

Open it Up!: A Tractatus Logico-Mathematica-Sonus

Emery Carlson

Preface

This work (I don't fully know what to call it, seeing as it occupies the intersecting (hyper)-planes of logic, mathematics, poetry, Noise (whatever that is), and memory) may be meant more for the dis/entanglement of my own thoughts than it is illuminating for an outside audience. That being said, I would hope that one need not be (equally) familiar with each of the several fertilizing grounds from which this work has drawn its fodder in order to derive pleasure from it. In the end, I hope to have produced a work that puts the highly abstract in direct dialogue, and perhaps even confrontation, with the intimately personal in a way that enriches both and brings enjoyment to the witness.

If the reader will bear with me for a moment, and (hopefully) without infringing on the work's capacity to speak (for) itself, I wish to make one note on methodology which helped me to clarify for myself what *I* was trying to accomplish in these propositions, but that the reader may disregard if they find it unhelpful. A somewhat common trick in the methods of pure mathematics is to use category theory in order to shift the ground on which one is attempting to solve a problem in order to make the process simpler. More formally, if one is attempting to prove a particular theorem in a particular category (for this example, one may read "category" as "branch of mathematics") and is encountering significant obstacles, it may be that there is a *different category* in which the problem becomes simpler. In this case, what we can do is first establish a functor (read, "analogy") between those categories, which will essentially allow us to "translate" results from one category into the other, and proceed to solve the problem in the category wherein it is simpler. We then "translate" our result *back* into the original category. I use the word "translate" to invite comparison with Wittgenstein's language games, but set it off with quotes to indicate that this is not the term used in mathematics itself. This is, albeit in a much less technical and artistically-rendered sense, how I conceive the method of the present work.

My central object of study is Noise in the context of music. Noise as genre, Noise as interlude, Noise as dis/inter/ruption, Noise as accident, as driving force, as dialectic wedge—these formulations (signifiers perhaps?) are all on the table. I have found it exceedingly difficult to theorize on Noise in and of itself and, in fact, have come to believe that such an endeavor is doomed to fail *unless* we expand our notion of the sorts of engagement which "theorizing" could encompass. As such, I chose to focus on a particular experience I had at a hardcore show during the winter of 2023 wherein I caught a glimpse of the Noise I was seeking *despite* it not being explicit in the event (this was *not* a "Noise show"). As such, the two "categories" with which I am concerned are that of Noise (using the capital letter to distinguish the bare *phenomenon* from the *category* in my analogy) and the Hardcore Mosh Pit. Thus, my "task" in this work may be broadly construed in three steps: first, I must establish a link between Noise and the Hardcore Mosh Pit, then I will execute my (non)dialectic in the context of the latter, and, finally, I will gesture towards a "translation" back into the language of the former. Of course, I do not want

whatever significance this work may have to be beholden to such an esoteric framework. That is why I will reiterate my point that this particular methodology is by no means *essential* to the work that follows—it is simply a form which helps *me* to understand my own thoughts, and if it is helpful or elucidating to even one other person, so much the better.

On the other hand, the component of this work which I do regard as essential and, for myself, ineluctable, is the *inseparability* and *interwovenness* of the four spheres (or language games) from which these thoughts have drawn sustenance: category theory, formal logic, Noise (music et. al.) and poetry. The truth of their inseparability I regard as unassailable, and one who disagrees with this will not find here any arguments that they might refute or by which they might be swayed—as Wittgenstein says in the *Tractatus*, “there are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical.” (*TLP*, 6.522). This interwovenness is not a position at which I have arrived via any dialectic or other *logical* sequence, but through the forms, games, ambiguities, and paradoxes of lived experience. The inseparability is simply the space in which I locate my being. What would it mean to *argue* for a *space* (what a hopelessly entangled picture!)?

Finally, I will mention that I am indebted to the work, insights and conversation of my friends Ava Jax and Philip Bold, and to the members of the band Valeska Suratt and anyone who attended their show in Minneapolis (location undisclosed on account of scene ethics) on December 29th, 2023, for much of the stimulation of my thoughts.

Minneapolis, 2024

E. T. C.

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- 1) Somebody spilled Corona in *my* corner.
- 2) The pit is opening in absence: simulating chaos but dissimulating joyful *attention*.
- 3) In the pit, the best way not to get hit is to let oneself go—to be more erratic than everyone else.
- 4) The pit is constitutive of a *mode* of being, but *we* are not constitutive of *it*—just so: Noise animates the pit but does not reside *in* it.
- 5) A glimpse of my own expectations: Graham’s matter-of-fact answers to my philosophically charged inquiries: “you don’t have to be good; you can play sloppily.”
- 6) Is there any fragment of Noise left here? What, in the end, was I trying to investigate? The pit is both solitary and communal (fantastical), violent and yet exceedingly fragile.
- 7) Whatever profundity such a moment holds, it must not be acknowledged too conspicuously lest it disintegrate.

