

Listening to Overcome

On 14th April 2023 I had a dialogue with Budhaditya Chattopadhyay [1] through video call, which we continued and concluded on the 16th of April. This conversation was in continuation of our collaboration with Budhaditya's project *Landing: Rituals for Situated Sonic Reverence* as part of the exhibition *Terra Libera* [2] at Rijksmuseum Twenthe and ArtEZ, Enschede. I work in this project as Research associate/assistant and I will also perform in several site-specific performances. We didn't manage to meet in person for the interview, which part of my study at CrossYart – giving me the opportunity to interview some people close to thematics around my research. We were both in our apartments: I myself just arrived back in Rotterdam from my mother's birthday party, and Budhaditya was just preparing to leave to visit their mother in India.

– Janneke van der Putten, 2023.

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We firstly met in my home in December 2022, when Lola Posani was visiting me from Milan, as I had invited her to perform at *Tiny Tuin #2*, a performance and music event series that I co-organise [3]. Lola knew Budhaditya from the Listening Academy in Berlin, and they joined us for dinner. I prepared a daal for the occasion and we also had the homemade ginger-ale or kombucha or kefir, or all of them, I don't remember. As desert we had the last figs in sirup, that I had prepared some years ago from the garden's fig tree. It was winter and it was very nice to have a shared meal in conviviality and exchange. Donna Haraway reminds this with '*cum panis*'. Translated from Latin meaning '*with bread*'. She points it out as origin of the word '*companion*': "companion species (...) at table together" (Haraway, 2016, p. 115). With bread, with food, we share amongst and with each other, and tell stories.

It was wonderful news to hear that Budhaditya is also friends with the musicians and couple Amelia Cuni and Werner Durand [4]. Amelia was one of my two teachers in North-Indian Dhrupad singing from 2009 until 2013, to whom I dedicate much respect and thankfulness. Amelia is likely to be the first European woman who went to India and learned to sing Dhrupad, the oldest surviving music tradition in India. Usually it was only practised and transmitted from father to son. Amelia: "There have been Indian woman learning Dhrupad but performing it was considered suitable only for men mostly because of its seriousness and required strength." With Werner I had a close collaboration in the project 'Voice-Skin' [5] between 2019 and 2021, for which Werner composed the piece 'Heart Sines' for my acoustic voice, digital audio files and the wearable loudspeaker costume, which is a moveable sound system called 'Voice-Skin'. I always visit them in their home in Berlin and it is very rare that I encounter someone like Budhaditya that is like me, both familiar to classical Hindustani music and contemporary art/music/sound.

Budhaditya then came a week later to see our show at *Tiny Tuin #2*, in the neighbour gallery Attent, the project space of foundation 't Otje and our community garden. I performed as well, it was a solo acoustic voice performance that reflected my travel to Mauritania. I had returned from there a few weeks earlier. My mother entitled it 'mauve' because she thought it matched that colour. It is a performance where all electricity lights are turned off, me holding a candle and singing a melody, a repetitive melody. Then I start to turn around myself and emit a high volume and high pitched ululation. This is a vocal extended technique which is similar but different from how women do in Mauritania. Only during my travel, as I wanted to learn this technique, I saw that I mastered it already in another way, with overtones. In Ouadane, the town I mainly stayed in, this technique is used for Independence Day on 28 November, during celebrations in general and as a joyful exclamation,

and also during divorces. In this last case, it is voiced by one woman especially. She is the one who signals to the town that there has been a divorce. She does this by going up the roof of the woman's house that has been divorced and by making three long and loud ululations that reach over the whole area. (In Mauritania, only the husband is allowed to divorce his wife.) The divorced woman typically celebrates a party with her girlfriends and doesn't show her possible grief. I dedicated the piece to the women in Ouadane, being part of the association formed by a very courageous, curious and confidently strong woman I met in Ouadane: Zaida Bilal. I met her as she was co-organising the residency programme I had joined, called Caravane Ouadane [6]. I collected some donations after the performance, which are to sponsor the new chicken farm Zaida Bilal [7] and the association she initiated, Ghavilet El Khair, have been setting up to create a self-sustainable meat production for the village and grow economic independence for the local women.

Talking with Budhaditya, they thought 'mauve' was very close to how they experienced rituals in the Indian countryside. There they experienced how people worship the land by singing simple repetitive tunes and moving their bodies accordingly. This was my first performance in years in which I start to use melodies. Usually I work more with a sound texture, and by repeating it, it changes slowly. Folk music and traditional ways of singing are very similar, where the singers evoke something, devote themselves to something greater and where repetition and melodic cycles create a sense of timelessness where one merges with the sound. There is no aim to go to, it is more like a gratitude to the now where the dynamics are energetic and not necessarily bound to a compositional complexity. In my case, the movements, the sequences of gestures and the size of the space, would condition the duration of the performance.

Repeating sounds, I use echolocation as a strategy and way to navigate in the space, "to wake up the ghost of the space", as Sajjra Xhrs Galarreta [8] says. Working with the acoustic architecture, the resonance and echoes of the space is a way to connect, to get to know what is there, where you are. It is a way to position oneself within a bigger whole. Budhaditya explained the term echolocation as in how animals use it to know their way, how bats and sea mammals use to understand distances and communicate with each other. I was not doing something so very different in fact. My sound would not sound if there was not space, no atmosphere. Using echolocation and working with the acoustics of the space, is a way to confirm that this is the natural amplification and fundamental existence in which I am moving with. As I am not singing frontally towards the audience – the listening public, but I am turning around myself and directing the sound to different parts of the room, different acoustics are triggered. The sound is travelling and my sound

source is not anymore the main sound, it is merging together with the response of the space to the sounds. Modulating the sounds, the space is co-performing. We are intrinsically connected with all that is around and in us. The division between myself and the space I am in, is fictive. As David Bohm [9] says in the work *Art Meets Science and Spirituality in a Changing Economy* (p.t5) ¹:

“We are one household really. We are not treating it that way isn’t it. The first step in economics is to say that the earth is one household and all depends on it. It is all one you see. So.. Now the implicate order would help us to see that. To see everything and folds everything. Everybody not really depends on everybody but actually everybody is everybody 90 percent. See, we are the earth because all our substance comes from the earth and goes back to in a minute. It is wrong to say it is an environment that is just surrounding us because that would be like trying the brain regarding the stomach as part of its environment.” [10]

After my performance *mauve* on 22 December we started our dialogue. When Budhaditya invited me for the *Terra Libera* project and described the research, it felt as if they were describing my work. But Budhaditya is very much working with the social-political and historical aspect of listening, sound and performance, in relation to the land and our societies. Having a background as a writer and as a practitioner originating from India, Budhaditya has a particular interest in highlighting the practice of listening from a non-Eurocentric perspective. To describe this, I include a paragraph from their essay *Re-sounding Souths*:

“In my book *Sonic Perspectives from the Global South: Connecting Resonances* (forthcoming 2024), I will develop a theory of the sonic confluence and relationality beyond global binaries and borders, drawing from these conversations as grounded and practice-based knowledges. I have been endeavoring to trace the knowledge flows from the other side of the Eurocentric models of listening and sounding by unpacking the specificities of the Souths and tracing historically equitable interactions, and thereby resisting the colonial power structure in the auditory epistemes. The sonic specificities of the Souths are broadly embedded in an idea of owing to the natural spatio-temporalities and presences, rather than owning them as in the case of the dominant Western model of modernity. This embeddedness to natural time and space is central to the ritual practices and transformative traditions of the Souths to be found in their ways of situated listening and sounding collectively.” (Chattopadhyay, 2023, CTM)

¹ Work by Louwrien Wijers in Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 1990.

