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Review

*The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies* by Trevor Pinch; Karin Bijsterveld; *The Sound Studies Reader* by Jonathan Sterne

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trained listener. Dismissed from the laboratory, aesthetics lost its claim to science, to an empirical foundation. At the same time, psychology ceded its claims to kinship with physics, to the mathematical expressions of physics, and became a statistical science. Of psychophysics, only the Fechner-Weber law would survive, and that because of its practical application—most notably (today) to audio file-compression.

If the vessel holding together an aestheticized science and a scientific aesthetics did shatter into any number of brittle and professionalized disciplinary shards—comparative musicology, modern music theory, experimental psychology—this was not the end of the narrative. Both Hui and Steege close on an almost elegiac note. While Helmholtz's concern with sensation is abandoned in favor of a return to idealization on the part of theorists such as Riemann and Kurth, it infects composers such as Debussy and Schoenberg. A concern with sensation becomes a hallmark with modernity (and a point of criticism). Music came to flicker between *Empfindung* and *Vorstellung*, sensation and representation—as did Helmholtz's ear.

The notion of a systematic musical aesthetics itself moved into the twilight. It has not vanished. But the end of the psychoacoustic episode marked a loss of authority—an authority that we today would somehow sense as authoritarian. Steege closes with a reading of Max Weber's unpublished sociology of music, dating to the second decade of the new century, wherein Helmholtz's ideation of sensation gives leverage to a profound reversal. For Weber, "primitive" music, attentive to sensation, is superior to the denatured, pallid, institutionalized sound of modern Western music. Musical aesthetics transforms into critique. It survives also in other guises—technological fantasies being but one. It becomes a negative space into which all manner of things can be written. But it can only do so in so much as our own sense of musical aesthetics takes shape as an afterimage of the aesthetic sciences of Fechner, Helmholtz, Mach—an aesthetics we might dismiss as quaint or curious, but one whose power is so elegantly and convincingly detailed in these two books.

LESLIE DAVID BLASIUS

*The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies*, edited by Trevor Pinch and Karin Bijsterveld. Oxford Handbooks. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. xii, 593 pp.

*The Sound Studies Reader*, edited by Jonathan Sterne. Abingdon, UK, and New York: Routledge, 2012. x, 566 pp.

*The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies* (OHSS) and *The Sound Studies Reader* (SSR) are rowdy in the best sense of the word—vibrant, intense,

materially diverse. To read multiple selections from either book in a single sitting yields a dizzying experience akin to plunging one's head into a roaring whirlpool. These volumes invite us to journey into cities, enter laboratories, streak across microchips, zoom in on atoms, tread into gardens, and dive into watery depths in search of soundworlds that boom and bloom. Across sixty-nine chapters in all—twenty-four in OHSS and forty-five in SSR—authors lend their ears to a jumble of mediums, spaces, topics, agents, data, devices, cultures, historical moments, and possible futures. Together, the resonant texts mirror and reflexively critique two of sound studies' leading concerns: first, that we live in noisy times (acoustically, discursively); and second, that the very challenges of writing *about* sound may offer vital clues into sound's definitions, properties, and epistemologies.

The respective introductions to OHSS and SSR lay out sound studies' agenda in admirably broad terms. Trevor Pinch and Karin Bijsterveld identify sound studies as “a flourishing interdisciplinary area with several overlapping disciplines and a range of methods that touch upon the fields of acoustic ecology, sound design, urban studies, cultural geography, media and communication studies, cultural studies, the history and anthropology of the senses, the history and sociology of music, and literary studies” (OHSS, p. 10).<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Sterne similarly notes that “people who do sound studies . . . are not strictly speaking -osophers, -ologists, or -ographers” (SSR, p. 3). Later, he continues: “As a field, sound studies should not close in upon itself to protect sound as an object from the encroachment of other fields or to claim it as privileged disciplinary property. Instead, it should seek out points of connection and reflection” (SSR, p. 10).<sup>2</sup> Sound studies, as these editors put it, boasts a generous disciplinary wingspan covering an array of methods and aims.<sup>3</sup> Virtually any query touching on sound, music, noise, speech, voice, or silence is fair game.

