

Duncombe's argument that punk's anti-establishment rhetoric ties it to the thing which punk would like to negate (a thoroughly Hegelian way of thinking, of course) by arguing that 'dominant culture is the negative' whereas 'oppositional identity is a positive response' (p. 57).

Such a reading of the problem – punk is positive, dominant culture is negative, essentially – is a pretty unconvincing either/or argument, in fact. Some readers (critical thinkers who are not punks, as well as punks who desire something more than just resistance and rebellion) will not be convinced by the book as a whole and, therefore, I repeat that this monograph is not the last word on punk. Nevertheless, it offers an enjoyable and interesting read which researchers can build upon in the future; I imagine, also, that many less- or non-academic readers could profit from the text, which seems to be a (laudable) ambition of Dunn's.

Pete Dale

Manchester Metropolitan University
p.dale@mmu.ac.uk

Reference

Duncombe, S. 1997. *Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* (London, Verso)

***The Production and Consumption of Music in the Digital Age*. Edited by Brian J. Hracs, Michael Seman and Tarek E. Virani. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016. 277 pp. ISBN 978-1138851658**
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Redefining its styles and formats at breathtaking speed popular music culture 'destabilises both theory and politics. Music critics, never mind the academics, have to run to keep up' (McRobbie 1999, p. 111). With the advent of digitalisation music critics and academics have to run faster than ever, which is why works like *The Production and Consumption of Music in the Digital Age* are welcome contributions to the conversation on the moving target that is contemporary music culture. The collection sets up the ambitious task of analysing the impact that digitalisation *is having* on the music industry – the workers, the artists and the consumers. No matter how 'current' it will read in the near future, it already achieves a crucial and much needed task, debunking the enduring myth of what I call 'digi-optimism'. Technologically reductionist in nature and informed by the rhetoric of 'convergence' and the agentic prosumer, 'digi-optimism' frames digitalisation in mostly positive terms: artists are freed from the constrictive politics of major labels, consumers congregate on virtual scenes to talk, share and find their own peers more easily than ever, the Internet provides the means for democratised access to all music ever published. So often the teleological narrative behind 'digi-optimism' remains unchallenged. This book, to the contrary, systematically rejects facile enthusiasms.

In the 'Recording' section the first corrective comes from Watson, who looks at the world of music production empowered by Digital Audio Workstations. The practitioners he interviews make the most of the flexibility and portability of their home studios, but also open up about the perils of being reachable and productive 24/7. Watson's analysis of the 'extensification and intensification' (p. 17) of engineering

work adds to the by now vast literature on the precariousness and often exploitative nature of creative jobs (Gill and Pratt 2008). Arditi zooms into the 'space' and 'time' of recording to look at how corporations capitalise on the new, decentralised recording practices to cut down on costs of studio time and labour. He makes a convincing case for the correlation between the contracting of studio work to small independents and the exploitation experienced by workers at all levels, from musicians to interns.

