate reduction of Dasein's world through the elision of (almost) all *différance*, as was the case (in modified terms) for Heidegger, but, at the same moment, the reduction of Dasein's pro-sthetic exteriorization—which is to say, its temporalization—to a standard, operating in and through the industrially-produced and formatted temporal objects that can be 'internalised,' simultaneously, by 'tens or hundreds of millions' of auditors (56). For Stiegler, it follows that, '[a]s enormous systems of synchronization the cultural industries, especially television'—though Heidegger's remarks on the radio's capacity to produce effects that 'cannot yet be visualized' may demand we alter this—'are machines to liquidate [the] *self*,' insofar as this self is 'a singularity': 'I can only say *I* because *I give myself my own time*' (56).

Thus, Stiegler defines "today" as the eradication of one form of temporality in favour of another, reduced or formatted version: that is, if real time pushes towards the elimination of the work of *différance*, and in this sense the elimination of temporality as such, then the industrialization of memory in and through the industrial temporal object replaces this *work* of time—what Heidegger termed the 'temporalizing of temporality' (BT 278)—with a 'hypersynchronisation constituted by the programs' of the culture industry (Stiegler 2011, 57).<sup>31</sup> Counter-intuitively then, for Stiegler the present as constituted through a process of *différance*—that is, a present that is never simply present—is increasingly replaced with a strict synchronicity that would, in fact, fit with the more traditional definition of the present through the presence of the now, but which, for Stiegler, constitutes the eradication of temporalization as such. Thus, our "today" would be defined as *con-temporaneity* through the conjunction of all the various, multiple and complex workings of temporalizing that mark the singularity of the individual in a standardized and universal nexus—a contemporaneity that can,

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<sup>31</sup> "Program" here situates the 'programming industries' as the 'current form' of a 'general economy of the program' as defined, in Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, as 'life becoming conscious of itself' through a process of exteriorization (T2 3); see Derrida 1997, 84.

paradoxically, only be defined as *disorientation*, to the degree that it lacks the *différance* between here and there, then and now, upon which time itself is oriented (see T2 65). With a surfeit of industrially-formatted memory and “no future”, we fall into a perpetual present that the individual cannot inhabit, but which is the possession of ‘*nobody*,’ or, in Heidegger’s terms, the “they” that, in fact, is not and can never be any given person, any Dasein in its irreducible ‘mineness.’

The question that remains to us, and that sound studies demanded we take up, is to ask how, and in what ways, this “today” can be the site of our finally beginning to think sonority—can we, today, listen to sound’s call for thinking, at last? If this today is to be figured, necessarily, as *technical*, in a way that Heidegger himself enabled us to think without being able to acknowledge, can it also be *made audible*? In the final section of this chapter, I wish to map out the contours of the contemporary soundscape, and to ask the extent to which the soundmarks<sup>32</sup> of this auditory topography confirm or challenge those we have elaborated from Stiegler. In doing so, I hope to finally return to, or rather, to re-call, the problem of thinking as such; if Stiegler has shown that the future of thinking is the thought of technics, then, from our analysis of the imbrication of technics and sonority in Heidegger’s own account of this future, we are permitted to ask whether it might also be *sonic*. Grounded upon this possibility, evoked implicitly throughout this chapter, I will turn to the work of Gilles Deleuze, and ask, once again, *what does it mean to begin thinking*, at last?

## 6. New Noise: Stockpiling and Retromania

Thus far, we have heard how the call of thinking has allowed us to uncover a repressed tele-phonics within Heidegger’s thought, and, from this, proceeded to a technical determination of the “today” within which this call might finally become audible. Yet it remains to be heard how this technically-constituted con-temporaneity offers itself to thought as something to which we must *listen*—in a manner different from Heidegger’s own insistence that we listen to Being. Which is to ask, once again: in what sense does sound, specifically, call for thinking, today? In pursuing this question,

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<sup>32</sup> An auditory modification of the landmark; see Schafer 1994.

I want to pursue two related lines of thought. Firstly, I want to uncover the ways in which Stiegler's concern with disorientation is audible in recent music writing from both journalists and artists, who have, in and through their engagement with contemporary sonic practice, immanently sounded out precisely the same issues, and identified proximate causes; in effect, this will function as an initial indication of the possibility of thinking *from* sonority, insofar as listening itself will be seen to produce certain theoretical results commensurate with those established above.

Yet the conceptual implications of this possibility must be carefully assessed, and this leads to the second line of thinking I wish to pursue—and, ultimately, this task will be the focus of the remaining part of this thesis. In order to begin laying the groundwork for such an assessment, I will frame my engagement with contemporary music writing through the pivotal work of Jacques Attali, whose *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* is not only a foundational text for sound studies, but is so to the very degree that it asks after the ways in which sonority might function as a spur for thinking. Attali's work, then, will provide a link between the attempt to *make audible* the above engagement with the technico-temporality of thinking and the broader question of method—that is, of the possible *responses* to sound's call for thinking.

Attali's work does not have merely methodological significance, however. Rather, I also hope to show that the speculative claim outlined above that the repression of (the thought of) technics identified by Stiegler may be functionally related to the elision of sonority claimed by sound studies—and that, therefore, the future of thinking may demand their conceptual imbrication—can be discovered as already present in Attali's text, and is, therefore, built into sound studies' very foundations. Not only does this text avow a suppression of sonic thinking coextensive with the philosophical tradition as such, but, just as significantly for my account here, its plea for a form of 'thinking through music' situates the possibility of this thinking within an analysis of the 'today' that is, at its root, *techno-phonics* (Attali 1985, 3). If Attali's text is, rightly, still much-read and cited in texts on and around sound studies, I hope to avoid any risk of redundancy by situating it (against its own broadly semiological and post-structuralist tendencies) within the above-outlined lineage of post-deconstructive phenomenology—not without risk, certainly, of placing a certain amount of stress upon Attali's own arguments, but with the hope that, in approaching proximate

conclusions through different resources, I can, in fact, strengthen the generally rather limited argumentation the text itself provides.

Initially, then, I want to consider Attali's work, before examining the way in which both his concerns and Stiegler's are audible in contemporary debates around listening and sonic practice. To this end, we can return to Attali's bold claim with which the text opens:

For twenty-five centuries, Western knowledge has tried to look upon the world. It has failed to understand that the world is not for the beholding. It is for hearing. It is not legible, but audible. (3)

Such a statement, as indicated previously, marks a recurrent trope within the articulation of sound studies' contemporaneity, as well as possessing an interesting proximity to Heidegger's own remarks on the "still not" of thinking—as well as his ultimately metaphorical remarks on the necessity of 'listening to Being'. This proximity to our preceding concerns becomes even more pressing in Attali's subsequent evocation of the 'thought-provoking time' in which this demand to think sonically is encountered:

*Today, our sight has dimmed; it no longer sees our future, having constructed a present made of abstraction, nonsense, and silence. [...] By listening to noise, we can better understand where the folly of men and their calculations is leading us, and what hopes it is still possible to have.* (my emphases)

Though Attali's characterization of "today" in relation to 'abstraction, nonsense, and silence' is not yet clear in its precise meaning, his invocation of the 'folly' of 'calculations' takes us directly back to Heidegger's own characterization of 'our thought-provoking time' in terms of a calculative pseudo-thinking; and, ultimately, Attali too is incited to invoke *hope*, that we may escape the trajectory upon which such calculations are 'leading us'—towards, perhaps, what Heidegger termed the *supreme danger*. Regardless of the specific nature of this hope, it is nevertheless pitched against a present that has *lost its future*, thanks precisely to the limiting of our present to calculative action. Clearly, we remain on familiar terrain here.

There are two principal aspects of Attali's own response to this shared predicament

that I wish to outline here, as means to providing my own account of the soundscape of our contemporaneity—that is, the contemporaneity *from which* sound studies hopes to think. Firstly, I want to consider, somewhat briefly, Attali’s own suggestion as to how we might position sound, not as object of a new theoretical discipline—a positioning that risks retaining the ocular aspect encoded in theory itself—but as something that itself performs theoretical operations, in a sense we must examine; thought would then seek to track and to map out the immanent theoretical capacities of sound itself. This first aspect is, therefore, more narrowly *methodological*—though, in this regard, only preliminary, as Chapter Two will indicate more thoroughly. Secondly, I want to indicate how Attali’s own deployment of this method produces an account of our “today” that relies, implicitly, upon the same logic as Stiegler’s account of disorientation through the industrialization of memory. This, more substantive aspect will then allow me to examine the ways in which recent examinations of “our thought-provoking time” within the discourse of music journalism echo and amplify this logic in and through a listening practice—albeit one whose own methodological implications are rarely made audible.

For Attali, the theoretical work that, for him, is performed by sonority stems from the claim—which is, again, a familiar one within sound studies—that sonority has an essential relationship to temporality; what is distinctive about Attali’s approach is that this relationship to time does not simply manifest phenomenologically in the act of listening (and the associated time consciousness), but is rather indexed to larger-scale historical transformations. Such an approach was, as noted above, already an explicit element of Stiegler’s account of the industrial temporal object, and, more broadly, his relationship to both Husserlian and Heideggerean phenomenology. What is vital about Attali’s work, placed in this context, is the central role he ascribes to auditory experience as a form of technico-temporal diagnostics—that is, the priority of listening as a way of sounding out the mutations of the temporal object, and therefore of the technically-determined transformations of temporality as such. In sum, for Attali, ‘music makes mutations audible’ (4); that is to say, music *sounds out* the transformations of a given social order, transformations that, given our above arguments, can only be thought as rooted in technicity. Music’s priority here is dependent upon two, mutually-reinforcing reasons, which I will consider in turn—one regarding the nature of music as Attali understands it, and the other regarding the



specific status of music in relation to the mapping of the social.

Firstly, music, for Attali, is definable according to a set of ‘codes’ that reflect (and this word bears its own difficulties) the social order in which it is produced: ‘All music can be defined as noise given form according to a code...’ (25). For Attali, this coding is an articulation of power that is coextensive with the establishment of society as such: ‘All music, any organisation of sounds is then a tool for the creation or consolidation of a community, of a totality. It is what links a power center to its subjects, and thus, more generally, it is an attribute of power in all of its forms.’ This exercise of power, which defines the intersection of music and collectivity, is on the order of a regulation and regularisation, against the chaotic uncertainties of uncoded noise: ‘music localizes and specifies power, because it marks and regiments the rare noises that cultures, in their normalization of behaviour, see fit to authorize’ (19-20); even more bluntly, he states that ‘[t]he code of music simulates the accepted rules of society’ (29, original emphasis). On this basis, Attali will claim that music ‘has no usage in itself, but rather a social meaning expressed in a code relating to the sound matter music fashions and the systems of power it serves’ (24); music *models* the imposition of order that defines the social as such. Thus, ‘the production of music has as its function the creation, legitimation, and maintenance of order’ (30), and one can *listen* to the dominant order of a given society in the music it produces.

From this definition of music in relation to power and order, it follows that, when the social order undergoes a transformation, so does the coding that reciprocally determines the boundary between music and noise. This leads us to the second point. Attali affirms that music has a privileged role in this coupling of the aesthetic and the political, not only thanks to its temporal nature (after all, there are visual arts that are time-based, such as theatre or dance), but thanks to its *immateriality*. Though I will not follow Attali to the letter on this point, not least because it is not clear exactly what is meant by “material” in this context, nevertheless the framing of music’s conceptual and theoretical significance he derives from it bears consideration:

[Music’s] styles and economic organization are ahead of the rest of society because it explores, much faster than material reality can, the entire range of possibilities in a given code. It makes audible the new world that will gradually become visible, that will impose itself and regulate the order of

things; it is not only the image of things, but the transcending of the everyday, the herald of the future. (11)

Once again, a dynamic of delay is audible here—the visible articulation of what music uncovers in and through its exploration of a given social code is belated in relation to what can already be heard; insofar as, according to Attali, thinking itself has been articulated in ocular terms, then thought too must come after the fact, as an *après-coup*. Sonic thought would therefore not only mark the (desired) future of thinking—that is, a mode of thinking extricated from the limitations of the visual sphere—but a thought of the future: it would articulate, through sonority, what aspects of our future are already audible in our present—that is, what aspects of “our thought-provoking time” already allow us to hear the future *of* thinking.

Beyond the methodological interest of such a claim—to which we will return—the specific results of Attali’s own attempt to listen to the future audible within our present offer some significant, specifically auditory corroboration for Stiegler’s own diagnosis outlined above. In general, Attali’s account identifies four principal ‘networks’, that is, distinct ways in which noise has been organized into music, arranged into a broadly historical sequence; that is to say, these networks are, effectively, ways of determining a particular epoch, a collective time, including the present. Importantly, these epochs—our thought-provoking time amongst them—are defined as sites of tension, across and between these networks, which never hold unitary sway over the time that they determine. Moreover, Attali is careful not to suggest any simple linear succession to the various networks he identifies; though there is necessarily the supersession of one by another, such that music can be prophetic of social changes, nevertheless, as with social change, it is not a question of the wholesale replacement of one mode by another: just as new institutions do not simply supplant or eradicate old ones, nor do new musical codes eradicate old forms of musical practice. This leads to some just caution on Attali’s part, mitigating some of the more bold statements of his theoretical intent: ‘The simultaneity of multiple codes, the variable overlappings between periods, styles, and forms, prohibits any attempt at a genealogy of music, a hierarchical archaeology, or a precise ideological pinpointing of particular musicians’ (19). That is to say, it is not possible to precisely delineate boundaries and transition points, nor to place particular figures within a given ideological framework; rather, the task of the

theoretician who would wish to engage music's prophetic capacity is to study the structuring and ordering of 'differences', which are 'done violence' by noises that '[call] into question' those differences, rather than to study homogeneous periods and read them back onto particular social organisations<sup>□</sup>.<sup>33</sup>

With this caveat in mind, let us consider Attali's auditory diagnosis of his present—which may or may not remain ours, forty years later. The *two* networks that are of most interest to us are those that, for Attali, mark the point of tension that defines our present in terms that, as we will hear, are reminiscent of the Heideggerean conception of time as *ek-stasis*: that is, our present, far from being a self-contained point on the line of time, is stretched out between a network that gathers up the entirety of the past, and one that attempts to exceed the already-there in the name of an unheard-of future—networks that he names repetition and composition, respectively. I will consider repetition first, outlining Attali's characterization of it in relation to Stiegler's own analysis of contemporary disorientation and the industrialization of memory, before turning to the mode of composition, which Attali considered to be embryonic at the time of writing, and of which, for this reason, he offers a less specific characterization. In so doing, I wish to draw attention to the way in which the call for thinking that emanates from sonority merges, simultaneously, with the question of *method*—that is, a question of musical *and* theoretical practice—and with that of the time “in” which such practice could “take place”. That is, I hope to show that, within Attali's account, so influential for sound studies, we find conjoined precisely those elements upon which I have insistently focused from the outset: what would it mean, today, for sound to call for thinking, with due emphasis on each of these terms? The way in which we can hear Attali posing such a question will allow me to return, at last, to this fundamental question—this question of the fundament, or of grounding—and to re-*pose* it once again, with a distinct set of resources.

Initially, then, and with this broader goal in mind, I will provide an overview of how

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<sup>33</sup> This notion of difference relating to difference by way of a particular ordering is, on the one hand, a common structuralist trope, present already in Saussure's general linguistics, where language is lacking in positive terms (Saussure 1986, 118); on the other hand, the statement has something of a Deleuzian valence, insofar as Deleuze's reconfiguration of structuralism can be understood as an attempt to reconcile structure and genesis (see DR 231-33, DI 170-192).

Attali defines the network of repetition. Fundamentally, the shift to repetition is, for Attali, defined by a technological innovation—what is more, a *mnemo*-technical one, in precisely the sense that fascinated Stiegler: for Attali, it is the possibility of recording sound that 'thoroughly shattered' the preceding network, representation (85), in a manner that acted contrary to its initially intended utilisation (86-88). It is important to note that this grounding of the shift between networks in technological advancement is not a simple determinism, and Attali avers that the technological conditions (instrumentation, for instance) for a new network often emerge before the other conditions necessary to allow for such a transformation (35); such caution can be re-figured in terms of Stiegler's own insistence on the "différential" relation between socio-genesis and techno-genesis.<sup>34</sup> What is key here is the way in which Attali figures sound recording in terms of a broader genealogy of recording-as-technics that is immanently related to social order. As Attali puts it: 'Recording has always been a means of social control, a stake in politics, regardless of the available technologies' (87). Following Stiegler, we could also say, reciprocally, that the available technologies are themselves always *recording technologies*, the exteriorization of memory, and if, according to Attali, '[s]tockpiling memory, retaining history or time [...] has always been an attribute of civil and priestly power,' then we can say that the thinking of technics is not only always a thinking of the technico-temporal, it is also a thinking of the technico-*political*—a theme that has remained implicit throughout our invocations of a collective temporality.

The mnemo-technical aspect of recording that instigates the transition to the repetition network is defined by Attali as the *stockpiling of time*; that is, recording allows the musical performance, which must take place in and over time, to be stored, preserved, and recovered; it allows for the production and re-production of determinate units of time, or, in Stiegler's (Husserlian) terminology, temporal objects. Thus, in Stiegler's parlance, recording produces an *industrial* temporal object—a temporal object produced on a mass scale thanks to its formatted repeatability, or, to take up Stiegler's terms again, its ortho-thetic character. For Attali, the real effect of this new recording capacity, implied by a pejorative connotation of 'stockpiling,' is that music is accumulated, rather than experienced, and the temporality of the industrial temporal

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<sup>34</sup> In *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari similarly insist on the priority of social machines over technical machines; see for instance AO 34.

object never coincides with that of the experience of the subject:

The major contradiction of repetition is in evidence here: *people must devote their time to producing the means to buy recordings of other people's time*, losing in the process not only the use of their own time, but also the time required to use other people's time. Stockpiling then becomes a substitute, not a preliminary condition, for use. *People buy more records that they can listen to. They stockpile what they want to find time to hear.* (101, original emphasis)

Thus, Attali affirms the technico-phenomenological diagnostics of Stiegler, with a renewed emphasis: not only is the time of the individual formatted according to the parameters of the industrial temporal object (in the case of the recording network, we could refer to the three-minute form of the pop single, itself notoriously determined, initially, by the capacity of a single side of a 7" vinyl record), but these objects are themselves accumulated in quantities that could never coincide with the time of experience itself. What is more, this disjuncture is manifest at the level of temporality's collective production—*my time is exchanged for the time of others*, but this exchange becomes dissymmetrical to the degree that my time approaches, asymptotically, a vanishing point, as the present of my experience is overwhelmed by the mass of the already-there to whose dimensions it can never be extended.

Again, then, in terms used previously, it is a question of the already-there assuming dimensions whereby it can no longer be re-assimilated; Dasein can no longer possibilize on the basis of its past, insofar as its past exceeds its capacities for anticipation, and collective temporality is itself ruptured through this very process. Attali himself gestures in this direction, redoubling the cry of *no future*:

if our societies seem unpredictable, if the future is difficult to discern, it is perhaps quite simply because *nothing happens, except for the artificially created pseudoevents and chance violence that accompany the emplacement of repetitive society.* (89-98)

We observe here the paradoxical dynamic that Stiegler extrapolated from Heidegger: in and through the hyper-formatting of calculability that, for Stiegler as much as for Heidegger, marks the specificity of modern technology, we do not, in fact, manage to reduce the relation between the various dimensions of time to one of sheer

predictability; to the contrary, we encounter disorientation as such, insofar as this formatting exceeds our capacities to make our own time. That is to say, “our time” is, in an important sense, no longer ours at all—and this fact is *audible*, today.

The prescience of Attali’s account of the contemporary soundscape is evident from even a cursory consideration of the four decades since its publication—the past twenty years, in particular, have been defined by not only a wholesale transformation in the production, distribution, and consumption of music through the emergence and subsequent omnipresence of digital and network technologies, but a subsequent crisis in the very status and significance of music as such—all of which we could define in terms of a the exacerbation of stockpiling, the amplification of repetition. That is to say, as the capacities for amassing and accessing the sonic stockpile rapidly increase and extend, the relation between lived time and the time of the already-there becomes increasingly decoupled, with music occupying the vanishing space between—in the overwhelming noisiness of our shrinking, disoriented present. It is now possible to carry around far more music than one will ever find time to listen to on a device small enough to fit comfortably in one’s pocket; moreover, this is not a mere technological possibility, but a significant, and possibly dominant, mode of musical consumption. What becomes of music qua coding of the social under these conditions—and what of our capacity to think *through* it, today, as Attali insists we must?

These questions are not only implicit in Attali’s account of the network of repetition, as well as Stiegler’s analysis of disorientation and the industrial temporal object, but have also been a preoccupation in recent music journalism. Within a particular strand of this discourse, which is in principle focused upon the sound of the present, there has been a focus upon contemporary musical cultures as either enabled or threatened by an informational deluge—the impossible surfeit of the already-there, the overloading of the sonic archive, leading to the impossibility of inhabiting a musical present with any coherent sense of its possible futures, much less a capacity to pursue them. I want to focus, in particular, on two texts by Simon Reynolds, his book-length study *Retromania* and an accompanying article for *The Wire* titled “We Are All David Toop Now,” alongside various entries in a series published by the latter magazine titled “Collateral Damage,” designed to encourage musicians, label-owners and bloggers to reflect upon the precisely these issues. In examining this discourse, I want to refine

Attali and Stiegler's accounts of the technico-temporality of the present in relation to the specifics of today's soundscape. In so doing, I hope to indicate how insistently the concerns over the scope of this present link the construction and consolidation of "our time" to the technical conditions of access to the already-there, even within a discourse attentive only to how "our time" *sounds*. Thus, I hope to reaffirm my initial supposition that, if we ask how sound might call for thinking today, we must not only confront the status of thought within our present, but also the ways in which this present is itself an uncertain, fragmentary unity—and it is to this extent that it is, as Heidegger has it, thought-provoking.

Let us begin, then, with the work of Simon Reynolds, a music writer whose work has insistently intersected with both theoretical concerns (including consistent, if brief and allusive, references to the work of Deleuze and Guattari), and, what is more, has been continually caught up in the problematic temporality of pop music itself; his earlier books on dance music and post-punk, for instance, are retrospective reflections on future-oriented, often avowedly *futurist* musics that nevertheless affirm a "popular" status in terms of their relation to a collective present (see Reynolds 2005, 2013). In 2011, Reynolds released a large work that once again takes up these broad themes, entitled *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to its Own Past*. As implied by the title, this text attempts to expound and investigate a temporal disorientation that is directly (though, in this text, with an uncertainty of causal connection) allied to technological transformations, and which brings into question the very contemporaneity of "pop" itself.

To this end, the book's first section, significantly subtitled 'Now,' provides a series of meditations on the saturation of contemporary culture with its own past, now indefinitely preserved and continually, instantaneously accessible thanks to digitisation and file-sharing; it is Reynolds' descriptions of how this reciprocal determination is *audible* today that is most important here. He makes his position clear at the outset: 'Instead of being about itself, the 2000s has been about every other previous decade happening again all at once: a simultaneity of pop time that abolishes history while nibbling away at the present's own sense of itself as an era with a distinct identity and feel' (x-xi). This is precisely Stiegler's diagnosis filtered through other terms: the saturation of the already-there prevents the present individuating itself

through a reciprocal relation between past and future that Stiegler refers to as epochal redoubling; the différential production of a singularized temporality—a “now” or a “today”—is no longer possible. This state of affairs, the eponymous ‘retromania,’ is neither random nor unprecedented, but rather directly allied, for Reynolds as much as for Stiegler, to a process of technological acceleration that has dissolved spatial boundaries just as it has compressed temporal ones: ‘From landscapes dramatically altered through development [...] to new technologies affecting the feel and rhythm of everyday life, the world in which you had felt at home gradually disappeared. The present became a foreign country’ (xxvi). Time, it seems, can no longer “take place.”

Accounting for this broader cultural shift is beyond my remit; here it merits simply to focus on Reynolds shared sense of the way in which our contemporary disorientation is registered through a *delay*. For Reynolds, the roots of this disorientation, for music at least, can be located in the middle of the nineteenth century: ‘Developed in the nineteenth century but defining the twentieth, recording in all its forms is what ultimately created the conditions of possibility for retro’ (xxxv). Again, the figure of the delay-deferral obtrudes into the relation between technics, temporality, and, increasingly audition—what we hear, “at last,” are the consequences of a rupture imperceptible at the time, whose symptoms remained inaudible until today. Reynolds goes on to quote Ariel Pink, whom he elsewhere refers to as a ‘godfather’ of hypnagogic pop (348), a largely US-based scene of exemplarily retro-fixated, drone-heavy pop music, drenched in reverb and full of gestures towards a half-remembered late-eighties youth: ‘It’s a total paradigm shift, it’s completely screwed with our brains,’ says Pink of the shift between music sold as scores and music sold as records, ‘The recording medium actually crystallises an event and makes it more than the sum of the score. The feel of the moment is captured. That has changed everything—people being able to revisit memories like that’ (xxxv).

Thus, we find Reynolds—and, as we will go on to hear more fully, musicians themselves—engaging precisely the concerns articulated by Stiegler and Attali, and, ultimately, even Heidegger. The connection is made even more explicitly in Reynolds’ comments on ‘music and memory in the time of YouTube’ (55). YouTube, for Reynolds is a ‘potent symbol’ of ‘the astronomic expansion of humanity’s resources of memory’ (56) since the advent of a widespread availability of digital technologies and



high-speed internet connections. The significance, however, lies not only in quantity, the sheer mass of the already-there, but rather in its ease of access: ‘In the pre-Internet era, there was already way more information and culture than any individual could digest. But most of this culture data and culture matter was stashed out of our everyday reach, in library museums, and galleries. Nowadays search engines have obliterated the delays involved in searching through a library’s murky, maze-like stacks’ (57). Reynolds himself notes that his book on post-punk would have been far easier to write had it not preceded the launch of YouTube by eighteen months—and for evidence of this, simply search YouTube for any of post-punk’s major bands (Wire, for instance, or This Heat) and listen to the copious amount of material, including full albums uploaded as single videos, available within seconds.

For Reynolds, this capacity, emblemized by YouTube, has ‘utterly transformed’ our ‘relationship to time and space’ (58), in two principle ways: firstly, through the preservation of an overwhelming amount of music history just a few clicks away from the interested listener, as opposed to the previous tendency for records to be deleted or go out-of-print, making them very difficult to find a few years after release if they were not highly successful; secondly, a new mode of listening, as this superabundance comes ‘at the cost of disempowering the power of art to dominate our attention’ (71), and the listener is increasingly placed in a ‘flighty state of distraction,’ a ‘vacillatory suspension of skipping and skimming’ that is ‘really an insidious form of paralysis’ (73). On reflection, even Reynolds himself is unsure if YouTube would have truly helped him write his post-punk history; the ease of access would be offset by the way in which he could ‘easily have lost [himself] in endless clips of live footage, ancient promo videos and TV appearances’—perhaps, at its limit, merely a Web 2.0 version of lostness in the “they”, awaiting a call of conscience that could never cut through the cacophony.

On this basis, temporality, technicity, and subjectivity are here tied together in a mutually-reinforcing dynamic of dispossession and insecurity, which matches up both with Stiegler’s analysis of contemporary disorientation as well as with a critical account of postmodernity: ‘The rearrangement of time and space in the internet age seems to be mirrored by distortions in one’s sense of self, which feels splayed and stuffed’ (73). If we turn to Reynolds piece “We Are All David Toop Now,” initially

featured in *The Wire* magazine in 2012 and republished in an expanded version on Reynolds' blog under the title "Tales of Topographic Oceans" (I will refer to the latter version here), we hear precisely this deployment of music to perform a diagnostics that is now both technico-temporal *and* psycho-pathological, as the crisis of disorientation, just as Stiegler feared, becomes a crisis of subjectification.<sup>35</sup> The eponymous David Toop—whom we now all are, and who thus becomes a figure of subjectification as such—is a music writer known for his eclecticism and expansive knowledge of musical esoterica and exotica (both these terms, as Reynolds note, relative and based upon a steadily-vanishing contrast between the proximate and the distant, the familiar and the foreign, or, in Stiegler's chosen terms, the occident and the orient); he is a pioneering representative of what Reynolds terms xenomania, the overwhelming desire for the alien, the other. This desire was, in Toop's case, the object of a gradual, progressive fulfillment through years of painstaking accumulation of musical exotica—including 'journeying to the Amazonian jungle to record the Yanomami tribe's shamanic rituals.' Regardless of the means of its fulfillment, to which we will turn shortly, this accumulative drive is, in Attali's terms, very clearly an extreme modality of stockpiling, premised upon the mnemo-technics of phonography and pushing towards the infinitization of the archive. At its root, the desire is self-annulling; in pushing ever-wider the boundaries of the phonographically-captured, the very distance upon which the drive itself turned is increasingly deprived of its conditions, eliminating the 'cardinal points' through which the relation between self and other can itself be sustained.

For Reynolds, this self-annulling is precisely what has taken place. If Toop is the archetype and precursor of a generalized tendency now encompassing and defining an equally generic "we," then in and through this extrapolation into a collective process—and thanks to the technical conditions of this collectivity—something vital has changed, such that, if "we are all David Toop now," then this subjective figure has itself become something other than what it marked in relation to an individual (the

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<sup>35</sup> In passing, I want to note that, in expanding the coupling of technics and temporality to include the production of subjectivity—something already implicit in Heidegger and then explicit in Stiegler—allows us to discern, once again, the trace of Nietzsche's definition of the philosopher as diagnostician or symptomatologist of civilisation; a definition that Deleuze will repurpose to his own ends, and that I will subsequently affirm. See Chapter Three for a fuller discussion.

actually-existing person named David Toop), in a way that bears direct connection to Stiegler's analysis of disorientation. Toop's xenomania and its fulfillment were premised, as noted previously, on the distinction between here and there, then its satisfaction retained an element of delay and deferral—that is, it was structured through *différance*. As Reynolds puts it: 'analogue-world collecting [or, we could say, stockpiling] involved physical exertion and travel, distance and delay structured music consumption according to a rhythm of hunt and capture, ingestion and digestion'; it possessed an orientation. Yet, the transformation of the mnemo-technical conditions under which this particular modality of stockpiling took place has ensured that 'any kid with a broadband connection can access the sort of dizzying diversity of listening experience that took Toop a lifetime of obsessive dedication to accumulate.' If 'any kid' is now equivalent to David Toop, it is on condition that the very structuring of time and space, a structuring that was the operator of Toop's xenomaniacal desire, is short-circuited, and its affective resonance thrown decisively into question.

Thus, we can read Reynolds' remark that 'today's xenomania is entwined with globalization and the distance-abolishing effects of the internet' as both a summary of his position and as an implicit gesture of technico-temporal diagnostics performed *through* the auditory experience of a "today"; what is more, we can observe how Reynolds' conclusion is directly proximate to those of Stiegler and Attali, as well as a more general critical interrogation of postmodernity. Here, the crisis of subjectification is articulated through the account of a collective listening subject passing under the name "David Toop": the 'always-there plenitude' of the online archive offers a 'plenitude [that] incites restlessness, the audio equivalent of checklist tourism.' We are incited to re-call here not only Stiegler's fears over the effects of the industrial temporal object, but also Heidegger's own account of a powerlessness to think that marks our thought-provoking time; though there may be 'everywhere a lively and constantly more audible interest' in listening—just as Heidegger heard such an interest in philosophy—nevertheless, such 'taking an interest' may not amount to *what is called thinking*—a call whose sense we have (deliberately) left in question to the degree that it may, I hope, include both the auditory and the philosophical within its ambit (WT 4).

Before turning, finally, to a broader re-consideration of "our thought-provoking time",

as means to a questioning of how we might respond to this provocation—which is to say, before taking up once again the question *was heisst denken?*—it must be noted that is not only Reynolds who sounds off on these concerns extrapolated from the experience of listening to our present. Responding to the increasingly voluble debates around online file-sharing and the digitization of music distribution and consumption, *The Wire* magazine began a series titled “Collateral Damage,” in which artists, label owners and music bloggers were invited to offer their own diagnosis of, and response to, the soundscape of our thought-provoking time. I am interested less in the specifics of the positions taken, or their respective merits, than in the way in which they mark out certain points of convergence upon what I would call, following Deleuzian terminology to be analysed subsequently, a *problem*. To this end, I want to consider, very briefly, various statements made during the course of these debates that align with the concerns outlined above, effectively mapping my engagement with technics and temporality, extrapolated from Heidegger and Stiegler, onto the sonic present.

We can begin with the piece that indirectly triggered the discussion that would subsequently unfold in the magazine’s pages: Kenneth Goldsmith’s “Epiphany,” from the April 2011 issue (subsequently published online in the version cited here, under the title “Collateral Damage: Kenneth Goldsmith”). Goldsmith recounts his encounter with online file-sharing (in this case, the early peer-to-peer music-sharing service Napster) in terms resonant with Attali’s account of stockpiling and with Stiegler’s industrialization of memory: ‘It was as if every record store, fleamarket and charity shop in the world had been connected by a searchable database and had flung their doors open, begging you to walk away with as much as you could carry for free.’ What is distinctive about Goldsmith’s piece is his evaluation of this transformation of the technical support for the already-there: he is unabashedly *positive* about its effects. Though he alludes to the effects of disorientation by noting that ‘file sharing is non-contextual’—and hence no longer situated spatio-temporally in terms of a linear chronology or an articulation of proximity and distance—and though he also reaffirms Reynolds’ account of the collective listening subject by noting that ‘[j]ust like you, I’m drowning in my riches [...] I’ve got more music on my drives than I’ll ever be able to listen to in the next ten lifetimes,’ and that ‘records that I’ve been craving for years [...] are languishing unlistened-to,’ nevertheless he affirms these facts as liberating, enabling an entirely new modality of sonic experience in which ‘the ways

in which culture is distributed have become profoundly more intriguing than the cultural artefact itself.’

The implications of Goldsmith’s claim here are, in fact, highly significant in relation to the nature of the sonic object itself *qua* ‘cultural artefact,’ and we will have opportunity to revisit their specifically sonic inspiration in the work of John Cage. Nevertheless, it must be said that those who more-or-less directly respond to Goldsmith’s provocation do not share his evaluation. Chris Cutler, who opens the “Collateral Damage” series proper with a direct response to Goldsmith, is a member of avant-rock group Henry Cow and owner of Recommended Records (ReR), and evinces a Stieglerian concern for the intersection of technics and temporality that is audible within sonic experience itself: Cutler asks after the ‘social, cultural and moral costs’ of so much “free” music (that is, music that can be easily procured without direct cost regardless of the legality), and remarks that ‘[s]ometimes it’s not only our attention span that has evaporated down to bug durations, but our future-directed thinking altogether’ (Cutler 2011). The present, reduced to ‘bug durations’ (and we should note that Stiegler, in *Taking Care of Youth and the Generations*, equates attention capacity to the constitution of the social as such (Stiegler 2010)) leaves us without a future that can be thought, and, perhaps therefore, without a future *of* thinking in both senses.

Amanda Brown, who co-runs the Not Not Fun label and performs as LA Vampires (and, formerly, as part of the duo Poca haunted, pioneers of the hypnagogic pop sound referred to by Reynolds), shares these concerns: referring to a non-specified “us” (the allusions to an implicit collective subject are frequent in the course of the “Collateral Damage” series, with many clearly sharing Reynolds’ impetus to try and define the contemporary listening subject) as ‘digital hoarders,’ whose music collections are now ‘bulging iTunes libraries stuffed with tracks whose cumulative ‘value’ is measured in total playing time (days and days’ worth, even months)’ (Brown 2011). The ‘cyber-waste,’ she goes on to remark, ‘is astounding.’ The effects of this stockpiled surfeit of industrial temporal objects—measured in an improbably-dilated clock time rather than through names of artists or albums, or through associated affective resonances or secondary retentions—are, for Brown, much as Cutler feared:

The climate of indiscriminate cultural channel-surfing seems to be having an effect on our collective attention spans, too. Albums are ditched in favour of one or two key tracks; we even fast-forward through YouTube clips. When music has been reduced to the status of junk mail, and groups' entire discographies are skimmed and dismissed in half an hour, what depth of understanding or appreciation for these creations can we have? How do we remember what we've eaten if it's been swallowed, not chewed?

Odd metaphor notwithstanding, the capacity to orient and integrate experience temporally—in relation to retentions and protentions of various kinds—is clearly what is at stake in this conjunction of technics, temporality, and audibility; we are still, it seems, try to *hear* our thought-provoking time. The clearest expression of this problem is perhaps that of Eric Lumbleau, former operator of the Mutant Sounds blog, which specialised in uploading obscure, hard-to-find and out-of-print records—and thereby functioned as an operator of the technico-temporal tendency that renders David Toop's xenomania into the characteristic of a collective listening subject. Lumbleau refers to our thought-provoking time as the 'ahistorical nowever in which we're all currently adrift; this vertiginous zone in which every last vestige of our collective cultural legacy past and present exists as freely interchangeable atomized particles with no meaningful breadcrumb trail left to daisy-chain them together' (Lumbleau 2011). Its différential construction short-circuited by industrialised memory and a disorienting "light time", our present is no longer the site where temporal ek-stases are interlinked and coordinated; it is a time effectively without time to the degree that it has—and can hear—*all time*, at once.

Having established the way in which my preceding account of contemporaneity in terms of disorientation is immanently sounded out within recent music writing, we are able to note that, if sound *calls for thinking* today, it is to the degree that this "today" itself is *audibly* problematic, lacking any clear referent, much as sound itself, within the ambit of contemporary academic discourse, troubles the very status of the theoretical object. To this last point I will return at length. At this stage, I simply wish to affirm how the question of the ways in which sound calls for thinking *today*—as sound studies has repeatedly claimed it does—turns upon a technico-temporal diagnostics of this "today" that can, in fact, be performed *through* sound, albeit on a methodological basis that we must now consider. In the preceding, we have assessed the contours of the "today" in which such a call is transmitted, and avowed that the

call itself is inextricable from such conditions; thereby, we have moved beyond the impasse the Heidegger's formulation of the call—silent and immediate—left us in. Yet, we are no further in articulating the nature of thinking as the *response* to this call—which Heidegger insisted it must be, in spite of the distortions it introduced into his philosophical project. Within the contours of our thought-provoking time, then, we must ask: what relation between thinking and listening, such that we might finally hear the call, and begin to think sonically, at last?

I want to conclude this chapter by laying out, briefly, Attali's account of such a response to the call of thinking sonically, one that would methodologically cut across the distinction between theory and practice by allowing researchers to, in Attali's words, to 'theorize *through* music' (4); that is, to trace out in thought precisely the exploratory simulations that music, qua social coding, itself immanently produces. Today, such theorizing must focus on the network that may potentially supplant the temporality-eradicating stasis of repetition, which Attali names *composition*. Attali's overview of the composition network is necessarily somewhat tentative, insofar as he considers it to be 'in embryonic form' (20); nevertheless, we can characterise it most generally as 'freedom' acting '*against normality*' (original emphasis). This freedom is essentially a *de-linking* of music and society, wherein music ceases to create order from noise in the name of a dominant social power and its enforced normalisation, but rather acts as 'something fundamentally outside all communication [...] a solitary, egotistical, noncommercial act' which is 'performed for the music's own enjoyment [...] with no other goal than his own pleasure' (32). Attali qualifies that this free act is not purely a solipsistic gesture, and that '[c]omposition does not prohibit communication' (143); rather, '[i]t makes it a collective creation, rather than an exchange of coded messages,' in which each creative act creates its own code or 'plug[s] into a code in the process of being elaborated by the other.' Rather than the ceaseless iteration of a given code that defined the networks of both representation and repetition (though differently in each case), composition allows for 'a collective questioning of the goal of labour' beyond the self-evidence of the requirement to communicate within a given code and provide use-value for the listener. This is a decentralised network, 'a new practice of music among people' (141)<sup>□</sup>. Coupled here, then, is a distinction between *communication* and *creation*—the shift from the former to the latter being a marker of the tension between repetition and composition, and,

ultimately, between the saturation of the past and the reinstatement of a future that itself is the object of such a creation.

