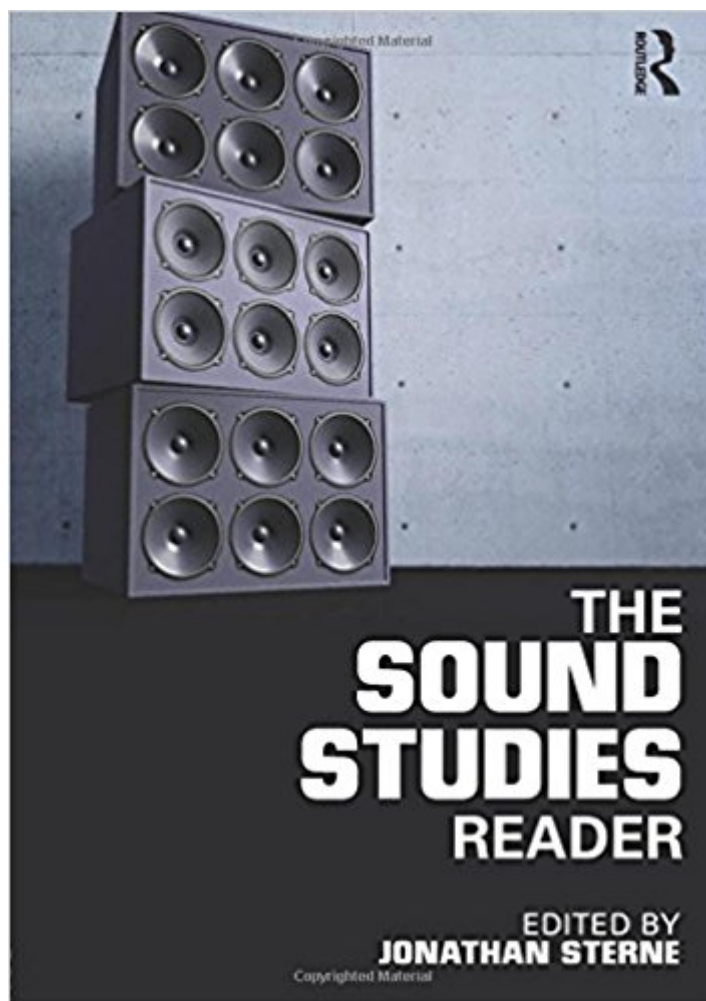


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The Sound Studies Reader



Synopsis

The Sound Studies Reader blends recent work that self-consciously describes itself as "sound studies" along with earlier and lesser-known scholarship on sound from across the humanities and social sciences. The Sound Studies Reader touches on key themes like noise and silence; architecture, acoustics and space; media and reproducibility; listening, voices and disability; culture, community, power and difference; and shifts in the form and meaning of sound across cultures, contexts and centuries. Writers reflect on crucial historical moments, difficult definitions, and competing accounts of the role of sound in culture and everyday life. Across the essays, readers will gain a sense of the range and history of key debates and discussions in sound studies. The collection begins with an introduction to welcome novice readers to the field and acquaint them the main issues in sound studies. Individual section introductions give readers further background on the essays and an extensive up to date bibliography for further reading in sound studies make this an original and accessible guide to the field. Contributors: Rick Altman, Jacques Attali, Roland Barthes, Jody Berland, Karin Bijsterveld, Barry Blesser, Georgina Born, Michael Bull, Adriana Cavarero, Michel Chion, Kate Crawford, Richard Cullen Rath, Jacques Derrida, Mladen Dolar, John Durham Peters, Kodwo Eshun, Frantz Fanon, Lisa Gitelman, Gerard Goggin, Steve Goodman, Stefan Helmreich, Michelle Hilmes, Charles Hirschkind, Shuhei Hosokawa, Don Ihde, Douglas Kahn, Friedrich Kittler, Brandon LaBelle, James Lastra, Richard Leppert, Michelle Le Sueur, Louise Meintjes, Mara Mills, John Mowitt, R. Murray Schafer, Ana María Ochoa Gautier, John Picker, Benjamin Piekut, Trevor Pinch, Tara Rodgers, Linda-Ruth Salter, Jacob Smith, Jason Stanyek, Jonathan Sterne, Emily Thompson, Frank Trocco, Michael Veal, Alexander Weheliye

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Customer Reviews

"Throughout the development of sound studies from both technological and aesthetic corners, the voice has accompanied the bolstering of the sonic and the new emphasis on listening and noise as an exemplifying force. Nowhere has that been clearer than in Jonathan Sterne's *The Sound Studies Reader*... In many instances, the articles contained within this volume offer a taste of a scholar's great theoretical expanse and can act as gateways for interested readers to dive into further research." - Gelsey Bell, *Journal of Interdisciplinary Voice Studies* "The Reader is an excellent collection and source of inspiration for all newcomers as well as old hands in sound studies research that crosses disciplines, methodologies and theories. It is also a "must" for academics in the humanities and sociology who have not yet encountered or dared to incorporate sound studies in their interdisciplinary study and research." - Ansa Linnstrup, Associate professor, Aarhus University, Denmark "The *Sound Studies Reader* manages to contain, in one (albeit fairly large) book, an amazing breadth of scholarly approaches to the study of sound. From phenomenological to anthropological to cultural studies to science and technology studies, the approaches range across disciplines, fields, and methodologies to offer a broad spectrum of thought on this very current topic. Alongside all of that, the choices also reflect care for writing and communication; they are accessible, readable, well-written. I have no doubt that I will be recommending this book to students frequently and for a long time to come. For those with any interest in this field, it needs to be on your shelf, if it isn't open and being actively consulted." Anahid Kassabian, University of Liverpool, UK 'The *Sound Studies Reader* provides so much food for thought that, in this brief space, I could only give some hints of its reach, the issues it addresses and the problems it raises. Needless to say, it will likely become a benchmark for anyone interested in this topic.' - Carlo Nardi, *Dancecult* '...we begin by recommending what we think is the most useful collection on sound studies to date...The result of Sterne's stance is a refreshingly balanced anthology that unflinchingly includes a variety of critical, historical, and theoretical perspectives.' Joshua Gunn, Greg Goodale, Mike M. Hall and Rosa A. Eberly, *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*