The 'Working' section describes major shifts in the everyday lives of musicians, beginning with Hracs's research on the independent sector in Toronto. Building on his own work from the past few years, his fieldwork suggests how the inherited bohemian 'way of life' of DIY artists is being substituted by one that looks at the suburbs for lower rents and deals with a nearly full-time preoccupation with reaching audiences across various platforms. Garnering a sense of exclusivity and driving attention to the value of their art compels musicians to become their own entrepreneurs, a 'forced' necessity confirmed by Speers in her chapter on the London hip-hop scene and by Haijen with regard to Dutch hip-hop. Creative careers in the record industry, Frenette reminds us in his chapter, are driven by the enduring appeal of non-monetary rewards. The feeling of 'working at a candy factory' (p. 85), as one of his respondents puts it, can compensate for precariousness and low income, but initial excitement can turn into plain disenchantment. Frenette's analysis echoes well-known findings on the nature of creative labour. It is when he cites factors specifically exacerbated by digitalisation that he makes his strongest contribution: tedious work hours spent administering social media; the near impossibility of navigating and absorb the current music overload. An effect of the decrease in sales and the reorganisation of the music industry after the 'Mp3 crisis', live music has become increasingly important for artists and labels, which is why the 'Playing' section of the book is where the most optimistic essays of the collection cluster. Jansson and Nilsson, writing about Sweden, provide a very useful analytical map to unpack the many functions played by music festivals. At a time when the *loci* of the music industry are increasingly dislocated, festivals become 'temporary spaces' (p. 147), crucial for networking and reputation building. Wynn and Dominguez-Villegas also concentrate on social capital and mobility, looking at the US folk festival circuit. Through an analysis of the artists' movements between festivals, the authors advocate a 'geography of genre' (p. 140), recognising a specifically 'folk' predisposition for collaboration in their own object of analysis, The Newport Folk Festival. For Virani opportunity of growth comes in the form of resilience. Researching the life of an experimental music venue in Dalston, London, he underlines how the venue manages to maintain a local and global presence, by establishing trans-local networks, digitising its archive of exclusive performances and redistributing public funding across projects. This success story is a good example of how, despite the challenges stirred by the de-materialisation of subcultural capital, live music can both bolster and transcend locality. However, is it accurate to conclude that 'this venue has created and used its local and trans-local networks to re-establish the identity of the local scene, and in doing so, has made it resilient' (p. 111)? Dalston is the same area where music clubs (and musicians themselves) are continuously priced out by increasing rents and the 'side effects' of gentrification. And how really diverse (and therefore representative) is the audience of a venue that caters to lovers of experimental music? These and other questions need to be asked to verify whether the whole scene, rather than just one of the main venues embedded in it, can be deemed resilient.

Part V, 'Distributing' offers a series of examples of how different businesses respond to the current dispersal of value. Record stores certainly benefited from the vinyl revival, but in 'post-modern Los Angeles' (p. 202), Sonnichsen argues, they need to carefully translate their world-making (and often romanticised) aesthetic through their online visibility in order to attract customers – just like musicians? Against the assumption that *all* artists can now adopt the '360 degree' model (an entrepreneurial mindset based on the pursuit of profits through any potential money-making asset or activity available, merchandise being only one of them), Bürkner, researching the EDM scene in Berlin, argues that for independent artists a 'trial and error' system is more likely to be in place. Tracks are often uploaded online for free, but through a strategic mobilisation of their social capital, artists can build their reputation and in turn strengthen their 'sonic capital' (Bürkner's own Bourdieusian coinage, very close in breadth and definition to Sarah Thornton's 'subcultural capital', which is surprisingly absent in his chapter). Pratt glosses the 'Distributing' section with a stern demystification of 'digi-optimism': in fact, he even positions himself against the very notion of 'digital age' echoed in the title of the collection, arguing for 'the need to turn our attention to the social and spatial embedding of musical practice' (p. 207). Using the field of copyright music as his entry point (and providing an impressive overview of the theoretical and practical ambiguities related to the concept of 'ownership'), he concludes that geography, materiality and the social need to be taken into account instead of making generalisations based on 'the digital global free market dream' (p. 216). The lack of resources of countries from the Global South to render international copyright conventions effective, says Pratt, exemplifies the need for more 'nuanced' accounts, capable of encompassing 'the subtle relationships of making and remaking music under particular local (legal, technical, and artistic) conditions' (p. 217). Pratt also hints at the fact that we might have overlooked those connections because of our protracted focus on consumption rather than production. Granted, consumption was probably one of the most fertile terrains for the advocates of 'convergence' culture, but as Arriagada states, opening the last section of the collection titled 'Promoting and Consuming', we still know relatively little about the consumption of music in the digital era. Whereas technology offers dedicated fans of the Santiago indie scene an opportunity to garner status and recognition within a 'mediated music scene' (p. 235), and it allows artists to co-create with fans through systems of crowdsourcing (Leyson *et al.*), it renders music journalists and tastemakers potentially irrelevant, for example. Lange describes the advent of algorithm-based forms of recommendation, which, together with the proliferation of unprofessional blogging, have destabilised the role of traditional intermediaries. Lange's contribution opens up an important conversation on one of the many 'elephants in the room' of the digital age in music: when there is so much music out there that artists need to become full-time entrepreneurs to emerge and fans rely on algorithms to sift through, what is the role of (professional) aesthetic evaluation? From the struggles of Hracs's independent musicians to gain visibility to the disenchantment of Frenette's music industry practitioners, unable to 'keep up' with music releases, the aesthetic question might as well be the unspoken *fil rouge* of this collection, and it surely will be a fruitful object of analysis from future research in the field.

