THE HEARING OF HARMONY: AUDIO ESSAYS AND SECONDARY ORALITY IN THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION

Cosmin Iris Ritivoiu
B.A., California State University, San Bernardino, 2004

THESIS

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

ENGLISH
(Composition)

at

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

FALL
2011
THE HEARING OF HARMONY: AUDIO ESSAYS AND SECONDARY ORALITY IN THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION

A Thesis

by

Cosmin Iris Ritivoiu

Approved by:

________________________, Committee Chair
Dan Melzer, Ph.D.

________________________, Second Reader
Fiona Glade, Ph.D.

________________________
Date
Student: Cosmin Iris Ritivoiu

I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University format manual, and that this thesis is suitable for shelving in the Library and credit is to be awarded for the thesis.

___________________, Graduate Coordinator
David Toise, Ph.D. Date

English Department
Abstract

of

THE HEARING OF HARMONY: AUDIO ESSAYS AND SECONDARY ORALITY IN THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION

by

Cosmin Iris Ritivoiu

As the audio essay enters academia in literacy instruction it has the potential of undermining some of the common values in Composition Studies. New media assessments often miss this impact by focusing on the image versus text dichotomy. The author conducted teacher research during the first semester of a first-year composition course in order to development an assessment tool that utilizes Walter J. Ong's description of secondary orality as a representation of the values of Composition Studies and helps ascertain whether audio essays are producing or encouraging informal language, participatory mystique, communal sense, concentration on the present moment, and use of formulas. Although audio essays did not seem to encourage informal language they seemed to undermine the quality of collaboration and community that may be expected when looking at them through the lens of secondary orality theory.

__________________________, Committee Chair
Dan Melzer, Ph.D.

__________________________
Date
Dedicated to God
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Informal Language</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Mystique</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal Sense</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration on the Present Moment</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Formulas</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Chapters</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Search For Critical Assessments of New Media</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Language</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Mystique</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal Sense</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration on the Present Moment</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Formulas</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Usefulness and Limitations of Reviewed Sources</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communal Sense..................................................................................................136
Concentration on the Present Moment.................................................................141
Use of Formulas...................................................................................................144
The Effect of the Definition of Literacy on Further New Media Assessments....146
Summary of Findings...........................................................................................149
Appendix A Questionnaires 1 and 2.................................................................................152
Works Cited.....................................................................................................................154
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Three Types of Orality and Rough Correspondence Between Categories</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Questionnaire 1: Language Change Expectations</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Questionnaire 2: Perceived Language Changes</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Questionnaire 2: Comparing Audio to Written</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Frequency of “I, we, me, us” in Different Genres</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

Having many things to write to you, I did not wish to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

~2 John 1:12

In speaking of the technology scholars who have focused their attention on "electronic, multimedia, and multimodal composing," composition scholar Cynthia L. Selfe credits Walter J. Ong's book Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word and his concept of secondary orality as "foundational for these scholars" (Selfe, “Movement” 22). This statement comes in an article, "The Movement of Air, The Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal Composing," which features audio essays that fit Ong's definition of secondary orality. Selfe paraphrases Ong's definition of secondary orality as "the technological mediation of voice by electronic, and later, digital technologies" (“Movement” 22). In addition, she provides a footnote in which she cites a longer definition of secondary orality from an interview with Ong:

> When I first used the term “secondary orality,” I was thinking of the kind of orality you get on radio and television, where oral performance produces effects somewhat like those of “primary orality,” the orality using the unprocessed human voice, particularly in addressing groups, but where the creation of orality is of a new sort. Orality here is produced by technology. Radio and television are “secondary” in the sense that they are technologically powered, demanding the use of writing and other technologies in designing and manufacturing the
machines which reproduce voice. They are thus unlike primary orality, which uses no tools or technology at all. Radio and television provide technologized orality. This is what I originally referred to by the term “secondary orality.” (qtd. in Selfe, “Movement” 52)

While this definition adds more detail and context it does not offer much in the way of proving "the importance of aurality and other composing modalities, for making meaning and understanding the world," which was Selfe's main argument (“Movement” 2). In order to see the full benefits of the technological reproduction of the voice in the composition of audio essays, the features and effects of secondary orality that do not fit into a simple definition but that are outlined in Ong's book Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word will be looked at.

In his book Ong describes five features of secondary orality which he expounds upon in a variety of passages: informal language, participatory mystique, communal sense, concentration on the present moment, and use of formulas. I have compared these features to audio essays and some of the values and goals of composition studies in order to develop a framework for approaching audio essays. I argue that these five features are especially useful in exploring the harmonizing effect of secondary orality as seen in audio essays. In addition, I will be arguing that these features represent many of the values held by scholars in Composition Studies based in part on Jimmie Killingsworth's article "Product and Process, Literacy and Orality: An Essay on Composition and Culture."

Finally, I will be arguing that some of the values these features bring out are sometimes undermined by audio essays. This approach will provide teachers of composition with a
point of departure in the conversation concerning new media in the composition classroom.

**Informal Language**

The first feature that I explore in audio essays is the informal style inherent in secondary orality. In speaking of interviews that have been adapted into books Ong states that:

> The new medium here reinforces the old, but of course transforms it because it fosters a new self-consciously informal style, since typographic folk believe that oral exchange should normally be informal (oral folk believe it should normally be formal). (Orality 135-6)

In order to find a definition of formal language that is simple enough to use in developing an assessment tool I looked at how other scholars have utilized secondary orality theory to analyze texts. Werner Holly's article, "Secondary Orality in the Electronic Media," is probably one of the more helpful examples of discourse analysis because of its use of relatively simple methods for a complex subject. Although Holly looks at a number of markers of informal language such as the frequency of the word and, first person references, passive form, and sentence length variations, he also utilizes the methods of linguist Wallace L. Chafe (349-52). Chafe's methods stand out as an even more reasonable approach to assessing levels of formality at a basic level. For example, when Chafe studied the difference between spoken and written language among faculty and graduate students he looked for the first person references I, we, me, and us (Chafe 36, 46). In my review of Holly's understanding of assessing secondary orality and my
methods in Chapters 2 and 3 I explain my use of Chafe's method of looking at first person references to differentiate between formal and informal writing.

In light of Holly and Chafe's definitions of formal and informal language in secondary orality, I considered two crucial questions concerning the teaching of composition: Is an informal style valuable for composition students and teachers and will secondary orality take on the informal conventions of primary orality as it becomes commonplace in the field of Composition? The first question, approached from a student-centered position, required interviews with students who enrolled in my composition course expecting to integrate their everyday language into their papers or expecting to learn an academic language. In other words, I asked whether it is more important for essays to include localized content that is closely tied to a specific culture or whether there is a desire for universal applications based on a discourse that has value in any academic environment. Students then adjusted these expectations as they experienced audio composition and thought about whether their expectations had been fulfilled.

Information concerning the second question was collected through an analysis of audio essays that overtly copied radio shows. Both of these questions provided a background for the development of a new media assessment tool that need not necessarily help support Ong's theory as much as it assesses the advancement of the values his theory brings out.

The underlying potential benefit of audio essays, in particular, is an increase in accessible language which could help more students collaborate. On the other hand, the potential risk of the audio essays that I looked at was the lack of progress toward mastery
of academic discourse. In addition to these two issues, I also looked at whether secondary orality theory should be taught directly to students in an attempt to arm them with the ability to deconstruct the genres of public discourse that are gaining influence because of the delivery systems they use. For example, in Chapter 2 I discuss Bruce E. Gronbeck's reflections on the way the presidency has changed since the advent of radio and television. However, since my primary focus is not secondary orality as a whole but audio essays in particular, the next chapter will be looking at the differences that have come up within different media of secondary orality in an effort to show the complexity involved in assessing them. In the next section, I will be looking at whether audio essays, as an example of secondary orality, provided me with an opportunity to assess voluntary participation within secondary orality.

Participatory Mystique

In speaking of secondary orality's resemblance to primary orality Ong lists "its participatory mystique, its fostering of a communal sense, its concentration on the present moment, and even its use of formulas" (Orality 136). The context suggests that he is referring to our current typography influenced mentality when he states that:

...we are group-minded self-consciously and programmatically. The individual feels that he or she, as an individual, must be socially sensitive. Unlike members of a primary oral culture, who are turned outward because they have had little occasion to turn inward, we are turned outward because we have turned inward. (Ong, Orality 136)

The idea that typographic folk choose to participate in a community of listeners instead of
being forced to for lack of options is pivotal for Selfe's point:

I argue that the history of aurality (as well as that of visual modalities) has limited our understanding of composing as a multimodal rhetorical activity and has, thus, helped deprive students of valuable semiotic resources for making meaning. (“Movement” 1)

If students, in contrast to the limited multimodal rhetorical activity in composition history, have a chance to participate in secondary orality through audio essays, then there would be a kind of restoration of participatory mystique. The paradox in comparing primary orality with traditional typographic practices is the lack of semiotic options in both.

One method that I used to assess whether students participated in academic discourse voluntarily was to offer them the option of composing audio essays and asking them why they chose that particular option. I was looking to see if they would respond by saying that audio essays indeed provided a more social dynamic that is unavailable in writing. The responses I received helped me assess Ong's theory and provided me with more background on how to assess audio essays. For example, when certain responses appeared to call into question Ong's predictions concerning voluntary participation, it provided me with the opportunity to talk about how voluntary participation should be preserved in spite of the fact that it may not come naturally or may even be hindered by the audio essay. This is not to say that the motivation behind voluntary participation should not be taken into consideration. After all, students who are driven by grades, finding the quickest and easiest possible way to finish the project, or other incentives that
have little to do with learning through collaboration, will likely miss out on the valuable social experience that writing instructors are trying to provide. In the following section I will be looking more closely at the effect of motivation on the audience that students keep in mind as they are composing.

**Communal Sense**

The communal sense of secondary orality is shared with primary orality in that, "listening to spoken words forms hearers into a group, a true audience, just as reading written or printed texts turns individuals in on themselves" (Ong, Orality 136). There are two important aspects to consider in this grouping. To begin with I would like to examine Ong's reason for believing that the spoken word groups hearers together. Secondly, I would like to explore whether this grouping is contingent upon the possibility for immediate response or interaction with the audience.

Ong treats the first idea in more detail in an earlier chapter: "Because in its physical constitution as sound, the spoken word proceeds from the human interior and manifests human beings to one another as conscious interiors, as persons, the spoken word forms human beings into close-knit groups" (Orality 74). This concept appears in more detail in a later article which Ong contributed to Peter Elbow's collection of essays, Landmark Essays on Voice and Writing. In an essay entitled "Word as Sound" Ong expands on the communal sense achieved by aural communication: "Sound... reveals the interior without the necessity of physical invasion. Thus we tap a wall to discover where it is hollow inside" (23). While we can find metaphors for this idea with objects such as a wall or a coin the idea takes on even more significance in a social setting because,
"human privacy or dignity imposes severe limits on reciprocity achieved by touch. Sound provides reciprocity and communication without collision or friction" (Ong "Word" 26). Therefore Ong speaks of a classroom-like situation to illustrate this point by saying:

When a speaker is addressing an audience, the members of the audience normally become a unity, with themselves and with the speaker. If the speaker asks the audience to read a handout provided for them, as each reader enters into his or her own private reading world, the unity of the audience is shattered, to be reestablished only when oral speech begins again. (Ong Orality 74)

This unity comes as a result of "interior to interior" speech encounters (Ong "Word" 27). In addition, Ong draws one final contrast that has special application to audio essays:

Because it consists of silent words, writing introduces a whole new set of structures within the psyche: communication which lacks the normal social aspect of communication, encounter with one who is not present, participation in the thought of others without commitment or involvement. (Ong "Word" 27)

This paragraph reveals the connection between the communal sense and participatory mystique. Although students may have access to the recording of someone's voice or interior it becomes displaced from the interior of the person who produced the sound when it is burned on to a CD or digitized into a thumb drive. This, then, has the potential of participation without the same involvement that would occur when the person is present. A true audience would only form if the audio essay is composed with a large
audience present either over the Internet or some kind of teleconference and if the audience can respond almost instantly to what is being composed. If, for example, a student merely records the audio essay for the professor to hear later then the communal sense is lost because the same imaginary audience that writers always depend upon will be perpetuated in an isolated composition of the audio essay. Ong makes this point about chirographic cultures:

...the written text appears prima facie to be a one-way informational street, for no real recipient (reader, hearer) is present when the texts come into being. But in speaking as in writing, some recipient must be present, or there can be no text produced: so, isolated from real persons, the writer conjures up a fictional person or persons. "The writer's audience is always a fiction." (Ong, Orality 177)

In my composition classroom the balance between the expression of interiority accomplished by speech and the lack of audience caused by recording was explored. For example, students had a present audience in peer-review workshops. When students discussed their audio essays during workshops they had the chance to receive instant feedback from both peers and instructor. The question was then posed to the student: Did your peer review workshops bring you more satisfaction than turning in a final draft of your audio essay? Why or why not? Ultimately responses to this question provided me with some clues as to whether teachers can use audio essays to teach the benefits of focusing on both process and product, private and public composition.

Public writing also takes on a new meaning in secondary orality because it
"generates a sense for groups immeasurably larger than those of primary oral culture - McLuhan's 'global village.' (Ong, Orality 136). Therefore, the most natural outlet for an audience of a larger capacity in my class was my offering students the opportunity to publish their audio essays on the Internet. However, even this did not have the instant feedback that a radio DJ might receive, for example, and the sense of a present audience was lost to some degree.

Beyond the presence of an audience is Ong's somewhat organic observation about the sense of sight and the sense of hearing. He states that:

Sight isolates, sound incorporates... Vision comes to a human being from one direction at a time: to look at a room or a landscape, I must move my eyes around from one part to another. When I hear, however, I gather sound simultaneously from every direction at once: I am at the center of my auditory world, which envelopes me, establishing me at a kind of core of sensation and existence. (Orality 72)

This statement is crucial to this study because Ong connects it with his epistemology, allowing an approach familiar to Composition Studies. He draws the parallel between something very basic and somewhat practical in the difference between seeing and hearing and the human consciousness:

Interiority and harmony are characteristics of human consciousness...

Knowledge is ultimately not a fractioning but a unifying phenomenon, a striving for harmony... It will be seen that most of the characteristics of orally based thought and expression discussed earlier in this chapter relate
intimately to the unifying, centralizing, interiorizing economy of sound as perceived by human beings. (Orality 72-73)

This harmonizing effect of sound would potentially lead students of composition to view knowledge as something that must be "aggregative (harmonizing)" rather than dissecting (Orality 73). This has the potential to cause some alarm to teachers who already have a hard time getting students to stop agreeing with each other and take the opposing view that is so popular in the teaching of composition. For example, one popular textbook, The Craft of Research, states that, "Readers value most highly new facts when they upset what seemed long settled" (emphasis in the original Booth, et al. 125). Composition scholars on the other hand have begun to value both/and arguments (Selfe "Movement"; Elbow). These two trends are not mutually exclusive because most dialogue involves acknowledgment of certain opposing points in the making of new points. Audio essays did not appear to take students in either direction perhaps because their composition involved both vision and aurality. The initial recording and playback was mostly aural but the editing was primarily visual in software such as Audacity and GarageBand.

Therefore, I looked at whether audio essays acted as a corrective to an imbalance of either an agonistic or dogmatic stance or a stance that had no significance. In order to assess any types of shifts in this area I looked at student drafts that were composed before and after they began audio composition. I looked for insignificant theses that become more significant in the audio essay and I looked for dogmatic theses that shifted to acknowledging opposing viewpoints during audio composing.

Ong highlights the harmonizing aspect of secondary orality when he states that,
"Electronic media do not tolerate a show of open antagonism. Despite their cultivated air of spontaneity, these media are totally dominated by a sense of closure which is the heritage of print" (Orality 137). This might seem like an antiquated notion of the Eighties with all the antagonism on television today. However, I would point out that even the most antagonistic shows end with remarks that try to bring a sense of closure. Since secondary orality theory seemed to lean so much on the harmonizing side I looked at whether audio essays would end up being a biasing instead of a balancing force in my composition classroom. Therefore, when I analyzed both audio and written essays I looked for dogmatic language, significant theses, and the genres students were imitating.

The role of genre and the perception of audience are also pertinent to whether students focus on product or process. This correlates with the following section because Ong's phrase "concentration on the present moment" not only suggests a focus on a running process but also has implications for whether students will be thinking about the instructor, who will give them a grade on their final product, as their audience.

Concentration on the Present Moment

In order to compensate, to a degree, for the lack of a present audience in the composition of audio essays, I looked at whether students could begin to think of words as events, an idea that Ong brings out of Hebrew by looking at the intersection between conceptions of words and events: "The Hebrew word dabar, which means word, means also event and thus refers directly to the spoken word" (Ong, Orality 75). Ong explains that in Christian religious services a sacred text may be read aloud because, "God is thought of always as 'speaking' to human beings, not as writing to them" (Orality 75).
Therefore, I looked at whether this same sense of a word as an event rather than something reduced to space could be recaptured through the composition of audio essays. Part of my study looked at whether students could become aware that every time someone listens to their essay, though they may not be present at the time of composition, he or she would experience the student as speaking at that very moment even if the composition involved a script. This would also have implications for the times when students read any written response to their essays.

The difference between the religious experience and the exchange between an audio composer and a listener is that from the Christian worshiper's point of view God remains the same in spite of the time that has elapsed since the text was written. On the other hand, the audio composer will likely have changed in a variety of ways and the essay may only reflect the understanding at the time of composition. Despite this limited reversion to the present audience of primary orality students still have the potential of gaining an understanding of the conversational nature of writing and the need to constantly be updated concerning an author's new position. Since the student should still retain a conversational stance toward an author's old stance despite the change that has taken place, my look at how students handled time sensitive topics took on added significance. More specifically, I looked at whether students who became aware of the conversational nature of composition resisted the tendency to look for a final answer rather than entering into an academic conversation. To assess whether students began seeing their texts as merely "coded symbols" that elicited a sound event in time I asked students about the importance of my response and the response of their peers before and
after the audio essay assignment (Ong, Orality 75). When one of my students began thinking of her assignments as conversations after completing an audio essay it seemed as though she was experiencing the harmonizing effect of secondary orality in the writing classroom. However, her response also had a great bearing on her definition of literacy because it provided another clue concerning the prevailing definition of literacy in my class. In other words, my students had the opportunity to weigh in on the definition of literacy as either something that is writing-centered, where all methods using new media should lead to better writing, or centered around something else, collaboration or critical thinking, so that writing had the potential of being marginalized.

This had significance in light of Killingsworth's discussion of the changing definition of literacy in the field of Composition, which will be discussed further in the second chapter. In addition, the question I will be analyzing in the following section has to do with whether the students' awareness of their dependence on other authors changed after composing in audio. When audio essays lead students to a greater awareness of the conversation they are entering into through their composition then students have the opportunity to benefit regardless of their definition of literacy.

Use of Formulas

In order to understand the use of formulas in composition and how this relates to audio essays we must first consider the nature of poetry in oral culture. Ong describes Homer's method of composition by saying:

Careful study of the sort Milman Parry was doing showed that [Homer] repeated formula after formula. The meaning of the Greek term
'rhapsodize', rhapsoidein, 'to stich song together' (rhaptein, to stitch; oide, song), became ominous: Homer stitched together prefabricated parts.

Instead of a creator, you had an assembly-line worker. (Orality 22)

The prefabricated parts that Ong refers to are formulas that he typifies using epithets such as "the brave soldier" (Interfaces 19). This does not mean that the composition was simplistic. On the contrary Ong quotes Michael M. Nagler as saying that it involved spontaneous "realizations of inherited traditional impulses" (qtd. in Interfaces 19). In secondary orality spontaneity occurs willfully because "through analytic reflection we have decided that spontaneity is a good thing" (Ong, Orality 137). For people of primary orality "analytic reflectiveness implemented by writing is unavailable" and therefore they have to resort to a spontaneity that depends upon formulas just as an assembly line worker must work with what comes by on a conveyor belt (Ong, Orality 137). On the other hand, people of secondary orality choose to be spontaneous while still using the formula equivalent jingles of popular culture (Ong, Rhetoric 299). They are more like the disc jockey who mixes music and samples in a unique way. Therefore, the production of audio essays resembles the work of a DJ and the spontaneous use of formulas. After all, producing audio essays often involves stitching together background music and sound effects as exemplified in at least three of the audio essays Selfe cites in her article. The music that is stitched together is not an original production and neither are the sounds. The only original sound produced on these essays is the voice of the student. These steps correlate with most writing processes where students must stitch together the thoughts, quotes, and paraphrases of authors without losing their own voice. Students must situate
themselves in the conversation they are entering through their writing. Therefore, I asked students about how they saw their relation to other authors.

In addition, DJs often throw in songs associated with strong memories, melodies that were popular in the past. In the same way students begin to remember the memories of a culture once they have read the pivotal writings of a field. Beyond the benefits of learning to be situated in a conversation is the remembrance of pivotal writings. In this case formulas or songs can work by association and bring back fitting memories. This has tremendous repercussions because in both typographic and oral cultures, "You know what you can recall" (Ong, Orality 33). Since oral folk cannot depend on texts for retention they rely on formulas (Ong, Orality 34). However, formulas themselves have the potential of pointing students to the nature of language as well as creating better retention. Ong explains this:

Of course, all expression and all thought is to a degree formulaic in the sense that every word and every concept conveyed in a word is a kind of formula, a fixed way of processing the data of experience, determining the way experience and reflection are intellectually organized, and acting as a mnemonic device of sorts... The formulas characterizing orality are more elaborate, however, than are individual words, though some may be relatively simple: the Beowulf-poet's “whale-road” is a formula (metaphorical) for the sea in a sense in which the term 'sea' is not. (Ong, Orality 36).