Listening has been an important part in my artistic development. During one of my first singing classes with Amelia Cuni, she told me to learn from the Deep Listening [11] practice of composer Pauline Oliveros. In an interview by William Dougherty, she describes what this practise means:

William: “What is deep listening?” **Pauline:** “It’s an investigation of listening, which is not as understood as hearing. Hearing can be measured, but listening is a different thing—it’s time-based and subjective. So listening is very hard to understand, except through consensus.” (Dougherty & Oliveros, 14 April 2016, Van Magazine)

Amelia emphasised that listening is at the basis of the formation: training my voice could not be without learning to listen deeply. Train listening, train the voice, and train to listen to the inner movements, that you then can express with the voice. What one can listen, and so perceive, is a first stage in order to learn to tune in with your voice. I find this a very natural healthy way to perceive sound and grow a practice around sound. Listening being the vehicle to engage with sound. Engaging with sound, means to connect. I find it interesting and not surprising that Amelia asked me to study Oliveros’ her work. The microtonality so present in Dhrupad, is because there are much nuances set on the tone: how it is approached, reached and where it goes to. The tone as a movement, something that has a way to go. There are a thousands of ways how to go and set a tone. To learn mastering this art of intonation, a very well developed listening is needed.

Pauline started to compose what she called ‘sonic meditations’. It was the time in the United States that Buddhism was introduced and became known to a generation of influential and groundbreaking composers, such as John Cage. In the interview *Listening, Not Hearing*, Pauline describes the context in which she started with her sonic meditations:

William: “How much did your interest in Eastern philosophy impact your sonic meditations?” **Pauline:** “Everything impacts [laughs]. I wasn’t trained in any Eastern philosophy or practice at the time. I was simply listening internally to what I thought I needed to do. This was during the Vietnam War. There was a lot of violence and distress at the time. I started looking inward and began listening to long tones—what I thought was meditation. And this is without having studied any traditional meditation styles, of which, of course, there are many.” **William:** “Why do you think that some composers shy away from engaging with the spiritual side of music-making?” **Pauline:** “Well, look at what religion has done. Look at the wars and

killings. That's not spiritual, but it's in the name of religion. It's what spirituality has done in wrong-mindedness." **William:** "Were you influenced by John Cage's works—particularly his engagement with Indian philosophy, Zen Buddhism, and the I Ching?" **Pauline:** "I began a friendship with David Tudor in 1963. David of course was working with John a lot. And it was really David who had the deepest impact on me. (I think David's approach to anything—his approach to making music, cooking, you name it—was much more about an understanding of Buddhism than anything else.) David and I became friends and began performing together." (Dougherty & Oliveros, 14 April 2016, Van Magazine)

Growing up with a father collecting Hindustani music and electroacoustic / new music, I was familiar with different sounds and instrumentations, and it was not strange to me that those worlds of what is considered as East and West merge in my ears and in my interests. But this was put in question by someone specialised in colonial history. Collecting the avocado seed from the avocados I had eaten for several years, and training in Dhrupad as part of my masters degree project in Artistic Research at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague. One of my tutors commented, "that I deal with what is exotic". Exotic was not what I understood under my collection of avocado plants or learning traditional Indian music. Emphasising the social political and historical terms, I felt this conceptual analysis of my artwork was contrasting my own perspectives as I acted from a personal and intuitive experience. To me the avocado and Indian music was familiar, and something I engaged in. It was not something 'exotic'.

Should artists always describe and form arguments in their work in words? Would it not be wonderful if the work can speak for itself, without using a text next to it, defending or explaining it? I am thinking about reflection, and question if text is an important part of an artwork, as a way to make the work more approachable or to contextualise it. I want to question the expectation raised by institutions that artists are expected to describe their work in text. Perfectionizing the writing, artist portfolio presentation and online presence certainly helps to sell the work, but arriving face-to-face with the work should always speak stronger than the words that described it.

But words can be crucial when dialoguing with people in a conversation. Knowing how to express oneself and what vocabulary to use in relation to the other person or the persons one is relating to, can be a diplomatic challenge and also an expression of respect and tact. It is also a way to show how one is capable to relate to the other and how someone is able to empathise with that other person. For example when one is talking with a young child. I don't think one needs to talk to that person as if

they are not understanding much, reducing the linguistic communication to the minimum. But one does take care that the words used to communicate in such a situation are appropriate and are also in the expected vocabulary range of that person.

I became more aware of the fascinating etymological constitution of words, translating them to my non-Dutch speaking friends who like to learn the language while living here. But becoming aware of words their social political definitions and contexts, is something new. Only in this study period I started to think about this. Here below is a list of words made in preparation to my talk with Budhaditya:

- cyclic.....
- time.....
- daily routine.....
- practise.....
- craft.....
- training.....
- travelling.....
- identity.....
- politics.....
- ecology.....
- feminism.....
- gender.....
- exotic.....
- collecting.....

race.....
landscape.....
geography.....
ritual.....
voice.....
embodying.....
appropriating.....
documenting.....
oral tradition.....
modernity.....

Words practise [12]

- *How would you describe these above listed words, if you would make your own, subjective, incomplete, radical, wholeheartedly, honest, non-conventional, not-compromised and personalised dictionary?*
- *You are welcome to write/type your interpretation next to each of them.*
- *Take one word from the list, and circle it.*
- *Close your eyes, and say the word, silently or out loud. Repeat the word a few times, attentively.*
- *Take the time to listen and feel the word's sound.*
- *Now you might remember something, you might think about something, or start to daydream, perhaps unconsciously.*
- *Ask yourself the question, where the word is placed at this moment to you. What does this word mean to you?*

– If you do this exercise in a group, ask who has the same word. Compare the definitions. All people might have a different perspective on the same word. If you do this exercise alone, remember that others might have different viewpoints and that your perspective is one version of this word.

– Take a minute to sit with this word and imagine all the stories and spaces it did traverse, and where you can bring it towards.

– Open your eyes and take a moment to feel your body, where you are sitting, and what moment in time this is; see the outdoor light/darkness as an indication of time.