Somebody spilled Corona in *my* corner.

1.1) Noticing resentment in myself: for me this goes beyond fun, for me this is transcendent: how dare you hardcore wannabes ruin it with alcohol and ignorance? How dare you profane the sacristy of Noise with your disingenuousness?

1.2) The pit has the capacity to democratize catharsis—the microcosm.

1.3) The enshrining of the accidental as the coronation of Chaos (another name by which to address Noise). Why Corona, why near the amp, why *my* corner—these become themselves the objects of intense scrutiny: *something* special is thought to hide in them. Accident, free-association, the mundane are treated like suspects: you, you common occurrence, you unnoticed blemish, you bear the stamp of the true essence of things: the keys are always in the first place we think to look and the last place which we actually check.

1.4) The presumption that one could, in theory, calculate the exact velocity of the stream of cheap beer as it gurgled onto the carpet—this is wreathed in the assumption that mathematics is the *lingua franca* of the universe, bestowing everything and everyone and every event with a precise determination (sense) that, if only we had the mechanical (logical) capability, is available to our thought. Language, too, has its Laplace's demon: I imagine it like a spider catching words in a web and weaving all of them into the same tapestry, drawing ever onwards to a center which asks: how do things stand (with or without you)? The poet looks on in dismay and makes off with a few of their favorite words here and there in a desperate effort to save them from the spider's unquenchable appetite.

1.5) Fake stained glass windows: is the venue essential to the pit, to the noise, to the chaos (all are entwined)? (The philosopher is permitted to read "venue" as "form" should they wish to.) I suspect that it—the energy, the ambiance—wouldn't be the same if this were an established venue (it would not be *organic*) and it is also a core part of a "scene" that it is not tied to any defining location—it must be able to take flight wherever it finds itself. An imperative in the mythos of Noise is that it must not be bound to the same spatio-temporal limitations by which we frail humans are constrained.

1.6) Before the music begins, a hush falls over the congregation—bodies tense, instruments are tuned in jangling wails and my fingers clench and unclench themselves against my side. Each spike of discordant sound sends a tremor through the crowd: “is it starting now—” some push fearfully to the sides while others encircle, like so many magnets turned the wrong way around, a pinprick absence, the seed of a latent pit awaiting germination, invocation. Inconveniently, the only spot of wall I could find to occupy had a small and precariously mounted painting or, more likely, a cheap facsimile (right at eye level), of Uzzah touching the ark, and I had to keep my head slightly cocked to avoid knocking it loose. I waited with what I hoped was nonchalance and reveled in my ordained status as an observer.

1.1

Noticing resentment in myself: for me this goes beyond fun, for me this is transcendent: how dare you hardcore wannabes ruin it with alcohol and ignorance? How dare you profane the sacristy of Noise with your disingenuousness?

1.1.1) As if I had a better reason to be here than anyone else—as if only I understood the true magnitude of what *we* were creating. There is also an obligation to cool nonchalance mingled in the veil of cigarette smoke and sweat with whatever *this* needed to be for any of us—to disclose it would be like speaking aloud one’s wish once the candles have been blown out at a childhood birthday party. The sense I had was almost gnostic: that of a secret knowledge which cannot be shared and whose purity was infringed upon by the ignorance of those who didn’t see it, who felt the need to supplant it—at least, that was how I saw it.

1.1.2) Perhaps I was too quick to judge—after all, what’s a bacchanal without a little wine? But it was never *really* about the beer; it was about something else, something ineffable—a chance for me to encounter Noise and lose myself in its enveloping, implacable embrace. I couldn’t be here *just* for fun, I had to have a deeper, inexpressible purpose which was violated by the all-too-obvious hedonism of those around me.

1.2

The pit has the capacity to democratize catharsis—the microcosm.

1.2.1) Everyone who partakes in the pit is there for their own reasons (which are most often obscure and private), and the pit allows for their independent expression until such a point where the independence of one infringes on that of another.

1.3

The enshrining of the accidental as the coronation of Chaos (another name by which to address Noise). Why Corona, why near the amp, why *my* corner—these become themselves the objects of intense scrutiny: *something* special is thought to hide in them. Accident, free-association, the mundane are treated like suspects: you, you common occurrence, you unnoticed blemish, you bear the stamp of the true essence of things: the keys are always in the first place we think to look and the last place which we actually check.

1.3.1) Mathematics as the sublimation of the absolutely particular into the kingdom of generality¹. The Mobius strip along whose surface the absolutely simple and the absolutely general (or, by other names, tautology and contradiction) dance an unending tango in the wake of which all life bursts forth like a fireworks display or a cosmic hiccup.

¹ 1.3.1A) The mathematician takes *their* sense of generality as a given. Explain the concept of a group to someone unfamiliar with set-theory and the paradigms of abstract algebra and they will think it a most *singular* and probably inscrutable construction. Only in the language of mathematics does the generality emerge.

