

Post-immersive Listening: Perspectives on the Mediation of Sonic Environments

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Resumo: Encontros não planejados podem surgir de movimentos complexos através de geografias, com a imponderabilidade desempenhando um papel crucial. O artista midiático Budhaditya Chattopadhyay encontra inesperadamente o pesquisador Budhaditya Chattopadhyay em um café em Budapeste. Este é o oitavo encontro deles, após interações anteriores em Copenhagen (2017), Haia (2021c), Calcutá (2021b), Berlim (2022a), Beirute (2022b), Basel (2023) e Rampurhat (2024). Cada interação promoveu uma troca reflexiva de ideias, fundindo suas perspectivas artísticas e teóricas sobre som, escuta, experiências migratórias e ativismo decolonial. Apesar das diferentes lentes que trazem, suas conversas geram novos insights. No café movimentado, cercados por estudantes desengajados, sintomas do isolamento típico de universidades europeias, os dois se envolvem em discussões ponderadas sobre ecologias acústicas, ambientes sonoros, gravações de campo e mídias audiovisuais. Seu diálogo reflete um espírito de camaradagem, destacando o valor das trocas interdisciplinares na promoção do conhecimento e da compreensão entre os domínios artístico e acadêmico.

Palavras-chave: Pesquisa artística, Ecologias sonoras, Som gravado, Composição de paisagens sonoras, Gravação de campo.

Abstract: Unplanned meetings can stem from complex movements across geographies, with serendipity playing a key role. Media artist Budhaditya Chattopadhyay unexpectedly meets researcher Budhaditya Chattopadhyay at a café in Budapest. This is their eighth meeting, following previous encounters in Copenhagen (2017), Den Haag (2021c), Kolkata (2021b), Berlin (2022a), Beirut (2022b), Basel (2023), and Rampurhat (2024). Each interaction has fostered a reflexive exchange of ideas, merging their artistic and theoretical perspectives on sound, listening, migratory experiences, and decolonial activism. Despite the differing lenses they bring, their conversations generate new insights. In the bustling café, surrounded by disengaged students emblematic of the isolation in European universities, the two engage in thoughtful discussions on acoustic ecologies, sonic environments, field recording, and audiovisual media. Their dialogue embodies a spirit of camaraderie, underscoring the value of interdisciplinary exchanges in nurturing knowledge and understanding across artistic and scholarly domains.

Keywords: Artistic Research, Sonic Ecologies, Recorded Sound, Soundscape Composition, Field Recording.

A

rtist: Hello, nice to seeing you here. I am glad to meet you again.

Researcher: Likewise. The pleasure is mine.

A: What brought you to Budapest?

R: A conference.

A: What is it about?

R: The conference is nurturing notions of sonic ecologies, a field also coined *acoustic ecology* – the studies of the intricate relationships between sound and ecological discourses. Often this discussion circles around the human-centric concept of noise.

A: Are you presenting at the conference?

R: Yes, I am here to give a keynote. Today morning I just woke up with a bad dream. In the fading memory from the dream, I can still recollect that ominous image of standing in front of piles of toxic garbage waste left by a film crew – plastic bottles, packets, boxes, food wastes, papers, plastic plates and glasses. All lying on the field, being witnessed by the flocks of birds, and the forest trees. They are scattered across the green grassland that was perhaps the setting of the film’s narrative. The crew left the site, but their human presence is inscribed in the garbage. Since coming out of this nightmare, I am thinking all morning about film and media production, its practice of location or field recording and anthropogenic mediation of lived environments into mediated universes of film and audiovisual experiences made for human consumption and entertainment. I may start my talk from there, ruminating on the extractive approaches of film and media production, especially in the form of location and field recording, and the ecological impacts of such act of leaving human detritus on a land.