– Maybe you like to share what you thought and how this was to you. If so, share your experience in your preferred way. And if you would like to share this with me, you are welcome to contact me. [12]

Reflecting

I am asking myself, how is what I do finding its place in this complex time we are living in. How can we learn from others and their stories, but also take the time to relate to our own stories? With these stories come a lot of words, creating our own set of vocabulary. We can open up to a lot of new words and knowledge, of course. But we can also look at what is familiar to ourselves already. What do I relate to and how can I reinterpret that? I take this period to ask these questions. What do the words mean that I am using? How does my practise relate to the now? This last question is a bit abstract, but it is more important to ask it, than to answer it. I think these reflections are ways to open doors in my perception. And when I will move, do, act and react, etc. these reflections will become actions, set in motion, they will become sound and movement. Something new will come out of these new thoughts. And sometimes a thought comes out of an action. This is the case with a question I had in the past weeks, a question that came up amongst my list of ‘by change operated questions’ that I have been compiling in preparation of the interview. The question was: How can the geography influence the thinking? In the case of Oliveros' Deep Listening, the architecture of a cistern inspired listening to its resonance, and this listening gave words to the name Deep Listening:

“While at the Skywalker Ranch I played a CD of my “Deep Listening”—a work I had recently recorded with trombonist and friend, Stuart Dempster and vocalist Panaiotis in a cistern 14 feet beneath the earth (that’s where the pun “Deep Listening” originates). The cistern had a remarkable 45 seconds of reverb.” (Dougherty & Oliveros, 14 April 2016, Van Magazine)

Also Lola's creative writing workshop *Fictioning the Landscape*, developed together with Giulia Deval, is connected to listening and the sounds of the landscape. In the end they did not realise the workshop during their stay in Rotterdam, and it would have been an interesting approach to experiment how we convey words in relation to the land. As a certified Deep Listener teacher, Lola is very familiar with Oliveros her work and I am curious how it would have been to take part:

“Through the use of listening and imagination we get to write a short story. The process is like a diary of the imagination that emerges from listening. *Fictioning the landscape* is a workshop that combines deep listening, vocality and creative writing starting with the idea that we "speak the landscape." Where do our words come from if not from the noises of our surroundings, passed through the filter of our larynx? How did we learn them and how can we rediscover them in the encoded phonemes we use every day? More importantly, how can we put ourselves back into listening to the landscape inherent in our voice? The environment around us will be our companion in an action of internal and silent composition, where listening becomes a poetic tool to expand the boundaries of reality. Through some exercises and suggestions borrowed from cognitive scientist Mark Changizi, the workshop will lead participants to put into words the transformativity of the landscape in a continuous exchange between sound, text and voice.” [13]

Teacher

Talking with Budhaditya was an opportunity for me to share thoughts on different words and ideas around them. The first word was 'teacher'. **Janneke**: “Somewhere in your essay I read: “The student will receive the teacher when the student is ready.” We don't have this hierarchy but then when my friend Yvan Etienne told to me two days ago, when I told him I was preparing a publication around my work, that it would be good if I would know someone that knows my practise, spirituality and sound, and is also a writer and does interviews...And then some days later we met! As you said, things fall in place. (...).” **Budhaditya**: “Yes. Thanks for the introduction and some teasing. I was thinking about the teacher question. “When someone is ready, the teacher appears.” This is a... saying, a proverb. And I think that... it is not one person... but, teaching happens... through... multiple possible beings. For example, the situation teaches you so much. An object, or a book, teaches you so much. A person can teach you much. I can tell about my experience when I was looking for a teacher. Multiple times, I was looking for ... a mentor figure. And...my father was there. I learned so much from him. And few people in my life

appeared as if they were there... but the way they appeared to me in certain moments... they were... mentors and teachers. Like I saw my mother's teaching. I was not very interested in this teaching in class, in university. But when with my father we started to... edit a journal on poetry.... then, he became my mentor. So that changed the situation, changed the dynamics... of.. how I saw my father. And in the same way... few family members, like my elder brother-in-law (Sculptor Sarbari Roy Chowdhury), was a fine artist, a sculptor... and, his working method taught me so much. I learned so much, from listening. 22 years of dedicated listening to various forms of music; Indian and Western classical, parallelly.

That 22 years of listening experiences taught me so much, about the history of sound... music... about how we can differentiate between sound and music... What it means to be configuring or re-configuring sense of time.. space... and territories in musical mediation. How we stretch time, we can squeeze time in music, in different cultures. Like, for me, in Indian classical music and Western classical music were two different listening cultures. So I... I learned about them parallelly. The body of records, cassettes, CDs... particularly CDs... These were my teachers too. Sound objects. And then... when I moved to Europe, I met Brandon LaBelle. He became my teacher, mentor, and he became a figure that I... follow very much... in my works, contemporary works.

So, teachers... they appear indeed that I have seen in my life. But they are not one person. They are multiple bodies, multiple .. multiple beings - entities; often, non-human. Or a situation that is very abstract. So, yeah in that sense, I think that I also met you and I, I would like to know more about the Dutch culture for example, the language, particular regions...that is also... I am also considering you as someone I can learn from, you know; it is a two way process. It is a two-way interaction and exchange, which is always fruitful. And that sense of exchange is... mm.. connected to what I think as teaching. Teaching is not just one person coming mm.. and giving you knowledge to the other person, present to your process. Like with Brandon we do projects together. With my father, we used to collaborate on a journal of poetry. In that sense it is a two-way exchange, and learning, is not just a... one-way transfer..., but a two-way transfer...; it is a continuing... exchange. So I think that continuing exchange puts us on a horizontal, non-hierarchical plane...mm.. which is a very natural place... If we think about how... a tree can learn from wind, or a bird can learn from..... a tree. That sense of natural non-hierarchical, horizontal relationality is something we can also learn from. This is what I can say about teaching and how teachers appear in your life... when you are ready..... It's just intentionality that is intensified."**Janneke**: "What do you mean with that? Intension...." **Budhaditya**: "Intentionality. Like you are in, your intention to learn.... is

so intensified, that you... find a teacher. Or or.. you look for a teacher. You are in..."

Janneke: "Right." **Budhaditya:** "That lead you to someone, that you can learn from."

Janneke: "Yes that is very nice very nice that you say that, yeah, ja ja..."

Curiosity

How do you see this relation between the different cultures? You saw in my work things that you know from India. When I once got a remark about working with the exotic, I felt it was an attack as if I am appropriating someone else's' culture. This marked a lot for me and that's why I might not like to justify and explain everything. As if nothing can be based on intuition or spontaneous inspiration. How do you think about this? This mixing of cultures. Specifically with Dhrupad and how you saw my performance." **Budhaditya:** "I think our curiosity always leads us to, you know, what is beyond our knowledge. Unknown is always something that you want to conquer. Unknown often... appears in the form of cultures that we are curious about. They are unknowledgeable for some time for us. Like, you know, throat singing, Tibetan chant, or ... African polyrhythmic practises, if you think of music practises. So that curiosity is often interesting. Because if you have the intention to learn, you find often teachers. But if you have the intention to learn about the world, then other.. other cultures open doors for you to learn something new. So it is also about intentionality. Many people are not curious. They are just happy with what they are. They just like to go to Amstelpark let's say, and meet in the café... and meet with their friends. In this friends circle there is not one from outside of the Netherlands. Can be maximum American, German friend they have, but.. Not outside of Europe. So that sense of limitation or that sense of lack of curiosity or a very provincial kind of ...eh cognitive universe. You know provincial?" **Janneke:** "Yeah."

