EMBODIED LISTENING AS ETHICAL PRAXIS: COMPOSING IDENTITY,
RELATIONSHIPS AND BODIES

By

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A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Critical Studies in Literacy and Pedagogy – Master of Arts

2017

ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines ways scholars and practitioners in the field of composition and rhetoric, as well as sound studies, compose and design sonic compositions. In order to ethically represent participants ethically in recorded audio, composers and sound designers have to reflect mindfully on their process and adopt an active, and engaged listening practice. I argue for an embodied mode of listening that can be used to engage in elements of sound that are often silenced. Embodied listening is a mode that aims to visibilize identity, relationships, and bodies. An embodied mode of listening can then be applied to composing and designing sound work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Chapter 1

Introduction

As I'm writing, I have Kamasi Washington playing in the background. His music is something I play when I'm trying to write. The upbeat pace helps me stay on task as I write, but I'm not fully listening to his album. I couldn't tell you about the sax solos, or the spoken word. This music plays for me in the background. For example, I discussed how an upbeat tempo puts me in a mood to write quickly. I can identify that music plays and affects my writing process, but I'm not fully paying attention to what's going on in the music, making it hard for me to fully comprehend all of Washington's album. This example demonstrates how listening can vary depending on the context of the situation and what a listener is "listening" for. While I did listen to music while I was writing, I am not fully engaged in the music. This way of listening is useful to me in this situation as it helps me write, but it is perhaps a passive mode of listening.

An active mode of listening can also be used to help us navigate the world safely. For example, crosswalks can be both visual and aural. Someone may listen for cars coming or someone may listen for the crosswalk to verbalize that it's safe to walk by calling "walk" and counting down. In this situation, listeners need information to make decisions about their safety to walk and travel. This situation illustrates a different kind of listening. A listening mode is the different way people "filter, selectively focus, remember, and respond to sound" (Sonnenschien, 77). A listening mode can vary from passive to active across different situations.

In addition to listening for motivation and information, people also listen for entertainment. Music can be listened to passively as I write, or I can dance and listen to it loudly in my house or the car. The Shins came out with a new album this spring, and I listened to this in my drive to work every day until I knew all the lyrics and chord progressions. In this sense, I am listening for *entertainment*, which leads me to engage with the music I'm listening to. In this sense, I am engaging many senses while listening to The Shins. I am engaging my body, my voice as I sing along, and memories and emotions the songs provoke. In this sense, we can see how listening to music can be considered embodied as it heightens and engages many parts of my body. An embodied mode of listening is different from the example I provided in the first paragraph about music. Both situations involve music, yet the listening mode is different. In other words, listening modes determine the listening experience someone has.

In this thesis, I call for an embodied mode of listening as a feminist methodology for listening, composing, designing, and editing sonic compositions. This listening mode helps composers and sound designers understand and create embodied listening experiences. An embodied listening mode examines the rhetorical and affective aspects of sound. However, some elements of sound can be overlooked and seen as material, rather than recorded audio that captures complex information about a participant. In order to get at those embodied, affective experiences, embodied listening questions assumptions made by composers and sound designers. In order to investigate the assumptions composers and designers make while listening and composing with

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sound, embodied listening is a mode of listening that tries to make elements of sound more visible.

Visibilizing gaps and silences is a common feminist practice. Erin Frost writes about an apparent feminist methodology that sheds light on issues that are often invisible. Frost writes, "apparent feminism is a methodology that seeks to recognize and make apparent the urgent and sometimes hidden exigencies for feminist critique of contemporary technical rhetorics" (5). This shows that a feminist practice can create uncovered possibilities that were previously out of sight. Embodied listening is a feminist method for composing with sound that attempts to ethically represent people. Embodiment as it is related to feminist thought has a focus on the representation of people. Embodied listening is concerned with identity and the performance of that in recordings (Lovatt). Furthermore, embodied listening examines relationships to how audio from participants is recorded. A reflective exercise about how researchers and interviewers influence and process as they listen to someone else's story is important. It is also important to acknowledge this relationship between researcher and participant as it values the people who have agreed to share their stories. Finally, embodied listening looks at the ways bodies are implicated in sound and represented in sonic compositions. Conby, Medina, and Stanbury write, "the body, that space where gender difference seems materially inscribed, has always been central to feminist investigations of representations" (8). In this quote, the examination of representation of bodies is a feminist practice. I believe representation is very much tied to ethics. For me, being ethical means also

being feminist, which is why I draw from feminist theorists to help make a case for a mode of embodied listening. The ethical representation of identity, relationships, and bodies are the focus of embodied listening in this thesis.

As more scholars in the field of composition and rhetoric compose with sound, there needs to be more consideration about how we teach and practice sound design and editing ethically. If listening modes create experience, then writing instructors and sound designers must emphasize an ethical mode and practice of listening as they edit and design. In his book about teaching audio-visual composition, Bump Halbritter writes about having students be aware of different listening situations. His work focuses on techniques for recording people in various environments like a crowded room or outdoors. His point is about achieving a clear, quality recording in different environments. In this sense, Halbritter suggests that students pay attention to the listening situation, but he doesn't specify how to do this. It is clear that students must be engaged in the listening situation they are recording, but this process emphasizes recording without giving advice about what to listen to when recording. Writing instructors and sound designers may ask students to critically engage in sound, yet don't teach a mode of listening that may allow for a thoughtful and ethical engagement with sound.

As writing teachers and sound designers take stock of their own mode of listening, they should also consider how their listening mode affects the listening situation they create for an audience. Rodrigue et al. write about teaching students sonic strategies that will help them develop a "critical sonic literacy"

(n.p). In other words, Rodrigue provides students with strategies that will help them understand the rhetorical nature of sound, so that they can better make choices about the way they compose with sound (n.p). These strategies can help inform the rhetorical situation of the students' work. In this way, the rhetorical situation can also be seen as a listening situation. Rodrigue's sonic strategies provide students with a method for listening rhetorically. These strategies are: music, silence, sound effects, sound interaction, and voice. While these strategies do give students some clues for how to compose with sound, these strategies call for a listening mode that is more concerned about using these strategies to fit within a common genre, like a radio drama or podcast (Rodrigue). The composer's mode of listening may be limited, as it is depends on the conventions of the genre, rather than listening for complex sonic information. Modes of listening have to be considered as teachers ask students to create listening experiences for an audience.

In order to create and design an embodied listening experience for an audience of a sonic composition, composers and designers must design sound that suggests an embodied mode for the audience as well. Sound designer, David Sonnenschein, asks questions, "what does the character sound like to the audience?...[h]ow does a nonliteral sound affect the way we perceive the character?" (176). These questions are especially relevant in relation to how teachers and sound designers represent people in sonic compositions. In addition, these questions bring up some concerns about ethics. As ethical concerns come up, teachers and sound designers may ask themselves how they

make decisions about what to delete or edit out. Ethical representation is a complicated issue, yet I believe there needs be a method for listening as composers make these decisions. Sonnenschein begins to answer these questions as he considers how characters are sonically represented in a story. He writes, "when actors perform with complete visceral involvement, their sounds extend beyond the dialogue...the natural communication of the voice range -- coughs, sighs, finger tapping and punches, tiptoeing and stomping -- all convey something about who that character is at that moment" (177). In this quotation, Sonnenschein shows that sound that may be less significant than the voice of the character; there are other sounds that may provide some shape of how someone is represented. If this is true, then moments that sound designers might not find important could be filled with rhetorical information relevant to the representation of the person being recorded. In sum, then, representing someone in a sonic composition requires a listening mode that won't make assumptions about what is important and not important recorded information. Instead composers and listeners will use a mode of embodied listening that aims to uncover the often invisibilized elements of sound. While this mode of listening may not be appropriate for every listening situation, embodied listening can be used to help composers and designers create sonic compositions.