Giuseppe Zevolli

King's College London
giuseppe.zevolli@kcl.ac.uk

References

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- McRobbie, A. 1999. In *The Culture Society. Art, Fashion and Popular Music* (London, Routledge)

Vinyl Records and Analog Culture in the Digital Age: Pressing Matters.
By Paul E. Winters. Lexington Books, 2016. 208 pp. ISBN 978-1-4985-1007-3.
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With vinyl record sales at their highest since 1988, new publications are appearing with some rapidity. Paul Winters takes on the challenge of keeping up with the fast moving subject matter while writing this book (p. xi), which aims to unpick such 'pressing matters'. Winters looks at how technological aspects of the vinyl format feed into the social context of consumption, from a postmodern view. He examines core areas such as fidelity of sound, counter-hegemonic attitudes, authenticity, aesthetics, collectorship and commodity fetishism as well as the role of the internet and social media in recent mainstream usage, arguing that the resurgence is attributable to 'both an outgrowth of and a reaction to the explosion of digital media and the information revolution' (p. xv). Key contributions to the field are acknowledged, such as Eisenberg (1987) and Sterne (2003).

The book starts from ideas of fidelity using the metaphor of Barraud's famous 1898 painting 'His Master's Voice', which advertised the gramophone and subsequently the music shop of the same name. One key insight is explored: 'taming technology is only ever partial, and it requires constant renegotiation in order to retain its place in the parlour' (p. 4). A fascinating description of the Edison Realism Tests in 1916 shows fidelity and technological advance intertwined with marketing tactics, with participants being primed to change their response to fit in with Edison's own expectations of the cylinder and its fidelity to live sound. Fidelity 'not only trains listening subjects in what to hear, it also trains them in what they should be listening for, what to expect and anticipate when they are listening' (p. 5). Fidelity cannot evoke the original aura of the performance but is, rather, a new creation devised by the technology involved, which has sparked ongoing debate to the present day among audiophiles chasing the 'dream of sublimity' (p. 15).

The second chapter extends Benjamin's aura with The Beatles as a case study: 'it might be worth noting how much the question of aura plays into aesthetic assessments of recording entities, and in fact the entire idea of who the Beatles are as a cultural phenomenon' (p. 32). Vinyl records are reproductions devoid of the original time and space, but might 'encourage new experiences and generate new traditions' (Katz, 2004, 15, quoted on p. 32). There follows an intriguing discussion of the control kept by the Beatles' rights owners, in terms of selling on i-Tunes but retaining mono-phonic mixes as much as possible. Mono mixes on vinyl with little intervention are considered the most authentic as opposed to the 'bastardisation' (p. 38) by Capitol, with the Beatles being the only artists to go from analogue to digital and back to analogue, albeit in a very different world. Aura then becomes a 'social construct' (p. 38) conceived differently to Benjamin but still aiming to replicate the original.

Chapter 3 introduces potential reasons why vinyl has become popular again, owing to its being 'comfort food' (p. 47) in a vacuous world, anti-industry backlash, the enjoyment of rituals and searching for the rarest record, or nostalgia. This chapter