

Sound Studies
ca01 - 100 points

Questions? Email the instructor: cdelaurl@jhu.edu

Sound Studies - ELSR Debrief

source: earlier iterations and from SS w04 ELSR_v4 Spring 2024.odt;

bring: binder clip!

set up: laptop display to NEVER fall asleep; it will disconnect HDMI

cue up: readings

cue up: _ca01_Earplug Listening Social Report.pdf

cue up: Google Doc with this week's discussion questions

cue up: Audition with sound files:

- Kits Beach Soundwalk - Hildegard Westerkamp_1989.mp3
- Sounds of My City - Tony Schwartz_1956.mp3 at 15'40"

Agenda

ELSR debrief questions	20 minutes
ELSR Debrief	~50 minutes (good length)
Break at 11:07 to 11:15	~10 min
Kits Beach Soundwalk	~15 mins
ELSR debrief continued	30 min
More Listening & discussion	Noon-ish
for next week	2 minutes

ELSR Debrief: Wearing Earplugs

ASK round-robin: Where did you wear your earplugs?

ASK for show of hands: How many of you told people you were wearing earplugs?

Why?

How did they react?

Were they friends or strangers (did it matter?)

ASK for show of hands: Who tried lip reading? (any other methods of communication?)

ASK Did anyone hear an inner voice aka interior monologue

(speaking or sounding?)

SWITCH to Google doc

MAKE SURE to insert reminder to revisit this sheet! (or add the closing questions to the end!)

TELL THEM we review what happened to get in the habit of remembering sound

Seminar leader discussion with A_____, D__

Closing questions

ASK:

Would you want to wear earplugs more often? Why or Why not?

Was this exercise an "impairment?"

Which circumstances would make it not an impairment?

What are your hearing impairments? Did you get an visual cue about them? After this assignment, do you have any, could you list them?

ASK how did this exercise make you feel about solitude?

IF NEEDED TELL Mahler tie his tie story

MENTION Mantle Hood and bimusicality

ASK How is the ELSR analogous to the path of the artist?

from SS week 02 discussion points and comments Fall 2021.txt, with additions Spring 2024;

1. (re) discovery
 - of what we are listening to
 - corporeal knowledge, intersecting the visual with what we hear
2. "unlearning" can free us artists from the fear, free us from the expectations of what is acceptable in music
3. Appreciation for negative space uses of (not sound) - silence and missing elements of sound
4. Appreciation for the sounds we hear in our heads (CD we listen presently as well as to the past - "transtemporally")
5. ELSR is analogous to the loneliness experienced by every artist

Listening: Kits Beach Soundwalk

wind still (yet she is in the studio, yes?)

- "What is the most interesting sound you have heard recently?"
- "get rid of the city" - illustrates power of the city with 3 dynamic levels
- 4, count 'em 4 dreams!
- Concret-PH II resembles barnacles (connection of EA to natural world)
- studio as a refuge for listening

n.b. mentions Tomaitis (I had forgotten this mention,)

Course Email

Fall 2024

after the ELSR

Hello everyone,

Please read in the Canvas module Soundwalking:

- Soundwalking - Hildegard Westerkamp_2001.pdf (9 narrow column pages, big type, I apologize for the awkward format!)

- I Have Never Seen A Sound - R Murray Schafer_2006.pdf (6 pages)

and two (or more) of the following:

- from How Early America Sounded - Richard Cullen Rath_2003.pdf (1 page)

- Aural Postcards - Fran Tonkiss.pdf (7 pages)

- Sonic Images - Pauline Oliveros_1972.pdf (2 pages; redux from w03)

- Three Levels of Listening - Tim Cordell.pdf (7 pages)

Then formulate and post one discussion question connecting two (or more) soundwalk readings before Noon, Monday, September 24 at https://_____

You can listen again to Kits Beach Soundwalk at:

Lastly this weekend is the High Zero Festival, one of the major festivals (worldwide!) for improvised and experimental acoustic and electronic music. See <https://highzero.org/> for a schedule and more information.

Looking forward!

CD

ps Street Music (1976):

"On Sunday, September 26 1976 at 8 am, I fired a rifle into the air several times on the corner of Cedar and Nassau streets in the Wall Street district of New York.

The shots were recorded on several stereo audiotape recorders with various miking configurations. The tapes are intended to be played back both at normal speed and at slower speeds to reveal sound echo patterns and reverberations in the deserted streets" (Viola 1995, 48).

