concrete ‘other’ of capital, which functions as its conditions of possibility and medium of reproduction, contains distinct ontological compulsions of its own, resisting and morphing value’s forms of appearance. Extensions to the Arthurist project should turn their attention this way.

While Arthur’s analysis eschews ’application’ to the empirical and historical contexts of abstract forms and their concrete bearers, Arthur does point to where possibility lies within the dynamic of the self-reproduction of the pure forms of capital. Arthur’s philosophically systematic theory of ‘pure form’ could be construed as the insistence that we must fully understand the social form of capital if we are to achieve conscious understanding of the historical material realm and act strategically. For Arthur, doing so necessitates that one interprets capital as a social ontology, where abstract social forms mediate the concrete world asymmetrically to pursue their own self-reproduction at the expense of life and the natural world.

The Spectre of Capital provides scholarship with a philosophical lens adequate to capital’s abstract forms. Self-restricted to ‘pure theory’, Arthur addresses the principles of capital’s social form in abstraction from their empirical history. What results, however, offers up a epistemic resource for historically informed empirical study. So framed, ’Arthurism’ might enable analysis to grasp the underpinning form of power behind historical development all the better. In this sense, the theoretical basis Arthur ventures establishes the groundwork for a political analysis and practice more fully aware of its opponent, granting insight into capital’s compulsions, determinations and preconditions. Without better understanding capital’s reproduction of social forms – and, correlatively, the question of why human agents continue to act as personifications of capital – actors, theoretical and practical, will fail to see the stakes of particular actions. Empirical analysis, as such, requires a robust understanding of abstract logical forms both to grasp the present and to envisage social life’s reproduction without capital. *The Spectre of Capital* is an imperative contribution to this ongoing project.

Rebecca Carson

Exiled sounds

Sam Dolbear and Esther Leslie, *Dissonant Waves: Ernst Schoen and Experimental Sound in the 20th century* (London: Goldsmiths Press, 2023). 320pp. £32.00 hb., 978 1 91338 056 4

Sam Dolbear and Esther Leslie’s book on the life and work of Ernst Schoen confronts two not dissimilar problems of memory and writing. How to write about radio, a form not reducible to denotation? And, how to depict a life of which the record is limited and partial?

As far as an analysis of Schoen’s main medium is concerned, Dolbear and Leslie’s task is aided by the fact that Schoen’s unpublished manuscript *Broadcasting: How It Came About* has been preserved along with magazines and programmes from the station that employed him, even if recordings for so many of the programmes he produced have not.

As for the second problem concerning limited biographical source material, this may be addressed through the use of conjecture and supposition. But there are manifold risks to such an endeavour; the biographer is pulled between loyalty to the presentation of experience in all its erratic messiness and the neat linearity of narrative. These dilemmas are all the more likely to confront those who document people and events at the fringes of official history. In *Wayward Lives*, *Beautiful Experiments*, her account of black feminist rebellions in New York and Philadelphia in the early twentieth century, Sadiya Hartman insists that studies of those made marginal to history must confront the boundaries of the archive and exclusivity of documentary records. The historian must, Hartman argues, press ‘at the limits of the case file and the document, speculate about what might have been, imagined things whispered in dark bedrooms and amplified moments of withholding, escape and possibility.’

In their study of Schoen, Dolbear and Leslie opt for a different biographical strategy, which they call,

borrowing from Theodor Adorno's study of 'Radio Physiognomics', the 'hear-stripe.' Adorno was referring to the background static one hears in radio reception that, in his view, generates a continuously moving sonic canvas upon which music is projected and by which it loses its own dynamism and reality. As Dolbear and Leslie deploy it, though, the hear-stripe refers to the foregrounding of archival gaps and silences, themselves products of world-historical events which bear scrutiny in their own right (in Schoen's case: the rise of German fascism, the Second World War and migration-cum-destitution). Equally, surviving ephemera that might otherwise be overlooked takes on new significance, from fairground photographs to dream journals. In this way, a life is reconstructed alongside the material and historical forces which shaped it without pretences to neat linearity nor comprehensiveness.