A: You have substantial research in film sound and field recording, which inspired me and informed my artistic practice with sound and audiovisual media. I think you can indeed draw a strong connection between cinematic mediation of environmental sounds and its impacts on the

situated acoustic ecology. My artistic point of departure was film sound as well, you know. I was trained in sound recording and design for films. But it was a polemical attitude that I developed towards the industrial filmmaking process and its exploitative relationship to land and people. I quit industrial filmmaking because of that attitude and tried to develop my own independent artistic practice with field recording. But I also found an uncritical practice of field recording didn't satisfy my artistic sensibilities. I am still looking for ways to disrupt the smooth processes of field recording on-(exotic)site and soundscape compositions in the privileged studio for producing work to be consumed. I endeavored to complicate this workflow with questions of ecology, labor, rights of nature and relationality – questions that pose more questions on e.g., entanglements. And your research in the book *The Auditory Setting* (2021a) showed me a way out, even if I was not entirely convinced of the language.

R: Thank you for mentioning this monograph. The work was a distillation of my inquiries in film sound and a deeper engagement with situated environments, ecology, and their entanglement with media - human mediation of atmospheres. My early cinematic encounters instilled in me an affinity with film sound and the sonic experience, arousing my curiosity about the construction of its auditive world. While fascinated and grounded by the tone, texture and layered composition of sounds from natural environments and sites or what is termed 'ambient sounds' I encountered, I also listened critically to the manufactured sonic universes of film and other audiovisual media. Through my experiences of various cinematic works, I confronted the mediation of 'ambience' or sounds from the film's 'actual sites'. In my first scholarly paper (Chattopadhyay, 2007), I focused on how ambience could contribute to a sense of place if given enough scope in filmmaking. I argued that the imposed limitations practiced in standard film sound production create lapses in the existence and recognition of site-specific sonic information for each film's soundscape composition. This first paper was the beginning of my critical articulation within a growing interest for sound studies, to voice my concerns on these issues. These considerations were instrumental in writing *The Auditory Setting* as the book grew. What made you unconvinced of the language?

A: You tried to bridge between a poetic auto-ethnography and scholarly, analytical language, but in my opinion, these two approaches remained foreign to each other, there was little assimilation and

synthesis. Language apart, I expected in your research more engagement with practice proper. I can talk about my practice and how the practice has epistemological claims. In 2007, I was making field recordings and composing with ambient sounds in response to a screen-centric and visually dominated field of film production I was trained in the film school. Disentangling from the film industry was difficult, as that's how the film school graduates are molded and are expected to be a part of. I had to retort to Internet, and the online communities – trying to connect with fellow artists elsewhere through early days of social media, such as MySpace and SoundCloud. I was aiming to situate my nascent artistic practice within the trajectories of sound arts across the globe. And moving to Europe eventually made it possible for me to nurture my artistic sensibility independently by engaging with the peers, venues, festivals, and labels, such as Guenrekorder and Touch. Generally, my artistic practice has always been driven by environmental concerns. Through situated listenings and tracing some of these listenings via recording on sites torn by industrialization, I have been exposed to the environmental decay in many parts of a rapidly developing global souths. Many of these transitory sites and environmentally troubled lands were frequented and depicted in film and media productions. Were they sensitive towards sonic environments disappearing at the hands of the profit-hungry corporates consuming natural resources, including fields, grasslands, and various other natural sites? I was aware that the intricate layers of environmental sounds from these sites would be lost through technological mediation of recording and compositional processes, turning the land into a site of anthropogenic spectacle, consumption, and entertainment. The cultural appropriation of natural lands and their entangled environments into recording would turn their audiovisual flux into linear and phenomenologically reduced environs, such as in film, audiovisual media, sound arts, soundscape composition and AV performances. I was moved by the fact that site-specific environmental sounds were disembedded by recording and engulfed by media technologies to produce mediated experiences, fulfilling human need to the detriment of ecological multiplicity. I found resonances of these polemics in your research. I see that you're also unpacking issues related to the mediation of environmental sounds even if these discourses remain predominantly on an “academic” realm rather than delving into embodied practices of sound and listening. There is clearly this tension in the book.

