

THE MANY WAYS OF LISTENING: A PROVISIONAL ANALYSIS OF TALK IN CRITICAL LISTENING SESSIONS TO INFORM THE RESEARCH AGENDA OF SONIFICATION

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ABSTRACT

Project RADICAL is an interdisciplinary investigation of sonification design and aesthetics, which understands listeners as embodied participants who co-produce the environment in which they perceive, interact and live. We intend to bring this ecological perspective into critical contact with research in sonification.

To facilitate this, we conducted several listening sessions with a group of experts who research sonification in scientific, musical, and artistic fields. Working from transcripts, we seek to unpack the ways in which our participants talked about sound and sonification, compared their perceptions and interpretations, and reasoned about sound's cultural significance. Our results suggest new topics for research and design. First, to regard sonifications as occasions for talk, as means to engender exploratory open-ended conversations. Second, to provoke curiosity and encourage interaction around what is heard. Third, to urge a requisite flexibility and polyphony of design which supports the variability of interpretation we have observed. Fourth, to recognise that listening is a matter of affect.

We believe these points offer ICAD a provocative alternative to the individualised, representational, ergonomic, and rationalised versions of sonification that can be found in the literature. Responses at the conference would be invaluable in helping us at a formative moment in our project.

<https://projectRadical.github.io>