Born in 1894, among the most formative events in Schoen's early life was the 'dramatic' reading circle he formed as an adolescent in Berlin in 1910 alongside his friends Walter Benjamin and Alfred Cohn. This was a fecund period of scholarship and learning, including periods of study with composers Edgard Varèse and Ferruccio Busconi, and it lasted until 1916 when Schoen joined the infantry reserves. 'War's communicative armoury was being adapted for its aftermath', Dolbear and Leslie write and, indeed, following a period of work in a POW camp, Schoen entered a burgeoning media industry upon his return to Berlin in 1918. This included spells as a writer for a cultural newspaper, as an editor for a press agency, and as a press officer for the imperial coal concession, all between 1918 and 1922. It was a period when Schoen orbited a group of artists and writers at the intersection of dada and constructivism: Raoul Hausmann, Werner Graeff, Tristan Tzara, John Heartfield and, of course, his old friend Walter Benjamin.

From 1924, the year that radio for entertainment purposes emerges in earnest in Germany, Schoen joined the SÜWRAG station in Frankfurt as a programme assistant and was quickly promoted to lead its programming department. It was in this period lasting up to Hitler's rise to power that, searching out the possibilities inherent to a medium still in its infancy, Schoen conducted his most important work. This included the aforementioned book on broadcasting, as well as an early radio play produced alongside SÜWRAG director Hans Flesch and for which Schoen composed the music. Adventurous in its reflections on the new medium itself, the play drew complaints from listeners befuddled by its setting in a radio station and uncertain if they were hearing a work of fiction. Schoen might also be credited with the invention of the now customary short introductory lecture designed to present new pieces of music to audiences.

This was also a period where Schoen intervened in national cultural debates, including a controversy around the teaching of jazz in conservatories in 1927 which, for its detractors, amounted to an attack on Germanness. It's noteworthy that Schoen's position was more or less opposed to that of Adorno who, in a series of infamous essays published a few years later, would describe jazz as a pathological reflection of chattel slavery and discern in its rhythms the discipline of industrial society. Conversely, Schoen views jazz as a uniquely American form which should be celebrated for its revitalisation of European music with new techniques and instruments.

Where Schoen's name is known today, however, it's primarily for the work he did alongside Walter Benjamin around radio programming for children. The parlour games and sing-a-longs they aired renewed something of the mass dialogical possibilities of the medium. Radio could also function as a means of transgressing the borders by which children are segregated from adult worlds. Characteristically adult themes of crime or catastrophe were often the subject of Benjamin's stories for children while other plays commissioned by Schoen sought mischievously to lay bare the mechanisms of the studio. Along similar lines, Schoen's musical compositions for children unstiffened the severity of atonal music while refusing the uncomplicated melodies typically reserved for the young.

Dolbear and Leslie present Schoen as committed to the possibilities inherent to a then still open, virtual technology; the site of new forms, genres and styles against the 'bourgeois laws of inertia', as he once put it. But this period of experimentation was fated to be short-lived. By 1929 pro-government content was increasingly being imposed upon broadcasters and by 1932 growing state control led to increasingly centralised programming. By 1933 Hitler's speeches clogged the airwaves and Schoen had been dismissed. 'Radio was captured', in Dolbear and Leslie's words.

From this moment on, the Schoen archive gets es-

pecially patchy. In 1933 he is accused of having tried to cut transmissions of a speech of Hitler's and promptly arrested. He escaped but was detained a second time for programming socialists and Jews and was only released by virtue of a heroic act by his wife, Joanna Schoen, with whom he fled to England in May of 1934.

The Schoens' exile in London marks a period of hardship that would persist off and on for the rest of Ernst's life. Despite a few publications in the BBC Radio Times – one on opera, another on radio and others still on Webern and on Krenek – paid jobs were few and far between, and the frustrations of economic insecurity were compounded by the failure to get his history of broadcasting published. More or less steady work only arrived in 1940 when Schoen gained a post as a translator in the German section of the BBC External Services Department. This, in turn, led to his being sent by the BBC to Germany in 1947 to report on the post-war state of cultural institutions there. But to his great disappointment and despite his production of a programme for German Youth Radio, Schoen was mainly excluded from the cultural reconstruction of his native country. His proposal to the BBC for radio programming in the British Occupied Zones was ignored and he returned to Britain broke and frustrated.

Schoen returned a final time to Germany in 1952, never to leave again, after being made formally redundant by the BBC, though work there had already long dried up. This final period of his life is characterised by fruitless pursuits of both steady work and compensation from the German government. He eked out a precarious existence mainly as an archivist for the Deutches Theatre and as a translator of British literature until his death in 1960. The implication is partly that, as Dolbear and Leslie have it, there was no place for Schoen's ilk in the post-war world.