Clearly, Attali considers this 'embryonic' network of composition, and the creation upon which it turns, to be liberatory, yet he notes that it 'is not easy to conceptualise' (134), and that, in fact, 'the new relation it creates between man and matter, consumption-production and pleasure, have never been expressed in theory before' (142); that is to say, insofar as music is exploring new possibilities of organisation in advance of society itself, the theoretical tools for analysing these new possibilities have not yet been created. As with Heidegger's thinking of Being, and Stiegler's thinking of technics, thought itself remains to-come, and it is this repeated argument for the necessity of theoretical inventiveness that I wish to re-emphasise here by way of a conclusion. For Attali, it is precisely these new, nascent, liberatory forms of musical production (and, therefore, of social organisation) that demand we overcome our theoretical deafness, and begin to listen to the world; if we are to attend to these new possibilities, we need the requisite methods for clear listening. It is on the basis of today's noise, with all its technico-temporal resonances, that sound *calls for thinking*; but it does so in a manner that necessitates thinking itself becomes something *new*, in a sense we must interrogate. I would like to quote at length Attali's powerful articulation of this necessity:

Conceptualising the coming order on the basis of the designation of the fundamental noise should be the central work of today's researchers. Of the only worthwhile researchers: *undisciplined* ones. The ones who refuse to answer new questions using only pre-given tools [...] Today, a new music is on the rise, one that can neither be expressed nor understood using the old tools, a music produced elsewhere and otherwise. It is not that music or the world have become incomprehensible: *the concept of comprehension itself has changed; there has been a shift in the locus of the perceptions of things.* (133, my emphases)

New sounds require new theories; there is no timeless repository of concepts that will allow us to uncover the significance of whichever thing we focus them upon, but rather we must fabricate them under the constraint and necessity of that which we encounter. It is this fundamental point which, I argue, remains absolutely significant in Attali's analysis, and which I want to preserve and take up in this thesis—that is, it is such a practice that is the “object” of my dramatization. The shock with which we



began will require a response which does not reduce it to an existing framework, but which is capable of conserving its absolute novelty. As the stress put on “undisciplined” indicates, doing so may demand not only that we enquire into the conditions of disciplinary emergency, but that we, as indicated in the introduction, place in question the very status and significance of disciplinarity as such. Perhaps, as suggested previously, this *perpetual emergency* might be precisely what is necessary to make sound thinkable, and to make thought audible?

To summarise, then, Attali's claim that music 'simulates' social order in advance of society itself leads him to the position that we must, for theoretical *and* political reasons, attend to the contemporary sonic contestation, repetition versus composition. Yet to do so we need to unfold the fraught question of why precisely 'Western knowledge' has failed thus far to listen to the world, and to give a fuller account of what these new theoretical practices capable of doing so will involve (3); Attali's diagnosis is incisive, but his approach is largely promissory, indicating a task to be undertaken rather than presenting the results of an investigation. It indicates the direction, rather than any clear outcome. A fundamental premise of my investigation will be that in order to pursue this path further, we need to pose a series of basic but far-reaching questions involving the nature of theoretical activity as such: what does it involve, and of what is it therefore capable? It is these questions that the following chapter will engage, by means of re-posing the question from which we began: what is called thinking?

Yet, this question will be the *target* of my subsequent analysis, rather than its starting point. For what remains unspoken in the speaking of and around the call—and what remains unheard in our attempts to listen to it—are that other, correlative and ineradicable demand the question places upon us: *what calls for thinking?* If, in the preceding, we found it necessary to pursue the question of the “today” of such calling away from Heidegger's own answers to the two questions—which are, in effect, one answer: Being—then, with this “today” brought into focus it is necessary to sound out our alternative, and to hear what it really says. If our answer has all along been that *sound* calls for thinking, today, then we must ask that which has remained implicit in the preceding discussion: what, exactly, is called *sound*? I hope to show that it is in fact only on condition of our *not* being able to answer this question—at least, not in a

simple, propositional fashion—that the question of what is called thinking can attain its fullest scope.

## Chapter Two: Sounding the Image of Thought

To begin, again, with a repetition: what calls for sonic thinking, today? That such a call is no doubt audible manifests in not only the range and volume of works on sound within cultural theory, but in the arrogation of these works to an avowedly novel disciplinary framing: sound studies. Yet the audibility of this discipline, as discussed in the introduction, constitutes itself around a failure, both historical and contemporary—the failure to make sonority thinkable, to respond successfully to the call it emits. The preceding chapter served to both demonstrate this failure, by means of an engagement with the figure of the call itself in the work of Martin Heidegger, and to reaffirm its contemporaneity, by returning to the question of contemporaneity itself; through an engagement with the work of Jacques Attali and the writings of various music journalists, label owners and performers, we heard that not only does our “today” demand to be thought, but that this demand itself is *audible*. Finally, we were left with an injunction: to *create* the theoretical tools to respond to this demand, to make it audible, and to think *through* the auditory channels by which it is transmitted to us.

This latter task is one I hope to take up in the remaining two chapters of this thesis—however, its positive formulation will have to be deferred, once more, to the third. Prior to this, I want to take up and to reconsider the twin failures around which the introduction and first chapter circled: the apparent historical failure to think sonority to which sound studies ceaselessly refers, on the one hand, and, on the other, Heidegger’s failure to reorient thought in relation to that which calls for it, and to give that which is called thinking an immanently sonorous determination. In this chapter, then, I want to draw on Gilles Deleuze’s account of the ‘dogmatic, orthodox and moral’ *image of thought* in order to diagnose these failures, and assess their extensive ramifications for our attempt to think sonority, at last (DR 167). The attempt to *creatively* respond to the call for thinking sonority will be heard, in the last instance, to require a critique of this image, in favour of what Deleuze calls a *thought without image*—a thinking that, far from offering a means to “finally” resolve sound studies’ long dissensus over its own existence and significance, will rather seek to affirm its delay-deferral as a positive condition. Ultimately, the goal of this thesis will be to embrace that which was initially encountered in the pejorative: long live the emergency.

To begin, then, let us repeat the repetition: what calls for sonic thinking, today? The answer is, of course, obvious: sound itself. Yet there are two difficulties that sound studies has ceaselessly encountered in affirming this response: not only does thinking itself, in its historically-dominant modes, exclude the possibility of an encounter with sound, there is no consensus over *what sound itself is* that would enable us to ameliorate this exclusion. If sound studies is an attempt to at last begin thinking sound, it faces not only a constitutive incapacity traceable to the conceptual frameworks of philosophy and cultural theory, but a fundamental disagreement over *what is to be thought*. In turning, initially, to the debates within sound studies over these two related issues, I want to indicate how the terms of these debates, and the corresponding sense attributed to the claim that *sound calls for thinking*, serve to appeal implicitly to an image of thought that will render sound studies itself ‘powerless to truly begin’ (DR 167).

### 1. Beyond the Audiovisual Litany: On the Essence of Sound

In the introduction, we repeatedly heard the claim that sound has not yet become an “object” for cultural theory to the degree that it resists being thought according to the criteria deployed by such theory—criteria that are generally accused of betraying an ocular bias. In returning to such claims and examining them more fully, what is at stake is not the truth or falsity of their accounts of sonority, but the stakes of the debate itself—that is, the way in which it attempts to determine the *what* that calls, and how it conceives of the “essence” of this what. Ultimately, it is a question of how the various positions within this debate invoke or resist a relation to what I will go on to thematise as “sound-in-itself”, and how these positions themselves appeal to an implicit determination regarding not simply the nature of thinking, but the possibility of thought encountering something beyond itself, that would *call for* thinking.

To begin, I will quote another exemplary declaration on this theme, this time by Aden Evens, the opening statement of his 2005 book *Sound Ideas: Music, Machines, and Experience*:

Music resists theorization at every step. As a form of art that is set in time, that takes its time, a piece of music does not sit still to be observed. One cannot subject sound to a persistent observation; rather, one can only listen and then, maybe, listen again. Music is apprehended in chunks of time. Partly because sound is dynamic, Western intellectual traditions show a marked preference for vision as the figure of knowledge. We articulate more effectively the fixed image than the dynamic sound. (2005, ix)

This passage contains a variety of archetypal claims regarding the relation of sound and theory familiar from the introduction—in particular, a relationship between sonority, temporality, and dynamism that is counterposed to the stasis and fixity of vision. It is the latter, rather than (and indeed, to the exclusion of) the former, that forms the privileged ‘figure of knowledge’ for ‘Western intellectual traditions’ (and we can recall proximate formulations from both Michelle Hilmes and David Suisman on this point), insofar as there is observed to be a correspondence between the methodological and epistemological criteria these traditions have deployed and the essential characteristics of vision. For instance, we can consider the theoretical privilege accorded to the subject-object relation, which demands a well-defined and grounded demarcation of the two that can only be frustrated by the necessary proximity and immersion of sound<sup>□</sup> but preserved by the detachment of the optical observer—a point to which I will return. To attempt to apply this “traditional” figure of knowledge to sonority leads to an internal conflict, insofar as the criteria deployed to determine such knowledge are immanently resisted by the qualities of sound; the criteria of what constitutes the knowability of an object serve to make sonority immediately and formally unknowable unless it can be stripped of its innate characteristics and reduced to visual figures.

It is precisely this gesture of reduction that Evens diagnoses as constituting the more specific failure on the part of musicology and cultural studies, in particular, to hear the call for sonic thinking emanating from sound itself. In spite of their attempts to ‘surmount [the] difficulty’ presented by the mismatch between sonority and the criteria of knowledge, according to Evens they only manage to do so by more or less implicitly screening out what is proper to sound *qua* sound. While musicology makes music visual by focusing on the score, and thereby reducing a musical work to its visual representation rather than its sonic experience, cultural studies ‘emphasises cultural artifacts and cultural dynamics’ without posing the question of sound as such.

For Evens, then, ‘neither musicology nor cultural studies listens to the material specificity of music; neither discipline attends enough to music as *sound*’ (x). If Evens’ work is exemplary for my argument, then, it is insofar as he claims the necessity for a specifically *sonic* form of theoretical engagement heretofore lacking in the existing disciplines which do engage with music, and he attributes this lack to a fundamental—if only briefly discussed—limitation in existing modes of knowledge. Ultimately, Evens demands that we place under a question mark the resources derived from existing theoretical frameworks; at best, they will require modification, and at worst they will serve only to reinforce the theoretical elision of sound by screening out what is distinctive about it vis-à-vis visuality. Significantly, then, Evens, just as with Attali, must advocate a form of theoretical *inventiveness*—sound studies, unable to rely on existing methods, must work to create new modes of theoretical engagement.

What I want to emphasise is the way in which Evens’ argument here is based upon a particular answer to the question *what calls for thinking*—or rather, a particular interpretation of the answer to this question (namely, sound) that determines, as a result, the valid responses to this call. For Evens, sound studies must base itself upon the attribution of certain essential qualities to sonority; sound itself calls to be thought *in particular ways* according to its own essence, and any mode of thinking that cannot respond adequately will serve only to prolong the delay marking sound studies’ emergency. Yet this particular articulation of the call for sonic thinking, grounded in an *a priori* mismatch between existing theoretical forms and the nature of sonority as object—that is, *between* sound and its study—has nevertheless drawn some criticism from within sound studies itself; in particular, in the influential work of Jonathan Sterne, referred to briefly in the introduction. I want to re-turn to this criticism neither to affirm nor to refute it, but rather to assess the scope of interpretations the call for sonic thinking has received, particularly in relation to the nature of sound as what calls; from these various interpretations, I hope to draw certain conclusions regarding the implicit relation between thought and what it thinks that is appealed to in each case.

Though Sterne, in his 2003 book *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*, acknowledges that ‘sound is not usually a central theoretical problem for major schools of cultural theory’ (4) in comparison to visual topics, he refuses to

follow Evens, Attali, Hilmes, Suisman and others, in either generalising this into the broader claim that ‘vision is the social chart of modernity’ to the exclusion of sound, or locating this relative lack of attention in some essential characteristic of sound itself that would inherently resist knowledge (3). He argues, to the contrary, that in spite of the relative dearth of work on sound in cultural theory, nevertheless ‘[t]here is a vast literature on the history and philosophy of sound,’ reflecting the fact that ‘[b]etween about 1750 and 1925, sound itself became an object and a domain of thought and practice’ (4). Sterne notes that during this period ‘sound and hearing were reconceptualised, objectified, imitated, transformed, reproduced, commodified, mass-produced and industrialised,’ but this historical complexity can only be occluded by appeals to the essential nature of sound (2).

Thus, the very gesture of invoking a mismatch between the nature of sonority and Western knowledge, for Sterne, implicitly appeals to a set of ‘biological, psychological, and physical facts’ as the ‘necessary starting point for the cultural analysis of sound’—that is to say, for any form of sonic thinking—thereby requiring that any such analysis be premised upon an unchanging substratum, a nature beyond historical variance and cultural modulation, and therefore, ultimately, an ontological register thinkable in-itself (15). Ultimately, according to this argument, any reliance by sound studies on claims regarding the ‘supposed natural characteristics of sound’ can only serve to ‘[set] up experience as somehow outside the purview of historical analysis’ (14)—history becomes ‘something that happens *between* the senses’ (16), each of which retains its ‘special characteristics’ (15), and the changes that dominate the period of Sterne’s focus (which we might, following him, loosely designate as “modernity”) become simply external variations to an in principle continuous essence of sound.

For Sterne, then, if there is to be a distinct disciplinary framework that could be termed *sound studies*, its value would not reside in ‘claims about the transhistorical and transcultural character of the senses’ (18) in the form of an ‘audiovisual litany’—this latter being Sterne’s term for the delineation of a set of opposable characteristics distributed between vision and audition, such as distance and immersion, or stasis and dynamism (15). If this litany serves to position history as ‘something that happens *between* the senses,’ Sterne would on the contrary affirm the project of the younger

Marx, to produce ‘histories of the senses’ themselves (5)—a history that would be *internal* to the senses, and that would begin ‘by positing sound, hearing, and listening as historical problems rather than as constants on which to build a history’ (22). Yet, as should be clear from the preceding, Sterne bases his argument on a set of premises that are themselves open to challenge, relying, as they do, upon a specific interpretation of the *what* that calls. There are two that are particularly striking for my purposes: firstly, the claim that the very notion of *sound itself* is tied to a particular capacity of the human body to transform a certain range of vibrations into an experience of audition; and secondly, the claim that this bodily capacity is itself mutable, such that any phenomenological account of this auditory experience ‘presupposes culture, power, practice, and epistemology’ (13).

According to Sterne, then, not only do ‘human beings reside at the centre of any meaningful definition of sound’ (11), insofar as is the human capacity to hear that distinguishes sound from other forms of vibration, but this figure of the human around which and according to which sound must be thought is itself historical—‘[s]pecies have histories,’ and therefore ‘[s]ound history indexes changes in human nature and the human body’ (12). This positive determination of the task of sound studies, as a historical (and, implicitly, materialist) endeavour, does have, significantly, its negative moment: it follows from Sterne’s claims here that ‘[i]t is impossible to “merely describe” the faculty of hearing in its natural state’ (10); not only is this natural state a *product* of historical circumstances, technological conditions, cultural norms, and so on, but so too is the *language* in which we would so describe it. As Sterne puts it, ‘[t]he language that we use to describe sound and hearing comes weighted down with decades or centuries of cultural baggage,’ and this is never more so than when we purport to present our claims as universal—‘claims about the transhistorical and transcultural character of the senses often derive their support from culturally and historically specific evidence’ (18). Thus, if sound calls for thinking, this call cannot be taken to emanate from beyond the predetermined limits of the thinkable—particularly, the historical mutability of language as the vehicle for thought—but rather must be located immanently *within* the processes of transformation to which human experience, and the conditions under which it can be apprehended, are subjected.



In sum, then, for the purposes of my argument what is implicitly but significantly at stake in the contrast between Sterne's critical engagement with the 'audiovisual litany' and the essentialist claims of Evens (as well as Attali and Suisman, as heard previously) is not the response to the question *what calls for thinking*—in both cases, it is sound that demands to be thought today, if not, in Sterne's case, "at last"—but the sense of this response, and the correlative response *from* thinking that it itself demands. For Sterne, sound necessarily refers to human experience, and is therefore an empirical and historically-determined designation—it has no (determinable or thinkable) transcendent referent whose identity could be appealed to as the source of sound studies' unity. Yet Evens does not simply invoke, contrary to this, a universal nature of sonic experience; rather, he raises the problem of the relation between experience and object. That is to say, as Sterne interprets all claims regarding the essence of sound as necessarily applying only to sonic experience, he excludes in advance the possibility of thinking the sonic object *beyond* experience.

In order to assess more fully the implications of this dispute, and the implicit conditions upon which it is constructed vis-à-vis the nature of thinking, I want to turn to a debate between sound studies scholars Seth Kim-Cohen and Christoph Cox over what they term, following Douglas Kahn, "sound-in-itself" (Kahn 1999). In so doing, I am again not intending to affirm or critique any particular solution—rather, my interest is in the *conditions* under which the problem is posed, the distinctions it implicitly relies on, and, ultimately, the image of thought it appeals to. It is this image of thought that will determine, in the last instance, not simply the truth or falsity of the identification of the *what* that calls, but the very possibilities thought possesses in relation to this what, its capacity to respond—it will define, finally, the orientation of thinking in relation to that which calls for it, in and through the conjunction of sound and its study.

## **2. Sound-in-Itself, or The Kantian Inheritances of Sound Studies**

In what is at this stage a familiar gesture, Kim-Cohen begins his 2009 book *In the Blink of an Ear: Toward a Non-Cochlear Sonic Art* with a diagnosis of the delay constituting the contemporaneity of sound studies. If theoretical reflections on sound

have yet to find their proper orientation, but instead find themselves ‘hitting a wall’ (xix), for Kim-Cohen this is because they remain caught up in methodological presuppositions which the visual arts have long-since undermined: the wall obstructing studies of sound marks the dead-end of a ‘phenomenological cul-de-sac.’ In order to remedy this, Kim-Cohen sets out to propose and defend a ‘conceptual turn’ for sonic theory culminating in a ‘non-cochlear sonic art’ (xx). My interest in Kim-Cohen’s argument here, to reiterate, is less its validity than the manner in which it is premised upon a set of methodological claims regarding the capacities of thought—or rather, its *incapacity*—and how these claims, though intending to reinstitute a différential relation between thought and what it thinks, effectively cuts the connection by making the thinkable fundamentally reducible to the interiority of thought itself.

To begin, I want to emphasise that what Kim-Cohen confronts under the name of the ‘sound-in-itself tendency’ is not simply a possible theoretical position but a theoretical *and* practical trend within both twentieth-century sonic practice and its conceptual framing; the former is identified principally with Pierre Schaeffer and (ambivalently) John Cage, and the latter with Husserlian phenomenology (115). In the first instance, Kim-Cohen articulates this link through Pierre Schaeffer’s claim that ‘[f]or years [...] we often did phenomenology without knowing it’ (8).<sup>36</sup> *Musique concrète*, the sonic practice Schaeffer pioneered, involved a focus on the ‘sonic object’ which was treated as divorced from any imputation of or reference to its source (that is, in Schaeffer’s terms, acousmatically) (9), and this focus of listening was to be attained by a procedure of ‘reduction’ which, as Kim-Cohen notes, is terminologically equivalent and methodologically proximate to Husserl’s phenomenological reduction (12). In both cases, for Kim-Cohen, there is an ‘essentialist’ emphasis upon a ‘reversible flow of ontological-experiential relations’ in which ‘all information that might shade our auditory experience with signification, with historical contingency, with social import’ is bracketed out and what remains is the ‘in-itself’ of sound, accessible in its pure state (13). Kim-Cohen does qualify that, for Husserl and Schaeffer alike, it is not a question of a ‘thing-in-itself’ in Kantian terms, the noumenon beyond any phenomenal experience of it, but rather the reality of the object ‘as perceived by a listener’ (14); on Kim-Cohen’s interpretation, the function of reduction in Husserl is primarily

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<sup>36</sup> This connection is also discussed in Demers 2010, 26-27.

*transcendental* insofar as it seeks to exclude, as an analytical gesture, any supposition about the “external” reality of the object of experience (12) and instead to study the essential structure of experience as such.<sup>37</sup>

The term ‘sound-in-itself,’ then, is Kim-Cohen’s coinage (borrowed, as noted, from Douglass Kahn) to describe a post-Schaefferian tendency within both the theorisations and the practices of sound art and experimental music, a tendency that focuses on the ‘revelation of phenomena’ rather than their socio-cultural significance or their aesthetic organisation (112). Kim-Cohen identifies an arrogation of the influences of Schaeffer and Cage on this point, though for Kim-Cohen ‘Cage’s loyalties are divided’ (113); the reading of Cage which ‘one-dimensionally and unproblematically’ positions him as an advocate of the sound-in-itself tendency ‘takes only partial account of Cage’s oeuvre’ (116), ignoring, for Kim-Cohen, the explicitly conceptual nature of his attention to process and structure (113-14); I will return to this point in my own discussion of Cage subsequently. Nevertheless, here we can begin to see the broadly political vector of Kim-Cohen’s aims in his critique of the sound-in-itself tendency: the attention to sound-in-itself is necessarily apolitical, according to Kim-Cohen, insofar as it wants to extract from sonority an essential matter which is prior to or in excess of its social mediation. Thus, for example, Christian Kubich’s famous *Electrical Walks*, in which the listener is provided with headphones that amplify the sounds of electromagnetic fields and an itinerary around the city in which the piece is being presented, have received readings that focus on hearing the sounds of the city as simply ‘the exposition and translation into sound of electromagnetic fields’ and which therefore ‘decline to engage the rich cultural, technical, social, ontological implications of [the sounds’] origins’ (115). Ultimately, this orientation (146) is resistant to a politicised analysis whilst itself suggesting a normative judgment: the positing of a ‘prelinguistic’ experience of sound, for Kim-Cohen, ‘would locate most of human experience in falsity and impurity’ (111), given that ‘being human is a state

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<sup>37</sup> With regard to Husserl’s account of the object things are rather more complex than is indicated here; what is primarily at stake is the transcendence of the object in relation to any given empirical act of knowing or experiencing, such that the same object can be encountered in distinct circumstances; the mind-independent existence of the object is not in question, insofar as non-existent things can still become objects for consciousness in a way that, for Husserl, is not to be immediately distinguished from objects of direct perception. For a clear and precise overview of Husserl’s work with a particular emphasis on this point, see Zahavi 2003.

inexorably tied to language—some would say state *in* or *of* language’ (112).

It is here that I wish to draw attention to the parameters of Kim-Cohen’s argument: the critique of sound-in-itself is dependent upon an account of the capacities of human cognition in relation to the objects of experience, which are essentially linguistic in nature, and therefore cannot be articulated beyond the necessary *interiority* of experience itself. Thus, the imputation that the sound-in-itself *should not* be focused on by sonic theory, given the occlusion of the socio-cultural register follows from such a focus, is allied to a claim that it *cannot* serve as a theoretical locus; not only is the tendency limiting and reductive in scope, it is also simply not possible as a grounding for analysis or interpretation of sound art works. It is important to note, at this point, that Kim-Cohen does not suggest the sound-in-itself does not *exist*, so much as argue, following Wittgenstein’s injunction that what cannot be spoken of must be passed over in silence (see Wittgenstein 2002, 89), that even if there were a ‘strata of experience prior to language,’ it follows from our immersion in language that ‘there is nothing we can do with it’ and therefore ‘it seems wise to put it aside and concern ourselves with that of which we can speak’ (112).

Thus, thought receives its a priori determination: regardless of the nature of that which calls, our capacities to respond must proceed according to a set of limitations that effectively reduce this call to our capacities of theoretical audition. Again, my interest is not in Kim-Cohen’s specific claim here—that all experience is linguistic in nature, thus sound cannot be thought beyond its signifiatory function (an argument interestingly proximate to that we heard from Heidegger in the preceding chapter)—nor even his diagnosis of phenomenology in terms of an equivocal appeal to the in-itself; rather, it is the *image of thought* upon which his argument relies. According to this image, thinking is inextricable from an interiority of the thinking subject determined (in the sense of circumscribed or limited) in advance. Effectively, Kim-Cohen claims that if we are at last to hear the call to think sound, and constitute sound studies as a coherent discipline, we must disavow the hope of hearing this call as being sent from afar; despite, then, his attempt to reintroduce the process of *différance* into the thinking of sound, he is only able to articulate this process *this side* of the gap between thought and what it thinks. Much as with Heidegger, distance and transmission is itself already circumscribed within the ambit of the thinkable, and

sound itself is merely epiphenomenal—just as Evens feared would be sound’s fate in cultural theory.

In turning to the work of Christoph Cox, whose has intervened in this debate in order to critique Kim-Cohen’s position, I want to emphasise two points: firstly, I want stress how, for Cox, this image of a pre-determined and interiorised relation between thought and what it thinks is implicitly Kantian in structure, and secondly, how Cox proposes a particular reading of Deleuze’s work that can direct us towards a ‘beyond’ of the ‘dualistic program’ that Kantianism bequeaths to cultural theory and philosophy (Cox 2011, 147). But firstly, let us once again note how Cox does not dispute one of Kim-Cohen’s central premises: that we are still not thinking sound. Again, it is the sense of this declaration that is at stake, the diagnosis of this “still not” and the corresponding possibilities of at last beginning to think sound. In a further similarity, the foregoing failure to think sonority is indexed to a demand for sonic thinking that theoretical and conceptual work encounters *from without*—the demand of sound art as ‘a confluence of experimental strategies in music’ that ‘emerged in the late 1960s’, for whom John Cage is, once again, a principal representative (145). For Cox, then, the failure to think sonority manifests specifically, and symptomatically, in the ‘undertheorized’ status of sound art as an aesthetic practice, the elision of these objects, or the silence of theory when confronted with them. Sound art is lacking its appropriate theoretical and conceptual response insofar as the ‘prevailing theoretical models are inadequate to it’, having been ‘[d]eveloped to account for the textual and the visual’. Such approaches thereby ‘fail to capture the nature of the sonic’ (146).

What is this nature, that renders sonority incapable of becoming an *object* of theoretical scrutiny? We can infer this, negatively, by considering his account of these models, which are broadly designated under the heading of the ‘linguistic turn,’ and which are ‘concerned with signification, representation, and mediation’ (146). For Cox, ‘contemporary cultural theory,’ which is dependent upon such models,

manifests a problematic Kantian epistemology and ontology, a dualistic program that divides the world into two domains, a phenomenal domain of symbolic discourse that marks the limits of the knowable, and a noumenal domain of nature and materiality that excludes knowledge and intelligible discourse. (147)

What is fundamental here, if only implicit, is the fate of sound as that which calls for thinking within this procedure of division—that is, the way in which transcendental idealism requires a splitting of the object between that which is encountered in experience and that which falls beyond it, between phenomenon and noumenon; a split that is, in Kant, occasionally aligned with a distinction between *object* and *thing*.<sup>38</sup> Sound, it seems, becomes an object for theory only condition of no longer being a thing-in-itself.

On the basis of its Kantian inheritances, scholars in sound studies—the exemplary case, for Cox, being Kim-Cohen—have abjured the possibility of thinking ‘sound-in-itself’ in favour of shoring up the Kantian dualism. The existing approaches rely upon a division between experience and the in-itself that is irreducible; as a result, ‘nature is either cast aside as in-significant or deemed a cultural projection, a social construction’ (147). These are, as I have shown above, ‘presuppositions and conclusions [which] are fully evident’ in Kim-Cohen’s work, insofar as Kim-Cohen dismisses any appeal to the materiality of sound as ultimately requiring an essentialist absolutism in which linguistic mediation is a fault to be atoned for, expiated as far as possible in the name of a “truer” raw experience of sound-in-itself. For Cox, this is to give far too much ground, and the problem is in fact the dualism itself: ‘A rigorous critique of representation would altogether eliminate the dual planes of culture/nature, human/non-human, sign/world, text/matter’ (148). However, this must be done not in the Hegelian direction, “inwards” towards the ideal, but rather “outwards,” ‘toward a thoroughgoing materialism that would construe human symbolic life as a specific instance of the transformative process to be found throughout the natural world.’ Sound, on this basis, can finally be thought in-itself, not as ‘a world apart, a unique domain of non-signification and non-representation’ but as ‘an asignifying material flux,’ designating an “object” (in an ambiguous, non-Kantian sense we must yet

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<sup>38</sup> As Dominique Pradell notes, Kant’s use of the German *Ding*, *Gegenstand*, and *Objekt* is inconsistent (Pradell, 360-68). However, there is a tendency to reserve the latter two for that which is given in experience, while the former finds its most prominent usage in the *Ding-an-Sich*, the thing-in-itself as that which can be postulated as subsisting beyond any experience but cannot, for that reason, be known. *Gegenstand* and *Objekt*, both frequently translated as “object”, can be distinguished, as Howard Caygill notes, insofar as the former generally refers to a ‘given intuition’ and the latter is the unity imposed upon this intuition ‘under the condition of the unity of apperception’ (304-306).

determine) that is ‘firmly rooted in the material world and the powers, forces, intensities, and becomings of which it is composed’ (157).

With regard to the figure of the call, then, Cox is attentive to the ways in which the Kantian solution restricts thought to “this side” of a divide between world and experience, such that, in practice, what appears to be sent from afar is in fact merely the reflection of a pre-existent subjective interiority; contrary to this, he claims that thought can, in fact, encounter something that is radically *external* to it, not simply as it is reflected in thought but as it “really” is as an element of an immanent and material nature. Prior to taking up the relation of interiority and exteriority more explicitly, and examining at length its implications for the project of thinking sonority, I want to consider an aspect of Cox’s own “solution” to this problem that is highly significant for my own analysis: as mentioned above, one of Cox’s key representatives of the philosophical possibility of eliminating the “dual planes” that would condemn thought to an inescapable interiority is Gilles Deleuze.

Cox’s appeal to Deleuze is largely confined to the famous distinction between the actual and virtual, which he considers to be an extension the distinction between the Apollonian and Dionysian ‘art impulses of nature’ outlined by Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*—in both cases, it is a question of *naturalizing* the distinction between empirical case and transcendental condition, rendering it immanent to matter rather than imposed by ‘external agency’ (151; see Nietzsche 2000a). Thus, in Cox’s account, Deleuze’s actual/virtual distinction is, in spite of the ‘Kantian language’ Deleuze deploys, in fact ‘thoroughly non-Kantian’ (152). Though he notes Deleuze does rely on a distinction between ‘what appears’ and the ‘conditions for the possibility of this experience,’ an exemplary Kantian distinction, in Cox’s reading the distinction lies in that these conditions, for Deleuze, are ‘thoroughly material, immanent in nature itself’ (153). This reading appeals to Deleuze’s repeated and important injunction that transcendental conditions must condition real, not possible, experience; as he states in *Difference and Repetition*: ‘In fact, the condition must be a condition of real experience, not of possible experience. It forms an intrinsic genesis, not an extrinsic conditioning’ (DR 192).

There are two issues here. Firstly, this reading encounters a number of immediate

problems in relation to Deleuze's engagement with Kant, the complexity and significance of which will be outlined in a subsequent section, but which can immediately summarized by the following claim, from the same text: 'Rather than being concerned with what happens before or after Kant (which amounts to the same thing), we should be concerned with a precise moment in Kantianism, a furtive and explosive moment which is not even continued by Kant, much less by post-Kantianism...' (DR 70). Prior to tracking this moment, however, we can consider a second issue, that underpins the necessity of rethinking the relation of Deleuze to Kant with regard to the call for sonic thinking: while Kim-Cohen attempted to preserve the différential relation between thought and what it thinks, and hence the structure of calling, in a manner that served only to resituate that which calls within the ambit of thinking's pre-determined capacities to respond, Cox risks, on the contrary, collapsing the distance entirely in the opposite direction, where thought is placed immediately in contact with the 'asignifying material flux' of sonority (157), with this latter already *identified* as the "what" that calls for thinking—that is, as the essence of sonority. To clarify, my claim here is not that what Cox seeks—a materiality philosophy of sound—is impossible, but rather that, without a thorough investigation of its conditions, such a philosophy risks constructing itself on precisely the same basis as that it opposes: a direct proximity between thought and its object, with the latter identified in advance as being amenable to the former.

In sum, then, though Kim-Cohen and Cox avow entirely opposed "solutions" to the problem of how to at last respond to the call for sonic thinking, based on distinctive interpretations of *what* it is that calls, their analyses nevertheless refer to an implicit image of what it means to think, of *what thinking can do*—including the premise that its activity is based upon its capacity to determine, in advance, the nature of the *what* that calls for thinking, and whether this "what" subsists beyond or within the interiority of thinking itself. Again, my claim here is not that either or both Kim-Cohen or Cox are wrong in their identifications; rather, I want to point to the way in which both rely upon the attempt to *identify* the *what* as such—with an emphasis on "identify" here. The very sense in which we understand the call is itself determined by the notion of a conjunction between a definite *object* of the call and a corresponding capacity to respond—but what if this interpretation, in particular the identifiable form of the object itself, can only ever repeat the failure we heard in Heidegger? That is,



what if taking up the call as a relationship of proximity between thought and what it must come to think serves to elide calling as such, and with it, the possibility that audition could genuinely be thought, at last? It is on the basis of these speculative claims that I want to turn directly to the theme of the image of thought in Deleuze, and to consider the ways in which it can help us clarify and expand this problem—that is, how it can help us to hear *differently* the claim that sound calls for thinking.

### 3. Implicit Presuppositions, or How to Begin?

Deleuze's extended reflection upon the problem of the image of thought in *Difference and Repetition* begins with the difficulty of beginning: 'Where to begin in philosophy has always—rightly—been regarded as a very delicate problem, for beginning means eliminating all presuppositions' (DR 164). We might add that this has insistently been the question sound studies addresses to itself: how to begin thinking sonority, at last? The question, then, for sound studies as for philosophy, is how one might begin from the beginning; and one should note the irony (or, perhaps, humour<sup>39</sup>) of Deleuze raising this problem at the central point, and conceptual caesura, of a text which has already begun many times, with so many differences and repetitions—a stylistic gesture towards Deleuze's ultimate response to this problem, that one must always begin from the *middle*.

Deleuze distinguishes two forms of presupposition against which our attempts to begin, to finally begin thinking from the beginning, must be posed, whether we are attempting to think sound or anything else: those that are *objective*, and those that are *subjective*. If the former are more clearly evident in a philosophical discourse, as

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<sup>39</sup> Deleuze rigorously distinguishes irony and humour throughout *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*. Though both function as a way to 'overturn moral laws,' they do so in different ways; the former achieves this overturning through an 'ascent toward principles' while the latter is an 'art of consequences and descents' (DR 5-6). In *The Logic of Sense*, in particular, this is developed into a methodological typology, in which irony, as a technique of ascent, remains caught within the individual who becomes coextensive with being, while humour designates the 'art of the surfaces and of doubles, of nomad singularities and of the always displaced aleatory point' (LS 159-160).

‘concepts explicitly presupposed by a given concept,’<sup>40</sup> then the latter are subtler, more difficult to identify, being ‘implicit presuppositions contained in opinions rather than concepts.’ These implicit presuppositions ‘[have] the form of “Everybody knows...”’ (DR 165), indicating what is presumed to be known by everyone ‘in a pre-philosophical and pre-conceptual manner.’ These are therefore not terms of a philosophical discourse, not concepts, definitions, or principles that are explicitly stated as grounds for a demonstration (one can think here of Spinoza’s definitions and axioms in the *Ethics*), but precisely those presuppositions which the philosophy in question *does not* articulate because it takes them to be *always-already given* and therefore requiring no defense; as such, the philosopher can ‘assume the universality of his<sup>41</sup> premisses’ and ‘claim innocence, since it [“his” philosophy] has kept nothing back’ (DR 165). Nothing, that is, ‘except the essential’—subjective presuppositions ‘in the form of a natural capacity for thought which allows philosophy to claim to begin, and to begin without presuppositions.’

It is precisely this set of subjective presuppositions, implicitly appealing to a ‘natural capacity for thought,’ that Deleuze terms an *image of thought*; as he and Guattari formulate it in a later text, it is ‘the image thought gives itself of what it means to think, to make use of thought, to find one’s bearings in thought’ (WP 37).<sup>42</sup> The immediate difficulty, in relation to the problem of where to begin in and for philosophy, is that, for Deleuze, such an image would not actually function to allow philosophy to begin, but would, on the contrary, ‘reveal instead that philosophy is powerless to truly begin’ (DR 165). Rather, if these subjective presuppositions are allowed to subsist it becomes ‘a question of rediscovering at the end what was there in the beginning [...] a question of recognising, of bringing into light or into the conceptual or the explicit, what was simply known implicitly without concepts’ (DR

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<sup>40</sup> Deleuze’s example here is Descartes’ criticism of Aristotle’s definition of man as a rational animal insofar as it presupposes the definitions of rational and animal (Descartes 2003, 24).

<sup>41</sup> I retain the masculine pronoun as given in the English translation here, but would also suggest that this figure of the philosopher as neutral conduit for universal truth is a specifically phallic conceptual persona, such that the ‘he’ can be taken as an integral element of the position Deleuze is miming here.

<sup>42</sup> A key allusion here is Kant’s “What does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?”, which directly unfolds the moral underpinnings of the image of thought, *qua* orientation, that Deleuze will go on to develop in relation to Nietzsche (DR 167): Kant emphasises ‘pure rational faith’ as a ‘signpost or compass by means of which the speculative thinker orients himself in his rational excursions into the field of supersensible objects’ (Kant 1996, 14).

165). It is this conception of philosophy as a *circle* that begins to suggest the conservative implications of the image of thought, and Deleuze's use of the term *recognition* in the preceding quotation is even more suggestive. As Deleuze goes on to emphasise, it is by virtue of operating through the 'supposition that thought is the natural exercise of a faculty' (DR 166) that the image of thought functions as 'the figure in which *doxa* is universalised by being elevated to the rational level' (DR 170). What is 'universally recognised,' doubtless, is 'not a particular this or that,' not any particular empirical *case* of thinking nor any specific proposition that may be posited in the activity of thought—not, for instance, the claim that sonority must be thought in relation to human auditory capacities, or the contrary—but rather only 'the form of representation or recognition in general,' in the form of a '*good will on the part of the thinker and an upright nature on the part of thought*' (DR 166, original emphasis). Yet this is precisely the danger: given this image of thought, 'it matters little whether philosophy begins with the object or the subject [...] as long as thought remains subject to this Image which already prejudices everything' (DR 167).

This last point is key. With regard to sound studies, we have heard from representatives of two distinct and contrasting positions regarding the significance of sound as that which calls for thinking—that is, regarding what is called "sound". Kim-Cohen and Sterne refer sound studies back to subjective auditory experience, and linguistically-mediated and socio-historically variable conditions, while Evens and Cox appeal to an ontological register in which sound can and must be thought outside of the limitations of the subject—that is, it is positioned as an *object*. Yet, the implication of Deleuze's remark here would be that, if in each case the image of thought can be heard to interfere in the call that sound "itself" emits, then this distinction is more apparent than real. Though the figure of the call has been insistently taken up, in relation to sound studies, as that which would allow us to begin thinking *from* sonority, in a manner that would, it was hoped, evade the ocularcentric biases of our existing conceptual frameworks, so long as the image of thought *qua* a priori orientation of thinking continued to supervene, this shifting of the starting point would be functionally irrelevant; from object to subject or subject to object, nothing changes. It follows that if this image of thought is not subjected to a thoroughgoing critique, then the reorientation of thought as emanating from the "object" rather than

the subject will be an *optical illusion*; an illusion, moreover, that can be located in the *object-form* itself, as I will go on to elaborate.

In order to clarify this point, I want to briefly return to our encounter with Heidegger, and reinterpret Heidegger's silencing gesture as effectively the *audible* result of the image of thought coming to supervene upon the figure of the call itself. We can begin by repeating the results of the preceding analysis as follows: Heidegger effectively eliminated tele-phonics from the call of thinking insofar as that which called—Being—was ultimately always-already encompassed within thought in principle, even if, in fact, this thinking was only achieved “at last”. Thus, in “The Question Concerning Technology”, Heidegger will state what is effectively a methodological principal for his thinking as a whole, underpinning both his sense of the task of phenomenology and his continual return to the Greek “origin”: ‘That which is primally early shows itself only ultimately to men’ (BW 327). With regard to the call of thinking, this manifests in terms of what Deleuze will describe as ‘the theme of a desire or a *philia*, of an analogy—or rather, a homology—between thought and that which is to be thought’ (DR 210n11). If Being calls for thinking, this calling is simultaneously what ‘gives food for thought’, and thought itself is essentially a *thanking* for this gift (WT 159). Hence the imbrication, in Heidegger, of thinking and memory: ‘Memory is the gathering and convergence of thought upon what everywhere demands to be thought about first of all’ (WT 11); thinking is always necessarily ‘thinking back’.