R: I admit that *The Auditory Setting* came out of my doctoral research. Naturally, the work was inclined to embrace a scholarly rigor and there was an analytical thrust symptomatic of a PhD dissertation. But in the rewriting of the book from the thesis, I tried to incorporate personal experiences of situated listening. However, given the demands of an academic monograph, the context, and the dominant reason-based language, I had to adhere largely to the Eurocentric fields of humanities scholarship. Anyway, thanks for sharing your journey. It is illuminating to know about your artistic trajectories and becoming. It's also interesting to note that how artists from the Global Souths need constant validation from European colleagues to be included into their (sound art) canon; and how it is a lack of privilege to grow up outside of Europe in the art historical context. Focusing on your invitation to think through the human mediation of environmental sounds, I ask you a rudimentary question: how do environmental sounds affect human hearing? Perhaps the idea of the 'Sharawadji effect' answers this question, which composer Claude Schryer defined as 'a sensation of plenitude sometimes created by the contemplation of a complex soundscape whose beauty is inexplicable' (Waterman and Harley, 1999). Sharawadji effect is the illumination when a sudden and unexpected everyday environmental sound appears to give immense pleasure to sensitive ears, harmonising the emergent auditory situation without any human intervention such as recording and re-composing. Is it satisfying because of the capacity to momentarily reconnect with nature on a subconscious level from which humans have become estranged? Jean- François Augoyard and Henri Torgue define the Sharawadji effect as: "Unbridled and unintentional structures disrupt the nature-culture binary and reveal new forms of life beyond their disorder (...) It is this blurring of the edges of aesthetics, this shifting at the frontier of art itself, that defines sharawadji" (2006, p. 118). Composer David Rothenberg suggests that: "All of us are searching for that enveloping soundscape that takes us beyond to indescribable realms of beauty, what the Persian philosophers once called the Sharawadji effect" (2013, p. 193). Even so, environmental sounds are generally taken for granted in film. In the value system of filmmaking, environmental sounds are mostly perceived as unwanted noise. A film soundtrack includes or excludes particular ambient sound elements depending on the story's needs. If its use needs to be diegetic, then the soundtrack will not disturb the audience's attention from the camera focused on the characters. In the case of non-diegetic usage, the soundtrack will highlight sounds that may not

actually exist but add colour in post-production. With this approach, some environmental sounds are used as disembodied textures similar to the musical motifs in films when made by authors with sensitive ears. Their presence within the auditory setting, like the Sharawadji effect, can supply moments of subdued and sublime pleasure that we usually do not acknowledge. They inject hues of vibrant aural colours to replace a one-dimensional, dialogue/background score/sound effects scheme of film soundtrack production, which merely serves the visual dominance of the film's narrative. Let's focus on the audio-audio relationship – the ecological layering of sounds in film that aspire to become independent of a visual domination entrenched in the anthropogenic mediatization.

A: Audio – audio relationship? Working against the hierarchical audio-visual nexus?

R: It is more like unpacking the complex layers of sounds outside the entangled sensory experiences often overwhelmed by the dominant visual thrust in cinema. This pressure of visually narrate and take other sensory stimuli as subservient, render film sound as a linear, one-dimensional “track”. Delving into this less-audio-more-visual model of cinema that is essentially a western modernist cultural production with an inherent sensory hierarchy, one can unpack how this skewed model reflected in the academic discourses of film sound as well. In *The Auditory Setting* I have discussed that even if film sound has received extensive academic interest in the last decades, much of this attention has been invested in explaining the role of voice and music in relation to the visual image (Chion, 1994, 2009; Gorbman, 1987). Rick Altman's (1980, 1985, 1992, 2001, 2012) and James Lastra's writing (2000) on the history of sound technology, examining sound's relationship to the moving image, have been instrumental in this developing field. The role of environmental sounds in film and audiovisual media and their intricate ecological entanglements are hardly addressed in this canonical body of work. In their work, sound is regarded as an element predominantly enhancing the visual narrative, reinforcing and/or underlining a scene's emotive potential considering the soundtrack as a secondary and one-dimensional accompaniment to visual storytelling without enacting an autonomous impact on the multi-sensory experience. They are not curious to examine how sounds can generate layered associations and post-cognitive perceptions in audiovisual media from the ground. The next generation of scholars – such as Mark Kerins (2006,

2011), Tomlinson Holman (2002) and David Sonnenschein (2001) – do mention environmental sound as a specific layer for sound design strategies, but their research do not always consider the complex relationship between sound, place, and environment. If you follow the current research, an apparent shift seems to be occurring in more recent works. Among contemporary scholars, Giorgio Biancorosso (2009), Andrew Eisenberg (2015), Jay Beck (2013) and myself (Chattopadhyay, 2015, 2016, 2021) questions the overarching theme of visual image in studying sound in audiovisual media and emphasizes the potential of *listening* as specific and separate areas of research. The idea that sound is more than a screen-centric soundtrack following the visual narrative and can be studied separately has destabilized the notion of a linear soundtrack. You have closely read *The Auditory Setting*, so you may note that I have underlined a spatial turn in film sound research, which is an entry point to study sound's relational entanglements with place, land and the environment.