This thesis examines various theoretical frameworks for ways of listening. To do this, I draw from scholars from the fields of rhetoric and composition and sound studies. For the purpose of this thesis, I posit listening as a method to hear sounds and their meaning. Sound can be understood as psychical properties,

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such as sound waves that the ear hears, but sound also related to social functions and culture (Blesser and Salter 4). Sound is important to this project because listening practices involve understanding the social and cultural functions of sound. I use scholars' theories about listening to argue for a new mode of listening that considers things that can often invisibilize certain elements of sounds in sonic compositions: identity, relationships, and bodies. Composers and sound designers must practice a mode of listening that recognizes these elements of sound so that they are effectively respecting and representing other people. To uncover these elements of sound, I suggest composers and sound designers take a feminist approach to listening and composing. There is an ethical responsibility when bodies and emotional affect are illustrated in sound and film (Lovatt). It can be said, then, that a feminist mode mode of listening account for the ways people and bodies are implicated in recorded sound. I will theorize about a mode of embodied listening that can act as a methodology for composing and designing sound.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

A feminist mode of listening can help composers and designers analyze rhetorically and understand sound that may often be seen as too much information, inconsistent, too intimate, or annoying. These assumptions are often based on ideas about style and audience (Rodrigue). In order to get at features of sound that are often under-theorized, I propose composers and designers use a method of embodied listening. Embodied listening is a practice that composers and designers can use to listen to and rhetorically analyze the ways their participant expresses themselves in sound. In this chapter, I discuss listening, and feminist theory that helps define embodied listening, then I will discuss how to use embodied listening to compose sonic compositions. After a mode of embodied listening is established, composers and designers can account for how they compose with sound. An embodied mode of listening can then be used to compose a sonic composition. This mode of listening connects with feminist approaches to multimodal composition, as it looks at the ways people are embodied in different listening modes (Lovatt). It is then important for a mode of listening and composing to account for the ways people are represented in composition. Over the course of this literature review, I will theorize about a mode of embodied listening and how to practice it in composition and sound design.

Listening for Identity

Rhetorical listening is one method of listening that can be used to understand the cultural context of sound. Rhetorical listening is a practice that can interpret a person's cultural identity. The term identity here points to a person's subject position. Subject positions are a complex system of relationships to the ways people relate to social and cultural systems (Royster). Subject positions are often constituted through categories of gender, race, age, sexuality, class, as well as many others. Krista Ratcliffe explains that rhetorical listening identified and interprets these cultural markers. Ratcliffe writes, "rhetorical listening may be employed to hear discursive intersections of any cultural category (age and class, nationality and history, religion and politics) and any cultural position" (196). In this quotation, Ratcliffe argues that one can hear cultural identity. This practice is important to use so that composers and designers pay attention to the cultural context of sound. This listening practice is significant to my thesis as my work is concerned with how people are represented in sonic compositions. Thus, if culture and identity can be heard, then composers and designers must account for how people's identity is represented in their sound work. Rhetorical listening is a mode of listening that can help people notice and understand the cultural context of the sound they record.

Sometimes assumptions are made about a person's identity, which affects how composers and sound designers make decisions about representing their participant in their work. Culture and identity inform how we see others and ourselves (Ratcliffe 51). Thus, people often expect others to act the same as they

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do and when they don't is a situation that assumptions can be made (51). An example of a way people listen rhetorically is to assume gender. Many people will assume a person's gender by someone's pitch of voice. Rhetorical listening can help composers and sound designers understand what they assume about a participant's identity based on their own perceptions or beliefs of how someone should act. It is then important for a composer and designers to first examine how they perform their culture. By examining the self, they can better recognize how they represent themselves. Then composers and sound designers can reflect on the cultural differences of those they record. This self-examination of subject position helps eliminate assumptions one may make about the cultural identity of those we have to represent in sonic compositions.

After identifying cultural information in sound, rhetorical listening can also be used to communicate with people with other identities and culture. Rhetorical listening picks up on identity markers and accounts for them. In other words, Rhetorical listening identifies cultural context and from that someone can better understand and respond to other people. Ratcliffe writes, "[rhetorical listening] foster[s] conscious identifications that may, in turn, facilitate communication" (26). In this quotation, rhetorical listening is shown to not only identify cultural context of sound, but also helps people engage and interact with it. This is important for composers and sound designers to understand as they must listen and interact with sound files of those they record. Furthermore, they must understand how they are creating an interaction with their participant's cultural identity when designing and editing a piece. Being able to understand cultural context of sound

is important in listening and trying to understand others. Once composers and sound designers address how they are listening to and perceiving a participant, then they can ethically communicate and make decisions about how to represent someone's identity in sonic compositions.

Identity is an important part of the people we record. In order to avoid assumptions, designers need to accept the differences and inconsistencies that may not make sense to better understand the situation. Rhetorical listening is a practice that can be used to really pay attention to the cultural context of sound in order to make ethical designing and editing choices. Rhetorical listening helps inform a practice of embodied listening as it relates to the ways people perform their identity. A listening practice that aims to understand the ways identity is heard and interpreted is important in making design decisions about a sonic composition.

Another mode of listening that highlights the way identity is interpreted through sound out is Brandon LaBelle's concept called the sonic self. Brandon LaBelle discusses the many ways sound plays a role in our daily lives in his book *Acoustic Territories*. LaBelle's book goes down the list of ways sound is used and interpreted in various situations. Listening provides different information about sound, but sound also shapes how a person listens to the world. While many overlook the nuances of how sound shapes us, LaBelle argues that sound is very important in how we experience life. LaBelle terms what he calls the "sonic self." The sonic self can be understood as a mental process that interprets the meaning of sound through certain social contexts. Essentially, people listen and

interpret sound through cultural, historical, and embodied conditions (xvii). This is important because it shows that listening is highly influenced by a person's subject position. Similar to rhetorical listening, the sonic self is used to understand how not only identity is understood in sound, but how culture, history, and the body influences how people make meaning with sound. In order to composers and sound designers to rhetorically analyze sound, they must adopt a listening practice that accounts for the ways sound can be interpreted through culture, history, and the body.

LaBelle adds the definition of rhetorical listening by illustrating that people don't just make meaning with sound, but they also make decisions based on that sound. LaBelle argues that because we interpret sound in through our own filter, people make decisions all the time about how to strategically interact with sound (xvi). Furthermore, he shows that sound not only provides information, but the information is interpreted through a person's culture, history, and body. Sound designers and composers have to first analyze sound, but then interact with it in order to make a sonic composition. This interaction happens when composers and sound designers take recorded audio and edit and design it into a finished audio file. The sonic self helps inform a mode of listening that emphasizes people make decisions based on their perceptions of sound, which are influenced by culture, history, and their embodied experiences. The sonic self connects to embodied listening as it recognizes the relation between listening, culture, and the body.

Multimodal listening accounts for how the entire body experiences sound, which why it is a major informant to a method of using an embodied listening mode. Rhetoric and writing scholar, Steph Ceraso literally calls multimodal listening a "bodily practice" (105). She calls out the reductive ways people think when they talk about listening. Ceraso argues that many people pinpoint listening in the ability to hear. "Hearing," rather than listening. This shows that people posit listen to sound as something that is consumed by the ear, rather than listening to understand and make meaning. Ceraso pushes this point further by saying writers and designers limit the potential multimodal listening because multimodal composition focuses on sounds semiotic meaning, which posit sound as text. The difference here is that Ceraso is showing that listening to sound is not only rhetorical, but is affective. Through multimodal listening, she sees the potential for sonic composition to consider "the affective, embodied, and lived experience of multimodality" (104). She cites the work of John Dewey and uses his concept of esthetic experience. Essentially, Ceraso describes an esthetic experience as a heightened, holistic sonic experience. Ceraso notes that an esthetic experience is a quality experience because listeners are aware and sensitive to their sonic environment. Ceraso theorizes about the practice of multimodal listening that can be used as a pedagogical tool to help students "un-learn" their bodily listening habits, which makes it difficult for students to understand how to design students "holistic experience" (107). Ceraso shows that learned listening practices drown out or ignore "holistic" sonic experiences, which might account for the ways people reduce the rhetorical and affective element of sound. Ceraso writes:

esthetic experiences are holistic in that they do not separate mind

and body or isolate one sense from another; they involve a

heightened sensitivity to the experience in its entirety Similarly, I

suggest that multimodal listening practices involve a full-bodied

awareness that heightens listeners' experience of the sensory,

material, and environmental aspects of sonic interactions (106).

