

Title	<i>Notes on breathing, perhaps</i> (Working title)
Conversationalist	Miriam Jakob
Conversation number	
Date	9th of June 2023 (around 11pm)
Place	At the outdoor tables of a little bar, Berlin
Time of recording	55:56 minutes
Context	In relation to the participation in The Listening Academy, Berlin, as part of The Listening Biennial. https://listeningbiennial.net/ Miriam Jacob and Lisa Desem facilitated an one-day durational breathing workshop which took place a few days before this conversation.
Note for conversation	I guess we were tired, exhausted after a long day (days), but also happy.

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- (Lukas Lund) [

] Where does this begin for you?

(Miriam Jakob) I think often for me it can begin with a more atmospheric listening. [

] I think it's not necessarily the logic conversation or the questions, like an introduction to someone you haven't met before or I don't know, but more, I don't know, how the encounters may happen between a place, a person, people, a party, an event.

- [

]

[

] the encounter with an audience, you can perform the same piece ten times and each time it will be a different experience. And it's very hard to nail down why. It would be stupid to say because there was one guy in the audience who spread really negative vibes. But you can sense that it is always a becoming-with several aspects. [

] And then

of course the event itself and my presence. So what was the question again?

- [

] what sort of

sensitivity towards the encounters is it that enables the listening? [

]

And then also the staying, somehow staying connected to yourself, in moments where you are, I don't know, where I'm not really, where I feel like I'm beside myself, or I mean whatever that to be in oneself means, but if I feel I'm not really connected or I'm doubting. I am not even sure. [

And I guess it has to do with staying tuned with my own, with my rhythm somehow. That starts with the rhythm of the breathing, but it kind of opens up to be differently connected to other things and people, because it feels like you're more connected to, maybe less to sense making, more to rhythmicality.

- [

Not necessarily pleasant, [

] Do you feel that breathing connects listening with us and the world in a specific way? [

] What kind of relationships are we within through breathing?

[Pause]

I think the breathwork is something very basic, [

] and you feel this hand on you, and just how this hand is following your breath. It's very simple somehow. It's really like you feel an aliveness, and that's what makes you feel very connected also to the world and to other people, to nature, culture.

[Pause]

I mean, of course, we can talk about more abstract ideas of time. That somehow linear time becomes obsolete because we are breathing the breath of dead people that are composted into trees. So, of course, we know that this is an ongoing process, but it's not something that we don't really have access to.

- []

We are just an interval on this timeline.

- [

]

[

] And, I mean, one participant in the workshop talked about taking LSD or that you're just more sensitive towards materialities. [

] and sometimes you can feel like a water wave is running through you and you become like water or fire [

] very concretely in everyday life, in communication with others. Sorry, I lost the question again.

- I'm not sure that was the question.

[

]

- [

] but more a relationship itself. [

] that we are less a subject when we are breathing. We are becoming this breathing subject that is something else, that exists in a different timeline.

[] like this alien feeling a bit. [

] what is becoming a stranger. [

] that we need to be somehow a stranger to ourselves. And that's another quality of the breath that sometimes you can really feel that the breath is something happening to you. [

]

- And I really like the framework of visiting. [

] but in some way I lose the sense of myself, of me being that house and completely just emerged into the breathing. So I feel that the visiting is also over-taking me [

]

[]

- [

] Does that make sense?

[]

- [

]

[pause]

Yeah, I mean the voice.

[pause]

I also like the idea that the voice is not just following logos, let's say, that we're not just expressing what we think but that it transports much more than that. [

]

- [

] this concept of being carried. [

[

] I mean, singing is somehow... In singing the breathing, I mean, singing is breathing. Like, sorry, you have a little insect here... Like, singing is colored breath somehow, you know. But yodeling is more... Yeah, it's different. It's very uncontrolled. [

] this is often something that happens to our voice in uncontrolled situations like the voice break, like in fear or panic or crying.

- [

] that you place yourself outside of these structures that you can control or that you can understand. And sort of moving out of that in order to enable

certain things to happen through you. I'm just wondering in what way do you see this premise of the uncontrolled as a practice in itself? Is there a certain performativity, a certain practice, a certain materiality to the uncontrolled? How do we feel it, sense it, perhaps just within your own experience?

[

] Also it generates trust. But this dimension of the uncontrolled is also what makes it interesting somehow.