1.4²

The presumption that one could, in theory, calculate the exact velocity of the stream of cheap beer as it gurgled onto the carpet—this is wreathed in the assumption that mathematics is the *lingua franca* of the universe, bestowing everything and everyone and every event with a precise determination (sense) that, if only we had the mechanical (logical) capability, is available to our thought. Language, too, has its Laplace's demon: I imagine it like a spider catching words in a web and weaving all of them into the same tapestry, drawing ever onwards to a center which asks: how do things stand (with or without you)? The poet looks on in dismay and makes off with a few of their favorite words here and there in a desperate effort to save them from the spider's unquenchable appetite.

² 1.4A) “But mathematics is not concerned with particulars! After all, what is abstraction if not the search for what is common *between* particulars—what knits them together? And what is mathematics if not the paragon of abstraction?” Perhaps, but this only regards mathematics as a finished product. What about the process? Take the apple falling on Newton's head (apocryphal, probably, but still illustrative), these are the moments that are supposed to give rise to profound and novel insights; mathematics *pretends* to concern itself least of all with particulars, and yet what picture of generality could we possibly form without particulars upon which to generalize? All the better if the particulars in question are odd, singular, or idiosyncratic in one way or another, yet they cannot be *too* singular or else run the risk of evaporating into the miasma of the ever-anew, Heraclitean current of the present. They must be recognizable but also *recognizably unique*—they must present a compelling puzzle which the mathematician must *work* diligently, lovingly, to smooth, where, in the case that perfectly conforms to the rule, there is little pleasure in the puzzling, little reason to want to see the picture through.

1.4A³, 1.4B⁴, 1.4C⁵

³ 1.4B) The spilled beer: this was the impetus for my imagining the pit as a sacred space—this the moment which grounds a whole system of metaphors in one particular coincidence. Perhaps it is true that the *results* of mathematics are as general as they are supposed to be, but why *these* generalities over others? Surely our groups and our rings, our fields and our categories are not *completely* severed from the very ordinary, “accidental” objects which give them their names. Mathematics frequently has to confine itself to trivial, or heavily simplified cases in order for the execution to be at all feasible; these simplified cases are rather singular. In a similar process, it is precisely *this* kind of moment (standing in *my* corner suffused in pungent Corona aroma), the seemingly accidental yet strangely profound through which I imagine I see, as though suspended in time with fishing line, the events which led me here organized at last into coherence. At last, relief, I have found my *space*.

⁴ 1.4C) Curious how the most obvious and banal notion of all becomes the foundation for our entire system of modern mathematics: the set as a “collection of objects.” How much more trivial does it get? And yet herein lies also the seductive power of mathematics—like readers of a cheap mystery novel, we wait with baited breath to see how the writer could possibly go from such a simple premise to the most glorious edifice of rationality and yet, at a certain point, we feel as though the wool has been pulled from our eyes, a certain crucial step elided and yet we cannot say exactly where the ellipsis has occurred. At the same time, we never really expected the mystery to be solved organically—that would require too much tedious detail—on a certain level we *wanted* to be hoodwinked, dazzled by some vaguely plot-annulling device we pretend we didn’t see coming.

We encounter Russell’s paradox (the plot-hole) and feel (with Frege) as though the world itself were crumbling under our feet—how could we have been cheated?! (It is not that we are upset at being cheated, but at being made to *admit* that we *know* we have cheated.) And yet, at the end of the story when everything is neatly tied up and the detective (Russell) emerges triumphant, the perpetrators (sets) unmasked, we look back on the clues and find them a little *too* suggestive, almost artfully arranged (which is, after all, why we kept reading in the first place). Surely, Russell’s paradox *does apply* to a *certain* kind of object, to some way of understanding a “set,” but to what extent does this understanding accord with the ways we actually speak of a “collection of objects?” Was a crime ever even committed in the first place?

⁵ 1.4C) The mathematician who feels the need to prove not only the *utility* of mathematics but its status as the ultimate terminus and final answer to all human knowledge, to show that mathematics is not only an important facet of life but constitutes its bedrock, the language in which the secrets of the universe are laid bare, and the origin of all necessity, is akin to the theologian who spends their entire life seeking “proofs” for the existence of their god on account of a deep seated doubt. Not to imply that faith in mathematics *ought* to resemble religious faith, but that its zealotry often does. What we seek is a mathematics that is unashamed of its contingency, a mathematics that is unabashedly human, fleshy, mutable, and yet no less powerful.

1.5

Fake stained glass windows: is the venue essential to the pit, to the Noise, to the chaos (all are entwined)? (The philosopher is permitted to read “venue” as “form” should they wish to.) I suspect that it—the energy, the ambiance—wouldn’t be the same if this were an established venue (it would not be *organic*) and it is also a core part of a “scene” that it is not tied to any defining location—it must be able to take flight wherever it finds itself. An imperative in the mythos of Noise is that it must not be bound to the same spatio-temporal limitations by which we frail humans are constrained.