Budhaditya: "That provinciality... is, quite common. Very few people are curious, to... To imagine the world. Or to conquer another unknown. But conquer... not in the sense of hierarchical power relationships, but conquer within; himself or herself or theirs, themselves, the fear of unknown. Fear of unknown is.. so common. We are always afraid of what we don't know." **Janneke:** "Ja." **Budhaditya:** "And and that sense of.. fear [cough by Janneke masks the word] you... also is in arts. That... like, cinema for example. If you think like cinema for example. In American cinema, the unknown is depicted. Unknown is depicted as enemy. Like under the sea you need to conquer. something like King Kong, you need to conquer. You know. That kind of unknown becomes the enemy. But, within us we are curious about the enemy. You know. So that relationship, the dynamics of the relationship changes.. if you... don't want to conquer from the outside. But you want to conquer.. your fear. So... inner

fear of the unknown you want to conquer. So it's a meditative process of knowing yourself. Knowing your fears. And many cultures, particularly European culture, is very provincial. I think.. many scholars, like... Dipesh Chakrabarty ² talked about it. His book *Provincializing Europe* is like one of the pillars of decolonial studies, theories, in which.. he talks about the provincial...ehm.. mentality of European cultures. They are very happy with... themselves, and kind of self-satisfied. And eh... that self-satisfaction is considered healthy, because.. often... the cultures.. we know like Dutch...ehm or Danish, they are cultures they are happy people. Because they are kind of happy being who they are. Do you know Danish?" **Janneke:** "Ja ja." **Budhaditya:** "You know they are the happiest people." **Janneke:** "Ja." **Budhaditya:** "Because they don't need anyone. They are fine with themselves. They are fine with their provincial... kind of structure... imagination... cognitive universes... But there are maybe one or two people, who are like: "What is outside?" That sense of curiosity leads them to.. trouble. Eh so...for you that trouble is trouble... Isn't it? But Donna Haraway says "staying with the trouble, is necessary." [laughs]

Janneke: "You know actually the Western traditional music was my trouble. So... eh I couldn't study music as teenager in school although I really felt the love for sound, it really moved me, in school you know. My mother was always singing...I always sung with her. My family from my mother was really into that. I couldn't learn singing as instrument, because I had to learn the piano in the Summer. And I was really insecure, eh... well I don't know if that was the reason, but I just.... didn't want to study the piano, in the Summer! I just wanted to sing! And so I hated solfège, to learn eh these notes by heart in France as a six years-old I had to learn solfège for violin...So... eh...my father taught me how to make portrait drawing and he saw I.. I was good in it, so I went to art school And then when I was 24 years I go back to singing you know.. Well that's my biography... But for me the trouble was really like, the cognitive layers and barriers of Western music. So, when you say eh... the trouble of being curious and going out... ehm... I always saw that as an opportunity, you know like a few cakes of curiosity you know [laughs] and just staying with what there is at the moment. Always was a trouble. Also in school in Holland coming back from France, like I didn't have friends, I just didn't know about their cultural codes, how they think..in their provincial ideas or.. you know like... so.... the difficulty to fit in to tune in is not just with what you don't know, what is outside of your culture.. It can also be that you are not... inside..."

Budhaditya: "Yes, yes ehm...Like troubadour music. Or modal music from pre-modern times, or yeah... like modal music from... renaissance time..... Or..."

² Dipesh Chakrabarty his book *Provincializing Europe* was first published in 2000.

musical cultures , which are marginalised in contemporary Europe. So you are... curious about them, right?" **Janneke:** "Yes of course, there are also oral tradition in Europe, that are not using this.. this same ways... But Dhrupad was a very easy step-in somehow. You just start to sing 'a' and you are there. Like... you are there in a way that you are already into it. Like you already start to become that. So... nothing is asked to you.. just basically generosity and I think that is the most important word for anything. Generosity and being open for what is there at the moment. So it was very easy to just start and just go for it. [laugh]. And eh not any frustration about "Where am I singing at the moment? Is it belly or head voice, or where is it? Do you want to add something about this feeling of Indian music in relation to cyclic time I feel it really influenced me a lot, that's where it started my interest in the night and day transitions and actually my whole practise is based on that, so... I really think it comes from what the 'Kharaj' [15] exercise gave me, singing 'a' before sunrise... half an hour you know. I started to do that outside also." **Budhaditya:** "Yeah..... So, I think,.... the most of the.....traditional musical practises in South-Asia, if you think of South Asia of one of the regions we can focus on, then.. most of the traditional musics, court music, what we call classical music (but classical is a problematic term). I think court music would be better, not devotional music. And, folk music. Folk as a word is also problematic. Or, but, which are.. situated... practises..." **Janneke:** "Goat music you say?" **Budhaditya:** "Court." **Janneke:** "Old?" **Budhaditya:** "Court. C O U R T. Court music, court like ...court haha..." **Janneke:** "Oh court?!" **Budhaditya:** "...court." **Janneke:** "Oh ja court, for the emperor, king or maharaja..." **Budhaditya:** "Yes." **Janneke:** "OK." **Budhaditya:** "Or devotional basically." **Janneke:** "Right." **Budhaditya:** "From these two aligned practises, classical is termed. But which is a very Eurocentric term. eh, because then if you talk about classical then class is the word. Class is.... thinking about hierarchies. Classicist, the idea of classicism is putting a particular kind of thought or discourse above others. That is an hierarchical idea. The classism is imposed on Indian music, to call it classical. It was traditional ehm... maybe tradition is also problematic term, but rather better than classical. ehm..." **Janneke:** "It was court music?" **Budhaditya:** "Court music, devotional music, music for worshipping.... Ehm... this is kind of the... ground... on which so called classical music is found.... But there is another parallel strand, that is folk music. Ehm... which is situated in communities. Communal songs, songs with a particular language, focusses on some social ehm... situations. Like there is a strong.... stream of songs in North East India. When the husbands leave the house for migrant work; they look for work in another city and their wives or girlfriends or partners sing a particular kind of song, which is called 'Birha'. A songs of separation, longing. That became a large stream of.... songs, musical practises. 'Birha' – it's a traditional way of expressing your longing for someone. So this is a part of folk music. Folk. What is folk? Another

problematic term, but yeah, situation. Situated practise.... I think....

Situated and outdoor. So indoor, and outdoor. Indoor music – outdoor music. So... but.. also at the same time if we look at classical musicians, Dhrupad singers, they... are very music oriented towards the nature. So outdoor... They also perform quite a lot outdoors. Like... Zia Fariduddin Dagar used to sing on his balcony, or rooftop. Nasir Aminuddin Dagar sang on his rooftop, not indoor. But, yes. It's more regarded indoor not like an architectural space but indoor in terms of metaphorical gardening. Like a bit of segregated, a bit of..... boundary within which that practises is performed. That boundary, sense of boundary, comes from, of course a bit of hierarchy because... it is court music. Court, like emperor, is more powerful than the ordinary people. The place of devotion is more powerful than ordinary people. Songs of ordinary people are... grounded and less powerful than songs which are sung in a court. So in that way, there is a hierarchical differentiation and classical music the way we know it, it is practised within a boundary. So that is indoor. But both kind of music are pretty much attuned with natural time and space. If we think about Dhrupad, if we think about other, Khayal, or... even thumri, like classical music, they are also dedicated to the time of the day. Like, Bhairavi.... would be in the morning, Multani... in the afternoon, Malkaus will be in the midnight. And if you sing them on a wrong time, you feel it in your body. You feel it. Because they are so attuned to the time of the day. So in that way..... all the songs, musics that we love from South Asia are either outdoor or indoor or ehm folk or... classical.... or.....hm..... ordinary people songs, or..... powerful songs... they are all in a way... attuned to the nature. Time and space... the way they treat time and space in their practise.”

