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Pura Felicidad: From conversation to installation, translating affect for pluriversal futures

Pura Felicidad: De la conversación a la instalación, traduciendo el afecto para futuros pluriversales

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Abstract

This article addresses the problem of how futures are often framed through statistics, prediction, and universal narratives that erase subjectivity and emotion. It proposes an alternative by examining how speculative feelings can become practices of resistance when foregrounded in artistic processes. The objective is to analyze Pura Felicidad, a multimedia installation developed through guided conversations with Latin American artists in Bogotá. The methodology consisted of recording and transcribing collective dialogues, fragmenting and editing the texts, and translating them across media—voices, subtitles, sound, and three-channel video—into an immersive installation. This process, defined as affective translation, carried the intensity of speculative feelings into spatial and collective form without reducing their ambiguity. The results show that plurality of voices, regional accents, and divergent perspectives generated an affective ecology where futures were staged as plural and situated rather than universal or abstract. The conclusion is that artistic research methods such as affective translation can contribute to decolonial and ecological thought by resisting homogenization, fostering pluriversal futures, and transforming subjective emotions into collective and resistant forms of world-making.

Keywords: Artistic research; Ecocriticism; Decolonization; Emotions; Futures studies

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Resumen

Este artículo aborda el problema de cómo los futuros suelen ser enmarcados mediante estadísticas, predicciones y narrativas universales que borran la subjetividad y la emoción. Propone una alternativa al examinar cómo los sentimientos especulativos pueden convertirse en prácticas de resistencia cuando se ponen en primer plano en procesos artísticos. El objetivo es analizar Pura Felicidad, una instalación multimedia desarrollada a partir de conversaciones guiadas con artistas latinoamericanos en Bogotá. La metodología consistió en grabar y transcribir diálogos colectivos, fragmentar y editar los textos, y traducirlos a través de medios —voces, subtítulos, sonido y video de tres canales— en una instalación inmersiva. Este proceso, definido como traducción afectiva, trasladó la intensidad de los sentimientos especulativos a una forma espacial y colectiva sin reducir su ambigüedad. Los resultados muestran que la pluralidad de voces, los acentos regionales y las perspectivas divergentes generaron una ecología afectiva donde los futuros se plantearon como plurales y situados, en lugar de universales o abstractos. Se concluye que métodos de investigación artística como la traducción afectiva pueden contribuir al pensamiento decolonial y ecológico al resistir la homogeneización, fomentar futuros pluriversales y transformar emociones subjetivas en formas colectivas y resistentes de creación de mundos.
Palabras clave: Investigación artística; Ecocrítica; Descolonización; Emociones; Estudios de futuros

Introduction

Opening: Problem + Urgency

When we speak of the future, it is often through the language of prediction: statistics, models, and probabilities that seek to reduce uncertainty to measurable outcomes. Yet these frameworks rarely account for the feelings and subjectivities through which people actually experience and imagine what is to come. What is overlooked when futures are treated as purely objective and calculable is the affective dimension: hope, fear, exhaustion, anticipation, and forms of not-yet-named emotion that shape how communities orient themselves toward tomorrow. Attending to these feelings is not a secondary concern but a political necessity, for they signal possibilities of resistance to imposed narratives of progress, growth, or inevitability. As Rosi Braidotti argues, a posthuman perspective calls for moving beyond purely statistical or predictive models toward embodied, affective, and imaginative orientations, where creativity, desire, and aspiration become central to how futures are conceived (Braidotti, 2019, pp. 97–99).

This insistence on the importance of subjective futures is particularly urgent in the context of ecological devastation and the extinction crisis. Mass species loss, toxic pollution, and planetary instability are not only material events but also affective realities that generate collective anxieties, grief, and fatigued hopes. Recent sound studies further highlight how ecological crisis is also inscribed in sonic and political registers, with weaponised and extractive uses of sound shaping both environments and communities (Parker, 2019, p. 74; Chattopadhyay, 2021a, p. 133). Such approaches resonate with posthuman and eco-critical calls to situate knowledge beyond human exceptionalism, foregrounding entanglement with ecological, technological, and sonic environments as

the ground of possible futures (Voegelin, 2021, pp. 7, 13, 207–208). Donna Haraway (2016), calls on us to "stay with the trouble" (p. 2), cultivating "multispecies stories and practices of becoming--with" (pp. 11–12) that acknowledge entangled existence rather than clinging to human exceptionalism. Similarly, Arturo Escobar (2018), argues for the pluriverse—not one universal world but many coexisting ways of making and knowing—that resists the extractive, colonialist regime of nature and its singular path for development (p. 12).

Theoretical Framework

In the humanities, futures have often been narrated through utopian or dystopian imaginaries. Yet these narratives risk reproducing the same universalist and extractive frameworks that ecological thought now seeks to overcome. In Latin America, traditions of oral testimony, community storytelling, and sonic practices have long resisted colonial erasures and offered pluriversal accounts of how worlds might be imagined otherwise (Cusicanqui, 2020; Robinson, 2020). Within contemporary artistic research, the affective dimension of these practices has gained renewed urgency as artists respond to ecological collapse, forced migration, and shifting emotional regimes. Situating this work within decolonial ecologies and affect theory thus provides a way to foreground not only what futures might look like but what they might feel like.