If students are more likely to come up with elaborate formulas in the composition of
audio essays then the assignments would not only become more memorable to students but the students themselves would come out better communicators, able to, like primary oral folk, "think memorable thoughts" (Ong, Orality 34). These memorable thoughts would also contribute to more social interaction since they are often associated with informal thoughts, such as jingles. Ong has pointed out that "the slogan, the catch phrase, or the compulsive jingle," although different from primary orality's formulas, are still a type of cliché (Ong, Rhetoric 299). In order to assess any potential changes to the level of significance in student theses as a result of students composing audio essays I looked at the audio essay theses produced in my class as well as the written theses produced after them to see if there was any difference in this area. Since this was also related to the communal sense category I discussed it in that section both in this chapter and in the following chapters.

This overlap between the use of formulas and communal sense reveals that the harmonizing potential of formulas may lie in the conversational sense of language as well as in some types of collaboration. However, there is also the risk that students will be influenced by audio production to begin composing simplistic formulaic essays. In addition, I looked at how students saw the potential benefits of their new found awareness of the conversational nature of their composition and the possibility of added collaboration through the use of their classmate's voices or music. After all, more semiotic resources can mean more opportunity for collaboration. At the same time, as I will discuss in Chapter 4, it can mean more decisions to be made and more work.

In every chapter, as I will point out in the next section, I have tried to show both
the potential benefits of audio essays, in terms of the values that Ong highlights in his description of secondary orality, as well as their limitations and even their undermining of these same values. As outlined in this chapter, I have used this study as the beginnings of an assessment of the effect of audio essays upon the levels of formal language. This included, to a certain degree, the conventions and genres audio essays take on as they enter the field of Composition. In addition, I have tried to look at the responses of fourteen of my students in their second semester of first-year composition. Since the small Christian college I teach at had a total enrollment of forty-five students during the spring semester of 2011, in which I collected the data, my population was relatively small. Eighty percent of the student body was between the ages of 18-24. Of the fourteen students who filled out consent forms to participate in my research five of them were females and nine of them were males. Using two questionnaires, one at the beginning and one at the end of the semester, and following up these questionnaires with informal interviews I was able to look at how my students responded to the opportunity for voluntary participation and some of their motives behind composing. In terms of student perception I also used the questionnaires and interviews to look at their sense of audience, their focus on process or product, and their awareness of the conversational nature of language. For example, in the first questionnaire I asked students, "Who did you consider your audience as you composed your writing assignments?" In the second questionnaire I asked them a corresponding question: "Who did you consider your audience as you composed your audio essays?" This allowed me to compare audience perception in the two media.
In addition, my analysis of their written and audio compositions provided me with data on the significance of their theses, their level of dogmatic language, and their imitation of some broad public discourse genres. Since one of my primary purposes for this thesis was to highlight the voice of the students I tried to use my analysis of their drafts and my quantifying of their questionnaire responses as a way to assess and confirm their perceptions.

Furthermore, I designed my assignments in a specific sequence in order to look for the changes I have been discussing in this section before, during, and after the audio essays assignment. In other words, I assigned a written argumentative essay followed by an audio essay, a written or audio article for a website, and a longer research paper. Therefore, my analysis of final drafts allowed me to not only consider whether results were occurring in part because of the sequence but also whether students voluntarily chose to compose in writing or in audio for the website article assignment. On the one hand these research methods emphasized the voice and perception of the student. On the other hand I also tried to provide some of my own perspective through my analysis of written and audio artifacts.

Summary of Chapters

The second chapter is a review of the criticism that has been directed towards Ong's theory, the need for critical assessments of new media, and some of the ways scholars from a variety of fields have viewed the potential of secondary orality as a method of assessment. In addition, I try to show how the approach I am using relates to the variety of media that the theory of secondary orality has been applied to. The third
chapter briefly discusses the methodology I've introduced in this chapter. However, I have included more on my data collection and organization methods and provided examples of the types of questions I asked and their relevancy to my topic. I also discuss the parallel between my methods and the theory I am assessing in order to show the importance of highlighting student perception. The fourth chapter is a summary of my findings with special emphasis on data from student interviews and other data that stood out as significant. In addition to the categories I have introduced in this chapter I also added a section on how my students define literacy because of it's implications to how any new medium is approached. My fifth and final chapter discusses the conclusions that I have come to based on the data. In addition, I offer strategies for teachers who are considering audio essays for their composition curriculum, and examine the possibility for further studies that would be valuable to these teachers.
Chapter 2

Often as they walked in the garden in the cool of the day they heard the voice of God, and face to face held communion with the Eternal.

~Ellen G. White Education

Whenever a study appears on the topic of new media it usually must address the change it brings about in the context of the primal medium of face-to-face oral communication. In the field of Composition this is especially necessary because education is seen as something that happens in workshops and conferences, or face-to-face interactions. However, the teaching style that sees the professor as the "sage on the stage" is a persistent temptation that does not require interactive discourse and therefore matches the view of education as the transfer of information. The development of information technology can reinforce the "sage on stage" mentality and must be monitored carefully so that it is not brought back into the classroom.

Instead of looking at whether face-to-face interactions are being encouraged by new media the discussion often turns toward the image versus text dichotomy. Since the tension often amounts to a comparison between writing and video production, audio essays provide a way to consider the primacy of speech without the complication of engaging in the image versus text debate. Bolter looks at the image versus text dichotomy and tries to defend what he terms "picture writing." But he also brings attention to a significant aspect of media theory. Bolter speaks of picture writing as a type of primary literacy since "it is not tied to spoken language" (46). In contrast to this organic approach is Ong's claim that primary orality does not require any form of technology, as has been
stated in his definition of secondary orality. Therefore, Ong's perspective addresses a primacy that even picture writing does not.

This ethnographic study relies heavily on secondary sources that develop the comparisons between a primal medium and new media that Ong made through his description of secondary orality. This does not suggest that Ong's categories, which describe the overlap between primary and secondary orality, represent the ideal method of defending some lost primal community. On the contrary, many sources have found significant inaccuracies in these categories. However, the inaccuracies do not negate the fact that Ong is speaking about a mode of communication that is valued precisely because of the reaction against the current-traditional method of education, which is perceived as isolating and oppressive. An even greater number of sources merely discuss changes in the media landscape and often do so with a look at what is lost instead of merely what is gained. These sources come from a variety of fields including Composition, Media Studies, and Music.

Although Ong had a mostly positive view of secondary orality I will be looking at how the categories from his description can be used to point out the challenges of implementing audio essays. After all secondary orality is not a return to face-to-face communication. Instead it is merely the return of elements of that primal interaction. Therefore, there is potential for scholars to assume that the return of elements of face-to-face communication does not pose a threat to current community building methods such as organizing a classroom so that it is conducive to discussion. Much of my discussion will be an attempt to show how some of the values of Composition Studies can be
undermined by certain aspects of the audio essay even though scholars may be sincere in
their effort to uphold these values using new media.

In this chapter I begin by discussing Ong's critics and the obstacles that media
theory faces in the world of Composition. Although many Composition scholars use
Ong's theory, only one source actually recommends that it should be employed in
pedagogy to transform students into cultural critics who can engage and critique the
dominant discourses of power. At the same time discourses of power, such as post-
modern schooled literacy, generally depend upon formal language, which secondary
orality usually lacks. Amidst these tensions the idea of the audio essay calls into question
whether the English department is responsible for teaching broadly-defined literacy or
just reading and writing (Killingsworth 35). If literacy is the main concern, then the
production and not merely the critique of audio essays in composition classrooms
becomes plausible. Therefore, I will attempt to use Ong's categories to help inform
educators on this question.

Additionally, there are two challenges to studying and producing audio essays as a
form of secondary orality which I explore in the section on participatory mystique. The
first is that the shift from a literate culture to a new type of orality and literacy mix
involves different degrees of change. In fact some of these changes resemble primary
orality so much that computer science and English scholar John December has coined the
term tertiary orality to describe them (3). These varying degrees require greater attention
to changes in specific genres, which likely translates into more class time. The second
challenge is the motivation behind composing once the means of production become
more accessible. For example, the motivation of a student attempting to achieve some type of rock star status may not resemble the motivation of an individual seeking social participation in a primary oral community.

The contrast between primary oral culture and the mixture of secondary orality continues in the section on communal sense. Once again I will be reviewing a type of collaboration that involves very little social interaction. In addition, a persistence of antagonistically toned genres in music and on the Internet calls into question Ong's assertion that secondary orality lacks the same edge as primary orality. This calls into question the level of collaboration and unity that can be achieved through the production of audio essays as secondary orality.

Another question that comes into play concerning the level of interaction with the audience is whether the reactions in a conversation are instantaneous. This will be covered in the section entitled "Concentration on the Present Moment." Because the audio essay is a recorded composition and not a live one it resembles writing in that the author may rely on imitating the voice on TV or radio just as writers imitate the voices of respected authors instead of focusing on a present audience. If the student decides to imitate other media messages they may benefit from knowing that they lose some of the spontaneity of live performance in exchange for the use of a greater variety of meaningful electronic sounds. On the other hand, they have the potential to become aware of the both/and harmonizing arguments that time allows when they are not pressured to perform extemporaneously.

In the final section that covers Ong's categories, entitled "Use of Formulas," I will
be looking at the role of accessible language in secondary orality. For example, the further harmonizing effect of accessible formulaic language has its limitations by being rooted in the short-term mobilization of a society. Unlike human reactions in primary orality people today are only driven by formulas temporarily, as can be seen in reactions to fast food jingles. This translates to less community building upon the use of formulas than occurred among the people of primary orality.

In the final section of this chapter I reflect on the significance of elevating one discourse above another and upon the omission of warnings concerning the changes in multimodal composition. After all, the nostalgia for primary orality means nothing to scholars such as Killingsworth who see the tension between different modes of communication as only being problematic when writing instruction does not take into account the arrival of these new modes.

The Search For Critical Assessments of New Media

In their article, "The Elusive Presence of the Word: An Interview with Walter Ong," Michael Kleine and Frederic G. Gale explain that Ong came under the sharpest criticism when he "listed nine characteristics of oral based thought, opposing them in each case to characteristics of writing" (65). His critics thought that these characteristics were a "categorization and oversimplification" (65). German linguist Werner Holly acknowledges this fact in his article, "Secondary Orality in the Electronic Media," where he states that "the grade of orality or literacy is not measurable in an objective or statistical fashion" (347). When looking at traces of orality in electronic media the grade cannot be tracked because:
...there is no uniform linguistic style for radio or television which could be
called oral or literate. Instead we have a variety of text types that at best
could be localized on a scale between typically oral vs. literate. (347)

This fact, however, does not prevent Holly from referring to studies that bring out the
differences through a specific method: "The customary method of illustrating both styles
is to contrast extreme examples that contain some of the typical features" (347). With this
approach Holly uses much of his article to emphasize the typical features of secondary
orality on German television, such as the frequency of the word and, first person
references, passive form, and sentence length variations (349-52).

Additional criticism against Ong's theory comes from Composition scholars such
as John Trimbur and Lester Faigley. They see Ong's theories as part of the "Alphabetic
Literacy Narrative;" the idea that the introduction of the alphabet is responsible for major
progress in "science, mathematics, jurisprudence, politics, economics, social
organization, and religion" (Faigley 176; Trimbur 364-5). However, Faigley admits that
this narrative, which runs through the works of a number of scholars, including Ong, is a
"reduction of their wide-ranging scholarship [that] is misleading" (176). Both Faigley and
Trimbur see the narrative as problematic because it is primarily "based on a dichotomy
between the oral and the visual" (Faigley 176; Trimbur 364-5). Indeed, most of the debate
over multimodal composing has centered around the conflict between the visual and the
verbal or oral (George; Selfe "Students"; Williams). Although the difference between
visual and oral composition does play a role in Ong's theories, as has already been noted
in the section on communal sense in Chapter 1, it comes in the context of comparing two
verbal modalities: speech and writing. In other words, Ong's focus is not on the role of visual arguments, websites, and videos.

Nevertheless, Trimbur and Faigley's argument about getting past the oral versus visual dichotomy is not altogether missing the implications of Ong's theory. After all, other senses are certainly involved in secondary orality, as has been developed by Bruce E. Gronbeck, a professor of public address. In a chapter entitled "The Presidency in the Age of Secondary Orality," Gronbeck points out that, "While characterizing political rhetoric in the age of secondary orality as ocularcentric, we must remember that it also is verbocentric and phonocentric" (41). He uses the example of a music video that was played at the 1992 Republican National Convention which used content that depended on pictures, music, and lyrics for a variety of messages (Gronbeck 41). He concludes that, "Meaning making is a multichannel activity," and "The ability of leaders to control all three channels [ocular, verbal, and phonic] in today's mediated world is absolutely essential to political survival" (Gronbeck 42). No one would deny that meaning can come from a variety of channels. Instead Gronbeck's emphasis on the multichannel expertise required in politics simply suggests that English professors cannot afford to ignore the ocular and phonic channels if they are to remain politically savvy. However, this does not mean that English composition students must produce ocular and phonic communication in order to analyze it. In other words, English departments can allow computer science departments or communications departments to focus on the production of other channels while every field can analyze and critique all three channels using their preferred mode.

Ong himself was not oblivious to multichannel meaning making, which can be
seen when he points out the combination of sense experiences on television: "Both visually and aurally (sound is of the essence of television), the instrument takes a real presence from the place where it is real and present and represents it in other localities where it is neither real nor truly present" (Interfaces 315).

This does not mean that he ignores the differences between the three channels but rather that he takes into account the fact that the difference between orality and literacy does not equate with the dichotomy between the visual and the oral. For example, he sees the similarities and differences between oral communication and electronic verbalization on the Internet:

> Although it is not exactly the same as oral communication, the network message from one person to another or others is very rapid and can in effect be in the present. Computerized communication can thus suggest the immediate experience of direct sound. I believe that is why computerized verbalization has been assimilated to secondary "orality," even when it comes not in oral-aural format but through the eye, and thus is not directly oral at all. (qtd. in Kleine and Gale 80)

Hypertext might receive the same response as network messaging because Ong calls all "technologizing of the textualized word... secondary literacy" (qtd. in Kleine and Gale 81). This response is needed when considering the writings of theologian Robert M. Fowler, who has looked at hypertext as secondary orality following the thoughts of media theorist Jay David Bolter, as well as English Professors George P. Landow and Richard A. Lanham. Fowler has applied the theory of secondary orality to hypertext despite the
difference between the senses that receive hypertext and sound.

Because the difference between the characteristics of primary orality and hypertext, or multichannel content, fits better in a spectrum rather than in categories, I will need to bend Ong's categories to fit in hypertext later in this chapter. This need to bend Ong's categories, once again, reiterates the fact that multichannel presentations create greater complexity and lead to a greater need for analysis from every channel, including the one with which English departments are primarily preoccupied with: the written verbal channel. In other words, communications departments, sociology departments, and computer science departments will all face a greater challenge in their need to analyze multichannel presentations through whatever means- essays, websites, videos, etc.- students expect to use in those departments.

This is not to say that understanding the subtle changes in the media landscape is irrelevant to Composition Studies. On the contrary, the ability to recognize the differences between receiving an ocular message as opposed to receiving an oral message has value to Composition Studies because of its potential empowering of students with the ability to interpret "the newly powerful delivery systems of secondary orality" (Welch 26). Kathleen E. Welch uses the example of secondary orality on television to suggest that:

Empowerment in writing can take place with the use of orality/literacy/secondary orality theory. This empowerment can derive from making writing courses locations for the training of cultural critics who understand the pressures and possibilities of delivery in its newly revivified manifestations. (28)
Welch's assertion makes sense because the theory of secondary orality has been used to analyze music of the world and television news, as well as in Interpreting studies, Rhetorical Studies, Media Studies, and the Studies of Consciousness (Blaukopf; Cooper; Cronin; Gronbeck, Farrell and Soukup). Furthermore, there is the call to look beyond "general theories" to what Ruth Finnegan, one of Ong's primary critics, calls:

...the specific historical circumstances in which literacy or orality have variously been deployed, and the different ways the various media of communication are used in different cultures and different historical periods, depending as much on culture and historical specificity as on the technology as such. (7)

Teacher research accomplishes just such a goal because no one is more aware of the historical specificity and culture of a classroom than the instructor and pupils that make up a class.

Unfortunately, most of the recent research that has been done on audio composition in the writing classroom has not utilized Ong's theory of secondary orality. This has resulted in many scholars praising new media and its production without including the corresponding need for critiquing a higher complexity of information using the written verbal medium. After all, students are likely to expect and desire to utilize written communication when they enroll in a composition course, especially as they become aware of powerful modes of discourse. In fact, Welch began calling for more attention to what she terms the "centrality of delivery and its reconfiguration in secondary
orality" back in 1993 (26). She explains her research at that time:

I examined 45 recently published first-year writing textbooks to determine the extent to which these powerful sources account for the forms of secondary orality. A number of textbooks now on the market are theoretically sensitive, pedagogically sound, and attractive in many other ways, but the vast majority (the readers, the rhetorics, the argument books, and the hybrids) do not substantially account for the powerful new kinds of delivery. (26)

Since Welch's research a number of first-year textbooks have begun to include delivery as one subject among others (Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters; Blau and Burak). However, they have not portrayed delivery as a topic that is central to the communication act probably because this involves a number of considerations, including whether the topics that are currently receiving the most attention should be receive more competition.

One reason for what Welch calls "a strange erasure" may be found in Lulu C. H. Sun and Maureen M. Hourigan's essay, "The 'MLA Job Information List': The Perils of Not Paying Attention" (26). This article appeared about seven years after Welch expressed her concern. It states that the problem lies in the demand for a composition instructor that fills a specific job description:

But while compositionists pen scholarly monographs interrogating the intersection of literacy and computers, our analysis of recent MLA job announcements suggests that computer skills and computer expertise, NOT discussions of the "literacy," the "how" and the "why" of computer
usage, are what institutions truly value in a compositionist. With rare exceptions, the listings are not interested in the candidate's knowledge of the theory of computers and their impact on literacy, but on his or her abilities to teach other faculty and students how to construct web pages and to teach in computer-oriented classrooms. These are basically technical skills, and NOT theoretical conversations, discourses, or demonstrations of computer applications. (Sun and Hourigan 81)

In spite of these circumstances Sun and Hourigan continue to predict the questions concerning the implications of these shifts:

As literacy is being transformed, redefined, reconstructed (and deconstructed), reinterpreted, and reimagined, more and more questions will be raised about the implications-theoretical, philosophical, pedagogical, and practical-of technologizing the composition profession. (89)

In fact, part of this clash comes from simple things such as the way desks are set up in the classroom. Sun and Hourigan give an example of an instructor who began distance education and was "so terrified by this unknown technology that [she] slavishly followed the advice of the 'the experts'" (87). This led to an experience that involved "the classic set-up of a distance classroom (with the instructor at the podium and rows of tables or individual desks for students) and the students' use of push-button microphones to ask questions and participate in discussion [which] assume a lecture format for the class" (Sun and Hourigan 87). This format "suggests a banking model of education rather than
the participatory, collaborative one" (Sun and Hourigan 87).

The banking model of education assumes that information can be deposited without taking into account that each recipient also interprets that information (Freire 28,29). Ong was saying this as far back as 1996: "We live in an information age, but information is not knowledge. Information always calls for interpretation. And interpretation commonly involves the use of rhetoric" (qtd. in Kleine and Gale 10). The banking model also assumes mass communication, one person delivering one message to a large group of people, without consideration for interpretation, which may lead some to reach a vastly different and likely unintended conclusion and therefore require more explanation if they are to gain the intended lesson. This list can go on for some pages but one more assumption deserves attention here. Because of differences in interpretation, the banking model ignores the fact that one student may gain such a valuable insight from what is taught that other students would receive a greater benefit from that particular student than from the teacher's words alone.

This is where Ong's theory needs to be addressed, because he suggests that secondary orality brings back the participatory mystique of primary orality, despite the fact that the word is technologized. As stated in the first chapter, the only hint we have of what this means to Ong is his statements about being socially sensitive or group-minded voluntarily. If this translates into what will be discussed later in the section on participatory mystique as "more equal participation in synchronous discussions, more opinions tend[ing] to be asked for and offered," then it would certainly be a beneficial addition to a composition course (Hiltz and Turoff 124). However, as has already been
suggested in the distance education example, this is not a given with secondary orality.

In addition, Sun and Hourigan point out another threatening aspect of technology in the composition classroom:

While these technologies offer an endless array of new and exciting possibilities for the improvement of education, they also frequently clash with some of our basic beliefs about the nature of classroom instruction, in all its communal richness and face-to-face complexity. (80)

Ong pointed to the return of the communal sense, the unity that comes from the manifestation of "human beings to one another as conscious interiors," in the form of a much bigger group: "McLuhan's global village." (Orality 74, 136). However, this should be considered in terms of the level of communal richness that can be attained with the development of secondary orality. As stated in the first chapter, the possibility of an isolated person participating in the thought of another without "commitment or involvement," because that person is not physically present, can occur with audio essays as well as with writing (Ong, "Word" 27).

A more recent example of articles and audio samples that do not address these challenges is the special issue of Computers and Composition Online entitled "Sound in/as Compositional Space" that appeared in 2006. Only one of these articles cites Ong and none of them address secondary orality. Perhaps a look at secondary orality theory in audio essays through the lens of ethnographic teacher research is an approach that resembles too closely the "quantifiable categories" that are demanded by program administrators and "corporate culture" as the cry of "literacy crisis" continues
For composition instructor Jimmie Killingsworth, Ong's theory of secondary orality fits perfectly with the shift from product to process in the history of Composition. In a CCC article entitled "Product and Process, Literacy and Orality: An Essay on Composition and Culture," Killingsworth asserted that "Product is to literacy as process is to orality" (Emphasis in the original 26). After tracing the historical parallels of the rise of secondary orality and the rise of the process movement he concludes by stating:

Despite the desire of many researchers and theoreticians to move forward, the conflicts of product and process, literacy and orality, remain alive for composition practitioners today, a decade after Maxine Hairston welcomed the process revolution in a CCC article that continues to be read and photocopied for training sessions and graduate seminars in composition. If our rhetorical theories and empirical evidence fail to account for this popular interest, then we should look to ideology and the cultural context, in which a wistful longing for community and trustful dialogue contends with the tough-minded preference for accountability, productivity, and technocratic management. (Killingsworth 38, 39)

Although he was writing almost eighteen years ago, the accreditation watchword, "intentionality," and the multiplication of assessment software such as LiveText and RCampus continue to encourage the creation of rubric education. While the field of Composition has maneuvered away from process pedagogy by shunning the ideal process, it still has to navigate a changing media landscape that no longer pines for the
ideal of a primal community:

The process pedagogy thus represents an effort not so much to recover an original orality, but rather to accommodate a version of orality that has been dialectically transformed by the culture and politics of literacy. After all, the aim of the composition course is still to teach writing. The challenge is to do so within the cultural confines of secondary orality.