Janneke: “You said indoor is more powerful, right?” **Budhaditya:** “I mean in terms of having said that indoor is something like a guarded knowledge, guarded–practised from... sometimes guarded from the ordinary people. Like ‘raja’ and ‘proja’. ‘Raja’ is the emperor and the constellation of the court. And ‘Proja’ as the people who are ruled.” **Janneke:** “Yeah also there is maybe the ehm....ehm... the way something is valued. Because if it is indoor there is like a ... maybe it’s more like ehm.... central also to the attention whereas outdoor can be also in function to the labor or.... no? It is a little bit more functional or... right?” **Budhaditya:** “Eh... functional... labor... Yes maybe we can relate to that. But basically I think it is about ehm... how you create borders around. Classical music is elitist in a way. And that is their border. Only a little court people or devotional people who are taking care to devote their time like priests... and court was like ministers, emperors....the social situation around that. That they, those people are listening to practise, learning classical.... and outside of the fort, like castle, there are people who are living in the villages, they are

practising their own music, their folk music, so this division is binary is often.... not working , but there is a binary. There is the binary that has been constructed with the social hierarchies.” **Janneke:** “So when you mean powerful you talk about the social hierarchy. Because I was thinking because I feel ... hm you are maybe more concentrated on the social aspect of sound, and I.. I... so Donna Haraway is talking about how welcoming different species also, well every presence has its own mind somehow and vitality, but I actually always look at the geography, architecture or landscape as being my presence-dialogue partner somehow. And like as having its own mind and moving my gestures or my ways... So when you talk about powerful indoor I directly think of the acoustics of the spaces and that is why it is more powerful because outside the sound is more likely to fade out unless you are in a cave.” **Budhaditya:** “Yes absolutely. So what do you call outdoor? It is more non-hierarchical. Anybody can sing a song you don't need to you know.. eh.. go through a training, through a guru, but you can sing a song by being in an environment. Most of the folk songs are not that you learn from someone else, you learn by being there, from your grandmother singing you pick up some songs, from your mother singing when you are in the cradle you pick up some songs. Or it is in the air. Literally it is in the air. So those songs that a community sings, you don't need to learn them like through a 'guru shishya' or a teacher – student relationship. But classical music is a teacher student relationship because classical music is taught as a knowledge system which is systematic eh.. which needs devotion.. which needs to be learned from one generation to the other. So in that generational hierarchy remains kind of fixed. In the classical regime, whereas in folk music things are very horizontal, you learn from your grandparents you learn from each other. ...”

Modernity

Janneke: “And how do you see nature as a way to navigate somehow? I always thought the East is like more important for me than the North pole because I am not sailing on the Northern Hemisphere with a compass. So for me the East, like many beings, is the day, is coming light, a new life somehow. A new, re-born thing, like a genesis or something. And I was thinking the East is for me in terms of nature important, solar reference.... So..how do you see the nature in terms of cyclic time but also in modern society? What do you think about how it is compatible, for example coming from Dhrupad practise in modern time, are they parallels in the modern urban societies? How do you think about that?”

Budhaditya: “Modern urban societies are very much focussed on a linear progress of time. Their memory doesn't have much a role into play. Memory. Memory is often thought of as memory disk harddrive, data information is stored, which is the ... but

memory is not like that. Memory is alive. Forgetting is part of memory. You have every right to forget something. Like a normal erasure of your memory can also happen. So...in that sense, I think time is so much conditioned through Western modernity as a linear progression because that is the one which will take the ideas of modernity forward. That sense of forward moving, is embedded in the way modernity is constructed. The idea of modernity and memory is a problem, is a trouble. Any you know, having a collective memory in a society is a trouble. Because then if you help each other you don't need corporations. Corporations which are arising from modernist idea of capitalism they are aimed at making individual entities as consumers. And treating them as individual consumers so that they are buying ... paying tax, so that they don't learn or associate with their community as complementary but only as a mass audience in which everything is massified and dehumanised. That dehumanised state of time is something corporations profit from. So yeah, Western modernity, modern urban life, hm....sense of progress... consumerism.... capitalism... they are all intertwined with each other."

Cyclic

Janneke: "And so cyclic time perspective, owing as you write, or embedding natural temporalities... Ehm....Would you say that ecofeminism is a good partner in this discourse?" **Budhaditya:** "Yes I don't have much reading - I can not say about it so clearly, ecofeminism I didn't study so closely, reading here and there, Donna Haraway two articles and a book, with that... knowledge ... propose other than.. of course I would like to, but maybe I would say, from my understanding, that indigenous knowledge is something we can refer to in this context. Indigenous knowledge. Ehm... I can send you some texts like Aboriginal-Indian, American indigenous thinkers. And their ways of thinking. They are proposing in terms of time, cyclic movement of time. Cyclic is not a perfect cycle. It is not perfect circle. It is very ... it is outside of a very geometric invention of time, which is a Western thought. But time which doesn't have any shape, which can be transgressive, which can be circuitous, which can be multiple at the same time - can go and arrive a so either cyclic or linear is something in-between you know , parabolic it can be like this vernacular shape. So I was thinking the way we memorise and the way we relate to our memory is not linear, is not cyclic, it's very something you remember, something we don't... When you remember something, we go back in time. And come back now. So that continuous flow of time is very natural. And also one very important matter that meLê yamomo [16] is telling 'perusia'... here, and now. Nature is often also here and now. A tree... is there, standing, in the here and now. There is no future no past. So this is also an important concept of time. Time stands, you know. So it is a combination of different positionalities, different

temporalities. Eh...That is neither cyclic, nor linear. But Western modernity needs this kind of scientific, geographic logical reason oriented idea of time. In that reason is like central factor to understand and to organise thoughts.” **Janneke:** “So that is why you say cyclic is problematic... That started with Plato I guess as he started to split body and mind...

But coming back, you said also tradition is a problematic word. Maybe you can explain a little bit what you mean with that? **Budhaditya:** “Tradition again is a Western concept. Thinking that is traditional eh... from English linguistic perspective is thought as derogatively because tradition is old, archaic, tradition is something past. Tradition is something fixed as a body of thought. And it is fixed. And in there is not eh... escape from tradition. But tradition the way the West sees tradition is not like that. Tradition is not fixed, it is continuously transformative. It is continuously experimental. It is alive. So Dhrupad was never a tradition. Dhrupad was a continuous flow of thought, practises, learning from each other, different schools of thoughts, merging sometimes ehm.... and producing new kind of thinking, textures. And I think that... ehm....that way of thinking about tradition is much more fruitful, so tradition, there is no alternative word I think.” **Janneke:** “You say the way to think about the tradition is more fruitful than pointing down a tradition. That is something to think about.” **Budhaditya:** “You can think about tradition not as fixed bodies. West would say that the culture of the others is traditional. That is tradition, because the culture of the others is fixed to its understanding. Ok but sometimes you say that is a tradition from my family because it has been done through different generations. Would you say it is a heritage or it is like a... I think heritage could be something because I also really like the image of the tree and not only the rizomatic kind of time.. but I think it is important to not forget the verticality and vertical power from inside going, and, the roots of your family... So heritage implies that also ancestry. In the context of tradition. Heritage is also problematic perspective because then we are thinking of heritage as an object, a fixed object of knowledge, a practise. That heritage can also be understood as something shared. Shared heritage. It is not just one dynasty or one family or one community. One society, but something that shared or when you think of heritage if you go back to heritage, African, we are all Africans, that is our heritage. the birth of life, that is our heritage. Heritage is not owned by a family.”