Although this review cannot do justice to the breadth of studies represented in SSR and OHSS, some topical clusters merit brief mention. Sites of investigation include churches (SSR: Blesser and Salter; SSR: Rath), factories (SSR: Bijsterveld; OHSS: Smith; OHSS: Braun), recording studios (SSR: Meintjes; SSR: Mowitt), sound installations (SSR: LaBelle), and hospitals

1. Trevor Pinch and Karin Bijsterveld described a similar agenda in “Sound Studies: New Technologies and Music,” special issue, *Social Studies of Science* 34, no. 5 (2004): 635–48, at 636.

2. See also Jonathan Sterne, “Being ‘In the True’ of Sound Studies,” *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 2 (2008): 163–67 (esp. 166).

3. Academic journals devoted to studies of sound include *The Journal of Sonic Studies*, *SoundEffects*, and *Soundscape: The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*. Special journal issues on the subject include “New Technologies and Music,” guest eds. Karin Bijsterveld and Trevor Pinch, *Social Studies of Science* 34, no. 5 (2004); “The Politics of Recorded Sound,” *Social Text* 28, no. 1 (2010); “Sound Clash: Listening to American Studies,” guest eds. Kara Keeling and Josh Kun, *American Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (2011); and “The Sense of Sound,” guest eds. Rey Chow and James A. Steintrager, *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 22, no. 2–3 (2011).

(OHSS: Schwartz; OHSS: Rice). Chapters unpack the social, cultural, and psychoacoustic ramifications of technologies such as gramophones (SSR: Kittler), phonographs (OHSS: Kursell; SSR: Gitelman), radios (SSR: Fanon; SSR: Hilmes), radio dials (OHSS: Fickers), telephones (SSR: Martin; SSR: Peters), tuning forks (OHSS: Jackson), stethoscopes (OHSS: Rice), synthesizers (SSR: Pinch and Trocco), turntables (OHSS: Fouché; OHSS: Katz), cochlear implants (OHSS: Mills), vehicles (OHSS: Cleophas and Bijsterveld; OHSS: Krebs), portable audio players (OHSS: Bull; SSR: Bull; SSR: Hosokawa), and video games (OHSS: Grimshaw). Authors home in on molecular vibrations (SSR: Idhe; SSR: Goodman) and immerse themselves in vast underwater ecosystems (SSR: Helmreich; OHSS: Helmreich). They contemplate not just human-made music but also whale songs (OHSS: Helmreich, p. 156) and bird songs (OHSS: Bruyninckx); not just sounds of the living but also sounds of the dead (SSR: Stanyek and Piekut). There are ruminations on speech and song (SSR: Barthes; SSR: Lastra) as well as laughter (SSR: Smith) and hiccups (SSR: Dolar, pp. 546–48). Contributors identify myriad listening modes: reciprocal, background, and delegated (SSR: Crawford); causal, semantic, and reduced (SSR: Chion); and monitory, diagnostic, exploratory, and synthetic (OHSS: Pinch and Bijsterveld; OHSS: Krebs). Dystopian and utopian imaginations are negotiated through theories of sound, technology, and modernity (SSR: Attali; SSR: Rodgers; SSR: Thompson). Discussions of social practices encompass noise pollution and abatement (SSR: Schafer; SSR: Picker; OHSS: Braun), online lurking (SSR: Crawford), and eavesdropping on neighbors' telephone conversations (SSR: Martin). Politically oriented case studies grapple with musical countercultures in Hungary and Czechoslovakia (OHSS: Hagen and DeNora), invocations of cultural memory in dub music and R&B (SSR: Veal; SSR: Weheliye), and the socio-ethical role of cassette sermons in Middle Eastern urban life (SSR: Hirschkind).

Sound studies, as this casual list attests, is exceptionally open-ended. It is an appreciative field, one that recognizes all sounds—real and ideal, material and imagined—as sheltering potential significance, brimming with interesting things to say. Yet as with any scholarly pursuit, sound studies has its own share of biases and boundaries. A pair of shadows haunts the field: one is music; the other, sight. Sound studies, to an extent, deprivileges the straightforwardly musical and the musically beautiful.<sup>4</sup> As a thought experiment, readers of this *Journal* might consider whether there is any aspect of musicology, ethnomusicology, or music theory that could or should definitively fall outside sound studies' conventional parameters. Paleographic approaches to plainchant? Ethnographies of Sufi music? Schenkerian analyses of Chopin preludes? Such projects jibe with sound studies insofar as they engage the

4. On this front, it is perhaps telling that the word “music” appears fewer than a dozen times in Sterne’s introduction to SSR.

aesthetic, social, and intellectual stakes of musical sounds and cultures. That SSR and OHSS ultimately omit these (daresay mainstream) musicological pursuits is no surprise, as it makes room in the books for lesser-sung examples of sonic phenomena. The necessary absence of particular topics in the two volumes is not a problem per se, but it does signal how certain strains of musical scholarship (more so than others) stand excluded from sound studies' otherwise comprehensive palette of inquiry. To wit, it is precisely because sound studies is so ambitiously inclusive that it needs to be scrutinized for what it nonetheless leaves out and gets defined *against*.