(Killingsworth 30)

Those who are attempting to meet that challenge may benefit from Ong's categories. But even before these categories are dropped into a rubric for testing audio essays and other new media, the categories themselves must be modified and updated according to the changes and evidence that has come to light since Ong was writing. If Killingsworth's parallel is right then modifications to the categories will not prevent them from providing a highlight of the values of process and orality using rubric-like categories that resemble the old literacy that administrators still run on. According to the scholars cited in this chapter it is the overshadowing topics of the image versus text dichotomy and the demand for computer literacy among professors that has likely created a lack of theoretical categorization in the area of new media assessment. As I begin my discussion of the first of Ong's categories I will try to show why theoretical categorization is valued by some Composition scholars.

**Informal Language**

In contrast to Finnegan's call for specificity is the direct defense of a theoretical approach in the teaching of literacy. In their book, *The Powers of Literacy: A Genre*
Approach To Writing, Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis explain the importance of teaching a metalanguage that can engage with discourses of power:

Pedagogies need to approach literacy theoretically - to teach grammar as a theory of language - because theory is the most appropriate way of deconstructing socially powerful discourses. It is the fundamental cognitive technology behind these discourses. And much of the time these genres are themselves theoretical. (78)

Therefore, if audio essays foster informal language then they may interfere with the progress a student would make toward "deconstructing socially powerful discourses." In Holly's example we have an analysis of televised political interviews which would certainly have the potential of attracting some student interest because of the stakes involved. However, this type of analysis will do little for students who are trying to engage post-modern theory, feminist theory, gay, lesbian, and queer theory, etc. As stated in the section on informal language this is precisely because these types of theories rely heavily on the literate mode and do not appear to be heading toward an involvement style. This is why Cope and Kalantzis emphasize the fact that:

The postmodernists see themselves as bricoleurs and revel in the interplay of the irreducible discontinuities they see in the world. Unfortunately, this is hardly a way to get around in industrialism. Worse still, it represents the intellectual false modesty of a cultural elite. Postmodernist authors write texts that are often so tightly woven, clever, beautifully written and canonically referenced that they cannot be other than the products of the
type of pedagogy and literacy that they so vehemently oppose. (73)

If students are to engage in the academic conversation that involves this type of writing then the production of audio essays, which have the potential of taking on the conventions of public discourse, might be limited by the need for the study of academic discourse. In other words, the participatory mystique may come in a hybrid form and contain informal language which involves participation in the larger social community of public discourse, while giving up some of the focus on the smaller and potentially liberating engagement with academic discourse.

On the flip side of this is what Gronbeck has said about the changing presidency during the electronic revolution:

We live in an era where access to the presidency-and, for the president, to his various constituencies-is controlled and conditioned by electronic channels. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's success in making himself and his office into powerful presences among the electorate depended upon radio.

(Gronbeck 30)

Beyond this simple definition are the massive results that make up what Gronbeck terms the electronic presidency:

(1) the comparative importance of a multimediated rhetoric,
(2) the acceleration of rhetorical processes,
(3) the centrality of ethos to presidential success, and
(4) the diffusion of what counts as presidential rhetoric. (41)
It is beyond the scope of my study to look into these claims. I merely want to point out that the changing media landscape introduces the challenge of deciding which type of discourse to critique in a composition course. Gronbeck, in particular, would certainly have these changes introduced into a variety of fields beyond computer science:

Yet, all teachers of government, sociology, journalism, politics, and the various communication studies should move the electronic presidency onto their syllabi. To ignore the presidency in the age of secondary orality is to fail to arm students with the means of verbally and visually deconstructing it. (47)

Gronbeck is reiterating that discourses of power have changed with the media landscape. However, the public discourse of politics is usually different from academic discourse. Therefore, instructors must judge which socially powerful discourse requires more urgent deconstruction: electronic politics or schooled literacy. Whether this means merely critiquing ocular, phonic, or verbal texts or the production of public or academic texts depends on the instructor's definition of literacy.

Since audio essays are new to academic discourse and are usually associated with public discourse platforms such as NPR, those who desire to choose between teaching one form of discourse over another must watch the conventions that audio essays take on as they enter academia. In order to identify formal, schooled literacy in audio essays and in the writing that takes place after a student has been exposed to audio composition a point of departure is needed. Holly's study on German television does not deal explicitly with schooled literacy but it does explain studies that have contrasted formal and
informal language in the media. For example, "More formal text types as news broadcasts prefer attributive genitives (die Reise des Kanzlers Kohl) (Glinz 1980, 614; Nail 1981, 47-8), talk shows or TV-drama dialogues in contrast use more prepositional phrases (die Reise von Kanzler Kohl)” (Holly 348). In addition, Holly later brings out a shift that seems to support Ong's observations about the harmonizing effect of orality. In speaking of TV interviews Holly states that:

> It is also not surprising if interviewees tried to suppress some of the colloquial informal behaviour and instead orientate themselves more towards the norms of written standard, so as to appear more serious and convincing. Perhaps this was true for earlier times when literate norms in the media were still strongly binding, today that just isn't so. Quite the opposite, informal colloquial behaviour obviously flourishes, and can even be quantified. (351)

In other words, while the informal on radio used to be reserved for a "personal presenter in various kinds of programs," a conversational style has penetrated and developed a secondary orality at least in political interviews on TV (Holly 351). He then gives an example of a quantified informal element, the first person reference, in two interviews conducted by journalist Fritz Pleitgen with politicians Helmut Kohl and Egon Krenz:

"Despite the fact that political subject matter does not suggest personalization in and of itself, there are 48.7 (Kohl) and 51.3 (Krenz) tokens of first person references (per thousand words), compared to 61.5 in Chafe's spoken informal texts and only 4.6 in the written ones" (Holly 351). Holly takes Chafe's method of narrowing first person
references to I, me, we, and us (351). An example of this can be seen in the interview scripts that Holly includes in his appendix. In one paragraph of speech Chancellor Kohl uses I and we a total of seven times in sentences such as the following: "I can only say I am now in my ninth year as chancellor we have decreased taxes three times..." (359). Despite his acknowledgment that first person references do not necessarily suggest personalization and that personalization itself is a common device of the media and politics, he still explains its power: "But the personalized style is also a strategy to appeal directly to the audience by creating an intimate everyday-like atmosphere which bridges spatial and social distances" (Holly 351). Therefore, Ong's idea of the harmonizing effect of the oral informal style resonates with Holly and appears in quantified elements. Prepositional phrases and first person references represent only a few examples in a long list of strategies used by Holly.

To sum up the lens he used as he chose these elements, Holly explains that because electronic media is accessible to the masses, as opposed to the exclusive nature of literacy, it is oriented "towards entertainment" (354). This is because

> Just as a speaker does in everyday conversation, electronic media have to assure that the listeners can follow what is said. That implies the permanent attempt to be interesting, gripping, amusing. Literate texts may be dry and functional, only presenting necessary information to be presented when it is needed. Orality has to deal with the human factor, i.e. human interest stories. (Holly 354).

This may be a new phenomenon in the media, as was stated earlier. Perhaps television
and other forms of mass media increasingly feel the pressure to hold the attention of an ever-increasing audience. To do this, as Holly suggests, they resort to amusement and entertainment. The audio essay may take on formal conventions that are designed for a smaller audience in comparison to that of mass media. For example, it may take on the specialized language of a particular field that utilizes it. However, until these conventions become commonplace audio essays will remain a part of a public discourse that, according to Holly, is under pressure to hold the attention of a growing mass audience.

In addition, the audio essay's nearest kin in the world of media genres is the radio essay on shows like NPR's All Things Considered. This means that any imitation of the radio essay would lead to the teaching of public discourse rather than academic discourse. This may imply that the production of secondary orality will prevent students from deconstructing postmodernism and other discourses of power because the cognitive technology behind them is not easily accessible like it is with secondary orality. I will be discussing how students imitate the sense of audience of other authors, which can produce unwanted informal language, in the section entitled "Concentration on the Present Moment." For now I will simply say that public discourse seems to be entering academic discourse in classes such as that of Stanford's Jonah Willihnganz who focuses on radio essays in teaching a Program in Writing and Rhetoric entitled "The Art of the Audio Essay" (Web Resources).

In addition, students will fight an uphill battle even if they try to become producers of secondary orality because "The access to reception and modification [of electronic media] may be open to all, but the production is under the control of
professionals in highly specialized institutions and multinational industries" (Holly 354-5). Therefore the composition instructor must decide how much time to allocate to the teaching of the secondary orality that is increasing in power and how much time should go toward teaching students to deconstruct the socially powerful post-modern academic discourses. Up to this point I have been grouping many of the genres of secondary orality together (audio essays, television, computer network communication, etc.). However, in the following section I will begin to show that different media, and genres within a medium, use different levels of formal language.

**Participatory Mystique**

In 1978 Starr Roxanne Hiltz and Murray Turoff began studying Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) discourse on Bulletin Board Systems. In 1993 John December, a former instructor in both computer science and English, presented a paper at the Twelfth Annual Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition in which he looked back at a number of studies on CMC, including those of Hiltz and Turoff. December lists three characteristics that Hiltz and Turoff identified in their study of CMC: "more equal participation in synchronous discussions, more opinions tend to be asked for and offered, there is a great deal of explicit sociability of an informal sort on these systems" (5). Hiltz and Turoff speak of informal exchanges as those that involve "joking and personal exchanges... in less than two hours" of interaction (113). Personal exchanges included "references to children, spouses, drinking preferences, personal requests, 'bad taste' remarks, and puns" (Hiltz and Turoff 113). December was looking for the presence of "participation, expression, and emotion" and he recognizes the overlap
between these categories (5). He groups these together as characteristics of oral participation using the synonym involvement for participation:

CMC technologies transform thought and culture by engendering the creation of communities in which the participants, much like the participants in primarily oral cultures, can participate in emotional, expressive, and involving communication (December 3).

Therefore, when he lists the three characteristics from the Hiltz and Turoff study he shows that "explicit sociability of an informal sort" is merely one aspect of involvement or participation (December 5).

The section that deals most with participation within December's study is his listing of Ong's primary (not secondary) oral category "Empathetic and participatory" (17). He describes this category by saying, "[In] a literate culture learning is objective and distanced. In an oral culture, learning means 'achieving close, empathetic, communal identification with the known' (Ong 45)" (December 17). He then explains how this might apply to a USENET, "a global computer Bulletin Board System," discussion: "The participants in USENET often gain a close, sense of connection to each other. For example, two participants call a truce in a flame war..." (December 5, 17). His example shows a kind of apology after two people have been insulting each other. In fact one says to the other:

By the way, when I saw Bob's recopying of what I said, I was surprised by how harsh it looked. I wasn't trying to flame anyone. I've found this thread very enlightening, and I have enjoyed reading Schlaer and Meller's
books in the past. (December 17)

In other words, December is equating "empathetic, communal identification" with the willingness displayed by two arguing members to call a truce after severe insults. His second application of Ong's category involves participants "take[ing] on personalities" (December 17). For example, he gives someone's list of the people in a particular USENET in order to show that their purpose for being a part of this online community is closely related to their identity. For example, a girl named Sandy has the following comment under the heading Purpose, meaning the purpose for being on this USENET: "Jon's girlfriend, and champion of all foul-mouthed feminists" (December 17). To put it another way, the members of this Bulletin Board System have reached the point of seeing themselves as holding a specific role in that community.

At first it may seem that December uses one of Ong's primary oral categories instead of his secondary orality categories because of their resemblance. However, December sees what happens in his study of Bulletin Board Systems as part of Deborah Tannen's "continuum between orality and literacy" (December 3). In her collection of addresses, essays, and lectures entitled Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy, Tannen defines her concept of "an oral/literate continuum" as: "a continuum of relative focus on interpersonal involvement vs. message content" (15). December does a good job of summarizing Tannen's introductory experiment that helps define what she means:

In her study, she showed how oral strategies grow out of emphasis on interpersonal involvement between speaker/writer and audience and rely
on social context and shared interpersonal context for meaning. Literate strategies for communicating focus on content, using analytic methods emphasizing abstract terms. (3)

This continuum then sets up the argument for what December calls a "tertiary orality" (3). This orality "exhibits many qualities of an oral culture" and "occurs in real-time conferencing systems and in asynchronous bulletin board systems" (December 3). Therefore, even though Ong would call this "secondary literacy," as noted above, it introduces a theoretical approach that is plausible because Ong did include participatory mystique as a carryover characteristic of primary orality. In other words, we may say with Ong that there is no returning to primary orality because the written word has permeated so much of our world. December, on the other hand, would argue that we can still see some of the categories if we consider the shift to secondary orality as one that is gradual enough to allow for new hybrid forms of orality. This is not very far from Ong's own idea of secondary orality since Ong also kept some carryover categories from primary orality such as participatory mystique.

December's classification not only provides a simple definition for participation taken from Ong's own writings, but also provides the framework for analyzing asynchronous electronic texts such as audio essays. As stated earlier, this framework involves a number of characteristics of oral culture outside of Ong's label "Empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced" (Orality 45). In fact, December uses eight out of the nine categories Ong put forth for primary orality. I have tried to outline the categories that Ong and December utilize for their different types of orality in Figure
1. Notice that tertiary orality is a circle that appears completely inside the larger circle of primary orality. This is because all of the categories inside tertiary orality except for homeostasis are also categories of primary orality. With secondary orality, on the other hand, I have tried to show the limited overlap by drawing lines between categories. However, the parallels that I draw between primary, tertiary and secondary orality in Figure 1 are somewhat rough because many of the categories overlap. For example, "concentration on the present moment" also corresponds with the "situational rather than abstract" category. I have also included abbreviated definitions of Ong's categories.

Of the eight that December uses, the first category, "Additive Oral speech patterns," resurfaces as a measure of participation in Holly's article two years later. December summarizes Ong's definition of the category by saying that it involves "parataxis (the 'and' to connect clauses) rather than words that give a sense of analytic, reasoned subordination" (10). He explains that the USENET version of this is a "cascade...an unreasoned connection of clauses made by multiple authors" (10).

Where December merely shows how a string of somewhat disconnected lines can occur as a normal sequence in CMC, Holly actually looks for the and that connects clauses. In other words, Holly tries to quantify the frequency of the parataxis where December only assumed it based on the sequence and content. One of the reasons for the shift from the formal literate norms to the informal colloquial elements on TV is what Holly calls a "mixed style" which involves "speaking in a rather sophisticated manner, if a complex subject requires it, but at the same time [...] making efforts to be both, comprehensible and lively" (349). He goes on to isolate linguist Wallace L. Chafe's
"involvement" category from the "oral mode" and contrasts it with Chafe's "integration" category from the "literate mode" (Holly 349). "Involvement" is defined as "the speaker's efforts to bind the hearer personally and to give his/her utterances an actual dynamic drive" (Holly 351). This is measured by "first person references, references to speaker's mental processes, or monitoring of information flow" (Holly 351). "Integration" involves a "hierarchic structure of idea units" as opposed to stringing idea units together using coordinating conjunctions (Holly 349). In addition, it is characterized by a higher
frequency of embedded clauses and a "packing" in of "as much information as possible in one single idea unit using a number of methods (Holly 349). Holly measures the level of "integration" by "the frequency of coordinating conjunctions at the beginning of idea units" (349). The reason he looks at the beginning of idea units is because, "The most crucial feature of spoken syntax is the fragmented way of hitching up so called 'idea units' one to another as if on a string, whereas in written language there are long periods with a hierarchic structure of idea units..." (Holly 349). He then cites Chafe's method of looking specifically at the coordinating conjunction and which "appears more than four times as often in spoken texts (44.2 per thousand words) as in written texts (10.1)" (Holly 349). Using this same method he looks at the interviews with Kohl and Krenz and concludes that "they are closer to the integrated than to the fragmented style" (Holly 349). In other words, although they may have a mixed style, they lean more toward the integration of the literate mode than toward the involvement of the oral mode.

Therefore, although there may be a shift to less formal language with first person references, a hierarchic structure of idea units persisted when Holly was writing in 1995. This reveals that different parts of the continuum between orality and literacy change at different rates. On the one hand, this implies a complexity that far exceeds Ong's categories and may suggest, for some, that the usefulness of the approach begins to break down. In other words, composition instructors may opt for a simpler means of assessing the impact of audio essays. On the other hand, Chafe and Holly have created a quantifiable method of monitoring the changes brought about by new media that may be perceived as a very useful administrative assessment. When it comes to implementing
Chafe and Holly's analysis into composition pedagogy some modification would likely be necessary. For more on this issue see the section on informal language above.

The production of secondary orality also involves the risk of producing something that is to be consumed instead of creating a means of social participation. In a chapter entitled "Mediamorphosis and Secondary Orality: A Challenge to Cultural Policy," sociologist Kurt Blaukopf looks at how secondary orality applies to music. He asserts that the role of the person who listens to recordings or radio broadcasts does not involve any type of participation in a social event:

...the musical experience derived from phonograms or radio is not the original product of traditional social practices, but is rather grafted upon this practice. While in pre-electronic times the function of the human being was based on the participation of the individual in socio-musical activity, the individual is now gradually turned into a consumer (in the Western sense). It is this very difference which may justify the distinction between traditional or primary orality, on the one hand, and secondary orality, on the other. (Blaukopf 22)

Although he does not explain what he means by "consumer (in the Western sense)" it can be safely assumed by the context that he is referring to a type of enjoyment without participation. This is relevant to audio essays because they often involve music and because the level of participation may simply be an imitation of the way students interact with texts.

Thomas Rickert and Michael Salvo introduce one alternative to the
consumer/producer divide in a multimedia hypertext companion to an article entitled, "The distributed Gesamtkunstwerk: Sound, worlding, and new media culture." They call the blurring of audience and performer "prosumer":

Prosumer refers to the erosion of the difference between a consumer and a producer. Garageband was a key example for this: it is a music creation software program bundled with Apple computers, and is therefore a product designed for a consumer—strictly speaking, it is entertainment, like a game. At the same time, the possibilities for production are significant. Garageband is a robust program, capable of producing professional quality music. (Rickert and Salvo "Pro Tools")

In other words, the people who once made up the audience have been given the means of production and this has contributed to a trend in the world of music. The trend involves audiences at live concerts participating in some of the performance. This subject will be looked at in greater detail in the next section.

In order for the "prosumer" concept to resemble the participation of primary orality it requires much more than a single software program. Rickert and Salvo's idea of the creation of a whole new world, or what they call "worlding," has the potential of filling in some of the predicted participation that Ong spoke of:

It presents a networked whole greater than the sum of its constituent parts, which requires the band not only to compose music, write lyrics, and play their instruments, but to paint images to accompany the songs, write liner notes, collaborate with mixing technicians, work with software and web
development tools, and develop innovative uses for input streams (what we now refer to as data streams)... It is the aesthetic realm that a visual-musical work invites us to both enter and immerse ourselves in, and it is the constellation of production pathways and inputs—people, communities, technologies, and networks—that are simultaneously evoked with each aesthetic world. ("Distributed" 310-13)

The implications for written composition of "worlding" is that "the tradition of text-based composition or the singular work of art" is only the beginning in a vast network of collaboration (Rickert and Salvo, "Distributed" 296). In other words, a class might begin with a written work and expand the project to include an audio aspect, a kinesthetic component, etc. In this case the audio essay would not be a singular work but merely a piece of a larger experience. This might be done in collaboration with other departments and does not necessarily mean that composition instructors must take on a "worlding" project.

The potential problem with the "prosumer" concept has to do with what drives students and artists to collaborate in such a vast way and allow their smaller projects to take on larger proportions. With the exception of their own compositions, all of the examples Rickert and Salvo provide are in the end commercial endeavors that bring plenty of popularity, if not money. They speak of artists who have achieved a great amount of success. Therefore, something different is required in order for the "prosumer" concept to transcend Blaukopf's observation about the declining social aspects of music, and in this case orality. The desire for riches and fame that drives many students to
imitate their rock star idols must not overshadow the sociability that gives value to composition. The development of tertiary orality and the persistence of some formal language in Holly's study all point to a complexity that requires frequent reevaluation of Ong's categories before they can be utilized for assessment. Beyond the breakdown between the producer and consumer of musical events is the sociability produced by presence. I will be discussing the implications of presence in the next section.

**Communal Sense**

Ong's idea of communal sense points to the unity that comes from the manifestation of "human beings to one another as conscious interiors" (Orality 74). This sense is emphasized in secondary orality because of the formation of a much bigger group: "McLuhan's global village." (Ong, Orality 136). Furthermore, it overlaps with his empathetic and participatory category, which was discussed in the previous section, as do most of his other categories. As stated previously, the problem of an "encounter with one who is not present" is that it results in "participation in the thought of others without commitment or involvement" (Ong, "Word" 27). This statement may seem confusing in light of Holly's use of "participation" and "involvement" interchangeably. However, Ong tries to show that reading a written text involves only a partial commitment or interaction and this limits the greater unity that comes through "interior to interior" speech encounters (Ong, "Word" 27). For example, "Reading aloud to family and other small groups was still common in the early twentieth century until electronic culture mobilized such groups around radio and television sets rather than around a present group member" (Ong, Orality 157). This meant that the new unity was centered on people who were not
Nevertheless, there is a sense of "author-reader intimacy" in secondary orality that Ong traces back to eighteenth-century journalism (Ong, Interfaces 66). He then shows its development in Hemingway's time and beyond:

With the help of print and the near instantaneousness implemented by electronic media (the telegraph first, later radio teletype and electronic transmission of photography), the newspaper writer could bring his reader into his own on-the-spot experience, availing himself in both sports and war of the male's strong sense of camaraderie based on shared hardships. (Ong, Interfaces 67)

This camaraderie was not based on actual interaction between the author and reader but on the "reader's role" as prescribed by the author (Ong, Interfaces 66). Another sense of unity without interaction that came with secondary orality is illustrated later in the TV events that had the largest audiences:

More recently, a similar collective healing and strengthening has been experienced through the television presentation of Alex Haley's Roots, where the events were not live... As in the John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King tragedies, the audience could sense its own vast unity. (Ong, Interfaces 317)

In the case of Roots the sense of unity is not dependent on a live event, which suggests that with audio essays some sense of unity can be achieved even without instant interaction. However, it seems as though this type of unity has only a partial commitment,
as Ong stated earlier.

