

<b>Title</b>	<i>Listening and Grieving (working title)</i>
<b>Conversationalist</b>	Hoda Siahtiri
<b>Conversation number</b>	XIII
<b>Date</b>	9th of July 2023
<b>Place</b>	Pappelallee Cemetery, Berlin
<b>Time of recording</b>	One hour and 9 minutes
<b>Context</b>	The conversation was possible due to our participation in The Listening Academy, Berlin, as part of The Listening Biennial. <a href="https://listeningbiennial.net/">https://listeningbiennial.net/</a> Hoda both spoke about, showcased a part of and facilitated a workshop in relationship to her artistic research work.
<b>Note for conversation</b>	We sat on a bench in the Pappelallee cemetery, a neighboring green space and extension of Ballhaus Ost, where the Listening Academy took place. Kids were running around, lots of insects in the air, and the weather was very warm.

<b>Publisher</b>	Bureau <i>for</i> Listening
<b>Contact Publisher</b>	<a href="https://bureauforlistening.com/">https://bureauforlistening.com/</a> bureauforlistening@gmail.com
<b>Year for publishing</b>	2023
<b>ISBN</b>	

- (Lukas Quist Lund): [

]

(Hoda Siahtiri): [ ] Because within my work I had an answer for you, [ ] I'm not separated from my work really, because it's really kind of my life this project thing.

- [ ]

[ ] there was a whole change actually in what listening means to me or how I relate to listening, I would say. There were different phases and it kept changing. My God, there are many flies here.

- [ ]

[ ]

- [ ]

[ ] different phases, not phases, I would say, they just changed or it was different stages of understanding and relating to listening. Very simply I would say, maybe I'm misjudging myself, but what I remember in the beginning was just not hearing. [

] when you're not really hearing, you're still kind of listening, [

] So your other parts are kind of listening still and there is a trace of listening there, but you don't have access or you're not able to be aware of it or very conscious about it. [

] the fact that I was directed to work with women's voice, especially my female ancestral voice, [

] psychological complications that, yeah, just was looking for a way to survive, you know, out of the amount of the grief I was dealing with. So my listening process maybe started from not hearing anything and then it was very difficult to open, to be honest, it was a difficult process to open, yeah, to open and to start to listen and hear really.

- [ ]

It was painful. It's painful to sit down and listen to your pain. It's just suffering. [

] because by hearing these songs, actually I was activating the whole pain there or I was trying to open up, to listen.

- [ ]

[

] Maybe we go there, these flies are in the way.

*[stopping the recording while moving to a different location.]*

- [ ]

[

] I found out that this listening for me, how it needs to be embodied because I cannot just sit and listen. It's so painful. So when you're in pain, you cannot just sit still. You need to just turn around or twist or, you know, react. And there was a time for me where I recognized that I can listen when I make a little bit of this little noise or sound because it smoothes me from inside.

- [ ]

[  
] my voice is a way of  
listening, which is contradictory because we think that if we want to listen, we have to keep  
silent.

- [ ]

[ ]

- Like voice is not only, to take space. [

] And rarely the  
voice is your own. [  
]

[  
] you know, this  
binary thing of listening and silence, you know, which I really don't believe in. I think to be  
able to listen, we don't need to be silent.

- [ ]

[  
] I see the voice as a limb, as a part of the body. I  
don't think the voice is different... I believe singers are dancers and for me it's the same, so I  
don't really differentiate them. So when I say move, I see it within the general form of really  
moving. Because I think it's also quite physical, it's just not visible.

- [ ]

[  
] It's an extension of the body that is  
not visible.

- [

]

[  
] you touch people, you touch the skin  
with the frequency with your voice waves. [

] I like it to be silent. But before, I was not able to do it for long  
Because the amount of pain I was experiencing was so high. Which didn't make sense just to  
pretend that I'm feeling nothing. And I can keep silent, you know. [

] listening is really... Is in a state of resonance. [

] So we resonate with what we are listening to. [

] If I resonate with you, I listen. But I also can resonate when someone keeps silent. [  
] If that person wants me to. If it's a way of  
communication. [

] It might change, but that's what I think now.

- [

] How has that sort of become both ways? That the listening is  
both a way of the pain emerging. But also a place where the pain can be reacted to.

[

] That's how it is. By listening you discover... Because the pain is

there, you know. So... I was just getting crazy because I was not able to connect to my pain. Or I was trying to not see or not connect or not to listen to. [

] And of course pain is painful. But to be able to calm this down. This painful thing you still need to listen to it. Otherwise you cannot calm it down. [

]

- Calming down, is that a sense of resonating?

[

] Going deep and vibrating deep  
inside the pain. [ ]

- [

]

[ ]

- [

]

Yeah tough because the human body has a certain capacity.