Janneke: “It is kind of interesting to understand the vocabulary we use and maybe also it is pointing out words are only fixed ideas but they are not really the reality and so it is very hard to juggle, make juggling with words in order to say something. Because a lot of things are nuanced, right?”

Budhaditya: “Yes.” **Janneke:** “I always think that some words and I always feel

that I want to erase them from the dictionary, they should just not exist, because they are just bullshit, like for example the...". **Budhaditya:** "Bullshit is a wonderful thing I think. Bulls do shit and that is a very wonderful, material... eh... on which plants can grow and live. So if you think of plants to have a good material to survive on, bullshit is keeping them life. On bullshit so many new flowers can grow. [Laughs] I think bullshit is an amazing thing." **Janneke:** "So it is not bullshit then, it is something else. What is it then? [Laugh] We can always twist around everything of course. But also I think it is good to I thing I come back to this cognitive idea of doing things from spontaneous way also, and then it is difficult to walk if you have to take care of everything of course. And I think that is a little bit problematic and difficult now that I start to be aware of all the implications of our society in different levels, inclusivity for example, how to make a workshop inclusive or something. How can I communicate that I am inclusive?" **Budhaditya:** "Yeah... Why do you say you don't hang out with people from my region?" **Janneke:** "Becauseehm..... I think I think.... I never had people from India in my area... besides the teachers of Marianne Svašek, my teacher who lives nearby, Barendrecht. So I met the Dagar before dying." **Budhaditya:** "Really?!!" **Janneke:** "Yes and I interviewed him also, it was very funny. I met his nephew... I met so I met these but that was not private let's say. Yeah I never went to India also, so.... ehm... that's actually the basically the reason I guess. Because I had friends from the African continent, South American continent also..... somehow ja..... so welcome to the group. [laugh].....Yeah... so I wanted to .. it is nice because we go a bit faster somehow also jumping in the talk. So I wanted to say..." **Budhaditya:** "Shall-I-talk-faster-than-you-can-record-it-faster-and-you-can-keep-it-in-your-memory-and-that-would-feel-as-your-knowledge-system-and-cognitive-universe-that-and-that-particular..." **Janneke:** "Yeah I have some connotations about this but then I will loose my precious time..." [Laugh]

So I wanted to say a word that I wanted to erase from the dictionary and this is 'choice'. I think this is not bullshit but it is a word that is really messing up with our mind, an illusion people really love to think in. And I really think it is nice to break illusions and stop a lot of ideals and concepts to rule ourselves and our fears. So what words would you ehm...are there things you want to point out, relate to what we said, some words....that are illusions basically." **Budhaditya:** "Dhrupad...." [Laughs] **Janneke:** "Because it is not a fixed thing." **Budhaditya:** "You know I just remember Kharaj. There is an actor whose name is Kharaj Mukherjee ... from Kolkata and he is funny, he is a comedian. So I was thinking why do you say Kharaj I immediately remember this face of this comedian. [laugh] When you said Dhrupad I also think Dhrupad becomes a fetish word. Dhrupad comes from 'Dhrubo Pada'. It is a text that is sound text, at the end of the performance, you build a structure, like

hierarchical sound, like alap, and then you sing just a few sentences. 'Pada' is the text. It is maybe... a stanza. 'Pada' is a stanza that you sing. That is your aim, is to sing it. But the build up is to be taken care of. An attunement needs to be taken care off. The tune the listener finally arrives at is the singing of the stanza, Why 'Dhrubo', 'Dhrubo' means constant. So there is only one constant. That is the text. The rest is all free. So Dhrupad comes from 'Dhrubo Pada'. Yeah, I think if we think of Dhrupad as only one particular kind, then we make a mistake. Dhrupads are different kinds. There are so many schools of Dhrupad, 'dagar vani', 'benaras ghanara' or school, 'Bishnupur gharana'... they are not even fixed. Like 'Bishnupur gharana'. There are maybe some similarities between renditions, but based on singer, the voice, the grain of the voice and the elaboration, ornamentation, they differ from each other, so there is no fixed idea of Dhrupad. If you think of Dhrupad when you use the word Dhrupad you think of a fixed knowledge it is not like that. There are multiple possible ways to understand and practise. So, 'gharanas' – schools of thought, voice, grain, elaboration ornamentation...text you sing, are different."

Janneke: "So Dhrupad comes from actually singing a few sentences at the end of a concert and the whole concert is to attune to understand also, the sentences that you sing at the end." **Budhaditya:** "Yes." **Janneke:** "What are these few sentences? NEXT TIME!! INTERVIEW!!" **Budhaditya:** "No, I think..." **Janneke:** "It's a cliffhanger." **Budhaditya:** "It is not like a dramatic... climax. It is not like that." **Janneke:** "No no no I was making a joke." **Budhaditya:** "It is not like a Hollywood film in which in the final moment the truth appears. It is just...eh... just..eh you know... the way houses are build. If you think about houses, there is one house, and then around that different houses are build. On a horizontal level. So Dhrupad is very much oriented towards architecture. Horizontal architecture. So you make one house and you make many many houses around it. So your inter community are.... accommodated. Like a village. One house connected to the other. So in that way, it is not just a linear progression of time to arrive at the point, but it is a multiple way to create progressionality between eh.... time... tempo you know. Some ...are ... some are... and that relationality builds up." **Janneke:** "And then there is the final cherry on the pie basically." **Budhaditya:** "Yes, you think the performance with a sweet dishes."

We end the conversation and retook it two days later.

Janneke: "I listened back to the recording of our talk on Friday and I have some questions; you are talking about differentiating sound and music, that this is something you learned with one of your friends, like with your Sculptor brother-in-law. Maybe you have something that you want to share with me about that

because I work a lot with sounds and I don't think too much about it as music when I make a performance. Like the second part of my performance was more one sound and the first part is more melodic but that is new for me. What do you mean when you said that you learn to differentiate sound and music?"

Budhaditya: "Yes.... So... Music has an aura..... Sound....is the....ingredient through which you can develop an aura. Pure sound, just environmental sound, sometimes we don't consider them musical. To attain music-hood one needs to consider how sounds form let's say narrative, a story, or a development, or a trajectory, or a....situation... and that sense of becoming is very very important.

Like for example Werner came to my class last week and we had a great time. And he was telling a story...to the students... One of his encounters was with Bilayat Khan – a sitar player. And they were listening toa recording, very bad quality recording, of a sitar. Someone said that this is so bad quality sound... then he said: "Oh it's not sound, it's music." What is the difference between sound and music? It's a question of aura, even if sound is of bad quality, let's say of Hirabai Barodekar's singing. Her recordings are a kind of rare. But some of the recordings that exist, they are of very bad quality like, you know. So unfortunately, that's what exists. If we think about Fayaz Khan. Most of his available recordings are so bad. But they are all music. They don't matter, if they are recording bad quality sound. The music is in their full right. Because they carry an aura, and valued therefore. So that they attain music-hood from sound by the rendition. How can we imagine sounds attaining that aura? You know. We have any back... they have an appeal. That appeal one needs to develop through, perhaps, organisation of sound, or create architecture of sound, or create development of sound, or...make sounds merged to each other to create a harmonic progression or disharmonic progression. Voice, if you think of voice. Dagar Brothers, senior Dagar brothers, one of the brothers, their voice was extremely grainy. And that grain, when one sings Malkaus or Malkauns that grain attains a kind a divinity.