A number of authors in SSR and OHSS offer their work as a corrective to the epistemic dominance of sight and the visual realm. Sound studies, notes Sterne, calls into question the "so-called hegemony of the visual and the privileging of the eye" (SSR, p. 7).<sup>5</sup> Emily Thompson declares that "scholars who assume that consideration of the visual and textual is sufficient for understanding modernity seem, well, shortsighted to say the least" (SSR, p. 124; for a similar view, see OHSS: Whittington, p. 376). Other writers criticize historians who are "guilty of fetishizing the visual at the expense of the aural" (OHSS: Jackson, p. 202) or who "ignore the aural history of early industrialization" (OHSS: Smith, p. 40). To the credit of both volumes, contributors largely refrain from casting their research as (mere) salvage narratives—as studies that locate the significance of sound solely or primarily via its opposition to the visual. Ocularcentrism does persist in aspects of art, science, and daily life, but as demonstrated by SSR and OHSS, sound studies' *raison d'être* is not simply to fill in the gaps of the human sensorium.<sup>6</sup> Especially with SSR, which collects writings published between 1965 and 2011, one finds that many scholars were doing sound studies well before it came to be nominally codified as such. For decades, even centuries, the aspirations and toolsets of sound studies have percolated in plain sight. Though it cannot be pure coincidence that SSR and OHSS ended up being published in the same year, neither volume marks the sudden consummation of a field.<sup>7</sup> With gracious acknowledgment of intellectual and institutional antecedents, these books supply a healthy boost to sound studies' long-gathering momentum.

5. On the "audiovisual litany," see Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 14–16.

6. See Martin Jay, "The Rise of Hermeneutics and the Crisis of Ocularcentrism," *Poetics Today* 9 (1988): 307–26.

7. Several other edited volumes on sound studies have appeared in recent years, including Michael Bull, ed., *Sound Studies*, 4 vols. (New York: Routledge, 2013–); Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, eds., *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music* (New York: Continuum, 2004); Veit Erlmann, ed., *Hearing Cultures: Essays on Sound, Listening and Modernity*, Wenner-Gren International Series (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2004); and Michael Bull and Les Back, eds., *The Auditory Culture Reader*, Sensory Formations Series (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003).

On occasion, scholarship in sound studies implicitly asks whether sound is somehow special in comparison with other phenomena. Authors in SSR and OHSS problematize as well as valorize sound for its (extraordinary) expressivity, immateriality, ephemerality, unrepresentability, and ineffability.<sup>8</sup> Several contributors observe that humans do not have earlids to block out audio stimuli (SSR: Schafer, pp. 102–3; OHSS: Smith, p. 40; OHSS: Schwartz, p. 279); sound, the argument goes, is thus inescapable, immersive, relentlessly penetrative. The voice makes a reliable (albeit overworn) platform for deconstructionist virtuosity (SSR: Derrida, pp. 496–98; SSR: Cavarero, pp. 525–26),<sup>9</sup> while noise likewise serves as a convenient poster child for counternarratives and deferrals of hermeneutic terminus (SSR: Kahn, p. 429). Collectively, these discourses gesture toward exceptionalist ontologies of sound.

In the case of music, take a well-known work excerpted in SSR—Jacques Attali's *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (1977, English trans. 1985). According to Attali,

the political economy of music is unique; only lately commodified, it soars in the immaterial. . . . That is why the political economy of music is not marginal, but premonitory. . . . Music is prophecy. Its 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. (SSR, p. 36)

A portrait of music as prophetic arguably crosses from ontological exceptionalism to a kind of hopeful mysticism. Music, Attali asserts, contains the DNA of not just present-day society, but futurity as well. Without picking at the minutiae of this claim, it is evident that the putative immateriality to which Attali attributes music's premonitory power is by and large what enables such audacious reasoning in the first place. Music, in (other) words, lends itself to grand narratives because it is so infinitely interpretable, so purportedly abstract. It lets Attali retroactively predict the past with recourse to compelling socioaesthetic analogies and chains of equivalency.<sup>10</sup> With its

8. Pinch and Bijsterveld remark that “Jonathan Sterne is right in stressing that ephemerality is not ‘a special quality of sound’: both visual and auditory experiences are ephemeral,” in “Sound Studies: New Technologies and Music,” 642. Also see Rey Chow and James. A. Steintrager, “In Pursuit of the Object of Sound,” *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 22, no. 2–3 (2011): 1–9 (esp. 6–7).