The argument builds on affect theory, decolonial ecology, and traditions of participatory art. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1995), cautioned that an "objective science of subjectivity" risks concealing lived perception (p. 7), while Brian Massumi (2002), emphasizes affect as an "unqualified intensity" that precedes naming and resists capture (p. 96). Sara Ahmed (2004), reframes emotions as circulating forces that are political, shaping bodies and social boundaries (pp. 10–12). Lauren Berlant (2011) extends this by showing how cruel optimism—attachments to promises of a "good life" that continually fail—structures collective exhaustion and deferred hope. William Reddy (2001), reminds us that emotions have histories, shifting across cultural and political contexts.

From a decolonial perspective, Escobar (2018), calls for a pluriverse of coexisting ontologies and "political ecologies of love" (p. 259), that dismantle dualisms and foster interdependence. This framework is crucial for rethinking affective futures in Latin America, where speculative feelings resist universalizing claims of progress.

Within artistic practice, Claire Bishop (2012), situates participatory art as both oppositional and constructive, emphasizing its capacity to redistribute authorship and symbolic capital. Katja Kwastek (2015), highlights how interactive and digital art generate knowledge through bodily engagement and simultaneity. *Pura Felicidad* extends these insights by showing how affective translation—moving from oral dialogue to text, sound, and audiovisual space—renders speculative emotions perceptible without erasing their ambiguity.

Aim of the Article

This article takes up Haraway's and Escobar's calls by foregrounding affect as a pluriversal practice. It introduces the concept of affective translation—the artistic process of carrying speculative feelings across media so they become collectively perceivable—as a way of opening other futures. Through the multimedia installation *Pura Felicidad*, it proposes that paying attention to speculative feelings in Latin America can itself be a practice of resistance. This orientation aligns with Chattopadhyay's (2022b, pp. 6-413), concept of "plurilogues," dissonant polyphonies that resist homogenising tendencies, underscoring how Latin American sonic and affective practices enact pluriversal futures in both form and content. The article argues for the creation of pluriversal affective ecologies where emotions that "do not yet exist" can be collectively imagined in response to ecological crisis and colonial histories.

Introducing the Case Study: Pura Felicidad

Pura Felicidad: ideas and fantasies on what futuristic feelings might be is a multimedia installation developed through a collective process. Guided conversations among artists from Argentina, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Colombia—held during the R.A.R.O. residency in Bogotá—explored how emotions circulate socially, carry broken promises, emerge before language, and shift across historical periods. These dialogues were recorded, transcribed, and edited into textual fragments that accompany the voices as subtitles. Combined with multichannel sound and projected visuals across three square surfaces, the installation creates an immersive environment where speculative futures are staged through affect.

The process underlying *Pura Felicidad* is more than an artistic technique; it is a methodology for structuring subjectivity without reducing it to data or illustration. As affective translation, it demonstrates how speculative feelings move across media and become collectively perceivable, contributing to pluriversal ecologies of resistance.

Research Questions

This article addresses three interrelated questions:

Q1 (Main): How can subjective emotions of speculative futures become practices of resistance in Latin America? **Q2 (Secondary):** How does the artistic process of translating group conversations into audiovisual simultaneity operate as a methodology of resistance? **Q3 (Supporting):** How does the plurality of Latin American voices contribute to pluriversal affective ecologies?

Together, these questions frame *Pura Felicidad* as both an artistic case study and a methodological contribution, showing how affective translation allows speculative feelings—too elusive for purely linguistic representation (Massumi, 2002)—to become perceptible, collective, and resistant forms of world-making.

Roadmap

The article proceeds as follows. Section 2 details the methodology, beginning with the structure of guided conversations, their transcription and editing, and the subsequent artistic process of affective translation into audiovisual simultaneity. Section 3 presents the results, highlighting the key thematic strands that emerged from participants' reflections and their translation into sound and image. Section 4 offers a discussion, situating the findings within debates on subjectivity, resistance, and pluriversal affective ecologies, and elaborating on the methodological stakes of translation. Finally, Section 5 concludes by reflecting on the broader contributions to ecocriticism, decolonial ecology, and artistic research.

Methodology

Artistic Research as Method

This article presents a case study conducted through artistic research methods, using the multimedia installation *Pura Felicidad* as both process and outcome. Artistic research offers distinctive capacities for engaging subjectivity and affect, emphasizing embodied, sensory, and experiential knowledge that conventional social science often cannot capture (Borgdorff, 2012, pp. 17–18). Rather than positioning practice as an illustration of theory, artistic research situates practice itself as a mode of inquiry—capable of generating knowledge through embodied encounter, aesthetic experience, and affective resonance (de Assis, 2018, p. 10). Braidotti (2019), similarly reminds us that posthuman knowledge depends on imagination, creativity, and embodied desire, foregrounding affect as a site of epistemic transformation (pp. 97–99). *Pura Felicidad* builds on this orientation by treating artistic practice not only as an outcome but as a methodology. The work demonstrates how processes of listening, translating, and staging emotions can reveal forms of knowledge irreducible to propositional or quantitative frameworks. As Borgdorff, Peters, and Pinch (2020), emphasize, artistic research functions as a "transposition from the aesthetic realm to the epistemic realm," producing sensory, embodied, and experiential forms of knowledge that resist reduction to propositional language (pp. 87, 112–114).