Similar to this superficial unity, perhaps, is the USENET flame war truce that December placed in the "Empathetic and participatory" category. After all, Fowler uses the example of flaming on the Internet to point out that Ong was mistaken when he stated that secondary orality lacks an agonistic edge. Fowler limits the lack of open antagonism to TV and then states:

However, I do not think Ong's claim holds for many other forms of electronic communication. Think of the contemporary, urban, oral tradition of "hip-hop" or "rap," in which we witness a revival of an oral, formulaic, bardic tradition, with a sharp, sometimes vicious verbal edge. On the Internet, the phenomenon of "flaming"--heaping bitter invective upon one's interlocutors--is well-known and wide-spread (LaQuey and Ryer: 71-73; Krol:150). In short, there is abundant evidence of a sharp agonistic tone in much of secondary orality. (3)

If Fowler is correct in his assertion that electronic forms of communication other than television retain an agonistic edge this would create a problem for composition instructors using the audio essay to teach both/and argumentation. While both/and argumentation tries to understand two sides of an issue an agonistic tone can lean towards dogmatism. As will be discussed in the following chapters, dogmatism is listed as one of the "Fallacies of Argument" in a popular textbook: Everything's An Argument (Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters 384).
December's comments coincide with Fowler's when he acknowledges the agonistic edge as one of the eight categories of tertiary orality. The fact that he uses a flame war as an example of the "Agonistically toned" category is significant because the "Empathetic and participatory" category has to do with ending the verbal joust (December 16). This suggests that, like Ong, he does not feel that the two categories are diametrically opposed. Therefore, Fowler's assessment supports December's idea of some type of tertiary orality that belongs exclusively to certain types of Computer Mediated Communication and which actually contains almost all of the characteristics of primary orality.

Another way to account for the agonistic tone in secondary orality is to consider Ong's discussion of the "dozens" and the "enthusiastic description of physical violence" in oral narrative (Orality 44). In his description of the "Agonistically toned" category Ong explains that oral culture persists in some parts of the United States:

Growing up in a still dominantly oral culture, certain young black males in the United States, the Caribbean, and elsewhere, engage in what is known variously as the "dozens" or "joning" or "sounding" or by other names, in which one opponent tries to outdo the other in vilifying the other's mother.

(Orality 44)

According to Geneva Smitherman, "Rap music is rooted in the Black oral tradition of tonal semantics, narrativizing, signification/signifyin, the dozens/playin the dozens, Africanized syntax, and other communicative practices" (4). Therefore, in some ways Ong was acknowledging the presence of the roots of rap music even though he did not
refer to it directly. Fowler's attempt to disprove Ong's claim that secondary orality lacks an agonistic tone through the discussion of rap music does not take into account Ong's acknowledgment that residual oral cultures still exist in the United States. For some residual oral cultures the audio essay could potentially come more naturally, but in some cases this could mean the entrance of an agonistic edge in a class where the instructor is trying to encourage both/and argumentation.

In addition, Fowler does not address how the flame wars on the Internet compare to the "Portrayal of gross physical violence [that is] central to much oral epic and other oral genres" (Ong, Orality 44). Ong explains that there is a difference between the level of violence in oral narratives and the level of violence in TV and cinema:

In the Iliad, for example, Books viii and x would at least rival the most sensational television and cinema shows today in outright violence and far surpass them in exquisitely gory detail, which can be less revulsive when described verbally than when presented visually. (Orality 44)

In other words, the difference between a verbal description of violence and a visual representation of it may have something to do with why Internet flaming, although retaining an agonistic edge, could not easily carry over into television. Perhaps one way to measure the persistence of the agonistic tone on the Internet would be to compare extreme examples of violent description in oral narratives to what comes up in chat room wars. Audio essays would certainly parallel to a lesser extent the gory details of television because of the advent of sound effects.

Another point that should be considered, which Fowler and December seem to be
touching on, is that certain genres retain an agonistic edge, perhaps because of their connection with residual oral cultures. But not all electronically transformed genres contain an agonistic edge. For example, since the audio essay involves the ability to electronically transform sound it provides for the blurring of the edges of collaboration.

When I gave my students an audio essay assignment one young woman complained that she didn't like the sound of her voice. The sample recording I played for my students used special effects to change the sound of my voice so I suggested to her that if she didn't like her voice she could change it using the free software Audacity. Later she asked if someone could read what she had written for her audio essay assignment. For some reason it seemed unfair for me to allow students to change the sound of their voice using effects and yet refuse to let a student record their classmate's voice instead of their own provided the content was their own. Therefore, I agreed to let the young woman have her classmate record what she had written. This, then, became somewhat of a social composition in which more than one person's voice was heard: one literary voice and one literal voice.

The social composition concept has been developed by Rickert and Salvo when they take Richard Wagner's idea of being in control of every aspect of a performance and expand it to multimedia collaboration. They explain the concept by saying:

We thereby move from the cult of the virtuoso or romantic genius that holds apart the realm of art from the common and everyday, to a postmodern postpunk re/mix hip-hop culture that values and utilizes all sounds that punctuate common experience and brings art back into the
everyday. Such an approach transvalues, reuses, and repackages content—sound, styles, and more—while also scrambling our sense of borrowed and originary. Such a culture fosters the full emergence of the “prosumer” (Toffler, 1980). This term... captures the emergence of practices that join together the formerly separate categories of consumer and producer. (Rickert and Salvo, "Distributed" 298)

Therefore, in the case of the classmate recording her voice for a friend's essay, we have an example of this "scrambling." However, there are two drawbacks to this new culture when it comes to the communal sense. To begin with, remixing a friend's voice into an audio composition is not much of a social event. It may involve reading a paper out loud, as in the case of my student, or it may involve a student recording some conversation and then using pieces of it for a project. Therefore, the composition itself does not resemble the type of communal sense that an instructor might long for but at least it would introduce the student into a typical feature of secondary orality which may prove to have this limitation.

Secondly, some of the musical genres that involve a prolific amount of remixing tend to retain an agonistic edge. A great deal of hip hop, as has already been mentioned, retains an agonistic edge despite it's frequent use of sampling, perhaps as a result of its connections with residual oral cultures. In addition, Rickert and Salvo speak of the roots of punk rock as attempting to transcend the fading communal sense: "Punk rock in the 1970s had already ushered in some of these ideas in its attempt to break down barriers sundering artist and audience by celebrating a do-it-yourself aesthetic (DIY), inspired
amateurism and increased audience interaction" ("Distributed" 307). The ideas they are speaking of involve audience participation, such as controlling prerecorded elements (Rickert and Salvo, "Distributed" 308). Some might argue that the rock of today does not have the agonistic edge of the punk rock of the 1970s. However, in a study published in Popular Music and Society in 2007, Debashis Aikat reports that of the 951 music videos analyzed the genre with the highest percentage of the highest level of violence was hard rock and the genre with the highest percentage of a moderate level of violence was mainstream rock (232). While these genres may be screaming out against injustice they also have the potential of perpetuating an already large problem in academia.

In an article entitled "Agonism in the Academy: Surviving Higher Learning's Argument Culture," Deborah Tannen explains that Ong's idea of agonism is most "endemic in academe" ("Agonism"). She describes the problem by saying:

The way we train our students frequently reflects the battle metaphor as well. We assign scholarly work for them to read, then invite them to tear it apart. That is helpful to an extent, but it often means that they don't learn to do the harder work of integrating ideas, or of considering the work's historical and disciplinary context. Moreover, it fosters in students a stance of arrogance and narrow-mindedness, qualities that do not serve the fundamental goals of education. (Tannen, "Agonism")

Although this description does not completely match the definition of dogmatism it still shows that the risk of agonism in the classroom can lean away from trying to "synthesize" seemingly conflicting ideas (Tannen, "Agonism"). Nevertheless, agonism is
not a given in secondary orality since it is usually contingent upon the genre as has already been discussed. Even with certain genres dogmatism is a risk, but not a given, as will be discussed in the following section.

**Concentration on the Present Moment**

Aggression is not always a means of destroying collaboration. In fact, some types of aggression occur in organized groups and binds members together against a common enemy. For example, the presence of an agonistic tone does not necessarily preclude the intimacy of camaraderie in war, as in the case of the war journalists and their readers. The war may have brought on some description of violence but this may have added to the communal sense as the "on-the-spot experience" that made readers feel like they were sharing in those violent hardships (Ong, Interfaces 67). However, the instantaneousness of the telegraph and radio teletype does not compare to the experience of watching TV. What the original instantaneousness of the telegraph has in common with TV is that the audience seems to relate with an event as if it was "simultaneous with reality" (Ong, Interfaces 316). This sense of instantaneousness then carries over into recordings: "Not all television presentations are simultaneous with reality, but, in a way, all television presentations seem to be; the fact that the instrument is capable of such presentations defines its impact" (Ong, Interfaces 316). Yet television has one more advantage that the telegraph and radio teletype lack:

Radio could do better [than smoke and bonfires], providing detailed oral accounts of distant events. But an oral account is always in essence a report: however recent, the event described is over with. The speaker knew
the fait accompli before the hearer did. Television is different. The voice on a live television sports broadcast lags behind the audience's perceptions. (Ong, Interfaces 316)

Therefore, although recordings such as audio essays produce the illusion that they are taking place simultaneously with reality they can never fully achieve what television has unless students did some type of extemporaneous composition.

In fact, taped television says a lot about how audio essays composed partially in peer review groups will not necessarily bring students back to the experience of a truly live audience:

The writer's audience, it has been said in this book, is always a fiction. So is the television "audience" in its own way: it is never present, though performers and audience alike pretend that it is... Taping or performing before a live audience does not eliminate the paradox but only enhances and complicates it. For instead of merely one audience, the performer is now dealing with two. The "live" audience in the studio is not the real audience at all. It serves as a substitute for the audience of those watching the TV screens who are by implication not "live" but somehow "real."

(Ong, Interfaces 317)

This statement has implications about the role of peer review groups. In some ways they serve as a substitute audience for whoever the audience might be. Therefore, composing audio essays from this perspective does not provide a higher level of instantaneous communication and resembles writing more than oral performance.
The distinction is made even sharper when looking at the problem of who the audience might be for a writer during composition:

It would be fatuous to think that the writer addressing a so-called general audience tries to imagine his readers individually. A well-known novelist friend of mine only laughed when I asked him if, as he was writing a novel, he imagined his real readers—the woman on the subway deep in the book, the student in his room, the businessman on a vacation, the scholar in his study. There is no need for a novelist to feel his "audience" this way at all. (Ong, Interfaces 57)

Audio essays will not differ much from the process of the novelist when it comes to imagining the audience. This is because both writing and audio essays involve an audience that is not present in contrast to face-to-face communication. But even if students composed audio essays merely for the instructor because they felt the instructor's presence more than novelists consider their audience, then the assignment would be a failure in some ways because they have missed the idea of entering into a discourse community. I am not suggesting that discourse communities need to resemble face-to-face communication. On the contrary, I am trying to show how different they are and how audio essays do not bring one closer to the other. Audio essays do not seem to make much headway in resembling face-to-face communication unless it comes from the fact that the audio essay is a completely new genre. Ong suggests that because students, like the novelist, do not have a specific person in mind when writing, they tend to copy the voice of writers that they are sure the instructor appreciates:
If the writer succeeds in writing, it is generally because he can fictionalize in his imagination an audience he has learned to know not from daily life but from earlier writers who were fictionalizing in their imagination audiences they had learned to know in still earlier writers, and so on back to the dawn of written narrative. (Interfaces 60)

Therefore, the only benefit, if it can even be seen as a benefit, with the audio essay is that there is very little precedence for the student in the way of voice, unless they imitate TV or radio.

This is exactly what is taking place as the audio essay enters academia. For example, Wendy Wolter's Hinshaw, one of Selfe's students, composed an audio essay for Selfe's article, "The Movement of Air, The Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal Composing," and explains that the assignment involved modeling the essay after NPR's "This I Believe" project (20). Although this project involves submitting print essays to a website the successful essay is transformed into an audio recording and broadcasted. The website itself has recordings of the feature essays. Therefore, when Hinshaw was preparing to write her audio essay script she likely had the model of other radio, not print, essays in mind. In addition, of the eight courses that utilize audio composition mentioned in Selfe's essay, three of them - Jeff Porter's course on Radio Essays at the University of Iowa, Jonah Willihnganz' on The Art of the Audio Essay at Stanford University, and Lisa Spiro's The Documentary Across Media at Rice University - include a look at radio essays. If the audio essay in academia is taking on the conventions of radio it is very likely that students will model radio announcers in their audio essays instead of
composing with either their peer review group or scholars in mind. In this case the concentration on the present moment will be undermined by a modeled tone they have heard in the past.

In terms of the ocular channel students may model a tone based on how they picture the speaker of well respected texts. Since audio essays do not have an ocular channel the visual side of a speaker would only come out through the tone of a piece. This can be best illustrated by the questions suggested to tutors who are trying to make students aware of an inappropriate voice or tone. For example, Tutoring Writing: A Practical Guide for Conferences by Donald A. McAndrew and Thomas J. Reigstad, recommends tutors ask a writer the following visually oriented questions: "If someone were speaking in this voice, how would they dress?... What would their facial expression be like?" (55). From this point of view students are also fictionalizing a voice they have imagined visually as they have listened to or read well respected texts. This would come in spite of the dress or facial expressions of their peers.

If a peer review group could be called a live event then there is a parallel to the undermining of live events in the world of music. Blaukopf explains that, "Unlike live music, which has the character of an event, omnipresent media music lacks this character. French sociologists have called this process a "banalization of music"" (24). He goes on to explain why this is so:

Technical production and dissemination has also emancipated music from live performance practice: usually, the sounds that reach the audience via loudspeakers have "in reality" never been performed as perceived by the
audience... The greater part of popular music (rock, pop etc.) has long ceased to exist primarily as symbols a composer sets to paper or in traditional live performance. Popular music is produced as electronically transformed sound. (Emphasis in the original Blaukopf 24)

While it is true that the organic sound has taken a back seat in most musical performance, the new electronic sounds have gained popularity despite the accusation of banality. In fact, one of the audio essays that Selfe showcased as part of her article, "The Movement of Air, The Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal Composing," included an essay in which the author used a "robotic voice" (24). This suggests that although the spontaneity might be missing, the meaning produced by an electronically altered sound makes up for the lack to some students. Perhaps what may be most valuable for students is to see that there is an exchange in the use of new media.

Despite the potential unifying effect of a live performance, Peter Elbow brings out an advantage to recorded events that may prevent the agonistic tone of taking an opposing viewpoint in his essay, "The Music of Form: Rethinking Organization in Writing":

The human weakness for either/or thinking is deeply reinforced by this bias toward space. X and Not-X cannot coexist in the same space or both be true in the timeless realm of logic. But they can both be true in the realm of time: at this moment for these conditions, X is true; then at another moment under different conditions, Not-X is true. (Emphasis in the Original Elbow 651)
Whether audio essays bring students to a greater awareness of the realm of time in which they have placed their essays remains to be seen. More is at stake with extemporaneous performance than just the ability to see solutions in the realm of time or attempting to avoid a modeled tone. There is also the question of whether the spontaneity of live performance is lost through recorded or electronically transformed events. This will be discussed in the next section.

Use of Formulas

According to Rickert and Salvo the need for spontaneity, whether or not it is directly connected with the student's sense of time, remains in high demand:

More recently, the alternative music review Web site, Pitchfork, posted a list of the fifty worst guitar solos of the millennium; David Gilmore’s solo for Pink Floyd’s “Comfortably Numb” was listed as the forty-third worst because he used tape splicing to compose the solo (Sandlin, 1998). The aesthetic brought to bear here demands that a solo be as spontaneous as possible, suggesting that the cult of the guitar hero remains a potent narrative despite the advent of new music forms that directly challenge it. ("Distributed" 304)

This concept points back to the shock of literates upon discovering Homer's dependence on "prefabricated parts" (Ong, Orality 22). But Ong often pauses in his discussions of oral formulas to make the important distinction between what literates see as bricolage and what actually takes place:

Bricolage is the literate's term for what he himself would be guilty of if he
produced an oral-styled poem. But oral organization is not literate organization put together in makeshift fashion. Subtle connections can exist, for example, in ancient Greek narrative of oral provenience, between the structure of the hexameter line and thought forms themselves. (Orality 165)

He suggests that primary orality may have its own versions of organization with which most literates are unfamiliar. Yet a vast knowledge of the organizational methods of primary orality is not necessary to understand secondary orality. After all secondary orality takes much of its organization from the formulas of literature: "That's the way it is"-Walter Cronkite's television signature comes from the world of print that underlies the secondary orality of television" (Ong, Orality 122). To put it another way, literature has plenty of familiar clichés that may have originated with orality.

Welch, on the other hand, does not lean on organization that is familiar in literature. Instead she looks at the familiar formulas on TV:

For example, the 30-minute text of the "NBC Nightly News" (22 minutes of news and 8 minutes of commercials) is comprised of lead stories, secondary stories, filler, and "humor," all slotted according to the lengths and requirements of advertisements, which, in the United States, control this form of delivery. (Welch 24)

Whether it be a formula that is common to print, like the signature, or one that is common to TV, like the structure of the nightly news, there is a certain sense that prevails among literates that these formulas lack depth:
...the ancient poem and the modern news show appear because of these characteristics, to be in some ways simple, elementary, and not really sophisticated. They seem to many literate minds to be superficial. (Welch 24)

Perhaps the simplicity of these formulas plays a role in their accessibility. If this type of simplicity is a result of the use of non-specialized language it may provide a harmonizing effect in the production of audio essays because it involves, to some degree, informal language. In other words, non-specialized language will reach a larger audience, including more students in the classroom. This coincides with the shift that Holly sees in the personalization in TV interviews. In some ways simplicity means accessibility and therefore opens the way for sociability. However, the formulaic simplicity of TV also causes many to underestimate its power, as Welch suggests:

Frequently, people respond that the televised text is not worthy of this kind of investigation. Television texts, rock music texts, radio texts, and so on are dismissed... The sophisticated explication of these texts - which to a large extent promote, defend, and extend corporate capitalism, sexism, racism, and other aspects of the status quo - is not only necessary but crucial. (26)

This means that on the one hand students may cultivate a communal sense by composing in a genre that may be associated with simplicity, while on the other, they will have a chance to better understand and learn to critique socially powerful discourses. Although few would argue that the ideologies Welch brings up need to be dealt with in a
composition course, the question of whether this translates into the production of audio essays requires attention because the expectations of students are at stake.

Alongside Welch's assertion about the simplicity of formulas is another chapter in the same monograph entitled, "Memory Issues in Composition Studies" by John Frederick Reynolds. In this essay Reynolds points out one of the powerful aspects of the formulaic: it's memorableness. He begins by quoting Ong's discussion of the formulaic in terms of memory in oral-formulaic poetry and then explains how textbooks have utilized this notion:

> Writing memorably, [The St. Martin's Guide to Writing] argues, is an essential strategy in both college and professional writing, because every type of nonfiction prose relies to some extent on storytelling. The key to mastering this essential narrative strategy, it advises, then, is to 'shape the experience into a story that is entertaining and memorable.' (Reynolds 9)

Perhaps, then, a useful utilization of secondary orality would be its production in genres such as audio essays for the purpose of critiquing socially powerful discourses while at the same time gleaning the effective delivery strategies that they use.

Essential to understanding the extent of the harmonizing effects of formulas is whether they are characteristic of secondary orality or whether they resemble the formulaic in some tertiary orality that is nearer to primary orality, as December suggests. Ong necessitates this decision in his explanation of the difference between the formulaic of primary orality and secondary orality:

> The advertising cliché is not in fact much of a knowledge storage and
retrieval device at all... The formulary devices of primary oral culture are conservative devices, ordered to the treasuring and use of hard-earned lore. Slogans, by contrast, are typically action-oriented, fitted to short-term goals... A literate culture... does not mobilize itself around sayings as permanently as an oral culture. (Rhetoric 299)

If Ong is correct then the formulaic in audio essays will not bring the harmony that formulary devices did. Therefore, as has already been stated, formulas in audio essays may not lead to the type of harmony and collaboration desired yet they still provide a model of memorable storytelling that has value in writing. While formulas may not produce the spontaneity that some genres of secondary orality call for they demand attention because of their power to perpetuate oppressive ideologies. As Welch suggests, television, rock music, and radio texts are often overlooked as simplistic because of their formulaic style and therefore can evade the criticism they might receive if they were associated with the depth and sophistication of written academic texts (26). In the final section of this chapter I will discuss the significance of formulas, and what scholars are saying about the other principles that Ong categorized, to my teacher research.

The Usefulness and Limitations of Reviewed Sources

Killingsworth has explained that composition instructors are not looking back at primary orality with longing eyes but are instead trying to grapple with the changing media landscape. Nevertheless, because of the parallels between the process movement and the rise of secondary orality, Ong's categories often reflect the values of the process movement regardless of whether they invoke an idealistic desire for primary orality. On
the one hand these categories provide a neat way to organize the values of the field of Composition and utilize them to approach the audio essay and other rising multimodal products. On the other hand these categories require further complexity when they are utilized, as scholars like Holly have shown. The question then becomes whether this complexity is worth the trouble. Will a fine tooth comb analysis of secondary orality in public discourse aid students in the deconstruction of oppressive discourses? Or will the actual production of secondary orality teach students not only the conventions of public discourse but valuable strategies for enriching their academic writing as well? Or should the composition course focus on academic discourse for the sake of empowering students? Both public and academic discourse have their power, but when considering time consuming strategies and the expectations of students it seems like the critique of one will have to suffer.

