

cept for media studies, they also find it hard to get established in Italy; b) secondly, theoretical ones: contemporary society is heavily constructed also through media, however, often the issue of the ontological status of communication and of its media technologies does not receive the attention it deserves, especially in Italy where the reflection on communication intended as social fact is very much influenced by the reflection on cultural industry.

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David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny (eds.)

Keywords in Sound, Durham, Duke University Press, 2015, pp. 272

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Sound studies is a newly emergent interdisciplinary field. *Keywords in Sound* is an attempt to address some of the foundational debates underlying sound studies as well as provide thought-provoking essays on different topics to do with sound. The theme if anything is anthropological: to capture sound in its multifaceted nature globally and historically and to get away from and challenge the rather narrow conception and examples of sound prevalent in the standard Western canon. This is a promising approach. Even an entry on a staid topic like “the Body” is given new resonance through Deborah Kapchan’s essay which describes a sufi singer in North Morocco and how she experiences her sounding body. In this rendition sound becomes part of a new turn to ontology. The ontological turn and posthumanism indeed provide the sounding boards for many

contributors.

The pedagogical idea of the volume is also a good one: to force individual contributors to take examples from their own work and push on the example to engage with some of the critical points of discourse swirling around sound studies. So think more Raymond Williams "Keywords" on culture than some sort of lexicon of definitions and explanations of useful terms. It is more a book to think with and teach with than to give to people as an introduction to the field. It is a book to place in dialogue with the major works in the field.

Many of the central figures in sound studies such as, Steven Feld, Mark Smith, Tom Porcello, Jonathan Sterne, Stefan Helmreich and Charles Hirschkind have contributions. Authors who have carried out major studies such as Tara Rodgers, on female contributions to electronic music, Mara Mills on sonic technologies and disability, David Novak on Japanese music, and Tom Rice on stephoscopic listening are also contributors.

The major terms at the core of sound studies that one would expect are there, such as "acoustemology" (a beautiful essay by Steven Feld on its importance - and in only 10 pages!); "noise" (David Novak of course), "silence" (a beautiful essay by Ana Maria Ochoa Gautier), "listening" (Rice), and hearing (Sterne). Strangely absent is Murray Schafer's term "soundscape". Although that term is today heavily criticized (as Novak and Skeeny point out in their introduction), it is still surely worthy of an entry. New terms such as "transduction" (Helmreich) gain truculent attention. Also familiar terms such as "echo" and "resonance" are reworked in interesting ways. Marc Smith explores echo as a way of thinking about how sound does or does not appear in historical writing. Veit Erlmann takes almost the opposite tack and offers a genealogy of "resonance" on the borderlands between philosophy, science and the humanities.

Readers of this journal will be a bit disappointed in the lack of sonic technologies explored. Radio and phonography are covered but if the goal was to make keywords resonate with the sonic experiences of today's readers, it is odd that there is little on the sonic devices and experiences that animate today's listeners: music streaming, laptop DJs, mobile listening, smart phones and so on. The book indeed has a sort of "classic" humanities echo to it despite of (or maybe because of) its anthropological good intentions. Entries on "music", "language", "image" and "acoustics", although the individual authors always run with interesting examples, reflect somehow an older genealogy.