- [ ]

[

] Like putting a knife in  
the body. Or nothing happens.

- Hanging themselves in crooks.

[  
] it all depends on the psyche. Also not to fall apart. Or what we consider as falling apart.

[  
] Or really you said tough. It's the fear of falling apart. It's the fear of annihilation. It's the fear of dying.

- [  
] Is the willingness of the risk. And the flexibility of capacity. [  
]

[  
]

- [  
] quite often if I try to avoid the pain. It is also because of the risk. What I would recognize in confronting this pain. That this pain perhaps holds some vulnerability. A state of vulnerability that I might be afraid of. Or it holds knowledge. In which I would then have to act upon. [  
]

] Does that make sense?

[  
] but why should you want to undo?

- [  
]

]

[  
]

]

- [ ] You then stay in this avoidance. In this fear. So you have already been damaged but it takes courage to open up for it. And there is a risk to embrace the damage.

[ ] Because the damage is there. When we feel pain the damage has happened.

- [ ]

[ ] So the fear for me is a little bit of something that has already happened. [

]

- [ ]

[ ]

- [ ]

[ ]

- [ ]

[

] The pain we are talking about which is coming with listening. And which is coming through grief. Is a psychological pain rather. I mean I don't really like to differentiate physical pain and psychological. Because I think there is no real border. [



] If you don't open up to it, it will damage much more. It will really damage much more. Because it is there and it is working. [

] But of course to take the courage.

I mean who am I to say that. [

] I said a little bit. I asked for help of everything. I asked for help of nature. I asked for help of my ancestors. I was just asking for help from everywhere.

- [

]

Can you say the beginning of your question?

- [

]

[ ]

- [

]

[

] Of course the other voices are needed.

Because I believe... I believe grieving is not a one man work thing. It is a collective thing. It needs support. It needs company. [

] But also collectivity in terms of being connected. To... This collectivity could be also with nature. Or could be with your ancestors. For me going through the lamenting tradition. I was asking and recalling. The voice, the supportive voice of my ancestors. How they were going through pain. So teach me how I can go. And how you can support me within that. Because maybe my body is more affiliated with that. Because you have been doing it in centuries. I don't know about millennia. Or god knows how long. [

] It is not only my voice. It is also the voice of maybe my mother. [

]

- [

] Voice is a witness of more than just who you are right here as an individual. Voices are witnesses to all these things that the voice is able to be of. [

] The voice is a very strong companion, when it comes to listening.

[ ]

- [

]

[ ]

- [

] How is listening then also changing? How is listening not just ‘becoming yourself’, but changing and becoming with-others. [

]

[

] It is like deep in the ocean.

- What do you mean?

It is dark. But the darkness doesn't mean... I don't mean this connotation of darkness as something negative. No, it is just so deep there. It is very dark.

- [

]

It is unknown but it is not only also mysterious. It is just. It is just massive. A massive thing. It is not easy to see. It is not easy to deal with. And for sure something that we don't have direct access to. We are avoiding it. Or we are scared to go alone. [

] And

you recognize that it is such a palpable thing. Of everyday life. So we all grieve. Everyone grieves. It is grieving. Because we all experience loss. But it is just the level of the loss. It is just sometimes the loss is how big it is. [

]

Again. We all deal with loss. Every human being. It is impossible not to.

- [ ] But also that we deal with loss together.

Yes. We do. But we do it in different ways. And we do it in different stages. So what is beautiful about collective grieving? For me. That is what I am also very fascinated with in communities. And rituals. Of giving space to such practices. Because it is impossible to take

it away from human life. [

] animals also grieve. [

]

- [ ]

[

] If we understand that in a big sense. Or in a more... Cosmic sense. We are all experiencing that. Through maybe collective grief. Then it is also easier to go through.

- [

] In some ways it is just. Breathing. It is just having our voice. It is just letting it become part of our idea of being. [

] It is really just allowing it to happen. It is not some big invention. It is not something you have to study for. You just have to allow it to be there, invite it in. [

]

[

]

- [ ]

[ ] Because unfortunately we are living in a dominant system. Where everything needs to be efficient within only one definition of efficiency.

- [ ]

[ ]

- [ ]

[ ]

- [ ]

[

] And it is becoming more and more stigmatized, which is likely to be considered as witchcraft. Or weird. Or whatever that you cannot perceive and analyze with your frontal part of your brain.

- [ ]

] I believe humans, I mean from a social science perspective, human beings are always in transformation. [ ] And also I hope, we survive. If we don't survive. It is ok also. But I hope we can transform. And then within this transformation. We also have to build up again our collective practices of grief. Otherwise it is impossible. It is impossible to continue.