As I continue to analyze the audio essays produced in my own classroom this review will provide me with an awareness of the tendencies of specific genres toward public or academic discourse. It will also keep the limitations of Ong's predictions in the forefront of my mind so that I do not limit my assessment of audio essays to his categories in a strict sense. In fact, my look at the importance of the specific motivation of students should provide deeper insights into the level of sociability brought about by secondary orality than a mere theoretical approach could. And although live events are not necessary for a sense of unity, this review also brings out the need to look at different levels of community and the potential entrance of agonistic features into audio essays. In addition, Ong's analysis of the fictional audience should provide more realistic
explanations of what peer review groups actually achieve when it comes to the writer's sense of audience. Most of all, the sources I have reviewed have pointed to the conventions that audio essays may take on as they are implemented in the composition classroom. This includes their resemblance to certain radio shows, their potential loss of spontaneity, and their use of different levels of formal language. All these issues boil down to the question of whether audio essays actually reproduce some of the harmony that writing may have hindered but that, as I have tried to show, scholars in Composition Studies continue to value.

Nevertheless, the secondary sources that I have reviewed in this chapter also have their limitations. Most of them have not looked much at the expectations of students, which teacher research tends to focus on and which will be discussed in the next chapter. In addition, many of these sources have had to wade through distractions such as the image versus text debate and the administrative demand for computer literacy without theoretical critique. Finally, Ong's inaccuracies may have led some scholars to give up his predictions all together. I have attempted to acknowledge the limitations of his predictions while at the same time using them to bring out the values that the field of Composition tends to hold. Therefore, I will try to show the impact the audio essay has on these values that seemed to flourish in primary orality, using Ong's structure.

In the following chapter on methods I will look at the potential benefits of using Ong's structure in light of the demands of what Killingsworth called "technocratic management" (39). I will also try to emphasize the importance of student expectations in teacher research which has definite implications when it comes to adjustments in the
definition of literacy. My use of interviews and questionnaires will hopefully lead to students weighing in on whether the production and not merely the critique of secondary orality is needed in the composition classroom.
Chapter 3

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

~1 Cor. 13:12

The methodology that a researcher chooses has the potential of betraying an epistemology that does not coincide with the theory that is being tested. Therefore, I begin this chapter on methodology by looking at the combination of theory and practice that teacher research affords when it is used to test a theoretical framework such as the one Ong has outlined. Secondly, I try to show that ethnographic research has the aura of systematization without neglecting the importance of the student voice which is so important to process pedagogy. Thirdly, I try to acknowledge that culture has a fleeting nature, which means that the connections I make between the culture of my class and larger social phenomenon is more of a relational comparison rather than an attempt at reductionism. I end this section with a brief look at the challenge involved in making sure that students have access to the means of producing audio essays.

The second half of this chapter looks at my research design. I begin with a brief overview of my purpose, questions, methods, population and scope. Then I take each of the five categories that I have extracted from Ong's description of secondary orality (Informal Language, Participatory Mystique, Communal Sense, Concentration on the Present Moment, and Use of Formulas) and describe my data collection, coding and artifact analysis in more detail. This means I give sample questions and my rationale in categorizing the data.
Balancing Theory and Practice, Orality and Systematization

Selfe quotes scholars such as Patricia A. Dunn as pointing out a blind spot in composition studies: the idea that "writing is not simply one way of knowing; it is the way" (Emphasis in Original 15). These questions may be discussed at length in terms of the epistemology Dunn has brought to light and there is no shortage of theory on this topic. However, the impact of secondary orality upon composition epistemology depends upon whether epistemology is approached from theory or practice. Elizabeth Ervin tries to show both sides by quoting Stephen M. North and John Schilb. She states that North claims epistemological authority "for practitioners of composition, placing them 'at the center of the field's knowledge-making explosion, exerting a sort of epistemological gravitational pull'" (Ervin 78). This comes after Schilb's declaration that theory provides "firm, objective, universal, bedrock principles for our practice" (qtd. in Ervin 78).

Although I am looking at the theories of Walter J. Ong, others who have built upon his work and the theorists that he draws upon, I am also considering the perspective of students through teacher research. The ethnographic elements of my study will also align my research with a concentration on the present moment because that is the nature of a class. By this I mean that classes produce a culture that is extremely time sensitive due in part to the fact that students are growing and changing during the time that elapses.

According to Killingsworth ethnographic research is rooted historically in the process movement, which he parallels with the rise of secondary orality (31-34). More specifically, he explains the connection when he states that Janet Emig "set out to remedy the shortcomings of current traditionalism not only with the testimonials of writers and
with classroom reforms but also with systematic qualitative research" (34). Emig's methods on the one hand introduced research that focused on orality: "...[her] citing [of] the Paris Review interviews with authors as one of the few sources of empirically based (as opposed to formulaic or rhetorical) information on the writing process... [her] method of 'composing aloud' (Killingsworth 33, 34). These methods would later lead to "the 'participant-observers' of ethnographic research" (Killingsworth 34). On the other hand she legitimized, in some ways, the process movement through the systematic residue of incumbent literacy: "Most important for meta-historical study is the aura of expertise and systematization that they brought to the process pedagogy, for the age of secondary orality is above all a technological age" (Killingsworth 34). Therefore, in ethnographic research the "student talks while the experts listen" while at the same time there is a preservation of:

Cognitive psychology, with its mind-computer analogies and problem-solving models, [and its offer of] a research model and a theoretical outlook that accommodates quite thoroughly the inside-outside, public-private, input-output schemata of secondary orality. (Killingsworth 34)

Therefore, from a historical perspective ethnographic research seems to fit the both/and argumentation needed in the study of a hybrid theory like secondary orality.

My study also requires a methodology that traces the culture of secondary orality and does so in view of the fleeting nature of culture. One of the definitions of ethnography in Wendy Bishop's Ethnographic Writing Research: Writing It Down,
Writing It Up, and Reading It is "a representation of the lived experience of a convened culture" (3). When an "experience is textualized through the analysis of field notes, transcribed interviews, and physical (in this case, usually textual) artifacts," it captures the fleeting nature of a temporary experience which "cannot be replicated" (Bishop 3). My methodology was also influenced by the choices made in a dissertation that deals with many of the same issues that I address. Jeffrey Niel Maxson, the author of the dissertation "Multimedia and Multivocality in a Basic Writing Classroom," also takes an ethnographic approach. He gives part of the reason when he speaks of classroom research:

By focusing as I do so much attention on phenomena regularly ignored or only partially noticed and by insisting, as I will, that these are linked to other broader social or structural phenomena and by following up these connections, the research does not just recreate classroom and institutional practice, but in fact creates a new artifact which stands in complex relationship to that practice. (Maxson 87)

Maxson is here revealing the need to address the researcher's biases and the complexity of the social situation that takes place in a classroom. Ethnographic research involves openly admitting these limitations and therefore is a fitting approach to cultural phenomena such as the use of media in a composition classroom. Therefore, in a certain sense, my methodology lines up with the concentration on the present moment that comes with secondary orality according to Ong. In other words, although my research may be read later on it will be a new event because the culture of my classroom no longer exists.
Maxson points out that even though the culture of a classroom may have changed by the time his study is read he still plans on linking classroom phenomena to "broader social or structural phenomena" (87). In Ong's case, as has already been shown, this linking has been criticized as too simplistic. However, Ong has called attention to the fact that his goal was to show relationships between phenomena he was observing and broader cultural changes:

To say that a great many changes in the psyche and in culture connect with the passage from orality to writing is not to make writing (and/or its sequel, print) the sole cause of all the changes. The connection is not a matter of reductionism but of relationism. (Orality 175)

I plan to show these relationships despite the fact that I am looking at linguistic styles, as Holly has pointed out, that are not uniform and that are on a type of continuum, as December has reiterated (Holly 347; December 3). Therefore, I will attempt to look at the relationship between conventions of orality and literacy by looking at the areas of the continuum where the difference between the two linguistic styles are clearly different rather than the areas where there is much overlap. Holly describes this method by saying: "The customary method of illustrating both styles is to contrast extreme examples that contain some of the typical features" (347). In this case I would be looking at the relationship between features of primary and secondary orality. This will include analyzing artifacts of written student drafts and recorded audio drafts in order to look for conventions of the surviving features of primary orality that December identified (such as
"empathetic and participatory," "additive oral speech patterns,") as well as the conventions of secondary orality.

One aspect of the culture of secondary orality that I had to take into consideration with new media assignments was whether students had access to the technology they needed in order to produce audio essays. Many of my students own laptops that have built-in microphones and can download the recording software for free. However, I encouraged those who do not own a computer to record on their friends' computers and loaned out my personal microphone to those who were unable to produce a good sound with the equipment they had. Since the college is small many students feel more comfortable using their friends' computers. However, at a larger institution the students may need to depend on computers loaned out by the library.

The computer lab may not be the most comfortable place to record because of a lack of privacy and the self-consciousness involved in recording. Students who used the same laptop during in-class peer review workshops likely had to have their drafts on a thumb drive if they were not in the same group as the friend whose laptop their essay was on. Students also had the option of e-mailing me their audio drafts so that I could bring my laptop for peer review workshops.

However, this process would work better if students could check out laptops from the library as they can at Sacramento State University. The laptops at Sacramento State already have a built-in microphone and small speakers for playback. Computer microphones are generally inexpensive and can be purchased for about $10. Therefore, if
a college or university's library does not provide enough support in the way of media services, depending on the size of the English department that wants to implement audio essays, they may only have to invest in purchasing a few microphones that could be controlled by the library. If laptops are not available they would also have to look into reserving computer labs for certain times when students can record without disrupting others.

Research Design

Purpose

This study is an attempt at developing an assessment tool that utilizes Ong's description of secondary orality as a representation of some of the values of Composition Studies in order to ascertain whether audio essays are producing or encouraging the type of collaboration and community that is valued in Composition Studies. In addition, this study assesses whether Ong's descriptions of secondary orality can be used as a foundational structure for assessing audio essays.

Research Questions

Are audio essays conducive to the formal language of academic discourse or do they encourage students to use the language of public discourse? Do audio essays lead to voluntary participation? Do they resemble a product meant for mass consumption and do they lead to an awareness of a social discourse? Are students more likely to collaborate as a result of audio essay assignments? Does their sense of community lead to insignificant theses that do not upset what is long standing? Or do audio essays function as an outlet
for agonistic aggression? Do students perceive audience in a different way as a result of composing an audio essay? Will a student be more likely to use an either/or argument in an audio essay assignment as compared to written assignments? Does the formulaic style of audio essays emphasize to students that they are entering into a discourse community rather than producing something original?

Methods

My study included two qualitative questionnaires that were meant to look at any changes in the student's approach to language, audience, and originality. The first was filled out shortly after the beginning of the semester and the second was filled out at the end of the semester. These questionnaires were then coded according to common responses. In addition, the second questionnaire looked at whether students voluntarily chose to do a second audio essay instead of a writing assignment and their reasons behind it (See questionnaires 1 and 2 in Appendix A).

As a follow up to the questionnaires I also conducted informal group interviews on the same days. These included questions that were similar to the ones in the questionnaires. However, in the interviews I tried to discover more detail such as the student's definition of formal language. I also tried to find out if certain personalities or preferences played a role in the responses by asking questions like whether students considered themselves outgoing or shy.

In order to see the influence of audio essays on the way students wrote I assigned them a sequence of one writing assignment, one audio essay assignment, one optional
written or audio assignment, and one longer written assignment. After the semester was over I began to analyze student written and audio drafts in order to discover the amount of informal language that they used before and after their audio essay. In addition, I looked at the significance of their theses and whether their papers included sections that were dogmatic. Finally, I looked at whether students focused on either/or arguments by looking in part at whether they felt their argument was more universal in nature or whether it depended on time or place.

Population and Scope

I teach first-year composition at a small private Christian college under the supervision and direction of Dr. Marilyn Wilcox. I decided to collect my data from the English 102 class, the second semester of first-year composition, because the Advanced Expository Writing class I teach had already begun doing audio essays before I received permission to collect data from the Institutional Review Board. Since the class was small I could only collect data from the fourteen students who signed my consent forms. In addition, I did not analyze certain student drafts because some students completed all their writing assignments before they did the audio essay assignment. Because I wanted to compare the changes in language, audience, and originality before, during, and after the audio essay assignment I decided to leave out the data from those students who had not completed the assignments in the order they were assigned. Therefore, the most consistent data came from only eleven students.

The college I teach at had a total enrollment of forty-five students during the
spring semester of 2011 in which I collected the data. Eighty percent of the student body was between the ages of 18-24. Of the fourteen students who filled out consent forms to participate in my research five of them were females and nine of them were males.

**Informal Language**

As I have begun to outline in the sections above, I asked students in the first-year composition course questions about their expectations of the course using informal group interviews and questionnaires. I began with the following questionnaire inquiries: In what ways do you think your language will be different after taking my course? When you write formal essays how do you approach your use of vocabulary? These types of questions allowed me to gauge whether the audio essay assignment changed their view of the role of informal language in academic essays. The responses were coded by inserting abbreviated versions of responses into a table and then creating categories based on similar responses. For example, for the first question, which stated "In what ways do you think your language will be different after taking my course?" I created the categories "concise," "attention to grammar," "convey a message," and "improved vocabulary." These categories, along with the number of responses that fit into each one, were then recorded in a separate word processing document.

The informal group interview involved essentially the same questions with slight variations such as: "What are your expectations concerning the level of formal language you would like to learn from this class?" and "What do you consider formal language?" I then asked questions on changes to these views: How has your language changed as you
Aside from the interviews and questionnaires I looked through the print drafts that students turned in before beginning their audio essays, the audio essays, and the print drafts they turned in after completing their audio essay assignments. I looked for an increase in informal language in their audio essays and in the writing assignments that followed. I did this by looking for the first person references I, we, me, and us. Wallace L. Chafe of the University of California, Berkeley, looked for these first person references when he studied the difference between spoken and written language among faculty and graduate students (36, 46). He explains the significance of first person references:

A speaker's involvement with his or her audience is manifested, for one thing, in a speaker's more frequent reference to him - or herself. Although such use is in part determined by the subject matter (one can of course write about oneself), first person reference is otherwise much less frequent in formal written language. (Chafe 46)

In view of the fact that the essays I assigned were to be argumentative essays one and a half pages in length, which is about 503 words, my measurement of first person references is on a smaller scale compared to the thousand words Chafe was looking at. The audio essay assignment was the second in a series of three argumentative essays that were to be one and a half pages long. This translates into about four to six minutes of
audio time according to my rough estimate. In some ways this length was more
demanding because Chafe reports that the average reading speed "may be between 200 to
400 words per minute" according to a study conducted in 1975 (37). Therefore, I was
probably asking students for a minimum equivalent of three pages. This may have been
easier because even with this longer allowance of time some students crossed well over
the six minute limit and were hesitant to cut their audio essays down.

Participatory Mystique

According to the context of Ong's description of secondary orality his definition
for participatory mystique has to do with the following statements:

...we are group-minded self-consciously and programmatically. The
individual feels that he or she, as an individual, must be socially sensitive.
Unlike members of a primary oral culture, who are turned outward
because they have had little occasion to turn inward, we are turned
outward because we have turned inward. (Orality 136)

Ong appears to argue that members of a secondary oral culture voluntarily choose to be
socially sensitive. Since audio recordings usually have a script students read or use for
cues the drafting process is very similar to writing a text essay. Although Steven D.
Krause of Eastern Michigan University states that there are many ways to do broadcast
compositions he also explains that it is probably a good idea to begin with a script or
outline (Broadcast). Therefore, to ascertain further differences between the two processes
I looked at whether students took the opportunity to do a second audio essay.
While I assigned one audio essay for everyone to do in order to receive enough data, I also made one assignment have the option of composing either in writing or in sound. This allowed me to ask questions to those who chose to do the audio essay: Why did you choose to do another audio essay? I asked this question in order to see whether there was voluntary participation in the production of audio essays. In essence, I was looking at the motive behind the audio essay. This was coupled with my looking at whether students were imitating a certain type of genre that came from mass media. Once again I was looking at indications of motive to ascertain whether the audio essay provides for a participatory social event or whether it had the characteristics of a product meant for mass consumption.

Communal Sense

The context of Ong's description of secondary orality suggests that communal sense has to do with the fact that:

listening to spoken words forms hearers into a group, a true audience, just as reading written or printed texts turns individuals in on themselves. But secondary orality generates a sense for groups immeasurably larger than those of primary oral culture - McLuhan's 'global village.' (Orality 136)

Because this sense often has to do with audience I also asked about the sense of audience produced through peer review workshops: Who did you consider your audience as you composed your writing assignments? Who did you consider your audience as you composed your audio essays? I was looking to see if students considered me their only
audience, which may have meant that they treated the peer review workshops as a less social event. However, if they saw their peers as members of their audience to a more self-conscious degree during the composition of audio essays as opposed to writing then this would suggest a communal sense created by the assignment.

In addition, I looked for the significance of theses according to the definition put forth in The Craft of Research: "A quality they measure by how much it asks them to change what they think" (Booth, et al. 124). This textbook is talking about the reaction of the audience and therefore must admit that "we can't quantify significance" (Booth, et al. 124). Nevertheless, they offer the strategy of diagnosing the significance of a claim by "changing an affirmative claim into a negative one and vice versa" (Booth, et al. 125).

The next step is to decide whether the reverse is "obviously false" or "trivial" in which case "readers are likely to think the original claim is not worth an argument" (Booth, et al. 126). I used this method to assess the significance of the theses over the course of the four assignments in the class.

I also looked at the level of dogmatism in the four assignments as defined by the textbook Everything's An Argument: "A writer who attempts to persuade by asserting or assuming that a particular position is the only one conceivably acceptable within a community" (Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters 393). Excerpts from this textbook comprised one of the handouts I provided for students at the beginning of the course. Once again this category is difficult to quantify but can be clearer when considering extreme examples.
In order to see whether their sense of the conversational nature of composition developed through their exposure to audio essays I asked them: Did you consider the responses you received from me and your peers important? Normally, I have students take notes while a member in their group is reading a text draft out loud. Students can then pass their notes to the writer after they have explained what they thought. Since response to drafts constitute a major part of the conversational nature of composition these questions would reveal whether audio essays drew attention to the similarity between a face-to-face oral conversation and writing despite the delay in response.

Concentration on the Present Moment

I then asked students questions that were an attempt to tap into their sense of having entered an ongoing conversation rather than having merely written for a grade. I tried to do this by asking: Did your peer review workshops bring you more satisfaction than turning in a final draft of your audio essay? Why or why not? Did you consider the responses you received from me and your peers important? When students considered the responses of myself and peers important and explained why, it was a chance for me to consider whether they felt they had entered into an ongoing conversation or whether this was merely a means at a better grade. This is an area that depends heavily on the detail provided by the student's explanation in the questionnaires and informal interviews because of the risk of misinterpretation or mind reading.

In addition, the questions I asked in order to look for a communal sense such as, "Who did you consider your audience as you composed the audio essay?" also apply in
the area of concentration on the present moment because when students felt that their audience continues to be members of a discourse community rather than merely the professor then they may have begun to realize that their paper is a part of an ongoing conversation rather than something that happened in the past.

To test whether their sense of the essay entering the temporal realm affected their use of either/or arguments I looked at the main points that they made. When students focused on either/or situations I looked at their comments on audience in order to try and understand whether this had to do with their thinking this paper was only for a particular time and place rather than expressing the idea that something may be true at certain times.

**Use of Formulas**

Finally, I asked students concerning their view of other authors and composers whose works they used in their composition: How much of your assignments depended on the works of other authors or composers? Some students chose to leave out sounds and music aside from their own voice. The response of these students was compared to the response of those that did choose to include the music of other composers: Why did you include sound outside of your own voice? What would make including sound other than your voice more difficult? Why would it be more difficult to include only your voice? With these questions I intended to get at whether they had a greater sense of stitching together the ideas and productions of others rather than coming up with something completely original. Once again, this has the potential of giving them a sense
that they have entered a conversation that was already going on.

In the following chapter I will be looking at how my methodology depends upon the willingness and availability of students. In order for this study to provide an assessment of audio essays that is both systematic and attentive to the voice of students I needed the cooperation of almost the entire class. Therefore, I will try to draw out not only the correspondence between what students perceived and what their writing actually revealed but also the voice of the students through the statements that were most relevant to this study.
Chapter 4

The word of the living God is not merely written, but spoken. The Bible is God’s voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears. If we realized this, with what awe would we open God’s word, and with what earnestness would we search its precepts! The reading and contemplation of the Scriptures would be regarded as an audience with the Infinite One.

~Ellen G. White Testimonies for the Church Volume 6

One of my intentions in conducting this study was to provide a structured assessment tool for teachers as they evaluate their investment in a new medium. However, I also wanted to make sure that I emphasized the voice of the students. This was because even if audio essays failed to give students a better sense of the way meaning is created - in groups rather than through some type of transfer of information - I could at least reveal this bias through my study. However, with only a small class of fifteen students and an even smaller pool of consistent data from eleven students I was able to accomplish more of my second goal than my first.

In this chapter I show the data that was more significant to my study and explain the significance of the threads I saw. Just as I did in previous chapters I organize the narrative of my class using the categories (Informal Language, Participatory Mystique, Communal Sense, Concentration on the Present Moment, and Use of Formulas) I have extracted from Ong's description of secondary orality. This chapter, however, contains
one major difference. I attempt to give my data analysis more of a narrative feel rather
than strictly adhering to a truth and proof style. In addition, I try to bring out the
expectations students had for this second semester of a first-year composition course in
order to provide a background for my arguments on the definition of literacy in the field
of Composition, which will be discussed in the final chapter. I also bring out the
connections between what students said and did and the focus of the class on either
public or private discourse as well as the amount of community building that took place.