1.5.1⁶) In this way, the function of Noise is not dissimilar from a religious experience: it acts as a solace against the specter of deterioration haunting the realms of the physical, of meaning, of self, even that of self-evidence (self-identity). It stands as if in spite of the ghost by holding a mirror up to its phantasmic visage—thus fracturing deterioration’s self-coherence. Of course, one could say that such a mirror is really just a clever sort of *reconstruction*, that the deterioration is not an *in-itself*—fine, but we can recognize *manifestations* of deterioration even if we cannot conceive of it *sui generis*. We never actually *see* the ghost, but we *know* it’s there—we are haunted⁷.

⁶ 1.5.1A) Although they appear to be completely opposed, the austerity of mathematics is applicable also to Noise. Here is *a* picture we might form of Noise: an attempt at realizing *pure* chaos, *pure* meaninglessness, Zero. On this conception, Noise is an abject failure in that it never fails to signify *that* it is an attempt at meaninglessness—but this only shows that the task is not finite but infinite. By contrast, mathematics shrinks and crystalizes this meaninglessness (its shadow) to a point, the origin, from which the divine and irrevocable order of its Majesty radiates—it has sublimated (in a Freudian sense) Zero back into itself, making it the very seat of its regal power. And the gnostic (the jester in the court of high mathematics) demands the immediate liberation of Zero from its Cartesian confines. For them, Noise is *not* the quest for pure meaninglessness—it is not a Lacanian mirror held up to, and thus constructing the ideal of, Deterioration/Emptiness/Chaos, but it is an ordinary mirror with cracks and flaws and tricks of the light holding precarious images of these forces only to situate them back into the realms which they haunt, not as outside forces, but as finding their natural home there (cf. Derrida’s *grafting*). Noise demands of us that we neither relegate it to the realm of the senseless (an unending game in and of itself), nor do we simply sublimate it back into *music*. Noise demands that we let it subsist in paradox (Music & Non-Music), and thus, along the way, frees *us* to persist in the paradox of Self (&No-Self).

If we consider Noise as the search for pure meaninglessness, we arrive, from the other direction, back in the realm of the essential, just where we began (as philosophers). Being “essentially meaningless” is, after all, to have an *essential meaning* (of nothing)—the null set for meaning if you will.

⁷ &&*&&) When I’m in a pit, the question simply does not *occur* to me whether I am a *self* or not. I received the ineffability I so greatly desired in a conception of Noise as *manifest* but unspeakable. For the moment, this was satisfactory.

The pit is opening in absence: simulating chaos but dissimulating joyful *attention*.

2.1⁸⁹) The pummel breaks down barriers to connection too: social space is wrenched open in the general torrent of the pit.

2.2) Like the philosopher who beats their head against the austere walls of logic and comes to find solace in their rigidity—an accidental punch to the jaw is an easy jumping off point for conversation.

2.3) Everyone is allowed their moment in the pit: not everyone takes it and some misuse it. We are the pit celebrating=creating its own existence and we take turns wearing the face of the whole.

2.4) Posture drops away in the pit and what is left is recognition: we can tell that each of us possess innumerable beetles in boxes, sometimes referred to as ourselves, that we must bear and it is enough to recognize this. A flash of fists; I see that you are here for a reason and so am I; I am fragmentary too and *it* could begin here. The picture of the essentially inaccessible Other is forcibly dispelled in the exchange of blows that float somewhere between psychic and physical—that is not to say, “I know you,” only to say “I see you,” I absorb a part of your energy.

2.5) This pit is a *simulation* of violence not in *this* way: that I act only in a mimicry of “real” violence. No, what I do *really is* violent, but it is not done in the *spirit* of violence; I am inclined to say: the act is violent but the disposition is not. One could get puzzled by this if one thinks of dispositions and actions as of the same kind, such that I can “do” one and yet not “have” the other. In the pit though, there is no puzzlement: there are signs (often in the eyes) by which we recognize when someone is participating in the game, and when they are simply playing by their own rules to the detriment of everyone else’s enjoyment.

⁸ #(-^-^-^-)##) For one, all of the careful postering, the foot against the wall, the eyes trained imperturbably on the ceiling, the clothes in curated disarray—these all go out the window in the struggle to stay standing under barrage.

⁹ ({}{}{}-)-) The pit is thus an *embodied* metaphor (in a literal sense), and yet one whose *form* is metonymic (i.e. it suggests absence).

2.2

Like the philosopher who beats their head against the austere walls of logic and comes to find solace in their rigidity—an accidental punch to the jaw is an easy jumping off point for conversation.

