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Computers and Composition xxx (2006) xxx–xxx

Editorial

**Computers
and
Composition**

Letter from the guest editors

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4 Because of the rise in multiliteracies scholarship since 1999, and with it a dramatic increase
 5 in the kinds of texts students read and compose in writing classrooms, this special issue hopes
 6 to introduce readers to a next step in multiliteracies composition. That is, we've moved—as
 7 a field—from linguistic to visual meaning-making, all in digital environments; so, a logical
 8 progression is to include other modes of meaning including audio. In doing so, we hope to
 9 provide readers with an overview of how a multiliteracies approach that incorporates attention
 10 to audio is possible within composition studies. Notable, in *Multiliteracies* (Cope & Kalantzis,
 11 eds., Routledge, 2000), the entry on audio design is the shortest and includes, simply, “elements
 12 that constitute music, sound effects, etc.” (p. 26). Even so, that brief list of two items started
 13 us thinking about how to make it more rich, more specific, and more useful to computers-and-
 14 composition teachers who are on the front-lines of implementing multimodal composition
 15 practices into their writing classrooms and their scholarship.

16 The seven articles here explore forms of audio from several theoretical, historical, and
 17 musical perspectives, adding a breadth and richness to current scholarship that uses sound in
 18 compositional practices. For instance, the authors discuss a range of sonic genres including
 19 opera, hip-hop, rock-n-roll, as well as voiceovers and soundtracks. The timeline of these genres
 20 covers centuries, from Wagner to digital multimodality (if not virtual reality, although that's
 21 mentioned along the way). The authors connect their discussion of audio—from sampling,
 22 sound effects, professional and amateur recordings, and hypermediation—to composition and
 23 knowledge-making methods as diverse as using citation systems and teaching sonic literacies.
 24 We are grateful to the authors, who have provided us with an amazing theoretical trajectory.

25 This special issue starts off with “The Making of Ka-Knowledge: Digital Aurality” by
 26 Jeff Rice in which he asks that rhetoric and composition scholars take an interest in the
 27 role aurality plays in digital composing. Rice explores how understanding the hip-hop notion
 28 of droppin' science (a way of showing one's knowledge of the world and of showcasing a
 29 DJ's or singer's literacies) can help us uncover new ways of knowledge-making, called ka-
 30 knowledge. To create ka-knowledge, authors need to sound out ideas, a process that allows
 31 them some freedom of exploration and use of nontraditional resources. Following the hip-hop
 32 grounding that Rice sets, Mickey Hess asks “Was Foucault a Plagiarist?” in order to examine
 33 the connections between hip-hop sampling practices and academic citation practices and how
 34 those connections can help students become better users of citation systems. Both practices,
 35 he argues, share a goal of building new work in response to existing sources. Yet this goal is
 36 obscured by lawsuits that reduce sampling to theft by applying to sound a copyright regulation
 37 system designed for print. These different stances in regard to authorship and ownership belie
 38 the values shared by the two systems.

39 Dramatically shifting musical genres from hip-hop to opera and alternative, Thomas Rickert
40 and Michael J. Salvo argue in “The Distributed *Gesamtkunstwerk*: Sound, Worlding, and New
41 Media Culture” that musicians have been at the forefront of the multimedia revolution. They
42 trace a genealogy from Wagner’s notion of the “total art work” to contemporary digital/remix
43 in the music of Brian Eno and The Flaming Lips, among others, to show how new media
44 composition—through software programs like Apple’s GarageBand—can extend techniques
45 of creating multimedia worlds that have long been developing in musical genres.

46 While the first three articles suggested ways to theorize composition studies in relation to
47 musical practices, the next set of articles turns to analyzing how sound is used in new media
48 texts. The authors focus on a range of multimodal texts from popular movies and professional,
49 digital texts to student-produced movies and soundtracks, providing some reading strategies
50 for each. Bump Halbritter rhetorically analyzes The Rolling Stones’ “You Can’t Always Get
51 What You Want” as the thesis of Lawrence Kasdan’s *The Big Chill* in his article, “Musical
52 Rhetoric in Integrated-Media Composition.” Using this example as a basis for song-as-thesis,
53 Halbritter also analyzes a student-produced digital video homage to David Fincher’s *Fight Club*
54 that employs The Ronettes’ “Be My Baby” as a vehicle for its argument. Next, Heidi McKee
55 focuses on four aspects of sound (vocal delivery, music, special effects, and silence) in her
56 multi-part analysis of aesthetic Flash-based texts in “Sound Matters: Notes Toward the Analysis
57 and Design of Sound in Multimodal Webtexts.” Finally, Jody Shipka, in “Sound Engineering:
58 Toward a Theory of Multimodal Soundness,” describes an activity-based multimodal theory
59 of composing as a way to better understand how, when, and why students might choose to
60 explore the affordances of sound in their work. As part of her argument, she discusses two
61 examples from students in first-year composition classes who explored how using sound in
62 their projects would help them achieve rhetorical soundness.

63 Finally, an article by Tara Rosenberger Shankar: “Speaking on the Record: A Theory of
64 Composition.” Shankar created software called The SpriterWriter, which students used to
65 transcribe their oral compositions into visual and linguistic documents. In describing this
66 project and its outcomes, she argues that literacy values assigned to writing can be achieved
67 in the domain of the oral and how oral forms might be revalued as literate composition. She
68 describes four kinds of learning that students (elementary-level and adult learners) were able
69 to demonstrate when they composed *talkuments* (spoken documents) using the SpriterWriter
70 software.

71 If these seven articles, these numerous themes and theories, aren’t enough, then
72 you’re in luck. There is an online issue located at *Computers and Composition Online*
73 <<http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline>>. There you’ll find more articles that address topics such as
74 identity issues in relation to voiceovers, podcasting, and others. We are excited to offer twice
75 the scholarship in this joint print–online venture, so please visit *C&C Online*.

76 In publishing these special issues we acknowledge there are gaps, things missing, and ideas
77 that may not be represented as fully as you would have hoped. Inevitably things get left out.
78 What is true here is true about multimodal and new media scholarship in general. For instance,
79 as with visual rhetoric/design and new media scholarship, the question must be raised: Who
80 has yet to fully (or partially) address disability/accessibility issues? Insert any field or area into
81 that equation and the answer is probably the same. We and many of our authors acknowledge
82 that important topics, such as accessibility, are missing from this particular discussion. We

83 have much work to do, but we hope that these articles start us on the way. In the end, we are
84 excited about what is here, about the possibilities that this issue represents, and about what
85 future directions these articles might lead you. Enjoy, and let us know what you think.

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