Informal Language

From the first moments that I began collecting data with my first informal
interview I began to get a sense that my students were interested in learning academic
discourse:

    INSTRUCTOR. ok so my first question is uh what are your expectations
    concerning the level of formal language which you would like to learn
    from this class...

    STUDENT A. scholarly

The first student to respond was a theology major who explains later in the interview that
he believes formal language is "words not used by society... because our vocabulary has
been dumbed down." Since this interview came three class periods before the first
reading assignment in Neil Postman's Amusing Ourselves To Death: Public Discourse in
the Age of Show Business there is a small possibility that this student was biased by
reading ahead. Postman's book is all about the decline of public discourse as a result of
the decline of typography which leads to the end of "the Age of Exposition" (63). He also
attempts to parallel television's arrival with the beginning of "the Age of Show Business" (Postman 63). These two ages are marked by "a sophisticated ability to think conceptually, deductively and sequentially; a high valuation of reason and order; an abhorrence of contradiction; a large capacity for detachment and objectivity; and a tolerance for delayed response," on the one hand and "the voice of entertainment" on the other (63, 80). Although it may seem as though students would have a hard time appreciating new technology and new forms of multimodal composition in a class where this book is taught, I was still able to show students the opposite perspective quite frequently during our class discussions. For example, I reminded them of the limitations of print using the quote at the top of this chapter from a multi-volume book that is held in high esteem by the denomination the college supports: Testimonies for the Church by Ellen G. White. In fact, my hope was that this quote would help them understand that audio essays may lead them to think of reading as listening to a voice rather than a mere silent exercise of the eyes.

In addition, the class was thinking about the difference between information received through different channels (ocular, verbal, phonic, etc.) since I began the class by asking students which of their five senses they would be most willing to give up if they had to choose to give one up. This was my way of introducing the first book, Seeing Voices by Oliver Sacks, from which they had reading assignments that should have been completed before the first informal interview. In this book, Sacks considers the world of the deaf and what their experience says about language and being human. In previous semesters in which I have assigned readings from this book students have also seen this
book as being biased toward the auditory channel and toward language being the primary
distinction between humans and animals. Perhaps this is because the author suggests that
it is much more devastating to be born deaf and not acquire language within the first few
years of life than it is to be born blind (Sacks 7, 8). Nevertheless, I did not try to defend
this book as absolute truth and often tried to get students to think critically about it.

Therefore, when the topic of language change expectations came up during the
first informal interview the desire for scholarly language was not the only position as one
student instantly disagreed. Student C's response was that "language changes... and what's
considered formal three hundred years ago is not even included in society and formality
changes as well." This same student along with another offered another expectation
earlier in the conversation. They talked about being their desire to be "able to approach
any public" and "make everyone think or agree with what [they’re] thinking." In addition,
there were two other definitions for formal language that were offered by an additional
two students. The first was the Declaration of Independence and law writing. The second
was talking to the pope or president. Interestingly, these examples are taken out of public
discourse even though these students seemed to desire the ability to be persuasive in any
situation, including an exchange in an academic setting. This sentiment was reflected in
their questionnaire responses. Keeping in mind that they filled out the questionnaire
before the informal interview the results seemed to suggest that the conveyance of a
message was only slightly more important to this class than having a more sophisticated
vocabulary and adept word choice (my category "improved vocabulary" included both
the ability to use words correctly and an enhanced vocabulary because I saw them as two
sides of the same coin) or achieving a higher grammatical standard (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2

Questionnaire 1: Language Change Expectations

In coding these responses I did not create a category for responses that were unique and not repeated by at least one other student. This allowed for more focused charts. In addition, the idea of having better vocabulary or grammar is not constrained to either public or academic discourse. Therefore, students did not seem to expect to improve in one discourse over another.

Another observation to note is that not one student expected to improve their spoken language as a result of taking my class. Nevertheless, at the end of the semester when students were asked in the second questionnaire "How has your language changed as you have completed the audio essays?" as many students felt that their language sounded better (this category involved words like deeper tone, articulation, pronunciation) as those who felt their language had not changed which were both only
slightly higher than the group that perceived an overall language improvement (See Figure 3 below).

Therefore, the audio essay assignment did not seem to be perceived as a major agent in the accomplishment of the expectations students had near the beginning of the semester.

This fact was even clearer when students responded in the second questionnaire to the inquiry "How would you compare the language in your audio essay with the language in your written essays?" The class as a whole seemed to conclude that there was no difference in the level of formality. Even the responses of the three students who felt that their writing was more formal than their audio essay were in a sense negated by the fact that an equal three students said the complete opposite. In addition, three others said that there was no difference in the level of formality (see Figure 4 below).

In order to check the accuracy of my students' perception I used Chafe's method
of looking at the frequency of the words I, we, me, us as a gauge on the level of formality. Chafe concluded that the "...first person reference is otherwise much less frequent in formal written language (46). When I didn't have a format of a student's paper that I could analyze using word processing software I estimated about 335 words per page. At first I

![Figure 4](image)

**Figure 4**

**Questionnaire 2: Comparing Audio to Written**

thought that Chafe's 200-600 words per minute would work for my analysis of the audio essays. Fortunately, one of my students sent me a digital version of his audio essay script that allowed me to do a word count. It turned out that he was speaking at 150 words per minute and because all the other essays involved a similar speed I decided to use that as the standard estimate. Therefore, according to my analysis of approximately 61,520 words in four completed assignments turned in by eleven students the percentage of occurrences of I, we, me, and us was basically the same in the audio essays as in the
written. The total percentage in the written assignments of these words was 1.11%, which was almost the same as the total percentage of these words in the audio essays: 1.13%. This confirmed to me that students were right about the language in both mediums remaining the same.

Because I realized that genre would likely play a role I decided to chart out the percentages based on genre (See Figure 5 below). Although the assignment that involved students writing an article for the school website had the highest level of informal language and the research paper had the lowest level of informal language the audio essay and the argumentative essay had about the same level: 1.18% and 1.13% respectively. These results seemed to be influenced by my own instructions on every assignment. I did not give too many instructions on the first argumentative paper or on the audio essay but I did tell students that the audio essay could be less formal. I also explained to students that the website article could be less formal and that the research paper had to be completely formal. Judging by the jump in informal language in the website article there is a possibility that the audio essay experience led to more informal language. However, the difference is still fairly small. One thing I can safely assume from my comparison of informal language in each genre is that the audio essay has not yet taken on the same level of informal language as an article for the school website.

Although the class did not use much more informal language in their audio essays in comparison to their other assignments there were still some clues about what conventions the audio essay may soon take on. One clue was the fact that three of my students tried to imitate radio shows in their audio essays. Two of those students were
imitating talk shows and one of them was imitating an NPR show. The student who was imitating NPR actually told me that was what he was trying to do while the other two actually had introductions to a talk show at the beginning of their audio essays. Even among these three students there was no trend in the usage of informal language with quite a disparate range of I, we, me, us: 2.6% and 1.52% in the talk show imitations and 0% in the NPR imitation.

Aside from this more specific look at some of the audio essay conventions I also tried to take into consideration the personalities of the students I was working with in order to see if that played a role in the results. Unfortunately, when I asked the students in the informal interview "How many of you consider yourselves to be outgoing?" and "How many of you consider yourselves to be shy?" I discovered that students do not feel these two descriptions are mutually exclusive. This resulted in many students raising their
hands on both questions and then explaining that they are both. Therefore, I could not
draw any conclusions on the role of personality in my results.

In the final informal interview at the end of the semester five out of the six
students who responded to the question "Did you consider the audio essay assignment a
chance for you to improve your vocabulary? Why or why not?" said that it had. One of
the most relevant responses to my study came from one of the students who modeled his
audio essay after NPR:

Yes because you have a standard to live up to like... my genre
was like professional talk... like NPR or something so you have like this
thing you have to live up to you have to talk like them and be like them... I
had to talk like them and they're very very technically intelligent.

This statement caught me off guard because although I know that talk radio has plenty of
intellectuals using difficult language I expected this type of statement to come from a
student who was imitating academic discourse rather than public discourse. This revealed
to me that I had been compartmentalizing the two discourses more than I should have.

Nevertheless, my questionnaires, informal interviews, and artifact analysis
provided a quick look at student expectations, the changes or lack of changes that were
perceived as a result of the audio essay assignment, student definitions of formality,
student comparisons of language in the two media, the frequency of informal markers,
and the conventions that the audio essay is taking on. In the following section I will be
looking at the motivation behind the production of audio essays.
Participatory Mystique

As stated in the previous chapter, I have chosen the following quote to define participatory mystique:

...we are group-minded self-consciously and programmatically. The individual feels that he or she, as an individual, must be socially sensitive. Unlike members of a primary oral culture, who are turned outward because they have had little occasion to turn inward, we are turned outward because we have turned inward. (Ong, Orality 136)

This definition seems to emphasize the voluntary nature of social participation. In order to ascertain this I had to look at whether students would voluntarily choose to complete an audio essay if given the opportunity. I also decided to look at some of the reactions that students had toward the mandatory audio essay assignment in order to understand how much voluntary participation actually takes place as a result of the audio essay medium. Only one student chose to do a second audio essay. The entire class had the choice of either writing out an article for the college website or composing a second audio essay. In the second questionnaire the student who chose to do a second audio essay gave the reason for his choice: "it was different and in some ways I found them easier talking than writing." Although the first part of his statement could be related to a social desire to communicate in a different way the second part of this statement could only be a social statement if he meant that it would give him more time to socialize if he didn't need to spend so much time writing.

Aside from this student two other students had positive comments concerning the
audio essay, although neither of them actually composed a second one. One student explained that he would compose another audio essay if given the chance "because [he] liked the fact that it enters a second dimension and the listener can hear the tone, effects and vocab[ulary] to construct a different meaning." This certainly sounded like a statement born out of a desire for some type of social participation. I never found out why he didn't actually choose to compose a second audio essay. The other student gave me a clue as to why most students did not compose a second audio essay. When he was asked "What did you like or dislike about the audio essay assignment?" in the second informal interview he responded by saying, "I liked it because I could control the way the reader or the listener like perceived what I was saying I could control them emotionally with the music that I used which is a big thing." There was no need to wonder why this student did not also choose to compose a second audio essay because he quickly threw in the negative side: "I hated the fact that it took six hours to record myself actually more than that." The other negative responses to this question were not clear except for one where the student explained that "I hate hearing myself on audio and it was dreadful every time I played it back." Therefore, whatever the social benefits of audio essays the awkwardness of hearing one's own voice played back and the length of time it took seemed to discourage a voluntary participation.

The issue of the extra work that audio essays require also came up when I asked another question:

INSTRUCTOR. Would you prefer that more composing was done with audio recording like instead of writing?
STUDENT E. I don't think so because I wrote the essay like and I could've handed it in to you but then I had to keep on working and like record it.

Although there was not much talk about the social benefits of doing this extra work this young woman decided that perhaps it benefited her writing. She explained by saying: "On the flip side I think it actually helps my writing by imagining myself speaking it in a way because it helped me think of like the structure and stuff." This was not the clearest statement but I believe this student was getting at an important idea. She realized that writing is a part of discourse and spending extra time thinking about a message can lead to a better message. Whether or not she meant a clearer or more persuasive message remains a mystery but what is clear is that at least one student felt that extra time spent with a message is beneficial. Even if there was nothing in her statement that explicitly pointed to social participation it certainly had important implications that will be looked at further in the following section.

With only one student actually composing a second audio essay and the raising of the more work and awkwardness objections this class provided little evidence that the audio essay was used as a voluntary means to social participation. Nevertheless, the influence of the audio essay on Student E's sense of discourse still suggested a type of harmonizing which will be looked at in more detail in the section on communal sense.

Communal Sense

For the purposes of this thesis I have been using the following passage to define communal sense because it links up with the phrase contextually in Ong's writing:

listening to spoken words forms hearers into a group, a true audience, just
as reading written or printed texts turns individuals in on themselves. But secondary orality generates a sense for groups immeasurably larger than those of primary oral culture - McLuhan's 'global village.' (Orality 136)

Nevertheless, I have tried to supplement the sense Ong speaks of here with the idea that he deals with in other passages: "Because in its physical constitution as sound, the spoken word proceeds from the human interior and manifests human beings to one another as conscious interiors, as persons, the spoken word forms human beings into close-knit groups" (Orality 74). Because "close-knit groups" is hardly a description of the author-reader relationship and yet a global village sense can be achieved through a vast audience experiencing a single event I knew I would be looking at the role of peer review groups and their connection to audience. I began by looking at whether students saw their peers as part of their audience which would suggest that the event could cultivate a type of communal sense.

Since the college I work at has an enrollment of under 100 students a close sense of community already exists. Nonetheless, I began asking about the sense of audience in the first questionnaire and discovered that only two students specifically mentioned their peers. Even these two students did not see their peers as the sole audience and mentioned their instructor along with their peers. The second questionnaire produced similar responses with two students seeing their peers as an audience to their written assignments and two students seeing their peers as an audience to the audio essay assignment. What most of the students said would fit into what I would call a topic-specific audience category. For example, one young woman who did her audio essay on cruelty to animals
stated that her audience was "people who were cruel to animals." Most of the students were not as specific as her and decided that members of a religious denomination or a subgroup of a religious denomination was their audience.

During my review of the final group interview it became clearer to me why students were not seeing their peers as their audience when composing their audio essay even though they had spent time composing in peer review groups. One student's statement in particular stood out as a good representation of what likely happened with most of the students:

INSTRUCTOR. Were the peer review workshops more enjoyable when you were working on audio drafts rather than written drafts?

STUDENT H. I asked people what they thought about it after I was done with it. because you can't record while there's other people in the room unless you want background noises you really can't work with other people when you're doing your audio essay.

In fact, there was no indication that any student actually tried to record in their peer review groups, although some changed their audio essays as a result of their group interaction. For example, Student E explains why she added something other than her voice: "In my peer review group they were saying that the [sic] most of the content was good it was just really boring at the beginning and I needed something to catch their attention so that's when I used the sound." This indicates that peer review group discussion of audio essays may not have been much different from a discussion on written drafts. Student C confirmed this by saying that he peer reviewed the written script
Nevertheless, there was one difference that stood out to me as I considered the two types of discussion; that of audio drafts and that of written drafts. This difference was brought out by Student G, the only student who decided to complete two audio essays. He explained why he enjoyed his peer review group more when the topic was his audio essay draft:

I had more fun in sharing my audio essay and I think that it was a lot easier to share it because you just had to sit there and listen you didn't have to read it and the less time it takes the better for a student so I was able to share it with a lot more people as well.

On the one hand this statement first appears to lead to less communal sense because the student is less involved, in a sense, by sitting back and not having to use his own voice in reading back a draft. On the other hand this student perceives this as a means for him to share it with a larger community. This, therefore, represents some of the quintessential tension of new media and the audio essay in particular.

Just as there were pros and cons in reaching a larger community I thought there would be pros and cons to the sharp agonistic edge Ong predicted would be missing in secondary orality. However, the difference with the agonistic edge is that it requires balance in order to add to the communal sense. One the one hand, as has been noted in the previous chapter, a thesis that does not ask the reader "to change what they think" is deemed insignificant by composition textbooks such as The Craft of Research (Booth, et al. 124). On the other hand, textbooks such as Everything's An Argument warn about the
weakening of an argument when a writer becomes dogmatic (Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters 392, 393). In order to ascertain whether audio essays influenced students to either become dogmatic or to discuss insignificant theses I analyzed their theses and my own comments on their theses.

I began by looking at the significance of their thesis by using the method that The Craft of Research recommends to students in order for them to evaluate their own theses. To begin with the book describes a significant thesis by saying: "Readers value most highly new facts when they upset what seemed long settled" (Booth, et al. 125) Therefore, "changing an affirmative claim into a negative one and vice versa" and then deciding whether the reverse is "obviously false" or "trivial" will reveal whether the thesis is worth arguing (Booth et al 125, 126). This method of stating the opposite seems to be based on the idea that a thesis is significant when it is likely that someone will argue the opposing side. For example, I sometimes tell my students that no one would argue that the sun will rise tomorrow because it is unlikely that anyone would argue that it will not rise. Therefore, no one would be interested in a paper that argues that the sun will rise tomorrow. There was one major problem with this method that I had to work around. A number of essays seemed to be lacking a thesis altogether because students sometimes merely reported information without making a clear argument or the genre was not conducive to clear arguments as in the article for the school website. To remedy this problem I decided to declare ambiguous or hard-to-find theses insignificant. After all, if a thesis can not even be identified it is far from fitting into the definition that describes theses as “upset[ing] what seemed long settled” (Booth, et al. 125).
Since I judged 75% of the theses in both the written and audio essays as significant a look at what I considered an insignificant thesis will reveal more on my decision-making process. One of the clearest examples of my declaring a thesis insignificant comes from a student who wrote his research paper in a science report format. This made it easy to find his thesis because it was labeled "Hypothesis" and was in a section of its own: "Sleep deprivation is a disorder that has negative repercussions not only on each individual, but in society as a whole as well." The reverse of this thesis would be: Sleep deprivation is a disorder that has positive repercussions not only on each individual, but in society as a whole as well. Since no one would argue that sleep deprivation has a positive impact on society and on individuals the original becomes clearly insignificant.

In addition, I was a little surprised to find that although I had a larger pool of written drafts to analyze, the percentage for significant theses was higher with audio essays at 72.73% compared to written essays at 66.67%. If genre is taken into consideration then the level of significance in theses was basically the same in audio essays as in written essays. This is because the article for the website was a genre that was not focused on an argument and therefore had the lowest percentage of significant theses at 45.45%. Aside from this all the other genres, including the audio essay, were between 72% and 82%.

There was even less evidence for dogmatic language in student essays. Since most of the students acknowledged an opposing viewpoint in almost every essay it was hard to find dogmatic language without actually looking at my marginal comments. Overall, I
was only able to find dogmatic language in one audio essay. Since there was such little evidence for dogmatic content and plenty of evidence that significant theses can occur in audio essays I decided that there was no need for further analysis along these lines.

One area that did receive further analysis was the response that Student E gave during the second informal interview: "On the flip side I think it actually helps my writing by imagining myself speaking it in a way because it helped me think of like the structure and stuff." Although I did not design the question "Would you prefer that more composing was done with audio recording?" in order to discover whether students had begun to see the conversational nature of composition this response seemed to answer my question.

I then decided to look at some of the questions that were designed to shed light on student perceptions of the conversational nature of language. However, when I looked at the question that was repeated in both questionnaires "Did you consider the responses you received from me and your peers important?" I did not see much change in the results. Only two students seemed to have different answers at the end of the semester. Instead of saying that my responses alone were important all the students said that both my responses and the responses of their peers were important to them. Additionally, during the second informal interview I asked students whether they were planning to share their audio drafts and/or their written essays with people outside the class. There was not much difference between the two responses. Two students said that they would share their audio essays and two students said they would share their written essays. Only one student said they would not share their audio essay because they would rather share
their written script. However, this student did not explain why he would prefer to give
one over the other.

Therefore, there was not much evidence for change in the students' perception of
their audience while composing in the two media or for an increased sense of the
conversational nature of language. In fact students held basically the same view on the
importance of responses to their composition before and after the audio essay assignment.
It was also fairly clear that students used their peer review groups in similar ways when
composing in the two media, meaning they listened to comments but didn't actually
record their new additions during the peer review sessions. There was one exception to
this comparison as there was a little less participation because students did not have to
read their essays aloud. Although there was practically no evidence for a rise in dogmatic
language there was plenty of evidence that pointed to students selecting significant theses
in both media. Notwithstanding there are many ways to assess whether students are
agreeing so much with each other that it threatens their ability to think critically, my
analysis of theses yielded enough data to meet the goals of a study of this scope. Future
studies might look beyond theses to potentially insignificant language all throughout
essays.

Since the idea of entering an ongoing conversation also has to do with whether
students are more concerned with a momentary present audience I will be looking at the
role of audience once again in the following section on concentration on the present
moment.
Concentration on the Present Moment

In the second questionnaire students were asked "Did your peer review workshops bring you more satisfaction than turning in a final draft of your audio essay? Why or why not?" This was an attempt at my finding out whether they had begun to value the ongoing conversation they had entered, a kind of focus on process, or whether they only saw their essays as a means to a good grade, something that was not really finalized until the end of the semester. If they were mainly interested in the grade then it would be likely that they were not so much concerned with the process analysis they were gaining. In response to this question, the class was mostly split, although the finished product seemed to be a little more important than the peer review process. Five students responded that they received more satisfaction from turning in a final draft than from working in the peer review groups. Four students reported that they preferred working in peer review groups. Of the five who preferred turning in their final draft two of them explained that their peer review group was not very effective. In fact, in speaking of peer review workshops one of them said "I am sure that if properly utilized it would be quite useful." On the one hand, the results could have easily swung towards peer review workshops being more enjoyable. On the other hand, it is likely that there will always be some students who work better on their own and would not benefit much even from the most dedicated group. Therefore, the following response, that represented four other similar responses, stands out as the most realistic: "...there is nothing more satisfying than to be able to turn in a final draft. You're done you don't have to worry about it anymore it's one less thing to do." It may be the case that a class that is more saturated with secondary orality will have
different results and the academic culture may still change. Nevertheless, this type of response reveals that an audio essay assignment does not work any miracles in terms of getting students to focus on process over product.

In addition, as was stated in the previous section there were no major changes in who the students perceived as their audience or in the level of importance they placed on my response and the response of their peers. Both of these results indicate that there was no major shift in their focus from the final product toward an ongoing process or conversation. In addition, it appears that audio essays have the potential of being directed towards a larger audience, as in the student who did two and is planning to share them with people outside the class, but if the assignment is not explicitly directed toward some larger audience, as in the article for the website, students appear to have a hard time shifting their focus away from the instructor's comments. This area has potential for further study and will be discussed in the following chapter.