In this quotation, Ceraso emphasizes the importance of multimodal listening than

a mode of listening that is merely hears sound as it occurs. Instead, multimodal

listening gets at holistic listening experiences, which accounts for the ways

people rhetorically analyze, interpret, and interact with sound. In addition, Ceraso

demonstrates listening as an embodied act, as it is a sensory and esthetic

experience. Multimodal listening highlights the way the body is affected in the

ways we listen to sound. It is because of this that multimodal listening is a major

part of informing embodied listening, as this mode of listening highlights the ways

bodies are implicated and affected by sound. Thus, embodied listening can be a

mode used for composers and designers to use while listening to their participant

in their recorded audio.

Feminist Methods to Guide Embodied Listening

In many ways, the work feminism does is to visibilize things often silenced

in the dominant culture. Conby, Medina, and Stanbury posit feminism as a way to

get at the gaps and silences of women's' bodies. While before feminism has

focused on the silencing of women's voices, I'm using feminism to look at the

ways identity, relationships, and bodies are represented. Furthermore, I draw

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from the work of Erin Frost that uses a feminist methodology for social justice. In

this thesis, embodied listening can be used for social justice, as it is aimed at

representing people ethically. Furthermore, Alexandra Hidalgo writes about a

feminist filmmaking methodology, which is similar to using embodied listening as

a way of listening and composing with sound. Hidalgo helps me define embodied

listening as a feminist methodology. She writes, "as a methodology, feminist

filmmaking is particularly concerned with how those behind and in front of the

camera relate to one another and with creating a final product that everyone

involved in the production is satisfied with" (n.p). In this quotation, Hidalgo

illustrates that a feminist methodology for her videobook is concerned with

relationships between composer and participants, as well as the representation

of participants. This thesis posits embodied listening in the same way, as it is

concerned with identity, relationships, and bodies.

Feminism is helpful framework to consider in modes of listening as it aims

to uncover aspects of experiences that may be overlooked. To consider the ways

some sounds are invisibilized, feminist theorists can help inform the ways to

highlight identity, relationships, and bodies. Like the work of Gloria Anzaldua,

dominant and normalized culture aims to make difference invisible. This is

related to the common notion that a mode of listening or a way of composing can

be standardized (Ong). Anzaldua writes, "I am visible --see this Indian face--yet I

am invisible. I both blind them with my beak nose and am their blind spot. But I

exist, we exist" (241). In this quotation, Anzaldua is responding to dominant white

culture and its attempt to define and distort history, as it is only interested in

telling white history. However, Anzaldua points out that her bodies and the history of Chicanos is present and real. Similar to how Anzaldua is points out disparities and gaps in the way white dominant culture defines history, feminist frameworks can help compositions and sound designers look at the ways elements of identity can be invisibilized in sound design. This feminist rhetorical practice of making things visible ultimately benefits the people composers and designers record. This feminist framework is an ethical approach to listening and composing, as it is concerned with relationships to identity and people, as well as how people are represented (Hidalgo). In this thesis, a feminist aims to represent participants in an ethical way that won't cover up those invisibilized aspects of listening and composing with sound, such as identity, relationships, and bodies. I draw from Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa Kirsch's book *Feminist Rhetorical Practices*, which discusses the importance of reflection in research and composition. I add to their feminist practice, by suggesting embodied listening can be used to reflect on how people listen, interpret, and interact with sound. An embodied mode of listening is needed to help listen and uncover invisibilized sound, as well as how to compose sound keeping embodied listening in mind.

Feminism, Listening, and Identity

As Ratcliffe illustrated in her book *Rhetorical Listening*, cultural identity can be determined by listening. Feminist thought supports the discussion of intersectional identity politics and diversity (Frost 14). This is important to the thesis because this thesis bases its theoretical frame around feminist thought. I believe ethical editing practices are based on a feminist approach to listening

throughout the composing process. This happens as composers and designers listen and record other people, during an interview for example, and expressions of identity can be captured. This is because identity is performed through the voice. Judith Butler discusses gender performance, and illustrates it to mean the expressions that add up to an overall impression of gender. If gender is performed, it can be said that many other parts of people's identities are performed, and therefore "heard". However, identity is not a fixed way of being. Butler argues that identity and gender performance is constructed as people ritualize a set of practices over time (xviii). It can be said, then, that because identity is constructed, it is not stable nor fixed (Butler xix). The notion of unstable identity performance is then an issue for composers and sound designers. This is because they create sonic compositions that will illustrate one representation of someone in time. It should be said then that recording, editing, and composing a sonic composition is always a representation as it'll never fully illustrate the complete picture of someone (Bolter and Grusin 27). Embodied listening as a mode will never achieve such a transparent and complete representation of someone; however, embodied listening discourages composers and designers to aim to illustrate one performance of identity just because it may better align with dominant view of gender performance. This thesis is about using embodied listening in order to make ethical design and editing decisions. Culture embodies sound, and rhetorical listening helps composers must parse out identity in order to better represent the people they record.

Listening and Relationships

In their book, *Feminist Rhetorical Practices*, Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa Kirsch, discuss listening as embodied as it relates to research practices. Royster and Kirsch call it "strategic contemplation." Royster and Kirsch define strategic contemplation as "using a meditative/contemplative approach allows researchers to access another, often underutilized dimension of the research process" (pp. 84). They describe an inward journey that a researcher undergoes during the research process. They suggest that researchers should reflect on how they work with materials, as well as how much creativity and imagination affect the way researchers interpret data (pp. 85). This research process specifically asks scholars to reflect on their experiences, and their interpretations of their research design, process, and data. In doing so, the researcher has to be reflective of their subject position in the research. In other words, a researcher can never be objective, as the research is always interpreting data through a subjective lens. Similarly, technical writing scholar Mary Lay talks about the position of an ethnographer and researcher being feminist because they don't rely on an inherent assumption about the "truth" (356). Put in a different way, recognizing the subject position of the composer/designer discourages the assumptions about the participant, as it is always dependent to how the composer/designer relates to the participant. Strategic contemplation is related to embodied listening as it highlights the reflective process of "listening" to their participant and engaging with how the researcher's position is related to the data. In other words, the researcher must be mindful of their position as a researcher

and their relationship with their participants. Understanding their position in their research helps them be mindful of what they're bringing to the table. This posits research relationship between the researcher and the participant as reciprocal as they each inform, respond, and relate to each other. Royster and Kirsch call this contemplation, yet it is also illustrating how listening both pays attention to the participant's responses, as well as the researcher's own engagement with it (which comes with understanding their own subjectivity in the relationship). In this sense, embodied listening is a feminist rhetorical practice as it claims composer/designer subjectivity and aims to illustrate the ways the composer/designer relates to the participant.

Listening to the Body

Listening is centralized to "hearing," which can exclude visual representations of the voices someone may hear in a sonic composition. However, that doesn't mean there isn't evidence of a responsive body that can be heard in a recording. As designers make decisions to represent people, they often go to the little "extra" things to edit out like pauses, breaths, sighs, and uhms. I see very little effort towards a consideration of these instances that can actually be rich with meaning, yet composers and designers cut it out because it is seen as too much or not a representation of the body (Anderson). For many, distinctions in the sound of someone's voice are recognizable, and I believe this is important to consider when sound designers begin to edit and mix audio. In my case, my mother conveys her lived experiences vocally, which have shaped who she is. Bodies are socialized and this notion influences the ways people

communicate. In their book *Embodied Resistant*, Chris Bobel and Samantah Kwan (2011) provide a clear definition of embodiment. By citing Turner (1996), Bobel and Kwan write, "typically through a feminist lens, body studies scholars interrogate embodiment or the sociocultural relations that act on individual bodies" (2). The authors highlight the connection between culture and bodies. Because voice is an expression of someone's body, sound designers should employ embodied listening in order to make responsible design decisions. Ehrick makes the case that while some argue that vocal gender performance is disembodied, there are still moments when sound interacts with the body. Moreover, she writes, "simply: if the voice is not the body, what is it? Even when it travels over long distances (via telephone or radio, for example) and/or if its source remains out of sight, the body is there, present via the sound vibrations it produces" (para, 10). Going along those lines, physiological properties of sound are intrinsically connected to our bodies. Lovatt explains this perfectly when she writes, "the sonic has an intimate connection to our bodies: A sound wave only becomes a sound when it reaches and vibrates the bones of the inner ear" (p. 25). In other words, bones and flesh are what allow us to hear sounds in the first place. Thus, having an awareness of the connection between voice and body will allow designers to pay close attention to the nuances of communication and consider the ways they choose to represent their participants ethically. Although it might be strange to consider these bodily moments, I believe it could facilitate embodied listening for viewers that can make those clear relations between themselves as a listener and the voice on the recordings.