9. See Michelle Duncan, “The Operatic Scandal of the Singing Body: Voice, Presence, Performativity,” in special issue, Performance Studies and Opera, *Cambridge Opera Journal* 16 no. 3 (2004): 283–306 (esp. 284–85).

10. “It is not by chance,” suggests Attali, “that the half-tone found acceptance during the Renaissance, at precisely the same time the merchant class was expanding . . . ; that noise entered music and industry entered painting just before the outbursts and wars of the twentieth century, before the rise of social noise. Or again, that it is not by coincidence that the unrestricted use of large orchestras came at a time of enormous industrial growth” (SSR, 35).

“broad shoulders,”<sup>11</sup> music slots easily into variable discursive agendas—whence springs the political economy of musicology.

In theorizing the elusiveness of music, noise, and speech, essays in SSR and OHSS wrestle with the alleged liminality of sound (SSR: Stanyek and Piekut, p. 306; SSR: Peters, p. 364; SSR: Veal, p. 460). Trevor Hagen and Tia DeNora describe musical experience as “the intersection of sounds, music, technologies, and places. Music. . . is a flexible medium—a liminal space—one in which all the fine shades of an actor’s lifeworld can be displayed” (OHSS, p. 441). On campaigns against noise pollution in hospitals and cities, Hillel Schwartz provides a different perspective:

It is common nowadays for noise to be characterized as “liminal,” as sounds that teeter on the edge of meaning. . . . Liminality was not what Julia Rice had in mind when she campaigned against noise, nor was it what decades of New Yorkers understood when protesting doormen’s whistles, itinerant brass bands, or church bells. . . . Indeed, knowing the time, place, and meaning of the noise was crucial, for only then could they argue, as they did, that the sounds came at the wrong time, in the wrong place, in excess, or as atavisms. Not liminal: obtrusive and inexcusable. (OHSS, p. 282)

Liminality, in short, functions sometimes as a gambit that facilitates scholars’ domestication of sound (cf. OHSS: Taylor, p. 389, and SSR: Leppert, p. 416). On theoretical grounds, it is easy, even expedient, to think of sound as reveling in the in-between. For academics, indeterminacy is the magic seed of dialectical fodder. Thresholds—hence, liminalities—appear wherever one seeks to erect them. This said, sound can get very real very fast when we are dealing with, say, a neighbor who is rattling our walls and keeping us awake with late-night castanet rehearsals. When emotions run high, the stakes of sound seem clear, material, and palpable.

With its reputed liminality, sound is a repository for internal contradictions. In OHSS and SSR, there is no shortage of sophisticated discourse to this effect. Paradoxes, reversals, antinomies, uncertainties, always-already, and no-longer-possibles abound. Arguments run as follows: A as simultaneously B and not B; A not as B but rather A as such; not A in B but B in A;<sup>12</sup> not just A of B but also A *as* B;<sup>13</sup> and so on. Consider Richard Leppert’s nuanced musings: “Music is simultaneously more and less than the concrete: it is abstract, yet it is inevitably made and experienced as embodied. Music, unlike theater, has a mystical substance; as an ‘embodied abstraction’ it

11. Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Music and the Ineffable*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 11.

12. In considering the sounds of the factory floor in nineteenth-century industrial Lowell, Massachusetts, Mark Smith reverses Leo Marx’s notion of machine-in-the-garden by noting how, sonically and ideologically, “the garden became incorporated into the machine” (OHSS, 42).