Finally, I tried to find out if the audio essay influenced students to produce fewer either/or arguments. In Chapter 2 I introduced the idea of either/or versus both/and arguments using Elbow’s essay, “The Music of Form: Rethinking Organization in Writing.” Elbow defines either/or arguments as “totalistic claims” such as “All language is social - private language is a wrongheaded, mistaken notion,” or “Everything is socially constructed - nothing exists in itself foundationally” (644). His purpose in introducing this concept is to say that he is not arguing against “(mapping, signposting, thesis statements, and the neat arrangement of parts)...” in other words “conventional modes of organization” (Elbow 645). Instead he is arguing for both conventional and
“dynamic time-oriented modes,” such as narrative and voice (Elbow 645).

When I tried to look for language that pointed to this type of argumentation in student compositions I was unable to find any references to the time-sensitive nature of the topics they chose. There was not one student who spoke of their topic either in the second interview or in the second questionnaire as being time sensitive. Perhaps this was because of all the topics chosen there were only two that stood out as being time sensitive. The rest dealt with students arguing for timeless principles such as the harmful effects of caffeine, television, sleep deprivation, etc. One of the only essays that stood out as time sensitive, especially since the topic expired even before I could send the student a response, was an audio essay on how one of the dorms that does not have Internet should have it installed. By the time I responded the Internet had been installed in the respective dorm. However, even in this essay I did not sense that the student was making an either/or argument but rather asking for some type of solution. The other essay that included time-sensitive information was on the harmful effects of caffeine on an unborn child. The student acknowledged that there was no consensus among scientists and that more research needed to be done.

Therefore, there was little evidence that the audio essay influenced students to focus more on the process of learning over focusing on a point in time when they would receive a grade. Both questionnaires revealed a nearly stagnant opinion of the importance of response and a slight preference for turning in a finished product over spending time in workshops. Also, the student drafts themselves did not reveal any evidence that students were aware of the time-sensitive nature of their topics. In the final section on the use of
formulas I will continue looking at the students' sense of their entrance into a conversation but I will do so with attention to their definition of originality.

**Use of Formulas**

In speaking of the production of a visual-musical work, Rickert and Salvo explain that the collaboration that takes place results in an awareness of the network of people it took to bring about the work of art:

> It is the aesthetic realm that a visual-musical work invites us to both enter and immerse ourselves in, and it is the constellation of production pathways and inputs—people, communities, technologies, and networks—that are simultaneously evoked with each aesthetic world. ("Distributed" 313)

Since the audio essay has the potential of becoming a verbal-musical work that also transcends "the singular work of art" students could potentially experience the same type of network awareness by their use of other authors ("Distributed" 296). The difference between merely quoting another author and using some type of formulaic style to remix a number of sounds, music, or tones of voice is that the latter has the potential of causing the student to rely on formula for structure.

Even before looking at any of the data I collected I knew that something had taken place in my class similar to what Rickert and Salvo spoke of. As I mentioned in Chapter 2 one young woman asked me if she could have someone else record their voice after she had written the script of her essay. Since I had just finished explaining that students could use the built-in effects of programs such as Audacity and Garageband to change their
voice it seemed unfair for me to refuse this request. Therefore, another young woman recorded her voice reading the script her friend had written. In chapter two I mentioned that this did not provide much in the way of social interaction because reading a couple of pages of text for someone does not necessarily produce a bond. However, in the context of the formulaic this method of composition took on new meaning. After all, no matter the level of actual interaction between the two young ladies, every time this audio essay is played, assuming the script-writer alerts her audience to the fact that she collaborated before they listen, the audience will get a sense of the collaboration it took and will be thinking about both of the people involved. This might not be bricolage in a strict sense but it is also a move toward a remix culture that evokes more than one person when it is listened to.

Aside from this collaborative project there was more evidence of an increase in evoking the words of others in audio essays. In the first questionnaire I asked students "How much of your writing assignment depended on the works of other authors?" The largest number of students, seven, had responses that I would categorize as Somewhat. This included a response like: "Considering I had to argue a point, I took into account the perspectives presented in the article I read. Yes, I did depend on the other author, but not solely." Three students said they depended on other authors a lot and two said that they did not depend on other authors at all. In the second questionnaire I asked the same question except I asked about how much the audio essay depended on the works of other authors or composers. This time the highest number of students, five, responded with what I would categorize as A lot. This included responses like: "I'd say most of it came
from the bible, so a lot, the rest were my thoughts based on experiences in the past."

Three said somewhat, three said not much, and one said none. Therefore it appeared like there was an increased dependence on other authors with the audio essay assignment when compared to the written argumentative essay.

Perhaps my addition of "or composers" in the second questionnaire had something to do with the spike because during the second informal interview I discovered that eight of the students used sound effects or music in their audio essays. However, one of the best examples of evoking other authors came from a student who also depended a lot on his own vocal impersonations. Although Student B doesn't explain the voice modulation that he did with one of the people he was quoting he does explain something that sounds like what Rickert and Salvo were talking about:

I tried to use different tones of voice cause there was three, uh, three different aspects of the essay one was my personal commentary, which I used my personal voice, the other one was about a scientist from England, so I used a British tone, the other one was quotes, so I used an elderly voice; so I like the [audio] essays because when you use different tones... it's like it's three different people and yet you're saying it the same way; so different tones; I realize I'm not that articulate so I had to really modify my articulations to really at least sound you know better it was interesting I liked it.

This type of response shows a definite awareness of the conversation that this student was entering into because he realized that he was evoking three different people even though
he was the only one talking. Perhaps other students felt the same potential but did not go
to this extent because of the difficulty involved. For example Student C explained that he
planned to even include appropriate music as part of his explanation of two different
points of view:

So as I mentioned earlier I did not want to use my voice I wanted to use
someone else's voice but um I think the the way I presented it it was in a
very it was a response to some other argument and I went from presenting
their point of view to presenting my point of view to explaining why my
point of view and to showing the flaws from both of the points of views
and finally saying what I believed so it was a lot of changing of moods so
I just said in order for me to find one sound effect or one type of song or
music for this mood and for that and then it changes mood and then it
changes again and then showing the flaws it was just too complicated...

This student clearly understood the potential involved and might have also become very
aware of the voice of his opponent and how he was creating a conversation but he
certainly had a legitimate concern for the limitations involved. He was not alone as
another student also expressed a similar complaint about the amount of work that would
go into adding effects or music.

In analyzing the audio essays themselves I discovered that aside from the young
woman who asked her friend to read her essay and the young man who talked about
changing his tone of voice there were four other essays that involved students changing
their accents, tone of voice, or using some type of voice effect such as an echo. One of
the students included a short scene of three ladies ordering coffee in a coffee shop and the rest of the students that included something other than their voice merely put in background music. However, even the students that relied only on background music may have worked with a student from another class who seemed to be a movie soundtrack connoisseur. In the student lobby he told me that because I was assigning audio essays many students were coming to him for help in adding music. This was certainly a good thing as my assignment was getting my students to collaborate even with students outside of class.

Therefore, although some students seemed to became more aware of the other voices involved in composing an essay, collaborated where they may have not if the audio essay had not been assigned, and became aware of their dependence on other authors or composers the whole endeavor took more work than some students were willing to put in. Perhaps some of the hesitation came from not expecting to do something so involved in an English class as Student K pointed out:

> well we were talking about like why why it's viable to use different type of media... I guess I don't fully understand what that means like the relevance of it to our English class because like here in English class we're not going to learn how to use a computer necessarily unless it's on our own and we ask someone for help or we're not going to learn how to use a video camera we're not going to go down to a radio station and learn how to use the equipment um what what would we be using we'd be like chatting online or Facebook or blogging or just you know recording our voice but
even then I didn't even learn how to use the program that I used to record
my voice very well it was pretty technical um so yeah like wouldn't we
need a class in and of itself to like learn these types of media and be
proficient you know in using them.

This quote reveals two types of frustration. One is over the expectations that this young
woman had for a composition course. In other words, she seemed to be saying that
English classes are for reading and writing. I'll be looking at this more in the final section
of this chapter. The other frustration was over the difficulty of learning new software.
Since the question of the role of audio essays in the English composition classroom
seemed to have an effect on how much effort the students put into the assignments I will
be discussing it in the following section.

Students Define Literacy

The young woman who expressed how she did not understand what audio essays
had to do with English was not the only one that suggested that audio essays do not
belong in a composition course. Student C suggested it might be a better assignment for a
speech class. This issue is relevant to every one of the categories I have created based on
Ong's description of secondary orality. Certainly the level of formality plays a role in how
a student defines literacy. Although I must confess that I did tell students that the audio
essay did not have to really be formal students still did not use a great deal of informal
language when compared to their writing assignments. Therefore, while my instruction
did not seem to have a profound effect on the amount of informal language used students
still desired to learn the academic discourse that has been associated with English
composition. This expectation may have been caused, in part, by the connotations of the word essay. If my students expected to use a formal voice in their composition of an essay, despite my disclaimer that they did not need to, it may have led them to desire instruction on formal writing to make up for a more lax assignment. At the same time, students may have been influenced by many other similar connections between formal discourse and college standards. Certainly the formation of the expectation for formal language instruction is an important topic that should be explored in future studies. The question that I asked to determine student perception on new media was not designed to reveal how students came to expect formal language learning. However, the following comments show that the expectation for formal language learning is certainly present.

This can be seen in the responses students had to my second informal interview question "Do you think [composing using other media] is an essential part of your education like you really should learn how to compose in other types of media other than writing for the purpose of your college career?" Two students said no and then with the third, Student B, the conversation began to become very relevant to this study:

Well I tend to agree um because well it depends what you're studying in college and how useful it is but I think if you really take the time to know how to write that in itself will teach you any other you know different way to use it in the media but you know not taking time in college to learn about the media I think it distracts from the main point if you know how to write then if the time comes when you actually need it you'll be more secure to speak in video or in audio or in any other part in media but you
have to focus on the written part so you could become secure and well endowed in vocabulary and all the rest so...

This student clearly sees writing as the avenue to a good control over communication in other media. However, he calls learning about media at this point in his college experience as something that "distracts from the main point." If this student was speaking for the rest of the class then there seems to be a continuing prevalent view that learning to write well provides a feeling of security for all other types of communication. The next person who spoke, Student K, continued to shed light on this point:

I believe that writing is a lost art and that we as young people are going to be exposed to media in many different forms naturally just because of you know where we live and the age in which we live but learning how to become a competent um become a good writer is invaluable not many people know how to write well.

This student focused more on how she perceived writing to be a kind of specialty that is not easily achieved or accessed. This point will be discussed more in light of the Cope and Kalantzis quotation that I introduce in Chapter 5. However, this point was also controverted by Student C who had already said that composing in different media is not essential for the college career:

I agree and disagree with the comments I agree with the part that says by writing I mean writing is invaluable right so it is as I mentioned earlier the way the professional world runs but some people learn how to write and from their good writing skills they develop good speech skills or good
social skills related to the question you started you asked at the beginning but some other people work the other way around they have very good verbal skills and from that they go into having good written skills or writing skills you know so I mean at the end it is like probably the most needed factor for communication the writing part but you can come from the verbal from the oral communication to the written.

There are two important points in this student's comment that are relevant to my discussion on defining literacy. First of all, this student sees literacy as relevant to the professional world. Two other students responded about how we live in a media-filled world where media can be used to powerfully persuade others. These two students both saw this as important to a career outside their academic career. Therefore, Student C was not the only voice on the relevancy of new media to the professional world. Nevertheless, Student C's second point about how people learn in different ways and therefore learning new media can also lead to better writing shows that he still saw new media as useful if it leads to better writing.

This definition of literacy as writing-centered seemed to prevail in my class not only in this final informal interview but also in the fact that all but one student actually did a second audio essay and he did it in part because he felt it was easier than writing. This same attitude may not carry over into other media because I also asked students about composing in other media, such as text messaging or the Internet, and Student C seemed to focus less on word-processor writing:

You could do like Facebook too I remember last semester I think it was
[Student I] that sent he wrote his essay in Facebook and he just like tagged people in his peer review group or just random people to peer review it so I think it's a very effective way to do it why because we live in a new generation where media it's carried in our pockets so why not using it why do we have to be dependent on pen and paper to be poets or why do we have to be dependent on uh a computer to type or an audio to record in order to be a writer you need to just put it in the website [inaudible]...

In this passage, as in his comments on text-messaging, Student C veers away from calling writing, probably with a word processor, the skill that is most desired. However, he seems to be the only one to hold this opinion as the two other students who join the conversation on this subject do not seem convinced:

STUDENT H. Come to think if we use text messaging and Facebook like
STUDENT C. [laughing] um I think I think it it can but not necessarily I think a good writer would keep his rules his principles of writing if we can call it that way in texting in Internet in video in whatever
STUDENT G. It's true I like I know people that will text you in proper English and it's like what's wrong with you

In this exchange Student H is asking a question about whether the increase in new media learning will result in falling grammatical standards. Although Student C tries to deny this Student G's comments seem to confirm that this is already happening. In other words, Student G feels that it is strange when someone tries to uphold the grammatical standards of one medium, such as word processor writing, in another one, such as text-messaging.
This conversation does not seem to lead to any major conclusions but rather suggests that further studies with broader designs directed toward new media are needed to explore whether my conclusions carry over into other media. I will be discussing more on further studies in the following chapter.

Beyond this, in Chapter 5 I plan to look at how the apparent increased awareness of discourse during the production of audio essays could potentially affect the definition students have of literacy. In fact, their view of their audience, the process that occurs during peer review workshops, and the conventions their audio essays took on all play a role in shaping their definition of literacy. My conclusions concerning student redefinitions of literacy as well as the amount of work required from both the instructor and students in order to integrate new media into the classroom will be discussed in the following chapter.
Chapter 5

Seeing that the conference, thus continued, would be utterly futile, Luther finally obtained a reluctant permission to present his answer in writing. "In so doing," said he writing to a friend, "the oppressed find double gain; first, what is written may be submitted to the judgment of others; and second, one has a better chance of working on the fears, if not on the conscience, of an arrogant and babbling despot, who would otherwise overpower by his imperious language.

~Ellen G. White quoting Martin Luther Great Controversy

The two aspects of literacy that my study has focused upon, and which seem to be intertwined, are the importance of collaboration, submitting "to the judgment of others," and the possibility of engaging the overpowering "imperious language" of academic and public discourse. My study has looked at whether audio essays lead to greater harmony based on the student's sense of the conversational nature of language, audience, process, and dependence on other authors and composers. In addition, I looked at the effect of voluntary social participation and the waning agonistic edge of secondary orality on the harmony produced in the classroom. Finally, I looked at the student perception on the need for learning academic and public discourse and the role of literacy in the composition classroom.

As in earlier chapters I will be looking at my conclusions based on the categories I have been extracting from Ong's description of secondary orality (Informal Language,
Participatory Mystique, Communal Sense, Concentration on the Present Moment, and Use of Formulas). Often times these categories overlap as the theme of harmonizing elements runs through every category. However, where there has been overlap I have tried to show the majority of my conclusions in the most relevant category and have briefly mentioned it in the overlapping categories. For example, the first section on informal language overlaps with the concentration on the present moment category in its treatment of conventions the audio essay is taking on as it enters academia. However, I give most of my conclusions on these conventions in this first section.

**Informal Language**

Based on the informal interviews and questionnaires it became clear that students expected to learn both academic and public discourse in this second semester of first-year composition. As an unexpected gain the audio essays provided students with greater attention to their spoken language (articulation, pronunciation, and tone pitch). However, just as many students - four out of the twelve students who filled out the second questionnaire - felt that their language had not changed as a result of completing their audio essay. Only three students perceived an improvement in their overall language as a result of their work on the audio essay. From the perspective of the students the audio essay did not seem to play an important role in fulfilling their expected gains in language. Certainly students can come out of high school with the wrong perception of what they will accomplish in one short year of composition instruction. However, their expectations reveal that instructors should not assume that students taking a writing course will go through technology withdrawals and that if technology needs are finally met it will cause
them to ignore their need for formal writing.

On the one hand, students did see the benefits of learning how to convey messages outside of writing. As one student explained: "We live in a media-filled world I mean we need to be able to know how to use things like computers or e-mail..." On the other hand, as I stated in the previous chapter, other students felt that this type of learning belonged in a class of its own such as speech, which parallels the unexpected improvement in articulation. Perhaps the most balanced response came from the student who felt the decision on whether to teach audio essays depended on the learning style of the student:

Some people learn how to write and from their good writing skills they develop good speech skills or good social skills ... but some other people work the other way around they have very good verbal skills and from that they go into having good written skills.

Based on the perceived language improvement it seems that only three out of eleven students in my class had the type of learning style that could utilize an audio essay assignment for the improvement of their writing. Therefore, although composition instructors can benefit from asking students if they expect to learn language in media other than writing, a further assessment is needed to ascertain whether the student's learning style coincides with the type of learning audio essays afford. In addition, if an instructor discovers an unexpected learning outcome such as better articulation, they should consider whether this outcome is essential to the goals of the course. Once again, this depends on the type of literacy goals the instructor decides upon. What is clear is that
students do not automatically expect to learn new media in a writing course. Therefore, instructors should make sure they understand what students expect as they are planning their course in order to either meet the expectation or be able to address the reasons these expectations will not be met.

Furthermore, if students expect to learn discourses of power, both academic and public, the level of formality that a particular medium is associated with should be considered. Although my students’ expectations concerning audio essays were likely influenced by my comments on how they do not need to be as formal with their recordings as they are with their writing, students ended up seeing little difference between the language they used in their writing and the language they used in their audio essays. Similarly, student perception of audience did not change when students composed in a different medium. Based on the second questionnaire student perception was nearly identical when it came to audience in the two media. Therefore, among the students who expected to have improved vocabulary and grammar, the majority did not see an improvement in the language they used in their audio essays. This came in spite of the fact that they spent more time on the audio essays and essentially had to go over their composition twice: once in preparing the script and another time in recording.

This perception was confirmed in my analysis of the frequency of the informal markers I, we, me, and us. Since there was not much difference in the level of informal language between the audio recordings and the written drafts instructors who are primarily concerned with teaching formal academic discourse need not worry that audio essays will influence their students to use informal language. On the other hand,
instructors should not expect audio essay assignments to provide formal language improvement that is more effective than writing instruction. In the end both proponents of the teaching of academic discourse such as Cope and Kalantzis as well as proponents of the teaching of public discourse critique such as Gronbeck emphasize that the teaching of communication can only remain relevant if it is focused on some type of formal language in both discourses.

Conversely, Welch and Reynold's emphasize the benefits of learning the conventions of informal public discourse. As I have tried to show in Chapter 2 there are a number of courses that are already focusing on the conventions of radio essays which have the potential of taking on informal language. However, the fact that three of the audio essays composed in my class resembled radio shows did not reveal whether formal or informal language was central to the radio essay as a genre. Therefore, if an instructor is trying to focus the attention of the students upon informal public discourse there needs to be another step in the analysis of radio shows as a public discourse genre. For example, of the three audio essays that resembled radio shows, one of them had none of the informal markers (I, we, me, us) and another focused on the complex issue of epistemology which required the student to use fairly formal language despite the fact that he also included a high percentage of the informal markers. Therefore, it is not enough for an instructor to critique a broad genre, such as the radio show, if the learning outcome requires one specific level of formality or another. Therefore, the assessment only begins with the medium and must then move into the complexity of genres and topics in order to account for the success or failure of the learning outcome.
My look at the subject of informal language in relation to audio essays revealed that instructors should not expect audio essays to fulfill student expectations in formal language learning to a great degree. Instead instructors should develop a way to assess whether a student has a learning style that can benefit from audio essays. However, instructors should not expect the majority of students to have an increase in formal language when audio essays are utilized. At the same time instructors need not fear that there will be a drop in formal language if they use audio essays. Finally, instructors should assess audio essay sub genres in greater detail in order to see convention patterns that may be helpful. This is the case because the radio talk show, for example, is a genre that is too broad to account for specific conventions.

In the following section I will be shifting my focus back onto the importance of student perception in achieving specific learning outcomes.

**Participatory Mystique**

By far the assessment that spoke the loudest on the topic of audio essays from the perspective of my students came when I gave them the option of either completing another audio essay or writing an essay for the school website. Since I did not want students to feel left out of an opportunity for some type of public exposure I told students that if they chose to do a second audio essay I would try to post it on the school website along with the written articles. This may have deterred some students who would not have appreciated the broadcasting of their voice over the Internet. Nevertheless, during the informal interview at the end it became clear to me that students perceived audio essays as a lot of work. This is likely the biggest reason for only one student choosing to
do a second audio essay. In fact, this student, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, composed his second audio essay in part because he felt it was easier. When a student faces more than "six hours" of work when they can simply turn in a script instructors may have a hard time assigning more than one audio essay.

This, then, precludes the participatory mystique, that voluntary social sensitivity, that should lead to the "more equal participation" that was spoken of in the second chapter (Hiltz and Turoff 124). This is not to say that there was no potential for social interaction in the audio essay assignment. After all, one student brought up "the second dimension" of "tone, effects, and vocab to construct a different meaning." Another student saw this extra dimension as an opportunity to "control" the perceptions and emotions of his audience. While this second statement does not sound as socially sensitive as the first it still shows the potentially inviting side of audio essays.

Therefore, the instructor may have to figure out ways to make the audio essay less work in order for students to even begin to consider its potential. For example, the instructor might suggest the production of an audio essay without a script. This might help model free-writing but it would likely not go far in producing a more complex genre. Cope and Kalantzis make a parallel point when comparing genres such as "recount, which retells events for the purpose of informing or entertaining," with genres such as "the complex, extended narrative":

Some genres, even though they are still characteristically written, are closer to the distinctive features of speech than others. A written personal recount, for example, can have features characteristically closer to speech
than other forms of writing. This, incidentally, is why process writing, so long as it maintains its ideological commitments to the voice of the creative individual and to the basic similarity of oral and written language, will rarely take students beyond recount. (67, 68)

Here Cope and Kalantzis are taking aim at the whole of process writing but their argument hinges upon the commitment to finding the individual voice which is one of the primary reasons for free-writing in particular. Therefore, if instructors are to use audio essays they should keep in mind that motivating students to do the extra work of recording should not involve extemporaneous performance if the learning outcome involves proficiency in a more complex genre.