In this regard, it is useful to contrast Schoen with Adorno who, aside from Benjamin, was probably his most significant interlocutor, although 'frenemy' might be a more apt term. When Schoen sought publication of his study of broadcasting at the Frankfurt School, Adorno wrote to Horkheimer advising against it. In his letter Adorno called the work 'quite schematic and empty' and described Schoen as not being 'theoretically gifted.' Around the same period, in a letter to a friend Schoen described Adorno's theory of music as both replete with conceptual shortcuts and blunders and 'almost schizophrenic in its snobbism.' Whether or not these accusations were justified, Adorno's sustained obliviousness to the hardships faced by Schoen after 1933 comes off as insensitive at best; a sentiment underscored by his response to Schoen's decision to turn down a request to

help collate Benjamin's writings. Schoen wrote to Adorno that he felt 'separated from [Benjamin's texts] by an abyss, out of which we try to climb today only with endless efforts, a struggle which will, I suppose hang over us for the rest of our lives.' Upon receiving Schoen's letter Adorno reported to Gershom Scholem that Schoen had declined, he suspected, because they hadn't chosen an East German publisher for Benjamin's works.

The theory of radio is another point of discord between Adorno and Schoen and we can piece together the outlines of a riposte to Adorno's unrelenting pessimism vis-a-vis music's technological mediation. Radio, for Adorno, marks a final stage in the capitalist corruption of musical culture whereby the intensity of the musical statement is lost to the acoustic conditions of small domestic spaces and to its integration into quotidian time. Authoritarianism pervades where programming standardises experience into a schedule and where voices are disembodied. To broadcast symphonic works is to atomise them, especially for the new listener lacking musical education or context. Musical colour and texture are lost by mechanical reproduction and this, in turn, makes music's culinary consumption all the easier.

In contrast, Schoen adopts the expediency of the programmer and so, operating in an altogether different theoretical register, retains radio as a site of possibility. Schoen's argument aligns with Adorno's insofar as he holds that the remediation of earlier forms for radio, whether opera or theatre music, can't simply entail their reproduction. This would 'disable' the listener lacking visual cues or a sense of wider context. Radio must, therefore, strive for a form 'that is essentially original and its own.' But the constitution of a new listening subject will demand a new pedagogy too, and this will involve careful selection of works and historical explication, demonstrations of how light forms are derived from high art, and so on.

Music in industrial society can become more than mere adornment, Schoen holds, but only if a social need for it can be construed. I have already mentioned the use of parlour games, sing-a-longs and quizzes and, in this light, we should discern these Brechtian gestures bending radio away from uni-directional transmission as attempts to interrupt audience passivity. But Schoen also insists that one needs to recognise the social situation whereby radio is consumed by the worker exhausted at the end of his shift: low standards are imposed on him which he must be equipped to resist.

Friedrich Kittler once characterised the emergence of radio networks as a result of efforts to retain control over mass communication against the nearly two hundred thousand demobilised German radio operators who kept their equipment after World War I and put it to 'anarchistic abuse.' With Schoen we encounter something like a continuity of this abuse of a technology and, given Dolbear and Leslie's presentation of his life, we confront a thought arrested by the terrors of war and its aftermath.

Paul Rekret

Tourists of the world, unite!

Hiroki Azuma, *Philosophy of the Tourist* (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2022). Translated by John D. Person. 256pp., £25.00 pb., 978 1 91510 300 0

In *The Case against Travel*, Agnes Callard writes that tourism turns us into the worst version of ourselves. Far away from 'home' – any metropolis in the Global North – the tourist does silly things nobody wants to hear about; writing postcards or taking photos of animals. Taking her own experience at a falcon hospital in Abu Dhabi as an example, she writes:

> I took a photo with a falcon on my arm. I have no interest in falconry or falcons, and a generalized dislike of encounters with nonhuman animals. But the falcon hospital was one of the answers to the question, 'What does one do in Abu Dhabi?' So I went.

She found the trip 'dehumanizing'. Back home, her life contained 'zero falconry' just as before. If the birds were not transformative, they taught her something about tourism: 'we already know what we will be like when we