Dylan Robinson (2020) highlights the methodological power of Indigenous sound practices through "critical listening positionality," which he defines as a haptic and proprioceptive encounter with asymmetries of power (pp. 45–47). This resonates with *Pura Felicidad*'s refusal to treat participant voices as extractable data, instead presenting them as affective presences in space. Katja Kwastek (2015), emphasizes that interactive art foregrounds the "oscillation between flow and reflection" as a key mode of knowing (pp. 67–70). Similarly, *Pura Felicidad* invites participants and audiences into an immersive ecology where reflection and sensory immersion continually interact. Flora Lysen (2018), describes the "logic of affect" in art-science experiments, where bodily participation produces insights unavailable to conventional neuroscience (pp. 169–172). *Pura Felicidad* extends this logic by translating speculative feelings into audiovisual simultaneity, making them collectively perceptible without dissolving their ambiguity.

By grounding itself in these traditions, *Pura Felicidad* exemplifies how artistic practice functions as methodology. It demonstrates that affect can be carried across media—conversation, transcription, sound, and image—not as neutral information, but as a form of resistant knowledge, staging futures otherwise inaccessible to conventional methods.

Hoja de Ruta: Guiding Theorists

In *Pura Felicidad*, guided conversations were structured around four theoretical anchors—Ahmed, Berlant, Massumi, and Reddy—that created a *hoja de ruta* for exploring speculative feelings. Rather than rigid hypotheses, these theorists offered orientations:

- **Sara Ahmed (2004):** Her concept of "sticky signs" prompted questions about how emotions attach to narratives of the future, while her idea of "unsticking" them encouraged participants to imagine alternative orientations.
- **Lauren Berlant (2011):** Her notion of "cruel optimism" guided prompts about promises that exhaust or disappoint, while the "drama of adjustment" framed these disappointments as spaces for new idioms of affect.
- **Brian Massumi (2002):** His distinction between affect and articulated emotion inspired the prompt *What do you feel when you don't yet know what you feel?*—drawing attention to pauses, hesitations, and bodily responses.
- **William Reddy (2001):** His idea of "emotives" encouraged treating speech as affective translation, where voicing speculative feelings could alter the speaker's state.

Together, these concepts offered structure while preserving openness, ensuring subjectivity could unfold in pluriversal directions. This pluriversal orientation also resonates with Chattopa-

dhyay's (2022b) call for "plurilogues" in sound practice, where dissonant polyphonies resist universalist reduction and insist on multiplicity as method (pp. 347, 413).

Affective Translation as Method

By **affective translation**, this article refers to the passage of emotions across forms—spoken conversation to transcription, text to sound, voice to moving image. This is not a neutral transfer but a practice that carries subjective intensity into new media, allowing it to shift, fragment, and resonate differently. Voegelin (2021), frames such ambiguity as central to sonic practice, describing "sonic possible worlds" as plural negotiations that preserve uncertainty rather than close it down (pp. 13, 192). In this sense, affective translation is both an artistic process and a methodology: a way of staging feelings so they become perceivable in collective and spatial forms without losing their ambiguity.

- **Step 1: Conversation → Recording.** Participants' speculative feelings emerged in collective dialogue. Here, affective translation begins as tone, rhythm, and hesitation already encode intensity in soundwaves. Massumi (2002), reminds us that affect operates as "unqualified intensity" prior to codification (pp. 35–36).
- **Step 2: Recording → Transcription.** Audio was rendered into text. In this shift, the richness of vocal texture gives way to visible traces—pauses become ellipses, repetitions appear as structure. Reddy (2001), describes such "emotives" as both expression and transformation of feeling (pp. 305–306).
- **Step 3: Transcription → Fragments.** Texts were edited into fragments, not to "clean" but to emphasize affective charge. Ahmed's (2004), notion of "sticky signs" shows how emotions attach to words, carrying orientations and shaping collective meaning (p. 215).
- **Step 4: Text → Subtitles/Projection.** Fragments appeared as subtitles across three screens, producing simultaneity rather than linear reading. Chion's (1994), idea of the "audiovisual contract" highlights how text and image can mutually inflect perception, amplifying affective presence.
- **Step 5: Voices → Multichannel Sound.** Participant voices, layered with music, created a sonic ecology where plurality of accents and overlaps became affective material. Voegelin (2010), describes sound as creating "a philosophical place" that preserves ambiguity and multiplicity (p. 4).
- **Step 6: Integration → Installation.** The three-channel video and multichannel sound merged into a spatial environment. Here, affective translation culminates: subjective expressions reappear as a collective, embodied ecology of speculative futures. Kwastek

(2015), argues that such interactive, processual works generate knowledge through action and reception, not detached representation (pp. 45–49). This echoes Parker's (2019), analysis of sonic lawfare, where sound resists containment in fixed categories and instead operates as a political and affective force, shaping environments and experiences (p. 74).

Taken together, these six steps demonstrate that *Pura Felicidad*'s artistic process is itself a methodology. Affective translation transforms speculative emotions into forms that are collective, perceivable, and resistant to reduction, staging futures that remain open and pluriversal.

