

seems already to have been adapted for film—replete with cuts, flashbacks, reverse shots, and voice-overs. The camera (and Bomberger’s witty, light-handed prose) takes us from Boston to San Diego, from New York’s Carnegie Hall to Indiana’s three-a-day vaudeville halls; and the juxtapositions, the recurrences, the contrasts tell us more than any single scene or person. The result adds much to our apprehension of the changing currents in US society, many of which are still stirring the waters today. *Making Music American* should and will be read with pleasure and gain for many years to come.

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*Digital Sound Studies*. Edited by Mary Caton Lingold, Darren Muellwer, and Whitney Trettien. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018.

The introduction of *Digital Sound Studies* peals to the horned production of W. Eugene Smith’s *Jazz Loft Project*.<sup>1</sup> Lingold, Mueller, and Trettien’s aural processing from the cracks, thumps, and cacophonies on the documented recording becomes a conduit to address sonic studies, digital collection, and scholarly methodology. Succinctly, the authors posit how: “This book dwells in these various interstices as both a testament to the transformative value of experimenting with digital tools and reinvestment in interpretive practices that always attend to the human” (3–4). Moreover, the authors reimagine scholarly practices through multisensory tactics to expand the canon of humanities-centered pedagogy, research, and recording practices. What is the academy missing by centralizing the bodied text as the genesis for multimodal assessment, epistemology, and archival studies? How do the compiled authors create a discourse that adopts sonar and tactile practices—more specifically, how is their research an echolocation of cultural impact and critical theories in the humanities?

The essays in *Digital Sound Studies* synthesize sound and collaboration. The authors pull from similar wells of interdisciplinary scholars and projects, referencing W. Eugene Smith, *Outkasted Conversations*, and *Provoke!* digital projects across multiple essays. Moreover, each scholar positions their work to encourage experimental, pedagogical, and communal practices. This exploration of sound is indicative of renegotiating the humanities from nerve to flesh, harnessing the capability to reconsider earwitnessing as methodology and praxis. Such a vibration can create new shelters in a violent soundscape. For example, contemporary artist Nick Cave creates hundreds of ornate, intricate sound suits crafted from grief and trauma

<sup>1</sup>This includes such jazz artists like Thelonious Monk, Sonny Rollins, and Charles Mingus. W. Eugene Smith was a former *Time* photographer who visually and canonically recorded jazz recordings.

he processed after the Los Angeles Police Department's 1991 assault of Rodney King. Cave's work reinforces the necessity of sound as experience, art, and theory. His work showcases the trajectory of grief into a brocaded sound study:

I started thinking about the role of identity, being racially profiled, feeling devalued, less than, dismissed. And then I happened to be in the park this one particular day and looked down at the ground, and there was a twig. And I just thought, well, that's discarded, and it's sort of insignificant. And so I just started then gathering the twigs, and before I knew it, I had built a sculpture.<sup>2</sup>

And so sound is also indicative of impact that reverberates into the making of the intangible, the loom (in the case of Nick Cave) from grief that is without grammar and also bound to the systemic tide of whiteness. Artistically, I come into sound work through poetry with a focus on studying the racial and cultural inversion of sound and its relationship to enslaved rebellions—more specifically, inquiring the prior and aftermath of the Stono Rebellion where consequently, drums were banned as a result.<sup>3</sup> More recently, I study sound and its relationship to healing and joy in Black culture through multimedia. Moreover, this text provides a contemporary possibility of classroom and research work that is innovative and communal. The essays in *Digital Sound Studies* examine how sound is contained but held in the body, held through the body but heard through institutions and a cacophony of additional casual, aural effects.

The text begins a multisensory framing through four parts. The first section, "Theories and Genealogies," discusses critical ethnography, ethnodigital sonics, and rhetorical folkness. This includes Richard Cullen Rath defining sonics, Eurocentrism bias, and historical imagination through his digital and musical interpretation of African music. Myron M. Beasley explains how a DJ playing a remixed song with Zora Neale Hurston, expands the constraint on Black cultural production and Black humanistic inquiry (49). Furthermore, Hurston's paralinguistic methodology was paramount to Black archival and anthropological methods. Through the track, Beasley critically soundtracks Hurston's haunting influence on orality, blues, and more. The theory section concludes with Jonathan W. Stones's discussion on the foretelling and innovation of Walter J. Ong's "secondary orality" and contemporary technology.<sup>4</sup>

The second section titled "Digital Communities," describes digital platforms and creation between scholars and listeners. Jennifer Stoeber, Aaron Trammel, and Liana Silva detail their creation of the *Sounding Out!* academic blog in "The Pleasure (IS) Principle."<sup>5</sup> The editors unravel their praxis that guides their relationship in producing and maintaining the site: "Very deliberately and through multiple means, *Sounding Out!* spins a center of gravity for sound studies, enabling a sense of

<sup>2</sup> San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, "Discussion Questions: Nick Cave's *Soundsuit*," <https://www.sfmoma.org/read/discussion-questions-nick-cave-soundsuit/>.