Embodied Listening for Practice

      Multimodal listening can also be used as a method for composing sonic compositions. Ceraso argues that this happens when composers, designers, and students unlearn their normalized listening practices. Ceraso writes, "to develop as listeners, students need to unlearn the listening practices that they have become accustomed to in their everyday lives. We need to find ways to defamiliarize these habitual practices—to make them strange again" (112). Ceraso illustrates that listening is a learned act. She also shows that in order to practice multimodal listening, there needs to be a shift from the norm, the learned way of listening which may ignore some of the rich rhetorical information. Ceraso also illustrates that in order to change learned listening habits, you have to shake things up. Ceraso believes that multimodal listening will help students become aware of their own bodily experiences with sound, which will in turn make them better composers and designers because they'll be aware of the affective, embodied experience of sound. Ceraso argues that this can help inform people's decisions as they design multimodal projects. Ultimately, she illustrates how the practice of multimodal listening helps people create a better, "holistic" experience for audiences and users. Ceraso writes, "we need to find ways to defamiliarize these habitual practices—to make them strange again" (112). Using Ceraso's practice of multimodal listening may be one answer to getting at the invisibilized sounds as it aims to look at sound in an entirely new way that focuses on how sound affects the body. Ceraso's concept of multimodal listening informs a mode of embodied listening that composers and designers can practice to compose

sound work. In order to use embodied listening as a way to compose, designers and composers must design a sonic composition that accounts for the way sound is embodied. As Ceraso says, designers can do this by making things strange, and explicitly creating a sonic composition that encourages listeners to get out of their normalized listening practice, so that they can experience a holistic, embodied experience.

Embodied listening can be used in the writing classroom for those teachers who want to compose with sound. It is important to introduce the concept of genre here so that students may understand the conventions of a genre. Ceraso and Fargo Ahern discuss the significance of teaching a project that is non-narrative based as it teaches the critical listening skills required to thoughtfully make decisions about composing with sound. In addition, Rodrigue et al. make clear that genre conventions are important to understanding how to compose with sound. Rodrigue and her students focus on what they call "critical sonic literacy." A critical sonic literacy is developed by tuning into the rhetorical nature of different sonic composing conventions, or strategies. A critical sonic literacy is similar to Ceraso's approach to a listening practice, yet Rodrigue specifically focuses on the practice of composing, rather than listening. Rodrigue shows that there are different genre conventions when making decisions about a sonic composition, yet it always relates back to how an audience listens, rather than the composer thoughtfully engaging in an embodied listening practice. An embodied listening practice takes note of identity, relationships, and the body,

which will help inform a "critical sonic literacy" rather than making decisions based on learned-listening skills of an audience.

Best practices for composing with sound would include an awareness of how sound affects and shapes the body. Embodied listening looks at the ways bodies are affected by sound. Rather than having a passive way of listening, embodied looks towards an approach that considers the ethical implications of representing someone in a sonic composition. This feminist approach to listening considers the ways identity is performed and constructed in a sound piece. It also recognizes and reflects on the relationship between researcher and participant. This approach considers the way the researcher and participant listen and make meaning together. A designer will also consider the ways bodies are being removed from the recorded material. This method of listening requires some more critical thought about the meaning of removing the evidence of a living, breathing body that performs the identity of the participant.

Presented below are six key features of embodied listening. I present this list not to suggest that embodied listening is the only way of listening, but rather as suggestions for those who are concerned with representing people ethically. Furthermore, the literature review of this thesis draws from theoretical ideas and frameworks in order to theorize about an embodied listening practice. The rest of this thesis builds upon ideas introduced in the literature review, so below is a list of defining characteristics of embodied listening.

1. Embodied listening is a practice concerned with the ethical representation of participants.

2. Embodied listening is based on a feminist methodology as it is concerned with what often gets silenced, and aims to visibilize overlooked elements of sound.

3. Embodied listening can look at the ways a participant performs their identity and argues that identity is fluid and unfixed.

4. As relationships between composer/designer are formed with the participant, embodied listening attempts to make this relationship transparent. In addition, this practice illustrates listening as a subjective exchange between composer/designer and the participant.

5. Embodied listening can be used to examine the erasure of bodies within a sonic composition.

6. Embodied listening can be used as both a mode of listening and a method for composing. This practice can also be used to rhetorically analyze recorded sound, as well inform the rhetorical choices composers/designers make while creating a sonic composition.

Research Questions

As I look at a feminist method of embodied listening I ask these questions: (1) What assumptions do we make when designing and editing sound? (2) How are bodies being included or erased? (3) What's an ethical way of representing a participant? (4) What sounds do we cut out that may be considered "too much information" or inconsistent?

In the next section I examine three case studies. Each case is an example of my work as a sound composer listening to the composing process, including

my relationship to how sound is edited in a way that considers identity, relationships, and the body. In Case 1, I illustrate the performance of identity in two different situations and the affect of showing identity inconsistencies that illustrate the different performance of identity. In Case 2, it considers the way the researcher (me) and my mom have related to the conversations we discussed in our interview. I look at the relationship I have with my mom, and also the way I related to her stories as a researcher and a daughter. In Case 3, I look at information and content that often gets edited out of recorded material that gave way for the bodily expression by participant captured in the audio recording.

Chapter 3

Case 1

Case 1 examines my composition and sound design practices in regards to expressions of identity within a sonic composition. Figure 1 is a section from a single composition, a multimodal academic memoir in-progress for publication with *Enculturation: Intermezzo*. These figures demonstrate the different ways identity is performed and then captured in recorded audio. Figure 1 illustrates various identity expressions within my own voice as the narrator and interviewer and the participant (my mother) being interviewed. I describe these recordings as having expressions of identity because it example illustrates distinctions in how my mother and I express ourselves at different points of the sonic composition. These differences show identity performance as a fluid, rather than fixed expression of identity. If performance and expression of identity is in flux, then there are factors that influence these changes. I will not explore every possible factor that may influence different expressions of identity because this is out of scope for this project. In other words, I do not discuss broad conceptions of identity, but I do explore some factors that may influence the way identity is performed and then captured in my sonic composition. A discussion of identity expression and performance is important for composers and sound designers to consider when making decisions about editing and designing a sonic composition. As noted previously in the literature review, embodied listening is a practice that can be used to visibilize the sometimes invisible representations of identity, relationships, and bodies. This is a feminist methodology in that it cares

about the ways people are ethically represented, especially as it related to their identity, relations, and bodies. Embodied listening is a method that can help composers and sound designers pay attention to the different ways a participant may perform identity. Embodied listening can also inform composition and design choices. Composers and sound designers may use embodied listening to illustrate some of the ways identity is performed in a sonic composition. This method of listening and composition is different from others in that it doesn't focus on notions of style that value of stylistic consistency. Unlike Rodrigues' work that emphasizes the notion of keeping representation consistent while composing with sound, embodied listening embraces the various and nuanced ways a participant expresses their identity and aims to make this apparent in their sonic composition. In the following subsections I will give an overview of the background of Figure 1 that will be important in understanding the context of the piece. Furthermore, I look at the ways for composers and designers to practice embodied listening. In addition, I briefly talk about the practical applications of embodied listening. The two methods sections illustrate two different aspects of embodied listening: (1) embodied listening as a practice of closely listening to the voice and sound produced by participants, and (2) applications of embodied listening, which are the composition and design choices made to complete a sonic composition. Finally, I analyze Figure 1 to illustrate the connections between embodied listening and composition.

Figure 1:

Audio File: This figure illustrates identity markers present in audio

Background

Figure 1 is a part of one larger digital memoir project I worked on. In this memoir project, I conducted interviews with my mother and sister and used their stories to make claims about my family's history. In addition to the interviews, I wrote a script and narrated this memoir project about my family's history. In Figure 1 I show how my own expression of identity changes throughout the sonic composition. This is especially apparent during my narration versus moments from my mother's interview. In Figure 1, I also clearly show differences in my mother's performance of identity. While these instances of various identity performances change throughout the entire sonic composition, I believe Figure 1 best demonstrates these differences.