Another option for instructors trying to encourage voluntary social interaction in composition that was mentioned in the previous chapter involves the posting of audio essays on the Internet where listeners can post comments, or other alternatives that help students focus less upon the instructor's comments. This was not fully tested in my current study because the front page of the college website is not a place where the public is encouraged to leave feedback comments. Later in the semester I actually started a blog for most of the articles that had been completed because many of the articles seemed to fit better in a blog rather than on the college's front page. This was especially true of articles that dealt with controversial topics. Therefore, a further study might be done in which students are assigned an audio essay or an essay in another medium and the students are informed that there will be an audience that is able to leave feedback during the semester. This could simulate, to a greater degree, the social participation that has the
potential of turning students into what Rickert and Salvo have called "prosumers."

This is not to say that my study was completely devoid of the sense of participatory mystique. After all, there was one young woman that saw the audio essay as a means to improving her writing because she imagined herself "speaking it in a way." Nevertheless, even this statement seems to make writing the end product rather than the participation itself. After all she explains the value of it by saying, "because it helped me think of like the structure and stuff." Instructors have many options in reacting to this type of statement. They might decide that student expectations should be central to their teaching and continue to focus on writing instruction. Another option might be to try and teach secondary orality theory as Welch suggests:

Empowerment in writing can take place with the use of orality/literacy/secondary orality theory. This empowerment can derive from making writing courses locations for the training of cultural critics who understand the pressures and possibilities of delivery in its newly revivified manifestations. (28)

Welch is speaking of messages on television, in rock music, on the radio, and in other "electronic texts" (26).

The primary challenge with teaching secondary orality theory is showing students what it means in a practical sense. For example, in looking at Holly's seemingly time consuming methods of measuring involvement by looking at the frequency of prepositional phrases or first person references we can conjecture that this type of tracking would either meet with indifference among first-year composition students or
lead to some type of software development. However, I am not denying that if students saw it as a means to engage with and deconstruct socially powerful discourses they might be more willing to try and find ways of analyzing the level of involvement in political interviews on television, for example.

Class time is at stake when it comes to deciding whether getting into the details of formal and informal language is really necessary in order to judge a speaker or author's level of involvement. In addition, it seems awkward to be using a fine tooth comb to decide whether community building actually occurs in different types of discourse. Because community building should be something that comes naturally, instructors should find less mechanical ways of making secondary orality theory relevant to their students than Holly's in-depth analysis. However, the question of whether to teach secondary orality theory to students is beyond the scope of my study, which was limited to testing the description of secondary orality as a teacher's assessment of a new medium.

My look at participatory mystique and its relation to audio essays revealed that instructors should not expect to assign more than one audio essay without seeing students struggle as a result of the extra work. In addition, instructors should not look to extemporaneous performance in trying to make audio essay assignments more palatable. Instead further assessments should be designed to look at the benefits of providing students with an interactive audience outside of the classroom which may lead to less focus upon the instructor as audience. In addition, instructors should consider student expectations in deciding whether to focus on writing instruction since students appeared to have seen audio essays as a means of learning better writing. Finally, further studies
should be conducted on the question of whether secondary orality theory should actually be taught to students because my study merely showed the complexity that this theory can take on.

As a researcher I did try to follow Holly's systematization lead in trying to quantify responses to questionnaires and significant theses in both written and audio essays. This provided me with evidence for the discussion in the following section on how students perceived their audience and their ability to find a balance between producing significant theses that are not dogmatic.

**Communal Sense**

The following phrase that I have been using to define communal sense leads to what I am calling the quintessential tension in new media:

> listening to spoken words forms hearers into a group, a true audience, just as reading written or printed texts turns individuals in on themselves. But secondary orality generates a sense for groups immeasurably larger than those of primary oral culture - McLuhan's 'global village.' (Ong, Orality 136)

This definition contains two elements that seem to be at variance. The first is the idea of a true audience. In Chapter 2 I intimated at what a true audience means when I talked about Ong's definition of what is not a true audience: "Writing introduces a whole new set of structures within the psyche: communication which lacks the normal social aspect of communication, encounter with one who is not present, participation in the thought of others without commitment or involvement" ("Word" 27). A true audience, on the other
hand would be participation in the thought of one who is present which calls for commitment and involvement. The second idea in the definition of communal sense I have put forth is that a much wider audience can be reached through secondary orality even if there is less involvement between a speaker and an audience. In the previous chapter I brought this out in Student G's statement:

I had more fun in sharing my audio essay and I think that it was a lot easier to share it because you just had to sit there and listen you didn't have to read it and the less time it takes the better for a student so I was able to share it with a lot more people as well.

This quotation from the second informal interview revealed that this student participated less in his peer review group because all he did was sit there and have the computer play back his voice. On the other hand he felt like this provided him with the opportunity to share it with more people because it was not as slow as reading.

If this tension between involvement and greater accessibility is in fact at the heart of the hesitancy instructors feel when making decisions about new media then this tension will continue to appear. Therefore, in the further development of new media assessments instructors should keep this tension at the forefront of their design instead of coming to it last.

Furthermore, this tension was revealed in the level of involvement in peer review groups during the composition of the audio essays. I began to suspect that the reason most of my students were seeing their audience as topic specific was because peer review groups were utilized at about the same level for writing as for composing audio essays.
To define topic specific I used the example of Student F who wrote against animal cruelty and then answered in her questionnaire that her audience was "people who were cruel to animals." Since most students seemed to think of their audience in this way I began to wonder why they were not seeing their peers as their audience even though they were working with them in workshops. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, I found that Student H did not have his group review his audio essay until he was done because he knew he could not record during the workshop because of the noise. Of the three students who responded to the question, "Were the peer review workshops more enjoyable when you were working on audio drafts rather than written drafts?" Student H was not the only one who did not utilize the workshops as much for audio essay composition. Student E also confessed: "I actually didn't spend as much time in my peer review group with the audio essay so it wasn't as helpful." Although she does not explain the reason behind this drop in peer review involvement a clue came up during the second informal interview.

The awkwardness involved in students hearing their own recorded voice may have played a role in students spending less time working in peer review groups on their audio essays. For example, Student J said, "I hate hearing myself on audio and it was dreadful every time I played it back." Therefore, once again this tension between accessibility and less involvement resurfaces perhaps because students feel more hesitant to have others listen to the emotion they may have put into a recording. When Selfe talked about "depriv[ing] students of valuable semiotic resources for making meaning," she did not spend a lot of time talking about the awkwardness that may drive students to less collaboration (1).
On the other hand, Selfe's assertion was correct when it came to the significance of the theses students produced for their audio essays. Perhaps the greater pressure of producing something that involved their actual voice and additional layers of information and meaning led to greater discrimination on the types of arguments students made. Whatever the reason, 72.73% of the audio essays had significant theses according to the definition for significance put forth by The Craft of Research. When taking into consideration the different genres that the students were asked to compose in this percentage was the same as that of the research papers and only slightly lower than that of the argumentative papers that I asked students to write. Although more assessment is needed before audio essays can be declared useful to the composition instructor this data suggests that there is no risk in students making insignificant arguments based only on the fact that they are composing an audio essay rather than a written essay. In addition, there was no evidence of an increase in dogmatic language as a result of composing audio essays.

Since insignificant theses and dogmatism are not issues to worry about some instructors may choose to employ audio essays to empower students from underrepresented cultures as was suggested by Welch:

Students from orally dominant cultures—Native Americans, for example—can especially benefit from applications of orality/literacy/secondary orality theory in the classroom... By examining the dynamism of the spoken word, we can better include non-European groups that have historically been excluded and marginalized, left to lament that they are
not understood by the dominant university culture. (28)

However, this optimism is tempered by the fact that underrepresented groups may have difficulty in learning the software just as they may have difficulty learning polemic argumentation. For example, Rickert and Salvo cite a website where people write reviews on new media:

What repeatedly comes up are specific kinds of frustration, and their criticisms of GarageBand in particular are telling. Among the complaints leveled by the reviewers is the assertion that the interface is too complicated: It is hard to learn and remember, and the learning that must take place is intellectual rather than musical. The review presents the critical perspectives of musical rather than technological experts... (314). This aspect suggests that these reviewers have had little access to similar technology and are struggling to learn it. Therefore, students who are new to audio software will require more time to adjust. This type of complaint came to me from a student who was not from an underrepresented ethnic group. As I showed in the previous chapter she expressed her concern by saying:

I didn't even learn how to use the program that I used to record my voice very well it was pretty technical um so yeah like wouldn't we need a class in and of itself to like learn these types of media and be proficient you know in using them.

This statement reveals that instructors may have to take extra time to teach audio essays
if they plan to use them to help students who have the type of learning style that would benefit from this new medium.

Therefore, if instructors are to address the tension between accessibility and involvement or community building they must first be willing to make the audio essay accessible to students who do not have a natural affinity for working with new technology. In addition, instructors must overcome the awkwardness that students feel when recording their voice if they desire students to spend at least an equal amount of time working in groups on audio essays as they do on written essays. On the other hand, although more data needs to be collected on these aspects instructors should not fear that students will produce less significant theses or employ dogmatism in the formation of arguments in the audio essay medium. In addition, there was some evidence of collaboration in the case of students going to a student from another class for help with the technical aspects. This will be discussed more in the section on use of formulas.

In the following section I will be discussing issues that are directly connected to encouraging collaboration. This will include the role of audio essays in encouraging focus on a collaborative process, the need for shifting student dependence on the instructor's comments, and the role of the audio essay in encouraging content that incorporates both/and argumentation.

**Concentration on the Present Moment**

Killingsworth's statement that "Product is to literacy as process is to orality" begins to get at the connection between the focus on process and community building
This can be seen to a greater degree in statements such as that of Student J in the second questionnaire in answer to the question, "Did your peer review workshops bring you more satisfaction than turning in a final draft of your audio essay? Why or why not?": "Peer review workshops brought me more satisfaction because of the learning experience." This type of statement seems to resonate with the ideal "wistful longing for community and trustful dialogue" (Killingsworth 39). Unfortunately, a slightly greater number of students preferred turning in the final product.

Proponents of the process movement's "ideological commitments to the voice of the creative individual" might see the student's focus on product as negative because the student is not focused on finding a voice (Cope and Kalantzis 68). However, Cope and Kalantzis point out that the genres that are the "most powerful in industrial society are not the ones which are closest to speech, but the most distant - the ostensibly objective, abstract, scientific report, for example, or the complex, extended, narrative" (68).

Therefore, instructors should not look to audio essays to provide some major shift in student thinking from product to process. However, if the focus of the instructor is on the powerful genres of academic discourse then audio essays will not necessarily hinder them when it comes to where the students place their focus.

Both proponents of the process movement and those of the genre movement might agree that students need to look beyond the instructor's comments, which suggests a grade-focused view, to their audience. Although many of my students claimed that their audience was either the general public or a topic specific audience, they also tended to write about their favorable regard for my comments in response to their composition. As I
mentioned before, this did not change much as the course went on and audio essays were introduced. My study has some potential in shedding light on whether the focus of students can be shifted off of teacher response through assignments that explicitly point to an audience outside of class. Since one of my assignments was an article for the school website, I had an example of this type of assignment composed for a broader audience. However, I did not design my study to probe into student thinking on this particular assignment because most of my questions were connected to audio essays. Therefore, a further study should be conducted that will focus not only on assignments that ask students to write for an audience outside of their class but also at whether the potential for that audience responding makes a difference. For example, the front page of my college's website is not set up like a forum and therefore is not conducive to easy feedback from the general public.

Further studies should also be conducted in the area of both/and argumentation. Because I was not able to find any evidence of students' awareness of the time-sensitive nature of their arguments I was unable to see the impact of new media in this area. Part of the problem with data collection in this area was that most of my students chose topics that were not time-sensitive. Therefore, a further study might assign time-sensitive topics and look at whether students use either/or or both/and argumentation in new media composition and how this relates to their awareness of the time-sensitive nature of their topic.

Further studies are needed not only for looking at whether new media is more conducive to assignments that ask students to write to an audience outside of the class or
on the relation between new media and the student's use of both/and argumentation on time sensitive topics but also on the effect of new media upon the student's focus on the collaborative process over the final product. After all, my conclusions in the area of the effect of audio essays on the student's focus on process or product should be used primarily as a guide to issues that require further assessment.

In the following section I will be looking at another area that is valued among Composition scholars that is related to collaboration. The increased awareness of the authors that students depend upon when composing was one of the benefits that audio essays appeared to bring to my class. In addition, students made the various voices in their writing stand out to listeners using software that layers sound or their own voices.

**Use of Formulas**

There is a difference between organizing evidence using a logical progression of ideas and merely throwing together a random stack of quotations. In between these two extremes is the respect that students gain when they openly show their dependence on other authors while at the same time bringing unique emphasis on certain intersections of ideas. As I discussed in Chapter 2, Welch points out that texts that "rely on formula, repetition, addition, and so on... appear simple, elementary, and not really sophisticated" to "many literate minds" (24). This was certainly a risk with audio essays since students can go overboard with effects and music and make their essays resemble a monster truck racing commercial. On the other hand, in the collaboration between the young woman who asked her friend to record her essay for her, the classmate's reading lacked some of the authentic inflections that likely would have come from the author of the script. In
between these extremes were the entertaining radio talk show imitations and the student who used three different accents and tones of voice to represent three different voices in his essay. This type of awareness of the different voices in an essay may be helpful for students who struggle with understanding the difference between acknowledging sources and plagiarism. On the other hand, collaboration can occur in essays that do not give credit to those who have helped. For example, I may not have known the amount of work that was being put into audio essays by a student from another class had he not approached me in the student lobby. In addition, although I was pleased with the collaboration that had spread outside my class, I have to wonder whether most of it was driven by necessity--the need to understand software that can be complicated.

Therefore, instructors may need to wait either until software is developed that is more intuitive or sound manipulation becomes even more commonplace. Otherwise students may desire to produce extra voices and music, as Student C expressed, but may end up forfeiting the extra semiotic resources for a simple recording of their own voice. However, because of the increased personal nature of hearing the inflections of the author's voice despite the fact that other authors are being quoted, instructors may decide to use audio essays simply because of the awareness that they bring to the intersection between the voice of the student and the quoted authors.

In addition, I have to wonder whether students actually depended more on other authors and composers in their audio essays or if they simply became more aware of them because of the ease of changing their literal voice as compared to changing their literary voice. On the other hand, the increased number of students who responded to the
second questionnaire as having depended a lot on other authors and composers could have come as a result of adding music or sounds simply for the sake of capturing the listener's attention. This was certainly the case for the student who added the sounds of a coffee shop because her peer review group suggested her essay was too boring at the beginning. These types of questions concerning the motivation behind greater dependence on authors reveals how little is known about audio essays. This topic is certainly fertile ground for future studies on how students perceive their role in a discourse community.

In the meantime instructors will have to struggle through the challenges of training students in new software, motivating them to put in the extra work that audio essays call for, and making sure that students do not produce elementary projects because they have become distracted by the myriad sound effects that recording software provides.

In the final section I will be looking at the issues this study has brought out that have a bearing on the changing definition of literacy. If this assessment tool has been able to capture some of the values of Composition Studies that are at risk as the definition of literacy changes, then the following section may provide some of the aspects that composition instructors should keep in mind as they continue to assess audio essays and other forms of secondary orality.

The Effect of the Definition of Literacy on Further New Media Assessments

When Killingsworth wrote that "the aim of the composition course is still to teach writing" he was making a statement based on the 1993 definition of literacy.
Nevertheless, he brought out the fact that process pedagogy changed the face of Composition in part because "Instead of listening to the experts talk about writing, the student talks while the experts listen" (Killingsworth 34). This was "the ultimate privileging of the student writer" (Killingsworth 34). Therefore, when my students explained their expectations for the second semester of first-year composition and did not mention anything about becoming more proficient in the use of new media, the improvement of their articulation, or the awareness of their own tone of voice, it may have revealed only a disillusioned view of a system that they do not expect will change. However, at the end of the semester, when they were making statements about not seeing the connection between audio essays and learning English and about how audio essays might be better for a speech class, they certainly were confirming a desire to learn writing.

On the other hand, most of my students also did not express a view of writing as a means of engaging in academic discourse and deconstructing socially powerful discourses. This is not to say that they did not see the benefit of writing and new media for their professional life. In fact the young woman who said, "not many people know how to write well" and called it "invaluable" seemed to confirm that students want to learn complex language. This seemed to support what Cope and Kalantzis were talking about when they said that process pedagogy "will rarely take students beyond recount" as a genre (Cope and Kalantzis 68). Although audio essays can certainly be used to produce significant theses they can also be perceived by students as standing in the way of more complex genres. Nevertheless, I must concede that there is a limit to the adjustments an
instructor should make based on student input. In the long run instructors know that students will need to know formal composition as well as critical thinking for their academic career. However, if this need is tempered by student expectations then articles such as Selfe’s on implementing audio essays should be viewed as requiring an extra assessment. By this I mean that although students can gain certain benefits from learning multimodal composing there should be some type of assessment that insures that their learning style requires it. For example, in my class there was only a single student who took the option of doing a second audio essay and he may have benefited from it more than others. In addition, students themselves recognized that audio essays are more beneficial for those with specific learning styles.

When Selfe wrote the CCC's article using audio essay samples she was not suggesting we impose multimodal composing upon students of every learning style. Instead she was arguing that instructors "broad[en] the choice of composing modalities" (30). However, it is easy to misread her statements about these choices "mak[ing] our work increasingly relevant to a changing set of communicative needs in a globalized world" (Selfe, “Movement” 30). Although my class is a small representation of what students may be demanding from American education, it still shows that instructors should not assume that we will become irrelevant to students before asking them about their expectations and whether they continue to see writing as central to literacy. Students, such as those in my class, may still see writing as an essential and expected part of both their academic and professional career.

Therefore instructors should design their assessments of new media without
turning a blind eye to the negative aspects, especially those that students bring up. This can be a potential trap for those anxious to see if audio essays, for example, can resolve some of their challenges in motivating collaboration and or bringing into question preconceived notions of writing that is done strictly for a grade.

**Summary of Findings**

Composition instructors can gain some insights for their own decision making process from this study despite its small scope. For example, instructors might consider the process of introducing a new medium, such as the audio essay, into the writing classroom. For this the instructor will need a way to assess learning styles and which student would benefit most from the new medium, a method of motivating students to overcome the self-conscious hesitation they feel when working with their own recorded voice, a method of teaching the technical side of the new medium without taking up too much class time (this would include teaching them how to avoid distracting listeners from their content by using too many sound effects), a method of tracing the conventions of sub genres that this new medium allows for, and perhaps a way for students to interact with an audience outside of their class. In addition, instructors need to decide whether they plan to use the new medium to teach better writing or better communication in general and whether they want to teach the theory that goes along with that particular medium, such as secondary orality in the case of audio essays. Despite the need for further studies in new media, instructors who are interested in audio essays should not be intimidated by the risk of less formal language, less significant theses, or dogmatism.

When I began this study I was not sure what to think about audio essays because I
had also spent a semester looking at the image versus text dichotomy and did not see exactly how audio essays intersected with that debate. As the semester went on and I saw how students responded I knew that it would not be easy for any teacher to introduce the extra work required by audio essays. On the other hand, the time I spent grading was filled with laughter at times as I heard the creativity that students put into their audio essays. In the end, however, I wish I had spent more time teaching academic discourse because students made comments at the end of my class that made it sound as if they had been a bit short changed by my addition of audio essays when they had come to learn writing. I was tempted to chalk some of this up to end of the semester complaints that will come no matter what I teach. However, knowing that these students will face demanding classes and professors that are not interested in the funny voices they can make, made me wish I had been more deliberate about assigning scholarly articles that would introduce them to the difficult language they will have to become accustomed to. This perspective came in part because I spent a significant chunk of the first semester of first-year composition focusing my students on reading and writing autobiographies. The idea behind that first semester was to ease students into the world of writing and begin teaching writing processes using a more accessible genre. If some instructors valued public discourse genres such as autobiographies they might also include audio essays into the mix during the first semester. However, the rigorous demands of academic discourse continue to spill over into my first semester. Therefore, as long as academic discourse continues to dominate the literacy goals which I form, based in part on the expectations of my students, I suspect this tendency will continue.
After all the overpowering "imperious language" of Luther's time has its contemporary counterpart in the language that students will encounter during their academic career and in their professions. Although conventions have changed since the fifteen hundreds the overwhelming feeling of facing a live discussion with a professor or well educated employer remains a challenge to students. This study has suggested that writing remains at the center of student-defined literacy and may be seen as part of the solution to the challenges they will face. Nevertheless, changes in the definition of literacy should not be ruled out. Instead the values of "submitting" ideas to "the judgment of others" and responding after sufficient reflection should continue to receive support.
APPENDIX A

Questionnaire 1

1. In what ways do you think your language will be different after taking my course?

2. When you write formal essays how do you approach your use of vocabulary?

3. How do you decide if your vocabulary is formal enough?

4. Did you consider the responses you received from me and your peers important?

5. Who did consider your audience as you composed your writing assignments?

6. How much of your writing assignment depended on the works of other authors?

Questionnaire 2

1. How has your language changed as you have completed the audio essay?

2. How did you choose the vocabulary you used in your audio essay?
3. How would you compare the language in your audio essay with the language in your written essays?

4. If you chose to do a second audio essay please explain why.

5. Did your peer review workshops bring you more satisfaction than turning in a final draft of your audio essay? Why or why not?

6. Who did consider your audience as you composed your writing assignments?

7. Who did you consider your audience as you composed your audio essays?

8. Did you consider the responses you received from me and your peers important?

9. How much of your audio assignments depended on the works of other authors or composers?
WORKS CITED


--. "The distributed Gesamtkunstwerk: Sound, worlding, and new media culture."


Sacks, Oliver. Seeing Voices: A Journey into the World of the Deaf. First Vintage Books

Selfe, Cynthia. "Students Who Teach Us: A Case Study of A New Media Text Designer."


--. "Agonism in the Academy: Surviving Higher Learning's Argument Culture."


Trimbur, John. "Delivering the Message: Typography and the Materiality of Writing."

Welch, Kathleen E. "Reconfiguring Writing and Delivery in Secondary Orality."

