



Week 7: The Sound of New Media

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Historically, print and writing with pen and paper have been privileged over all other forms of meaning-making in composition

The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal Composing

Cynthia L. Selfe

Selfe advocates teachers of composition pay attention to multiple modalities, not just print, and she especially advocates using sound when composing

The scientific revolution normalized visual representations of data via graphs and charts. This would eventually bleed over into composition classrooms



The history of composition centered around orality, speeches, debates, sermons... However, rising industrial manufacturing and scientific discovery shifted business and institutional focus to better written communication

Technological innovations (printing press, typewriter, etc.) expedited the shift toward greater numbers of written rather than oral communication

Let's talk about traditions

Aurality Continued

According to Selfe, since women and other minorities in the 19th and early 20th centuries were denied access to higher education and the ability to become literate, they kept the oral tradition of learning alive through church ceremonies, performances, poetry and song

Drawing from this historical background of an overemphasis on written works and great neglect of orality and sound in composition, Selfe states that teachers should be aware of the variety of affordances aurality can give students who may not be as comfortable with writing as they are with another meaning-making mode of composing.

The cultivated tradition of sitting in silence and reading and writing is one that has barely evolved in the past several decades due to the emphasis on professionalism, science, and manufacturing.



Questions on the Selfe Reading



Question 1:

Selfe introduces historical facts about how the American education system had gone through a “reform” to compete with other global powers with a unified curriculum. By undoing the wrongs of this “reformed” education system little by little, we accommodate for various cultures, learning styles and cognitive strategies. What other pedagogical techniques do you wish we brought back / implemented from other countries’ pedagogy?

Question 2:

Outside of group projects and presentations, how can auditory education be brought back into the classrooms across disciplines? Can you think of any other “unorthodox” approaches to “standard education” from your K-12 educational experience?

VanKooten compares composition in writing to composition in chorus music, using the four main ideas:

Singer, Writer Crystal VanKooten

1. Connection

Blending ideas together as a harmony comes together in a chorus. Chora is defined as creation through intuition. Further, the author discusses combining several ideas for a unique blend (chords) and the mimicking of pre-existing sounds (or ideas; fugue).

2. Body

Posture & proper technique - including a writer's silence / keyboard clicking. Hands moving in a way that produces sound and letters on a screen.

3. Emotion

The joy one feels while performing - or in the case of a writer, the joy of bringing ideas together in your composition. Communication is emotional; therefore, writing contains emotion, too. Different people will have different reactions to composition.

4. Collaboration

Sharing your composition with others - including peer reviews, exchanging ideas and so on. A choir is incomplete without everyone knowing their part and the rhythm to go with it



VanKooten demonstrates these ideas in an avant-garde video, showcasing audio recordings from her analysis and layering them over each other as a metaphorical “chorus” of ideas.

Questions on the Vankotten Reading

Question 1:

While this is an unorthodox and fascinating combination of composition and chorus singing by overlapping audio in a video presentation, do you feel that this presentation was distracting of its original message or did it benefit the idea that composition for musical and literary work can work in “harmony,” as depicted here?

Question 2:

What other examples can you think of where “juxtaposing” ideas can be presented at the same time, but can work in “harmony?” Can this idea of “juxtaposing harmony” exist in the composition world?



Navigating the Soundscape, Composing with Audio

This section highlights Sonic Rhetoric/Scholarship and Sonic Pedagogy,

Sonic Scholarship defined by nine examples of potential forms of audio composition:

- Audio drama (fiction), audio drama (non-fiction), aural history, poetry and prose, audio journals, audio memoirs and audio essays.
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Sonic Pedagogy, by contrast, discusses auditory learning and its advantages in the classroom, as well as increased cognition by sensory engagement.

Every composer used sound in their podcasts intentionally. The students would employ sound during instances where simply telling the story wasn't enough—they wanted their audience to be physically queued when certain events like a car crash or phone call happened



ON AIR

Navigating the Soundscape and its Questions

Question 1

Of some of the ones we listened to, what podcast(s) stood out to you and why? Was it because of the story, sound, both?

Question 2

Many of the students mention silence and its use within works using audio. We don't often consider silence until it happens, and even then, it makes many uncomfortable. Why are we not comfortable with silence? What can silence add to multimodal compositions?

The Technology of Storytelling

Joe Sabia



This section highlights the common themes through the evolution of storytelling.

Sabia presents Lothar Meggendorfer as one of the first of many to presevent **novelty** back into **storytelling**.

For 400 years, books were produced in a very similar fashion - until Meggendorfer's **pop-up book** invention in the 1800s.

Since then, we tell the heart of the stories in similar ways, only with newer ways to surprise audiences.

For example - film, the internet, television, etc.

Discussion of storytelling and its evolution

Notice Sabia gives his entire presentation using several different kinds of technology- Google Translate, Google Earth, digital tablet, etc.

At one time, the people of the world had only their voices and bodies to deliver stories and entertainment to each other. As people became more literate and able to produce recorded texts, storyBOOKS took over the art of song and dance when conveying ideas. Technology helped add sound and visuals back into stories and made it possible to do with just one person!

Question 1

Can you think of an instance where visuals and audio would NOT contribute to a better understanding of the material presented?

Question 2

Think of the power of storytelling today and the affordances technology provides when crafting tales. Is there a place in composition classrooms for narratives and personal experience to enhance research and academic discourse?

Think about some inspiring messages that stick out to you in music history. Compile them together and think about how this can be applied for lesson plans / composition projects. Be ready to share some lyrics with the class! Have fun!

Group Activity! **“Words of Wisdom”**

Brought to you in stunning technicolor!

Thanks for Listening