In order to begin understanding these differences I was hearing in the audio, I mapped out the different positions my mother and I inhabit in this memoir project. Figure 1 clearly illustrates three different subject positions: (1) me as the narrator (2) me as mother's daughter (3) my mom and me as two women from southern Ohio. I exhibit a tension as I am the narrator and writer, as well as having a familial relationship with my participants. Because of these changes in positions and location, my dialect shifts and illustrates an accent that is common in southern Ohio, where I'm from. This shows a shift in the ways cultural identity is expressed, and is especially complicated when composers and designers have

to grapple with the ways this may affect their sonic composition. These examples focus on the way I ultimately decided to represent the identity of me and my mother. Composition and design decisions are not easy to make, especially considering the close relationship I have with my mom. It is important for composers and sound designers to understand that identity fluctuates from moment to moment based on a variety of factors and contexts, so constructing a representation of someone's cultural identity that will be fixed within a sonic composition is difficult and requires a great deal of thought. As noted by rhetoric scholar Erin Anderson, a person's identity can be recognized within in audio, yet this isn't always explicitly clear to the composer or listener of the sonic composition. Because identity performance can never be totally clear to a composer or a listener, assumptions can easily be made about a person's identity. Scholarship by Krista Ratcliffe argues that listeners can hear a person's cultural category, yet this may be invisible to the composer when editing and designing a sonic composition (198). It can be said, then, that a listening practice is needed to understand various expressions of identity in order to make editing and design choices in a sonic composition. Embodied listening is a practice I use within these case studies in order to demonstrate how performances of identity can be recognized and then how to use this method of listening to make decisions about composition.

Methods

In this section I will discuss methods I used to inform my composing practices in Case 1 from a feminist standpoint. As I discussed in the literature review, an

ethical approach to listening and composing is feminist. A feminist standpoint in listening, editing, and designing Case 1 focuses on paying attention to how identity is captured in recorded sound. Some sound composing practices don't account for identity, and even suggest that identity within recorded sound isn't an essential part of a recording (Anderson). However, I believe identity is something that composers and designer should consider in order to ethically represent their interview participant. A feminist embodied practice can accomplish two things for composers and sound designers: (1) suggest a way of listening that recognizes and accounts for various identity performances and (2) inform composing and design choices so that identity may be apparent for audiences to experience as well. I make distinctions between embodied listening and composing practices because one informs how designers and composers listen and the latter helps them make decisions about their sonic composition so that audiences may also hear the ways identity is implicated within sound.

Practices of Embodied Listening

I started the memoir project, which then became a sonic composition I created in a graduate class with the intention of trying to publish it, so most of the composition consists of my narration. I wrote a script connecting stories of my childhood and my mom's childhood to illustrate an overall claim about our family. I wrote this script after the interview with my mom and sister. This move is important an important one, because even though I am primarily directing the claims being made in my sonic composition, I still draw on my mother's experiences to make claims about our family at large. This step is important in

ethnographic research as it positions myself in two different subject positions. In ethnographic research, it can be difficult for a researcher to observe and gather evidence about a specific claim, but it can be even more complicated if the researcher is involved in the community he or she is researching. In Julie Lindquist's book *A Place To Stand*, she illustrates two rhetorical performances of herself: a narrator and a character in her research narrative. By doing this, Lindquist is able to create an identity performance both individually as the researcher/narrator and someone part of the community she was researching. In the same way, I also create these two different identity performances in my own sonic composition. This move illustrates identity as in multifaceted and fluid, thus I'll never be able to solely posit myself as the researcher because I was researching my family community.

Applications of Embodied Listening

These different performances of identity are accounted for as I not only narrated my sonic composition, but I also included myself interacting with my mom (the participant) during the interview. It is important to show these changes in identity performance as it gets at the different subject positions I embody while composing and designing this sonic composition. In addition to my own performance as a scholar, I also had to account for the ways my mother and I performed our class and geographic background. This identity performance was difficult for me to make composition and design decisions about because I was afraid about the way I was representing my family to an audience. My family is a working-class family from southern-Appalachian, so I was nervous an audience

might listen to our accents and stereotype my family as "hillbilly." Even though this was a concern of mine, I decided to include these moments, even as I try to illustrate myself as scholarly and professional in other parts of Figure 1. In saying this, there is a tension between how my mother and I perform our cultural identity. Composers and sound designers can better recognize and represent this tension by not conforming to notions of how voices and identity should be performed in audio. James D Batcho discusses the issue when sound designers construct vocal authority by using a professional-like radio host. Batcho goes on to say this representation of vocal authority is how audiences will legitimize the radio broadcaster's claims. It is my concern that audiences won't believe claims about my family's history because we sound a certain way. However, it is the sound designers' job to try not to posit a single representation of themselves or a participant because it perpetuates the idea that there is one way to get vocal authority. Instead, I try to include the various ways identity is expressed in my sonic composition to better show audiences the ways my mother and I construct ourselves in the spaces we inhabit and that this is not any less important than the "professional" narration I include in my sonic composition. In other to take these steps in my sonic composition, I had to first develop a listening practice that helped me see a few ways identity is expressed in a sound piece. It was then that I used embodied listening to help make these expressions of identity clear to audiences in Case 1. The application of embodied listening in Case 1 can be used in most situations composers and designers may face. In fact, composers and designers who must compose in a certain way can apply embodied listening

to pay attention to different expressions of identity, which may or may not be noticeable to most listeners. If this is the case, embodied listening can be useful here without straying too far from normative ways of composing sound.

Analysis

Because this is a memoir project, and I wrote it in a graduate class, my script reads like an academic article. I narrate my scholarly observations about my family and in doing that I posit myself as a scholar and researcher. I recorded myself reading the script in my apartment near my university that I go to for graduate school. My subject position as a graduate student is clear as I narrate my book chapter. At the beginning of Figure 1, I introduce the next ideas I explore in my sonic composition. In the first minute of Figure 1, listeners recognize that I am trying to embody professionalism through my vocal performance. Not unlike an NPR radio show, I position myself as the narrator recorded myself reading it in my apartment near my university that I go to for graduate school this piece.

The context of this digital book chapter is rhetorically situated in an academic setting, so the way I perform my identity in most of it is as a graduate student interrogating my own family history. The first minute of this figure demonstrates the listening situation because it shows the academic tone of my project through my vocal narration. Listeners of the first few minutes of this clip can understand the piece as professional and academic in the style and tone of my voice. However, this is not the only representation of myself in Figure 1. It is apparent that identity is not fixed, and can be expressed differently based on the

context of the location. Jacqueline Royster writes about the differences she experienced when reading and writing in school. Though Royster read and wrote in a style she was presented in an academic setting, she realized this language and the ways writers expressed their ideas did not embody her identity or experience. Royster recognizes the performance of academic reading and writing, she illustrates that is not her voice (29-30). Royster writes, "I have come to recognize, however, that when the subject matter is me and the voice is not mine, my sense of order and rightness is disruped" (31). This illustrates this kind of dissonance between two voices in different settings. This illustrates that within a location different expression of identity can emerge based on the cultural construction of that space. Similarly, the most apparent identity I inhabit in my project is as a researcher and grad student; however, it is not the only one I demonstrate in Figure 1.

In addition the identity of the researcher and the participant, there may some clear expressions of cultural identity present in the recording. In my sonic book chapter, the most obvious example of this is the way I express myself as the narrator/researcher and the way I speak to my mother and sister. I am from southern Ohio, which is part of appalachia. Being born in this area, I often have a noticeable accent when I talk to my family verses when I talk to my friends or colleagues. In Figure 1, I talk to my mom about hunting frogs using a "gig." In Figure 1, I explain what a "gig" is so that audiences can follow along. However, there is a shift in dialect in tone in my voice as I talk to my mom about hunting. I really struggled with this moment as the researcher of this piece. I record myself

as the narrator of this digital memoir, which illustrates a professional and scholarly tone. However, in this important moment between my mother and I, I illustrated a change in identity. I was no longer speaking like the academic, but rather as a daughter in my parent's house. Including this section of the interview in the final version of my digital book chapter was challenging because it illustrated a few different ways I expressed my own identity. Similarly, my mom demonstrates her own accent as she talks about her childhood experiences hunting. This illustrated an inconsistency with my own voice as the narrator and interviewer, which may not sit well with audiences. It is important to be able to listen for these inconsistencies and lean into them rather than control them as the composer or designer. Composers and designers should recognize that there is no one way a person will illustrate himself or herself in a recording. Instead of following a style and form that encourages presenting a certain idea about someone, composers and designers must see that by doing this they aren't paying attention to the various ways identity is expressed.