It follows from this that the distance separating thought and what calls for thinking comes to define only the forgetfulness of metaphysics in which beings are separated from Being; thinking is, by definition, the thinking *of* Being in both senses of the genitive, and hence must effectively short-circuit the call. Ultimately, as Corijn van Mazijk puts it, thinking and Being are, for Heidegger, ‘really two sides of the very same coin’ (2013, 342). Though Heidegger may affirm the necessity of preserving in thought the ontological difference between Being and beings—and though Deleuze provides a positive evaluation of Heidegger on this point (DR 77-79)—genuine thought is that which encompasses their reciprocal implication *without mediation*: the im-mediate proximity of veiling and unveiling. As an attempt to figure the dependence of thought upon what calls for thinking, the call is ultimately only epiphenomenal,

however inevitable it may be from the perspective of human history: thought and Being are united in principle, though they diverge in fact. If, in *What is Called Thinking?*, then, the call of thinking is ‘far from being incomprehensible and alien to thinking’ but ‘precisely what must be thought’ (WT 165), this is to the degree that Being, as what calls for thinking, is defined in terms of an essential relation to thought.

This essential relation between thought and what it must think is precisely what Deleuze intends by the image of thought as the ‘natural exercise of a faculty’, and moreover, is an exemplary case of the way in which such an image ensures thinking is a ‘question of rediscovering at the end what was there in the beginning’ (DR 165). Heidegger appeals to the image of thought as a *subjective presupposition*: though he does not explicitly assume the meaning of thinking or Being as a concept within his discourse, he nevertheless invokes a ‘pre-ontological and implicit understanding of being’ (DR 211n11; see also 164). In order to avoid the silencing attendant upon Heidegger’s articulation of the call of thinking, then, we must subject this image to a critique.

In order to begin outlining such a critique—and, in particular, placing such a critique directly on contact with the concerns of sound studies—I want to examine a highly significant commentary on Deleuze by François Zourabichvili which emphasises and elaborates, in an extremely convincing manner, the problem of *interiority and exteriority* in relation to the image of thought, thereby allowing us to more clearly connect Deleuze’s analyses to my foregoing engagement with the relation between thought and what it thinks in terms of the call for thinking. Firstly, then, let us consider this image in which thought confronts that which it must think, its object, as something exterior to it and which calls to it from a distance—in our case, the sonic object which we must find means to conceptualise. On the basis of the image, it follows that the confrontation between thought and sound must take place through a play of interiority and exteriority, in which the *interiority* of thought is counter-posed to and complemented by the *exteriority* of the object. Yet this model is immediately faced with an immense, perhaps insurmountable, difficulty: if thought was to confront its object from without, how could thought not fail to grasp the object as such? We encounter, once again, the Kantian problematic, as well as that of sound-in-itself—how can thought truly grasp that which is external to it, such as, for instance, sonority?

Yet, as Zourabichvili elaborates from Deleuze, it is precisely in and through this framing of the problem that the image of thought comes to intervene, and to determine any possibility of a solution. A key aspect of Zourabichvili's analysis, and its value for my exposition, is the way in which he shows that the very presupposition of an interiority of thought, which would constitute its nature and its pre-existence in relation to any act of thinking, suffices to make the exteriority of what it thinks only an apparent or *relative* exteriority, in which thought only confronts that which already accords with its operations—which is to say, it eliminates the tele-phonic dimensions of calling. As a result, for Zourabichvili, this image of thought ensures that 'all cognition [*connaissance*] is already re-cognition [*reconnaissance*]' (DP 47). The consequences of this for the activity of thinking are clear: all thinking is accomplished *in advance* of its being thought, and there can therefore be no possibility of *thinking again* or *thinking anew*, as Attali has demanded in relation to sonic theory. If we wish to maintain this possibility of thinking anew, the possibility for thought to be an *act of creation*—and indeed to stress this as thought's *highest* possibility, as Deleuze himself will—then the struggle against an image of thought which makes thinking into recognition will be of paramount importance. Initially, then, we must consider how this model comes to obtain its hold over thinking, and to establish recognition as the ultimate orientation of thought within this dogmatic image.

Zourabichvili begins his account by stating that '[t]he most general problem of thought is perhaps that of its *necessity*,' that is, of 'how to arrive at a necessary thought'— '[t]he thinker is happy when he no longer has a choice' (DP 44). From where would thought derive such a necessity? Philosophy, according to Zourabichvili, has 'recognized the relation of necessity with *exteriority*': a *necessary thought* would derive its necessity from an outside that gives a 'precise content to what must be said or thought' (DP 44). This necessary thought, determined by an exteriority to which it must conform, would be, precisely, *truth*. The truthful thought would therefore be 'double[d] [...] with a correlate outside the mind' which constrains this thought to think and gives it its necessity, and to which it owes its very status *as truth*; here we find the familiar image of truth as the correlation between thought and the world, in which the truthful thought is determined by the actuality of the world to which it must

correspond. ‘Philosophy,’ then, ‘readily admits that the fate of thought depends on its relation to exteriority.’

In the context of my argument here we might reformulate this, and declare that the fate of *sonic* theory depends on its relation to sound as something which calls for thought *from without* and which it must somehow apprehend, to which it must come to conform, via a method that remains uncertain—yet such an interpretation of the call, as we have heard, does not suffice to ensure that thinking will actually *begin*, as opposed to simply allowing sound itself to enter into the circularity of recognition. We must understand, then, the contours and elements of such an interpretation of the call, of the relation between thought and what it must think. The significance of Deleuze’s intervention on this point is to be found in the following ‘diagnosis’: ‘however much philosophy recognises in truth an element independent of thought, it ends up *interiorizing* the relation and postulating that thought and truth have an intimate or natural relation.’ That is, in his account of the image of thought that functions as the subjective presupposition for philosophy, Deleuze will indicate that in spite of (or perhaps, indeed, on the basis of) figuring that which it thinks as something *external* to it, calling to be thought from afar, philosophy only ever succeeds in thinking a ‘relative exteriority’ to which it already, in advance, gives the form of ‘an external reality that is identical to itself’ (DP 45).

The image of thought, then, is an implicit and subjective presupposition about *what it means to think*, which is taken to be something that ‘[e]verybody knows, in a pre-philosophical and pre-conceptual manner’ (DR 165), and which predetermines, thereby, the possible *orientations* of thought. But what characterises more specifically the ‘dogmatic, orthodox or moral image’ that marks the history of philosophy, across all the various explicit commitments that distinguish schools and periods, is precisely the primacy of *recognition* as a model of thinking, in which what thought confronts is always already amenable to its operations *in principle*, and is only ever *re-covered* in practice. Whatever practical difficulties we may face as thinkers, through a lack of method or a failure of memory, laziness or distraction, we are nevertheless assured that ‘thought has an affinity with the true; it formally possesses the true and materially wants the true’ (DR 167). Thought, then, is not only the ‘natural exercise of a faculty,’ it is also possessed of a natural *affinity* for truth—as Zourabievich puts it, ‘[t]he desire

for truth belongs by right to thought as a faculty,’ and ‘there is a relation of affinity between the thinker and what he is seeking’ (DP 46). Although ‘[t]hought does not yet know what is true, [...] it at least knows itself to be well-endowed for the search, [and] *a priori* capable of finding it’ (DP 44-45). The image of thought as ‘dogmatic, orthodox or moral,’ specifies not only that thought is a natural capacity with which everyone is endowed, but that thought is also ‘naturally upright’ (DR 170); thought is in principle capable of auditing the call, if in fact it has yet to receive its transmission.

On the basis of this presupposition, thought becomes *orientated* in principle towards the truth which is purportedly external to it—not only can we take it that *everybody knows*, without concepts, what it means to think, we can also take it that this thinking *naturally desires truth*, and is capable of attaining it. If, in practice, thought is deviated from this inherent aim by lack of method, by errors or mistakes, these are not constitutive but rather entirely contingent in relation to the internal necessity of thought itself—instead of *truth* being dependent upon something external to thought, it is now *error* that characterises this exteriority. Or, rather, if both truth *and* error are exterior to thought, then ‘[e]xteriority, in philosophy, is thus divided: truth no less than error finds its source outside of thought—yet we have an essential and intimate relation with the former, and only an accidental relation with the latter’ (DP 46). Truth, then, is the *necessary exteriority* of thought, which thought already possesses by right even if in fact it is often led astray by the *contingent exteriority* of error. If thought can succeed in thinking the ‘good outside’ of truth, then, it is insofar as it always already ‘lies in the depths of our hearts.’ Yet there remains a question, here, of how this postulate of an upright nature of thought, and an affinity of thought with the true, can be sustained in relation to the world that thought encounters—this postulate would not be able to maintain its authority if it were continually challenged by the world to which it is applied. How does the world itself come to conform to this presupposition of a natural affinity between thought and truth?<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> In *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, Deleuze refers to Kant’s own framing of this problem from the *Critique of Pure Reason*: ‘if cinnabar were sometimes red, sometimes black, sometimes light, sometimes heavy [...] my empirical imagination would never find opportunity when representing red colour to bring to mind heavy cinnabar’ (KC 11; quoting CPR A 100-101). That is, if we did not encounter, in the world, a certain regularity, our mind would never have reason to perform its synthetic acts of comparison and connection—ultimately, acts of *recognition*.



In order to respond to this difficulty, the postulates of a natural capacity for thought and an affinity between this thought and truth requires a further postulate to sustain it, one that is no less subjective even if it addresses the world that we think, rather than the thinker who encounters it. If ‘[w]e do not seek truth without postulating it in advance,’ as bearing a natural affinity with the thought which seeks it, this is because we do not seek truth without ‘presuming, before having thought at all, the existence of a reality’ (DP 47) which conforms to our thinking. Zourabichvili emphasises that Deleuze’s critique of this presumption is not aimed at ‘the reality of a world’ as such, an emphasis consistent with his opposition to narrowly ontological readings of Deleuze,<sup>44</sup> but rather takes aim at the notion of a “truthful world” [...], identical to itself, a docile world faithful to our expectations whenever we try to know it.’ If we are able to postulate a natural relation between thought and truth, this is insofar as the *world itself is presumed to be truthful* by conforming to our capacity to think it. This ensures that what thought does not *yet* think, the necessity and truth derived from the exteriority of what it must *come to* think, is nevertheless determined in advance as ‘homogeneity and identity.’ If thought, then, is naturally disposed towards the ‘good outside’ of truth, this is insofar as this outside is itself *inherently truthful*.

Taking these three postulates, then, of a natural capacity for thought, an affinity between thought and truth, and the truthfulness of the world, we see that, on this basis, thought already possesses in advance the exteriority that is its object and which gives it its necessity—this exteriority is made relative to the thought that has already, in principle, determined it. It is for this reason that Zourabichvili will claim, as noted above, that this ‘relation between thought and truth is the model of *recognition*’ (DP 47). Thought ‘in a certain way precedes itself by prejudging the form of its object’ as, precisely, *thinkable*, and as such ‘the object of thought is less the object of a discovery

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<sup>44</sup> The original text of Zourabichvili’s *Deleuze: A Philosophy of the Event* specifies on two occasions that the reality of the external world is not a problem for Deleuze. The first case is cited above, but the second is perhaps clearer and more strongly-formulated: ‘It should be understood that the existence or nonexistence of a world exterior to the thinking subject is not at stake here, and that such a question has no meaning within the Deleuzian problematic’ (DP 65). The introduction added to the text in 2004 pushes these two claims even further, to declare polemically that ‘[t]here is no “ontology of Deleuze”’ (DP 36). It is significant, in this regard, that in the decade between the publication of the original text and the addition of this introduction, Alain Badiou published his *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, in which he outlines a strongly ontological interpretation of Deleuze’s philosophy. The problem of Deleuze’s precise relation to ontology will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

than of a recognition.’ The immediate consequences of such an image of thought for philosophy are as evident as they are, for Deleuze, disastrous: ‘The form of recognition has never sanctioned anything but the recognisable and the recognised; form will never inspire anything but conformities’ (DR 170). Thought finds itself gifted with an affinity with truth only on condition that it may only encounter a world that is already in conformity with it, and, at the limit, thought will think nothing other than its own image, of which the world is a reflection. What is more, and more troubling for Deleuze, is that the truthfulness of the world, as determined by its inherent thinkability, appeals to an existing sense of *what thinking is*—if the world is to be made, in advance, amenable to thought, this can only be insofar as *we know what it is to think*. The criteria of thinkability must already be possessed—that is, we have an *image of thought*. Ultimately, what will unite the eight postulates of the image of thought, as Deleuze enumerates them, will be precisely this claim that we know what thinking is, and it is this claim that will form the locus of Deleuze’s struggle.

Having established, in broad terms, then, the way in which the image of thought functions as the a priori orientation of thinking according to a natural capacity and a model of recognition, it is hopefully clear that this image functions as a diagnostic tool for not only the failure of Heidegger’s articulation of the call, but the widely-affirmed failure of sound studies to as yet begin thinking sonority. My claim is that those affirmations are likely to remain self-fulfilling—and that, therefore, sound studies will be ‘powerless to truly begin’—so long as this image continues to supervene, and makes of sound an *object of recognition*; that is, so long as the *what* that calls for thinking is too readily identified, whatever the precise nature of this identification (whether idealist or materialist, for instance). In order to demonstrate this claim more fully, I want to turn to an instance of the *what* that calls for thinking—that is, an instance of sonic practice—that, given its insistence as a reference point within the discourse of sound studies, seems to be an exemplary case of the way in which sound, in fact, continues to evade such identifications: the work of John Cage.

Cage’s work marks a focal point for struggles in sound studies over the conditions of possibility for thinking sonority, insofar as his work poses quite explicitly the difficulty over which the meta-theoretical debates in sound studies have turned—the

difficulty of determining the relation between sound and thought.<sup>45</sup> By taking up this theoretical difficulty, in the first instance, in relation to Cage's attempt to embrace *the entirety of sound* (and we might say, 'sound-in-itself') within the ambit of his compositional practice—an attempt that was, as I hope to show, the animating impetus for his most significant and challenging inventions—then we can observe quite clearly the extent to which, by presuming Cage's work to be in some way *already thinkable* through some existing theoretical framework, we make it *recognisable* in the sense elaborated above.

My claim here, then, is that it is only by virtue of forming yet another element of a *relative exteriority* that we could claim Cage's work is thinkable *in principle*, precisely because we must invoke an *existing* set of capacities on the part of thought in order to do so; capacities, moreover, that could be assumed to stretch as far as the limits of *all-sound*, which would be uniformly and indifferently thinkable. Not only does such an assumption, which, as I have shown, was common to the counterposed projects of Kim-Cohen and Cox, raise all the problems discussed previously with regard to the presuppositions that it must rely upon, but, even further than this, it also implicitly assume the *failure* of Cage's project as such. That is to say, the assumption of the *necessary thinkability* of an *all-sound music* can only assume that Cage was not able to fulfill his intention, evident in his work from the late nineteen-thirties onwards, to move beyond the limitations of the *already-audible* within music through a procedure that was avowedly *experimental*, in a strictly-defined sense. My argument, then, will be as follows: insofar as Cage's intent to produce an all-sound music would ultimately animate his embrace of an *experimental* compositional practice, a practice which, as I will show, is orientated against an image of thought in which the world is, in principle, *already known*, then any theoretical approach to his work that does not articulate itself as experimental, but implicitly or explicitly relies on a set of existing capacities for

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<sup>45</sup> It would perhaps be more accurate to say *meaning* rather than thought here, given that it is a particular relation between intention and expression, and the subordination of sound to a mere vehicle for this relation, that forms the strategic adversary of Cage's compositional practice. However, it will hopefully become clear that the term "thought," as used here and throughout, can capture both the limited, representational model of semantically-determined and subjectively-coherent experience and cognition from which Cage aims to liberate sounds, and a broader creative and experimental practice which, in fact, can characterise Cage's own practice. This argument will be progressively elaborated in the course of this and the subsequent chapter.

thought, can only assume the failure of his work—or, perhaps, impose such a failure upon it.

#### 4. “The All-Sound Music of the Future”

In order to establish this argument, we can first note that, from his earliest mature works,<sup>46</sup> Cage’s musical focus was on overcoming the distinction between musical sound and noise—his embrace of *all-sound* was couched, initially, in terms of an opposition between those sounds included within and those excluded from the ambit of musicality.<sup>47</sup> A vital moment in the development of this preoccupation, emphasised

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<sup>46</sup> I say “mature” here in order to distinguish the pieces composed from 1938 onwards from those that came before—while the former can be positioned quite clearly in relation to the subsequent developments of Cage’s compositional practice, the latter are focused upon forms and principles that Cage would come to abandon almost completely in the late thirties. Cage’s earliest compositions date from a period spent in Paris after dropping out of Pomona College in 1930, aged eighteen, and were ‘derived from calculations of a mathematical nature’ (Cage, quoted in Pritchett 1993, 6), while subsequent pieces composed during the mid-thirties were based on ‘serial and contrapuntal ideas’ that ‘were never again to appear in his work after 1938’ (10). The website of the John Cage Trust describes *Metamorphosis* (1938) as ‘his last work to be composed in a serial and contrapuntal style,’ while Pritchett similarly gives this year as the date when Cage’s ‘professional career as a composer’ began (6). It is notable, in this regard, that Cage is still suggesting, in “The Future of Music: Credo,” likely given that year, that the ‘new methods’ which will allow for composers to ‘make use’ of the ‘entire field of sound’ will ‘[bear] a definite relation to Schoenberg’s twelve-tone system’ (S 4-5). It is therefore not strictly a question of a definitive and complete break with and rejection of serialism on Cage’s part, so much as the crossing of a threshold that would divorce him irrecoverably from many of its central concerns, while nevertheless retaining certain aspects of its orientation. Virgil Thompson would later include in his review of the 1945 prepared piano concert at the New School the remark that ‘Mr Cage has carried Schonberg’s twelve-tone harmonic manoeuvres to their logical conclusion’ (Thompson, quoted in Tompkins 1968, 96), and it is clear that Cage’s embrace of all-sound entailed his rejection of serialist means in a gradual and uneven fashion. This is further indicated by his friendship with Pierre Boulez in the late nineteen-forties and early nineteen-fifties, occasioned by the (seeming) proximity of their work, which in Boulez’s case was derived (via a polemical critique) from the project of total serialism initiated by his teacher Olivier Messiaen (see Griffiths 2010, 3-21).

<sup>47</sup> Cage emphasises this aspect of inclusion and exclusion in his retrospective account of this period of his work in the “Lecture on Nothing”: ‘Noises, too, had been dis-criminated against; and being American, having being trained to be sentimental, I fought for noises. I liked being on the side of the underdog’ (S 117). Though facetious in its phrasing, this remark nevertheless points towards the increasingly socio-political dimension that Cage’s attempts to “liberate sound” would take on during the nineteen-sixties, as it adopted an increasingly explicit orientation against the power-dynamics implied by this constitutive exclusion of noise from music. In this regard, we can note that, historically speaking, the gesture of exclusion, as constitutive of the properly musical, has often formulated itself in specifically Euro- and ethnocentric terms; as Michael Chanan argues, citing the work of the musicologist F. Albert Gallo, ‘European composers have long been given to consider only what they themselves

by Cage himself as well as the various biographical accounts of his musical development,<sup>48</sup> is an idea expressed by Oskar Fischinger, an abstract filmmaker who had asked Cage to compose music for a film he was making. As Cage describes it:

When I was introduced to [Fischinger], he began to talk with me about the spirit which is inside each of the objects of this world. So, he told me, all we need to do to liberate that spirit is to brush past the object, and to draw forth its sound. (FTB 73)

According to Kenneth Silverman, this ‘concept of incarnate sound animated Cage’s thinking about music for the rest of his life’ (Silverman 2010, 26). In Cage’s account, it was this idea of Fischinger’s that ‘led [him] to percussion’ (73), that is, to the form of music for which he would become initially known and which would be the central focus of his compositional practice until his development of the prepared piano in 1942. This embrace of percussion was both a direct extension of Fischinger’s idea (Cage’s percussion pieces would often make use of everyday and household objects, as opposed to percussion instruments<sup>49</sup>) and one element in a more general project that he would first articulate in the important lecture “The Future of Music: Credo,” and which would form a core element of his musical thinking through the nineteen-

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wrote, in accordance with whatever rules were current, to be ‘music’, thus excluding all non-European music, as well as all European music which did not fall within the ambit of the dominant culture’ (Chanan 1994, 78). We can note, in this regard, that Cage’s own early work for percussion orchestra found itself engendering comparisons to Balinese gamelan music (Patterson 2002, 41); further, as discussed briefly below, his musical thinking during the nineteen-forties developed alongside and in dialogue with a growing interest in South and East Asian music and philosophy. As Chanan himself notes, however, there is an issue here of the degree to which Cage’s appeal to and creative (mis)use of East Asian philosophical (and to a far lesser extent, musical) sources manifests ‘certain habits of thought rooted in the mentality of the colonizer’ (264); Pierre Boulez, for his part, was explicit in accusing Cage of Orientalism in his attitude to these sources. An engagement with this problematic falls beyond the scope of my project here, but it must nevertheless be acknowledged as a significant point of tension in any attempt to analyse Cage’s work; certain key elements of it will be outlined in Chapter Three and the Conclusion.

<sup>48</sup> In particular, see Pritchett 1993, 12; Larson 2012, 60-61; Revill 1992, 51-52, 60; Silverman 2010, 24-26. Silverman quotes Cage as saying that Fischinger’s remark ‘set [him] on fire’ (25).

<sup>49</sup> For instance, *Living Room Music* (1940) is ‘for unspecified instruments,’ and the score suggests that ‘[a]ny household objects or architectural elements may be used as instruments’ (Pritchett 1993, 20). Examples given include ‘magazines, newspapers or cardboard’ for the first player and ‘table or other wooden furniture’ for the second. This was, in a certain respect, a necessity related to the cost and difficulty of obtaining a range of percussion instruments, as well as the amateur nature of the performers Cage was able to secure for his percussion ensemble—including, for a period from late 1937 until he and Xenia moved to Seattle in 1938, the bookbinders at whose house they lived in Santa Monica (Silverman 2010, 27).

forties—the project of embracing ‘any and all sounds that can be heard’ (S 4).<sup>50</sup> I will consider this lecture, along with related texts from the subsequent decade, in order to establish clearly his first fully-articulated position on, as the title indicates, the *future* of music—that is, on what music is *not yet* but might *become*; this future, as we will hear, demanded, for Cage, a break with harmony and other tonal forms of organisation.

The lecture sets out clearly the central motivating ‘disagreement’ from which this future of music envisioned by Cage would emerge as that ‘between noise and so-called musical sound’ (S 4), rather than, as ‘in the past,’ ‘between consonance and dissonance.’ Whereas dissonance remains, as Michael Chanan puts it, ‘an integral part of the system’ of tonality, insofar as consonance and dissonance are ‘opposite ends of a continuum’ defined by the harmonic series (Chanan 1994, 232),<sup>51</sup> noise, on the contrary, designates ‘the inarticulate sounds that fall outside the system’ by virtue of lacking a fundamental tone. The continuum between the poles of consonance and dissonance, then, is orientated by reference to the primacy of tone, while the opposition between musical sound and noise cannot be anchored in this way. Though this opposition also forms a continuum, insofar as any pitched sound will have a

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<sup>50</sup> Here and subsequently, I have removed the capitalisation of quotes from “The Future of Music: Credo” for the sake of readability.

<sup>51</sup> Chanan here notes the significance of Schoenberg’s quasi-evolutionary theory of harmony. For Schoenberg, dissonant chords are initially produced “accidentally” within the harmonic system by the interaction of the melodic line with the harmonic ground; the tone that produces the dissonant chord is termed a ‘passing note’ or ‘non-harmonic tone’ insofar as it falls ‘outside the harmonic scheme of the piece in question’ (Chanan 1994, 67). As Chanan goes on to explain, ‘[a]t first these strange harmonies can only be admitted to the harmonic system when suitably prepared and resolved,’ but are then subsequently ‘admitted to the system’ through being ‘recuperated by the powers of harmonic integration’ (67-68). ‘As a result,’ Chanan continues, ‘at no time was the system [of harmonic tonality] closed; on the contrary [...] it was forever expanding and contracting’ (68). This expansion led, for Schoenberg, to the point where ‘the repertoire of acceptable dissonances’ increases to the point where ‘chromaticism became acute and relentless’ and ‘the key system began to suffer from a loss of definition.’ This is, of course, the point where Schoenberg’s atonalism, his ‘emancipation of the dissonance,’ is brought into effect, as the end-point of this evolutionary trajectory. In a sense, Cage’s attempt to replace the consonance-dissonance opposition with one between musical sounds and noises is an extension of this project to the incorporation of sounds that, lacking a fundamental tone, are *not even dissonant*. However, this extension ultimately demands a rejection of the Schoenbergian perspective, which still implied a fundamental reliance upon harmony, insofar as it is only with reference to the priority of harmony that consonance and dissonance form the limit points—limits that are relative in relation to the field of all possible sound. In this regard, it is important to note that, in Cage’s account of his studies with Schoenberg, the latter told Cage that he had ‘no feeling for harmony,’ and that this would mean his compositional activity would be ‘beating his head against a wall’ (S 161).

timbre determined by overtones that are inseparable from but irreducible to the fundamental, it is a continuum that stretches to cover the entire field of sonority, rather than limiting itself to discrete steps (241).

As Cage puts it, then, the use ‘for musical purposes’ of ‘any and all sounds that can be heard,’ rather than simply the ‘particular steps in the field of sound’ that characterised ‘so-called musical sound,’ demanded that a struggle be undertaken in the name of *noise*, insofar as noise designated precisely those sounds that fall outside of the discrete steps of the tonal system—the ‘academically forbidden “non-musical” field of sound’ was *noisy* by (negative) definition (S 5).<sup>52</sup> Thus, the pursuit of an all-sound music, for Cage, demanded an embrace of noise. Percussion music, for Cage, was a tactical element in this broader struggle: it marked ‘a contemporary transition from keyboard-influenced music to the all-sound music of the future’ insofar as ‘[a]ny sound is acceptable to the composer of percussion music.’ Yet percussion music, as a nascent form of this all-sound music of the future, posed clearly the problem that any such music would have to confront—its *mode of organisation*. That is to say, though Cage may advocate, following Edgard Varèse, the substitution of the term ‘organised sound’ for ‘music’ (S 3), this nevertheless implied particular methods for organising this new body of *noisy* sonic material. This posed a problem that would underpin both Cage’s iconoclastic attacks on the Western classical tradition during the nineteen-forties, and, ultimately, his embrace of an *experimental* compositional method from the early nineteen-fifties. It is, for this reason, a key moment in my establishment of Cage’s work as a *struggle against recognition*, and against a particular sonic form of the dogmatic image of thought.

Already in “The Future of Music: Credo,” Cage is aware of the way in which his embrace of noise through percussion music, as well as the electronic experiments he was conducting, sporadically and as money and institutional access permitted,<sup>53</sup> at the

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<sup>52</sup> For an exemplary case of this negative definition of noise, see the opening pages of Hegarty 2007.

<sup>53</sup> The period of the late nineteen-thirties saw the first of Cage’s long and ultimately fruitless endeavours to establish a centre for experimental music that would help facilitate such researches, for which at the time he was reliant upon access to radio studios. He refers to the importance of such centres for the development of the ‘all-sound’ music he envisages in the “Future of Music” piece (S 6). For details of his initial attempts in this direction, see Silverman 2010, 40-43.

same time, demanded a revision of the very basic premises of musical structure: ‘The present methods of writing music, principally those which employ harmony and its reference to particular steps in the field of sound, will be inadequate for the composer, who will be faced with the entire field of sound’ (S 4). That is, the attempt to embrace noise within music will require that the organising principles of the latter—the ‘musical habits’ (S 9) that serve to ground the *recognisability* of a certain set of sounds *as musical*—must be challenged and, ultimately, replaced. As he puts in an article from 1942, entitled “For More New Sounds,” in writing for both new technologies and percussion instruments

the composer is dealing with material that does not fit into the orthodox scales and harmonies. It is therefore necessary to find some other organized means than those in use for symphonic instruments. The sounds cannot be organised through reference to an underlying fundamental tone since such a tone does not exist. (Cage, in Kostelanetz 1970, 66).

The existing modes of sonic organisation are inapplicable to noises insofar as, lacking in a fundamental tone, the latter cannot be incorporated into the system of pitch-relations that characterised musical organisation in the Western tradition from its Greek origins—and had become anathema to the even stricter set of permissible relations that characterised classical tonal harmony, the defining form of musical organisation in the Western concert tradition from around the mid-eighteenth century onwards.<sup>54</sup> However, it is precisely these existing modes of organisation that underpin the recognisability of *music* as such, entailing thereby the exclusion of noise from within the remit of music simply by definition. The question Cage raises here, then, is whether there can be a form of music that is *not* dependent upon or reducible to the existing ways of organising sound—and that thereby would not be (immediately) recognisable as music—and which would thereby be able to incorporate sounds that were by definition non-musical. I will not discuss in detail, at this point, the specific *alternatives* Cage himself developed and formulated this period, which will be the topic of Chapter Three, but rather focus on the way in which this search for an alternative required an increasingly strident opposition to the traditions that

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<sup>54</sup> Chanan notes that percussion was actually ‘altogether absent’ from the ‘early classical orchestra and the consort it grew out of’; it was ‘only after Berlioz that a limited range of percussion is reintroduced as a standard feature’ (Chanan 1994, 210)



constrained the possibilities for sonic organisation, and the ultimate rejection of an *intentional imposition of order* that this opposition would entail.

A particularly significant moment in the trajectory I am tracing here is Cage's subsequent expansion of the argument of "For More New Sounds" in the 1948 lecture "Defense of Satie," which develops the logic of his overall project in a more polemical direction—a direction so polemical, in fact, that, after presenting the lecture at Black Mountain College, Cage would not be invited back until 1952, when his long-time friend Lou Harrison had taken over as head of the music department (Tompkins 1968, 117). A clear sense of this rhetorical shift can be seen in the following, famous declaration:

With Beethoven the parts of a composition were defined by means of harmony. With Satie and Webern they are defined by means of time lengths. [...] Was Beethoven right or are Webern and Satie right? I answer immediately and unequivocally, Beethoven was in error, and his influence, which has been as extensive as it is lamentable, has been deadening to the art of music. (Cage, in Kostelanetz 1971, 81)

Cage's advocacy of a structure based on duration will be discussed more fully subsequently, but what is central to my argument at this stage is both the critical edge to Cage's argumentation here, and the reasoning that underpins the opposition he is proposing. A structure based on duration, for Cage, is preferable to the position he attributes to Beethoven insofar as 'duration' or 'time length' is the only attribute of sound that is common to both sound and its 'opposite' and 'necessary partner,' that is, 'silence.' While Cage's position on silence here is a preliminary one, and the shifts that this position underwent will be considered in the following chapter, we can nevertheless note that a durational structure, unlike a harmonic one, can, in principle at least, incorporate *all forms of sound* rather than just those that are pitched. As Cage puts it in "Forerunners of Modern Music," an article published the following year that explores many of the same ideas, '[a]ny sounds of any qualities and pitches (known or unknown, definite or indefinite), any contexts of these, simple or multiple, are natural and conceivable within a law and freed structure which equally embraces silence' (S 65).

This shift away from harmony toward duration as the structural principle of composition is therefore central to the possibility of an ‘all-sound music of the future’ that Cage envisaged in “The Future of Music: Credo” (S 5). The ‘artificial’ nature of harmonic structure must be eradicated, in favour of a music that would ‘structure itself from the very roots of sound’ so as to be able to embrace, in principle, *any sound whatsoever* (Cage, in Kostalenetz 1971, 80-81). However, what is vital to note here is that these structural principles admitted of a compositional freedom at the level of *content*—though the structure may be determined according to time-lengths, the actual sonic elements themselves remained amenable to *choice*. At this point in Cage’s development, then, he still maintained ‘two fundamental and opposed elements’ as determining the ‘function’ and ‘meaning’ of a piece of music: Law and Freedom (84). This opposition (and, indeed, opposition as such) is foreign to Cage’s subsequent thinking, insofar as it implies both a collective agreement, in the case of Law, and an appeal to ‘matter[s] of the heart’ and ‘improvisation,’ in the case of Freedom (83-84).<sup>55</sup> A key task of the remaining part of this thesis is to examine in detail the shifts that would lead, over the course of the subsequent four years, to a complete revolution in Cage’s views on this point—and, moreover, to demonstrate how this revolution is *entailed* by the pursuit of his very earliest compositional goals, as their logical extension. As a result, my presentation of this transformation will be cumulative, rather than linear, tracing and retracing the various shifts involved from different perspectives as my argument develops, and any single account should not be read as definitive. Given the current emphasis of my analysis, my initial presentation will therefore on the way in which there is a degree of consistency between these earlier discussions of the conditions of possibility for an all-sound music and his subsequent account of his work as *experimental*.

The experimental nature of Cage’s attempt to move beyond the limitations of specifically *musical* sound is presented clearly in “Experimental Music,” first given as an address to the Music Teachers National Association in Chicago in 1957. In this text, Cage explains that his work aimed to explore the possibilities of a ‘total sound-

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<sup>55</sup> As Cage himself will later describe it, in the first of his three lectures at Darmstadt in September 1958: ‘Composition, then, I viewed, ten years ago, as an activity integrating opposites, the rational and the irrational, bringing about, ideally, a freely moving continuity within a strict division of parts, the sounds, their combination and succession being either logically related or arbitrary chosen’ (S 18).

space' beyond the 'steppingstones twelve in number' (S 9; see also 16, 183) of the dodecaphonic scale, and the 'musical habits' that underpin this limited range of sonic possibilities. As such, the essay marks a refinement and extension of Cage's thinking discussed above, insofar as it turns upon a distinction between the necessarily *limiting* 'discrete steps' of the existing forms of sonic organisation—that is, our 'musical habits'—and the far greater richness of sonic possibilities that lie beyond these narrowly-delimited boundaries (S 9); in order to embrace these possibilities, one must 'be willing to change one's musical habits radically.' However, this apparent proximity conceals a highly significant and fundamental *transition* that marks the distance between the two, a transition indexed by Cage's embrace of the term 'experimental':

Formerly, whenever anyone said the music I presented was experimental, I objected. It seemed to me that composers knew what they were doing, and that the experiments that had been made had taken place prior to the finished works, just as sketches are made before paintings and rehearsals precede performances. [...] Now, on the other hand, times have changed; music has changed; and I no longer object to the word "experimental." I use it in fact to describe all the music that especially interests me and to which I am devoted, whether someone else wrote it or I did myself. (S 7)

This shift in attitude is premised upon a 'parting of the ways, where it is realised that sounds occur whether intended or not' and where one, as a result, 'turns in the direction of those [one] does not intend' (S 8). Cage makes very similar remarks in a nearly-contemporaneous article entitled "Experimental Music: Doctrine," but with a few highly-significant additional details, and which I will therefore quote at length:

Objections are sometimes made by composers to the use of the term *experimental* as descriptive of their works, for it is claimed that any experiments that are made precede the steps that are finally taken with determination, and that this determination is knowing, having, in fact, a particular, if unconventional, ordering of the elements used in view. These objections are clearly justifiable, but only where, as among contemporary evidences in serial music, it remains a question of making a thing upon the boundaries, structure, and expression of which attention is focused. Where, on the other hand, attention moves towards the observation and audition of many things at once, including those that are environmental—becomes, that is, inclusive rather than exclusive—no question of making, in the sense of forming understandable structures, can arise (one is tourist), and here the word "experimental" is apt, providing it is understood not as descriptive of an act later to be judged

in terms of success and failure, but simply as of an act the outcome of which is unknown. What has been determined? (S 13)<sup>56</sup>

There are a number of vital formulations in this passage, and a number of them will only receive a clear account subsequently; however, what is most important at this point is the shift from the *determination of an object* which possesses an ‘understandable structure’ toward the ‘audition of many things at once,’ a shift which entails an *experimental* attitude insofar as it prevents an advance knowledge. Therefore, referring back to my preceding account of Zourabichvili’s work, we can say that it disrupts the equivalence of *cognition* and *re-cognition* by placing a *caesura* between composition and audition; one does not know (in advance) what a body can hear.<sup>57</sup>

Though Cage’s declaration here implicates the more specific case of the use of chance procedures within his compositions (which I will discuss in Chapter Three), it is also applicable to the broad thrust of his project as such, insofar as that which is *known* prior to the act of composition can be precisely only those musical habits or, in the terms Deleuze borrows from Nietzsche, *established values*, against which his work struggles (NP *passim*). It is these habits regarding the construction of music, and the ‘discrete steps’ upon which they rely, that enable something to be *recognisable as music*, and this recognisability is itself, as established above, the criterion upon which

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<sup>56</sup> Significantly, this definition of “experimental” is cited approvingly by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* as part of their discussion of ‘art as “experimentation”’ (AO 405); references to Cage in Deleuze’s work are relatively rare, and the most extended engagement, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, is broadly critical, though focused on the prepared piano works which precede the major shifts in Cage’s compositional thinking toward chance and indeterminacy.

<sup>57</sup> I allude here to Deleuze’s consistent invocation of Spinoza’s formulation ‘we do not know what a body can do’ (Spinoza 1992, 105; see NP 36, SPP 17, D2 60, TP 284, ECC 123). For a discussion of this aspect of Deleuze’s work in relation to sonic theory, see Goodman 2010, 99-104; and Cimini, 2010, 135 and *passim*. Goodman uses the alternative reformulation that ‘[w]e do not yet know what a sonic body can do’ (191, original emphasis), which captures more accurately the implications of the Spinoza’s univocal ontology than my own, insofar as the “body” referred to by Spinoza is not the *human* body but rather ‘a mode which expresses in a definite and determinate way God’s essence insofar as he is considered as an extended thing’ (Spinoza 1993, 63). As such, “body”, in Spinoza’s sense, refers to any finite extended thing, a sound as much as a physical human body, and “audition” in this sense would be the interaction between two bodies (each of which would contain a multiplicity of others). However, at this stage in my argument I am focusing on the listening experience in isolation from considerations of the sonic object, which will be discussed shortly, as well as broader ontological considerations, dealt with in Chapter Three; my formulation here therefore is an accompaniment to Goodman’s, but one which must be acknowledged to be, from a Spinozist perspective, insufficient in itself.

something can be affirmed as *already* thinkable. Though this argument cannot yet be established in full, I want to suggest here, as an gesture towards my overall intention, that an approach to Cage's work that does not acknowledge the need to move beyond a dogmatic image of thought as model of recognition, and that does not approach Cage's work as something that is in fact *unthinkable* according to a natural and therefore *already-existing* set of capacities of thought, but nevertheless something that *may become so* beyond such an image, can only assume the failure of his project as an attempt to push, experimentally, at the limits of the audible.

### 5. The Sonic Object = x

In order to elaborate this position more clearly, and defend it more fully, I want to extend my characterisation of the image of thought in order to assess, from Deleuze's own account, how it actually supervenes upon thinking as an activity, limiting and channeling it according to the model of recognition discussed above. Firstly, however, I will reiterate elements of the above analysis in order to indicate why I take such an account to be vital. Within the postulates of the dogmatic image of thought, what offers itself to thought as the exteriority to which it must conform, and which thereby grounds its necessity and its truth, is merely the object of a sublime philosophical sleight-of-hand—the possibility that thought might be unsettled by this encounter with its outside, and that this necessity may force it down strange and obscure paths, is eliminated in advance by ensuring that thought only ever encounters that which is already subordinated to it in principle, if not yet in fact. Thought submits to a simulated passion, relinquishing its authority only once it *already knows* what it is to encounter, once it knows that the *world itself has become truthful*. However, though these three interrelated claims would sustain the image of thought as a model of recognition, they remain incomplete without an account of how this *internalised* relation between thought and its object can be sustained in the activity of thinking—that is, we have not yet properly resolved the problem, raised above, of how the natural affinity of thought with truth is ratified by what it encounters, by the *reality of the world* that it thinks.

Of course, the claim that the *world itself is truthful* is a necessary component of this resolution, but it remains an equivocation so long as the *conditions of possibility* for such truthfulness are not exhibited—how can we *know* the world is truthful, without thereby presuming what we hope to demonstrate, namely that the world itself is knowable *by us*? That is to say, if we claim that thought has an affinity with truth because the world itself is truthful, the grounding of truth in a correspondence between thought and world finds its justification continually deferred from the subjective to the objective pole—the subject has a natural capacity to think the true that is countersigned by the objective truthfulness of the world which it thinks, but without either pole providing sufficient reason for this state of affairs. This relay precipitates us towards the vertigo of *groundlessness*, as each term appeals to the other in an endless oscillation; how are we to recover our stability, to recover our image in the world beyond this *mise en abyme*?<sup>58</sup>

A prominent mode of philosophical justification for this reciprocal correspondence between thought and world is one that Deleuze finds to be characteristic of ‘dogmatic rationalism’ but also present in Humean empiricism: the invocation of a ‘pre-established harmony’ (KC 12). This notion of a pre-existent and universal ‘harmony between subject and object’ (KC 58) serves to underpin the ‘*accord* between the order of ideas and the order of things’ but, in doing so, it ‘demand[s] a theological principle as source and guarantee of this harmony’ (KC 12). It must postulate, in addition to thought and the world it thinks, a *third term* which links them while being reducible to neither (finite) thought nor to the world itself.<sup>59</sup> Zourabichvili amplifies this point: if the “truthful world” possesses a ‘presumed identity,’ insofar as ‘thought [gives] an *a priori* form to what it does not yet know,’ then that which ‘guarantees [the world] an identity’ can only be a ‘*transcendence*,’ something beyond or outside the world that is capable of providing it with a ground (DP 47). For this reason, ‘[b]elief in an external

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<sup>58</sup> I allude here to Christian Kerslake’s important monograph *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy*, which focuses on the meta-critical problem of grounding pursued in post-Kantian German Idealism and, ultimately, in Deleuze’s work too—in particular, the problem raised by the methodological immanence of the critical procedure (the critique of reason by reason itself) and extended by the ontological commitment to immanence that Deleuze pursues in relation to Nietzsche and Spinoza. This problematic will be raised more clearly in the subsequent discussion of Deleuze’s relation to Kant.