Viola, Bill. 1995. *Reasons for Knocking at an Empty House: Writings 1973-1994*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

end postscript

ELSR sample discussion questions

F_____: As someone with a voice which can be described as “boomy,” while wearing earplugs I found myself extremely self-conscious about the volume level of my voice. This resulted in my reducing my speaking voice to the point that the person to whom I was speaking could hardly hear my words. I was reminded of the story of Tamsin Parker as described by William Renel:

“For example, in 2018, Tamsin Parker - a disabled woman with learning disabilities - was forcefully removed from the British Film Institute on her birthday for laughing loudly at the film. Here, it was the auditory experience of other cinema-goers, who heckled and applauded as Tamsin was removed, that were prioritized in the way the sonic environment was socially produced and maintained. Tamsin's laughter and subsequent crying can be understood as a socio-political sounding of oppression, 'an acoustic politics of the voice' (Kanngieser 2011, 2 - this is a bonus reading check it!!!).”

Valerie Rye, the protagonist and narrator of Olivia Butler's “Speech Sounds,” also feels compelled to hide her voice for fear of social exile. She explains to the children she meets at the end of the story that it is ok to speak only “as long as no one's around.”

What are examples of ways in which our own sensory capabilities affect our sense of self and how do those effects alter the way we present ourselves in public? #D_____#A_____#R_____

N___: Christine Sun Kim notes her "learning process was greatly shaped by indirect modes of communication" (p. 1). While exploring social contexts with Earplugs, I tended to use (and had to learn) a combination of the oral method and the writing method to communicate with my friends and strangers (*Welfare of Those with Hearing Impairment*, p. 2.) Similarly, I also tended to mime feelings or thoughts to those who I am closer with, this could be considered a form of sign language, another method Dr. Kobayashi mentions (Ibid).

Perhaps the most frustrating part of this exercise was feeling like my thoughts weren't being understood by my peers. Similarly, I felt “unheard” or accidentally ignored during this exercise. In *Speech Sounds* by Octavia Butler, the main character, Rye, explains that conflicts escalate quickly in this dystopian society since people can't understand or communicate with each other (p. 89) **Did you experience any conflict during the ELSR Exercise? If so, how did you communicate your thoughts to the other party? #X_____#T_____#F_____**

D_____: (this is really long; I'm sorry in advance)

In “The Gender of Sound,” Carson indicates two points of assumption in two men's distinct accounts of “confronting the female voice,” each from a perspective outside of such females' interactions: Alkaïos of Lesbos hearing adjacent beauty contests being one, Ernest Hemingway

hearing Gertrude Stein speaking to her “maidservant” the other (p. 122, or 5 on PDF). Both men concluded from the unfamiliar content of what they heard (in addition to their educated backgrounds) that the women in question were essentially too vulgar or repulsive to be *tolerated* in close proximity, let alone be taken seriously (or in Hemingway’s case, simply friends).

Butler’s *Speech Sounds* contains a similar narrative to those of Alkaïos and Hemingway, but character Valerie Rye’s case of assumption involves three contextual shifts. First, Rye has been far removed from her educated background due to the plague which rendered her illiterate and shattered civilization globally. Second, the result of that plague issued a hostile social hierarchy much more directly linked to survival (or imminent danger). Third, though not involved in the bus fights, Rye was close enough for her safety to be compromised.

These contextual shifts significantly inhibited Rye’s ability to make assumptions and pass judgements (beyond cognition) in that a mistake in judgment or too explicit an expression of it could threaten her life, such as when she began to receive harassing and “obscene gestures” from one of the men from the bus (p. 95, or 4 on PDF).

Consequently, Butler describes Rye’s experiences almost exclusively through observations, like when “a woman shook the driver’s shoulder and grunted as she gestured toward the fighting,” and stepwise logical inferences, like when “[The Ford driver’s] use of his left hand interested Rye... Left-handed people tended to be less impaired,” therefore, “more reasonable and comprehending, less driven by frustration, confusion, and anger” (p. 90 and 91-2, respectively, or 2-3 on PDF).

In my personal experience using earplugs in public, I found my case of assumption to be much less dangerous than that of Rye and much more open-minded and welcoming than those of Alkaïos and Hemingway. In terms of how quickly my observations turned into assumptions, I consciously strove to mitigate arriving at any conclusions until each interaction concluded itself and only jotted down observations from time to time to review later.

Nevertheless, my experiences at a local restaurant and shopping mall both led me to assume a homogeneity of American English-language storytelling and response. Specifically, from the speakers’ inflections and cadences (as the words were unintelligible through the earplugs) paired with the resulting response sounds from the rest of the groups I observed, I found that (at least this region of) American English anecdotal delivery is not only very homogenous (at least in public) but also embedded with social cues on how positively/negatively to respond and with what magnitude. Ironically, such observations would likely add validity to the connotative works of Gertrude Stein.

All of that being said, did you find any homogeneity in the sounds of human interaction? Was it spontaneous, tempered, dismissive, maybe strategic? Did the changes in your own communication style cause you to draw conclusions differently? #N_____#T_____#F____#A____#R_____