

Editorial

JOHN FROW AND KATRINA SCHLUNKE

In *Individuals* (1959) the English philosopher P.F. Strawson tries to imagine a world where material bodies are not the basic particulars. His example of such a world is one in which our experience was purely auditory, and he assumes that such a universe would give us no spatio-temporal grounding. What is not clear is how, in this no-space universe, I could distinguish between states of myself, on the one hand, and what is not myself or a state of myself on the other: it is not clear, that is to say, how the notion of a subject of perception of sound could develop that would be different from sound itself; how there could be a distinction between the subject's experiences and the idea of that which has those experiences.

The first section of this special issue of *Cultural Studies Review* is devoted to the concept of noise and the roles it plays in a range of very different contexts. As Strawson's example demonstrates, perhaps despite its intentions, sound (and that 'wild' variant of sound that we call noise) seems to be situated at the margins of our epistemology: we think of it as being less grounded and less grounding than the other material dimensions of the world. If sound disorients our sense of who we are, noise does so even more strongly. That sense of disorientation or disruption or interference, and particularly of the political force of noise, lies at the heart of many of the essays presented here: the relation between noise and civilisation or between

music and the noises heard by travellers doing the Grand Tour, criminal noise and the legal status of silence, noise in political philosophy, mechanical noise, urban noise and the shaping of architectural space by noise, the soundscape of colonial settlement, and noise's affective force. We'll leave it to the section editors David Ellison and Bruce Buchan to describe the work done by each of the essays they have brought together; for the journal, we have found this a particularly important attempt to readjust the sensorium through which cultural studies usually imagines the material world and the cultural politics that flows from it.

Marcus Breen's 'Provocation', providing the transition to the essays that follow, meets the devil in cultural studies in the form of an anachronistic Nazi forerunner to the discipline: a reminder, writes Breen:

that the devil itself is part of the formation of cultural studies and every articulation, contingency and relationship incorporates forces at work that must be explored, revealed, described, critiqued and resisted. It cannot be assumed that cultural studies will continue as a critical exercise within the liberal institution, countering the narrowing of ideas in the shrinking neoliberal imagination.

That reminder is picked up in some of the essays that follow: in Gerhard Fischer's eloquent meditation on the genealogy of Anzac Day, for example, and in Robinder Kaur Sehdev's 'Beyond the Brink', which analyses what she calls the 'settler myth' of a Native American 'Maid of the Mist' and its displacement of Indigenous knowledge systems. In other essays, Emily Bullock reflects on the display of grotesqueries in a small Tasmanian museum and, through this exhibit, on the aesthetic status of junk. Jonathan Marshall's 'Information Technology and the Experience of Disorder'—picking up on some of the themes developed in the 'Noise' section—analyses the ways in which information technology works to generate disorder as much as to construct order. Camille Nurka's essay on shame and disgrace, built around a reading of Coetzee's *Disgrace*, undertakes an account of the 'gendered cultural articulation of the two terms', reading them as a distinction between an emotion 'of the body' and an emotion deriving from loss of 'face'. Finally, Saskia Beudel's essay on the introduced grass species Buffel grass explores a way of writing history that situates it along 'diverse and overlapping temporal registers such as weather, dust, faultlines, human histories, animal histories and histories of seeds', among others.

This is John Frow's final appearance as an editor of *Cultural Studies Review* before he moves to the University of Sydney in 2013. His essay on modes of identification in digital gaming and pornography is excerpted from his current work on fictional character, and it is followed by two short responses from Tony Bennett and Stephen Muecke. We would like to wish John well with all his future projects, thank him for his many contributions to the vibrancy of the journal and look forward to welcoming Chris Healy as a new(ish) fellow editor.