<sup>59</sup> This interposition of a third term into a relation in order to ground it is, as we shall see, is central to Deleuze’s understanding of reactive force in Nietzsche; see Chapter Three for a fuller discussion.

reality refers in the last instance to the position of a God as the absolute outside,' the ultimate transcendence which, as in Leibniz, ensures the harmony by selecting, from amongst all possible worlds, that which has the maximal degree of convergence (see DR 60-62, 332; LB 75). This fundamentally *theological* element that underpins the dogmatic image will be extremely important for Deleuze insofar as it does not disappear once it no longer forms an avowed and explicit presupposition of philosophy, but rather retains its influence, migrating from the atemporal *beyond* of a strictly theological transcendence to reside at the heart of the human subject itself.<sup>60</sup>

To summarise my argument thus far: if the difficulty of how thought can come to think its outside is resolved, within the dogmatic image of thought, by surreptitiously folding this outside into the ambit of thought in principle, such that thought by right can articulate this exteriority within itself, there remains the problem of how this folding operates, and from whence it derives its justification. Such a justification is ultimately dependent upon a claim that is less philosophical than *moral and religious*—and it is for this reason that it must remain an *implicit* presupposition, never brought to the surface of a philosophical position, never forming an element of its conceptual elaboration but providing the *support* on which such elaboration can be unfolded. This is precisely why Deleuze characterises the image of thought as 'dogmatic, orthodox or *moral*' (DR 167, my emphasis), and why Nietzsche will form a key ally in contesting it, as we will hear. However, the central antagonist in Deleuze's struggle against this image of thought, as well as its most equivocal and ambivalent representative, is neither rationalism nor empiricism—and recall that the differences between the two are more a matter of the specific 'construction' of this image rather than its fundamental traits (DR 167)—but rather the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant. In order to assess the full scope of Deleuze's account of the image of thought, and the stakes of his resistance to it, we must turn to the elements of the dogmatic image of thought that are most specifically *Kantian*—even if, as we shall see, Kant

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<sup>60</sup> This shift will be central to my account of the image of thought in Deleuze, insofar as it is this shift that characterises Kant's critical project, for Deleuze. It is ultimately this retention of a theological supplement that marks Kant's critical project as a *failure* for Deleuze, and it is therefore the element against which a *true critique* must turn: 'By turning theology into anthropology, by putting man in God's place, do we abolish the essential, that is to say, the place?' (NP 82). See the subsequent section of this chapter for a more detailed account of this element.

himself, for Deleuze, is a thinker who gestures to the possibility of moving beyond this image.

This Kantian element of the dogmatic image of thought can be found in the postulate of *common sense*, which Deleuze interposes between the upright nature of thought and the model of recognition outlined above. He outlines the ‘precipitation’ of these three ‘postulates’ as follows: ‘the image of a naturally upright thought, which knows what it means to think; the pure element of common sense which follows from this “in principle”’; and the model of recognition—or rather, the form of recognition—which follows in turn’ (DR 170). It is this ‘element of common sense,’ then, which mediates between thought, as natural exercise of a faculty, and the object of thought as re- and pre-cognisable, and provides the grounding of their *a priori* relation. This notion of a *common sense* will provide the additional detail necessary to draw together Deleuze and Zourabichvili’s account of the dogmatic image of thought with Cage’s insistent critique of music as mode of self-expression, insofar as both will presuppose an *a priori* limitation of the thinkable and the audible according to the demands of the *communicable*. On this basis, then, I will turn to Deleuze’s own engagement with this aspect of the image of thought in *Difference and Repetition*, and connect this postulate of recognition, with its moral underpinnings, to Cage’s critical engagement with the demand that music be a form of *expression*. Together, these two moments will form a simultaneously philosophical and aesthetic challenge to sound studies—how to push our engagements with sound outside of this model, both conceptually and practically?

To begin to elaborate the Kantian inheritance of the dogmatic image of thought, and the postulate of common sense, in particular, we need to firstly consider the *facultative* model of thinking that Deleuze adopts from Kant. A *faculty* refers to a distinct *capacity* or *power* of thinking;<sup>61</sup> in its most general sense, it designates the relations established between a representation, an object *of which* it is a representation, and a subject *to which* the representation is given. As Deleuze defines it, ‘[w]e can

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<sup>61</sup> The German term here is *Vermögen*. While “faculty” is standard in English translations, and Deleuze uses the French *faculté* in his discussions of Kant, Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood’s translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* for the Cambridge Edition translates the term as *capacity* rather than *faculty* throughout. Though I will use “faculty” here to maintain consistency with Deleuze’s French, and the English translations of it, the active sense of *capacity* does offer a somewhat clearer image of what is meant here.



distinguish as many *faculties of mind* as there are types of [this] relation' (KC 3, original emphasis).<sup>62</sup> To take two important examples by way of clarification, the faculty of *knowledge* relates a representation to the object 'from the standpoint of its agreement to or conformity with it,' while in the faculty of the '*feeling of pleasure or pain*' the representation is 'related to the subject, in so far as it affects the subject by intensifying or weakening its vital force.' In what sense, however, do these various relations denote a capacity or power of the mind? It is vital to note the modification implicit in the "re-" prefix of re-presentation here, as indicating an element of *activity* on the part of the subject: what appears to us immediately in intuition is simply a 'sensible empirical diversity' and, as such, 'intuition [...] is not a *representation*, nor is sensibility a source of representations' (KC 7).<sup>63</sup> Representations, on the contrary, must be *produced* through an active *synthesis* of this diversity encountered in sensation. As Deleuze puts it: 'The important thing in representation is the prefix: *re* – presentation implies an active taking up of that which is presented; hence an activity and a unity distinct from the passivity and diversity which characterise sensibility as such.'

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<sup>62</sup>In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant defines '**representation** in general' as a 'genus' under which one can find various perceptions (as 'representation with consciousness'); a perception 'that refers to the subject as a modification of its state is a **sensation**,' while an 'object perception' is a cognition, which are either immediate, and are termed intuitions, or mediate ('by means of a mark') and are called concepts (CPR B 376-77). The delineation continues beyond this point, but what is important to note is that all these various aspects under which an object is given to a subject are specifications of representation as the genus which unifies them, which supports Deleuze's summary here.

<sup>63</sup>Strictly speaking, Deleuze's claim here is inconsistent with Kant's own account in the 'Transcendental Logic': 'Our cognition arises from two fundamental sources in the mind, the first of which is the reception of representations (the receptivity of impressions), the second the faculty for cognizing an object by means of these representations (spontaneity of concepts); [...] If we call the **receptivity** of our mind to receive representations insofar as it is affected in some way **sensibility**, then on the contrary the faculty for bringing forth representations itself, or the **spontaneity** of cognition, is the **understanding**' (CPR A 50-51, B 74-75). However, in his discussion of the syntheses that allow for the representations given in sensibility to be determinable by the understanding, Kant does seem to suggest that the *representability* of the manifold given in intuition is dependent on the synthesis of time: 'Every intuition contains a manifold in itself, which however would not be represented as such if the mind did not distinguish the time in the succession of impressions from one another' (A 99); one possible implication of this passage (if not the only one) is that prior to the synthesis of apprehension, sensibility cannot be said to possess representations. This possibility allows Deleuze to make a terminological distinction that is suggested but nevertheless not adopted in Kant's text.

The various faculties, then, refer not only to ‘the different relationships of a representation in general,’ but also to ‘a specific *source* of representations,’ insofar as the faculties must actively produce these representations and each does so in a different manner. In the case of the faculty of knowledge as defined above, for example, it is the *understanding* that operates as the source of these representations which are related to objects ‘from the standpoint of [their] agreement or conformity with it’ (KC 3), by means of the particular *synthetic activity* of which the understanding alone is capable.<sup>64</sup>

This is, of course, the core of Kant’s infamous ‘Copernican Revolution.’<sup>65</sup> Deleuze defines the ‘fundamental idea’ of this revolutionary gesture on Kant’s part as follows: ‘substituting the principle of a *necessary* submission of object to subject for the idea of harmony between subject and object’ (KC 12); the object is “submitted” to the subject by the active application of the capacities of cognition to produce representations. Rather than assuming a correspondence or harmony between thought and the world, Kant’s model of a determining subject with a set of faculties, functioning as capacities

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<sup>64</sup> The three syntheses, mentioned in the previous note, by which the ‘sensible empirical diversity’ is transformed into representations are central to the account of common sense, as well as to Deleuze’s analysis of its insufficiencies, particularly insofar as the syntheses converge upon *recognition* as the third synthesis (DR 171, see CPR A 95-130). It is recognition which allows us to ‘go beyond synthesis’ toward knowledge, insofar as it is ‘the act by which the represented manifold is related to an object’ (KC 13); in order to perform this function, however, it requires both the form of the object to which these representations can be related in a unified way, and the unity of the subject which apprehends them. In Deleuze’s view, Kant does not deduce these forms but rather ‘traces’ them from ‘the empirical acts of a psychological consciousness’ (DR 171).

<sup>65</sup> The famous passage in Kant, from the Preface to the Second Edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, runs as follows: ‘Up to now it has been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects; but all attempts to find out something about them *a priori* through concepts that would extend our cognition have, on this presupposition, come to nothing. Hence let us once try whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition, which would agree better with the requested possibility of an *a priori* cognition of them, which is to establish something about objects before they are given to us. This would be just like the first thoughts of Copernicus, who, when he did not make good progress in the explanation of the celestial motions if he assumed that the entire celestial host revolves around the observer, tried to see if he might not have greater success if he made the observer revolve and left the stars at rest’ (CPR B xvi-xvii). The theme of *necessity* as involving the imposed conformity between thought and object, discussed above, is clearly implicated here, and offers the clearest sense of why this revolution is significant for my argument; in his “Copernican revolution,” Kant is reversing the order of determination by which necessity obtains in thought—from the necessity of thought conforming to the objects it encounters, to these objects being necessarily apprehended in a certain manner according to the *subjective* conditions of possibility for any such encounter.

to produce representations, seems to offer precisely what we were seeking: an explanation for how the world can be *made truthful*, or, what amounts to the same thing, how it can become a *relative exteriority*. While a dogmatic rationalist position, as noted above, would demand a theological guarantor of the truthfulness of the relation between thought and world, Kant seems positioned to eliminate such a theological presupposition by making this correspondence something that is actually *produced* by the subject itself;<sup>66</sup> as we will hear, however, this is not something Kant is ultimately able to achieve, and the theological element is ultimately retained in an implicit form. At this stage, however, we can give a fuller account of this activity of the subject by turning to the postulate of common sense, which describes how a particular relation between the various faculties is made into an element of the dogmatic image of thought. This will ultimately allow us to identify how recognisability is *imposed* upon the world according to the requirements of the dogmatic image of thought, and ultimately provide us with a model of thinking against which Deleuze aims to target what he terms a ‘true critique’ (DR 176).

Each faculty, then, is distinguished by its unique capacity to produce representations, as well as a distinctive way of relating them to both the subject and the object *of* these representations, in the appropriate sense of the genitive in each case. This implies a further innovation on Kant’s part that Deleuze will make central to his own use of this facultative model: though previous philosophers utilised the idea of distinctive capacities of the mind, Deleuze remarks that ‘[o]ne of the most original points of Kantianism is the idea of a *difference in nature between our faculties*’ rather than a simple ‘difference in kind’ (KC 19, original emphasis). Each faculty not only relates

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<sup>66</sup> This notion of *production* must be carefully qualified here, insofar as Kant maintained an *empirical realism* (KC 13) and, as such, the *productive* capacity of the faculties only goes so far. Phenomena, as that which we encounter in experience, are strictly speaking not ‘products of our activity’ but rather ‘affect us in so far as we are passive and receptive subjects.’ That is, while we produce coherent *representations* from these phenomena through an *a priori* synthetic activity, the actual empirical data which are given to be synthesised remain independent of the subject. Thus, as Deleuze puts it: ‘In Kant, the problem of the relation of subject and object tends to be internalized; it becomes the problem of a relation between subjective faculties which differ in nature (receptive sensibility and active understanding).’ This ambiguity can be observed, in particular, over the question of whether or in what sense sensibility actually produces representations—a question that will lead to the major developments of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Deleuze is particularly critical of the way in which this model leaves us only with an ‘extrinsic conditioning’ of ‘possible experience’ rather than an ‘intrinsic genesis’ of ‘real experience’ (DR 192), a problem of which postulate of common sense is in many respects a symptom.

the representation to the subject and object differently, but also generates these representations in a distinctive manner: as well as referring to ‘the different relationships of a representation in general,’ “faculty” also ‘denotes a specific *source* of representations’ (KC 6, my emphasis). An important example of this is the difference between the faculties of sensibility and understanding as sources of representations: while *sensibility* produces *intuitions*, defined as ‘a particular representation which relates immediately to an object of experience,’ *understanding*, on the other hand, produces ‘a representation which relates mediately to an object of experience, through the intermediary of other representations’ (KC 6).

The various faculties, then, are defined simultaneously by differing relations between subject and object, as well as different sources of the representations that underpin these subject-object relations. However, there is immediately a problem here, and one that will be highly important for Deleuze’s analysis of the image of thought: how do we ensure that these various faculties relate to one another in a consistent and coherent way? How do we ensure that they *converge*? To put it another way, if the faculties differ in nature, and if each of them produces distinct representations and different subject-object relations, how are they able to interact in such a way that we can ensure that these representation refers in each case to *the same subject* and *the same object*? The solution to this problem is provided by the postulate of *common sense*.

Before analysing Deleuze’s technical framing of *common sense*, we can briefly reconsider the problems faced by the image of thought determined as *recognition* for which we are pursuing a response. Above, we defined recognition, in terms drawn from Zourabichvili, as indicating the way in which thought only encounters an exteriority that is already in principle amenable to it, such that this exteriority is pre-determined by the requirements of thinking and is, as such, always-already *thought*. However, we lacked a clear account of *how* such a model of thinking could be sustained, without claiming, dogmatically, that the world *simply is* that way, thanks to the beneficent work of a deity who ensures the correspondence. Refiguring recognition according to the facultative model drawn from Kant suggests a way to develop such an account, insofar as it relies on a principle of the active *submission* of the object encountered to the capacities of the subject to determine such an encounter. However, it is not strictly necessary that the facultative model developed by Kant would actually

ratify the model of recognition—indeed, Deleuze’s engagement with Kant will turn upon the fact that his philosophy revealed, but did not pursue, an entirely different possibility. However, in practice Kant was able to shore up the difficulties of the model of recognition by coupling the facultative model of cognition with the postulate of common sense. Deleuze’s analysis of the postulate of recognition, and the dogmatic image of thought more generally, in *Difference and Repetition*, draws extensively on this Kantian inheritance, and it is to this analysis we now turn. Having completed this account, we will then be able to return to the resistance of John Cage to what I take to be a sonic equivalent of *common sense*, and provide a more detailed engagement with his attempts to *compose otherwise*.

In *Difference and Repetition*, then, we can find recognition defined in a more technical manner as ‘the harmonious exercise of the faculties upon a supposed same object,’ such that ‘the same object may be seen, touched, remembered, imagined or conceived’ (DR 169). That is, though the faculties may operate as distinct sources of representations, each of which involves a different relation of subject to object, the model of recognition demands that these various faculties are exercised *harmoniously*, converging upon a ‘supposed same object’; the difference between these various modes of apprehension is limited in advance by the necessity of this conjunction. Deleuze develops this point further by claiming that *thought itself*, in the dogmatic image, simply *is* recognition defined in this manner, insofar as “thought” designates not the exercise of a particular faculty, but rather ‘the unity of all the other faculties [...] which it aligns with the form of the Same in the model of recognition’ (DR 170). If each faculty, then, involves not only a different relation between representation, subject, and object, but also a distinct source for such representations, it is the model of recognition and the unity of the faculties in thought that ensures each of these distinct faculties *converge*, such that it is, in each case, the *same* object that is represented, and the same subject who thinks this representation: recognition is ‘expressed in the form of the unspecified object as correlate of the “I think” to which all the faculties are related’ (DR 171). If the image of thought presents thought as the ‘natural exercise of a faculty,’ then what is naturalised thereby is not simply the form of one cognitive activity amongst others, but the very *unity and convergence* of all acts of cognition as operating *between a subject and an object* that remain consistent and

coherent, with *thought* designating nothing but this unity in its necessity and its universality.

To what extent, however, does this just shift the terms of the problem, from an accord between thought and world to an accord between distinct faculties, without offering a real solution? Deleuze frames the problem as follows:

It would seem Kant runs up against a formidable difficulty. We have seen that he rejected the idea of a pre-established harmony between subject and object; substituting the principle of a necessary submission of the object to the subject itself. But does he not once again come up with the idea of harmony, simply transposed to the level of faculties of the subject which differ in nature? Doubtless this transposition is original. But it is not enough to invoke a harmonious accord of the faculties, nor a common sense as the result of this accord; the Critique in general demands a principle of the accord, as a genesis of common sense. (KC 19)

This principle of the *genesis* of common sense, of the accord of the faculties and, indeed, of the faculties themselves, is to be found, on Deleuze's reading, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, and it is this search for a principle of genesis that will lead us to the 'precise moment within Kantianism' that Deleuze wishes to pursue, a 'furtive and explosive moment which is not even continued by Kant, much less by post-Kantianism,' in which 'for a brief moment we enter into that schizophrenia in principle which characterises the highest power of thought, and opens Being directly on to difference' (DR 70-71). However, prior to this moment, which will be taken up in Chapter Three, I want to explore more thoroughly the *aesthetic* implications of the harmonious accord of the faculties that underpins the image of thought-as-recognition; in returning to Cage, we will now be able to more precisely elaborate the claim, outlined above, that his work was staged quite explicitly against such a *harmonious relation* and the *communicability* that it both demanded and allowed. This will further substantiate the broader claim of this chapter: that sonic theory must aspire to a thought without image if it is not to reduce sonic practice, in advance, to a criterion of recognisability.

## 6. Critique or Communication

One of Cage's most famous declarations, and the one that best stands as a summary of his aesthetic orientation, occurs on three separate occasions in the writings and lectures collected in *Silence*: 'I have nothing to say and I am saying it' (S 51, 109, 183). Though the difficulties, both philosophical and aesthetic, in both interpreting and *carrying out* such an act of *saying nothing* are multifarious, and indeed Cage himself produced a prodigious variety of compositional strategies to this end over the course of his long career, nevertheless we can immediately note the force of this *refusal*—the refusal to communicate, the refusal to simply *say something*. If we note here that in the facultative model outlined above the harmonious accord of the faculties is a precondition for any communication, we can begin to draw together the philosophical and the compositional problematic:

common sense appears not as a psychological given but as the subjective condition of all 'communicability'. Knowledge implies a common sense without which it would not be communicable and could not claim universality. (KC 18-19)

To what extent is the model of communication conditioned by common sense equivalent to that which Cage refuses by saying nothing? To establish that this more than a nominal proximity, I want to consider briefly a vital part of the reasoning that underpinned Cage's turn away from self-expression as a rationale for, and goal of, composition during the course of the nineteen-forties and his still-controversial attempt to 'let sounds be themselves rather than vehicles for man-made theories or expressions of human sentiments' (S 10): the necessarily *disjunctive* relation Cage observed between a sound, the affective responses it produces, and the meanings it bears.

In 1944, Cage's piece *The Perilous Night* for prepared piano was premiered in New York, to press reactions that Kay Larson describes as 'hostile and clueless' (117). Though this was not unusual during the period (or even today), and, on Larson's account, characterises quite well the broader press response to the "percussion

concerts” for which he was becoming known at the time,<sup>67</sup> this event was, in Cage’s recollection, to mark a significant shift in his compositional practice, and one which propelled him towards both the specific strategies and overall aesthetic orientation for which he ultimately became widely-known.

What is most significant for my argument here is that Cage’s music during this period was avowedly *expressive* in a manner that was, as noted above, soon to become anathema to his work. Though the significant majority of the works during this period were for the prepared piano and/or percussion ensembles, and thereby continued to embrace the incorporation of non-musical sound that had animated Cage’s work since the late nineteen-thirties, they were nevertheless orientated toward conveying emotional states to the listener—states, moreover, that were frequently bleak. Both Larson and Kenneth Silverman tie the ‘sadness and anxiety’ of the prepared piano pieces of this period to the disintegration of his marriage at this time, with Larson emphasising strongly the traumatic nature of this experience as a catalyst for his turn to South and then East Asian philosophical resources (Silverman, 62; Larson, 109-121); yet what is vital for my purposes is less the biographical sources of the music

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<sup>67</sup> As Larson describes, ‘[d]espite his brilliant debut concert at the Museum of Modern Art in February 1943, Cage’s percussion revolution wasn’t being received in New York with the enthusiasm he must have anticipated. Except for astute reviews by Virgil Thompson, the critics mostly ignored or attacked him’ (109-110). Silverman, on the other hand, emphasises both the positive responses to the percussion concert at MoMA (55), and the encouraging reviews from Thompson and Lou Harrison for a piano concert of his music at the New School for Social Research in 1945 (57-59). He also notes that the joint concerts that Cage and Merce Cunningham began to stage at this time, with the first taking place on April 5<sup>th</sup> 1944 and containing the premiere of *The Perilous Night* referred to previously, were well-received: ‘Cage and Cunningham’s first joint concert received enthralled reviews’ (63), and ‘[t]he partners quickly followed up with another success, then another’ (64). This suggests that either Cage misapprehended at the time, or misremembered later, the nature of the response to the piece in particular, and the concerts of this period more broadly. It is also possible, however, that the reviews Silverman cites were the exceptions, or that the response in the hall was far more negative than the published critical responses. Regardless, Cage’s own account of how he perceived, and responded to, the reactions to this piece retains its significance in relation to the development of his compositional practice, regardless of its strict accuracy—on this point, we can note that in an interview with Richard Kostelanetz, published in 1971 but conducted in 1966, Cage remarked that he had ‘nothing but opposition until 1949 and 1950’ (Kostelanetz 1971, 15). This general negativity is also averred by Calvin Tompkins, who declared in 1968’s *The Bride & the Bachelors: Five Masters of the Avant-Garde* that ‘[t]he attitude of most New York subscription audiences, and most New York musicians for that matter, toward works by Cage is almost invariably hostile’ (70). Interestingly for my current argument, Tompkins also refers to Cage’s music as being ‘less *recognizable* [...] by nineteenth-century standards [...] than any other music being written in the 1960s, and ears tuned to nineteenth-century traditions usually do not hear it as music at all’ (71, my emphasis).



than the way in which, for Cage, his attempt to *express himself* through these pieces was deemed to be a failure—not only in practice, but ultimately in principle. It was this failure that would lead him to re-evaluate the possibility of what he had described, in “The Future of Music: Credo,” as the ‘all-sound music of the future’ (S 5), and to embrace the idea that this music would be dependent on an *affirmation of chance*—that is, as noted above, that it must be *experimental*. In order to trace this transition and uncover its logic, I want to consider Cage’s response to the “failure” of these expressive works, and how it can be figured as a failure of *communication*.

Cage describes his response to the performance of *The Perilous Night* as follows:

I had poured a great deal of emotion into the piece, and obviously I wasn’t communicating this at all. Or else, I thought, if I *were* communicating, then all artists must be speaking a different language, and thus speaking only for themselves. The whole musical situation struck me more and more as a Tower of Babel. (Cage quoted in Larson 2013, 119; CWC 43)

In Larson’s analysis, ‘Cage’s deliberate turning away from self-expression begins here,’ with the realisation that his intention to communicate through his music was a failure.<sup>68</sup> But what, precisely, did this failure amount to? And how was Cage able to

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<sup>68</sup> It is important to note here that expression and *self-expression* need to be distinguished; while I would affirm Larson’s claim that the dissatisfaction with the self-expressive pieces of this period marks an important transformation in Cage’s work, I would emphasise that the ‘turning away from self-expression’ only ‘*begins*’ here, insofar as Cage was only gradually to explore and uncover the true scope and implications of making music non-intentionally; during the period from 1945 to 1950 he continued to have a certain expressive component to his pieces, even if they were avowedly not *self-expressive*. In particular, we can consider the way in which certain pieces from this period attempted to dramatise elements of the South Asian philosophy he was beginning to engage with at the time, under the influence of the Indian musician Gita Sarabhai, who he met in 1946: his major prepared piano work *Sonatas and Interludes* (1947-48) was, in Cage’s words, an ‘attempt’ at ‘the expression in music of the “permanent emotions” of Indian tradition’ (Cage in Kostelanetz 1971, 129), while *The Seasons* (1947) and *String Quartet in Four Parts* (1949-50) both ‘attempt to express the traditional Indian view of the seasons as quiescence (winter), creation (spring), preservation (summer), and destruction (fall)’ (Cage, quoted in Pritchett 1993, 40). As Cage himself explains: ‘As soon as I began to study oriental philosophy, I introduced it into my music. People then were always pretending that a composer had to have something to say. So, what I was saying was nothing more than what I had understood about oriental philosophy’ (FTB 41). These pieces are therefore no longer attempting to express *personal* feelings, and therefore are no longer strictly forms of *self-expression*; rather, they hope to convey certain universal characteristics which are cosmic in scope, and which Cage had encountered in his reading at the time. However, Cage himself would not remain satisfied with even this more

draw from this failure the conclusion that he would ‘stop writing music until [he] found a better reason than “self-expression” for doing it’ (Larson 2013, 120; Cage 1991)? Though we might agree with Larson’s assessment of the significance of this moment for Cage’s development, it nevertheless does not seem clear that the particular failure of this piece would entail the radical conclusion that self-expression is an insufficient reason for writing music. In order to draw such a conclusion, Cage’s failure to express himself *in practice* in this particular case must be figured as indicating an *in principle* difficulty for any attempt to communicate through music. We must draw out Cage’s logic carefully here, and, in doing so, I will show that it impinges directly upon the preceding discussion regarding communication as *recognition*—that is, as necessarily determined by a *harmonious exercise of the faculties*. It is from the perspective of this proximity that we are able to understand Cage’s wholesale rejection of it as the rationale for writing music.

Firstly, let us examine the specific nature of the failure that Cage discerned in his expressive pieces of this period; doing so can help us to clarify his reasoning on this point, insofar as it raises the very question of what actually constitutes a failure of communication, and what the necessary conditions of its success would be. In “An Autobiographical Statement,” published in 1991, Cage offers a slightly modified account of the response his melancholy, expressive pieces received: ‘I noticed that when I conscientiously wrote something sad, people and critics were often apt to laugh’ (Cage 1991). The additional detail given here is important, even if seemingly minor: the failure to communicate manifested itself in a *disjunction* between Cage’s intention to express a particular feeling and the response of the audience, which encountered the piece as bearing an entirely different affective valence, one that is typically taken as diametrically opposed to and exclusive of the intended one. *Either* the piece is sad, *or* it provokes laughter; Cage intends the former, and the audience

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broadly expressive function for his music, insofar as it remained dependent upon the *intention* of the composer; it is worth noting here that these pieces emerge from the relatively brief period in which Indian and South Asian philosophy was prominent in his composition and his aesthetic thinking; from the late 1940s, the Zen Buddhism of D. T. Suzuki would supersede these references to become a decisive and transformative influence. For a detailed discussion of these developments in Cage’s work, see Patterson, 2002; Larson 2013, 122-155; and Crooks, 2011; I will discuss this point briefly in Chapter Three. However, Cage would ultimately retain a central principle that he discovered in the writing of Ananda Coomaraswamy during this period, if his turn to chance would ultimately alter its sense: ‘Art is the imitation of nature in her manner of operation’ (S 100; see also S 155, 173, 194).

hears the latter. The *failure* that animated Cage to reject self-expression, then, denotes the lack of correspondence that he observed between the moments of transmission and response, insofar as it is precisely this correspondence that is taken to define communication as such—the shared experience of an affective state through the medium (in the sense of *milieu* or *middle*) of the piece itself. The successful communication would be one in which these two moments are equivalent—what was there at the beginning is retained at the end; or, we could say, when there is a *correspondence* between call and response. The immediate question that such a failure poses is how to ameliorate it: how would it have been possible for *The Perilous Night* to successfully produce an affect of sadness in those who heard it? Or more generally, how is it ever possible for the moment of transmission and of reception to coincide? Which is to ask, ultimately: what are the *conditions of a successful communication*? As I hope to show, that Cage will ultimately reject communication *in principle* as the purpose of music is not simply due to this particular failure, but rather due to a fundamental insight into the nature of these conditions induced by this failure—ones which, in Cage’s account, will be strikingly similar to these encountered in my discussion of Kant above.

In establishing this similarity, we can initially observe the degree to which the question that emerges here regarding the conditions of communicability is proximate to the one we observed facing Kant, above. In the latter case, the problem was as follows: if the subject *imposes itself* upon the object by means of the various faculties, and the representations that these faculties produce, we then encounter the problem of how these faculties are to be exercised *harmoniously*, how their various representations are to be made to *converge* upon one and the same object, insofar as these representations are *precisely not part of the objects themselves* but products of our encounter with them. How are such a convergence and such a harmony to be maintained, when it does not seem to be a necessary aspect of our cognition—even (and, indeed, especially) if we constantly observe it in fact, as a vital element of everyday experience? As Deleuze puts it, this convergence is the ‘subjective condition of all ‘communicability’’ (KC 18), insofar as it grounds the possibility of *recognition*—the ability to say, as Descartes does, ‘It is of course the same wax which I see, which I touch, which I picture in my imagination, in short the same wax which I thought it to be from the start’ (Descartes 2003, 28; quoted at DR 169). What is more,

it is this convergence that is required to guarantee the repeatability of this recognition between distinct subjects, which is exactly the condition we were searching for in the discussion of Cage. Kant's answer to this problem, as noted above, is to invoke *common sense* as a *subjective presupposition*; it is not an objective and explicit conceptual proposition, but rather an appeal to what *everybody knows*—thought, as the natural exercise of a faculty, demands this convergence.

I will consider Deleuze's critical engagement with Kant's appeal to a dogmatic image of thought in more detail below, but prior to this we can observe how this postulate of common sense would function as a condition for communication in the case of music in particular: the piece of music, to communicate successfully, must be *heard, felt, and understood* in the same way by everyone who encounters it, with the composer as having *determined in advance* the necessity of this convergence by virtue of his intention to communicate. For communication to be successful, then, the object, in this case a sonic one, must be apprehended in the *same manner* on different occasions, such that it is recognisably the *same sonic object* in each case by virtue of it bearing the same qualities and engendering the same responses (in this case, conveying sadness). Contrary to this, Cage's pieces produced a *disjunction*—he heard, felt, and understood them to be sad, an expression of his troubled emotional state at the time, whereas the critics were moved to laugh. By the criteria of communication (convergence and harmony, recognition and repeatability), this constitutes a failure; but it is only a failure *according to those criteria*. That is, it is only if one's intention is to produce an *object of recognition* that one may declare the disjunction between composer and audience to be a failure—for if one, on the contrary, embraces the freedom of the listener in relation to what they hear, then *any response is equally valid* from the perspective of its accuracy (although only from this perspective, as discussed below). The prospect of *misunderstanding* would become, in a certain sense, moot—or perhaps, indeed, something to aspire to.

How, then, was Cage pushed toward this latter conclusion? As noted previously, Cage's work from its very earliest stages sought to embrace the entirety of sound as musical material, and this was still present in the expressive pieces of the mid-nineteen-forties insofar as the prepared piano, for which they were composed, was itself the product of his experiments with percussion orchestras as the source of

unpitched and timbrally-complex sounds.<sup>69</sup> Yet these sounds remained, at this early stage, simply the *material* which could be *used* compositionally: in “The Future of Music: Credo,” Cage saw the potential of ‘electrical instruments’ as being precisely that they would ‘make available for musical purposes any and all sounds that can be heard’ (S 4). As Douglas Kahn puts it, in a discussion of the same article: ‘More than a decade before Cage’s dictum of *letting sounds be themselves* came into being, he was interested in *capturing and controlling sounds*’ (Kahn 1999, 98). In the failure of his pieces to produce the intended response, however, Cage came up against an internal contradiction between the availability of all sounds and the criteria under which they could be *used* in the strictly purposive sense. Within a communicational framework—where the intention of the composer must successfully predetermine the experience of any particular listener—the usefulness of ‘all-sound’ is not uniform. There are, on the contrary, pre-determined criteria of exclusion and inclusion which will ultimately appeal to the ‘musical habits’ Cage was hoping to abjure; or, in Deleuze’s terminology, the *established values* which actually condition the supposed universality and naturalness of thinking-as-recognition in the dogmatic image of thought. Only certain sounds are suitable to engender an *act of recognition* on the part of the listener, and, as such, success will require a limitation of the field of possible sounds.

It is in pursuing this logic that we find the link between the pursuit of *all-sound* that was present from the earliest stages of Cage’s work and the principle that would become the core determinant of Cage’s work from 1950 onwards: the renunciation of intention in an attempt to ‘let sounds be themselves’ (S 10), and the embrace of *experimentation*. We can articulate this in terms of the foregoing analysis as follows: in order to allow for a strict *equality* amongst *all possible sounds*, we must avoid not only individual *preferences*<sup>70</sup> but also the *intentions* which shape those preferences

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<sup>69</sup> This greater timbral and harmonic variety of noises as against musical sounds was similarly invoked by Luigi Russolo as part of the rationale behind his art of noises. As Douglas Kahn puts it: ‘[Russolo] valorized “the great variety in the timbres of noises in comparison to the more limited ones of sounds”’ (Kahn 1999, 80). Russolo’s *The Art of Noise* was listed by Cage in 1960-61 as one of ten books that had ‘the greatest influence on his thought’ (Kostelanetz 1971, 138); Cage’s annotations to the list suggest that he first encountered the book in 1935, and it is highly likely, on this basis, that it formed a major influence on his thinking during this period.

<sup>70</sup> As Cage puts it in “Experimental Music: Doctrine” (first published in 1955, with the dialogue from which I quote here added on publication in *Silence* in 1961): ‘Pitches are not a matter of likes and dislikes [...] except for musicians in ruts; in the face of habits, what to do?’

according to the requirements of communication—namely, the recognisability of the object through the harmonious accord of the faculties. We can infer from the foregoing that, contrary to this model, any compositional practice which wishes to embrace *all sound* must of necessity engender *disjunctive* relations between the faculties, and therefore demands the necessary failure of communication—otherwise it will be limited to only certain sounds according to the conditions of recognisability. I will consider this notion of a *disjunctive relation* between the faculties, or a ‘discordant harmony’ as Deleuze puts it (DR 183), in more detail in Chapter Three, but prior to this I want to conclude my initial engagement with Cage’s turn away from self-expression by noting that we can observe this notion of a disjunctive relation already at present in Cage’s own work, insofar as he affirms the irreducibility of sounds to any particular experience of them—he makes sound something *unrecognisable in principle*. The correlate of renouncing intention is *letting sounds be themselves*, but this involves making the object something other than our representations of it.

If we return once again to the postulate of common sense, we can recall that it involved not only the presupposition of a convergence between the faculties, but also, necessarily, the unity of the subject and object which the faculties relate to one another. That is, common sense requires that for all the variety of representations of a given object, which come in as many different types as there are different faculties of cognition (KC 3), there is nevertheless a *single object* to which they are related and a *single subject* which encounters it. It follows from the Copernican revolution that this unity cannot be grounded in the *object as it is in itself*, insofar as this would contradict the ‘necessary submission of the object to the subject’ by invoking properties of the object independently of how we encounter it (KC 19); the assertion of the unity of the object *in itself* could only be, from the perspective of the critical method, a dogmatic one, insofar as it would appeal to a ground for experience that is itself not given in experience. Kant outlines the problem as follows:

What does one mean, then, if one speaks of an object corresponding to and therefore also distinct from cognition? It is easy to see that this object must be thought of only as something in general = X, since outside

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(S 16). The answer, of course, was to ‘give up the desire to control sound’ (S 10), and thereby ‘accepting equally what one let sounds be’ (S 133).

of our cognition we have nothing that we could set over against this cognition as corresponding to it (CPR A 105).

Deleuze elucidates Kant's position here as follows: for Kant 'the manifold [of what is given in intuition] would never be referred to an object if we did not have at our disposal objectivity as a form in general' (KC 14), precisely because the *object in itself* cannot be given in experience and therefore cannot act as ground for the unity of this manifold. This "object = X" is therefore the 'correlate of the 'I think' or of the unity of consciousness; it is the expression of the *cogito*, its formal objectivation.<sup>71</sup> It is this object-form to which all the distinct representations (I hear, I feel, I understand) are related, and thereby given as various representations of *a single object to a unified subject*, even if, as a result of Kant's necessary limitation of his account to objects of possible experience, 'the unity that the object makes necessary can be nothing other than the formal unity of the consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of the representations,' rather than the object in itself (CPR A 105).<sup>72</sup> As such, it is also *without particular content*—as the "x" indicates, it is not this or that object, being rather the condition of possibility for any object whatsoever. It is therefore, precisely, a *subjective presupposition* that underpins any particular act of cognition while being irreducible to (and not given in) any of these particular acts.<sup>73</sup>

The object, then, is precisely the form of unity that determines the convergence of representations; it is, precisely, the object of *recognition* (DR 176). But is there not another possibility—that instead of an object of recognition, there could be an object

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<sup>71</sup> Though I focus here on the objective pole of this correlation, Deleuze's own critical engagement with Kant's account of the synthesis of experience will focus particularly on the presupposition of a conscious, active, and self-identical subject as the operator of these syntheses—hence the significance of his articulation of a set of *passive* syntheses which ground the active syntheses of conscious representation while not themselves being conscious (see DR 92 for a significant formulation of this position). Henry Somers-Hall emphasises this critique of the subject's role in synthesis as a central element of Deleuze's formulation of a transcendental empiricism (Somers-Hall 2012, 11-40).

<sup>72</sup> The material cited here from the First Edition is, in Deleuze's words, 'suppressed' in the Second Edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in order to 'hide' the 'tracing method' by which 'Kant traces the so-called transcendental structures from the empirical acts of a psychological consciousness' (DR 171). However, '[a]lthough it is better hidden' in the second edition, this method 'nevertheless subsists.'

<sup>73</sup> As Somers-Hall puts it: 'Such a concept [of an object in general] has been shown to be necessary for experience, as the manifold of intuition cannot itself be presented in such a way as to allow us to know it without it. As with the categories, this object is a precondition for experience and as such cannot show up within experience without generating an infinite regress' (Somers-Hall 2012, 20).

that registers as a ‘fundamental encounter’? In such an encounter, rather than converging upon a single, identical object, each faculty ‘grasps that in the world which concerns it exclusively,’ that which ‘cannot be grasped from the point of view of common sense’ (DR 180); this is not to say that it would a *different object* that is grasped in each case, but rather the object = x would become *difference in itself*. Though this possibility pushes us towards the very core of Deleuze’s philosophy of difference, and therefore must be considered closely and in detail, which will be the task of the subsequent chapter, we can note, immediately, a correspondence between the *negative condition* of such a possibility (the refusal of the postulate of identity in the object) and Cage’s resistance to communication. That is, Cage’s desire for the liberation of sounds demanded a resistance to the impetus of communication, insofar as it was precisely the requirements of communication necessitated that sounds become an object of recognition, and, as such, become a *static and generic unity*. By considering briefly this aspect of Cage’s thinking, we can move towards Deleuze’s account of what a *true critique*, as the ‘destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself’ (DR 176), would truly involve.