Case 2

Case 1 and 2 illustrate stark differences considering my use of embodied listening as method of listening to my mother's stories. Listening engages the listener, and the subject of the thing producing sound. In this case, I interviewed my mother, so I am the listener, and my mother is the subject of what I'm hearing. While listening to my mother, I take in her stories, while also responding to her in my head with ideas, thoughts, memories, and more. This illustrates listening as a relationship going two ways: (1) Hearing sound produced by a

participant and (2) engaging and responding to the sound. Embodied listening is needed to understand listening as a reciprocal act as it highlights the ways relationships are formed between people. In saying this, embodied listening can be understood as a way to consider research participants in the process of sound design. Embodied listening also uncovers the listener as a part of the practice of listening. Thus, listening must account for the ways the listener engages with the sound of a participant.

Case 2 also addresses the relationship between participants and composer or sound designer. Some believe they don't have to ethically consider their own subjectivity to sound, which suggests audio can be objectively constructed (e.g., Anderson). However, the editing process is much more complicated. A relationship is formed between participant and listener, and is especially important for composers and designers to recognize this relationship. Composers and designers have the power to represent someone through audio. In order to ethically represent a participant, composers and designers must address the inability to objectively listen. Listening involves hearing another person, but also engages the thoughts of the lister as they interpret and understand what the other person is saying. As Royster shows, listening can be understood as a subjective act. This subjective act of listening then demonstrates need for understanding listening as a relationship between speaker and listener. Thus, designers must adopt a practice that addresses the subjective nature of listening and the relationships formed with participants because of it. I propose an embodied listening practice to help composers and designers make choices

about the way they represent their participants within a sonic composition. In next sections of Case 2, I talk about the background of making Figure 2, which includes the same recorded interviews as Figure 1. Furthermore, I discuss methods of making Figure 2. I discuss (1) practices of embodied listening to illustrate the relationship between composer/designer and participant and (2) application of embodied listening that informs how to make this relationship apparent in a sonic composition. Furthermore, I analyze Figure 2 to demonstrate sonic elements of this composition and how it relates to the methods for composing this piece.

Figure 2:

Audio File: This figure shows the relationship in an interview

Background

Figure 2 is a sonic composition I made using my own audio diaries and parts of mom's recorded interview, which was first presented at *Cultural Rhetorics Conference* in 2016. The conference talk addressed my composing process for the digital book chapter I discuss in Case 1. I talked about the issues I had while editing my mother's recorded stories. While this was especially difficult for me because I am related to the participant, I believe this case can be used for anyone struggling to make decisions that will affect how their participant is represented in audio. Because my digital book chapter is a memoir, I used my mom's stories to make claims about my family's history. In my conference talk, I

recognized the discomfort I felt editing my mom's stories for the purpose of proving a claim I wanted to make. Later I realized I could draw comparisons between my mother's and my experience in an ethical way if I recognized my subject position and my relationship with my mother in the sonic composition, similar to what Vankooten illustrates in her multivoiced video about chora. Figure 2 illustrates a method for composing that highlights relationship between composer/designer and interview participant.

Methods

This method section will look at how embodied listening can help designers and composers recognize their own subjectivity. Drawing from Walter Ong's work, orality and listening to someone speak is a complicated process much different than writing. Ong suggests that writing and composing that often seems objective or at a distance (145). Similarly, listening and composing sonic composition can be seen as objective, yet listening can never be objective, as it is a subjective process. However, in Case 2 I demonstrate that objectivity is impossible because listening is a highly subjective act. In saying this, I divide this section into two parts. I first talk about an embodied listening practice and how this can be used by composers and designers as they record, interview, and listen to their interview participants. An embodied listening practice accounts for how the listener (the composer/designer) subjectively experiences and interacts with the participant's voice and subject position exemplified in their interview. Secondly, I will look at how embodied listening can be used to inform composing choices. A composer or sound designer may account for their subjectivity while listening to

their participant; however, I suggest there are ways to clearly illustrate the subjective relationship between the composer/designer and the participant. I will make suggestions for how composers and sound designer can best demonstrate this relationship to an audience so that they may also understand the subjective role of the composer/designer.

Practices of Embodied Listening

To demonstrate composer/participant relationships in sonic work, a listening practice that recognizes listening as subjective and reciprocal is needed. Embodied listening is a method for better understanding researcher/participant relationships. Once composers and designers recognize this relationship, this knowledge can inform their decisions about sound composition and design. Embodied listening informs my sound editing and design practice in Case 2 by shedding light on how I relate to my mother's stories. While listening to my mother's stories as I interviewed her, it reminded me of my own childhood, so I chose an embodied method of composing for Figure 2 to reflect these connections.

The embodied mode of composition highlights the relationship between composer/designer (me) and the participant (my mother). As I mentioned, my digital book chapter took a different route to illustrate my mother's and my similar childhood experiences, which can be heard in Case 1. In Case 2, I compare and draw connections between my mother and my experiences in a different way. This difference is shown through the embodied method of composition that I used in Figure 2. Instead of separating our stories like in Case 1, I combined

them for Case 2. In Figure 2, listeners will hear two voices speaking at once. I overlaid audio tracks from my mother's interview and my own audio diaries to demonstrate my embodied method for listening to and composing for Figure 2.

Applications of Embodied Listening

I separate Figure 2 in four different sections separated by interludes of music or ambient sound. I started composing Figure 2 by first separating different sections of my mother's stories in my audio editing software. The first three sections contain dialogue from my mother and myself. The last section is an interaction we had with each other while listening to music. I juxtapose our voices by putting them together for the first three sections, yet as the listener focuses in on both of our stories they may find that we talk about similar topics. I draw from composing methods used by Crystal VanKooten in her article, "Singer, Writer: A Choric Explanation of Sound and Writing." In this article, Vankooten composes a video about the rhetorical concept of chora. VanKooten cites Jeff Rice and Sarah Arroyo to define chora. VanKooten writes:

> In *The Rhetoric of Cool*, Jeff Rice (2007) described *chora* as an argumentative and narrative strategy that uses pattern making and pattern generation. *Chora's* logic, Rice (2007) argued, isn't a print logic; it's based instead on connectivity, on identifying unexpected juxtapositions, on interlinking. Likewise, Sarah Arroyo (2013) defined *chora* as an inventional methodology that is felt, not reasoned, that is emotional and associational, not logical (n.p).

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In order to show the sonic relationship between two things, the concept of chora is useful to illustrate embodied sound as it mirrors the ways people are related to people, places, and spaces (Rickert 69). In her video, VanKooten uses her own voice saying the quotes from the scholars she's drawing from. In addition, she laps her own voice with the voices of the scholars she uses from footage taken from academic conference presentations. In doing this, VanKooten is demonstrating her own relationship to the people that she is theorizing from and citing. It can be said, then, that there is an embodied method for composing that can illustrate relationships between people. I use VanKooten's method of composing to illustrate to listeners that both me (composer/designer) and my mother (the participant) are involved in creating claims and ideas in Figure 2. This method of composing is important for audiences to listen to so that they can also recognize the two-sided nature of listening within the relationship of composer/designer and participant. This application of embodied listening may be helpful for audiences to hear this relationship, but some composers and designers may have some restraints that make this impossible. For example, stakeholders or clients may not want the composer and designer to be present in the sonic compositions. In this case, it might be difficult to use embodied listening to compose relationships. Instead, I suggest that composers and designers write a reflection about their composing process that highlights the relationship between the composer/designer and the participant to include with the sonic composition.

