

This is a document for Jennifer Sano-Franchini, Margaret Fernandes, Jonathan Adams, and Michelle webtext “Sounding Out in a PWI: Circulating Asian American Sound for Institutional Change” published in *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, 26(1), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/26.1/>

Sounding Asian America 5:15–6:30 PM (75 mins total)

Set Up

- Speaker, 3 projectors and stands, 3 screens, 3 laptops
 - On large post-its (bring markers):
 - What is your favorite Asian American song? Or, what’s an Asian American song that you think is interesting and worth discussing?
 - What does Asian American sound mean to you?
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The Plan

5:15–5:30 PM Sounding Asian America Introductions & Short Talk (Jen; 15 mins)

- What does it mean to “sound” Asian America?
- How many Asian American musical artists do you know? Who are they? (Record on large post-its)

5:30–5:45 PM Asian Americans’ use of AAVE (Michelle; 15 mins)

In hip-hop and rap, use of AAVE. Inhabiting a space built by black people for black people, i.e., dreads, grills, using hip-hop style.

1. What are the problems with Asian Americans using AAVE? What factors need to be considered?
2. Does Asian American use of AAVE attempt to fill a cultural deficit? What is that perceived cultural deficit, and how would AAVE fill it?

Notes: AAVE looked on with disdain (i.e., when heard over the phone, or Rachel Jeantel) vs. AOC (When don’t people use AAVE? When do they come out of that costume? That tends to reveal a lot.) or Awkwafina, fun sidekick supposed to be funny, parallels being Black funny sidekick. This is problematic. There is a need to recognize you’re in a space you haven’t created, recognizing the contributions of African Americans.

Talking black does not fulfill a cultural deficit that Asian Americans have in this country. We don’t have one unified culture, there are many ethnicities, whereas African Americans do have a more unified identifiable culture.

5:45–6:00 PM Asian American Women in Indie (Maggie; 15 mins)

Overview/context for “Your Best American Girl,” when it went viral; watch the Video: Mitski, “Your Best American Girl” (3.5 mins); discuss the video.

1. How does this song work as an example of Asian American sound? What makes her lyrics/sound Asian American? How important are lyrics when we consider Asian American sound?
2. How does it speak back to perceptions of Asian American women’s sound? For example, how does the use of volume, and that intensity when the chorus hits function re/vision Asian American women’s sound?
3. What is the song saying about what it means to be American?

Notes: *Song Exploder* interview, where she talks about song mechanics. Three main elements of makeup of song: *intensity when chorus hits and volume*, use of distorted guitar, as lyricist and melody person first (she wrote chorus first). How important are lyrics when we consider Asian American sound?

Contextualizing her song and her career: Stopped using distorted guitar; doesn’t want that to be her brand. “Raw and confessional characterization takes away from artistry.”

Tunes guitar to make it easier to play--on the other hand she could have someone else play.

The efforts she needs to make to help people understand that it’s intentional, etc. and “Your Best American Girl” is a love song. Doesn’t want to be limited to what people thinks she is or what she is supposed to be.

Loud and about self acceptance.

6:00–6:15 PM Duke, Language, and Accents in the University (Jon; 15 mins)

Overview, look at emails, discussion.

1. How might what is happening in these emails and in this situation tie into Asian American sonic rhetoric as we’ve been discussing it? [For example, how does it relate to Michelle’s or Maggie’s points for consideration?]
 - How does volume play into this discussion? What is the role of nationality and language?
2. Why did people feel entitled to others’ conversations? Is it ever reasonable to require students to speak English? In what conditions, in what settings?
3. What might be done to prevent this kind of occurrence in the future? Does our diversity training go far enough?
4. Are these attitudes and issues more prevalent in STEM programs, why or why not?

Notes from Michelle: European accents as aesthetically pleasing (esp British, French), whether as intelligent, sultry, versus Asian accents as grating, annoying. Nail salons and the idea that they’re talking bad about you, assumption that there’s something nefarious going on.

**6:15–6:30 PM Open listening & discussion based on what people write on large post-its.
(15 mins)**