In this regard, then, we can consider a number of significant statements by Cage that draw together the resistance to communication with the necessity for the sonic object to operate according to a disjunctive encounter—that is, an encounter in which the object itself can bear a variable series of responses without offering any strict criteria of correctness or demanding any continuity across this series.<sup>74</sup> Firstly, in “Experimental Music: Doctrine,” Cage argues that there is a *disjunction* between sounds themselves and the ‘man-made theories or expressions of human sentiments’ for which they are simply a ‘vehicle’ (S 10); as such, to ‘let sounds be themselves’ involves no longer *utilising* them in this fashion, no longer taking them to be *in themselves* signifying or communicational when, in fact, these properties have been imposed upon them in a form of limitation that simultaneously makes sound into a

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<sup>74</sup> This is not to say that the object of encounter (as opposed to recognition) would be entirely random in terms of its apprehension, which would serve to make it entirely undifferentiated; Deleuze will continually oppose this forced choice between conceptual determination according to a priority of identity, on the one hand, or a complete lack of determination, on the other. Deleuze’s revised concepts of *series* and *structure*, particularly prominent in *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, are precisely attempts to provide a model of determination that does not invoke a priority of identity, and which thereby hopes to avoid relying, implicitly, on the dogmatic image of thought.



generic and interchangeable *material substrate* in the service of these properties. Cage will distinguish, on this point, between sounds and words, in which the latter are sounds shaped in a specific way in order to perform this communicative function: ‘if something were being said, the sounds would be given the shapes of words’ (S 10). This is not to say that, for Cage, words *must* be used in this fashion, and indeed many of his later writings, and the readings he would give of them, emphasised the non-signifying sonority that subsists within words themselves; rather, in the writings of this period *words and speaking* primarily designate, metonymically, all intentionally communicative operations that, on this basis, are required to compromise with the conditions of communicability by *limiting* the range of sounds used.

Insofar as, for Cage, words are precisely sounds submitted to these limiting conditions, then words are therefore only an extremely narrow subset of the field of total sounds; as a result, sounds that are *not* given the form of words should not thereby be expected nor demanded to perform the function of this limited subset. Cage reiterates the point in a talk first given in 1956, titled “In This Day...”:

We are not, in these dances and music, saying something. We are simple-minded enough to think that if we were saying something we would use words. We are rather doing something. (S 94)

We can see Cage gesturing obliquely toward his own practice as precisely the *act of saying nothing*, which will be unfolded in more detail subsequently, but at this point the emphasis of my argument is on Cage’s resistance to communication as necessarily involving a *subordination* of sound to the intentions of the composer, precisely insofar as the sounds *themselves*, the *sonic objects*, are not coextensive with the meanings they bear in a given instance; they are always able to be *heard otherwise*, as Cage discovered in practice when trying to write sad music. Convergence, then, is not a given; it must be imposed, extrinsically, by making sounds into a *vehicle* for a particular and limited set of meanings on condition of no longer hearing them *freely*, no longer letting them *act*.

However, the appeal to *let sounds be themselves* by no longer subordinating them to a communicative intention does not demand that we simply hear sounds *as they are*; this claim, which underpins Seth Kim-Cohen’s critical engagement with the “sound-in-

itself” tendency that Cage is taken to (partially) exemplify, overemphasises certain of Cage’s proclamations at the expense of others. It is important to be clear on this point, for if Kim-Cohen’s reading were correct then my argument here would not stand up: Cage’s compositional practice would demand a listener who *only heard*, operating not on a disjunction of the faculties but the limitation to a single one, which, according to the ontological implication of the term *sound-in-itself*, would operate identically in each listener insofar as the sonic object itself would be said to determine its own apprehension. With regard to this claim, we can consider a statement by Cage which must be read alongside the two remarks distinguishing sounds and words cited previously, and which will allow me to substantiate my claim that Cage’s resistance to communication is, simultaneously, an attempt to allow for a disjunctive use of the faculties.

Returning to “Experimental Music: Doctrine,” then, we can note that certain remarks would certainly suggest an interpretation of the sort offered by Kim-Cohen; in particular, Cage describes a ‘new listening’ that would ‘[n]ot [be] an attempt to understand something that is being said’ but rather ‘[j]ust an attention to the activity of sounds.’ However, immediately prior to this quotation, we find the following remarks, which I will quote at length:

Hearing sounds which are just sounds immediately sets the theorizing mind to theorizing, and the emotions of human beings are continually aroused in encounters with nature. Does not a mountain unintentionally evoke in us a sense of wonder? otters along a stream a sense of mirth? night in the woods a sense of fear? Do not rain falling and mist rising up suggest the love binding heaven and earth? Is not decaying flesh loathsome? Does not the death of someone we love bring sorrow? And is there a greater hero than the least plant that grows? What is more angry than the flash of lightning and the sound of thunder? These responses to nature are mine are will not necessarily correspond with another’s. And sounds, when allowed to be themselves, do not require that those who hear them do so unfeelingly. (S 10)

It is only on the basis of an intention to communicate that any particular response of this sort may be evaluated according to its correctness in relation to the supposed *identity* of the sounds encountered—that is, their convergence upon the sonic object =

x.<sup>75</sup> For Cage, eliminating this intention, and the criterion of convergence that it sustains, does not thereby demand the simultaneous suppression of affective or conceptual elements that the listener may encounter *alongside* the sonic object, but rather the suspension of any necessary relation of these elements to the object itself. Again, we must not conclude, from this, that all responses are equivalent, but simply that no single response can appeal to the *unity* and *recognisability* of the sonic object to ground its exclusive claim, the necessity of its relation, precisely because there is no necessary convergence between the “I hear”, the “I feel”, and the “I understand” of a particular sonic experience—the sonic object = x is, in this case, avowedly *not* an object of recognition, but an object of *encounter*, in a sense that I will go on to elaborate.

In a later account of his resistance to communication, Cage will not only present his thinking in terms that are even closer to the Kantian problematic outlined above, but also emphasise something of the *ethical* aspect of this resistance, which will gradually come into focus more fully as my argument progresses—in this regard, we can note that Cage’s explanation in this later account resonates with the broadly anarchist slant of his socio-political thought from the nineteen-sixties onwards. In an interview with Daniel Charles, collected in *For the Birds*, Cage remarks upon the tendency to take his resistance to communication as the pursuit of an emotionless listening: ‘sometimes, when I speak, I give the impression that I am against feelings. But what I am against is the imposition of feelings’ (FTB 148). The distinction here is precisely the one emphasised above: communication is the ‘imposition’ of a certain response demanded by the composer in accordance with the pre-determined identity of *that which calls*, without which the composer’s work would be considered to fail—or, perhaps, without which the listener would have failed to hear “correctly”. In a highly Deleuzian fashion, Cage goes on to distinguish communication from *dialogue*:<sup>76</sup> in the latter case,

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<sup>75</sup> In strictly Kantian terms this formulation is somewhat imprecise, insofar as for Kant the object = x must be without any empirical content; as such, we should more precisely say that the sonic object can be the focal point for a convergence of the faculties insofar as it takes up the formal *position* of the object = x, a position which itself is irreducible to any particular occupant.

<sup>76</sup> Deleuze and Claire Parnet’s book of dialogues, cited here in its second edition as *Dialogues II*, was, as the translator’s introduction describes, ‘commissioned as a conventional book of interviews,’ but Deleuze quickly felt this ‘had the effect of forcing him into a position in which he had nothing to say’ (D2 ix) insofar as the questions posed to him resulted in ‘a

‘nothing imposes itself,’ whereas the former, on the other hand, is ‘always imposing something,’ whether this be ‘a truth’ or ‘a feeling.’ This *something* to be communicated, or rather, to be *imposed*, is an *object*: ‘Communication presupposes that one has something, an object, to be communicated’ (FTB 148).

As the discussion progresses, Charles suggests the term ‘music-objects’ for works in which ‘a particular feeling is imposed on the listener’ (FTB 149), and Cage goes onto relate the ‘music-object’ formulation to the ‘will of the composer,’ as something imposed upon sounds in order to *make* them into objects (150). It is this imposition of the object-form upon sounds (which, at this stage in Cage’s thinking, are identified as *processes* rather than *objects*) that conditions the judgment of a successful or failed listening, or what Cage terms here a ‘correct understanding.’ It is only on condition that sounds are made, through the imposition of the composer’s will, into music-objects that a judgment regarding the correctness of the listener’s understanding can be made; the ideal of *correctness* is strictly illegitimate when applied to sounds beyond this limiting imposition of the object-form: ‘With a music-process, there is no ‘correct understanding’ anywhere. And consequently, no all-pervasive ‘misunderstanding’ either.’ There is a strict equality of understanding in regards to a listening experience so long as that experience is not limited to the audition of a pre-given object-form imposed upon it by the composer—that is, the question of the *validity* of the relation between a sound and its accompanying elements (a feeling, an image, a concept) is rendered irrelevant. I would once again stress, however, that it does not follow from this that any response is *equivalent* or *neutral*, but rather that they are no longer indexed to the transcendent criteria of success *qua* recognition. That there are *other forms of evaluation*—just as there are *non-representational modes of determination*—is a central premise of Deleuze’s philosophy; and, I will argue, such a premise is vital in avoiding reductive misreadings of Cage’s work as advocating an uniform and

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forced, external ordering being placed on [his] thought.’ Instead, the book was produced in ‘a format in which each chapter is a ‘dialogue’ consisting of two halves which link and operate together in a multiplicity of ways.’ As a result, instead of forming a direct, linear, and imposed transmission between two poles—that is, as a *communication*—the texts were produced *between* Deleuze and Parnet. As Deleuze himself put it: ‘What mattered was not the points – Félix [Guattari], Claire Parnet, me and many others, who functioned simply as temporary, transitory and evanescent points of subjectivation – but the collection of bifurcating, divergent and muddled lines which constituted this book as a multiplicity and which passed between the points, carrying them along without ever going from one to the other’ (D2 viii).

indifferent affirmation of any and all forms of sonic practice and modes of listening. Though the question of *immanent criteria* of evaluation will be raised more fully as my argument progresses, on this point I will quote a vital statement of Cage's, whose sense must be considered carefully: 'Permission granted, but not to do whatever you want' (YM 28).<sup>77</sup>

On the basis of the foregoing, largely critical material, we can identify a vital *positive* task that we must now pursue in order to articulate more fully and more convincingly the nature of the *encounter* with sound beyond the narrowly-determined constraints of the music-object—particularly insofar as I want to suggest such an encounter does not entail the straightforward indifference of infinite equal possibilities. These are difficulties, moreover, which any attempt to *theoretically* engage Cage's practice in a systematic and coherent way cannot ignore. What confronting these difficulties ultimately amounts to is asking after a coherent and rigorous account of how sound can be encountered beyond or in excess of recognition—what would the precise nature of such an experience be, and how can it be determined without appealing to either a pre-given identity (and therefore ultimately referring back to recognition and the image of thought), or to an 'undifferentiated'<sup>78</sup> abyss' lacking in any means to distinguish between different forms of sonic practice and listening experience (DR 36, LS 118)? This amounts to asking: what would sound freed from *utility* or *purpose* actually *sound like*? Or, to use Cage's parlance, how can we engage with sound in a form of purposeless play? These questions require us to not simply oppose the image of thought as representation, recognition, and communication, but to actively *diagram* an alternative—a thought *without image*.

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<sup>77</sup> Marjorie Perloff notes that Cage 'frequently refers back to this aphorism in his later work' (Perloff 2012, 33n9), and her essay "Difference and Discipline: The Cage/Cunningham Aesthetic Revisited" makes precisely the point I am emphasising here: 'Cage may have insisted [...] that "Each listener's experience is his own" [YM 32], but that is not to say that the composer thinks all responses are equally valid' (29).

<sup>78</sup> I use Paul Patton's neologism here, coined for his translation of *Difference and Repetition*, in order to capture a distinction between differentiation and differenciation made in Deleuze's French; the former refers to a difference between constituted identities that pre-exist the relation between them, whereas the latter designates the immanent relation of difference to difference that underpins Deleuze's alternative model of determination; see DR viii for Patton's explanation. However, in the passage cited here from *The Logic of Sense* 'undifferentiated' has been used, and is used throughout that text, rather than following Patton's distinction.

### Chapter Three: Revaluating the Essence of Sound

In the preceding chapter, I repeated the question “what calls for sonic thinking, today?” in order to interrogate the *identity* of the “what” that calls—that is, the essence of sound.<sup>79</sup> In doing so, I attempted to uncover, via the work of Deleuze, the implicit presuppositions that the very question of identity rests upon: namely, the presumed *re-*recognisability of that which calls for thinking, a recognisability that entails, in the last instance, its *a priori* encompassment by thought in principle, whatever difficulties may be encountered in fact. In sound studies as in Heidegger, we thereby encountered a vicious circularity<sup>80</sup> that would ultimately recuperate the history of delay and deferral affirmed, conditionally, by both: the fact that we are *still not thinking* was discovered to be ultimately only an empirical condition whose epiphenomenality was transcendently guaranteed. Ultimately, according to such an image of thought, we need only to find the conditions under which we can affirm our pre-established *natural capacity for thought* in order to make this possibility a reality (DR 165-66).<sup>81</sup>

Contrary to this, my argument is that, as Deleuze puts it, such a position makes us ‘powerless to truly begin’ (DR 165), insofar as, between a beginning and an end that ultimately coincide, in Nietzsche’s phrase, ‘nothing will have happened’—thinking will not have “taken place” (Nietzsche 2000b, 53). What is at stake, then, is the temporality of thinking itself—not only the “today” that has insisted, throughout, in

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<sup>79</sup> In his discussion of essence in “The Question Concerning Technology,” Heidegger describes the ‘ancient doctrine’ of essence as being ‘*what* the thing is’ (BW 310); this *whatness* of essence is traditionally counterposed to the *thatness* of existence, a tradition that Heidegger famously subverts through his definition of Dasein as the being whose ‘essence lies in its existence’ (BT 67).

<sup>80</sup> In *Being and Time*, Heidegger acknowledges the circularity of his argument, but claims that this circularity does not constitute a ‘vicious circle’ but rather a ‘positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing’ (BT 195); the famously circular opening to “The Origin of the Work of Art” makes a similar claim. The difference from Deleuze here must be carefully judged, to the degree that Deleuze continually evokes the necessity to begin ‘from the middle’; an important text in judging this difference more precisely would be Pierre Klossowski’s *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, which, as the title would suggest, offers a reading of the eternal return in precisely these terms—a reading, moreover, that bears significant relations to Deleuze’s own. Deleuze discusses Klossowski’s work in the appendices to *The Logic of Sense*, but the most direct discussion of his reading of Nietzsche occurs in “On the Will to Power and the Eternal Return” (DI 117-127).

<sup>81</sup> As Deleuze puts it, with reference to Descartes, the invocation of a natural capacity for thought inherently oriented toward the true suggests that, though ‘it is in fact difficult to think’, nevertheless ‘the most difficult in fact may be easiest in principle’ (DR 168).

the thinking of the call, but the relation between this “today” and the *still not* that is, paradoxically, our contemporary provocation to begin thinking. Yet this argument is not offered as a “purely” philosophical demonstration that would subsequently find its application to the field of sound, as a specific case of a general problem. Rather, my hope was to show how this problem itself occurs audibly within the sonic practice of the twentieth-century—and, in particular, in John Cage’s attempt to confront, precisely, the *sonic* as such, beyond the relative interiority that compromises the distinction between musical and non-musical sound. It would be to this degree that sound would *call for* thinking today—it would force us to re-think what is called thinking.

If the preceding chapter diagnosed the negative conditions of our powerlessness to begin, through a critical account of the image of thought as recognition and an analogous exploration of the limits of composition as communication and self-expression, then the task remaining for this chapter is to encounter the positive conditions under which such an image can be contested. Finally, we must ask: how are we to stop *recognizing* and begin *creating*? It is this distinction that, as I hope to demonstrate, underpins Deleuze’s counterposition between the image of thought and a thought without image and their respective relationships to temporality, as well as, in the last instance, defining the task of philosophy. At the same moment, this distinction underpins, implicitly, Cage’s own affirmation of experimentalism as a way to ‘let sounds be themselves’ (S 10); such a *letting be* would, contrary to its immediate or evident sense, require an *active creation* directed against the all-too-familiar musical structures through which sounds are intentionally and expressively deployed.<sup>82</sup>

This chapter, then, will seek to articulate the sense of creation as that which exceeds and contests the recognizable, and, in doing so, will extend the analyses of the preceding chapter in establishing a resonance between two related but irreducible lines of thinking—one that proceeds through concepts, the other through sounds. Finally, this resonance will allow us to (re)turn to the question of the relationship between

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<sup>82</sup> In the same sense, Deleuze will insist that the artist begins not with a ‘white and virgin surface,’ but with the ‘clichés that are already lodged on canvas before the painter even begins to work’ (FB 8; see also FB 61-63). Thus, ‘it is first necessary to erase, to clean, to flatten, even to shred’ before one can begin to create (WP 204). In Cage’s terms, it is necessary to be ‘disciplined’ in order to ‘start [...] from zero’ (CWC 72).

thought and sound as one of its “objects”, and to offer a reformulation of this problem that will allow us to preserve, rather than to cover over, the differing-deferring function of the call for thinking.<sup>83</sup>

### 1. Evaluating the Question: What is Sound?

To begin, I want to repeat the gesture of the preceding chapter, by taking up and reevaluating the question from which that chapter proceeded, namely: *what* calls? Which is to say: what is called sound? If Cage’s early work was, as we have heard, an attempt to produce an ‘all-sound music of the future’ (S 4)—an attempt that required what we can call, paraphrasing and re-appropriating Deleuze, the destruction of an image of music that presupposed itself—then this work implicated, as both Seth Kim-Cohen and Christoph Cox acknowledged in distinct ways, a claim on the *essence* of sonority. Yet in elaborating and extending the critical moment of Cage’s work into its positive dimension, I want to show how the destruction of the image of music entails a reevaluation of the sense of essence itself; that is to say, though Cage doubtless repeatedly invokes ‘sounds themselves’, the imputation of an essential identity to sound cannot survive the critical destruction upon which it is based. Thus, this chapter will seek to trace how Cage was to gradually draw the consequences of the rejection of self-expression outlined in the preceding chapter in a manner that not only required his development of an explicitly experimental method, but that this method itself was dependent upon a concomitant reevaluation of the nature of sonority.

What, then, is sound? As indicated previously, Cage’s early work was based upon a precise answer to this question; thus, in a pivotal text from 1949, “Forerunners of Modern Music,” Cage states: ‘Sound has four characteristics: pitch, timbre, loudness and duration’ (S 63). Further, in a dialecticising turn of phrase, Cage adds: ‘The

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<sup>83</sup> I reinvoke, here, the “concept” (which is ‘neither a word nor a concept’) of a differing-deferring relation that Stiegler elaborates from Derrida’s formulation of *différance* as ‘the irreducibility of temporalizing’ (Derrida 1973, 130), or the ‘(active) movement of the (production of) difference’; it is worth noting here that difference ‘seemed to [Derrida] to be strategically the theme most proper to think out (if not master) [...] in what is most characteristic of our “epoch”’ (135-6), particularly to the degree that both “we” and “epoch” are themselves *différentially* constituted.



opposite and necessary coexistent of sound is silence'. From this, in an explicitly syllogistic fashion, Cage draws the consequence:

Of the four characteristics of sound, only duration involves both sound and silence. Therefore, a structure based on duration (rhythmic: phrase, time lengths) is correct (corresponds with the nature of the material), whereas harmonic structure is incorrect (derived from pitch, which has no being in silence). (S 63)

This preliminary position is exemplary in many respects: not only does it invoke a set of essential characteristics of sonority, but it also suggests, on the basis of those characteristics, a 'correct' approach to composition, the very correctness of which would derive from its correspondence to the 'nature' of sound as the 'material' of music.<sup>84</sup> Yet on the basis of the analyses of the preceding chapter, we can hear how this position would eventually become problematic: not only did this deductive approach to the problem of structure fail to solve the practical compositional issue of how to embrace the entirety of sound within music—the problem of the relation between *form and method* remained, as I will discuss subsequently—but this approach, for this very same reason, was still at the service of an expressive function for music.

My claim, in sum, is that Cage's position regarding the essence of sonority, despite functioning as a spur to the pursuit of an 'all-sound music of the future' by evoking a set of essential characteristics sufficient to encompass and to determine the nature of this 'all', would ultimately itself become subject to the critical impetus that such a pursuit would involve. Indeed, as I will show, the very question "what is sound?", the question of *essence*, is irrecoverably tied to precisely the outlook Cage found it necessary to escape, namely, the image of thought as *recognition*. In order to demonstrate this, I want to begin by considering an aspect of Deleuze's work that is rightly famous: his antipathy to the very question "what is x?". Expressed initially in 1962's *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, and taken up subsequently in "The Method of

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<sup>84</sup> Michael Nyman summarises this point in a manner close to my own interest: 'Cage had discovered the simplest and most direct way of letting music develop more according to the logic of sound, unhampered by any (non-sonic) pseudo-logics of methodological strictures' (Nyman 1999, 33).

Dramatisation” and *Difference and Repetition*,<sup>85</sup> Deleuze claims that, though positioned from Plato onwards as the question that best corresponds to the ‘discovery of the Idea’ or the ‘essence’, the question “what is x?” in fact presupposes the ‘simplicity’ of the essence, its fundamental identity and unity, which is counterposed to the (theoretically unlimited) particular cases of the ‘example or the accident’, which relate to the essence only contingently (DI 95).

This presupposition is, in fact, nothing other than the *implicit presupposition* of the dogmatic image of thought. If the question ‘what is x?’ corresponds to the distinction, ‘dear to Plato’, between essence and appearance, this distinction itself relies upon the appeal to a ‘truthful world’ whose identity would subsist *beyond* the multiplicity of appearances (NP 89): ‘The truthful world is inseparable from [...] the will to treat *this world* as appearance’. As we have heard, and as Deleuze, through Nietzsche, will stress, such an appeal to the truthfulness of the world is inevitably theological: ‘the answer to “What is X?” is always God as the locus of the combinatory of abstract predicates’ (DR 237). It is this appeal to (divine) transcendence as the guarantor of identity that underpins and validates the supersession of the truthful world over all appearances—and, on this same basis, grounds the priority of recognition in the image of thought. To recall, it is the presumed truthfulness of the world—the implicit presupposition of a truthful world *beyond* the apparent multiplicity of appearances—that ‘guarantees the world an identity’ and ensures that thought ‘does not give itself anything to think that it has not first passed through the screen of the Same’ (DP 47).

It follows, then, that the question of essence posed in relation to sound—“what is sound?”—cannot but situate our attempt to think sonority within the constraints of the image of thought as recognition, and, on this basis, we will be rendered ‘powerless to truly begin’ (DR 165). In this sense, we have drawn close to the position already audited through Sterne and Kim-Cohen: namely, that sound studies must not found itself upon an account of the essence of sonority. Yet, on the basis of the foregoing

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<sup>85</sup> *Nietzsche and Philosophy* was published after an eight-year gap following the publication of his first book *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, which Deleuze later referred to as a ‘hole in [his] life’ (quoted in Dosse 2010, 116); this text, as I will indicate, is of vital importance insofar as it sets out clearly a number of aspects of his work that would remain central across his entire career, and upon which much of my analysis in this chapter will hinge. Significantly, the eponymous concepts of both “The Method of Dramatisation” and *Difference and Repetition* receive their first articulation in the book on Nietzsche.

analysis, it is not clear that we must give up attempting to think the essence of sonority, or hoping to provide some answer to the question of what, in sound studies, calls for thinking. Are there not, perhaps, other questions we might ask, if we suspect the question ‘what is x?’ may in fact be a ‘blunder’ (NP 71)? Might the question of essence itself require a reevaluation?

## 2. “Our Time” is Out of Joint

In order to respond affirmatively—and in order to begin tracing out the questions that would guide us towards a thought without image in and through such a reevaluation—I want to return to that other aspect of the question “what calls for sonic thinking today?” that has been a principle focus of this thesis: the *today* in which this yet-to-be-determined “what” calls to us. I want to return to the question of “today” for three related reasons: firstly, to clarify that, for Deleuze as much as for Heidegger, contemporaneity itself is at stake in the question of how to *begin* thinking: creation, as the beginning of thinking is inseparable from—if not reducible to—an encounter with “our thought-provoking time”, the “at last” in which we hope to finally begin thinking. Secondly, and following from this, for Deleuze it is “our time” that, in fact, *calls for* a form of thinking that would not appeal to a truthful world beyond this one, but that would, on the contrary, affirm the necessity of thinking *this world*. In tracing out these two related aspects of Deleuze’s work, we will be able not only to understand more fully why the question “what is sound?” would fail to capture the contemporaneity of sound studies, but also begin to hear more clearly the demands placed upon any alternative. Finally, and as an extension of these preceding points, I want to stress that the distinction between recognition and creation is inseparable from an account of thought’s relationship to time; indeed, recognition and creation mark, at the same moment, two distinct conceptions of what it is to think and two divergent ‘readings’ of time (LS 8).

In sum, then, if creation is taken to indicate the “nature” and the activity of a thought without image, and, from this, the ways in which such a form of thought could preserve the distancing-differing relation of thought to what it thinks (which is to say, preserve *calling*), it does so to the degree that it demands a renewed conception of

temporality. What is more, such a conception is actively called for by the sonic problematic derived from Cage: for if, on the one hand, it was the static and unchanging quality of essence that allied it to the dogmatic image of thought, and thus requires critique, it was precisely the *durational* quality of sound that Cage identified as defining, in the last instance, such an essence. It is this tension, then, that requires a rethinking of essence *and* of temporality—or perhaps, of temporality *as* essence—which, as I will show, Cage will undertake from within sonic practice.

Let us, return, then, to “our thought-provoking time” as the time in which the call for thinking is to be audited. To recall: our thought-provoking time was analysed, in the second part of the first chapter, in terms of a fundamental *disorientation*, a technico-temporal dismantling of the directionality by means of which time becomes habitable—or, at least, by means of which it had traditionally been inhabited. To borrow a phrase from *Hamlet* of which Deleuze was fond, we could say of such a time that it is *out of joint*—it lacks the cardinal points, the hinges (in Latin, *cardo*), upon and around which it turns, by means of which its movement is coordinated (KC vii; DR 111-12; Shakespeare 1996, 96). Certainly, Stiegler himself understands the nature of temporal orientation in these terms: disorientation, for Stiegler, marked the failure of ‘adjustment’ between socio-genesis and techno-genesis, an adjustment that had formerly been articulated through ‘cardinal points’ distinguishing here and there, past and future (T2 2-3). A time without orientation, a time stripped of such cardinal points—how could such a time provide a beginning for thought, when it would in principle place in question the directionality of time itself, stable beginnings as much as coherent ends? Would the thought adequate to such a time not be itself incapable of beginning—whether to think sonority, or anything else?

For Deleuze, if “our time” does indeed provide a beginning for thought, it does so precisely by placing in question what it means to begin, and, by extension, thought’s relationship to time; it does so, moreover, in a manner that effectively *demand*s an alliance between thought and creation. Our contemporaneity is encountered, for Deleuze, as a demand to think anew, to think differently, and to that degree requires that we hear and think beyond what is merely “present” within that present, its brute actuality. Thus, he claims that thought’s relation to the present is not one of conformity, nor of reflection, but of *resistance*—thinking is ‘resistance to the present’

(WP 108). Deleuze will repeatedly affirm Nietzsche's definition of philosophy as *untimely*: 'This is why philosophy has an essential relation to time: it is always against its time, critique of the present world' (NP 107). To do philosophy is always to act 'counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come' (DR xix; WP 112; Nietzsche 1997, 60).<sup>86</sup> If "our time" provokes thought, then, for Deleuze this is not insofar as we must seek to think in accordance with it, but rather because we must think *against* it: to think *from* our time is certainly to think on basis of a relation to the present, but it is also to depart from it, to actively pursue a future *of* thinking. If thinking is resistance to the present, it is to the degree that it is an act of creation: 'to think is to create' (DR 185).

What alternative conception of the relationship between thought and time is implicated here, beyond the obviously future-oriented sense of creation? This question is imperative, insofar as we might suppose, without such an alternative conception, that for thought to become creative it would be necessary to restore the cardinal points upon which time was oriented, and thereby to recover our capacity to act.<sup>87</sup> An initial indication of such an alternative can be found by returning to Deleuze's relation to Heidegger, which we are now able to specify more clearly. In the preceding chapter, I noted that Deleuze critiques Heidegger's articulation of the call of thinking insofar as, on Deleuze's reading, Heidegger appeals to an affinity between thought and what it thinks that suffices to reintroduce the image of thought as an implicit presupposition—thought always already encompasses in principle that which it must "at last" come to think. Yet it must be noted that there is, in fact, a certain point on which Deleuze will repeatedly and affirmatively cite Heidegger: none other than the claim that 'we are still not thinking'. Invoked as early as *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, and as late as his

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<sup>86</sup> As Deleuze puts it, succinctly: 'The use of philosophy is to *sadden*. A philosophy that saddens no one, that annoys no one, is not a philosophy' (NP 99). Deleuze is close to Klossowski's reading of Nietzsche on this point: 'For what are the thoughts and experiences of a philosophy worth if they serve merely to guarantee the society from which he comes?' (Klossowski 2005, 4).

<sup>87</sup> Such a misunderstanding plagues Žižek's famous critique of Deleuze as 'the ideologist of late capitalism', imagining a 'yuppie' reading Deleuze with 'enthusiasm' as justifying and legitimating, for instance, his work of creating 'publicities' (Žižek 2012, 163); there are a number of important passages in *What is Philosophy?* designed to counteract such a reading—in particular, through the contrast between creation and communication, and the repudiation of the confusion of the two in the "creation" of 'commercial products' or the work of 'marketing' and 'information services' (WP 10-11).

final collaboration with Guattari, 1991's *What is Philosophy?*, this claim clearly bears a vital importance for Deleuze—one coextensive, in fact, with the priority of the image of thought itself, which finds its first and last major engagements in the same two texts.

In citing this phrase so consistently, Deleuze implicitly affirms two central aspects of Heidegger's attempt to figure thinking through the call: firstly, the attempt to place thought in relation to a constitutive delay, a differing-deferral that unsettles its authority and its stability; and secondly, the relation of this delay to a "today" in which thought has yet to begin. Yet nevertheless, it seems that Heidegger's work fails to pursue this impetus, remaining caught within an image that imprisons thought, and that strips the figure of the call of its radical potential, by aligning the "still not" with an *always already* that encompasses thinking in advance.<sup>88</sup> Thus, Deleuze's invocation of the claim that 'we are still not thinking' functions as a demand to hear this claim differently, beyond the contours of this image and the elimination of tele-phonics that it entailed. What other sense could this "still not" take on, and what other diagnosis of "our thought-provoking time" would it require?

An initial clue can be found in a remark made by Claire Parnet in conversation with Deleuze, when she briefly refers to the latter's relationship to Heidegger:

...you are not a Heideggerean. [...] You do not say that we are not yet thinking, and that there is a future of thought which plunges into the most immemorial past, and that, between the two, everything would be 'hidden from view'. (D2 17)

Parnet, as we have heard, is only partly correct on this point: Deleuze does, in fact, say that we are not yet thinking, but he introduces into this claim a sense foreign to Heidegger's own, one that Parnet correctly tracks to the temporal directionality implied, and to the concept of beginning invoked in each case. To begin thinking, for

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<sup>88</sup> This term passes from Heidegger (e.g. BT 476) to Derrida and Stiegler; for the latter, in particular, it is deployed in order to revise the sense of Dasein's "guilt" in *Being and Time* as indicating what Stiegler calls the 'de-fault of origin'—that is, Dasein is *always already* outside-of-itself, which is to say, *technical*. I use it here in its more typically Heideggerean sense, but indicate the expanded sense in order to suggest that there are ways in which Heidegger can be subverted "from within", a strategy that Deleuze does not attempt (and which marks a vital difference between Deleuze and Derrida—see DI 260).

Heidegger, would be to *return* to an always-already established proximity between thought and what it must think, and it is this that ultimately ensures the figure of the call is merely metaphorical. For Deleuze, something else is at stake: namely, *creation*. Creation explicitly orientates thinking towards the future, but does so in a fashion that refers not a particular future—a present yet to arrive—but rather to a form of time that ‘eludes the present’ (LS 5); if thinking is creation, then the present in which thinking “takes place” is always undercut by the to-come toward which thinking proceeds, and which can never, in and of itself, become present. Thus, the “still not,” in Deleuze’s case, refers less to a future in which the past will recur than to a constitutive delay in which thought must always be re-created—with regard to the present, thinking will necessarily “still not” take place, for its operation is precisely to produce that which does not yet exist.

There are a number of misreadings that are not only possible but even likely to arise from Deleuze’s insistent invocation of an essential relation between thinking and creation; not least as a result of Deleuze’s conception of philosophical stylistics: instead of ‘typographical cleverness’, ‘lexical agility’, or ‘syntactical boldness’ (TP 24), Deleuze will evoke a ‘specifically philosophical *taste*’ in the naming of concepts, some of which will necessarily ‘make do with an ordinary and everyday word that is filled with harmonics so distant that it risks being imperceptible to a nonphilosophical ear’ (WP 8). Just as with Heidegger, then, we must be careful auditors of Deleuze: we must not hear too quickly, nor too easily, what might be meant by “thinking”, nor by “creation”. With these caveats in mind, I want to take up, initially, the sense in which thinking might begin only by turning against and resisting the present—our thought-provoking time—and to ask what the conditions of such a resistance would be. Ultimately, these conditions will return us to the question of essence and of temporality; that is, of a renewed conception of essence capable of introducing time into thought—a conception that would thereby become adequate to Cage’s understanding of sound, albeit on condition of radically transforming the *sense* of this understanding.

As noted above, our time is marked by a technico-temporal disorientation made audible in and through the stockpiling of time, and through a corresponding inability to construct a coherent, unitary present. For Stiegler, the industrialization of memory

and the corresponding production of industrial temporal objects have led to a potentially irrecoverable divorce between socio-genesis and techno-genesis, whose relation had previously functioned to produce the (oriented) present; this différential production of the present is elided by the ‘hypersynchronisation’ of the program industries whose effect is, ultimately, the eradication of all temporalisation (Stiegler 2011, 57). Would resistance to the “present” (which is not, in fact, a present at all) therefore involve its *re-construction*—a re-orientation of temporality through the establishing of new cardinal points? Such a response to the undoubted sufferings of the disoriented contemporary—whether characterized as “liquid modernity” or a postmodern crisis of metanarratives<sup>89</sup>—is not uncommon, nor strictly conservative: even Stiegler has recently appealed to the continued radicality of the Enlightenment project and its characteristic modes of temporal individuation.<sup>90</sup> Yet for Deleuze, at least, the crisis cannot be reversed—we can only ask “what happened?” (ATP 212-228).

Deleuze’s response to this question is clear, and, what is more, clearly related to that of Stiegler: what happened is ‘the break[ing] of the sensory-motor link’ (C2 260). For Stiegler, the failure of ‘adjustment’ between the social and the technical milieu entailed that we are no longer able to pro-ject a future that would constitute our response to the present situation, a space within which our intentional activities could find their fulfillment; so, for Deleuze, though for different reasons, does our encounter with the present fail to offer a coherent “situation” in which affection and action, stimulus and response, can be coordinated in a regular and consistent fashion. It becomes impossible to *act*, to *respond* to that which we encounter. Significantly, Deleuze diagnoses this break of the sensory-motor link in and through an encounter with the signs of the cinema, which, after the Second World War, no longer presents a coherent relation between perception, affection, and action (the movement-image as a whole); instead, we encounter

situations to which one can no longer react, [...] environments with which there are now only *chance relations* [...] situations [that] no longer extend into action or reaction [...]. These are *pure optical and sound situations*, in which the character does not know how to respond, abandoned spaces

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<sup>89</sup> See Bauman 2000; Lyotard 1984.

<sup>90</sup> See Stiegler 2010.



in which he ceases to experience and to act so that he enters into flight, goes on a trip, comes and goes, vaguely indifferent to what happens to him, *undecided as to what must be done*. (C2 261, my emphases)

Cinema presents us with, precisely, a time ‘out of joint’: a disorientated temporality whose proximity to our own encounter with the contemporary soundscape at the conclusion of the preceding chapter should be noted (C2 260). Cinema, as much as sonic practice, reveals the ‘modern fact’: ‘we no longer believe in this world’ (C2 166). The world has lost its coherence, its orientation—it is no longer a space or a time within which we can move and act. This fact, as François Zourabichvili puts it, ‘leaves us with no defense against the excessive afflux of data we’re delivered over to daily, and modern man is overcome with vertigo—fascination or nausea’ (DP 190). Or, perhaps we could say, bearing in mind the remarks of musicians and journalists sampled previously: fascination *ad nauseum*.

How, then, are we to respond to the provocations of our time, to our nausea and confusion, to the ‘chaos’ that assaults us? How can we *re-act*? For Deleuze, the task of thinking today, ‘our most difficult task’, is ‘believing in the world’ (WP 75): ‘Only belief in the world can reconnect man to what he sees and hears’ (C2 166). Yet belief in the world does not mean believing in its ‘existence’—that is, in its actuality<sup>91</sup>—but ‘in its possibilities of movements and intensities, so as once again to give birth to new modes of existence’ (WP 74); we do not believe in the world *as it is*, but as it is *becoming*. Does this reconnection through belief mean: to restore the sensory-motor link, to recover our orientation within time, so that we might act once again, and restore our movement? This is not strictly the case for Deleuze; for the breaking of the sensory-motor link does not take us *out* of the world, but rather this ‘modern fact’ reveals ‘a situation that exists in principle’ (DP 190): it reveals the essential divergence of the world itself, in which we are now tasked to believe.

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<sup>91</sup> As noted previously, Zourabichvili argues, against readings of Deleuze that would emphasise his supposed realism (that is, his commitment to the existence of the world independent of our minds), that ‘the existence or nonexistence of a world exterior to the thinking subject is not at stake here, and [...] such a question has no meaning within the Deleuzian problematic’ (DPE 65). It should also be noted, with regard to the important Deleuzian distinction between actual and virtual (which will not be treated directly in this thesis), that the French *actuel* has, as Michael Hardt notes, a ‘primary French meaning’ of ‘contemporary’ (Hardt 1993, 16).

Thus, what is lost when the sensory-motor link is broken is not the world as such, but precisely the belief in a world that is ‘truthful [...] identical to itself, a docile world faithful to our expectations whenever we try to know it’—and, indeed, to act upon it (47); the ‘truthful world’ is not *this* world, but ‘another world’, a ‘supersensible world’ that is the ‘negation of *this* world’, and belief in such a world is well lost (NP 139, my emphasis). *This world*, in which we must believe, is precisely the world without any transcendent beyond in which its identity could be grounded—the world as *pure immanence*: ‘belief replaces knowledge only when it becomes belief in this world, as it is’ (C2 166), but this “as it is” becomes something entirely new when it is no longer related to a stability or identity that could orientate it in advance and guarantee its coherence.

What principally characterizes the distinction between “this world” and the truthful world, then, is its relationship to time. The truthful world serves to *orientate* “this world” according to a set of cardinal points that themselves are atemporal: ‘The hinge, *Cardo*, indicates the subordination of time to precise cardinal points, through which the periodic movements it measure passes’ (CC 27). Within this image, time is not encountered in itself; time is rather the measure of something else—it is the measure of *movement*. Moreover, the very precision of these cardinal points, and the periodicity they measure, stems from their own stasis: the ‘subordination of time’ to ‘the measure of movement [...] will entail an entire hierarchization of movements according to their proximity to the Eternal’ (CC 27). That is to say, the subordination of time to movement via the imposition of static, cardinal points or hinges is dependent, in the last instance, upon the supervening of the supersensible world over the contingent becoming of “this world”; indeed, it is precisely what underpins the *re-cognisability* of this world, insofar as the subordination of time to the periodicity of movement effectively *curves* time, producing a ‘circular movement’ that guarantees the *return of the same*, and hence the recognition of what is encountered as having always-already been made comprehensible.

Time out of joint, then, is the time of *this world* decoupled from the cardinal points that subordinated it to (circular, periodic) movement. It is this form of time that is presented by the breaking of the sensory-motor schema—time is no longer subordinated to the movement that it measures and coordinates in a regular and

predictable fashion, but ‘aberrant movement depends on time’ (C2 39). It is in this sense that the ‘modern fact’ reveals something true in principle: ‘temporality showed itself as it really was for the first time’ (C2 102) and ‘we enter into temporality as a state of permanent crisis’ (C2 109). Time, no longer circular, unfolds as a ‘pure straight line, all the more mysterious in that it is simple, inexorable, terrible’ (CC 28).