Participants & Plurality

The R.A.R.O. residency in Bogotá provided the framework for the development of *Pura Felicidad*. Unlike residencies confined to one city or institution, R.A.R.O. circulates across Buenos Aires, Madrid, Barcelona, and Bogotá, emphasizing mobility and exchange. In Bogotá, the residency takes place inside Talleres Telecom, a building once occupied by Colombia's national telecommunications company before its bankruptcy in the 1990s. For two decades, the building remained abandoned, and today its decaying architecture has been repurposed into ateliers for nearly thirty artists. The atmosphere of working inside such a space—a ruin of modern communication infrastructure turned into a host for speculative artistic practice—carried symbolic weight. As Escobar (2018), would argue, these material histories themselves are part of the "pluriverse," where abandoned modern infrastructures become the grounds for alternative forms of world-making (p. 229).

One afternoon, a group of twelve artists gathered around a table in this setting, with coffee cups and a microphone placed discreetly in the center. Rather than conducting formal interviews, the conversation was framed as an open dialogue: what feelings might exist in the future, just as today we experience "scrolling anxiety" or social media fatigue that did not exist thirty years ago? The structure of the conversation followed the *hoja de ruta* developed earlier, inspired by Ahmed's (2004), notion of "sticky signs" that attach emotions to objects and narratives, and by Berlant's (2011), work on broken promises and cruel optimism. Yet the space was deliberately left open for interruptions, digressions, and overlapping speech, in order to let the group dynamic generate a sonic and conceptual ecology of speculative feelings. One participant captured this speculative openness when they remarked: "A mí me emociona pensar que el futuro va a ser una cosa que va a salir como una deriva, que se va a salir por una grieta y va a ser algo que no habíamos podido como percibir de ninguna manera" [Residency conversation recording, Bogotá, 2023]. ("It excites me to think that the future will emerge like a drift, slipping through a crack, becoming something we had not been able to perceive in any way.")

From the outset, plurality was inscribed into the project. Participants came from different regions of Colombia, as well as Ecuador, Argentina, and Venezuela. Each voice brought with it a

particular accent, rhythm, and repertoire of slang, creating what Chattopadhyay (2022b) describes as a "plurilogue" or "dissonant polyphony" that resists homogenization (p. 352). The group did not speak in unison, nor did they converge on a consensus of what the future might feel like. Instead, the conversation became a polyphonic weave of situated perspectives. In this sense, plurality was not only content but also form: the differences in speech patterns and tonal inflections themselves became part of the material that would later shape the sound composition.

Listening to this conversation already produced a kind of affective ecology. As Robinson (2020) argues in *Hungry Listening*, listening is never neutral but bound up with positionality and power. His call for "decolonial listening" emphasizes the importance of attending to sonic differences without subsuming them into a normative or universal framework (pp. 3–14). In the group dialogue, the simple act of hearing multiple accents in the same room enacted this principle. Each cadence and vocal texture foregrounded a different situated history of Latin America, and the simultaneity of these voices disrupted any tendency to reduce "the future" to a single narrative. Chattopadhyay (2021c), highlights how uncolonising sound requires attention to such pluralities, foregrounding sonic archives not as neutral repositories but as contested sites where power and difference resonate (pp. 216–217).

The richness of this sonic plurality became especially clear when participants spoke over each other, when jokes in Argentine slang overlapped with Colombian idioms, or when a Venezuelan accent carried a different intonation of anxiety or hope. These moments underscored what Voegelin (2021), calls "sonic possible worlds": the recognition that no single actuality exists, only temporary negotiations between multiple perspectives (p. 19). The installation would later amplify these plural temporalities by projecting subtitles and voices simultaneously across three screens, refusing linearity in favor of an ecology of overlapping futures.

Plurality in this context is not merely descriptive but political. Chattopadhyay (2022b), warns against the "homogenising tendency" of European sound and media art discourse, which often glosses over the Global South as a monolithic entity (p. 413). By contrast, *Pura Felicidad* insists on the irreducible specificity of regional voices, making speculative futures emerge from their differences rather than from any universalizing synthesis. Similarly, Robinson (2020), critiques "settler colonial listening regimes" that extract and categorize Indigenous and non-Western sonic practices into fixed cultural labels (pp. 3, 11). By refusing consensus and instead staging difference as aesthetic form, the residency conversation aligned itself with what Escobar (2018), calls the pluriverse: a constellation of "heterogeneous visions of the good life" (p. 229).

The plurality also had aesthetic implications. Different rhythms of speech created textures that would later be compositional elements in the installation. As Guattari (1995), reminds us, subjectivity is produced through heterogeneous components, including "a-signifying semiological dimensions" that escape purely linguistic structures (p. 72). The timbre of a Venezuelan voice, the

rapid-fire cadence of Colombian slang, or the drawn-out vowels of Argentine Spanish each carried expressive intensities beyond semantic content. In this way, plurality was already functioning as affective translation before the later steps of transcription, editing, and audiovisual staging.

By embedding this plurality into the artistic process, *Pura Felicidad* underscores that speculative futures are always situated. They emerge not from abstract universality but from encounters between particular perspectives. As Escobar (2018), notes, a pluriversal world requires "multiple situated worldings and multiple sorts of translations" (p. 229). The residency conversation was one such translation: a lived negotiation of speculative feelings across regional, linguistic, and cultural difference.