A: Is it the scholarly ground on which you develop *The Auditory Setting*?

R: Yes, precisely. I have termed the sonic environment made within a film and media production as “auditory setting” or *mise-en-sonore*. It is constructed by environmental sounds or ambiances that provide background atmosphere and select spatial information in film and media. But the production process heavily reduces the site-specific details and complexity, as well as ecology of situated sounds for the purpose of human-centric immersive storytelling. I have shown an anthropogenic rendering of natural sounds to moderate and modulate their layered flux into a linear structure.

A: Some of the terminologies you introduce or explain in the book helped refresh my thoughts. But more interesting for me is the term “immersion” as there lies the politics of anthropogenetic rendering, environmental manipulation, and control of an ecology.

R: The notion of ‘auditory setting’ or *mise-en-sonore* draws on the term *mise-en-scène*, meaning the arrangement of objects within a pro-filmic space and its visual framing, but rather focuses on the arrangement of sounds within a pro-filmic space and its recording. *Mise-en-sonore* is concerned about sound's complex relationship with site and space in cinema and denotes a sonorous film

space constructed through the recording of the space and designing these recorded sounds for narrative depiction. Diegesis and Mimesis are loaded terms for me that helps to comprehend how anthropogenetic rendering happens in storytelling. While diegesis narrates the action, mimesis shows the action. I discussed how cinematic narration through sound combines both strategies to a certain degree. Another immensely important term for me is “presence” that concerns the degree to which a medium can generate seemingly accurate reproduction of objects, events, and space – representations that look, sound, and feel like the real. The term rendering denotes a media production process modulates information from a coded data source and uses that information to produce and display a simulated image. Rendering also connotes reducing, suggesting that reality is mediated and condensed in this process. Immersion, on the other hand, becomes a buzzword today due to the marketing strategy of immersive media technologies and conglomerates who like to sell their new products as many artists buy into these calls.

A: I am not convinced. While you are right that today’s overtly technologically mediated film and audiovisual media works come with a compulsion to create immersive experiences, the personal mode of immersion into something, such as reading and listening, is a natural process of attending, and meditative engagement in this context is helpful. On the flipside, the workflow of reordering the sensory stimuli and disentangling their ecological situatedness for human consumption, natural sounds are reduced into sonic effects through cultural modes of rendering and anthropogenic reconditioning. Here, immersion is a new condition that allows the technologies to have an upper hand over the audience as a passive receiver (or consumer) of the experience by new sensory power structures. This is mostly found in the commercial films and audiovisual media and media architectures. More artistically oriented films and media artworks (for example found in large, well-funded festivals in Europe) also cannot escape this lure of technological marvel – as often media corporates fund these festivals. Your research has identified the methods and creative strategies that are used to manufacture sensory presence of a site or a land within the mediated and rendered environments in varied degrees by means of various forms and formats of recording and spatial organization of recorded environmental sounds for human consumption. But your argument may have missed out the momentary escapes we need to refresh our minds and memory, and the

generally open immersive approaches in personal engagement with the world having focused attention to details without distractions.

R: I have used this book premise as a polemical and discursive space to reassess the portrayal of environmentally troubled sites in essentially humanmade media architectures, and how insensitive often they are in handling their situated sonic environments while falling prey to the lure of controlling their audience's environments. I have pointed out how the intricate layers of environmental sounds from the sites are lost through technological mediation when recorded, turning natural environments into sites of spectacle, consumption and entertainment, much like the human colonization of the natural lands. In particular, I have critiqued the practice of sound recording, what you may also have incorporated in your work: field recording, gathering material to develop immersive soundscape compositions and sound artwork.

