

Listening Protocol: Editing Interviews and Environments for Broadcast

This listening protocol is designed for the purpose of producing and editing podcasts that contain voice and environmental recordings. It aims to generate narrative structure and content beyond a traditional “voice from nowhere” production. It is based around 4 stages of my listening process in terms of editing and mixing. This is as much a playful prompt for practice and discussion as it is a set of guiding principles. In addition to your editing suite you will need a notebook and pen.

Voice & the Emergence of Narrative

- 1.1 Establish what thematic content you are listening for (you may want to make notes first)
- 1.2 Audition interviewees voice(s)
- 1.3 Edit, label and code audio based on point I.
- 1.4 Do not grade quality
- 1.5 Now you are ready to establish your narrative structure

Atmospheres & Events

- 2.1 Atmospheres refer to general environmental ambience
- 2.2 Events refer to demonstrations or participatory activities/scenes
- 2.3 Treat both as informative and agential as the voice
- 2.4 Do not grade quality
- 2.5 Which atmosphere or event relates to your vocal coding?
- 2.6 Assemble and position audio based on your above answer
- 2.7 Your narrative structure should be getting clearer

Authorship & Artifacts

- 3.1 Notice the ways the interviewee/recordist is present in each recording, beyond voice
- 3.2 Listen for microphone handling, a cough or shuffle
- 3.3 They will often exist at the start or end of a recording
- 3.4 Such artifacts are valid
- 3.5 Audition any content you may not have been listening for (see point I)
- 3.6 Insert and rearrange all content accordingly
- 3.7 Do not to overload this type of content for the sake of self-reflexivity

Editing, Montage & Transitions

- 4.1 Resist cross fades or long fades in general
- 4.2 Use abrupt sounds to cut directly into another acoustic scene or narrative arc
- 4.3 Emphasize acoustic difference and spatial signatures where possible
- 4.4 Use volume as a perspectival tool to create distance and space
- 4.5 Conflictual content and sounds should be explored
- 4.6 Do not be afraid of dropping the listener into a scene
- 4.7 Different voices should be edited in a conversation style relay of perspectives
- 4.8 Rearrange all content accordingly
- 4.9 You have arrived at your first draft edit

Fermentation Process

- 5.1 Leave the draft for 1-2 weeks
- 5.2 Return and make detailed notes checking whether the narrative holds and if transitions work
- 5.3 Reedit, remix and send for peer feedback