Thus, participants' diversity was not incidental but methodological. It shaped the content of the conversation, the sonic material of the recordings, and ultimately the political stakes of the work. The resulting installation does not present a singular answer to the question of future feelings. Instead, it stages plurality itself as resistance: a refusal of homogenization, a refusal of a universal future, and a commitment to speculative diversity.

Methodology as Resistance

The methodology developed in *Pura Felicidad* privileges subjectivity over objectivity, directly challenging the dominance of predictive models, statistics, and extractive data frameworks that have long shaped imaginaries of the future. Instead of mining information from participants, the process stages their affective voices as material for collective speculation. This aligns with Ahmed's (2004), insistence that emotions are not private states but circulate socially and politically, shaping worlds. It also resonates with Escobar's (2018), call for a pluriverse, where multiple situated worldings replace the universalizing logics of extractive epistemologies.

Central to this methodology is the practice of affective translation. By refusing to stabilize speculative feelings into definitive categories, the process safeguards their ambiguity and generative openness. Massumi (2002), emphasizes that affect, as "unqualified intensity," resists codification and operates in excess of signifying systems. Within *Pura Felicidad*, the passage of voices through recording, transcription, fragmentation, and audiovisual staging is not a reduction but an expansion, allowing intensities to resonate across forms. Ma (2020), reinforces this point by arguing that rethinking the "audio-visual contract" requires destabilizing the hierarchy of speech and image, opening space for sound to carry epistemic and affective weight in its own right (pp. 1-167).

The installation ultimately creates an affective commons: a temporary site where subjective feelings become collectively perceivable. As Bishop (2012), notes, participatory and installation--based art can redistribute symbolic capital into socially meaningful encounters, while Voegelin's

(2021), notion of "sonic possible worlds" frames such spaces as experiments in multiplicity rather than affirmations of singular reality.

Thus, the methodology of affective translation does not merely document speculative feelings; it performs resistance by staging plurality as a lived and felt alternative to extractive and homogenizing imaginaries of the future. This methodological framework, rooted in affective translation and resistance to homogenizing logics, sets the stage for the analysis that follows.

Ethics Note

All participants provided informed consent for audio recording and for the reproduction of excerpts in academic dissemination. Names were not used in the transcription or analysis; quotations are referenced only by recording timestamps. As this was a practice-based artistic project conducted independently of an institution, no formal ethics review board approval was required.

Results

Description of the Installation

Pura Felicidad (literally "Happy Full") was presented as a three-channel audiovisual installation in which projected text fragments, recorded voices, ambient textures, and composed music unfolded simultaneously rather than sequentially. The work was staged on three square projections, evoking windows into multiple futures, while a multichannel sound system surrounded the audience with layered voices and electronic atmospheres. Each medium retained its own integrity, not merely supporting the others but offering distinct points of entry. Audiences were thus challenged—and invited—to create their own narrative. Some might follow the textual fragments, others might attend to vocal accents or sonic textures, and others still might allow the music to carry them through. Returning for a second experience could yield an entirely different reading, underscoring that the work's meaning was not fixed but plural.

The installation deliberately unsettled cinema-centric hierarchies, where vocal clarity is often prioritized above all else. Voices sometimes receded into the musical texture, with subtitles projected to retain intelligibility while reframing the act of listening as part of a wider ecology of affect. The distribution of simultaneous text, sound, and image created an environment where it was impossible to focus on everything at once. Viewers had to choose where to place their attention—on projected text, on the timbre of an accent, or on a musical swell. This multiplicity emphasized that the work staged happiness not as a fixed definition but as a speculative question: what might happiness feel like in the future? This indeterminacy resonates with Voegelin's (2021), revised notion of

"plural sonic worlds," where each encounter with sound generates contingent relations rather than definitive meaning (pp. 192, 242). Braidotti (2019), extends this perspective by arguing that posthuman knowledge relies on imagination, desire, and embodied experience, positioning artworks such as *Pura Felicidad* as generative sites for affective futures (pp. 97–99).

Thematic Strands

Circulation of Emotions (Ahmed) Participants reflected on how feelings circulate socially, often amplified by technologies. One noted:

> "Como estamos más conectados... traemos más ideas diferentes como formas de pensar... y siento que al mismo tiempo como tenemos esta nueva herramienta que es como el teléfono... en una forma estamos un poco más alejados" [As we are more connected... we bring more different ideas, forms of thinking... and I feel that at the same time as we have this new tool like the phone... in a way we are a bit more distant] (Participant 1, 0:04:47).

Another asked:

> "Maybe we should be talking about where his lack of tolerance comes from... If we say that it comes from the media, then where did the media get it from?" (Participant 2, 0:15:39).

The installation translated such reflections by spatializing voices across speakers so that tones of fear, joy, or hope bled into one another. Projected text fragments appeared in overlapping layers, creating the sensation of contagion—emotions moving across media and across the room, much as they circulate socially. Chattopadhyay (2021a) connects this circulation directly to ecological concerns, showing how sound art and climate change discourses reveal affect as a dynamic field where environments and emotions continually co-produce each other (pp. 129–130).

Broken Promises (Berlant) When asked whether they had felt a "tired hope," one participant responded:

> "¿Han sentido una esperanza cansada, como que ya no sé si creer o no?" [Have you felt a tired hope, like you don't know whether to believe anymore?] (Participant 3, 0:02:44).