A: Of course, I started my sound practice with field recording. But I have also developed a strong self-critique in the last few years if you follow my recent works, namely *The Nomadic Listener* (2020b) among others. A polemic of “unrecording” reflects in a later body of work in which I suspend the recording device for critical and poetic listening on site, working with an auto-ethnographic approach of self-reflective sonic tracing of the listening experience removing primacy of recording.

R: Unrecording?

A: Field recording practice established itself in the sound art canon since the digital revolution in 2000s. Location recording in cinema also turned digital during the same time. This was largely due to the digital technologies which somewhat democratized the arena with easy to access recorders, microphones, and media. Outside of Europe too, digital systems brought a spirit of experimentation with recording outdoor endowed with portable recorders and digital workstations to process recorded sound with ease. Every sound was prone to be recorded with the ubiquity of recording, even embedded in phones and digital devices. While aural witnessing and registering of the world was giving rise to journalistic contents, on the other hand, studio artists wanted to indulge in manifold compositional manipulation using the digital recording and computing

systems to give listening pleasures to the audience in concerts, performances, installations often with a populist agenda manifesting in elaborate studio work on the recorded sound through the techniques of soundscape composition. Films made with digital systems turned to popular entertainment using digitally manipulated gimmicks. In this mode of studio and mass production, criticality of the site, and ethical issues around rights of nature, ecological integrity of environments, land use and exploitation of native people remained unanswered. I just thought of your dream from last night! As in a flourish of tourism, field recording tended to turn to exploitative and extractive routes to gather materials with hungry microphones. I sensed this turn early in my work. Likewise, I was always looking for an ethical practice. “Unrecording”, for me is a provocation, and a defiance against the ubiquity of recording that turns everything into recorded objects. For me, a self-reflective approach could register with sensitivity and nuances the socio-politically and environmentally troubled lands, which may not entertain like immersive sound pieces composed using the state-of-the-art gears and workstations. With an activist stance, I wanted to approach field recording on the ground, often not recording but listening on-site, and taking the recorder out only when it can trace the listening situations in flux to expose environmental exploitations and extraction of land, and to keep record of socio-political upheavals and transformation in ecological crises. I hoped that location recording in film could follow this ethical-critical non-immersive approach, but I noticed it is failing under industrial pressures.

R: I resonate with this polemic against recording and a strong critique of immersion. But let me further articulate a critical attitude towards immersion that I elucidated in *The Auditory Setting*. The current state of sound arts seems to possess less power in instigating societal change not only due to a lack of penetration in the public art venues and institutions, but also because of the immersive and pleasantly enveloping qualities of well-funded and well-fed sound arts, audiovisual and interactive media experiences that generally fail to infuse the discursive and questioning faculties of its audience. Would you agree? We can examine the sonic experience of immersion, particularly in the context of producing and discussing sound arts, to speculate if more environmentally, socially and politically aware works can be generated in the future.

A: I more-or-less agree with you. But I would like to argue that this weakness is due to sound arts' recent fascination with immersion, making use of the immersive technologies that are available to (white) privileged artists. Also, a sense of hedonism pervades in sound arts scene, especially in the club cultures. How do you like to theorize immersion in this context? I look forward to hearing from you a scholarly critique.