“Our problem”, then, is to know how thinking might respond to the demand of this encounter with situations stripped of their periodic and recognizable forms. How can thinking become the thought of a ‘pure and empty form of time’ (DR 108-111), without reverting to or restoring a naturalized image of thought, without appealing to the ‘clichés’ and ‘opinions’ that act as an ‘umbrella’ to ‘protect us from chaos’ (WP 202), without attempting to restore the cardinal points linking this world to a truthful one that grounds and guarantees it? Which is to say, if we are to once again become capable of acting and of thinking, it is only through a *revaluation* of the conditions under which action and thought (or the action *of* thought) is possible.

At the level of sonic practice, it was this same task that confronted Cage upon rejecting self-expression as the goal—which is to say, the orientation—of his work, in order to ‘let sounds be themselves’ (S 10). For Cage, it was necessary to stop *acting* in a predetermined and intentional fashion in order to begin to *listen*—that is, in order to encounter a “pure sound situation”—but this was not to simply give up the activity of composition entirely, or to avow an indeterminate freedom that was, for Cage, inevitably a return to preferences and habits. As he puts it:

When this freedom is given to people who are not disciplined and who do not start—as I’ve said in so many of my writings—from zero (by zero I mean the absence of likes and dislikes) [...] then, of course, the giving of freedom is of no interest whatsoever. (CWC 71)

Or, as he remarks more succinctly elsewhere: ‘Permission granted, but not to do whatever you want’ (YM 28). Thus, the implied opposition between acting and listening is itself undercut by a deeper relation, in which listening itself becomes-active on condition that action itself is divorced from simple (which is inevitably to say, habitual) volition. What is more, such a becoming-active is itself dependent upon a new relation to the durational essence of sonority—that is, to a specifically *auditory*

temporality, that would evade recognition at the same moment as it demands a specific form of *creative act*, namely, the experiment.

The problem of how to act in a non-predetermined fashion, then, indicates a shared *premise* between Deleuze and Cage that is ontological in scope—though the sense of this term must be carefully weighed: to affirm the univocity of Being (as Cage affirmed the essential unity of all-sound) is not to abolish the question of distribution and selection—ultimately, of *evaluation*—but rather to renew its sense. In Deleuze’s words, ‘the whole question [...] is to know under what conditions [...] disjunction is a veritable synthesis’ (LS 199), and how to thereby think relations between differences that do not pass by way of a prior identity. In Cage’s terms, composition becomes the attempt to assemble a ‘collection of extreme differences’ whose effect is that of an ‘experience’ in which ‘the dimension of resemblance disappears’ (FTB 48). Yet such an assemblage of the different with itself is by no means a straightforward process, as we will hear: ‘it’s obviously difficult to let sounds be’ (MC 220).

In sum, then, our thought-provoking time presents us with a time out of joint, and demands that we *create new possibilities* for responding and re-acting beyond the limitations of the question of essence—that is, if sound calls for thinking today, it calls for a *form* of thinking that would ask something other than “what is sound?” It is this task that both Deleuze and Cage encounter as one of *construction, practice* or *production*—all terms that Deleuze, at various points, uses to characterize the work of philosophy and/or art (see, for example, WP 7, C2 268-69, DR 192). It is the eminently practical problem of how thought can respond creatively to its encounter with chaos, rather than falling back upon the image of thought as the *a priori* imposition of recognizable order—a problem that requires a reconfiguration of thought’s relation to time itself, a time that is not simply “ours”.

In order to approach this broader goal, I want to begin by indicating how the active production of an encounter with *this world* that does not seek to impose order upon it must, for both Deleuze and Cage, pass by way of the *affirmation of chance*. That is, it is only through a particular relation of chance and necessity that thought can be brought to confront the ‘pure and empty form of time’ as, precisely, an *outside* beyond any relative exteriority, and thereby preserve the differing-deferring function of calling

that this thesis has insistently sought to make a *positive* condition of both thinking, in general, and sound studies in particular.

Thus, we must continue to pursue the possibility of figuring thought in terms of *difference* between thought and what it thinks that is no longer that between subject and object as two predetermined terms whose relation is conditionally superadded in a given act of thinking; rather, we must think this relation as ‘external to its terms’, the very same goal that underpinned Deleuze’s lifelong identification with empiricism (D2 41). It is this goal that explains the priority accorded by Deleuze to the *middle* and the *between*, as the paradoxical solution to the problem of how to begin thinking: ‘One begins again through the middle’ (D2 29). It is this relation of thought to difference that will constitute the conditions of *real production* of a thought without image, a mode of thinking that does not think only the recognizable but rather places thought in direct relation to both ‘that which is both unthinkable and that which must be thought’ (or, should we say, that calls for thinking?), to reach the point at which thought’s ‘highest power’ is at the same moment its ‘inability to think’: ‘Henceforth, thought is also forced to think its central collapse, its fracture, its own natural “powerlessness” which is indistinguishable from its greatest power’ (DR 185). It is this disjunctive force of powerlessness that will ultimately pass under the name of *chance* for Deleuze—and that can be, as I hope to show, productively correlated with Cage’s own deployment of chance as a means to giving up one’s intentions and to ‘let sounds be themselves’.

### 3. Force and Sense: The Truth(s) of Time

On a purely exegetical basis, evidencing the centrality of chance to the conjunction between thinking and creation for Deleuze is easily done, and, what is more, it is worth noting that the interplay of these terms extends through Deleuze’s work to the exact extent of the thematic of the image of thought and the appeal to the Heideggerean ‘still not’. Deployed principally in relation to the Nietzschean figure of the dice-throw, the relation of thinking, creation and chance emerges first in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, and plays an important role in both *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, and is still a point of reference as late as Deleuze’s book on *Foucault*

and his final collaboration with Guattari.<sup>92</sup> To focus only on the first of these texts, the significance of this image for my argument is clear, insofar as Deleuze states unequivocally that ‘[t]o think is to send out a dice throw’ (NP 30). The question, then, for Deleuze as for Cage, is that of the nature and significance of chance’s function in relation to creation—that is, under what conditions does chance function as a means to evade or elude the vicious circularity of recognition, and to, on the contrary, put thinking in contact with an outside beyond the merely relative exteriority of the truthful world? Ultimately, this is much as to ask: how does chance allow us to “respond” to the call of our encounter with chaos?

In order to respond to such questions, it is necessary establish, firstly, whether there is a thought of essence that is not a thought of identity—and if we can think the “what” that calls, and respond to its calling, without imposing recognition upon it in advance. Deleuze affirms this possibility clearly, and to essence as identity he opposes a radically different conception: ‘essence is always sense and value’ (NP 72). Such a claim is, initially, obscure, though we can note the significance it plays for Deleuze in terms of philosophy’s contemporaneity: when asked how we would ‘define the problem of contemporary philosophy’, Deleuze responds, ‘using the notions of sense and value’ (DI 137), and to this degree, for Deleuze, ‘*modern* philosophy has largely lived off Nietzsche’ (NP 1, my emphasis). How, then, can we re-think the essence of sonority in terms of sense and value, and, more significantly, how can such a re-thinking not simply evade the coordinates of the image of thought, but actually contribute to its destruction?

Let us begin with sense—a complex term in Deleuze’s work, but one that we can initially understand simply as meaning or significance.<sup>93</sup> Thus, the question of essence

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<sup>92</sup> In *Foucault*, Deleuze states: ‘thinking involves throwing the dice’ (F 87). Moreover, later in the same text we find the following proposition: ‘To think means to experiment [...]’ (F 116); this latter phrase, moreover, is repeated almost word for word in *What is Philosophy?»: ‘To think is to experiment’ (WP 111). Finally, this latter text once again invokes the image of the dice-throw, in order to characterize the philosophical practice of creating concepts (WP 35).*

<sup>93</sup> Both *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* expand upon the conception of sense articulated in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, in order to rigorously distinguish sense from other forms of propositional meaning: specifically, denotation, manifestation and signification. I will rely here upon the earlier formulation, but it should be noted that the notion of sense will capture, in the later two texts, an important element of the distinction between thought and what it thinks that I am emphasizing throughout.

reformulated in terms of sense would be: what is called “sound”? What do we intend through this term? That this is not simply a variant on the question of essence becomes clear with the following, programmatic statement from the opening of *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, which I will quote at length before unpacking:

We will never find the sense of something (of a human, a biological or even a physical phenomenon) if we do not know the force which appropriates the thing, which exploits it, which takes possession of it or is expressed in it. A phenomenon is not an appearance or even an apparition but a sign, a symptom which finds its meaning in an existing force. [...] Even perception, in its divers aspects, is the expression of forces which appropriate nature. That is to say that nature itself has a history. The history of a thing, in general, is the succession of forces which take possession of it and the coexistence of forces which struggle for possession. The same object, the same phenomenon, changes sense depending on the force which appropriates it. History is the variation of senses... (NP 3)

There are a number of points that require attention here, but initially I want to read this passage alongside and against the debates regarding the “what” of sound studies discussed at the outset of the preceding chapter.

To recall, these debates centered upon the ontological and epistemological status of sound, and emphasized two related difficulties: firstly, whether sound could be thought “in itself”, possessing a reality irreducible to our apprehension of it, or whether it must be thought “for us”, in terms of its context-dependent significations and socio-cultural functions; secondly, whether sound possesses a set of essential characteristics by means of which it can be determined in counterposition to, for instance, the visual or whether, on the contrary, its characteristics are mutable, determined cultural and historically and subject to technical modifications. Broadly speaking the first two positions are represented by Cox and Kim-Cohen, and the latter two by Evens and Sterne.<sup>94</sup> Where does this passage fit, then, with regard to these various positions through which the object of sound studies has been articulated?

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<sup>94</sup> To be clear, this reductive matrix does not hope to capture the detail or complexity of the arguments of these authors, or to exhaust the possible relations between them. For instance, with regard to their relation to phenomenology, we can observe that Kim-Cohen’s Derridean critique of Husserl is allied to a positive invocation of Merleau-Ponty, whilst Evens directly positions his work as deploying a ‘phenomenological method’ (xv), and Cox, for his part, allies phenomenology with the idealism to which his work as a whole is contrasted. In this

At the outset, Deleuze refers to a ‘something’ or ‘phenomenon’ that can be ‘human, [...] biological, or even [...] physical’; thus, this ‘something’ remains, initially, undetermined with regard to the various positions outlined—sound, therefore, could be conceived as belonging to any of these various instances. Indeed, it follows from the subsequent remarks that whether sound was figured as physical *or* physiological, or some combination of the two, would be dependent upon the ‘force’ that ‘appropriates’ it in a given case. For, as Deleuze goes on to state, ‘perception’ is the ‘expression of forces that appropriate nature’, while ‘nature itself has a history’ marked by the ‘succession of forces which take possession of it and the coexistence of forces that struggle for possession’; thus, the final remark cited, that ‘[h]istory is the variation of senses’, functions as a conclusion, insofar as from history through nature to perception we find a set of constantly varying determinations that the concept of force is ultimately intended to capture.

On this basis, Deleuze (via Nietzsche) offers a solution to the forced choices set out by the positions outlined previously—either essence and the in-itself or history and culture; either realism or phenomenal idealism. The historical ‘variation of senses’ and its corresponding transformation of perception bears obvious proximity to Sterne’s invocation of Marx’s ‘history of the five senses’, yet does not thereby abjure reference to either essence or to the “natural”, nor to a ‘physical’ aspect of the phenomenon, as Sterne himself does.<sup>95</sup> Further, Deleuze will refer to the ‘thing itself’ (NP 4), but without, as Kim-Cohen feared, thereby appealing to an ‘unchanging essence’, and thus without accepting the inevitable equivalence of essence and identity (14-15). From this perspective, then, Deleuze retains a conception of the in itself, but one that evades the limitations ascribed to it by its critics. Yet, from the reverse perspective—that is, from

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instance, this reductive approach is taken to be justified insofar as my intent is not to offer a specific critique of the work of any of these authors, but rather to locate the broader terrain upon which sound studies has established itself—the coordinates of its problematic, to put it otherwise—and thereby to position the point at which Deleuze’s work can intervene. Obviously, this initial setting out of Deleuze’s relation to sound studies must be followed up with more precise engagements, to which this thesis hopes to function as a propaedeutic, or perhaps, more simply, an indication of some general possibilities.

<sup>95</sup> To be clear, Sterne references physical aspects of sonority—necessarily, insofar as his main interest in a history of its technical capture and reproduction—but depends, in the last instance, upon a definition of sound whose inescapable referent is the human auditory capacity, however mutable those capacities may be.



the perspective of the demand to think sound-in-itself—much the same can be said: though Deleuze certainly appeals to an ontological register that would be typically the province of a realism or materialism—for instance, the reference to ‘nature’ that would traditionally find its sense in opposition to history—he nevertheless retains a concept of sense that functions as an index for various ‘phenomena’, concepts that are explicitly phenomenological and—at the limit—Kantian in their derivation.<sup>96</sup> Thus, though Deleuze affirms precisely that which Evens and Cox sought to assert against the limitations imposed by a narrowly idealist conception—namely, that thought could capture both the essential and the dynamic, that it could, indeed, make time itself essential—he does so in terms which Cox, at least, would consider redolent of a reductively idealist approach.

It is here that we can begin to hear the true significance of Deleuze’s oft-cited but rarely elaborated claim, set out in one of his earliest publications, a 1954 review of Jean Hyppolite’s *Logic and Existence*: ‘Philosophy must be ontology, it cannot be anything else; but there is no ontology of essence, there is only an ontology of sense’ (DI 15). Such an ontology cannot be, as Zourabichvili notes, ‘a metaphysical discourse which could inform us, in the last instance, what there is of reality’ (DP 36); rather, it serves to achieve ‘substitution of IS by means of AND or, what amounts to the same thing, substitution of becoming for being’ (37). At the same moment, the ontology of sense introduces difference and temporality into thinking—for the sense of what exists is dependent upon a mutable relation not simply with another “thing”, but with “itself”, as I will go on to emphasise. It is to this extent that philosophy becomes a ‘symptomatology’ and ‘semeiology’: ‘Sense is therefore a complex notion: there is always a plurality of senses, a constellation, a complex of successions but also of coexistences which make interpretation an art’ (NP 3). This relation between ontology and sense is the fulcrum of a reversal of the relation between truth and time: the truthful world no longer stands against the becoming of this world, but instead truth becomes the plural ‘truths of time’ (NP 100): ‘To seek the truth is to interpret, to

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<sup>96</sup> Thus, Deleuze remarks that Kant’s substitution of the problem of distinguishing essence and appearance for the problem of the relation between apparition and sense makes him effectively ‘the founder of phenomenology’ (Deleuze, 1978).

decipher, to explicate. [...] and the truth is always a truth of time' (PS 12).<sup>97</sup> This time, needless to say, is precisely not the recurrent and cyclical time by means of which the supersensible truthful world imposes itself upon "this world", and becoming is subordinated to being; if, as we will hear, the search for truth is dependent upon the fortuitous and the contingent, it is to the degree that time in and for itself unfolds as, in a phrase of Borges, 'the labyrinth made of a single straight line which is indivisible, incessant' (CC 28; Borges 2000, 117) and in which *only difference returns*.

To summarise, then: against the search for essence as an identity underpinned by the question "what is x?", Deleuze poses an 'empirical and pluralist art' that 'does not deny essence' but 'makes it depend, in each case, on an affinity of phenomena and forces, on a coordination of forces and will' whose ultimate condition is a time out of joint (NP 71-72). Yet to what extent does the concept of sense allow us to retain a notion of essence without the traditional coordinates—identity, timelessness—of such a notion? The reference to affinity here indicates a vital clarificatory point: if 'the notion of essence does not disappear here but takes on a new significance', it is insofar as, though the 'thing itself has as many senses as there are forces capable of taking possession of it', nevertheless 'the thing itself is not neutral and will have more or less affinity with the force in current possession' (NP 4). Thus, '[e]ssence [...] will be defined as that one, among all the senses of the thing, which gives it the force with which it has the most affinity'. This appeal to a concept of affinity, however, does not simply reintroduce an identical object "beneath" the various forces, because that upon which a force bears, and with which it may or may not exhibit an affinity, is precisely *another force*:

Up to now we have presented things as if different forces struggled over and took successive possession of an almost inert object. But the object itself is force, expression of a force. This is where there is more or less affinity between the object and the force which takes possession of it. There is no object (phenomenon) which is not already possessed since in itself it is not an appearance but the apparition of a force. (NP 6)

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<sup>97</sup> Deleuze is clear, in *Cinema 2*, on the degree to which this relation between truth and time itself forms an element of, as well as a possible response to, the crisis in and of thought that marks "our time": 'If we take the history of thought, we see that time has always put the notion of truth into crisis' (C2 126).

Thus, essence as affinity is not defined by the characteristics of a particular object upon which a series of forces would bear, but rather the differential relation of force to force. To read this back into the preceding passage, we would say that the history of a thing, the variation of its sense—and, thereby, the *truth of time*—is determined by the mutable state of this relation, by the way in which this thing exerts its force in relation to the forces that it encounters, contingently and fortuitously—a thing is defined by its ‘capacity for being affected’ that Deleuze terms the ‘will to power’, as the ‘differential element [...] that determines the relation of force with force’ (NP 57); it is will to power that provides the element of *value* that, in connection with sense, completes the renewed conception of essence. It follows that this will, and the relation of forces that it evaluates, is necessarily *incomplete*: we cannot know, in advance, what other force a given force may enter into relation with, and whether this relation will amplify or dampen this force’s capacity to act. Which is to say, the genealogical account of essence must be an *experimentation* of force.<sup>98</sup>

This differential, temporal, and experimental ontology of force-sense, then, provides us with the means to think *this world* beyond the opposition between pre-established identity and pure indifference—it allows us to think essence as the relation of difference to difference, or, rather, as the relation of difference to itself, which does not require difference itself to be ‘tamed’ in advance and made re-cognisable according to the coordinates of the dogmatic image of thought (DR 330). On the basis of this initial presentation, I want to elaborate this relation between force, sense, value and will to power through an attempt to articulate the essence of sonority—that *what* that calls for thinking today—in these terms. How can we determine the essence of sonority in terms of a differential relation between forces? And, perhaps more significantly, to what extent does such an account of the essence of sound become audible in Cage’s work during the late nineteen-forties and early nineteen-fifties?

In order to begin responding to this question, there are two things I wish to note immediately: firstly, that a force, in a given configuration, is determined as either

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<sup>98</sup> It is on this basis that ontology and ethics is inextricable for Deleuze. As de Beistegui puts it: ‘for Deleuze, as for Spinoza or Nietzsche, there is no longer any difference between the ontological and the ethical: the ethical is nothing outside our ability to realize or maximize our ontological potential, nothing, that is, outside our capacity to extend ourselves to the limit of our power’ (76).

*active* or *reactive*, and that this relation itself can be evaluated as affirmative or negative depending upon the degree to which this relation expresses the essence of a given thing—which is to say, the degree to which it *affirms* or *negates* this thing’s capacity to act; secondly, the will to power as value—as affirmation or negation—is, for Deleuze, a ‘sensitivity, a sensation’ (NP 58). I want to return to the work of Cage, then, in order to begin outlining, concretely, the logic of such a renewed conception of the essence of sonority.

#### 4. The Listener as Spectator: Actions and Re-actions

To begin, we can note how, for Cage, what became increasingly central to his articulation of a non-expressive all-sound music (which is to say, as indicated in the previous chapter, a music that would renounce expressivity to the very degree that it hopes to encompass the entirety of sound) was the necessity of allowing sound *become active*—it was a question of the activity of sound rather than the expression of feelings or ideas, as captured in the famous phrase, ‘let sounds be themselves’ (S 10). In the same piece (“Experimental Music”, from 1957), Cage remarks:

New music: new listening. Not an attempt to understand something that is being said, for, if something were being said, the sounds would be given the shapes of words. Just an attention to the activity of sounds. (S 10)

I want to place an emphasis upon the initial remark, to the degree that I would take the subsequent sentences as their elaboration: a colon both separates and unites ‘new music’ and ‘new listening’, the former being the creation of a music which no longer seeks to communicate, to express something using sound as a vehicle, but rather allows sound to act, with the latter being the renewed position of the auditor, whose ‘attention’ now functions differently in order to encounter this activity—listening becomes active in order to reveal the activity of sound. My claim is as follows: in this reciprocal becoming-active, sound *qua* a relation of forces takes on a quality of affirmation that reveals the essence of sonority in an *experimental* fashion—that is, in and through the determination of concrete encounters in which the activity of these forces is explored and deciphered.

There are three questions that follow immediately from such a claim. Firstly, how do we distinguish active from reactive in the relation of forces? Secondly, how does the listener become-active? Thirdly, how does the affirmation derived from this becoming-active determine the essence of sound? I want to take these questions in turn, and articulate a response to them that is constructed *between* the terrain of Deleuze's text, on the one hand—that is, through reading *Nietzsche and Philosophy* in terms of its applicability to the thinking of sound—and, on the other, through the concrete sonic practice of Cage, by means of which he explores and articulates an attempt to *experimentally* determine the essence of sonority as a contest between active and reactive forces, and the correlative possibility of an *affirmation* of the totality of sound that would preserve its inherently differential nature.

Firstly, then, let us take the distinction of active and reactive: 'an active force is one which goes to the limit of its consequences' (NP 61). Or, in other words: 'Every force which goes to the limit of its power is [...] active' (NP 54). Reactive force, then, is by contrast that which is 'separated from what it can do', and which, in relation to another force, 'separates a force from what it can do' (NP 54). Thus, to let sounds be themselves would mean to give sound, as a relation of forces, the power of going to the limit of what it can do—only under such a condition would we be able to affirm the activity of sound. This is yet another reason why essence, as sense, is necessarily the object of an experimental practice: we *do not know* in advance what a given force can do, of what relations it is capable.<sup>99</sup>

To what extent does this imply that music, traditionally understood, is therefore *reactive*, separating sound from what it can do? On a merely intuitive level, we can note that, as Cage himself articulated from early in his career, music traditionally selects only a limited set of sounds that can be used—the 'stepping stones' within the field of sound that mark out the specifically musical elements (S 9, 16, 183)—and thus restricts the activity of sound, excluding, in principle, certain aspects of its capacity of

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<sup>99</sup> As noted previously, Deleuze frequently cites Spinoza's remark, from the *Ethics*, that we do not know what a body can do. If we note that 'body', on Deleuze's interpretation, refers simply to 'relations of motions and rest, of speeds and slownesses' and a corresponding 'capacity for affecting and being affected', then we can infer that what is being stated here is equivalent to claiming that what constitutes the *activity*, which is to say, the affective capacity, of an active force can only be determined in and through concrete encounters (SPP 123).

act (such as, for instance, its capacity to behave in a non-periodic and therefore unpitched and, traditionally, noisy fashion—see Chapter Two). Thus we can understand the equivalence drawn in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, between reactive force, on the one hand, and utility or motive on the other (NP 68-69); utility requires that an action is evaluated with regard to an *effect* that is distinguished from that which acts, now hypostatized as cause. On this basis ‘force is split in two’ and separated from what it can do, to the degree that what it can do—the effects it can produce—are now distinct from it both logically and ontologically (NP 115). In this sense, music, in its expressive or communicative mode, requires sound to be reactive, insofar as those sounds that are permissible are so permitted due to their facility in providing pleasure for the auditor, or serving to communicate the intentions of the composer.

It is this process of becoming-reactive through the judgment of an action according to its utility or motive—such as, for instance, its success in adequately communicating or providing pleasure—that allows us to understand the critical role performed by the listener in the becoming-reactive of force. For Deleuze, if the ‘becoming of forces’ bears a direct relation to ‘sensibility’ (NP 59), then reactive force indicates a particular mode of sense experience: the sensibility of the *spectator*. Two passages, in particular, make this point clearly:

*Who* considers an action from the standpoint of its utility or harmfulness? Not the one who acts: he does not ‘consider’ action. It is rather the third party, the sufferer or the spectator. He is the person who considers the action that he does not perform – precisely because he does not perform it – as something to evaluate from the standpoint of the advantage which he draws or can draw from it. (NP 69)

...who considers action from the standpoint of good and evil, of praiseworthiness and blameworthiness? [...] it is he who claims an interest in actions he does not perform... (NP 111)

This mode of evaluation, for Deleuze, with its inherent ‘misrecognition of action’, is dominant; we might even suspect that ‘becoming-reactive is constituent of man’ (NP 60).<sup>100</sup> Language, for instance, is ‘usually judged from the standpoint of the hearer’

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<sup>100</sup> The same is true of consciousness, which, for Deleuze, ‘is inseparable from a triple illusion which constitutes it: the illusion of finality, the illusion of freedom, and the theological illusion’ (SPP 20); all three are elements of reactive force, as will be indicated. Ansell Pearson

(NP 69); and was it not precisely such a function of language that Cage saw separating the force of sound from what it could do, subjecting sound to the evaluation of a listener who sought something expressive within sound, and evaluated it on this basis?

We can push this interpretation of the reactive listener-spectator further, as well as indicating the way in which it functions as a specifically contemporary diagnosis, by noting that becoming-reactive—the way in which active forces are separated from what they can do—involves a particular role attributed to memory. Firstly, we must assert that, from an ethical standpoint (as distinct from a moral one),<sup>101</sup> the active ‘type’—Cage’s “new listener”—does not *only* act; insofar as force always bears upon force, there is necessarily a relation of action to reaction in any given encounter, hence the evaluative priority, ultimately, of the concept of the will to power as the differential element of force, to which I will return shortly. The relation of force and sensibility, for Deleuze, makes this point clearly: sensibility is precisely the encounter between two distinct elements (typically, if problematically, framed in terms of a relation between interior and exterior), but this encounter, and sensation itself, is generally defined *reactively*—that is, as something passively *felt* by the one who experiences the sensation. Yet this latter is only a characteristic of the reactive type, and is itself a reactive evaluation of sensation: the active type ‘acts his reactions’, whereas the reactive type is incapable of doing so and instead the reactions are ‘felt’, experienced passively (NP 104). It is on this basis that Deleuze will indicate that the experience of a becoming-active would require ‘another sensibility, another way of feeling’ (NP 60)—or, a new listener.

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indicates, interestingly, the way in which the reactive elements of the human can be articulated as *techniques* for humanity’s modification—and, thereby, are revaluated, in technical terms, as elements of humanity’s becoming (Ansell Pearson 1997, 16). Ansell Pearson also indicates the importance of the relation between memory and forgetting on this point (25-27); as indicated previously, his work is therefore vital for a fuller investigation of the relations between Deleuze and Stiegler than can be offered here.

<sup>101</sup> Schematically, for Deleuze ethics refers to a ‘typology of immanent modes of existence’ evaluated according to the degree of power—that is, the capacity to affect and be affected—implied in each case, whereas morality ‘always refers existence to transcendent values’ (SPP 23). In this sense, the reactive judgment of the spectator is inevitably moralizing, while the active listener (who will be discussed in more detail below) would not necessarily suspend all judgment, but would rather evaluate their encounter with sonority only according to the increase or decrease in their capacity to act.

How, then, does memory function to establish a reactive form of sensation, and to preserve and sustain the reactive type? Deleuze connects Nietzsche to Freud on this point: there must be a distinction between ‘the system which receives an excitation’ and the ‘system which retains a lasting trace of it’—that is, between perception and memory, but also between consciousness and the unconscious: ‘the same system could not at one and the same time faithfully record the transformation it undergoes and offer an ever fresh receptivity (NP 105).<sup>102</sup> Though for Nietzsche these two systems together form the ‘reactive apparatus’, insofar as they both can only react to that which acts upon them, which is experienced as an exteriority over which they have no control, nevertheless there is an important distinction between them to which I will return shortly.

Firstly, however, we must note that there must be another force in addition to these two: how can the system of perception offer an ‘ever fresh receptivity’, and prevent the trace from ‘invas[ing] consciousness’ (NP 106)? This is the task of the ‘active [...] faculty of forgetting’, which ‘must be given the job of supporting consciousness and renewing its freshness, fluidity and mobile, agile chemistry at every moment’ (NP 106). It is the *failure* of this active faculty that allows the reactive system of memory to dominate through a becoming-reactive of the psychological apparatus as a whole, such that one can no longer act one’s reactions. I will quote Deleuze’s summary on this point at length, as it is of vital importance for both his argument and my interest in it:

Let us suppose that there is a lapse in the faculty of forgetting. It is as if the wax of consciousness were hardened, excitation tends to get confused with its trace in the unconscious and conversely, reaction rises into consciousness and overruns it. Thus at the same time as reaction to traces becomes perceptible, reaction ceases to be acted. The consequences of this are immense: no longer able to act a reaction, active forces are deprived of the material conditions of their functioning, they no longer have opportunity to do their job, *they are separated from what they can do*. We can thus finally see in what way reactive forces prevail over active forces: when the trace takes place of the excitation in

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<sup>102</sup> A principal reference point here would be Freud’s famous text “A Note Upon the Mystic Writing Pad” (Freud 2008); see also Derrida’s discussion of this text in “Freud and the Scene of Writing”, in which the ‘metaphor’ of the mystic writing pad ‘opens up the question of technics’ and the ‘analogy between the physical apparatus and the nonphysical apparatus’, themes that will be vital for Stiegler’s own formulation of technics as mnemotechnics (Derrida 2001, 287).



the reactive apparatus, reaction itself takes the place of action, reaction prevails over action. (NP 107)

The possibility for reactive forces to dominate by separating active forces from what they can do, then, is dependent upon a certain distribution of perception and memory: perception only re-acts in relation to a preserved trace, which is to say, perception becomes *recognition*.

This, then, is precisely the condition that Cage diagnoses in his critique of communication and the expressive function of music: the necessity for what is heard to relate, perceptibly, to a pre-established set of audible forms, in order that the listener may *react* in a predetermined and predictable manner, which is to say, in the *same* manner each time one listens. Indeed, the Western tradition of music itself, as established in Chapter Two, is, for Cage, only the set of coded conventions through which all sound is subordinated to this re-activity through which the auditory judges the sound heard with regard to its familiarity, its proximity to those traces of previous musical experiences. Thus, traditional structural elements such as ‘themes and secondary themes; their struggle; their development; the climax; the recapitulation’, for instance, are ‘bound up with memory’ and manifest the ‘belief that one may own one’s own home’—which is to say, that one may *securely inhabit* the space of music (S 11).

Thus, Cage remarks that ‘it is so difficult to listen to music we are familiar with’, insofar as ‘memory has acted to keep us aware of what will happen next’; to *listen*, then, is precisely to hear *without memory*, to hear actively. For Cage, though ‘[w]e would be stupid if we didn’t have memory’, nevertheless, ‘it’s that memory that one has to become free of’ (MC 223). Further, it is on this basis that Cage will, on occasion, invoke his own evaluative criterion regarding what constitutes the distinction between good and bad with regard to his own work: if a work is ‘good’ it is ‘in the sense that you can tell when you heard that music that you haven’t heard it

before' (MC 214). Or, more bluntly: 'My tendency is to prefer music I haven't heard to music I have heard' (MC 186).<sup>103</sup>

What is more, this diagnosis allows us to add a further degree of significance to the diagnosis of contemporaneity outlined both in the first chapter and at the outset of this one: for Stiegler, to recall, technics is the *exteriorization* of the memory apparatus, and contemporary disorientation is derived from the industrialization of this apparatus, which served to effectively eradicate temporal orientation as such. This manifested audibly in what Attali termed *repetition*, a mode of sonic and socio-cultural organization in which the stockpiling of sonic objects—that is, the constant expansion of auditory memory—and the consequent oversaturation of the present with the past prevented any coherent articulation of a future. "Our time", then, can be defined as essentially reactive to the degree that the technical expansion of memory causes reaction to 'overrun' consciousness, to undermine our capacity to hear anew, and to reduce sonic experience to an encounter with the already-heard.<sup>104</sup>

The question, then, is once again how we are to respond to this situation—how are we to become-active? Which is to say: how we are to resist this becoming-reactive, to restore our capacity to forget, and thereby to act our reactions? For Deleuze, it is precisely perception, as distinct from memory (at least in the latter's reactive form—which, I must stress, is not its only form), that offers the model of an acted reaction: 'when reactive forces take conscious excitation as their object, then the corresponding reaction is itself acted' (NP 106). Which is to say, though the position of the spectator (at least within the remit of an existing sensibility) is inherently reactive, this reaction does not prevent the listener being of the active type—so long as their reactions are acted, which is to say so long as their object is a 'conscious excitation' not covered over by memory traces. It is this capacity that Cage sought to affirm in the listener, beginning with his critique of communication and self-expression: it was not an absence of reaction that Cage sought, not a suppression of feeling or emotion, but a

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<sup>103</sup> These claims regarding memory relate to Cage's famous and problematic distaste for improvisation: 'I've always been opposed to improvisation because you do only what you remember' (MC 270). I will return to this opposition in the conclusion.

<sup>104</sup> Again, these considerations serve to explain not only Cage's opposition to memory, but also to records: 'I should like to make it clear that I do not have any records in my home...' (FTB 50). See Grubbs 2014 for a full discussion.

reaction that was in each case *active*. As he puts it: ‘sounds, when allowed to be themselves, do not require that those who hear them do so unfeelingly. The opposite is what is meant by response ability’ (S 10). This *ability to respond*—which is to say, to act one’s reactions—is dependent, for Cage as much as for Deleuze-Nietzsche, upon a disinvestment of memory; Cage frequently evokes a correspondence, if not an equivalence, between ‘taste and memory’ as those elements of the listener that allow for ‘value judgments’, preventing an encounter with sounds themselves to the degree that the listener thereby assumes the position of the spectator, seeking to evaluate, passively, the pleasure or use they stand to draw from the (re-)act of audition, and to affirm or deny, thereby, the value of the activity of sound itself (S 59).

Under what conditions, then, can the listener be induced to act their reactions, and to encounter the object of conscious perception in and through an active force of forgetting? As I will show, this capacity on the part of the listener is, for Cage, inseparable from the conditions under which sound itself would be able to act—and, therefore, from a renewed and specifically experimental encounter with the essence of sound. To establish this last point first, before taking up those conditions more fully, we can recall that an active conception of value (as opposed to the passive judgment of the spectator), as the correlate of sense, refers to a differential relation between forces, and that this relation is determined as either affirmative or negative, with these two poles bearing a ‘deep affinity, a complicity’ with active and reactive forces, respectively (NP 50). This is so insofar as, on the one hand, an active force is defined as a force going to the limit of what it can do, whereas an affirmative will is precisely the ‘power of becoming active’ (NP 50) to the degree that what is affirmed is the ‘difference’ of the active force from that which it encounters (NP 57). Thus, Deleuze will state: ‘[b]ecoming active [...] presupposes the affinity of action and affirmation: in order to become active it is not sufficient for a force to go to the limit of what it can do, it must make what it can do an object of affirmation’ (NP 63). Essence as sense and value, then, is redefined in terms of a relation between active force and affirmative will—the thing or phenomenon goes to the limit of what it can do, and in so doing affirms its difference, that what it can do is exactly what *it* can do by going to the limit of *its own* unique power.

The becoming-active of both sound and the listener, as forces whose relation constitutes the phenomenon of audition, thus requires the affirmation of difference, as distinct from the passive judgment of utility which itself turns upon the dominance of reactive memory traces; this affirmation would reveal a renewed essence of sonority to the degree that it would uncover *what sound can do*, the limits of its capacity to act. What is more, this affirmation would involve a corresponding *distance* between not only composer and listener, but between composer and listener both, on the one hand, and the activity of sound itself, on the other:<sup>105</sup> affirmation of difference is at the same time the preservation of distance, and early in the text Deleuze posits their equivalence, such that the differential element of the relation of forces is precisely their intrinsic and ineradicable distance (NP 2, 6). This possibility leads us to pose the question that will be the final concern of this thesis: *how* do we affirm? That is, how does thought affirm its distance from what it thinks, in order that both thought and its object can *become active*? As I hope to indicate more fully, this is indistinguishable from the question I have pursued throughout both this chapter and the preceding one: how do we construct a thought without image?

On this point, we can finally return to the relation between creation and chance indicated previously. My claim, which the remainder of this thesis will seek to elaborate and to defend, is that, for Deleuze as much as for Cage, the becoming-active of thought and sound involves not just the affirmation of difference, but, what is more, the ‘affirmation of chance’ (NP 24). In order to elaborate and defend this claim, we must pursue the sense in which chance forms precisely a condition for the affirmation of difference and distance that would allow both sound and listener to go to the limits of what they can do. I want to begin by tracing out the logic of Cage’s development on this point—that is, indicating how Cage’s critical engagement with self-expression and communication (defined in the preceding chapter through the image of thought as recognition), and his corresponding attempt to let sounds be themselves, ultimately turned upon the development of a renewed compositional method—that is, a method

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<sup>105</sup> The potential persistence of the subject-object relation, or a similar ‘point-system’ whose model is ultimately communicative, is thereby subverted (TP 324); instead, we reach what Cage calls a ‘situation involving multiplicity’ (S 101). Yet we must recall that, for Deleuze and Guattari, the multiple is attained by the *subtraction* of a supplementary dimension (TP 7), and not by the addition of new elements that can always, in the last instance, be reduced to the priority of unity. This latter point will be established more clearly in the following.

that would allow him to accomplish precisely such a “letting be”—in which *chance procedures* substituted for personal taste or value judgment. From this, I want to indicate how these procedures, and the conception of chance upon which they were based, allowed for a renewed, active relation between the listener and the sonic object that will be counterposed to the object of recognition analysed in the preceding chapter—a relation that Deleuze terms an *encounter*. Finally, I will indicate how Cage’s deployment of chance in order to produce objects of an encounter rather than of recognition ultimately demanded a reevaluation of his own conception of the essence of sound—a reevaluation that passes from *identity* to *multiplicity*, thus proceeding parallel to the shift traced by Deleuze above and extending its importance in relation to sound studies.

### 5. Affirming the Whole of Chance

In order to begin, let us take up, once again, the problem Cage confronted in his pursuit of an ‘all-sound music of the future’ during the course of the nineteen-forties: the desire to allow music to “include” all sound—which would be to say, to allow sound to go to the limit of what it could do—is stymied by the predetermination of the available sonic material through the desire to communicate and/or an individually-manifesting but inevitably socially-determined aesthetic preference for certain sounds—what Cage refers to as ‘musical habits,’ and which we have encountered above in terms of the reactive memory trace and the value judgment of the spectator (S 9). Hence, Cage’s decision to forego self-expression, and the corresponding affirmation of a desire to ‘let sounds be themselves’ (S 10), are to be understood, in these terms, as a necessary condition for sonority to become liberated from such habits that would delimit in advance the sphere of the properly musical—which is to say, the *recognizably* musical—and allow both sound and listener to become active. *How*, then, did Cage pursue this becoming active after the perceived failure of his expressive works and the corresponding decision to ‘stop writing music until [he] found a better reason than “self-expression” for doing it’ (Larson 2013, 120; Cage 1991)?

I want to stress, initially, that it was in this context that the term *experimentation* was embraced by Cage in order to designate the (set of) method(s) by means of which such

“letting be” could be attained: ‘Those involved in experimental music find ways and means to remove themselves from the *activities* of the sounds they make’ (S 10, my emphasis); experimentation is thus defined as a means to *let sound act*. Yet Cage’s own attempt to uncover such ‘ways and means’ was neither simple nor straightforward, and my account will distinguish two central moments: the deployment of chance procedures, beginning with the *Concerto for Prepared Piano and Chamber Orchestra* in 1950, and the embrace of indeterminacy, whose foundational moment was Cage’s famous experience in the anechoic chamber at Harvard in 1952. With regard to each of these two stages, I wish to indicate how Cage’s compositional practice—which I want to figure here as a *practice of thinking* that takes place “through” sonority—proceeds in a manner analogous to Deleuze’s own attempt to renew the practice of philosophy. That is to say, in each case, what are sought are the *conditions* of a ‘true creation’ through the affirmation of chance (DR 176).

The *Concerto* of 1950 is an exemplary work with regard to Cage’s solution to the difficulties he encountered with his expressive works of the nineteen-forties, outlined in the preceding chapter: it structurally dramatizes his conflictual relation to such expressive works, and the possibilities he envisaged for escaping their limitations and allowing sound to become active. Its significance for Cage’s overall development cannot be overstated: in Cage’s own words, the piece was ‘like the opening of another door’ (quoted in Silverman 2010, 99)—a door that led him towards the embrace of chance procedures that would ultimately come to dominate his working process for the rest of his life. The piece, composed following a galvanizing trip to Paris during which he began a short-lived but intense friendship with Pierre Boulez,<sup>106</sup> consisted of three movements enacting a “dialogue” between the piano and the chamber orchestra; in the first two movements, the soloist and the ensemble each, in Cage’s own words, ‘express’ an ‘opinion’ regarding whether music should be ‘felt’ or should rather ‘give up personal taste’, while the third movement would ‘[signify] the coming together of things that were opposed,’ and, in James Pritchett’s words, ‘completely integrate the piano and orchestra’ in a shared impersonality (66). As I will show, this piece is not

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<sup>106</sup> Boulez, who is a principal musical referent for Deleuze (see in particular TM 156-160, 292-299), would subsequently distinguish his own use of chance in composition from that of Cage, and, partly for this reason, the friendship between the two would rapidly cool. For an overview, see Jean-Jacques Nattiez’s introduction to Cage and Boulez, 1993.

only summary with regard to the methods Cage had developed during the nineteen-forties for embracing the entirety of sound, but, in staging these methods as only preparative with regard to the elimination of expressivity, it demonstrates how this latter would, in fact, turn back upon some of the certainties that underpinned the former, and force Cage to entirely revise his approach to composition, as well as his conception of the essence of sound, which would take on a new sense and a new value through the conjunction of an active force and an affirmative will.