Janneke: "What do you think in the voice for example, or in minimal or drone music. We call it music still." **Budhaditya:** "Noise,.....Noise usually I thinkwith you voice right?" **Janneke:** "Right." **Budhaditya:** "In the Rotterdam performance?" **Janneke;** "Right." **Budhaditya:** "I think noise, is a difficult question, because I think noise... ehm... noise needs to be put in a context. Like for example a normal [makes a cough] will sound like a gesture clearing the throat. But if you do that in a context it becomes something. The context makes possible of its becoming to something. So I think that context is extremely important. Like for example if the Dagar Brothers do [makes a cough] it pulls it

like upward ... you know...” **Janneke:** “So basically it is not necessarily the organisation of the sounds that make music but it is more the context of the listener. The context of the person or the environment of the audition. That is making also.... that is also creating a communicative setting, no?” **Budhaditya:** “Yeah. For the organisation of sound yes. I did [cough] and my throat is now hard.” **Janneke:** “But for the organisation of listeners... Because you say it is about context. So it is also more about like, what does the audience, or for like how is it like, in what ehm....how is it received, no?” **Budhaditya:** “*Exactement.*”

Decolonizing listening

Janneke: “And then you were also talking about or I don’t know if you talked about it but about decolonizing listening, Someone I associate this term with you. What do you... because I always thought about listeners being emancipated in the moment that the listener chooses its own position in space. Like where do you want to listen to this music, this sound. That is an emancipated listener somehow. What do you think about decolonising listening, is it something very architectural how I interpret it, like emancipated listening, or is it more about cultural codes?”

Budhaditya: “It’s about.... different ways of listening, to clear, to open the ear for different ways of listening. What altered the ways, we think of listening, the Western European way of listening, driven by its culture, it’s focus on modernist ideals, like you know.....ehm... reason, logic...science, measurement, quantification.... These are like....words which are loaded in modernity, Western modernity, European modernity, which grew out of Enlightenment. In that particular context listening becomes linear. Listening becomes very progress oriented, acceleration-driven. Moredriven by progress and development. Here memory doesn’t have a role to play. But think of other ways of listening. So, think about the way Ramayana was sung and listened to. *Ramayana*, the epic literature from 8th to 4th centuries before Christ. This epic literature were sung, even told. They were listened to. They were listened to in a digressive manner. They were never told in a linear manner. . Digression.....digressive, which means that say something, and then you digress from another. That’s why they are multiple stories told in one story. So you talk about listening, and then you talk about your computer because we are communicating through a computer. Then you talk about the computer and the computer sound card and then you talk about the sound card and then about the rooms’ light. We talk about the light and the different lights in the world. So then you digress from one to the other. There is not a linear movement of time. So it is digressive way of listening. Then

there are circuitous ways of listening. Like, sometimes coming back to memory. It is not cyclic but it is circuitous. Then there are improvisational ways of listening, in which you don't expect something but you make your ears open to anything that comes in the way. This kind of attitudes, are not found in European thinking around listening. They are outside of European thought but they exist. The European way of listening is not the only way of listening. There are other worlds like this. If Europeans think that the way they are happening to be thinking and listening, that's universal, that's not true. Europeans find one way of listening, but there are equally other ways of listening. Decolonising means to pay attention to these other ways of listening and respecting them. Not undermining them but respecting them."

Janneke: "Do you say the European way, I have to think about the listener that is going to my performance and asks me: "Ok what does this mean? What do you want to say? That's to me the way I see some listeners, that they want to understand and grasp the meaning. So they are rationalising and coming and interpret, so that's why I ask if it is a cultural code. So they are trying to interpret logically, like rationally, what the sound means. Is that also what you mean when you talk about European listening?" **Budhaditya:** "Eh European way of listening is judgemental." **Janneke:** " So it is related to what I say. So a rational way to interpret the sound. Not necessarily judging differently but trying to rationalise it also." **Budhaditya:** "Yes that's right. Rationalise always... listening needs to make meaning. Listening needs to have a justification. Listening needs to make utilitarian choices." **Janneke:** "Like what is the goal?" **Budhaditya:** "Goal driven."

Conceptual art

Janneke: "And I think it is very frustrating also when you make art and then people ask you what is the goal. Because you in that sense I think, it is also hard with conceptual art also because you have to argument why you are doing something. How do you feel about that, about conceptual art? Because it is different to be aware of colonial history and social implications, but how is that this cognitive aspect of being aware of things and the conceptual art that you can argument everything. How do you see that?"

Budhaditya: "Conceptual art eh.... I think art is conceptual from the very beginning. In a way it is not just saying it is conceptual or all art becomes conceptual. It is not like that. Conceptual art, if we think about ...Altamira [17]... It comes from a concept you know. Without concept nothing can exist. It is a conceptual ground on which Altamira paintings in Spain, 3000 years ago....are

made” **Janneke**: “What is?” **Budhaditya**: “People draw bison...Altamira is one of the earliest examples of human made paintings. 3000 years ago humans made painting on a wall. Altamira. It is like ... a conceptual painting.” **Janneke**: “Yes but with conceptual I also mean instrumentalizing an idea in a visual way. Not so much attuned to experience of intuition..... ..art that you have to understand. That is more logic, that you can also really explain somehow. This means that it has to do with this and this, that it is actually an **instrument** for an idea more than that it is meant to be experienced.”**Budhaditya**: “Yeah I think.....I think somebody in your flat is downloading a very heavy file.” **Janneke**: “Really? Well that’s a cool answer. That’s really non-linear right?” [Laughs] **Budhaditya**: “Yeah, non-linear.” (...) “Yeah. So.....I think that.....your concept driven artworks....ehm.....like you need to understand you need toeh.....conceptualise.....the dissemination of the artwork. That is something I find highly problematic. Just to critique concept, but art is always conceptual. In different grades. I mean you experience something, an object of a situation, but that doesn’t mean that you are doing away with your conceptual critical faculty. So yes, some artworks more focussed on the materiality, like the experience itself, and some arelike...text scores. Some are.....remains on the... realm of thought....But that doesn’t mean that there is only conceptual art and then other art is different. This kind of categorising is a very Western way of looking at experiences.Categorisation is an issue here. Why should we categorise?” **Janneke**: “Well that is an important issue.”

Landscape

How do you think “reconfiguring eh... the sense of time space and territories in musical mediation”? These are your words.” [laughs] (...) I am every interested in the relation between the territory, the geographic aspect and the experience in space with your body and sound.” **Budhaditya**: “Yes. Are you recording this?...Then I can tell on record, that... eh.. the relationship between sound and territories... is like the relation between sound and concert music and territories is a very complex one. It is a very highly debatable discourse in which you have to think about one particular aspect, which we sometimes call disembedding. The inter-discourse on disembedding comes from how grounded sound experiences are, and how technology tears things apart from their ground. And make them available as objects. Think about... folk music. Folk music is termed folk music only because of the outsiders. They call it folk music. People who sing collectively in groups in community performances, gathering, celebrations, they never think we are making folk music. So what they do, outsiders who come let’s say ethnomusicologists who come from Britain - they are coming to India or Bangladesh, they are recordings the

songs and they call them folk music. Uttering “folk” is othering the folks. It is like they are folk, we are elites. That kind of othering happens. Even by the mere naming of things. So, why this practise, this invent a grounded sound to another context by disembedding via recording which you can actually store in archives. So disembedding is a larger issue. Disembedding is an issue in colonisation. Colonisers disembedded meanings associations, humans, labours, you know, ideas, sounds, many other things, images, from their ground and took it away as something that, they commodified and quantified in various possible ways, their museums. Also they made profit out of it. So disembedding has been done historically though colonisation. Sound and music is also not outside of this discourse. Sound and music were also disembedded, So disembedded from the territories. If we think of territories as resource, it is easy to disembed, but if we think of territories as our part, like we are part of nature, then disembedding is difficult, since it is about an approach, an attitude. So Western modernist attitude towards anything related to culture was that it is possible to disembed and take it out and put it in an archive. And therefore, territories become territories. They become resources. Lands become landscapes.....”