- []

[] I can see people are really doing this thing, like negotiating or struggling or in whatever way, but when I see it's not in that sense controlled, [] you can really feel that they are going through an experience. It keeps my interest and my curiosity. [

] because it's also a way of having at least little holes where one can circumvent or disappear for a moment this logic and the control. []

- [] allowing and surrender to it. [

]

[

] That surrendering in the

context of breathwork doesn't mean that you let go of everything or you loosen up completely, but that it's still, that there is still a certain tension in the body, like this heaviness and lightness, [] And it actually also creates trust, [

] And it feels good. [] just walking for hours through the space and feeling to be carried. And it's again something that you only experience in the experience. [

] that there's a continuum of this surrendering. And this also creates, let's say, a whole series of beginnings in a way because it doesn't have this... It doesn't add on, you know. [

]

- [

] in what way does acceptance of death really allow this surrender and can I surrender completely to the breathing and the listening if I don't also surrender to the idea and practice of death and dying and coming to terms with that? [

]

I think it's very important. Yeah, I don't know if I can say more. [

] I can be there, I can be present but I cannot change them [

they are not experiencing the time changing [

] I think that's when
you are stuck in time and you also don't accept the end, then you don't accept that it's a
limited... that we are living in limitations, and that's also a good thing. It gives us an
orientation [

]

- [

] but most of it is likely not for us
because we are very specific beings; we are beings with specific bodies in specific
time and places, and that's a very very small part of all that is [

] sort of a radical unknowingness that I'm living in and with [

]

[

] it's the little tiny things in life, not the heroic stories that always end up in the catastrophic apocalyptic but that life consists of these, or what is of meaning are these, tiny things and this is where I also see a relation to breathing because... it's you know sometimes we are very much focused at aiming at something specific, like the whole self-optimizing discourse [

] but with the breathing if you are like... if you are conscious or if you can feel your rhythm of breath you also feel there's actually already so much there, that doesn't need to be done []

- [

] there's much more within the breathing that I will ever be able to comprehend and that's a powerful thing [

] in what way do you experience
that the breathing is being perhaps if not undermined then just made into a difficulty
rather than at ease?

[
] disruption is also really good so I'm
not seeing it as an imperative but as an experience. It's something flowing, like a wave, that
happens [] we chunk reality into bits and
pieces [] disrupt the connectedness [] just the
way how you touch your child [] I
experience myself like wow I can become really violent when I become impatient [

] this is a big challenge in our life to grow up in a society but then on the
other side I also want to be part of the society [

] I also think it's important to not draw oneself out of the reality
we live in; I mean this reality is very complex and always limited [

]

- [

] it's the right answer to almost everything.

[

] you become somehow also aware of dying because it makes you aware that wow that's the last thing probably I gonna do is to breathe in. I think to die is to... I heard that it's not an out-breath but an in-breath [

]

- I'm wondering, what is breathing after death, because as you said we are breathing the air of our ancestors but in what way does the ancestors remain, or maybe not remain but transform, through the breathing, how does their breathing, their very specific breathing, what is it after the 'bodily' death [

[]

- []

[

] this is happening now but maybe in an hour it's not there anymore so in that sense it's very much in the experience [

]

- [

] staying with a larger truth about how ‘small’ we actually are
because we try to do something that we will definitely fail at [

] we are sitting in a place that is very noisy in a way a lot of things
happening in what way does that influence your thinking and talking within this
conversation about breathing and listening?

I mean I realized that I was super focused now. I wasn't really paying attention. I feel like we
could have sat next to a river in the forest [

] so not thinking I need to be in a specific
place where I can breathe well and be connected to nature [

]

- [

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[

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- Do you have a last note or comment that would be interesting for you to leave there?
Something that can just free float in some way? It can be poetic..

Lately I noticed, I realized, that I'm also busy with, how to be a bit more inclusive, maybe with the breathing, [

] I don't really want to judge this experience. And I know that for many people it's, they can't not even think or have time for it, they are so short of breath, it's completely out of their reality. [

] this is now like a personal story, [

] it's so political. And actually she just feels that she cannot breathe out and it makes her show her limitations that she's not... she needs to protect something.

- [] how both the breathing, but also just giving voice and listening is something to do with pain and grief. That is, not by definition too painful, but it can be... to actually listen, to give yourself time and space when you carry much trauma and grief within you. But at the same time, breathing, and listening, is also a way of living with it, rather than being destroyed by it [

]

[] I'm afraid that it becomes too idealistic, maybe the breathing, that it's something I need to stay in tune and in flow. And for so many people, this flow experience just might not happen because they didn't have it in life. [] how to still include their breaths and their, it's also something very valid and something we can learn from. So I don't have any answers, but it's a wondering [

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- []

[]

- []

Without being like a kind of missionary, you know, because this is also always a danger. But I think you have to leave, right?

- []

[]