R: Immersion is a fetishized term in the domain of contemporary media arts, e.g. VR/AR/XR. Responding to your critique, I point out that I consider here mostly the immersive spaces that inherently involve contexts of a consumerist nature, such as sound diffusion in a live multichannel performance in a commercially funded festival or a commissioned interactive sound artwork, or sound design for a commercial film or VR work. It is through immersion that the audience is often made to engage with the artworks, especially those involving multi-channel sound, visuals and spatial practices. The rapid emergence of immersive technologies, such as multichannel surround sound in film and media arts was possible due to its reliance on the medial dispositif of immersion (Reiter, Grimshaw et al, 2011) to surround the audience sonically. In contemporary media arts, immersion operates as a strategy to realizing the production of an “illusion of non-mediation” (Grimshaw, 2011) where the presence of the technology and the medial devices are made to appear as unobtrusive as possible to sustain a smooth, and engaging entertainment. You may have noted that in *The Auditory Setting* I have quoted Seth Kim-Cohen who levels such an immersive space as a “soft space of light” (Kim-Cohen 2013, p. 151) to provide a pleasant ambience with a “disarming tendency to lull (...) within which sound envelopes and centres us” (Schrimshaw, 2018). Etymologically, the word immersion suggests a plunging or dipping into something or an absorption or submerging in some enveloping situation for pleasantry. When applied to mediated sonic space, it offers the idea that a person who enters such a space will be transformed through its entertaining capacity. Immersion suggests the idea that a space through its multitude of architectural, material, performative, and technological mediation may wrap up or envelop an audience within it like an escape – like a drug induced state. The ability to immerse an individual who opens up the sensorium to its environs is related to its constructed narratives that are involved often in a suppression of a conscious subjective formation. For the subjectivity of the spectator/listener to emerge, there needs to be an opening, or a rupture in the experience, through

which a plurality of personal thoughts can be encouraged to explode. However, as film and media scholar Whittington notes, immersive effect is established “through an imaginary emplacement of the spectator in the world of the film achieved through textual strategies such as the placement of the camera in the literal position of the character” (Whittington quoting Constance Balides, 2013, p. 67). Such fixity of positioning, and defacing of the spectator in favor of the character and the narrative experience, closes the experience itself for the spectator to intervene and make multiplicity of meanings, and maintain a critical distance. There is a dangerous power hierarchy between the producer and the consumer of the immersive works that are mediated and purpose-designed so as to overwhelm and overpower the audience in order to convey and transmit directed information and knowledge of a consumerist nature. This is a problem, isn’t it, given the times we live in, when the analytical faculty of a subject is most needed for awareness to contemporary issues, from inequality to injustice, from mass migration to climate crises? If we approach immersion emphasizing the often-glorified design- and experiential side of a space and disregard the research-analytical capacity of an individual experiencing it, we might make an error to disregarding open thinking and collective discourse. In fact, we should ask critically why immersion is viewed as a positive medial strategy in a conceptual sense. In my writings on this topic (Chattopadhyay, 2020a, 2021) I have reiterated that immersive space is often a make-belief fantasyland where the real is always hidden to create pleasurable experiences. The audience tends to become a passive and non-acting guest within this immersive space often constructed by an authoritarian and technocratic consumer-corporate nexus. In this mode of non-activity, the audience may lose the motivation to question the content and the context of the work by falling into a sensual and indulgent mode of experience, therefore rendering the consumerist-corporate powers to take over the free will of the audience (Lukas et al, 2016) through directed advertisements and manipulated attention. As a result, the audience may succumb to the enveloping and engulfing power of a fantasy world produced by the creative industry with economic, political or other hegemonic intentions. I will argue for producing a more discursive environment, rather than an immersive one. I will demand from you - a socially and environmentally conscious sound and media artist, a discursive space where the individuality and the questioning faculty of the audience is carefully considered and respected as a parameter for a successful communication and dissemination of the artwork. Here discursive situation underlines

the contemplative processes triggered by an artwork to interlink the artistic object and the listener's mind that apprehends it. In such a discursive mode, a sound artwork can become intersubjective, more socially committed, responsible, responsive and respectful towards the aware subjectivity of the audience and the mindful context within which the artistic experience is formed. However, as you mention, many contemporary filmmakers and media producers tend to glorify immersion as a mode of production and mediated experiences predominantly in commercial film and audiovisual media.

A: Not only in the commercial films and popular media, but also in the contemporary sound art scene, such examples of a less thoughtful and more indulgent sonic experience are more than ample – experiences that are produced by sound works with a fetishized use of the idea of immersion. Take for example the audiovisual performances and installations by popular sound artists like Ryoji Ikeda, and Alva Noto. Among numerous other similar artists working today, both produce pure sensorial experiences via large-scale multichannel sound projection along with live or preprogrammed abstract visuals. Their notoriously spectacular immersive sound works often drown the potent subjective contemplation of the sensitive listener to foreground the entertaining spectacle itself. There are many noise artists performing regularly in the festival circuits as well as in the club scene, promoting a popular kind of immediately immersive sound works that are made to move the body and chill out. I wonder when the pleasant mode of immersion would be broken through which sounds may enter, creating fertile premise for a condition you have termed “post-immersion”.