Janneke: “Land-scape. Landscape is not land?” **Budhaditya:** “No. Landscape is a human eh....human disembedding of image of **the** land from the land itself. To make a.....[Internet connection is cutting].... int....land is... differ..” **Janneke:** “It was blocked. You were saying landscape is an image of the land.”

Budhaditya: “An image taken from the land. An image taken away. Disembedded from the land.....And it is very much disembedding as an act. It is at the core of capitalism.....Taking something away and putting a value on it. Is something at the core of capitalism. It comes directly form colonialism.” **Janneke:** “And call it a landscape.” **Budhaditya:** “Yes.” **Janneke:** “So reconfiguring a sense of time and sound in territories means actually like finding embedded ways of making sound practises?” **Budhaditya:** “Yes.” **Janneke:** “And that is why you talk about psychogeography [18] as a way to hack the normative cartography in a way to see land and to make it landscape, from upper-view.” **Budhaditya:** “Yes. *Exactement. Exactement.* So two things: one is I am super thirsty for a drink. But I don’t want a Coca Cola at this hour [Laughs] . Also it is Sunday night so shops are closed.”

Janneke: “You can just gorgel a little with water.” [Laughs]

Sources

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Dougherty, W. & Oliveros, P. (14 April 2016). *Listening, Not Hearing*. <https://van-magazine.com/mag/pauline-oliveros/>. Website visited on 4 May 2023 at 20 h 35.

Haraway, D. (2016). *Staying with the Trouble, Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham and London.

Notes

[1] More information: <https://budhaditya.org/>

[2] More information: <https://www.rijksmuseumtwenthe.nl/content/3422/en/terra-libera-who-does-the-land-belong-to>

[3] *Tiny Tuin* is a performance and music event series that I organise together with my friends and neighbours from the instant composition quartet Abla Xilas. It takes place in Attent, the project space of Foundation 't Otje in Rotterdam.

[4] More information: <http://www.ameliacuni.de> and <http://www.wernerdurand.com/>

[5] More information: <https://jannekevanderputten.nl/voice-skin/>

[6] More information: <https://caravaneouadane.weebly.com>

[7] Zaida Bilal is co-organiser of Caravane Ouadane in name of her tavern, Auberge Vasque. More information: <https://www.facebook.com/people/Auberge-Vasque/100063667846547/>

[8] Sajjra Xhrs Galarreta is my long-term collaborator since 2013, in amongst other the sound research project 'Invisible Architecture' in which we highlight hidden acoustic characteristic of specific sites. More information: Sajjra Xhrs Galarreta: <https://cielopresenteytotal.wordpress.com/>, 'Invisible Architecture': <https://jannekevanderputten.nl/invisible-architecture-in-a-tunnel/> and <https://jannekevanderputten.nl/invisible-architecture-in-a-tower/>

[9] David Joseph Bohm (USA, 1917 – 1992) was an American-Brazilian-British scientist who has been described as one of the most significant theoretical physicists of the 20th century and who contributed unorthodox ideas to quantum theory, neuropsychology and the philosophy of mind. Among his many contributions to physics is his causal and deterministic interpretation of quantum theory, now known as De Broglie–Bohm theory.

Bohm advanced the view that quantum physics meant that the old Cartesian model of reality—that there are two kinds of substance, the mental and the physical, that somehow interact—was too limited. To complement it, he developed a mathematical and physical theory of "implicate" and "explicate" order. He also believed that the brain, at the cellular level, works according to the mathematics of some quantum

effects, and postulated that thought is distributed and non-localised just as quantum entities are. Bohm's main concern was with understanding the nature of reality in general and of consciousness in particular as a coherent whole, which according to Bohm is never static or complete.

Bohm warned of the dangers of rampant reason and technology, advocating instead the need for genuine supportive dialogue, which he claimed could broaden and unify conflicting and troublesome divisions in the social world. In this, his epistemology mirrored his ontology. Source website: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Bohm visited on 7 May 2023 at 22h25.

[10] More information: <https://www.cultureunplugged.com/documentary/watch-online/play/8745/Art-Meets-Science-and-Spirituality-in-a-Changing-Economy---Pt-5---The-Shifting-Paradigm> Source website visited on May 7th, 2023 at 21h51.

[11] More information: <https://www.deeplisting.rpi.edu/deep-listening/>

[12] 'WORDS PRACTISE' is a new practise I develop during this period which I will include in my labs, which are group projects in the format of workshops and performances. For sharing the 'word practise', send me an email: info@jannekevanderputten.nl. During labs we share this practise in person, as well as in speech and in drawing for example. If you like to join a future lab, let me know.

[13] More information: <https://allevents.in/rotterdam/fictioning-the-landscape-%E2%80%93-workshop-w-diana-lola-posani/200023757081424>

[14] Dipesh Chakrabarty his book 'Provincializing Europe' was first published in 2000.

[15] Kharatj is a morning vocal exercise as I learned from Marianne Svašek (in the tradition of Zia Fariduddin Dagar's pedagogy), and by Amelia Cuni. Kharaj is the training of singing the vowel 'a' in the lowest register for long sustained tones under accompaniment of the tanpura. The training starts at least half an hour before sunrise and finishing right at the sunrise: "Kharaj sadhana is to hold one tone for a long-long time by individual breathing capacity to produce effortless 'Sound' or 'Nada' emerging from the navel point by the drone of tanpura in 'aakar'." Chatterjee, S. (3 March 2023). *DHRUPAD PEDAGOGY OF USTAD ZIA FARIDUDDIN DAGAR*. IJCRT Vol. 11, Issue 3, p. 4, retrieved from <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2303051.pdf>

[16] More information: <https://site.meleyamomo.com>

[17] The Cave of Altamira is a cave complex, located near the historic town of Santillana del Mar in Cantabria, Spain. It is renowned for prehistoric cave art featuring charcoal drawings and polychrome paintings of contemporary local fauna and human hands. The earliest paintings were applied during the Upper Paleolithic, around 36,000 years ago. Source website: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave_of_Altamira visited on 6 May 2023 at 18h40.

[18] “Psychogeography is the exploration of urban environments that emphasizes interpersonal connections to places and arbitrary routes.” Quote from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychogeography> visited on 6 May at 20h00.

Colophon

Text by Janneke van der Putten in dialogue with Budhaditya Chattopadhyay. Thanks to the transcription of the audio recording made during their conversation. It is realized as part of CrossYart, Rotterdam, June – July 2023.

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