2.2.1) It is not that I *want* to be hit in the jaw (though some may and that is for them), but, when I am, I am able to recognize that I was not the *target*, I merely happened to be in the way of an intransitive verb, becoming its unintentional object. The resulting accident is one in which I and whoever it was that hit me are equally involuntary participants, and we now have a point of contact¹⁰ beyond the one that involved their fist and my jaw.

¹⁰ 2.2.1A) Points of contact multiply and in doing so, refine a model of a social contour as in Taylor approximations for polynomial graphs.

2.4

Posture drops away in the pit and what is left is recognition: we can tell that each of us possess innumerable beatles in boxes, sometimes referred to as ourselves, that we must bear and it is enough to recognize this. A flash of fists; I see that you are here for a reason and so am I; I am fragmentary too and *it* could begin here. The picture of the essentially inaccessible Other is forcibly dispelled in the exchange of blows that float somewhere between psychic and physical—that is not to say, “I know you,” only to say “I see you,” I absorb a part of your energy.

2.4.1) We all become, reduce to, expand to, energy in the confines of the pit. This is not to say that we are entirely sublimated. One’s actions are still, on a certain level, one’s own, but there is also a sense in which the divisor of (S)elf drops away in this particular equation leaving *some* kind of whole (a signification) undivided, regardless of what we call it.

2.5

This pit is a *simulation* of violence not in *this* way: that I act only in a mimicry of “real” violence. No, what I do *really is* violent, but it is not done in the *spirit* of violence; I am inclined to say: the act is violent but the disposition is not. One could get puzzled by this if one thinks of dispositions and actions as of the same kind, such that I can “do” one and yet not “have” the other. In the pit though, there is no puzzlement: there are signs (often in the eyes) by which we recognize when someone is participating in the game, and when they are simply playing by their own rules to the detriment of everyone else’s enjoyment.

2.5.1) An example of such a “misuse” of one’s moment: here stands the circle (a common form for the common pit to take), good, here the onlookers, also good—now, if I am to take my moment, I enter the circle for a *brief* while and do something unique (but, again, it must be *recognizably unique*; I am still involved in a game), a handstand say (and everybody roars, the pulse is heightened), but if, say, I instead start antagonizing those on the edges of the pit (that is, in breach of the agreed upon forms of antagonization), will I, nill I, I am ousted. The pit has a keen eye for egotism. Anyone who steps into the center out of passion for the music and the moment is welcomed, but if the goal is simply to treat the pit like a stage (and it is painfully obvious when this is the case)¹¹, removal will be swift.

2.5.2) Since there is no true “whole” which can be wholly constitutive of the mosh pit, each of us has the chance to be its representative¹², to take on the full force of its energy

¹¹ 2.5.1A) An example: stage diving is reserved for an especially climactic moment and requires a significant amount of spontaneous, and typically unspoken, agreement. Some, presumably under the delusion that pit revolves around them, expect that they will always be caught and climb up onto the stage (to the surprise of the band), spread their arms outward as in a crucifixion, and fall backward to meet only the venue floor with a dull thud. Then will they be picked up, asked if they are ok, and politely removed from the pit. It is true that the pit facilitates a remarkable degree of camaraderie, but this camaraderie will not tolerate those who seek to bolster only their own self-image by it. Crowd-surfing, stage diving, swinging, all of these are *responses* to the music, to the animacy of noise, and require a deep respect and intuition for such forces. And it is quite clear when respect is lacking for it requires an awareness of the pit as more than a collection of bodies, more than a composition of selves: $\$s \ \circ \ s \ \dots \ \circ \ s \ \neq \ \$\$,$ and yet less than transcendent, fleshier than any *ideal*.

¹² 2.5.2A) I speak of a “representative” in a similar sense as one talks of representative elements for an equivalence class: *prima facie* any element will do just as well as another, but we can only have *one* representative at a given time and, if we want to speak of the equivalence class at all, we must be able to specify it somehow. The representative in no way *defines* the class, merely picks it out as something specifiable.

field and writhe in celebration of that non-existent inexpressible—one becomes, if only for a second, more than a subject in a tangential relation to objects—one becomes that-which-cannot-*but*-become-manifest, an imaginary signifier to the un-signified energy (~~noise~~) undergirding the microcosm of the pit.

2.5.3¹³) The “simulation” is called such not because it is necessarily false or unreal, but because it is communal rather than individually determined. The underlying assumption being something like: individual reality must have a rock bottom (often, whether explicitly or implicitly, the same as for Descartes: *cogito ergo sum*) whereas collective “reality” is only real insofar as it is *reflected in* or composed of individual experience (cf. elementary propositions). That the function of the “collective” (as opposed to the individual) is inherently fictionalizing is seen in the use of the phrase “socially constructed” as often synonymous with “unreal.”