In order to demonstrate this, let us consider the technical means of staging this “dispute” within the movements of the *Concerto*. The contrast between the two ‘opinions’ was achieved by the renewed deployment of what Cage referred to as a ‘gamut technique’ (Pritchett 1993, 40), developed during the late nineteen-forties as a way of practically subordinating the specific musical content of a piece (which at the time Cage was calling ‘form’) to its rhythmic structure—which, as discussed in the preceding chapter and briefly above, was central to Cage’s attempt to allow composition to formally embrace any possible sound, insofar as duration was, at this stage, taken by Cage to be the parameter of sound common to both the entirety of sound and to silence. Yet, as discussed previously, this structural element was maintained in explicit tension with expressivity at the level of ‘form,’ manifesting in a set of dualisms such as *law and freedom*, or *grace and clarity*.

Thus, the gamut technique functioned, initially, as a practical means to the resolution of such dualisms, as a process of selection of sonic materials defined in advance of the process of composition; in Pritchett’s words, ‘[i]n this usage, a gamut is simply a specific collection of musical materials to be used in a piece, defined before the rest of the process of composition continues’ (40). Cage’s development of the gamut technique was initially conditioned, then, by the difficulty of relating the in-principle openness of the rhythmic structure—its embrace of all-sound—to concrete sounds; in the context of Cage’s first orchestral piece, the ballet score *The Seasons* (1947), this was specifically a problem of how to avoid ‘harmonic progression’ (41). By selecting sonorities in advance, and then placing them within the rhythmic structure by means of various permutations of these same basic materials, any familiar harmonic progression could be avoided—and we should note how this remains, to a degree, a matter of

*distaste* for such progressions on Cage's part, and his desire to avoid them on the basis of this personal preference.

Yet clearly this technique was only a partial solution: there remained 'a great deal of freedom in the use of the gamut in *The Seasons*' (48), a freedom that, as we have heard, would become increasingly problematic to the degree that it continued to implicate a set of likes and dislikes—such as, in this case, Cage's particular dislike of traditional harmony. The technique's subsequent use in *String Quartet in Four Parts* (1949-50) would attempt to mitigate this aspect by restricting the material even further and limiting the combinations used, but Cage's thinking at the time, expressed in particular in the text "Forerunners of Modern Music," published in *The Tiger's Eye* in 1949 and subsequently collected in *Silence*, was pushing at the limits of this method. In this text, Cage maintains the tension between structure (as music's 'divisibility into successive parts'—hence necessarily durational by definition) and form (as 'content' or 'continuity'), with the former 'mind-controlled' and determined through 'precision, clarity, and the observance of rules' while the latter 'wants only freedom to be' and 'belongs to the heart' (S 62). Structure here is, once again, explicitly rhythmic, insofar as '[a]ny sounds of any qualities and pitches (known or unknown, definite or indefinite), any contexts of these, simple or multiple, are natural and conceivable within a rhythmic structure which equally embraces silence' (S 65).

Yet the question remains: if *in principle* any sound—that is, any *form*—can be contained within a rhythmic structure, how does one select a particular form in practice? Which is, it should be noted, a problem of how to determine the sense of Cage's identification of the essence of sonority as duration: if rhythmic structure is 'correct' to the degree that it corresponds to the essence of sonority, how is this correspondence to be affirmed in practice, and on the basis of what understanding of duration? Significantly, at this stage Cage names *method* as the 'means of controlling the continuity'—which is to say, of relating form to structure—but remarks that method 'may be planned or improvised', and '[n]ormally the choice of sounds is determined by what is pleasing and attractive to the ear' (S 62). As we have established, Cage would subsequently come to recognize that such a method would ultimately lead to a freedom that is 'of no interest whatsoever', and which could only ever produce objects of recognition derived from the intentions and preferences of the



composer—and that the corresponding listening experience would be, in Deleuze’s terms, fundamentally reactive, on the model of the passive spectator (CWC 72). Even at this stage, such a tension is manifest in Cage’s writing: the text features an interlude in which Cage cites Meister Eckhart on the search for ‘unselfconsciousness’ (S 64), and concludes with the claim that the ‘in-the-heart path of music’—which is to say, the determination and selection of form—‘leads now to self-knowledge through self-denial’ (S 66).

It is this tension that the divergent ‘opinions’ of the *Concerto* was to express and to resolve—but, as I will indicate, the very techniques Cage developed in order to dramatize this tension sonically would turn back upon the terms of the problem, providing not a solution but a demand to ask *different questions* in the pursuit of sound’s essence. In composing the parts that were to signify the giving up of personal taste, Cage deployed a development of the gamut technique in which the materials, instead of being deployed in a linear fashion, were arranged in a chart (in this case, 14 by 16), wherein each “cell” contained simple sonorities, and the continuity (that is, the method) was determined by means of what Cage termed ‘moves of a thematic nature’—in effect, simple steps (e.g. two down, three across) that connected distinct sounds in a way that implied no continuous relation between elements. I will return to the conceptual implications of this process shortly, but, on a practical level, Cage was quick to see how this mode of arrangement—or, we could say, assemblage—could be pushed much further. The third movement was to express the resolution of the tension between structure and form, but far from constituting the dialectical resolution that Cage implicitly sought when describing it as ‘the coming together of things that were opposed’ (quoted in Pritchett 1993, 62), it effectively eliminated the dualisms with which Cage had been working in favour of an encounter with sound as pure difference.

Significantly, this encounter was dependent upon the revelation of *chance*—a revelation whose implications would be drawn progressively over the subsequent eighteen months, and whose gradual ramifications I hope to trace through the remaining sections of this chapter. Initially, Cage noted how the use of what Pritchett calls ‘arbitrary moves’ on the charts, in Cage’s words, ‘brings [him] closer to a ‘chance’ or if you like an unaesthetic choice’—precisely that which was required to

unite form (as the selection of sonic material) and structure (as that which allowed for the in principle equality of all sound) in the suspension of expressive intention (71). Prior to writing the third movement, Cage was famously gifted a copy of the *I Ching* by Christian Wolff, a Chinese divinatory text that provided responses to questions asked of it by the selection, through the tossing of yarrow stalks (traditionally), of one of sixty-four hexagrams and interpreting its associated meaning. Arriving at a fortuitous moment, the text offered a solution to both Cage's compositional and metaphysical needs at that moment; indeed, we can note that Cage, by his own account, had first come across the *I Ching* in San Francisco Public Library in 1936, where Lou Harrison had introduced it to him, yet it was only when gifted the book by Wolff that he was 'struck immediately by the possibility of using [it]' (quoted in Larson, 174).

What, then, had changed in the intervening years? Certainly, Cage had only come to discover the compositional necessity to renounce self-expression after the "failures" of the mid-nineteen-forties, but this discovery was itself inseparable from Cage's development of a broader aesthetic and metaphysical position during this period, rooted in an encounter with South and East Asian thought. During the course of the nineteen-forties, Cage's initial interest in Indian philosophy (established through his friendships with the Indian musician Gita Sarabhi and the mythologist Joseph Campbell) had developed and shifted into an engagement with Zen Buddhism, in particular thanks to the work of D. T. Suzuki, a scholar of Zen who gave a series of lectures in New York City in 1950 and '51. Though Suzuki himself was, in Kay Larson's words, 'cautious' about the *I Ching*, nevertheless Suzuki's teaching was, for Cage, effectively a spiritual and metaphysical legitimation of his musical struggles, and of the use of the *I Ching* as a solution to them (179). Insofar as Suzuki's teaching of Zen emphasized (at least on Cage's reading) the necessity to relinquish the ego, Cage, on this basis, ultimately understood his use of the *I Ching* as related to, or a substitute for, the Buddhist practice of *zazen*—that is, literally, 'to sit in meditation' (Suzuki, 34n2). As Cage puts it:

Following my studies with Suzuki Diasetz in the philosophy of Zen Buddhism, I have used in all my work [...] *I Ching* chance operations in order to free my mind (ego) from its likes and dislikes, trusting that this was comparable to sitting crosslegged... (quoted in Larson, 180)

Thus, the *I Ching* not only fulfilled Cage's musical needs—the need, in particular, for the third movement of the *Concerto* to musically dramatise the “resolution” in favour of impersonality—but also aligned with his more general sense of the value and validity of relinquishing the merely personal.

Though Cage's reliance on Zen Buddhism to support and legitimize his compositional practices falls beyond the scope of this thesis, there are nevertheless two points that merit noting here. Firstly, it must be stressed that Cage's use of Zen to formulate and defend his aesthetic practices was highly influential on key elements within the New York City art scene in the nineteen-fifties and early nineteen-sixties, initially through talks presented at the Artists' Club, including “Lecture on Nothing’ and “Lecture on Something”, and then through the class on ‘Experimental Composition’ Cage taught at the New School in 1957 and '58 (see Kim 2011). Amongst Cage's students in this class were many of the significant contributors to the Fluxus movement and early pioneers of conceptual art, including Allan Kaprow, George Brecht and Yoko Ono.<sup>107</sup>

Secondly, and by contrast, Cage's engagement with Zen has been subject to critique for the potentially Orientalist implications of his partial and instrumentalising usage, as well as for the way in which this partiality was often covered over by pronouncements that conveyed a degree of authority; indeed, though Cage may have remarked that ‘what I do I do not wish blamed on Zen’ (quoted in Patterson, 41), nevertheless there are no shortage of definitive claims in Cage's writing regarding the meaning or significance of Zen. On the basis of this tension, that is manifested both conceptually and aesthetically in his work, both John Corbett and E. J. Crooks have argued that Cage displayed an ‘oblique’ (Corbett 2000, 169) or ‘affirmative’ Orientalism (Crooks 2011, 27), characterised by an autodidactic engagement with a relatively limited set of sources; this particular form of Orientalism is distinctive, musically, insofar as it influenced his conceptual approach to composition, rather than being used in a ‘decorative’ fashion through an imitative resemblance with the musical traditions of East Asia (Corbett 2011, 172).<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Peter Osborne's *Conceptual Art* emphasizes Cage's significance in this regard (54-55).

<sup>108</sup> See also Patterson, 41-43.

This aspect of Cage's work is doubtless significant and has only recently received due attention; nevertheless, a closer consideration falls beyond the scope of this thesis, which will emphasise, instead, the distinct musical logic of Cage's development—even if, though distinct, it is ultimately inseparable from his engagement with East Asian philosophy.<sup>109</sup> Thus, as indicated previously, at the moment Cage was gifted the text by Christian Wolff, it served as an immediately practical solution to a compositional difficulty: the erasure of self-expression. Cage, noting the proximity between the arrangement of hexagrams in four columns in the back of the edition Wolff gifted him and the charts used for composing the *Concerto*, realized that the resolution of the final movement in favour of impersonality could be expressed by substituting the arbitrary moves between cells with the selection of cells using the *I Ching*, with each hexagram corresponding to a single cell. This method would serve not only for the completion of the *Concerto*, but also for the following year's *Music of Changes*, a major work for piano composed entirely using the *I Ching*.

It cannot be overstated the degree to which the discovery and subsequent use of chance procedures was revelatory for Cage—as he wrote to Boulez, 'I have the feeling of just beginning to compose for the first time' (quoted in Silverman 2010, 102). I want to indicate, initially, two principal consequences Cage drew from them, before turning to the relation between chance and affirmation. The first consequence bears upon the practice of composition. For Cage, chance, as a truly non-intentional method of composition, transformed what it was to make music: Cage's compositions no

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<sup>109</sup> There are a number of brief allusions to Zen in *The Logic of Sense*—particularly regarding the relevance of the Zen *koan* to Deleuze's theory of paradox—that suggest the possibility of incorporating Cage's reading of Zen Buddhist texts into the Cage-Deleuze assemblage I am attempting to construct here; indeed, when asking after the person who would be capable of affirming univocity (a familiar Deleuzian move at this stage in his work), he remarks that it 'would be necessary to imagine someone one-third Stoic, one-third Zen, and one-third Carroll' (LS 285, see also 11, 55, 66). I do not attempt such a task here for two related reasons: firstly, these references are so brief that expanding upon them in relation to Deleuze's work would be a significant and demanding task in its own right; secondly, any engagement with this aspect of Cage's work that does not endeavor to assess as fully as possible the specific limitations of Cage's engagement with these traditions, and assess the degree of his deviations from them, would serve only to repeat and reinforce the Orientalising gestures to be found in Cage's own work. As Crooks notes, '[w]riters surveying Cage's work have frequently presented him as an authority on Asia,' and if this imputation of authority to Cage—often, as noted, derived in the first instance from his own framing of his knowledge—is to be challenged, engagements with this topic must seek to far more specifically delineate the nature of his knowledge and the sources upon which he drew (255).

longer represented his ‘control’ over sounds—a control that would inevitably impose the form of recognition upon the object produced—but rather ‘questions that I’ve asked’: ‘I’ve merely changed my responsibility from making choices to asking questions’ (CWC 228). Yet, it remains nonetheless a responsibility—and, what is more, this does not manifest a contradiction, as some have suggested, but rather, in terms of my engagement with Deleuze, the way in which chance is active and affirmative, rather than reactive.<sup>110</sup> What is vital is the following: for Cage, the affirmation of chance is not a question of dismissing all evaluation so as to embrace the totality of sound in a fashion that would render it an indifferent and abstract unity; rather, the deployment of chance remains an *activity*, but one whose terms and conditions radically reconfigure the sense of the creative act itself, and, moreover, one which remains subject to critique to the degree that, in Deleuze’s words, we are able to ‘[apply] the test of truth and falsity to problems’, and the questions they manifest, rather than simply to the “facts” that function merely as cases of solution (DR 198). As Cage puts it, ‘[w]hat can be analysed in my work, or criticized, are the questions I ask’ (CWC 89). I will return to and amplify this argument shortly.

The second consequence follows from this: the shift from making choices to asking questions is premised, for Cage, on a liberation from the necessity to impose relations upon sounds, relations that are inevitably predetermined by ‘musical habits’; rather, in the deployment of chance, Cage came to affirm that ‘[w]e don’t have to bring about relationships’ precisely because such relations occur in and of themselves: ‘all things *are* related’ (quoted in Larson, 173). Yet, again, this is not to appeal to a purely indifferent chaos or abstract generality; rather, the ‘complexity of chance’, in music as in life (and I will return to this uncertain equivalence), in which ‘layers of chance are superimposed at every moment,’ entails a relation of differences that are irreducible to prior identities, with the latter exemplified by the dualisms upon which Cage had previously relied: if chance ‘allows this and excludes that’, it nevertheless, at the same moment, evades ‘radical alternatives between opposites’ (FTB 94). It is this distinction

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<sup>110</sup> Kim-Cohen considers this necessity for continuing to make decisions as effectively in tension with Cage’s professed aim of letting sound act: ‘As aleatory and systems-generated works make apparent, one must always make a decision on how to begin (or whether to begin at all)’ (114). As I hope is clear from the foregoing, despite the immediate sense of some of Cage’s formulations—particularly regarding “letting be” or “acceptance”—his actual compositional practice recognized the necessity for actively constructing situations in which sound could act.

that is captured in the shift from choice to chance, rather than the facile opposition between aesthetic production as self-expression or a purportedly “complete” freedom. Thus, chance, as an experimental method, both generates and responds to a transformation in the sense/essence of sonority: sound manifests as an active force to the degree that what were once static characteristics become active capacities, and its durational nature is re-configured as a capacity to actively produce relations.

Finally, then, at the methodological level the solution turns back upon the problem: the dialectic of structure and form, mind and heart, discipline and freedom, is subverted rather than resolved. The affirmation of chance implies a reevaluation of the relation between action and intention, and between intention and freedom: chance is opposed to ‘purpose’ and to the ‘end to be obtained’ (NP 24-25).<sup>111</sup> Indeed, in order to ‘abolish chance’, one needs only to proceed by ‘holding it in the grip of causality and finality’, and thereby to judge to the outcome in terms of its utility—which is to say, to remain a spectator. Thus, becoming active—which is to say, affirmation—is not to be opposed to discipline or constraint, but is rather conditioned by them; just as, for Deleuze, ‘motives’ are a ‘superficial aspect of human activity’ (NP 29), so, for Cage, chance undoes the dichotomy which would oppose freedom in and through intentions to the constraint of structure; in both cases, *action* demands a paradoxical *acceptance*, in Cage’s words, or *affirmation*, in Deleuze’s, of *what happens insofar as it happens—amor fati*, the love of fate, as the secret of all willing (LS 170-72).

Yet this suggests an important point regarding the significance of chance—or rather, what it means to *affirm* chance. For chance is not necessarily affirmed; or rather, it is only affirmed once it is related to *necessity*. In order to understand this, let us return to the image of the dice-throw that, as noted previously, underpins the relation between chance, creation and thinking upon which Deleuze insists. In both *Nietzsche and Philosophy* and *Difference and Repetition*, as well as *The Logic of Sense*, a distinction is drawn between two ways in which one can throw the dice—which is to say, two deployments of chance, two different games or ways of playing (NP 35; Deleuze is

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<sup>111</sup> As Cage remarked to Boulez with regard to the use of the *I Ching* in the final movement of the *Concerto*: ‘By making moves on the charts I freed myself from what I had thought to be freedom, and which actually was only the accretion of habits and tastes’ (Cage and Boulez, 94).

ambiguous on this point, see also LS 70). In the first case, the ‘bad player counts on several throws of the dice,’ in order to ‘[make] use of causality and probability to produce a combination that he sees as desirable’ (NP 25); thus, in *making use* of chance, one retains the reactive position of the spectator, who judges the outcome equally regardless of the shift from expression to chance procedures at the level of method. As Deleuze elaborates in *Difference and Repetition*, in this case ‘even when [man] is given a situation of chance or multiplicity,’ nevertheless ‘he understands affirmations as destined to impose limits upon it, his decisions as destined to ward off its effects’ by appealing to a ‘winning hypothesis’ (DR 141-42); affirmation becomes *conditional* on the “success” of the throw. The introduction of chance is thus mitigated by the evaluation of each “throw” according to an intended or predicted outcome that, by its nature, is external to the throw itself—as Deleuze puts it elsewhere, the criteria of evaluation are transcendent, rather than immanent, which is to say, the “truthful world” is reintroduced in order to ground the evaluation (SPP 23).<sup>112</sup>

Cage’s own practical deployment of the experimental impetus, particularly through the use of chance procedures in his compositions from 1950 onwards, pursues precisely the same logic; as he puts it in an interview with Daniel Charles: ‘if we want to use chance operations, then we must accept the results. We have no right to use it if we are determined to criticize the results and seek a better answer’ (FTB 94). Or, as he remarks in an interview with Joan Retallack, in an even greater proximity to Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche: ‘if you assume that you’re winning at every moment, then you proceed’ (MC 237). In sum, then, by evaluating chance according to an *intention* established at the outset, then, we fail to *play* insofar as we are not willing to affirm chance *as such* and as a whole; rather, we *judge* that which we encounter according to a rule that pre-exists, and determines whether we have won and lost. The connection to Cage’s definition of experimentation, cited by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* and considered initially in Chapter Two, is clear: it is to be understood ‘not as an act to be later judged in terms of success and failure, but simply as [...] an act the outcome of which is unknown’ (S 13, cited at AO 405). As we have heard, for Deleuze this is precisely the condition of *action* as such—a force only goes to the limit of what it can do if it is not subordinated to the passive judgment of the spectator, for whom an act’s

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<sup>112</sup> This distinction is central to the analyses of *Anti-Oedipus*; see AO 120.

value is determined ‘in terms of success or failure,’ which is to say, on the merit, or lack thereof, of its outcome. Affirmation, then, simply *is* becoming active to the very degree that it is an affirmation of chance, and, at the same moment and for the same reason, an affirmation of the *necessity* of chance: only on such a condition can the active force resist judgments stemming from ‘memory and habit,’ which, for Cage as much as for Deleuze, are ‘essentially reactive’ (NP 38), insofar as they inevitably separate force from what it can do, making what happens into the ‘act of a subject’ who was thereby ‘free to manifest [its force] or not’ (NP 115).

Thus, if the affirmation of chance, and chance’s necessity—which is to say the affirmation of ‘the *all* of chance’ (DR 142)—inevitably turns back upon and reconfigures Cage’s dichotomous struggle between the freedom of the intentional act and the passive submission to the discipline of structure, it is because it separates *activity* from *subjectivity*—and therefore demands a *transformation* of the latter. As Cage puts it: ‘If I am unhappy after a chance operation, if the result does not satisfy me, by accepting it I at least have the chance to modify myself, to change myself’ (FTB 95). In a later interview with Joan Retallack, Cage summarizes this shift from communication to creation as follows: ‘instead of self-expression, I’m involved in self-alteration’ (CWC 139). This self-alteration is both condition and consequence of a suppression of subjectivity in the narrow, egoistic sense; thus, following his encounter with Zen, Cage will continually invoke the necessity of relinquishing ‘personal taste’ (S 30), ‘personal expression’ (S 68) or ‘individual taste and memory’ (S 59), without which it is impossible to ‘accept whatever comes’ (S 129).<sup>113</sup>

Similarly, Deleuze will attribute a positive role to ‘self-destruction’ in the transformation of reaction into action: ‘it and it alone expresses the becoming-active of forces’ (NP 65). By extension, then, the conversion of the reactive spectator into a listener capable of acting their reactions proceeds not simply by affirmation—which, as we’ve established, is precisely becoming-active as such—but in an ‘active destruction’ by means of which they ‘destroy the reactive in themselves’ (NP 65). For

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<sup>113</sup> Deleuze’s reading of Spinoza indicates a way in which the concept of the individual can be reevaluated according to relations between forces, as opposed to a pre-established identity: ‘An individual is first of all a singular essence, which is to say, a degree of power. A characteristic relation corresponds to this essence, and a certain capacity for being affected corresponds to this degree of power’ (SPP 27).



Deleuze, this destruction passes by way of the ‘test’ of the eternal return—an important theme that this thesis will unfortunately not be able to treat in full—but for Cage we can say that it rather involves the test of the sonic encounter. I will consider Cage’s ultimate formulation of such a test subsequently, but initially we can simply note that Cage’s criticisms of those who are ‘not disciplined’, and the uninteresting uses they make of the freedom they are given, effectively refer to a failure to commit to such a destruction—they do not ‘start [...] from zero’, and are thus not ‘changed individuals’, but rather ‘remain people with particular likes and dislikes’ (CWC 72).

In summarizing the foregoing, I want to quote a number of remarks made by Cage in his interview with Daniel Charles, which will serve two functions beyond simply clarifying the development of my argument thus far: firstly, to emphasise, once again, the degree to which Deleuze (via Nietzsche) and Cage share a common project, even if, importantly, these projects proceed via distinct means; secondly, to return to the theme of the relation between thought and creation and, thus, the notion of a thought without image. For what remains to be established is the degree to which the concepts outlined in the foregoing—essence as sense and value, active and reactive force, affirmative will, chance and necessity—serve to resist and to contest the limitations of the dogmatic image of thought and the form of recognition by means of which it operates. How does the affirmation of chance make thought creative? Moreover, what relation does it imply between thought and time? In response to Charles’ claim—which, as we have heard, constitutes a misinterpretation—that Cage seems ‘to profess a rejection of all the emotions’, Cage remarks:

Emotions, like all tastes and memory, are too closely linked to the self, the ego. The emotions show that we are touched within ourselves, and tastes evidence our way of being touched on the outside. We have made the ego into a wall and the wall doesn’t even have a door through which the interior and exterior could communicate! [...] What is important is to insert the individual into the current, the flux of everything that happens. And to do that, the wall has to be demolished: tastes, memory and emotions have to be weakened; all the ramparts razed. (FTB 56)

Firstly, then, Cage’s remarks here constitute a condensed summation of the argument thus far. The self or ego, as repository of tastes and memory, is essentially *reactive*—it is separated from what it can do; this separation involves the production and

preservation of an interiority whose encounter with the outside is limited as far as possible, and that thus encounters only that which it has already circumscribed in principle, as a *relative* exteriority; against this, an active destruction must be pursued in order to ‘insert’ the individual into ‘the flux of everything that happens,’ whose condition would be an affirmation of, precisely, *what happens*, an affirmation which would be inextricable, moreover, from a becoming-active that pushes the subject beyond itself. Finally, and most significantly for my subsequent argument, we are returned to the thematic of *this world*—that is, the affirmation of ‘everything that happens’ is not simply a destruction of the self separated from the world, but of the conception of a supersensible world upon which such a separation is based. Thus, if Cage insistently criticizes the ‘gap between art and life’ (S 107), it is insofar as this gap or separation is itself premised on a conception of art that would attempt to preserve it from the ‘flux’ of the everyday. As Cage put it elsewhere: ‘Our intention is to affirm this life, not to bring order out of chaos nor to suggest improvements in creation, but simply to wake up to the very life we’re living, which is so excellent once one gets one’s mind and one’s desires out of the way and lets it act of its own accord’ (S 95).

Ultimately, then, it is a conception of *life* as nothing other than the becoming of *this world*—and, therefore, as indexed to a form of time no longer subordinated to the measurement of repetitive, periodic movement—that joins and completes the “objects” of affirmation by means of which becoming active is achieved: from difference to chance to necessity and finally to life, it is a question of resisting that which is ‘opposed to life’, that which is set above and beyond it and by means of which life is judged (NP 94). It is this opposition, as indicated above, that sits at the heart of the postulate of the truthful world, the transcendence that underpins it, and the image of thought as recognition that it sustains: the person who desires the truthful world necessarily ‘denies innocence’, ‘accuses and judges life’ and ‘wants life to be virtuous’ (NP 90). Such a person is the one who is incapable of affirming chance, of playing correctly—he or she is the spectator par excellence, the passive judge who can only react, and who seeks to separate force from what it can do.

It is the image of thought as recognition, then, that the affirmation of chance finally confronts, and against which it poses itself as a true critique and, thereby, a true

creation. The only necessary thing, the only thing that thought must affirm, imperatively, in order to create, is the certainty that nothing is settled in advance: ‘That the universe has no purpose, that it has no end to hope for any more than it has causes to be known—this is the certainty necessary to play well’ (NP 25). Time is no longer circular, and the same does not return—this is the sense in which Deleuze understands the affirmation of the eternal return: ‘The Identical does not return. The Same and the Similar [...] do not return. Only affirmation returns—in other words, the Different, the Dissimilar’ (DR 372). Time out of joint, the pure and empty form of time, time as a straight-line labyrinth—these formulas, in their various ways, point towards the same thought: *only difference returns*. Cage himself will, in an intuitive fashion, express a similar interpretation: remarking to Daniel Charles that ‘the instant is always a rebirth’, in a discussion of his conception of time, Cage is then asked whether he ‘take[s] exception to what Nietzsche envisioned under the label eternal return’—clearly interpreting this latter as the return of the same, against Deleuze’s protestations; Cage remarks that ‘I would say that there is only *eternal rebirth*’ (FTB 47). The degree to which this can be interpreted as aligning with Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche is indicated when, as the discussion proceeds, Cage summarises his views by quoting René Char: ‘Each act is virgin, even the repeated one’ (FTB 48; the reference is to Char 1948).

On this basis, then, thinking must ‘*affirm* life’ rather than being subordinated to ‘a knowledge that is opposed to life [...]’ (NP 94):

Life would be the active force of thought, but thought would be the affirmative power of life. Both would go in the same direction, carrying each other along, smashing restrictions, matching each other step for step, in a burst of unparalleled creativity. Thinking would then mean *discovering, inventing, new possibilities of life*. (NP 94, original emphasis)<sup>114</sup>

It is this active force of thought that would constitute the thought without image we have insistently sought: it is at this point that thought goes to the limit of what it can

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<sup>114</sup> On this point, as on others, Deleuze’s Nietzsche is close to Spinoza, of whom he states: ‘In Spinoza’s thought, life is not an idea, a matter of theory. It is a way of being...’ (SPP 13). The question, for Deleuze, then, is how theory itself can become a practice immanently related to life as a mode of being, and the evaluations that would be appropriate to such a form for theory.

do, becoming the ‘n-th power of thought’ (NP 101). Finally, then, we can begin to understand the degree to which a thought without image would involve an encounter with ‘that which can only be thought’ (DR 181), insofar as it is only within such an encounter that thought would affirm its own difference.

Yet there is a vital element of such a claim that has yet to be elaborated. In the previous chapter, we have observed, in detail, the functioning of the dogmatic image of thought, to which the affinity of active force and affirmative will has been opposed; what is more, in relation to sonority, we have asserted that such an affirmation, and the corresponding becoming-active, would require that the difference and distance between sound and listener is preserved, and even made an ‘object of enjoyment’ (NP 52); finally, it is the use of chance procedures that was to function as a means to engender such an affirmation. What remains to be established is how this is concretely achieved in a given listening experience; that is, though I examined, at length, how the image of thought comes to supervene upon thinking through the harmonious accord of the faculties and the identity of the object, we have yet to hear how thought may resist such a harmony in and through going to the limit of what it can do, and how, by the same token, the listener may come to affirm their own difference. Indeed, I have yet to even establish the relation between these two problems. In turning to these problems, then, I hope to ultimately return to the question of essence from which we began, and to clarify, finally, the way in which Cage’s initial attempt to determine the essence of sound, as discussed previously, under the pressure of his experimentation with chance as affirmation and becoming-active, was ultimately reevaluated through a reconsideration of what, exactly, sound *can do*.

## **6. The Discordant Harmony of the Faculties**

I want to begin by recalling that, for Deleuze, ‘that which can only be thought [...] signifies the highest power of thought only by designating the unthinkable or the inability to think’ (DR 181). The logical necessity for this claim is immediately evident, even if its precise meaning is not: if that which can only be thought were readily thinkable, there would be nothing to distinguish it from a traditional conception of essence, or from the relative exteriority discussed previously. On the

contrary, for Deleuze, that which must be thought ‘at the empirical level’ *exceeds* our capacity to think, and to this degree it is directly opposed to the object of recognition examined in the preceding chapter, which is defined by being cognized-in-advance. Indeed, it is in relation to precisely this point that Deleuze cites Heidegger: if ‘we are not yet thinking’ it is insofar as thought is ‘never the natural exercise of a faculty’, but that, on the contrary, thought will never go to the limit of what it can do ‘if forces do not do violence to it’ (NP 101). Thus, ‘[w]e are not going to think unless we are forced to go where the forces which give food for thought are, where the forces that make thought something active and affirmative are made us of’ (NP 102). The question, then, is under what conditions does sonority manifest such a force? My claim is not strictly that Cage’s chance-composed pieces function as “solutions” to this problem, but rather that they demonstrate Cage is posing a related question. Indeed, as Cage himself remarks: ‘A mind that is interested in changing [...] is interested precisely in the things that are at extremes. [...] Unless we go to extremes, we won’t get anywhere’ (CWC 227).

With this caveat in mind, let us consider what a form a piece of music must take in order to function in this manner. Deleuze is clear on this point—if the object of recognition sustains the image of thought, it is the object of the *encounter* that fractures it: ‘Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental encounter’ (DR 176). Though this object ‘may be grasped in a range of affective tones’, nevertheless ‘its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed’, and thus ‘it is opposed to recognition.’ There are two points that must be made here: firstly, this object, as Cage insisted, does not require the “spectator” to encounter it ‘unfeelingly’, but rather allows for a variety of affective responses; secondly, and by extension, this object is not an object of recognition to the degree that it fails to support the ‘harmonious exercise of the faculties upon a supposed same object’ (DR 169). On this basis, it is ‘in a certain sense imperceptible’:

It is imperceptible precisely from the point of view of recognition—in other words, from the point of view of an empirical exercise of the senses in which sensibility grasps only that which also could be grasped by other faculties, and is related within the context of a common sense to an object which also must be apprehended by other faculties. (DR 176)

Here we find, once again, the complementarity of active force and affirmative will, this time at the level of the faculties: sensibility goes to the limit of its power in sensing that which can only be sensed, but in so doing affirms its difference and its distance from the other faculties; therefore, from the perspective of the model of recognition, which demanded the convergence of the faculties, what sensibility encounters is strictly imperceptible.

By the same token, it is through an encounter with such an object that the spectator would become capable of acting their reactions—insofar as what is sensed cannot be recognized, the ‘conscious excitation’ is divested of memory, or at least, a particular, reactive form of memory. As I noted previously, Deleuze maintains a distinction between ‘two memories’ (NP 107), which is to say, in the context of *Difference and Repetition*, between two states of the faculty of memory. For the encounter with that which can only be sensed ‘moves the soul’ and ‘forces it to pose a problem’ (DR 176) whose initial character is to push memory itself to the limit of what it can do by evoking an ‘essential forgetting’ that subsists ‘within memory’ (DR 177). In the encounter with that which can only be sensed, which subverts the empirical, reactive function of memory, forgetting itself becomes an active power. Finally, and most significantly, this force is transmitted, once more, to thought itself: ‘it forces thought to grasp that which can only be thought’, the ‘essence’ as the ‘final power of thought’ (DR 177, my emphasis), which is ultimately nothing other than the ‘problem’ that passes ‘from sensibility to thought and from thought to sensibility, capable of engendering in each case, according to their own order, the limit- or transcendent-object of each faculty’ (DR 183).

The problem, then, as the divergent object of each faculty, which is to say the *object of the encounter*, is nothing other than the *Idea as multiplicity*, the essence said of difference itself (DR 230); the Idea’s origin, moreover, is nothing other than the *dice throw* insofar as the latter, as we will hear, expresses the problematic unity of the multiple (DR 354). For Deleuze, art itself is inseparable from the dramatization of Ideas, insofar as the latter constitute, in the (divergent and differential) relation between thought and sensation that they express, ‘complexes of space and time’, whose function is, ultimately, to ‘reunite the two parts of Aesthetics so unfortunately dissociated: the theory of the forms of experience and that of the work of art as

experimentation' (DR 356). On this point, music and theory, at least as I articulate them here, intersect, or rather interfere: if they both constitute experimental practices of thought it is to the degree that their object is, ultimately, nothing other than the relation between the Idea, as differential and problematic essence, and the spatio-temporal dynamisms that incarnate it, a relation, moreover, whose distance must be the object of an affirmation. It is dramatization that, ultimately, offers us an alternative to the question "what is x?"—if such a question, as noted above, implicitly presumes the simplicity and identity of the essence, the differential and problematic Idea is dramatized through the questions '*who? how much? where and when? in which case?*' (DI 96, original emphasis). What is at stake in such questions is the essence not as a static identity but as determined in and through its concrete effectuations, and the spatio-temporal dynamisms from which it is inseparable—ultimately, it is here that philosophy and art can and must intersect *as practices*. I will return to this point at the end of this chapter.

This summary provides us with the alternative to the model of recognition outlined previously: rather than the convergence of the faculties harmoniously upon a single, identical object, each faculty encounters its own limit, and the object itself becomes a problem to the degree that the faculties no longer converge upon it—from the perspective of such a convergence, the object is strictly *imperceptible* and *unthinkable*. Deleuze will thus invoke a 'discordant harmony' of the faculties, in which 'each communicates to the other only the violence which confronts it with its own difference and its divergence from the others' (DR 183). Significantly, this discordant harmony is figured in terms of an *unhinging*: 'Each faculty is unhinged, but what are the hinges if not the form of a common sense which causes all the faculties and functions to converge?' (DR 177).

Here we encounter, once again, the problem from which my analysis in this thesis began: our thought-provoking time. That is to say, for Deleuze, as indicated above, contemporary disorientation is to be understood as a time out of joint to the degree that it no longer believes in a truthful world that would provide it with an orientation in advance—it can no longer believe in the transcendence that guaranteed the stability and unity of the dogmatic image of thought. The task we are faced with, today, is rather a belief in *this world*, a world that has 'no end to hope for any more than it has

causes to be known' (NP 25). What we are offered here, then, with the conception of a thought without image as discordant harmony of the faculties, is precisely what we have sought throughout: a way of *responding* to the chaos of such a world without appealing to a natural image of thought, or the stability and identity of a predetermined essence; the faculties affirm their difference, and in so doing grasp 'difference in itself' (DR 181).

Three questions arise with regard to this model of a thought without image, a thought within which the faculties no longer merely recognize that which is determined in advance but rather undergo a genesis insofar as they reach their own unique limit, which, as established, cannot be determined in advance: firstly, to what degree does this model correspond to or capture Cage's intention in relation to his chance-composed pieces?; secondly, and from this, to what extent could such pieces actually succeed in no longer functioning as objects of recognition and become, instead, objects of an encounter?; finally, to what degree is the problematic Idea that is the 'both the final power of thought and the unthinkable' related to the affirmation of difference and the corresponding becoming-active that Deleuze evoked in his book on Nietzsche (DR 177)?

To begin with the first question, it seems clear that the divergence of the faculties would function to describe precisely the 'new listening' that Cage sought to evoke. Such a listening, to recall, was intended to allow for the *divergence* of responses amongst listeners, rather than the 'imposition of feelings'; thus the piece is necessarily unrecognizable, insofar as the 'affective tones' in which it might be grasped are not appended to it as properties of a single, same object, but are distinct in each case; indeed, in referring to this aspect of his work, Cage remarked '[m]y wish is to leave the attention of the faculties free' (FTB 149). Or, at least, such is the intent.

To what degree does this manifest in practice? The listener is presumed to be no longer able to rely on 'musical habits' insofar as, in the case of *Music of Changes* for instance, every element of the piece, from pitches to durations and dynamics, is determined by chance, and thus presents no familiar continuity, no pre-established relation between sonic elements. Thus not only is the piece as a whole strictly unrecognizable—that is, what is sensed aurally cannot be subsumed under a



predetermined concept that would allow it to become an object of recognition through the collaboration of sense and thought—but even the individual sonic events occur as a ‘shock to thought’ to the degree that they cannot be predicted, but appear uniquely at each moment (C2 151). Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the fact that the process of composition is itself inaudible in performance returns us to the distinction between new music and new listening intimated above: not only do the resultant sonorities not resemble in any way the process of composing, but this divergence itself is affirmed as an element of the becoming-active of the listener. As Cage put it: ‘composing’s one thing, performing’s another, listening’s a third. What can they have to do with one another?’ (S 15). Thus, the divergence of the faculties is concretely dramatized at the level of sonic practice: composer, listener and performer encounter and engage their unique object, and relate to one another only insofar as they affirm their difference.

Yet it is within this last point that we can observe the possibility for a critique that Cage himself was to subsequently articulate—a critique that would ultimately transform his conception of the essence of sound and the means by which one could let sound express this essence by going to the limit of what it can do. In 1958, Cage reflected on *Music of Changes* in particular, and made the following remarks:

Though no two performances of the *Music of Changes* will be identical [...], two performances will closely resemble one another. Though chance operations brought about the determinations of the composition, these operations are not available in performance. The function of the performer in the case of the *Music of Changes* is that of a contractor who, in following an architect’s blueprint, constructs a building. (S 36)

*Music of Changes*, regardless of its method of compositions, remains a *recognizable object* at a certain level, to the degree that, once completed, it is fully determined, as much as any of the ‘masterpieces’ of ‘Western music’ (S 36). The piece thereby becomes recognizable for the repeat listener (for instance, the listener whose auditory archive includes a CD copy or an mp3), and in performance it functions as a ‘Frankenstein’s monster’ insofar as it functions to ‘control a human being’—that is, insofar as Cage was ‘still making an object’ (Larson 2013, 261). Whatever the degree to which chance was affirmed in its composition, at the level of both performance and listening, *Music of Changes* mandates the *return of the same* as a condition of its

musical objecthood, and to this extent reverts, in the last instance, to a familiarly musical form—or, put otherwise, to the form of musical familiarity.