- [

] But everything is affected by grief. [

] But the grief of trees, stones, rivers. The planet. I don't  
know how and in what way to describe it. [

]

[

]

- [

]

[

]

- [

]

[

]

- [

]

[ ]

- [

] How

does listening manifest itself? How do we touch it? How do we act upon it? In relation to these, pains and grievances. [

]

[

- [

For me it is my artwork. And it is when I sing. It is really that. I don't know why. I found myself there. It was not a decision. I just found myself. I am very sensitive to pain. What comes out is actually the result of listening to it. [

]

- [

[ It is my voice. I sing the pain. Of loss. And I don't know. How it just happened.

- [

] It is more me who has to be allowed in.

[ I just mostly don't say it. Because it might be perceived as some sort of a schizophrenic type of thing.

- [ It is something we say when we sense that the other person understands what I mean to say.[

]

[ ] Maybe in 30 years I will be the song of joy. Or something. But that is who I am. [ ]

- You will be many different songs.

[ ]

- [ ]

] ]

[ ]

- [ ]

] ]

[ ] Laman singing exists all around the world. It is just part of... I mean Laman has very different shapes. And forms. It also depends on which context. And which region. [ ]

[ ] in French they call it pleureuse. We do not have it in English? Someone who makes others cry. Or help them to cry. [ ]

[ ] In this form it exists in Iran. Because this nation, the Bakhtiari nation, they have been nomads. [ ]

] ]



Women gather for the community. It is what they do. For themselves and for the community. When a big loss happens. Basically you learn, by growing up in the community, these songs. Because there is always someone who is dying. Most of the time. And your mother or aunt, your sister or grandmother, one of them knows how to sing. You have heard it. [

] It is named Go Giriv or Suru. It is a lamentation. It means to say and to cry. I don't know. [ ]

- [ ]

[

] There were occasions that I heard it. If you are not living in that area. You don't hear it.

- [

]

[ ]

- [

]

[ ] We try to transform our old traditions. Not to let them die. Not because they should not die. Just because they are important. They are useful for us as humans to continue. [

] And many people told me the same as you said. Like we need this regularly. We need it at least once a month. Or no, maybe it is too much. Every Saturday, every season. I was like I agree. I myself need it. I need to grieve in a collective way. Because the energy that we release through collective grief, through voice, is so powerful. It is so powerful.

- [

]

[

] When people opened up their voice. I could hear the whole planet.

- [ ]

[

]

- [ ]

[ ] Or in their cellular memory. And then I could just. Like recognize.  
Wow. Different tonalities we have from different places. All around the world. And the power  
it had.

- [ ]

]

[

]

Totally nonsense. Because you can never achieve that. It is always a path. That always you  
have to try. With its own ups and downs. Which can get super hard. Super tough. So this is  
also with grief. Grief is not something that you say. Ok. I grieve and I am good. Goodbye. I  
am going and I am productive.

- [ ]

Grief never disappears. Never. Grief just transforms in different ways. But never disappears.

[

]

- [

] I think there is a lot of grief on a level of the unknown.

Like with the species that we don't even know about, but that is dying out. We can still feel it.

[ ]

- [

] There is not a situation where

things are fixed. So these vibrations of unknowns. That just goes through us. Is what we should adapt to in some way. [

]

[ ]

- [ ]

[ ]

- [

]

[

]

- [

] And because of certain systems. Only certain ways of crying are being acknowledged. And shared publicly. And understood. And all the other marginalized ways of crying. They are just pushed out. [

] And you can 'hide' within the collective. To have another kind of way of crying. One that you cannot carry on your own.

That is the thing of collectiveness. You cannot carry things alone. So we carry together. That is why we are kind of social beings.

- But I think the same is true about listening. [ ] structures benefit certain kinds of listening. Certain kinds of care. Certain kinds of having a voice.

[ ]

- [

]

[

]

- [

]

[

]

- [

]

[

]

- [

] How is

it to talk about? [

]

[ ] It is really my topic. I am kind of at ease.  
To talk about it. It is really... A little bit of difficulty. With sometimes noise, distraction. Or  
dogs or human passing. But I find it quite interesting. Because also... There is a way of also  
thinking-writing. But there is also a way of thinking-talking. [

]

- [

]

[ ]

- [

]

[

]

- [

]

[

] I know we can only do it when we are invited.

- [

] We never talked about that. How the  
invitation is a premise. For the collective. And the allowance.

[

]

- [ ]

[ ]

- [ ]

[

] For me this is a jewel. If someone understands how valuable this jewel is, I would love to share it. If not, I am not going.

- [ ]

[ ]

- [ ]

[ ] But of course. It is also a lot of work. To see and think that. What are the places now? Within this context. In this locality. In this time, what provides a place for people. And means. Means and place to gather together. And do such things.

- [ ]

[ ]

- [ ]



[ ]

- [ ]

But at the same time. Not one person can do everything. It is a collective work.

- [ ]

[ ]