¹³ 2.5.3A) “Oh, but you’re not *really* being violent.” On what basis is the difference predicated? I could behave in the exact same way (both externally and dispositionally) and it *could* be perceived as violent. Even *in* the pit, some of those who are uninitiated are not able to see our actions as not-violent in *that* way (that is, in the way they would be violent in most other contexts). There are even gradations to this seeing-as violent: each of us has different points/criteria at which the pit becomes “too real” –the language is quite literal—and the pit functions like a story in that we suspend our disbelief (we simulate violence) in order to gain perspective. “He took it too seriously,” “it became too real for them” – these expressions are similar in their usage to those such as “you read too far into it,” or “my allegory did not extend past *that* point.”

In the pit, the best way not to get hit is to let oneself go—to be more erratic than everyone else.

3.1) The goal is neither to bestow the most blows nor to sustain the most: the pit tolerates neither martyrs nor heroes.

3.2) Blows are not turned against, they are simply turned: revolving in the void and maybe could become vines entwining us, enshrining a moment. Chaos is no contest, the question is not one of quantity but quality: how much are you willing to let go? And it will be recognized. Yes, there is a degree of harmony, but don't *call* it Beauty.

3.3) The terms I thought in, teetering on the edge, wanting in but holding onto fear: I have to wait for the music to give me my cue—I await my absorption. On the sidelines, a careening body dislodges me from the cell wall and I am sent whizzing away, a particle traversing valence shells spitting violet and infra-red joy

3.4) A hit is only a hit if one conceptualizes oneself as a separate entity participating *in* a pit—one does not think of the blood cells tumbling down veins and arteries as self colliding with self—the self is static just as the pit (itself) is static on one plane and active on another.

3.4

A hit is only a hit if one conceptualizes oneself as a separate entity participating *in* a pit—one does not think of the blood cells tumbling down veins and arteries as self colliding with self—the self is static just as the pit itself is static on one plane and active on another.

3.4.1) This act of letting go could be conceived as a physical action: that of absorbing into the surrounding entropy, or it could be conceived as a shift in perspective: that of seeing the pit *sub specie aeterni*, as a limited whole of which one is not a *part*, which could be specified or pointed to as if by a coordinate, but the boundary. We might want to say: well then one is just a *part* of the boundary! But, *qua* boundary, it does not have parts—it is not a *thing* on its own (cf. Augustinian picture of language).

3.4.2¹⁴) The pit is not merely the sum total of its participants: it is not *necessarily* changed if someone leaves or a new person joins (absorption of an element into an ideal does not change the ideal because the elements are prefigured in the ideal) although such an event might *coincide* with a shift in the mode of existence for the pit.

¹⁴ 3.4.2A) One might be tempted, then, to conclude that the pit is thus *structural*, i.e. composed of *relations* rather than objects ({subjects}). These pictures become muddled when we consider that one can treat a relation as an object (in mathematics quite explicitly by defining relations in terms of sets) and an object as a relation (a point *between*). How could we possibly characterize the relation of being “more erratic”? The problem is on the order of NP hard, if not outright paradoxical, and yet so naturally resolved in the course of the pit—I take my moment, charging across the no-man’s land, arms flailing, slamming back-turned into the other side and rebounding. In this moment I am the one colliding, not being collided with—this difference is *palpable* if fleeting.

The pit is constitutive of a *mode* of being, but *we* are not constitutive of *it*—just so: Noise animates the pit but does not reside *in* it.

4.1) Noise takes on the aspect of what can be shown but not said insofar as it manifests in, but is not *expressed by*, the pit. One would like to say that the pit shows us the contours of Noise like mountains and valleys show us the paths of ancient rivers, lakes, and glaciers.

4.2) The pit as a topology of noise: the crowd-killers crouch, awaiting impetus with fluttering fingers ticking off seconds till launch while two-steppers tear down the sky like deep-rooted trees in an old-growth forest: they embody the heartline of the Noise while its glistening fragments, the agents of chaos, dodge limbs and mingle into margins. We can understand what is open in terms of what is closed and vice versa.

4.1¹⁵

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¹⁵ 4.1A) My remarks on the mosh pit reflect on Noise in *this* way: it is Noise which animates the mosh pit. My reluctance to make direct statements *about* Noise comes partially from respect, partially from my own puzzlement which has only been increased in the course of this work. In category theory we (I say, as if I were a part of that community) often establish a functor between categories in order to understand a complex phenomenon in a context in which it is easier to understand. The functor gives us a way to import, as it were, our understanding of the simpler case to the more complex by providing a bridge between the two. When physicists speak of energy they do not speak of energy *in-itself* but in terms of a change in physical states—I see Noise similarly as such a trace, as evidenced in changes to the mode of being, but not *something* which we might turn to and say, “ah, *therein* lies Noise.”

