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Sshhh

Daniel Cookney

*There is no such thing as an empty space or an empty time.
There is always something to see, something to hear. In fact, try
as we may to make a silence, we cannot.*

(CAGE, 1961, 8)

A heavy bass line is my kind of silence.

(RASCAL AND VAN HELDEN, 2009)

This chapter documents a process undertaken by the author in summer 2010. Submitted as part of the University of Salford's MA Communication Design programme, the study resulted in a practice-based outcome – a compact disc of audio recordings housed within an illustrated book – that aimed to capitalize on a grey area located somewhere between noise and silence.

The Cagean fascination with background noise was key to this exploration, given how it has largely been derived through its ability to communicate while avoiding some contrived message aimed directly at the receiver. Unlike music, the random chatter and clatter of life in motion refuted the composer's creative agenda with any unclaimed aural turbulence being an approximation of Barthes' 'death of the author'. However, that accompanying birth of the listener was only really facilitated when an individual chose actively to meditate on these supposedly low-impact sounds. In general, these *were* ignored and often shifted away from concepts of 'noise' and back to a