Another described the tension between destiny and desire:

> "Tengo que seguir con este designio de continuar la dinastía galáctica... o lo que yo tengo que hacer es sencillamente irme a ser feliz" [I have to continue this design to extend the galactic dynasty... or simply go be happy] (Participant 4, 0:01:06).

The installation rendered these broken promises by looping voices that trailed off before resolution, with harmonic progressions dissolving into noise. Subtitles fragmented mid-sentence, echoing the instability of promises that never arrive.

Pre-linguistic Affect (Massumi) The moderator asked:

> "¿Qué siento cuando aún no sé qué siento?... presión en el pecho, calor en la cara, escalofríos... ¿creen que en el futuro habrá nuevas palabras para sensaciones nuevas?" [What do I feel when I don't know what I feel yet? ... pressure in the chest, heat in the face, chills... do you think in the future there will be new words for new sensations?] (Moderator, 0:05:07).

One participant explored this experimentally:

> "I wanted to extract the sounds of literature... not the meaning but the sounds. I put my body on edge... I wanted to hear it, to sound the voices of the text through my body, pulled to the limit" (Participant 5, 0:29:43).

Another emphasized intensity:

> "No, it's not about entertainment. It's about affecting... I search for ways to create intensity, summon forces that can really affect" (Participant 5, 0:30:46).

These sensations were translated into drones, vibrations, and distorted breaths, stretched beyond recognition, allowing affect to resonate directly in bodies rather than through words. This echoes Robinson's (2000) call for "critical listening positionality," where embodied encounters with sound exceed discursive capture and instead generate knowledge through intensity and relation (pp. 15, 77).

Historical Change (Reddy) One participant recalled acoustic imaginaries shaped by electricity shortages:

> "They heard voices and strange sounds in the night-time... so they created stories about the ghost in the Hammam. This is one of the acoustic and sonic qualities... that communicates with the people until now" (Participant 6, 0:11:47).

Another reflected on music education:

> "What Philip Ewell's work did for me was sublime... the inherited knowledge that we use every day actually comes from a place of supremacy, therefore we need to change" (Participant 2, 0:15:39).

The installation translated such historicity by layering voices from different ages and regions into a temporal collage, accompanied by shifts in video textures from archival to contemporary, creating a montage of emotional time. Chattopadhyay (2021c) similarly demonstrates how colonial sound archives reveal shifting regimes of affect, underscoring the methodological importance of attending to the historical contingency of sonic expression (pp. 216–217).

Collective vs. Individual Dynamics

The group conversation revealed both shared moods and strong divergences. On digital connectivity, participants emphasized paradoxes of closeness and distance (Participant 1, 0:04:47). On pre-linguistic affect, one argued for intensity over consensus:

> "No, it's not about entertainment. It's about affecting... I search for ways to create intensity, summon forces that can really affect" (Participant 5, 0:30:46).

The moderator highlighted contradiction as productive:

> "El hecho de que haya contradicciones emocionales es parte... siento que esa conciencia colectiva tiene contradicciones emocionales dentro de sí misma..." [The fact that there are emotional contradictions is part... I feel that this collective consciousness has emotional contradictions within itself...] (Moderator, 0:04:47).

These tensions were staged in the installation as overlapping voices and subtitles, polyphonic rather than harmonious. Borgdorff et al. (2020) argue that such plural and divergent modes of knowledge production exemplify the methodological pluralism of artistic research, where contradictions and tensions become epistemic resources (pp. 112–114). Participation became a site of contradiction and difference rather than consensus.

Plurality as Ecology

Plurality was audible in the diversity of voices, cadences, and regional registers. Some imagined utopias, others dystopias, and many futures of simplicity or technological provision. The

installation preserved these pluralities through spatialized sound, circulating voices around the room so that no single perspective dominated. Chattopadhyay (2022b) describes such practices as "plurilogues," where dissonant polyphonies enact resistance to homogenising tendencies and affirm a universalism of difference (pp. 347, 413).

Audience members noted how accents and rhythms emphasized multiplicity. Subtitles reinforced intelligibility while encouraging movement between sound and text. The density of simultaneous materials—voices, music, projections—meant no one could absorb everything at once. Each listener created their own pathway, and repeated visits yielded different experiences.

Plurality here was not incidental but methodological. Differences in rhythm, timbre, and cadence were treated as compositional elements. By staging these divergences without resolution, *Pura Felicidad* enacted an affective ecology of coexisting perspectives, foregrounding pluriversality as both aesthetic and political practice.

Discussion

Subjectivity as Resistance

When the extinction crisis is most often narrated through statistics and predictive models, listening to subjective accounts of imagined futures initiates a profound shift in understanding. This shift moves the focus from the quantifiable and universal to the embodied, emotional, and pluriversal, recognizing the inherent limitations of purely objective data in fostering deep reflection and meaningful action. Instead, it foregrounds individual and collective affective experiences, challenging conventional ways of knowing and opening pathways to more nuanced, situated forms of envisioning the future.

Quantitative approaches often fail to convey the visceral reality of crisis. They can be reductive, privileging generalized data over lived experience. Dylan Robinson highlights how narratocracy compels sensation to "make sense" through digestible stories, yet art can generate empathy on an emotional level that mere facts cannot (Robinson, 2020). Katja Kwastek reminds us that objectivity in human interaction is impossible because experiences are always individualized (Kwastek, 2015). Brian Massumi critiques data-driven understandings for "squeezing out the singular" in favor of the general (Massumi, 2022). Timothy Morton warns that such empiricism produces an "impoverished" grasp of environmental realities (Morton, 2007).