4.2¹⁶

The pit as a topology of Noise: the crowd-killers crouch, awaiting impetus with fluttering fingers ticking off seconds till launch while two-steppers tear down the sky like deep-rooted trees in an old-growth forest: they embody the heartline of the Noise while its glistening fragments, the agents of chaos, dodge limbs and mingle into margins. We can understand what is open in terms of what is closed and vice versa.

4.2.2) I could envision the relationship between the patterns of the music and the movements of the pit as a functor between categories: both exist as their own games individually where certain elements are intertranslatable, but we should not be so rash as to conclude that there is any *essential* connection; the existence of a functor means: we can make an analogy. This does not mean that one causes the other or that there is any *internal* resemblance (what do we gain from separating into internal and external the properties of a movement or a musical gesture?).

¹⁶ \mathfrak{I}) The absorption property from ring theory: multiplying a member of the ideal by any element of the ring produces an element of the ideal; those on the boundary of the pit are neither members or nonmembers: they contain the possibility of absorption into the ideal—into the self-sustaining part. (Understanding the technical meanings of these terms is not essential to my point.)

A glimpse of my own expectations: Graham's matter-of-fact answers to my philosophically charged inquiries: "you don't have to be good; you can play sloppily."

5.1) That I was tempted to ask: "and what would constitute precision in this context anyway?" is telling.

5.2) I wanted Graham to confirm my transcendental views of Noise but he did not take my baited questions: hardcore is "fun," Noise is "sloppy playing, not caring too much about tone," the mosh pit is "a tradition of extreme music." It was fun, but I needed to be reminded of that.

5.3) As a *mere* participant I was at the mercy of the magnetic field of the pit—drawn in by its revolving dynamism, but as an observer, as I bestowed that title upon myself, the pit became an entity and its participants became mysteries.

5.4) Graham's answers *showed* that the music was not a mere product of he and his bandmates' instruments and required participation in order to be realized. At the very least, if music can be a product, then Noise is not something which can be forcibly imbued *into* it, Noise must be found along the way. The ease with which a pit can turn on a band when it senses that the band is attempting to play *it* like an instrument.

5.3

As a *mere* participant I was at the mercy of the magnetic field of the pit—drawn in by its revolving dynamism, but as an observer, as I bestowed that title upon myself, the pit became an entity and its participants became mysteries.

5.3.1) As a participant, I knew without being able to articulate my position. There is a kind of uncertainty principle wherein I either know my position without any recognition of the pit as a whole, or I chart the pit as a whole and lose my position in it—the solipsistic self shrinking to a point in the plane.

5.4

Graham's answers *showed* that the music was not a mere product of he and his bandmates' instruments and required participation in order to be realized. At the very least, if music can be a product, then ~~Noise~~ is not something which can be forcibly imbued *into* it, ~~Noise~~ must be found along the way. The ease with which a pit can turn on a band when it senses that the band is attempting to play *it* like an instrument.

5.4.1¹⁷) Reciprocity of the band, the pit, the music and noise. Neither can exist without the others, but as soon as one element tries to assume dominance, the whole network collapses.

¹⁷ S|s) We can imagine these relationships as pairs of signifier/signified, and in this light better understand the need both for reciprocity and distance (the bar).

Is there any fragment of Noise-left here? What, in the end, was I trying to investigate? The pit is both solitary and communal (fantastical), violent and yet exceedingly fragile.

6.1) The pit /is/ /ultimately/ an absence: a channel through which Noise flows in and out, created and destroyed, remade and unincorporated and it ends only when we disperse.

6.X) Ad in(fin)itum broken; the circle squashed and broken, a few fists still pounding the sky; lift ur skinniest fists skyward for redemption–haven't I learned anything? Is this my punishment for attaching too much of my own baggage onto the inchoate framework of noise? I am cast out of the pit and I cannot tell if this is part of the dialectic (whether it is an encouragement, a recognition of an extreme catharsis; yes, yes, yes I said yes, throw me as far as you can, ragdoll, dead-limbed for I am *cogitatio*, I am absorbed in total asceticism into the walls of singing sounding absence pummeling static and I am free free to the jaws of Aporia in the form of a fist grabbing the hem of my shirt or maybe,) maybe *this* is the symbolic razing of anyandall dialectic; then again...perhaps I have taken my moment too far: have become parasitic to the Noise I hoped would free me. Somewhere along the way I lost the quite corporeal, quite unremarkable context which gave rise to all of these transcendental musings, blind to imperfection, overly attached to my own self-salvation-in-annihilation–maybe I got what I deserved, a forcible therapy dislodging a miasma of over-wrought pictures. I can only speak *around* the moment and the plastic-tree mercifully bashes through all of my carefully wrought impositions–yet I am still tempted to view even *this* as yet another sign in a perfect simulacra–a synthesis of thesis and antithesis. I welcome it vaguely masochistically, absorbed in a feeling about the value of pain ready for whatever kick would push me into a haphazard beyond.