Analysis

My initial interview with my mother was about two hours long, thus I had to piece out each major story she told me during the interview. I separated these pieces into different tracks on the editing software to keep each story organized. I then made notes to myself about the stories that stuck out to me as the interviewer and audio designer. These stories reminded me of my own childhood, and these connections made helped me figure out what claims to make in Figure 4. In doing this, I'm showing my own subjective process of editing and designing audio taken from an interview with a participant. To show this subjective process, I included my own recorded audio in Figure 4. In doing this, I use embodied listening as a practice to demonstrate how I relate to my participant's stories by placing both of us in an audio track.

Many designers edit out their own voice asking interview questions or not include their process of making the sonic composition. In doing this, they are essentially invisibilizing their own involvement with the sonic composition. In order to visibilize my own process, I highlight the reciprocal relationship I have with the participant. I overlap tracks of her interview, with my own audio diaries that reminded me of how I connected to her stories. I highlight both of our voices, and by the end of the Figure 2 I end with a clip of an interaction between us conversing over a song we played. My method for editing Case 2 visbilizes my own subjective point of view that happened while listening to my mother during her interview. In order to illustrate the things I thought were important in her interviews, I overlapped some of my own thoughts about my family to illustrate

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the connections I made while listening to my mother's stories. This method for composing is specific in that it recognizes the subjective relationship of listening between composer and participant.

Some composers and designers believe it is possible to objectively design and edit audio, yet the way they interpret and listen to the participant will always influence the way they design a sonic composition. In Case 2, I emphasize the relationship between myself as the composer/designer and the participant, who is my mother. Showing the relationship between my mother and myself is important to illustrating the ways I subjectively listen to her stories. It is impossible for me to relate to my mother's stories objectively because of the relationship I have with her. However, this can also apply to recording people that aren't related to the composer/designer. Relationships are always formed with those who are interviewed. Listening brings up memories to the listener and creates connections between the speaker and the listener. Cynthia Selfe talks about the connections between speaker and listener in the practice or orality as it brings up emotions and memories within the listener (636). This relationship is invisibilized when composing sonic compositions as the composer designer makes choices about the way their participant that is represented but may not demonstrate how they are relating to their participant. Because listening can never be done objectively, it then becomes important to illustrate the relationship between composer/designer and participant to illustrate the subjective ways we design and edit audio.

Case 3

Case 3 addresses the erasure of bodies in sonic compositions. In Figure 3 and 4, I created a sonic composition to illustrate the ways composers and sound designers edit out evidence of bodies within a their work. Scholars and practitioners often overlook critical nuances in the way the body is implicated in recorded sound. This rationale can be illustrated by some assumptions made about the rhetorical affect of sound. Sound Designer, Max Lord, writes "audio feedback is an unreliable communicator of complex information" (n.p.). In saying this, Lord illustrates that sound can't illustrate complex meaning. This idea suggests that sound designers simplify sonic information. However, these assumptions often erase parts of the body that might be rich in meaning. In order to argue this point, I use Case 1 and 2 to help me illustrate the ways bodies become invisibilized based on assumptions about identity and representation. As I discussed in Case 1, performance of identity shifts depending on the context of space and culture. Thus, composers and designers must accept that there is no one-way to represent someone. Composers and designers shouldn't stick to a single expression of identity that fits their overall impression of the participant, but rather should accept the multiple or competing expressions of identity.

Case 3 also engages ideas in Case 2, which states that relationships of composer/participant are important to consider while making decisions about the sonic composition. Sound designers must first recognize their own subjectivity while listening to participants, so that they can better understand how their assumptions about people influence their editing decisions. Embodied listening

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can help composers and designers better examine the ways they make assumptions about a person, and can then address the ways they may or may not invisibilize bodies of their participants. This is important because it focuses on the practice of some of the strategies I proposed in Case 1 and 2. Taking out breaths and ums is one of the first things a composer or sound designer does when he or she starts to edit their sonic composition. If this is true, then compositionists and designers need to recognize the ways they are making assumptions about ethical representation in regards to identity and relationships. Performances of the body in recorded audio can sometimes illustrate the unique ways participants express their identity and illustrate their relationship to the interviewer/researcher. In saying this, an embodied listening practice can help uncover those meaningful bodily expressions that are usually edited out first in sonic compositions.

Figure 3:

Audio File: This figure shows the gaps made during editing

Figure 4:

Audio File: This figure shows key content taken out during editing

Background

Figure 3 and 4 were first created in a visual rhetoric graduate class. Later I

proposed this idea to *Computers and Writing*. This case also deals with the

interviews I conducted with my mother for my sonic composition memoir piece. In

Case 1, I talk about how I composed the memoir project. In Case 2, I discussed

how I remixed interviews taken for the memoir project with my own audio

journals. In Case 3, I only examine the ways I constructed Figure 3 and 4 with

the recorded interviews with my mother. In Case 1, I talk about the sometimes

watered down version of a person's identity as it is represented in sonic

compositions. In Case 2, I look at the ways the notions of objectivity erase the

research relationships created while recording a participant's interview. In Case 3

I try to look at the absences created by ignoring notions of identity and

subjectivity. In doing this, sound designers may be deleting complex rhetorical

information from their participant in recorded audio.

Methods

These methods for the case studies draw from feminist theory as this

practice focuses on how the body is implicated in sonic compositions. These

methods are also heavily based on arguments I made for embodied listening in

Case 1 and 2. Methods for understanding how the body is captured and

manipulated in sound work is related to identity, subjectivity, and relationships

between composer/participant. An embodied listening practice can visibilze the

interaction between body of composer and the body of the participant. This idea

is reminiscent of the argument I make in Case 2. In addition, an embodied

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listening practice can affect the composing process. Composers and sound designer should think about how they are representing the body of their participant. This expression of the body is often tied to identity, which I talk about in Case 1. Embodied listening can be used to help highlight the ways bodies are taken out of sonic compositions as it is normalized practice of sound design and composition.

Practices of Embodied Listening

In order to first highlight the body, I discuss the process of understanding how the body is closely tied to listening. There is evidence that the body exists in recorded audio. However, it is often taken out of sonic compositions. In this thesis, I ask why this happens and what the function this has in composing sound. There is not a lot of literature written about this element of sound. There is literature that talks about the embodiment of emotion in sound, but little that talk about how bodies are captured in sound. If these sounds are edited out, then I question the function of it as it erases evidence of the living, breathing body of the participant that performed and produced this sound. In Case 3, I illustrate the gaps and silences created in a sonic composition once this evidence of the body is erased from the final sound piece.

Applications of Embodied Listening

The bodies of participants are illustrated, analyzed, and then represented in sonic compositions, so it is important for composers and designers to understand how bodies are demonstrated in their work. Figure 4 is a sonic composition that highlights the body. In many ways, composers and sound

designers will take out sounds that illustrate parts of the body. There is an assumption about these sounds being bothersome or unnecessary for audiences to hear. For example, many designers edit out breaths, uhms, pauses, change in tone, which to them may seem meaningless. In an effort to get away from traditionally composed sound, I consider the potential of composing with sounds that are thought of as "too much information" (Rodrigue). These assumptions come from expectations about style of sonic compositions. However, this conception of style can limit the ways participants aren't being erased within sonic compositions. In order to account for ways bodies are erased, I composed and designed a piece that highlights the breaths, pauses, and uhms of my participant in a recorded interview to illustrate ways evidence of the body are sometimes erased. While this way of composition does reveal silences by erasing bodies, this method may be the most unrealistic. Many clients and stakeholders may not be happy with leaving gaps in a sonic composition, so in Case 3 I suggest using embodied listening to question the automatic move to erase bodily expressions of sound.

Analysis

In Figure 3 and 4, listeners will experience the absence created by editing out nonverbal, bodily expressions from an interview with my mother. I split an audio file up into Figure 3 and 4, but both audio files are taken from one original recorded audio from an interview with my mom. In other words, Figure 3 and 4 speak to each other and contain the same recorded material. Moreover, Figure 3 illustrates the gaps made by editing out sonic expressions of the body. In other

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words, I edited out evidence of the body in the sound file, but did not fill the gap they made in the final sonic composition. Figure 4 illustrates gaps in that it only contains breaths, asides, and sighs taken out from the original audio file. In a sense, Figure 4 will match up with Figure 4 in that it's the information taken out of Figure 3. In showing Figure 4, I try to show the ways bodies are captured in audio. Overall, Case 3 highlights the erasure of bodies in sonic compositions, as well as showing different ways expressions of the self and body are removed in doing so.