Cage's remarks, taken from his series of lectures at Darmstadt, indicate the distance covered by Cage between the early chance pieces—*Music of Changes* was the first major work produced using the *I Ching*, composed immediately following the *Concerto for Prepared Piano and Chamber Orchestra* in 1951—and his work in the late-fifties and onwards. I want to now turn to a pivotal moment in this period, one that marked not only Cage's definitive reconsideration of his attempt to articulate the essence of sonority, but a renewal of the methods by which this essence could be expressed: the famous experience in the anechoic chamber in Harvard, in 1952, and the premiere of *4'33''* the same year. As the title of this piece indicates, what is at stake is the claim from which my engagement with Cage in this chapter began: the relationship between duration and the essence of sonority. I want to read this piece as, effectively, both an exemplification of the renewed sense and value this relation takes on as an effect of the affirmation of chance and, from this, the *dramatization* of this sense and value in and through a concrete experience in which affirmation is practically achieved—and to this extent, constitutes a *test*, for Cage as much as for the listener, of what sound can do.

### **7. There is No Such Thing as Silence**

In order to establish this, I want to begin by setting out some of the familiar biographical elements that led to the production of the piece. Firstly, let us recall Cage's account of the essence of sound that determined his compositional practice throughout the nineteen-forties: 'Sound has four characteristics: pitch, timbre, loudness and duration' and '[t]he opposite and necessary coexistent of sound is silence' (S 63). When asked about these characteristics by Joan Retallack in 1992, Cage remarked: 'At the time, of thinking that, I thought silence existed' (MC 206). Yet, in his own words, he had 'never put silence to the test.' Thus, in 1952, Cage sought to encounter silence, to finally make audible the premise upon which his compositional methods had been based—that is, to produce a piece of music that was entirely silent. He was spurred to do so, at least in part, by the work of his friend

Robert Rauschenberg; with regard to the latter's *White Paintings*, Cage remarked: '[w]hen I saw those, I said, "Oh yes, I must; otherwise I'm lagging, otherwise music is lagging"' (CWC 71). Yet the notion of producing a silent piece had, by his own admission, been on his mind since at least the late nineteen-forties: in a 1948 lecture titled "A Composer's Confessions", Cage described his 'absurd' but 'serious' idea to 'compose a piece of uninterrupted silence and sell it to Muzak Co.'; the piece, titled *Silent Prayer*, would be '3 or 4 ½ minutes long—those being the standard lengths of canned music' (quoted in Kahn 1999, 178).

By 1952, then, Cage was positioned to finally pursue this project—a project that would be the ultimate declaration of his own position regarding the essential nature of sound in and through its 'opposite,' silence. In entering the anechoic chamber at Harvard, he 'really expected to hear nothing', and for his compositional practice to be validated in experience (CWC 270). This, of course, was not the case. He would tell and re-tell the story of the ensuing experience throughout the rest of his life:

For certain engineering purposes, it is desirable to have as silent a situation as possible. Such a room is called an anechoic chamber, its six walls made of a special material, a room without echoes. I entered one at Harvard University several years ago and heard two sounds, one high and one low. When I described them to the engineer in charge, he informed me that the high one was my nervous system in operation, the low one my blood in circulation. Until I die there will be sounds. And they will continue following my death. (S 8)<sup>115</sup>

Thus, as Cage put it elsewhere, what he discovered was simply that 'there is no such thing as silence' (S 50-51). '[S]o-called silence' now designated not the absence of sounds, which was impossible, but simply those sounds that were 'not intended'; thus, we can understand 'so-called silence' as, in this case, referring to the *activity* of sound going to the limit of what it can do, unconstrained by the reactive viewpoint of the spectator who assesses this activity according to its utility, its expressive value, or its facility in fulfilling a particular motive.

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<sup>115</sup> That Cage heard his nervous system is in fact unlikely—Revill suggests it was probably tinnitus (153).

It is on this basis that we can understand Cage's initial deployment of chance as being, in effect, a preliminary moment—if it required Cage to align his critical account of music as self-expression and communication with a corresponding active self-destruction through the affirmation of what happens, it nevertheless did not yet reach as far as the affirmation of sound's capacity to act, insofar as the limit of this capacity had not been reached. What was revealed in the anechoic chamber, then, was precisely the *essence of sound* as active force and affirmative will:

A sound does not view itself as thought, as ought, as needing another sound for its elucidation, etc.; it has no time for any consideration—it is occupied with the performance of its characteristics [...]. Urgent, unique, uninformed about history and theory, beyond the imagination, central to a sphere without surface, its becoming is unimpeded, energetically broadcast. There is no escape from its action. (S 14).

Sound goes to the limit of what it can do in affirming its difference from thought, and the irreducibility of its activity to 'thought' or 'imagination', at least insofar as these two faculties attempt to separate sound from what it can do by making it serve specific, predetermined intentions. When the distinction between sound and silence is recast as a distinction between intended and unintended sound, what is necessarily affirmed is the excess of the force of sound over our capacity to hear or to understand them, and, indeed, to produce them: 'sounds don't worry about whether they make sense or whether they're heading in the right direction. They don't need that direction or mis-direction to be themselves. They *are*, and that's enough for them' (FTB 150).

What remains at stake, then, is the sense in which *sounds are*—a sense, moreover, that may not "make sense" according to the demands of recognition—and the way in which this sense is revealed in and through an encounter with what had been called silence. As the preceding quotations indicate, such a sense is, for Cage, inextricable from the 'action' and 'becoming' that becomes audible in the encounter with silence, from the 'performance of [sounds'] characteristics' that silence reveals (S 14). This last phrase is particularly telling: if, formerly, Cage had enumerated 'four characteristics' of sound as constituting the 'nature of the material' (S 63), grounded in the opposition between sound and silence, then the question is to what extent the emphasis on the 'performance' of such characteristics modifies or transforms this sense at the same moment that it reveals this opposition to be illusory (S 14). In

concluding, then, I want to analyse the construction of 4'33'' as effectively dramatizing and explicating this shift, or, in Cage's words, the 'turning around', by means of which the emphasis on action and performance in relation to the essence of sound demands a reevaluation of the conception of essence as such (quoted in Larson 2013, 271). My claim is as follows: insofar as sound *performs* its characteristics, duration ceases to be one (static, identical) characteristic amongst many, and becomes a condition under which essence itself is expressed—that is, a condition under which sound explores and unfolds the indeterminate limit of its capacity to act—and it is this shift that the sonorous inaudibility of 4'33'', its imperceptible sensibility, transmits to us.

To begin, then, let us consider the basic elements of the piece. Its compositional history is complex, insofar as there exist at least three distinct versions of the score, the most well-known of which is not the one initially performed by David Tudor at Woodstock in 1952—nevertheless, it is to this famous version I will refer (see Gann 2010, 178-87). The score marks out three movements, each containing only the instruction 'Tacet', indicating that the musician is to remain silent. An accompanying note states that the title of the work indicates the complete length, as well as describing the length of the movements in the initial performance, and the fact that the beginning and ending of each movement was indicated by the opening and closing of the piano lid; however, it then states that 'the work may be performed by any instrumentalist or combination of instrumentalists and last any length of time' (quoted in Gann 2010, 183). Thus, at its limit the piece contains only one instruction: to do nothing, to let sound act. Which is not to say that the piece necessarily places performer or auditor in an inevitably reactive position, or demands the disinterested apprehension of the spectator: these latter two would involve, as indicated, a *recognizable* relation between cause and effect, between action and intention, in order to ground their evaluations. To the contrary, all intentional action is suspended, time as the correlation between stimulus and response—coordinated by the periodicity of cardinal points—is undone by a 'pure and empty form of time' (DR 346), and performers and listeners alike are tasked with *acting their re-actions*, unleashing the active power of forgetting now conditioned by the revelation that the same does not return, but only difference.

In order to establish the validity of such a reading, it is important to emphasize the way in which Cage understood 4'33'' as not only a work of distinctive significance but as a work that had a functional and effective transformative capacity. Thus, Cage explicitly referred to 4'33'' as the most radical of his works (CWC 71) but this importance was itself derived from the fact that the piece served not simply as a *demonstration* of the pivotal discovery of Cage's work (and it is of course significant that Cage's first published collection of writings was titled *Silence*) but as its practical effectuation and a corresponding test. Cage thus remarked, on the one hand, that silence itself constitutes a 'change of mind,' and, on the other, that 'no day goes by without my making use of [4'33''] in my life' (quoted in Larson, 271, 276-77). Further, Cage considered that those who understood the work as being a silent piece, in the sense of a simple absence of sound, had 'missed the point' to the degree that 'they didn't know how to listen' (CWC 71). If the piece had a 'use' then, it was to demand the renunciation of utility: 'the essential meaning of silence is the giving up of intention' (CWC 198). This *essence*—and the sense it indicates—is itself dependent on sound's own renewed essential sense: in giving up intention, sound is revealed to *act* in a manner that cannot be determined in advance, whose limits have yet to be determined, and whose capacities are irreducible to the 'established values' by which the listener-as-spectator might evaluate them.

Finally, then, Cage's encounter with the problematic Idea of sound as/and silence transformed his conception of the essence of sound away from a static identity determined through a set of stable parameters, of which silence formed the dialectically-framed 'opposite and necessary coexistent,' toward a 'situation involving multiplicity' (S 101), a situation that is 'essentially non-dualistic' (S 36) but whose unity is, to again borrow from Deleuze, only said of multiplicity, a 'multiple unity' (FTB 198): 'I have always sought to grasp the plurality of the figure one' (FTB 77). 4'33'' is not only the same piece in each performance, but the performance itself is ongoing—in "making use" of the piece, Cage remarks that 'it's going on continuously' and he simply 'turn[s] [his] attention towards it' (Larson 2013, 277); that is, he begins to listen, to act his reactions through the power of forgetting, and affirms the unity of all sound, without division—which is to say, he attends to the essence of sound.

Yet if this unity, and the essence corresponding to it, is said only of multiplicity, then this entails that it is said only of the continuous activity of sound that escapes *a priori* determination, and which acts anew at each moment, going to the limit of what it can do. That unity is said only of multiplicity follows directly from the affirmation of non-duality—which is to say, of this world, in its immanence: to affirm ‘all that appears’ is inevitably to affirm the *multiple* (NP 16), insofar as what appears is not static being but becoming, what Cage referred to as the ‘flux of everything that happens’. To the degree that this becoming cannot be *opposed to* or *distinguished from* anything which would be ‘beyond’ it—such as a truthful world—then ‘[m]ultiplicity is the affirmation of unity’ (NP 22); there is ‘no being beyond becoming, nothing beyond multiplicity’. If being thus lacks any essential division—and if distinctions such as intentional and non-intentional are partial, reactive and conditional—then the unity, or non-duality, of being that follows from this can be said only of multiplicity itself—it can be said only of *this world*. Hence the famous Deleuzian theme of univocity: ‘Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself’ (DR 45).

In sum, then, though the piece presents, strictly, *nothing*, nevertheless, as Cage himself had established, the “silence” of the piece is, in fact, be ‘full of accidental sounds’ (CWC 70); these sounds are unpredictable, never alike from one performance to the next—and ultimately, *unrecognizable*.<sup>116</sup> That is to say, they can *only be heard*, but

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<sup>116</sup> On a certain level, this is inaccurate: the piece inevitably presents to us many *recognizable* sounds that may, therefore, be understood in terms of objecthood in the Kantian sense: the shuffling of feet, traffic in the street outside, my own breathing, the creaking of chairs, and so on; the “same” sounds as I have heard many times before. Yet these are precisely *not* the objects I would expect within the context of the musical performance – they do not emanate from the performer, they are not subject to control, and they are not regulated according to the mandate of a score that would allow for multiple experiences of a single, uniform piece; if we recall that “something” obtains its sense through a relation of forces, then, it seems clear that these “same” sounds can thus be appropriated, in Deleuze’s words, by a distinctive force, and therefore must be evaluated according to the concrete situation. In the case of 4’33”, the sounds I experience are encountered as present where they should not be, “within” the musical situation, at the same moment as those sounds I would expect are *missing from their place*. These are precisely the characteristics that Deleuze attributes to the object of the encounter: it moves between (at least) two series, causing them to resonate with one another, without its belonging to either yet simultaneously being included in both – Deleuze will refer to it, for this reason, as the *paradoxical element* and the *empty square*, and declare ‘there is no structure without the empty square that makes everything function’ (LS 61). The degree to which this revaluation of recognizable sounds is effectively dependent upon the traditionally- and institutionally-constituted space of the concert hall will be considered in the conclusion.

are nevertheless, according to the collaboration between sensibility, memory and thought characteristic of common sense, *imperceptible*. But, for this very reason, this is not to say that the essence of sonority, thus dramatized, is unthinkable—rather, it manifests a ‘violence’ that can be transmitted to thought, that ‘forces us to think’ (DR 176, NP 101). If, as Cage hoped, the listener acknowledges that ‘the sounds of their environment constitute a music’ (CWC 70), then the listener will encounter precisely what Cage himself did in the anechoic chamber: the unity of all-sound that is said only of difference, the flux of becoming that is the concrete encounter with the being of sonority going to the limit of its capacity to act. This multiple unity itself cannot be heard but only thought as the imperceptible limit of every performance, the paradoxical unity of a piece which can only differ in every “case”, in every actual listening experience.

That this essence remains problematic entails, as noted above, that it can never be given in advance, nor completely determined in actuality—what sound can do is never the object of propositional knowledge or of verifiable fact, just as the capacity of thinking itself cannot be circumscribed in advance without appealing, once again, to a natural capacity for thought. It is rather the object of *experimentation*—of a pluralist and ‘superior’ empiricism (DR 180). It is in this sense, then, that affirmation links chance to creation: if, until our encounter with something that forces us to think, we are ‘not yet thinking’, then thought itself must be *created* in and through this encounter. In going to the limit of what it can do, thought does not activate a preexistent natural capacity of which it had not previously made use—rather, we encounter the ‘genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself’ (DR 176).

To conclude, then, we can return to my initial claim: it is only by affirming the distancing-differing function of the call that we can evade the insinuation of a dogmatic image of thought, precisely because such difference, as object of affirmation, immanently disrupts any appeal to the transcendence of a truthful world. Finally, we are in a position to understand Deleuze’s claim that a thought without image would have ‘no ally but paradox’ (DR 168): it is only by rendering sound unthinkable that we could at least begin to hear the call for sonic thinking, and understand what is at stake in our response, today. Thought must affirm its own capacities in and through its very distance from the forces that it encounters and which ‘take hold of [it]’ without,



thereby, being contained by or merging with it (NP 97-98). It is, finally, time itself that designates the unfolding of this difference: the ‘pure and empty form of time’—of which 4’33’’ functions as a continually-renewable concretion—functions as a ‘caesura’ which distributes future and past unequally on either side; time ceases to ‘rhyme’, and the ‘beginning and end no longer [coincide]’ (DR 111). The empty form of time is ‘the most radical form of change, but the form of change does not change’ (DR 111); the unity of sound, thought, and time as a continual transformation.

It is this ‘fracture’ of time that ensures thought relates to what it encounters (which is to say, to sensibility as the struggle between forces) as to an ‘other’ (CC 29); the active determination of thought bears only upon the ‘passive, or rather receptive, “self” that experiences changes in time’, across the fracture of time that separates the two: ‘The I and the Self are thus separated by the line of time, which relates them to each other only under the condition of a fundamental difference’ (CC 29). It is *through* this fracture that chance is affirmed and the dice throw passes: ‘The fracture [...] is the pure and empty form of time through which pass the throws of the dice’ (DR 355). Thus, the relation of thought to sensation is one of ‘modulation’ or ‘continuous variation’ (CC 30); in *A Thousand Plateaus* and *Francis Bacon*, it becomes the ‘thought synthesizer functioning to make thought travel, make it mobile’ (ATP 379). It is this, finally, that constitutes the ‘precise moment within Kantianism’ with which Deleuze was concerned—the point at which time fractures the unity of thought and sensation, and allows each faculty to go to the limit of what it can do; a limit, moreover, that is not given in advance, but is rather the object of a *genesis* or, as Deleuze otherwise puts it, a *true creation* (DR 70). Ultimately, then, if the essence of sound is duration, this claim not only requires a reevaluation of the conception of essence—in relation to active forces and an affirmative will—but reintroduces distance and difference into thought itself.

Finally, then, we return to the opening *problem* of this thesis, without a response but with a renewed sense of the question posed. How do we begin thinking sound? To respond to the call for thinking “at last” is, in the last instance, to make of thought itself a calling—that is, a differentiating, deferring and delaying *process*, a force that affirms its difference from other forces at the same moment that it makes difference itself its (paradoxical) object. If sound calls for thinking, then, it is insofar as it *forces*

*us to think*—that is, it does violence to thought by forcing thought to go to the limit of what it can do, a limit that cannot be determined in advance. As an object, sound is a problematic and differential Idea, whose practical effectuation is the goal of an ongoing, experimental practice. We know neither what sound nor thought can do, and it is across and between these two unknowns that *creation* will “take place”, at last.

On this basis, then, the claim made at the outset can be affirmed with a distinct sense and value: sound studies’ emergency must be maintained and extended, to the degree that this term indicates not sound studies’ uncertain existence, but rather the uncertainties *of* its existence, manifested in and through the distancing-deferring relation between theory and its supposed “object”. It is theory that, in the last instance, must be constrained to affirm its own unique capacities, which are distinct from those of musical practice, but with which it can enter into an active, mutually-creative relation. The preceding analyses have been at once the demonstration and the dramatization of such a claim, insofar as it was precisely Cage’s experimental practice that is here affirmed at a theoretical level—but precisely to the degree that theory cannot become, and should not aspire to be, “adequate” to it.

### Conclusion: The Others of Experimentalism

In the preface to *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze remarks that ‘[t]he weaknesses of a book are often the counterparts of empty intentions that one did not know how to implement’, and that, on this basis, ‘a declaration of intent is evidence of a real modesty in relation to the ideal book’ (DR xvii). Insofar as this thesis began with such a declaration, it is certainly possible, and indeed worthwhile, to attend to the ways in which certain of its intentions were not implemented; yet what is perhaps more pressing is to consider the ways in which those intentions themselves remain inevitably partial and preliminary. Yet if, in the latter case, elisions and omissions are necessary and inevitable, they therefore cannot be necessarily said to constitute weaknesses with regard to the work itself; indeed, to the contrary, they mark, in a certain sense, precisely its success, insofar as what was intended was the construction and elaboration of an *experiment*, the value of which rests upon it being able to affirm its own contingency, and to provoke its own recommencement. Thus, in the same preface, Deleuze asks: ‘How else can one write but of those things which one doesn’t know, or knows badly? It is precisely there we imagine having something to say’ (DR xx). By way of a conclusion, then, I wish to reflect upon what this thesis has said, and, on this basis, indicate its *limits*, in a positive sense—that is, to throw into relief those themes and elements that remain to be explored, but whose possibilities are revealed by and through those very limitations.

In the first instance, these limitations are evident in the relatively circumscribed extent of my consideration of both Deleuze and Cage—in each case, an emphasis is placed upon a set of initial, in a certain sense preparatory moves. One reason for this is that, in each case, the *logic* of their divergent but related practices is most fully evident in the initial, establishing steps, which mark out, in each case, their attempt to distinguish and differentiate themselves from their milieu; if, in the case of Deleuze, his creative rereadings of Kant and Nietzsche (alongside Hume, Bergson and Proust) were a way of resisting the dominance of ‘Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger’ (D2 9) in French philosophy of the period while nevertheless laying claim to a ‘subject’ that was ‘manifestly in the air’ (DR xvii), so too did Cage seek to progressively distinguish himself from the avant-garde tradition principally represented, in Cage’s own

biography, by Schoenberg, through constructing his own alternate genealogy: Ives, Satie, Duchamp.

As a result, my analysis of their work effectively stops at the moment they had each finally begun to establish their own, distinctive contributions—even if, throughout, I have cited later texts in which they each reevaluate or reaffirm these early developments. Yet it must be stressed that both Deleuze and Cage would not only explore and extend the implications of their early works in diverse domains—Deleuze’s texts on Francis Bacon and cinema, for instance, or Cage’s text-based compositions and works of visual art—but also, in doing so, critically reflect upon and challenge their own previous developments. As such, they too dramatized their own conclusions—philosophy and composition, as experimental practices, must continually affirm the openness of their tasks, the necessity to reactivate them.

If, to stress once again, this indicates a partiality that I consider to be inevitable, there is nevertheless a particular way in which both Deleuze and Cage proceeded with their practices beyond the framing set out in the body of this thesis that merits emphasizing: the turn to *politics*. What marks both Cage’s work subsequent to his revelation regarding the essence of sonority in *4’33’’* and Deleuze’s work following his encounter with Guattari in 1969, a year after the publication of *Difference and Repetition*, is a reconsideration of the political dimensions of their work. This is not to say that their work, to a certain point, was apolitical; to consider only two isolated examples, Deleuze, as discussed previously, had consistently framed his account of the image of thought in terms of ‘established values’ or ‘*doxa*’ (DR 170-73), while Cage, for his part, would eventually publish “Other People Think,” a piece on the United States’ relationship to the countries of Latin America that won him a high school oratory prize, and which presaged, in an interesting way, some of his later political views (Kostelanetz 1970, 45-49).

Yet undeniably the tenor and extent of their engagement with political questions would transform subsequent to the period discussed in this thesis, in a manner that necessarily reflects back upon this earlier work. Again, I will offer two brief examples. In Deleuze’s case, we can read the claim, from the famous introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, that ‘it is not enough to say, “Long live the multiple” [...] [t]he multiple

*must be made*’ as implicitly remarking upon the limitations of his earlier account of how multiplicity was conceived—which is to say, that it was precisely conceived rather than assembled, and hence the pronounced ethico-political focus of the collaborative works required the concept of the assemblage, invented in collaboration with Guattari, which became of primary importance for the remainder of his career (TP 7, original emphasis). For Cage, meanwhile, his turn to indeterminate scores, exemplified in the *Variations* series composed between 1958 and 1967, was explicitly an attempt to ‘[give] freedom to the individual performer’ (CWC 72) and thereby to critique the authoritarian function of the composer as ‘someone who tells other people what to do’ (YM ix)—a position explicitly aligned with Cage’s increasing identification with anarchism, and, indeed, an attempt to ‘show [...] the practicality of anarchy’ (CWC 72). This, then, functions as another dimension to Cage’s retrospective critique of *Music of Changes* outlined in the preceding chapter—if that piece was a ‘Frankenstein monster’ to the degree that it functioned to ‘control’ the performer, then, on this very same basis, it was almost, in fact, a ‘dictator’ (S 36).

What is most important, however, and what validates the approach this thesis has taken, even if such an approach inevitably obscured or occluded, to a degree, this more “directly” political aspect, is the way in which this turn to the political was as much a question of the political status of philosophy or composition *as a practice* than any specific political claim regarding the constitution of the state or the ideal arrangement of social space. This is not to say that Deleuze and Cage make no substantive political claims—as indicated above, Cage, in particular, explicitly referred to himself as an anarchist and as an opponent of government—yet these claims are ultimately significant only as an extension the way in which they are carried out, or we could say, dramatized in their work as a concrete activity.

So, for instance, Deleuze’s work with Guattari would continue to emphasise the question of the nature of thinking as an ethically and politically (over)determined *activity*; thus, the famous distinction between the rhizome and the tree consists less in a specific set of propositional claims regarding the nature of reality or of the social realm than in two different *images of thought*, each of which can itself be evaluated in terms of its relation to particular kinds of behavior or modes of social organization (as the title *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* itself implies). In this sense, it does not

constitute a break from, but rather an extension of, the position articulated in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*:

We always have the truths we deserve as a function of the sense of what we conceive, of the value of what we believe. [...] The truth of a thought must be interpreted according to the forces or power that determine it to think and to think this rather than that (NP 97).

Indeed, the preface to the English edition, written in 1983, will reinterpret this very claim in terms derived from his collaboration with Guattari (as well as the increased prominence accorded to Spinoza): ‘a proposition always reflects a mode of existence’ (NP ix).

In this sense, what is at stake for Deleuze is less a change of subject than a shift of emphasis, and a corresponding revaluation: it is the struggle between the image of thought and the thought without image, between recognition and creation, that itself becomes the terrain of a political struggle—not a struggle between two competing claims or propositions regarding political realities or actions, but a struggle over the material effects and implications of thinking *as a practice*. For Cage, on a similar basis, his political engagements and evaluations extend from, complicate and unsettle the premises of his early work—in particular, the critique of self-expression and the affirmation of chance—and are, on this basis, impossible to evaluate without tracing them from this foundational moment.

Thus, if this thesis, as indicated at the outset, is intended as a contribution to Deleuze studies and sound studies with regard to the question of practice—which is to say, in retrospect, with regard to the relation between thought and what it thinks, the differing-deferring dynamic of the call for thought, and the image that risks suppressing such a dynamic in favour of direct, im-mediate contact that appeals, in the last instance, to the recognizable and established values—then to this extent it serves as the necessary groundwork for broader evaluations of specific instances of such practices by raising the question of evaluation as such. Indeed, as noted in the third chapter, in particular, what have been insistently, if often implicitly, at stake are precisely the conditions and criteria of such evaluations—what would it mean to evaluate a form of theoretical and compositional practice according to the image of

thought implied, the possibilities of life revealed, the mode of existence entailed? What connection would such evaluations have to interrogations of concrete positions and positive claims—given that the very premises of the former would complicate any easy distinction between form and content, for instance?

These questions, then, are actively posed by the foregoing work, as its necessary extension—that is, as that which this work itself calls for, as the problems it implicates in and through its own attempt to articulate the conditions of a truly creative and experimental theoretical practice. In the remainder of this conclusion, I wish to specify one particular avenue which demands such an extension, and one which, moreover, inextricable from the uncertain status of the political during the stage of Deleuze and Cage's work considered here: the complex and ambiguous historico-cultural significance of the *experimental*.<sup>117</sup> I noted that Deleuze and Guattari, in *Anti-Oedipus*, cite affirmatively Cage's own definition of experimentation, and, in the body of this thesis, I have been attempting to unpack and amplify the premises and the implications of such a definition with regard to its application to the activity of thinking; what is more, doing so has placed a particular emphasis on the method of dramatization, insofar as it involved allowing sonic practice to demand—or to call for—a reevaluation of theoretical practice, constituting, thereby, Deleuze's 'interference' between practices (C2 268). Yet this definition offered by Cage is neither neutral nor uncontested within the history of sonic practice itself, and the ways in which it has been challenged, expanded and undermined will therefore be of great importance in continuing to explore the possibilities and potentials of theory as experimentation. In sum, then: the interference must (always) be extended.

In offering, by way of a conclusion, a preliminary account of such an extension—and emphasizing, thereby, the ways in which it builds upon the preceding work—I wish to distinguish two key points: firstly, the problematic relation between control and freedom in Cage's account of experimentation, with regard to a more nuanced account of musical and institutional power; secondly, and by extension, the way in which this account was both historically and theoretically constituted through an exclusion of—

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<sup>117</sup> Though I will focus on the tensions surrounding this definition as they manifest within the limitations of the Western concert tradition, Joanna Demers, in *Listening Through the Noise*, extends this point in relation to electronic music, specifically (7).

and often, direct opposition to—vernacular traditions and musical practices of a directly African-American heritage, in particular that of improvisation. My point, throughout, will be that, in an extension of the method of this thesis, these theoretical concerns regarding the status and nature of experimentation are immanently explored in and through the developments of sonic practice—in particular, in this case, through what Tony Conrad referred to as the ‘post-Cagean crisis in music composition’ (quoted in Grubbs 2014, 30).

The political and institutional dimensions of this crisis were exemplified most directly by the work of Conrad, Henry Flynt and, in particular, La Monte Young. Young trained as a saxophonist with a background in jazz improvisation and would become most known for his use of long sustained drones and exploration of alternate tuning systems,<sup>118</sup> both of which were explored with Conrad and others (including, for a time, John Cale, later of the Velvet Underground) in the Theater of Eternal Music group during the nineteen-sixties. His important role in negotiating the post-Cagean crisis began at the Darmstadt International Summer Courses in 1959, where, one year after Cage’s controversial substitution for Pierre Boulez,<sup>119</sup> Young heard Cage’s *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*, whose *Solo for Piano* was the most extensive and detailed indeterminate composition Cage had completed to date, as well as having opportunity to ‘study [Cage’s] scores and writings’ (Joseph 2008, 74). This encounter had an ‘immediate impact on his production’ (85), but Young would, in Branden W. Joseph’s words, ‘not be content to remain in Cage’s shadow for long’ (90). To the contrary, Young and his ‘circle’—including Conrad and Flynt—would almost immediately begin to explore the limitations of Cage’s conception of composition as an experimental practice, particularly with regard to the power relations it implied.

Nowhere is this more evident than in two pieces from Young’s *Composition 1960* series. As Joseph describes, *Composition 1960 #3* is effectively a reworking of 4’33’’ in which the performer, rather than remaining silent, acts as an ‘announcer’, who not only informs the audience of the start and end point of the piece, but ‘states [...] that members of the audience can do whatever they like for this amount of time’ (97). *Composition 1960 #4* is ‘largely the same’ except ‘the lights will be extinguished for

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<sup>118</sup> For a brief explanation, see Evens 2005, 45-48.

<sup>119</sup> For a thorough discussion of Cage’s time at Darmstadt, see Iddon 2013, 196-228.



the length of the performance.’ What is directly challenged here is Cage’s conception of freedom; as noted throughout, Cage’s appeal to freedom demanded that the person being granted freedom ‘only when nothing is taken as the basis’, which is to say, when intentions (and the habits and tastes that, for Cage, such intentions necessarily implied) are relinquished (CWC 71). Thus, from Cage’s perspective, the audience for Young’s pieces were precisely *not* free to the extent that they were not forced to relinquish their personal taste by an imposed discipline, and they did not thereby engage in the process of self-transformation that was the condition of the ‘new listening’ the Cage sought.

Yet what Young’s piece demonstrates clearly is the central point of a major critique directed at Cage’s work during this period: insofar as Cage’s work bore a pedagogical intent, it necessarily maintained a power differential between the composer and the performer or listener, as its demonstrative quality requires a disciplined attention of the latter to the demands of the former. What is more, this discipline is in many respects indistinguishable, certainly in effect, from the role of the audience characteristic of concert music as an institution—silent and focused attentiveness. Indeed, on this basis Douglas Kahn critically contrasts *4’33’’* with its precursor, the never-realised *Silent Prayer*: the shift from the latter to the former was a ‘retreat from the social’, insofar as *4’33’’* was ‘removed to the special space of Western art music’ (Kahn 1999, 188)

This particular instance, as illuminated through Young’s works during this period, is one element of a more general critique that would emphasise, as Benjamin Piekut notes, how Cage ‘folded his output very easily into the conventional concert-music tradition, where it was later taken up by willing performers’ (17). Two further examples will serve to specify this. Firstly, as Piekut notes, Cage was heavily reliant, through the nineteen-fifties and sixties, upon David Tudor and other ‘preferred musicians’ as those Cage would effectively trust to, paradoxically, realize his intention—even to the point of allowing a degree of improvisation on the part of Tudor and James Tenney, for example, in the performance of *Cartridge Music*—as opposed to those who ‘could not be trusted to handle the freedoms of indeterminacy’ (Piekut, 47-49). On this point, Cage himself is candid:

This giving of freedom to the individual performer began to interest me more and more. And given to a musician like David Tudor, of course, it provided results that were extraordinarily beautiful. When the freedom is given to people who are not disciplined and do not start [...] from zero (by zero I mean the absence of likes and dislikes) [...] then of course the giving of freedom is of no interest whatsoever. (CWC 72)

This position can, as I have shown, be unfolded in accordance with a Deleuzian-Nietzschean logic in which the becoming-active of the individual—that is, their going to the limit of their capacity to act—is dependent upon a self-destruction that would divest them of their allegiance to ‘established values’ (which, it must be asserted, refers not this or that particular set of values but rather an entire mode of evaluation from which particular instances are derived).<sup>120</sup> Yet it also indicates a possible limitation at the level of concrete effectuation that, in turn, demands reconsideration with respect to theory—so long as it is understood that this “concrete effectuation” refers as much to composition as it does to theory. That is to say, the dynamic of compositional practice can and must be allowed to *interfere* with theoretical practice, as an element in the latter’s own critical-creative and experimental dynamic; which is not to say that theory must “conform” to that which it engages with, but rather that it must acknowledge the practices with which it intersects can reveal its own unthematized limitations.

To expand and clarify this point with regard to the performer, rather than the audience, we can refer to another of Young’s pieces from the same year, which also responds to 4’33’’; the *Piano Piece for David Tudor #2*, which instructs the performer (by implication, Tudor) to attempt to open and close the cover of the piano keyboard without making any audible sound, with the duration of the piece being determined by how long it takes the performer to succeed or to give up (see Joseph, 95). Here, then, the performance of 4’33’’ is restaged in a manner that lays out its implications starkly:

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<sup>120</sup> Thus, in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze remarks: ‘Nietzsche’s distinction between the creation of new values and the recognition of established values should not be understood in a historically relative manner, as though the established values were new in their time and the new values simply needed time to become established. In fact it concerns a difference which is both formal and in kind. The new, with its power of beginning and beginning again, remains forever new, just as the established was always established from the outset, even if a certain amount of empirical time was necessary for this to be recognized’ (DR 172). It is a question, once again, of two different ‘readings’ of time, as discussed in Chapter Three (LS 72), and, correspondingly, whether evaluation appeals to immanent or transcendent criteria.

rather than simply attending to silence as non-intended sound, that performer must strive to avoid producing the very sounds that are an inevitable correlate of his intentional acts—but it remains ambiguous whether these sounds themselves would be qualified as intentional or not. Further, the disciplining of the performer is imposed even more explicitly: how much care and precision is required, how many interminable attempts, before success is achieved and the performance is complete? One recalls the infamous lengths David Tudor would pursue in order to learn Cage's pieces—including, notoriously, 'solv[ing] the rhythmic difficulties of *Music of Changes* by calculating the duration of each phrase in seconds and then using a stopwatch in performance' (Pritchett 1993, 102); indeed, it was precisely this discipline that marked him out as one deserving of Cage's "freedom".

Cage, for his part, would go on to avowedly embrace this aspect of his work with a number of pieces in the nineteen-seventies, including the *Etudes Australes* for piano and the *Freeman Etudes* for violin, which were explicitly designed to push the limits of physical and instrumental capacity in order to indicate 'the possibility of doing the impossible' (quoted in Silverman 2010, 282); Paul Zukofsky, a violinist who collaborated with Cage on the *Freeman Etudes*, considered them 'the most difficult music he had ever played' (Silverman 2010, 282). Further, the implication that any and all activity inevitably produces sound and can therefore be considered a musical performance was explored in Cage's "sequel" to *4'33''*, 1962's *0'00''*, which instructs the performer to 'perform a disciplined action,' the sound of which would be amplified.

This latter piece is exemplary in another respect regarding Cage's legitimizing appeal to concert music traditions: as David Grubbs notes, 'Cage never ceased to create works in the form of copyrighted musical compositions that unambiguously identify Cage as author and that are published by the C F. Peters Corporation' (77). Elsewhere, Grubbs quotes Henry Flynt on this point: '[Cage] persisted in a professional life which could not be reconciled with his own pronouncements' (Flynt, quoted in Grubbs 2014, 25). Indeed, in the very first performance of *0'00''*, undertaken by Cage himself, the 'disciplined action' was, in fact, the writing of the score itself—and, as Benjamin Piekut notes, in other cases Cage would create scores for a piece retrospectively, after it had first been performed (Piekut 2011, 17), thus recuperating it for a tradition that,

to whatever degree Cage may challenge or unsettle its premises, he still situates himself squarely and visibly within by means of exactly such gestures.

This point becomes even more pressing if we return to the conception of experimental that is implied in and through this specific institutional framing—and, from this, avow that this conception is itself not neutral in relation to those histories and practices that it includes and excludes, those it directly challenges and those it simply dismisses. Thus, Cage’s infamous opposition to improvisation, as well as his evident pride, as Henry Flynt reported it, in being ‘out of touch’ with regard to popular music: according to Flynt, upon telling Cage that he was influenced by Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry, Cage initially recognized neither name, and, upon it being explained to Cage who they were, remarked to Flynt, ‘If that’s what you’re interested in, well, what are you doing here?’ (quoted in Grubbs 2012, 39-40).

On the one hand, then, Cage’s distinction between improvisation and indeterminacy is grounded in the logic elaborated in the body of this thesis: improvisation relies, at least for Cage, on habit and repetition, whilst indeterminacy requires the performer to undergo a self-altering submission to the score, unfolding it according to its own rules in a manner that inevitably produces an unforeseen outcome. Thus, improvisation remains recognizable, while indeterminacy does not. Yet, on the other hand, such an evaluation is itself grounded, in the last instance, in a constitutive exclusion of an alternative that is dismissed out of hand, based on virtually nonexistent scrutiny—and which therefore inevitably excludes both a specific analysis of the historical contours and power relations implied by such a distinction and, just as significantly, the possibility for productive contact and contestation between the two. Finally, then, what I wish to stress is the way in which this conception of experimentation as, in effect, unequally distributed between two distinct traditions cannot but constitute, on the one hand, a spur for compositional practice and, on the other hand and on that very basis, serve as a primary point of departure for further interferences between this practice and that of theory.

For as both Piekut and Grubbs note, based on the pioneering work of George E. Lewis, this distinction between indeterminacy and improvisation as specifying the nature of experimentation as a practice is ultimately an extension of, rather than opposition to,

the legitimizing forces of concert music as an institution, and, in particular, the racialized construction of this institution and its corresponding musical tradition. As Lewis puts it: ‘Coded qualifiers to the word “music” [...] such as “experimental” [...] are used [...] to delineate a racialized location of this tradition within the space of whiteness’ (Lewis 1996, 102). At another point, he quotes composer Anthony Braxton: ‘Both aleatory and indeterminism are words which have been coined [...] to bypass the word improvisation and as such the influence of non-white sensibility’ (quoted in Lewis 1996, 99). Thus, when Piekut poses to us the question ‘[w]hat *was* experimentalism?’, we are induced to consider the ways in which compositional practice has been and continues to be a process of contestation and construction whose power dynamics must register at the level of theory.

On this basis, Piekut poses the important suggestion with which this thesis will conclude: the necessity of dismantling the racializing institutional logics separating indeterminacy and improvisation, and to reconstruct a concept of experimental practice adequate to the work with which it hopes to intersect. If it is necessary, as Piekut avows, to ‘register the ambivalence of the connections between these two avant-gardes’—which is to say, between jazz improvisation and, to use Lewis’ term, Eurological indeterminacy—it is in order to make theory itself adequate to the complexity of sonic experimentalism itself, from the post-Cagean turn to improvisation by groups such as AMM to the jazz-derived compositional practices of the Jazz Composers’ Guild. What would an experimental practice of theory adequate to this complexity be? Not only can we “still not “answer this question, but this is so to the degree that the problem itself remains to be dramatized.

In sum, then, this thesis has sought to establish an initial account of an experimental practice of thinking that operates *between* music and theory—insofar as, indeed, for Deleuze and Guattari both are forms of thinking. In engaging Cage’s work, it hoped to provide a dramatization that would attain its fullest scope with regard to the possible connections between Deleuze studies and sound studies, as well as to articulate key elements of the logic of a body of work that continues to set the terms under which sonic experimentalism is engaged and understood, in both compositional and theoretical practice. Yet, by the same token, this can and must remain only an initial point of contact; sound studies, in particular, must interrogate the post-Cagean

paradigm that is its privileged referent, and, on this basis, the meta-theoretical work of constituting theory itself as an experimental practice will have much to learn from the struggles of the post-Cagean crisis, the directions pursued out of it—and, perhaps most significantly, those forms of practice that were never caught up in it in the first place.

This brings me to my final point, returning once again to the problem of contemporaneity. I have attempted to establish the degree to which the Cagean problem, and, more general, the problem of experimentation in thinking, constitutes a provocation for thought, today. In closing, I wish simply to emphasise that, with regard to the “objects” of thinking—that is, both that which it attempts to articulate and that which it aims to achieve—there is neither a priority of the new in the sense of the more recent, nor can we rely on appeals to historical significance or audibility. Rather, it is a question of the needs and demands of the “thought provoking-time”: ‘If one can still be Platonist, Cartesian or Kantian today, it is because one is justified in thinking that their concepts can be reactivated in our problems and inspire those concepts that need to be created’ (WP 28). In presenting a Deleuzian-Cagean thesis, then, I hope to have demonstrated that one can still be Deleuzian or Cagean on this very basis; yet, by the same token, in being Deleuzian or Cagean, one is impelled to, in Deleuze’s words, ‘trim [one’s] own arrows, or gather those which seem to us the finest in order to try to send them in other directions, even if the distance covered is not astronomical but relatively small’ (DR xiii). Doubtless, the distance has been small; but this conclusion is intended as an indication of those other directions that, on the basis of these initial steps, have opened up in a renewed fashion, and remain to be pursued.

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