13. In his anthropological explorations of underwater environments, Stefan Helmreich aims to show that “ethnographies of transduction press toward considering ethnography *as* transduction” (SSR, 170).

simultaneously is and is not. . . . Music bears relation to the shadow: it is the *is not* of that which is” (SSR, p. 412). Dense passages of this sort are especially prevalent in SSR—no doubt a reflection of its editor’s proclivity for theoretical depth. At its most diligent and lucid, such poststructuralist rigor opens refreshing windows to elevated ways of thinking (see, for example, SSR: Hirschkind and SSR: Stanyek and Piekut); taken too far, it may strike a reader as overwrought, roundabout, even syntactically implosive. To be sure, this manner of writing is rife in today’s critical humanities at large. Still, its prominence in SSR and OHSS reflexively points up a basic property *qua* caveat of sound: namely, that discursive conceits find easy refuge in sound’s accommodation of rhetorical ambivalence, turns of phrases, and semantic sleights of hand. In this respect, the slipperiness of sound’s signifying currencies (that is, what sound lets us *say*) should be something that in itself deserves careful attention.

Essays in SSR and OHSS show that the barriers involved in talking about sound—in finding shared lexicons and grammars of sonic appraisal—have practical, demonstrable repercussions in everyday life. Hans-Joachim Braun describes how noise-abatement campaigners in Nazi Germany had a hard time “alert[ing] workers to the problem of industrial noise” in part because “it proved difficult to *visualize* the issue of noise” (OHSS, p. 61, italics in original; on “visual proof,” also see OHSS: Mody, p. 233). Comparable hurdles lay in the path of automobile manufacturers’ “acoustics people,” who, in their research, “needed to find ways to have the test subjects *verbalize* their evaluation of sound in a maximally sophisticated manner” (OHSS: Cleophas and Bijsterveld, p. 109, italics in original; also see OHSS: Krebs, pp. 81–85, and OHSS: Pinch and Athanasiades, p. 492).<sup>14</sup> And on the use of electronic sounds in midcentury television ads, Timothy Taylor stresses that in “an industry that has always employed ordinary nontechnical language to describe music—since most advertisers and advertising agencies are not musicians—the difficulty of finding language to describe synthesized sounds was a problem in the early days of synthesizers” (OHSS, p. 402). Several of these cases deal with *transduction*, the process of “turn[ing] sound into something accessible to other senses” (OHSS: Pinch and Bijsterveld, p. 4; cf. SSR: Sterne, pp. 209–11), whether it be written text, graphs, colors, scents, or vinyl grooves. The unusual challenges of putting sounds into words may be one reason visual biases persist. Without precise rubrics and vocabularies, people face obstacles in their attempts to articulate how sounds matter.

14. Stefan Krebs similarly notes how oftentimes “the editors [of the *Allgemeine Automobil-Zeitung*] had difficulty making sense of the written accounts because motorists, despite the attempts to codify car sounds in handbooks and journals, shared no standardized vocabulary to describe their auditory experiences” (OHSS, 85).

Yet sound, naturally, *is* data in its own right. It need not undergo exhaustive transduction in order to convey values, opinions, and measurements. To this point, authors in SSR and OHSS engage the idea of *sonification*, broadly defined as the communication of information via nonverbal sound. Debates about sonification have been particularly salient in domains of science. “Sonification has been applied to a wide variety of data and phenomena,” remarks Alexandra Supper, “ranging from seismographic data to election results, from molecular structures to the electrical activity of the brain” (OHSS, p. 250). In their articles, conference presentations, and grant proposals, scientists rely heavily on visual data (charts, figures, numerals), but they also “work with their ears, fingertips, and taste buds. . . . Some [microscopists] consider sound better for perceiving change over time, while some combine visualization and sonification for a richer data environment” (OHSS: Mody, pp. 224–25). Skeptics of sonification dismiss it as a gratuitous endeavor, a gimmick that lacks and obstructs informational accuracy, efficiency, and comprehensiveness. Researchers who sing the praises of sonification, by contrast, insist that sound can make known certain things that other modes of representation cannot. In addition to improving data’s accessibility to sight-impaired individuals, sonification implicitly critiques hegemonies of sight and visualization. It calls attention to the fuzzy boundaries between science and art, between hearing and other senses (see OHSS: Sterne and Akiyama, p. 551).