By contrast, listening to subjective accounts of imagined futures enables a more personal, embodied engagement with the crisis. Robinson's "critical listening positionality" underscores how deep understanding emerges through affective encounters with asymmetries of power (Robinson,

2020). Kwastek stresses how interactive art fosters "corporeal self-understanding" (Kwastek, 2015). William Reddy's concept of "emotives" as self-altering speech acts (Reddy, 2001) shows how subjective accounts translate crisis into emotionally impactful forms. In *Pura Felicidad*, participants articulated feelings before they could be named, summoning intensity and new forms of imagination.

These subjective accounts also cultivate "pluriversal futures" that resist homogenization. Budhaditya Chattopadhyay critiques Western universalism and instead advocates for "plurilogues" that embrace multiplicity (Chattopadhyay, 2022b). Robinson similarly emphasizes "non-totalizing" listening positionalities (Robinson, 2020). Massumi's "systematic openness" (Massumi, 2002) and Salomé Voegelin's "sonic possible worlds" (Voegelin, 2021), frame futures as emergent, plural negotiations. Braidotti (2019), frames such pluriversal imaginaries as integral to posthuman knowledge, where creative and embodied practices help articulate futures beyond anthropocentric or universalist models (pp. 97–99).

Finally, subjective accounts reposition temporality, shifting from distant apocalyptic projections to the "ongoingness" of crisis. Morton argues catastrophe has already taken place (Morton, 2007), making the present the critical ground of action. In *Pura Felicidad*, participants wove stories of futures as lived, affective urgencies rather than abstract predictions. It is precisely this insistence that the immersive, polyphonic environment of *Pura Felicidad* sought to enact, inviting audiences not to observe a future, but to feel their way through its plural possibilities.

Affective Translation (Methodological Contribution)

The process of moving from subjective conversations—individual voices, fleeting feelings, fragmented thoughts—into an installation that layers sound, text, and video is not neutral documentation. It is a methodological act of affective translation: preserving difference, resisting simplification, and generating new forms of knowledge through multi-sensory encounter.

Salomé Voegelin (2021) and Brandon LaBelle (2006, 2010), emphasize sound's indeterminacy. Listening produces "sonic possible worlds" (Voegelin, 2021) and relational ecologies (LaBelle, 2010), where overlapping voices and ambiguous resonances resist singular interpretation. This underpins *Pura Felicidad*'s layering of accents and tonalities, staging ambiguity as a methodological strength. This resonates with Voegelin's (2021) insistence on the plurality of sonic worlds, where affective ambiguity is not a weakness but a generative condition of listening and world-making (pp. 192, 242).

The installation's compositional strategies deepened this methodological contribution. Looped harmonies that trailed off without resolution echoed Lauren Berlant's "cruel optimism" (2011), staging broken promises as sonic suspension. Distorted breaths, drones, and vibrations rendered

Massumi's pre-linguistic affect as visceral sensation. Layered voices from different generations and regions formed a temporal montage, amplifying Reddy's sense of historically contingent "emotional regimes" (2001). Together, these techniques demonstrate how affective translation operates not through resolution but through the careful preservation of contradiction, ambiguity, and intensity.

In this way, audiences were not passive recipients but active co-constructors of meaning. Faced with too much simultaneous material to absorb, they were compelled to choose where to listen, where to read, and where to let go. This participatory demand resonates with Goebbels's (2016), insistence that strong spaces force sensitive hearing, and with Kwastek's (2015), argument that interactive art heightens embodied perception. Ma (2020) reminds us that rethinking the audio-visual contract involves decentering the dominance of the visual and acknowledging sound's capacity to generate affective relations that exceed representation (pp. 11, 167).

Latin American Pluriversality

While plurality is a common concern in affect studies and sound art, its articulation here is rooted in the specific textures of Latin American voices, oralities, and contradictions. The diversity of accents—Colombian, Argentine, Venezuelan, Ecuadorian—was not incidental but central: each carried histories of migration, displacement, and situated imaginaries of the future. This plurality operated as both form and content, transforming difference itself into a compositional material.

Participants did not converge on a single account of what the future might feel like. Some imagined utopia, others dystopia, many proposed futures of simplicity, or even artificial forms of engineered happiness. These divergences exemplify what Escobar (2018), terms the pluriverse: multiple "visions of the good life" coexisting without resolution. The installation staged this pluriverse by circulating voices in spatial sound, ensuring that no single perspective dominated, while subtitles reinforced semantic accessibility. As Chattopadhyay (2022b) notes, such "dissonant polyphonies" exemplify plurilogues that resist homogenising frameworks and foreground the political stakes of plurality (pp. 347, 413).

Rather than homogenizing "Latin American voices," the work highlighted their irreducible specificity. Chattopadhyay (2022b), critiques European media art's tendency to flatten the Global South into monolithic identity; *Pura Felicidad* resisted by foregrounding dissonant polyphony. Robinson's (2020), notion of "decolonial listening" similarly emphasizes attending to sonic difference without subsumption. In this sense, the installation enacted pluriversality as both aesthetic and political practice. Chattopadhyay (2021c), shows how colonial sound archives exemplify this contestation, reminding us that practices of listening are always entangled with histories of power and resistance (pp. 216–217).