Jonathan Sterne teaches in the Department of Art History and Communication Studies and the History and Philosophy of Science Program at McGill University. He is author of *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (2003), *MP3: The Meaning of a Format* (2012); and

numerous articles on media, technologies and the politics of culture. He also makes sound. Visit his website at <http://sterneworks.org>.

Good

The articles in this book cover a wide spectrum of the relevant literature by key authors on sound, from listening, to music, diffusion, culture, etc. Very nice starting point for a serious research or as a source of readings for a course.

great book

5 Star seller, Thank you

The Sound Studies Reader, edited by Jonathan Sterne, is a comprehensive volume of brief to moderate sized articles focusing on the study of sound. Because this volume is a reader, none of the articles are necessarily related to each other and many are derived from various separate books. That being said, many connections can be made between articles based on content and reference to figures and occurrences. In general, Sterne's article selections focus on historical, culture, and analytical discussions on sound rather than scientific thesis or theories. The reader, published in 2012, includes a broad range of topics on sound in history such as acoustics in ancient religious establishments, the Memorex sound recorder, the Sony Walkman, and the Apple iPod. Sterne's reader is divided into six broad parts on different discussions of sound, each of which include about eight articles. Due to the wide variety of article content throughout the reader, section titles are not necessarily a useful device for determining the subject of an article. Many of the articles are interchangeable between sections. Substantially, there are many connections among articles between sections of the book. Some articles are much easier to interpret than others and the length of an article does not determine its clarity. This is due partly to the blurring of some articles' clarity as they are taken out of the context of their original publication. Although Sterne includes an extensive list of notes and references with each article, the original publication date of each article is difficult to determine as it is not included next to the title. This drawback can complicate the understanding of an article if context based on original publication date is unclear. In my study of this reader, I found three different articles in all of which the author discussed a

“soundscape” or “sonic landscape.” The first author to introduce this topic of study is R. Murray Schafer in his article, *The Soundscape*. Schafer begins by relaying his beliefs that the soundscape has changed for worse as noise pollution now encompasses much of this soundscape. He examines the history of soundscape and discusses its change through ages and cultures, and its influence by scientists, inventors, and music composers. Sterne includes an author who refers directly to this article in her own writing while taking a slightly different spin on the subject. In *Sound, Modernity and History*, Emily Thompson essentially elaborates on R. Murray Schafer’s *The Soundscape*. In this “sonic environment,” Thompson observes the soundscape of history versus the soundscape of today. In particular, she examines acoustics. In the third article, *Reading the Sonoric Landscape*, Richard Leppert does not refer to either of the aforementioned authors although a strong connection can be made between the readings as if all three authors collaborated for a comprehensive publication on the soundscape. Leppert takes a historical and philosophical stance on the subject and incorporates the sonic landscape into a visual piece of art. He qualifies this by stating that a sonic landscape can be visual, especially in its qualities of music and how the observer receives the sonic landscape. Sterne chose relative articles on similar or directly related topics and placed them in different sections of the reader. In studying the sonic landscape, the reader receives insight on the historical and sensory aspects of this subject. Mara Mills and Karin Bijsterveld both discuss similar health concerns and technological solutions for hearing. In *Hearing Aids and the History of Electronics Miniaturization*, Mara Mills observes the miniaturization of electronics in general as well as hearing aids’ specific role in this field. Although Mills cites hearing aids as being the first miniaturized electronic device, she studies the parts that make up the hearing aid such as “button mercury batteries and subminiature vacuum tubes. Mills discusses the definition and function of a miniature device and the market and pricing of hearing aids compared to devices of similar innovative history. As Mills discusses a technological device to improve a health situation, Bijsterveld discusses the history and issue of hearing loss. In *Listening to Machines: Industrial Noise, Hearing Loss and the Cultural Meaning of Sound*, Karin Bijsterveld discusses noise pollution; in particular, that which was found in industrial factories of the late 1800s and early 1900s. According to this article, initially, factory managers were criticized for maintaining an environment where young boys and men’s ears were damaged. Bijsterveld points out that the workers were against earplugs as they accepted hearing

loss as a part of life and felt in the right place immersed in the machines' noise. Sterne provides a greater appreciation for and understanding of sound through historic accounts and cultural analysis. The variation of articles demonstrate how sound can be appreciated as art or criticized as pollution. Sterne created a compilation depicting sound as a landscape of many elements influencing culture, history, and interactions between people groups. Major and minor occurrences of sound's influence can be found in *The Sound Studies Reader*, and the numerous articles provide a base for study and discussion.

I purchased this book for a project and it arrived on time and in the advertised condition. I cannot speak specifically about the content as the others working on the project are currently using the book. They have seemed to find it helpful so far, though.

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