R: In a previous article (Chattopadhyay, 2020a), I have coined this term *post-immersion*, to underscore a disjunctive moment in a medial experience, when the alert subjectivity of an audience is encouraged to take form. I referred to the philosopher Vilém Flusser's notion of “homeland” and “homelessness”, which are central to his thinking (2002). Flusser suggests that when a person is removed from their home, they become aware of the ties, which reveal themselves in unconscious judgments. The idea of homelessness is useful for my argument. The non-immersive/discursive situation I am trying to defend is based on the awareness of the spectator about the possibilities of loosening the ties between the sited experience and a subjective formation. This means also a

disentanglement of sound from the dominant audiovisuality and set a separate area of praxis based on sound's autonomous movements beyond visual image, into a more socio-spatial manifestation. Sound scholar Joanna Demers notes, "Discursive accent, then, exists in a state of ambivalence (...) discursive accent resituates the phenomenal qualities of voice (or sound, taken broadly) into an artwork, and divests sound of its signifying properties so that it can conceal, rather than reveal meaning" (Demers 2013, p. 149). Drawing on her perspective, one can argue that a discursive moment in an artistic experience occurs when the spectator/listener is free to detach him/herself from the experience to open it for multiple possible interpretations, rather than being fixed in an ontological relationship with the experience, as it takes over the phenomenological freedom of the spectator/listener. This disjuncture, like an unstable situation of homelessness, is crucial in a media art environment as a mode to personalize an immersive sonic experience for a self-aware critical faculty to emerge. Inspired by Flusser and Demers's idea of a discursive accent, I have proposed several approaches to disrupt the pleasant immersion, for this critical discursive moment to be triggered: such as a sudden intrusion of noise, or a loud scream as an alarm mechanism; Asynchronism – a divorce of sound and visual in an audiovisual experience; or, disrupting a narrative flow with discursive elements, such as critical commentaries or voice over, or contemplative moment in a stream of thoughts via poetic utterances. Each of these proposed approaches facilitates a momentary split from the experience itself using specific methodologies. For the first approach, it is a sudden noise, such as in an experimental sound art and noise performance; for the second, it is an out of sync moment in an audiovisual media art experience; and for the third, using extraneous element, such as critical commentaries, textual slides, voice over monologues or poetic intervention in a medial experience, e.g., a soundscape composition or a sound installation. This disjunctive moment will bring back critical faculty of an audience/ listener immersed in audiovisual experiences made for entertaining them, letting them escape the socio-political realities of today that need to be apprehended with alertness.

A: My work increasingly aims to challenge immersion. I have endeavored to disrupt the pleasant immersion of sonic experience in order to create a discursive moment for engaging with the context and content of the work using different methodologies, not always like you mentioned, but I try to

devise different methods in each project, e.g., use of texts or spoken words, sensory shifts, movements, or improvising with noise.

R: Good to hear that! In my humble opinion, the intention of a socially, environmentally and politically sensate sound or media artwork will be to make the audience alert, and context-ware, through a production of intersubjectivity about the discursive realms of the work, as well as awareness of the issues the work likes to underscore, concerned with contemporary urgent crises; from the climate breakdown to a power hungry machine and surveillance society, from ecological catastrophe to mass migration. As potent examples, these artworks may suggest that art practices for the future may not be stuck in entailing a mere enjoyment and mindless entertainment in their constructed hedonist environments with an immersive-consumerist approach but may aim to generate a more socially and politically aware critical space that invites discourse within an open-ended post-immersive experience for generating debates, and action.

A: The intimate but context-aware listening with which we critically engage with each other in our conversations, could be consider *post-immersive*. Don't you think so?

R: Yes, this is certainly a post-immersive listening as we are engaged in a discursive and conversational unfolding of knowledge. I hope that artists and scholars take a more conversational approach in their work. There is also a performative aspect to it.

A: Shall we get another coffee?

R: Yes, let's go to the counter.

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