<sup>3</sup> Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975).

<sup>4</sup> Walter J. Ong, *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology; Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971).

<sup>5</sup> *Sounding Out!*, <https://soundstudiesblog.com/>.

community, effort, pleasure, and enthusiasm to fuel the push to new areas” (98). They are astute in their “unequivocal stance that politics matter both within and without the field,” and that race, class, gender, and disability studies are fixed discussions for content, research, and listening practices. Accordingly, Jennifer Stoever also wrote *The Sonic Color Line: Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening*, a text that is paramount to contemporary race and sound discourse.<sup>6</sup> In “Becoming Outkasted,” Regina N. Bradley discusses the making and engagement of her hip hop digital conversations inspired by Southern artists Outkast and Mark Anthony Neal’s “Left of Black.” In “Reprogramming Sounds of Learning,” W. F. Umi Hsu curates sonic pedagogical practices that encourage collaboration and experimentation built from his Digital Music-Cultures course. He expands his strategies through the reprogramming principles of “remediation, reflexivity, and resonance” (134). He includes concrete assignments and practices to integrate into the classroom that enrich sensory analysis and community engagement. This is especially important in considering how sound studies, particularly sound studies beyond music, has the propensity to witness cultural footprint and bridge kinship across identities and regions.

The third section on “Disciplinary Translations” includes scholars who have created and assessed platforms for capturing or interpreting sonic languages. Tanya E. Clement defines the “sociotechnical perspective” in order to discuss the classification, methodology, and transcription for a digital humanities project on analyzing spoken word poetry (156). She unravels the equipment, prosody, and paralinguistic in the project called High Performance Sound Technologies for Access and Scholarship (HiPSTAS). The project is a multi-institutional and multischolar collaboration all powering a platform to analyze spoken-word audio using niche “supercomputing” technologies (157). Thereafter, Michael J. Kramer studies the convergence of imagery, sound, and text by examining data sonification and folk music. Through digital sound design, Kramer posits how the “viewable body” complicates the symbolic racial and regional remixing (187). Through “algorithmic experimentation” and specific computation, he becomes increasingly aware of seemingly *quiet*, sonic concepts of gender and class. In “Augmenting Musical Argument,” Joanna Swafford describes her process with creating Augmented Notes, “a tool to help make the highly specialized language of music accessible to nonmusicians” (215). Swafford’s platform expanded language accessibility to read sheet music and further interrogate her interests in gender, sound, and poetry.

The last section, titled “Points Forward,” includes essays on “Historical Epistemologies” and “Sound Practices for Digital Humanities.” Rebecca Dowd Geoffroy-Schwinden’s essay interrogates the sociopolitical influence of reenactments, historical soundscape, and aural histories through her examination of digital projects like the web collection “*Provoke!*, Organs of the Soul: Sonic Networks in Eighteenth-Century Paris.” Steph Ceraso creates an explicit blueprint for sound practices that “amplify the ecological relationship between sound, bodies, and

<sup>6</sup> Jennifer Lynn Stoever, *The Sonic Color Line: Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

environments” (251). This blueprint includes a multimodal praxis that redefines universal design and user experience.

The final portion of *Digital Sound Studies* features an interview with the volume’s editors and Jonathan Sterne, editor of *The Sound Studies Reader*.<sup>7</sup> They discuss the intricacies of digitization and highlight certain Zora Neale Hurston and technology platforms. However, they also critique the trajectory of peer-reviewed publishing, academic writing accessibility, and other less highlighted sonic studies like poetics. This is where the text has room for expansion—addressing poetics and visualization in the digital field. How does Tina Camp’s recent text on *Listening to Images* configure into digital transcription?<sup>8</sup> How are sound studies scholars approaching Afro-Pessimism, the Wake, or the avant-garde into their aural mechanics and discourse?<sup>9</sup> How is the sound study field integrating digital cultural rhetoric scholars who are utilizing sound as a social justice praxis for language interventions and translations?<sup>10</sup> However, this is also indicative of larger inquiries the academy is burgeoning to address in reference to the framework and utility of sound. This text situates the vibration as a fluid but canonical study with an opportunity to critically imagine projects and multimodal studies for new shelter in the humanities.

Kimberly Williams

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Sterne, *The Sound Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Tina M. Camp, *Listening to Images* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Frank B. Wilderson, III, *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Christina Elizabeth Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016); and Uri McMillan, *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> Digital Cultural Rhetoric Scholars Angela Haas, Laura Gonzalez, and Victor Del Hierro.