Given sound studies’ far-reaching intellectual milieu, specters of democratization—ontological, epistemological, topical—are pervasive in SSR and OHSS. Disciplinarily, sound studies is an equal opportunity field: its doors are open to all sonic phenomena, making no *a priori* judgments on value or significance.<sup>15</sup> Procedurally, transduction and sonification set forth equalizing agendas in the way they redistribute the burden and affordances of data (more evenly) across the senses.<sup>16</sup> Technologically, democratic ambitions and illusions crop up in critiques of radio and race (SSR: Hilmes, p. 355), telephone and class (SSR: Martin, p. 347), and cellular phones and disability (SSR: Goggin, pp. 383–84). Discursively, writers adopt wide

15. In his seminal work on soundscapes, R. Murray Schafer proclaims that “today all sounds belong to a continuous field of possibilities lying *within the comprehensive dominion of music*. Behold the new orchestra: the sonic universe! And the musicians: anyone and anything that sounds!” (SSR, 97; italics in original).

16. Michael Bull and Les Back aspire to a “sensory democracy that . . . enables traces of the past to be registered in the present beyond what might be thought on first sight,” in *Auditory Culture Reader* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003), 2. Concerning sonification and the phonautograph, Jonathan Sterne and Mitchell Akiyama disavow facile appeals to the democratization of the senses: “This is not a claim about synesthesia or, worse, a desire to restore a so-called balance of the senses in an idealized sensorium. Rather, we argue that this extreme plasticity lays bare the degree to which the senses themselves are articulated into different cultural, technological, and epistemic formations” (OHSS, 545).

stances on agency in their analyses of relations between people, sounds, devices, and environments. Collaboration, as Jason Stanyek and Benjamin Piekut argue, involves “humans and nonhumans, all distributed and all effective. . . . The living can make no special claim on effectivity, nor do they *necessarily* maintain a relationship of dominance with the dead. . . . The effective agencies that we attribute to individual persons are always distributed across multiple mundanities and always involve co-labor” (SSR, pp. 308, 316–17; italics in original). In line with the de-anthropocentrizing impulses of actor-network theory, thing theory, and object-oriented ontology, Stanyek and Piekut effectively recognize the potentialities of all things.<sup>17</sup> Their work, broadly writ, invites us to ponder the intertwined narratives of sonic exceptionalism and human exceptionalism.

In his Introduction to SSR, Sterne says he hopes the volume “will be useful to people whose primary academic calling is not at first blush sonic” (SSR: p. 10). Indeed, scholars in the sciences and the humanities alike will find chapters of interest in SSR and OHSS. Since both volumes are brimming with valuable contributions, it would be unfair to fault them at length for what they leave out (such as—to a mildly surprising extent—dance, sexuality, sonic warfare, and other touchy topics that place senses and bodies at the fore). In the end, my true grumbles are minor, pertaining mainly to matters of presentation. For the most part, selections in SSR are judiciously excerpted: they average about ten pages each and tend to include discernible key arguments. Reading the volume, however, can be disorienting at times. An Acknowledgments section cites the source of each chapter, but when it comes to excerpts from articles in journals or in edited volumes, there is little indication of where exactly these excerpts fall—beginning or middle or end—within the original works.<sup>18</sup>

Essays in SSR and OHSS cite thousands of sources in total. While the bibliographies are impressive in scope, each book could have benefited from a concise list of Recommended Readings (not least for the sake of nonspecialists and students). Ultimately, both volumes are suitable as textbooks, though undergraduates are likely to find OHSS more accessible. Like most anthologies, the books are best read not from beginning to end, but on shuffle, as desired. As a bonus, OHSS has a companion website with links to webpages, videos, and sound files for ten of the book’s twenty-four chapters.

17. See John Law and John Hassard, eds., *Actor Network Theory and After* (Oxford, UK, and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999); Bill Brown, “Thing Theory,” *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (2001): 1–22; and Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology: Or, What It’s Like to Be a Thing*, Posthumanities 20 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

18. Without cross-checking SSR’s credits with their original sources, moreover, a reader has no way of telling that the essays by Berland, Crawford, Hosokawa, Bijsterveld, Altman, and Barthes are the (only) six chapters reproduced in full.

A few broken links and inaccessible YouTube clips aside, these supplementary materials are definitely worth the reader's attention.<sup>19</sup>

*The Sound Studies Reader* and *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies* are works of immense value. The former gathers and interlocks historical contributions to the field; the latter sails boldly into new horizons of inquiry. Many readers of this **Journal** are sure to find these books stimulating and applicable to their own work, musicological and otherwise. The two volumes complement each other beautifully and together set a high bar for sound studies research. For the moment, they are among our most eloquent guides to what the future of this field may hold.

WILLIAM CHENG

19. Some links on the Oxford companion website variously lead to YouTube videos with the error message "unavailable," "private," or "no longer exists."