I've created multiple artifacts from my mother's three-hour interview. Because I've done so many things with this original recorded audio, I've started to notice the things I'm cutting or editing out and why. In Case 3, I want to stray away from traditionally composed audio and add more layers that might be considered "too much information." As discussed previously, in paying attention to the body in recorded audio, I add back a layer of sound that is so often erased. In Figure 3, there's going to be recordings from my mom's interview that are cleaned up. However, there's going to be gaps in the audio because, those gaps are where I took out expressions of the body. In doing this, I illustrate the erasure of my mom's body in Figure 3.

Figure 4 illustrates the layer of audio filled with breaths, sighs, asides, and other things many would cut out of an audio piece. This piece also has gaps because it fits into the gaps made in Figure 3. If you listen to them both together then it makes one "complete recording." However, this isn't the originally recorded audio with my mother.

I've put some reverb and echo on the second audio track so that the bodily sounds stand out. Embodied listening does not suggest that composers and sound designers use the entire original recording. However I believe there can be some balance between completely cutting out evidence of the body which could be rich with meaning. Though in order to do this, the field first needs to question the normalized practice of removing these bodily expressions from media like sound and video. Sean Zdenek discusses this in relation to closed captioning. Zdenek emphasizes that deaf audiences can gain meaning from filling in those silences and ambient sounds with closed captioning. From Zdenek's text, it can be said then that even though there may be nonverbal or ambient sounds, audiences can still glean meaning from it. Thus, it can be said then that nonverbal expression of the body should also be considered as important, and not something that is automatically taken out of sonic compositions.

Case Studies Conclusion

Within these cases, I demonstrate how I used a mode of embodied listening to inform my practice of listening and responding the recorded audio. Furthermore, I illustrate how embodied listening as a practice can influence the ways composers and designers can create their sonic compositions so that audiences may also hear the invisibilized elements of sound. In looking at all three of these cases, embodied listening comes down to actively engaging with the sound our participants produce that may have be invisible before coming to embodied listening. It is important for composers and sound designers to understand how to deal with inconsistencies with identity. As shown through Rodrigues' and

Zdenek's work, many composers try to make a narrative sonic composition that follow styles of conciseness and consistency, yet often make assumptions or miss things that may have been important rhetorical information that sound contains. Ultimately, embodied listening looks at the ways identity, relationships, and bodies are represented in sonic compositions. These elements of sound are undertheorized, so I've used these case studies to demonstrate the importance of visualizing these sounds to ethically represent their participants.

Chapter 4

Implications

In order to compose ethically with sound, an embodied listening mode is needed to best understand and account for the invisibilized elements of sound. Embodied listening discourages assumptions composers and sound designers may make while editing and designing a sonic composition. Some composers and designers may be more concerned about a method of composing that favors audience and stylistic expectations (Rodrigue). Embodied listening doesn't discourage people to completely stray from these expectations. Instead, this mode of listening can be used as a method to composing ethically. To me, being ethical means being feminist. Feminist methods of composing call for attention towards elements that may be ignored or invisibilized (Frost). This feminist approach to listening may change the way composers and designers compose sonic compositions. An embodied mode of listening helps composers and designers deal with the way identity is presented, the relationship between composer/designer and the participant, as well as how bodies are implicated in sound.

Composition instructors can use an embodied mode of listening in order to teach an ethical approach to composing with sound. To scaffold these projects, instructors should assign readings on feminist theory. Some of these readings could be Judith Butler's book *Bodies That Matter*, the collection of essays about embodiment and feminist theory, *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*. In addition, there are several readings on feminist composing such as, *Feminism and Composition*, Erin A. Frost's article, "Apparent Feminism

as a Methodology for Technical Communication and Rhetoric" and Mary Lay's article called "Feminist Theory and the Redefinition of Technical Communication." In addition, there are several readings on embodiment and multimodal composition. The two most notable books for that are: (1) Kristin L. Arola and Anne Wysocki's book, *Composing Media Composing Embodiment* and Jacqueline Rhodes and Jonathan Alexander's digital book, *Techne: Queer Meditations on Writing the Self*. These are all readings that can help students build a feminist framework that may influence their ideas about listening. Furthermore, these readings offer advice on how to compose sound using embodied listening.

Classroom Practice

There are a few assignments that can help students develop a listening practice and use embodied listening to compose their sonic compositions. The first assignment is a short audio memoir documentary. This assignment asks students to create an audio documentary based on an idea they have about them or their families, which may bring up instances of culture and identity. This allows students to first experience how they represent themselves in sound. The next assignment will ask students to interview a classmate about their audio documentary memoir. Students will listen to a partner's audio documentary, created interview questions to ask their partner about, and then interview and record their partner about their first sonic composition. Then the student will create an audio documentary about their partner. Then the most important part of this assignment is making sure students reflect on their process. I combine Jody

Shipka's stance on a reflective composer statement, as she describes in *A Composition Made Whole*, and Gesa Kirsch and Jacqueline Royster's concept of strategic contemplation. A composer statement for this second assignment will have students explore their process, as well as reflect on their subject position in the process of interviewing and recording their classmate. This assignment gets at the subjective nature of composing and designing a sonic composition. This assignment also asks students to reflect on their subject position as it is related to their interview participant, highlighting the relationship between these two people. Furthermore, the composer statement should talk about the process of editing and how it may have erased the sonic presence of their partner's' body. In other words, I ask students to make a log of all the times they took about things like breaths, sigh, pauses, and other nonverbal sounds and their reason for cutting this sound out of their final sonic composition. This log can discourage students to make editing decisions based on assumptions, rather than the ethical representation of their partner.

Future Research

This thesis theorizes about an embodied mode of listening in relation to my own work, but it has a potential for future research. I have applied embodied listening to my experience conducting a recorded interview with my mom, which I've used for various projects. The main limit to my discussion about embodied listening is that it is applied to my own sound work. Furthermore, I examine my position as the composer/designer and my mother as the participant. This discussion of our relationship is limited because it only looks our familial

relationship. I believe this discussion can become much more rich and nuanced if a composer/designer interviews someone outside of their family and community. This kind of interview dynamic is much different and I think the discussion about embodied listening and the relationship between composer/designer can benefit from further discussion about participants.

Further research on embodied listening can a case study for composer/designer, which focuses on their subject position. I am writing this thesis after having done much of this composing and editing work, so I think more case studies on practical applications of embodied listening for a composer/designer. For example, I think it would be useful to see journal entries or a sound-composing log from the composer/designer. I believe a journal or log from the composer/designer can better illustrates strategic contemplation as it is happening in research. Furthermore, it can better demonstrate the ways composer/designers subjectively listen as well as how they relate to their participants. This is an important aspect of embodied listening as it can better show the practical ways ethical sound composition can be done.

Chapter 5

Thesis Conclusion

Embodied listening is firstly a mode of listening that can be used as an ethical method for composing with sound. As this is a feminist approach to composition and sound composition, embodied listening can be used to represent people ethically in a sonic composition. I believe embodied listening is most useful in actively engaging composer and designers in elements of sound that are often invisibilized: identity, relationships, and bodies. This mode of listening can help composers and designers address their own subjectivity, which discourages them from making assumptions about representations of their participants. In addition, embodied listening can be used to compose sonic compositions. In my case studies, I discuss the importance of keeping embodied listening in mind as the composer/designer. It is my goal to have audiences listen to a sonic composition and also thoughtfully engage in the identity and body of the participant. In addition, I hoped that composing for audiences to experience embodied listening mode would make what Ceraso calls "making listening strange again" (112). In doing this, audiences may be able given the opportunity to listen to these embodied elements of sound.

This method of composing may not be useful for every rhetorical situation. Composer and designers can have seemingly little control over how audiences actually experience a sonic composition. In addition, designing an embodied listening experience for audiences may be too much of an unconventional approach to some genres of composition. This is even more complicated

considering the interests of clients, stakeholders, and institutions that may not support this kind method of composition. If anything, I encourage composers and designers to use embodied listening to better rhetorically analyze and ethically compose sound with their participant in mind. In doing so, composers and designers can avoid making assumptions and illustrating what they believe is the objective "truth" (Haraway). In doing this, composers and designers can practice respect to the people they record, and work to ethically represent their participant within a sonic composition.

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