6.2) The real danger here: the pit was palpably capable of consuming that which made it possible in the first place. Noise functions also like a drug and, like other drugs (philosophical or otherwise), has the capacity to justify the position that everything in *this* reality must be razed, overcome, chewed-up, and spit-out in service of the next, the *truer* reality.

¹⁸ @—>>> Each person is able to play out their own myth in the face of that-which-does-not-ask: we create the boundary of a new self to which each of us contributes but none alone is constitutive: the action(circle) of metonymy. Open it the fuck up! Run

Run

Run: the center is safer than the edges, paradoxically.

6.1

The pit is ultimately an absence: a channel through which ~~Noise~~ flows in and out, created and destroyed, remade and unincorporated and it ends only when we disperse.

6.1.1) Certainly, no shred of the pit remains in such ossified words as these. Perhaps some of the same impetus is present, however. I find that the feeling of working myself up to enter a mosh pit is not dissimilar to the mode into which I have had to energize myself in order to write like *this*.

6.2¹⁹

The real danger here: the pit was palpably capable of consuming that which made it possible in the first place. Noise-functions also like a drug and, like other drugs (philosophical or otherwise), has the capacity to justify the position that everything in *this* reality must be razed, overcome, chewed-up, and spit out in service of the next, the *truer* “reality.”

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¹⁹ 6.2A) I do not mean to sound the alarm by referencing a “real danger.” Besides, the reality here is more so a philosophical reality which, as we have seen, is just as much a land of fancy and imagination as any great mythology. So I offer a counterpoint to the above: the real *joy* here is the recognition that even such philosophical musings have their part to play in the pit-as-experience, as a new *way of seeing*, but this can only be achieved once one has, in a certain sense, caught the ma(lo)gician in their sleight-of-hand (and these propositions are full of tricks). What is left at the end is a playful disregard for any full “account,” that is, the absolute precedence of one language game over another. For me, *this* process, which resembles a continual return to the waters of doubt, helped to dispel the resentment with which I began.

²⁰ __()__ [I] bought a sweatshirt to support the band, watched the disheveled musicians packing up toms and searching for misplaced mics, and slunk through throngs of cigarette cherries on the walk back to my bike. Even though it was cold that night, probably just below freezing, [I] biked home in nothing but a t-shirt and started to feel the stiffness of sustained blows setting in as the adrenaline wore off. [I] think [I] poured a glass of wine when [I] got home, or maybe [I] went straight to bed—the edges of the memory are now ragged from wear.

Some Notes on Basic Category Theory (for reference):

- A category is a mathematical object that consists of only two components (which are sometimes interdefinable): objects and arrows (sometimes also referred to as “morphisms”). These really have no definitional characteristics outside of particular cases but my own personal read is that objects are the “things” which we are considering in a particular category and arrows are the ways that those things are related. I say potentially interdefinable because sometimes we want to consider arrows as objects themselves and in that case our category consists of arrows and arrows between arrows. The other component of a category is a binary operation, called the composition of arrows, which essentially allows us to chain together arrows and talk about the resulting, cumulative, arrow. This binary operation (composition) must obey two axioms: associativity: (using $*$ to notate composition) $(a*b)c = a*(b*c)$, and identity: $\mathbf{1} * a = a * \mathbf{1} = a$. Here boldface number one does not represent a number, but what is called the “identity arrow,” which is *defined* by the axiom of identity, that is, the identity arrow *just is* the arrow, notated “ $\mathbf{1}$ ” such that $\mathbf{1} * a = a * \mathbf{1} = a$ for any arbitrary arrow “ a ”. These are *all* the rules for a category, so you can see that the object which we are defining is quite general. Some examples will help illuminate the sorts of things that category theory is useful in describing.
- Important examples of categories:
 - Set: the category of sets. Objects are sets and arrows are total functions (i.e. mappings of the form $f: A \rightarrow B$ where the domain of f is the entirety of A (as opposed to a particular subset, which would make f what is called a partial function)).

Here’s a link to a presentation I gave for a directed-reading program on the basics of category theory (wherein I also briefly touch on a philosophical interpretation of the methodology of category theory): [DRP Category Theory - Google Slides](#)

Key link I see between category theory and Wittgenstein (especially insofar as category theory is a foundational branch of mathematics and as *opposed* to set theory): categories essentially give us an articulation of the “game” we are playing when we work with certain kinds of mathematical objects and the key rules to these games such as when we consider two objects identical *relative to the game*. In category theory there is, arguably, *no notion of absolute identity*, but only a contextualized identity, often called *identity up to canonical isomorphism*. For example, we consider two sets to be *the same* if they have the same cardinality (i.e. are bijective) and we don’t care whether they are actually identical sets or not insofar as, e.g. $\{a,b,d\}$ and $\{a,b,c\}$ are nonidentical (since they don’t have *the same elements*), yet isomorphic. In other words, in the category Set we would make no distinction between the two sets I gave as examples above.