Why Installation Now

The multimedia installation emerges as the most fitting artistic form for staging speculative, pluriversal futures within the complex context of ecological and affective crises due to its inherent capacity for hybridity, non-linearity, embodied engagement, and resistance to homogenization. It functions as a methodological act of translation that actively preserves difference, resists simplification, and produces new, situated ways of knowing that purely didactic or statistical approaches cannot achieve. This aligns with Parker's (2019) framing of sound as a juridical and political force, where sonic practices both enact and resist structures of power (pp. 74–75).

- **Embracing Plurality and Non-Linearity.** Installations resist singular narratives and embrace coexisting perspectives. Kwastek (2015), describes interactive digital art as a "hybrid field of inquiry" that frays genres without dissolving them, enabling simultaneity of viewpoints. Lev Manovich (2001), shows how new media deploys a "database logic" of multiple trajectories, countering linear narratives. Such structures align with Escobar's "pluriversal worldings" (2018), staging futures as open and contingent rather than predetermined.

- **Embodied Engagement.** Installations shift audiences from detached observers to participants. Kwastek, drawing on Hansen, points to how interactive art generates new forms of bodily awareness by mediating between real and data space. Sound, in particular, creates a visceral dimension: LaBelle (2006, 2010), underscores its relationality and ambiguity, allowing crises to be felt rather than merely represented. In *Pura Felicidad*, the layering of voices and textures staged an "ecology of coexisting perspectives," turning affect into an immersive experience.

- **Resistance to Homogenization.** Installations provide space for multiplicity without resolution. Chattopadhyay's (2022b), "plurilogue" and Robinson's (2020), "apposite methodology" highlight how such forms refuse integration into a single narrative. Guattari's (1995), heterogeneity and Borgdorff's (2018), methodological pluralism further affirm installation as an epistemic necessity, not just an aesthetic choice.

Contribution

The discussion demonstrates that *Pura Felicidad* contributes on multiple, intersecting levels:

- **Artistic Contribution.** It develops an immersive form that stages speculative futures through sound, text, and image, extending traditions of testimony and orality into a contemporary, multimodal aesthetic.

- **Methodological Contribution.** It advances a hybrid definition of affective translation as a practice of knowledge-making that preserves ambiguity, fosters plurality, and resists homogenization. Borgdorff et al. (2020), emphasise that such transpositions from aesthetic to epistemic realms are central to the value of artistic research, generating non-propositional forms of knowledge that enrich both art and theory (pp. 112–114).
- **Theoretical Contribution.** It bridges decolonial thought, sound studies, and affect theory to argue for subjective, pluriversal futures as vital counterpoints to extractive, predictive logics.
- **Communal Contribution.** It foregrounds collective voices, particularly from Latin America, not as objects of study but as co-authors of speculative worldings, enacting pluriversality in practice.

Together, these contributions establish the project not only as an artwork but also as a theoretical and methodological intervention in how we imagine, translate, and stage futures in a time of ecological and affective crisis.

Conclusion

The findings of *Pura Felicidad* suggest that subjective emotions of speculative futures can function as practices of resistance, not as supplements to predictive models. For ecological and political thought, this opens alternatives to extractivist frameworks, making space for plural imaginaries of survival and coexistence. Braidotti (2019), similarly insists that posthuman futures must be grounded in embodied creativity and affective imaginaries rather than abstract universals, foregrounding imagination as a political force (pp. 97–99). For decolonial and Latin American studies, the plurality of voices and accents demonstrates that difference is not merely representational but methodological—an enactment of pluriversality that resists homogenization.

As artistic research, the project offers a replicable method: guided conversation, transcription, and multimodal translation into installation. This approach can be extended to other communities and contexts, generating pluriversal affective ecologies that articulate difference without erasure. This echoes Chattopadhyay's (2022b), notion of plurilogues as "dissonant polyphonies" that resist homogenisation, providing a methodological anchor for future artistic research (pp. 347, 413). Future work may involve integrating other oral traditions, hybrid media environments, or participatory practices that link installation with performance and workshops. Voegelin (2021), points toward such extensions by framing sonic practice as the staging of "plural worlds," inviting audiences to negotiate difference as a lived, affective ecology (pp. 192, 242). Such expansions could deepen the project's capacity to cultivate emotions not yet named, affective orientations that exceed vocabularies of fear, hope, or despair.

At the same time, the scope of this study remains limited. The group of twelve participants reflects a situated constellation of Latin American voices and should not be read as representative of broader populations. The translation of conversation into installation inevitably involved curatorial choices that emphasized some elements over others. These constraints are not weaknesses to be eliminated but conditions that shaped the work's pluriversal character.

In conclusion, if affect can be translated into spatial and collective form, then speculative futures are not abstract projections but embodied possibilities. *Pura Felicidad* demonstrates that subjectivity, staged through polyphony and immersion, resists extractive logics and opens horizons for imagination. As Robinson (2020), argues, such refusal of normative listening regimes constitutes a form of "hungry listening," where Indigenous and pluriversal approaches enact sovereignty through difference rather than consensus (pp. 15, 203). Futures are not only to be predicted or managed; they are to be felt, contested, and collectively created.

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