Collaborative Filmmaking and the Sonic Ecology of Adivasi Landscapes

How can multisensory and decolonial approaches contribute to a better understanding of Adivasi land dispossession and enhance transcultural resonance?

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Abstract

Dit etnografisch onderzoek situeert zich in de context van Adivasi-landonteigening ten gevolge van de koolmijnontginning in Jharkhand (Oost-India). Door de integratie van dekoloniale en multisensorische methoden gaat deze studie verder dan rationele discoursen en erkent het belang van onze zintuiglijke waarneming. De verkenning van het Adivasi-geluidslandschap gaat gepaard met deze geschreven reflectie op het participatieve en collaboratief filmmaakproces. Multisensorische en feministische kaders zoals 'Standpoint Theory', 'Speaking Nearby', 'Triangular Relationship' en 'Sonic Ecology' vormen de blauwdruk van de bijhorende kortfilm, waarin de echo's van deze benaderingen verweven worden in het narratief.

Dit onderzoeksproject streeft naar het vestigen van een driehoeksverhouding tussen etnograaf/subject/zintuig op een cultureel gevoeligere manier. Het draagt vandaar bij aan de dekolonisatie van de visuele etnografie. Door verschillende kwalitatieve onderzoeksmethodes zoals interviews, visuele bronanalyse en perceptie-analyses samen te brengen werd een cultuursensitiever, participatief en collaboratief filmproject ontwikkeld. De data van het *'embodied'* luik werd voornamelijk verzameld door middel van auditieve indrukken. Desondanks, was visueel materiaal noodzakelijk om de context van Adivasi-ontheming op een begrijpelijke manier te schetsen. Experimentele audiovisuele composities brengen conflicterende Adivasi land- en geluidscapes samen om gevoelens van resonantie op te wekken. De kortfilm, genaamd 'de Sonic Ecology of Adivasi Landschapes', draagt vandaar bij aan een versterking van cross-culturele intimiteit tussen de perceptor en contrasterende, sonische Adivasi-ecologieën beïnvloed door de dreiging van extractivisme.

Dit artikel zal onderzoeken hoe interculturele sensibilisering rond het thema van Adivasi-landonteigening kan worden verhoogd via cultuursensitieve benaderingen. Aan de hand van perceptie-analyses, zullen we de verschillen in resonanties bespreken en de implicatie hiervan voor het collaboratief filmmaakproces.
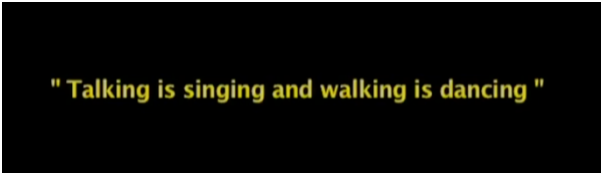

Trefwoorden: Adivasi, landonteigening, dekoloniaal onderzoek, multisensorische etnografie, Jharkhand, collaboratief filmmaken, culturele sensitiviteit, visuele cultuur.

Keywords: Adivasi, displacement, decolonial research, multisensory ethnography, Jharkhand, collaborative filmmaking, cultural sensitivity, visual culture

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Introduction

*Figure 1 Source: AKHRA Production (2020). 'Sona Gahi Pinjra'
/ 'The Golden Cage'*

An ancient Adivasi proverb tells us: *Kaji Ge Durang* (speaking is singing), *Senge Susun* (walking is dancing)[1]. In Adivasi culture, there is a great emphasis on the emotional, lyrical and dynamic aspects of life, rather than the static and rational. While singing and dancing, people tell us stories to the Akhra[2] (Hoffman, 1907). The increasing demand for India's minerals and other natural resources has led to the erosion of these stories. When Adivasi land is seized, their entire culture, along with the ecosystem that supports it, is endangered. Jharkhand is one of India's richest states in terms of minerals and is often referred to as India's 'mineral basket' because of its abundant mineral reserves. Jharkhand holds around 27% of India's coal reserves, around 26% of iron ore reserves, around 20% of copper ore reserves and 18% of bauxite reserves. Therefore, every Adivasi person in Jharkhand is somehow affected by the problem of displacement. Rehabilitation programmes under the guise of 'modernisation' fall significantly short and take a high cultural toll (Appendix 1.20). Displacement exposes Adivasi communities to malnutrition, unemployment, marginalisation, psychological problems and other hardships (Bose, Banerjee, Mukhopadhyay, & Bhadra, 2006).

This ethnographic research centralises it around the displacement of Adivasi people in Jharkhand. I choose to move away from descriptive, rational discourses by integrating various decolonial and multisensory research methods into a collaborative film project. By engaging with rhythms and resonance, I aim to acknowledge Indigenous, feminist and decolonial epistemologies, whose intersections are reflected in this dissertation. The preference for rationality and objectivity in research is deeply rooted in patriarchal and colonial structures. Historically, these norms were promoted as neutral and universal, but they are often based on western, male perspectives and have marginalised other forms of knowledge. These approaches reflect colonial hierarchies in which Western knowledge was considered superior (Harding, 1995).

In the first part, I will elaborate on these ethical considerations using various cornerstones such as 'Speaking Nearby' (Trinh, 1994), 'Triangular Relationship' (Davis, 2000), 'Standpoint Theory' (Harding, 2004), and 'Becoming Indigenous' (Kimmerer, 2013). The integration of these principles sustained a *more* culturally sensitive way of collaborating. In PART 2 'Methodology', the two central research methods will be discussed. We will explore how the 'Multisensory Turn' can be applied to achieve a paradigm shift. By responding to the sensory factors that shape the ethnographic context, it becomes clear how a more intimate connection with the research field is established. These decolonial methods led to the development of a participatory and collaborative film project approaching Adivasi

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[1] Translated from Mandari to English.

[2] The Akhra is a circular cultural space in the center of the village. Traditionally, they come here together to celebrate, share stories, thoughts and concerns in the form of dances and songs (Personal conversation, Appendix 1.19). Many people I spoke with expressed their deep sadness over the fading use of the Akhra, a space so vital to the expression and preservation of Adivasi culture.

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displacement in Jharkhand. By engagement of not only local villagers but also the film's audience (see PART 3) in the filmmaking process, I will translate the beforementioned approaches into a community-driven film process exploring the Adivasi soundscapes. The short film accompanying this dissertation, is in no way an attempt to represent struggles of Adivasi displacement in a comprehensive way. It is rather an experimental composition of glimpses of that environment. However, it does aims to establish a deeper sensitization towards the conflicting rhythms shaping temporary Adivasi landscapes.

By collaborating with Akhra (see Appendix 7), a documentary production house in line with my belief in the activist potential of audiovisual media, I discovered a way to carry out audiovisual ethnography within an Adivasi village 'Kotari' in Ranchi District. Akhra's expertise in the activistic audiovisual field enabled me to engage with the visual culture of Jharkhand, bridging the insider/outsider gap, which I will reflect on deeper in the next section. Thanks to the collaboration between USOS[3] and Ranchi's university 'XISS'[4], I had the opportunity to visit the Tapin North coal mine and a nearby coal plant during my first period of stay in Ranchi. Here I collected a significant amount of audiovisual material and gained insight into the dominant 'development' perspective. However, this also provided a distance from grassroots voices, limiting my intimate understanding of daily life within Adivasi communities. Given time constraints, I considered an alternative research direction that would not require extensive ethnographic fieldwork in an Adivasi community. However, after three weeks in Ranchi, I had established a strong friendship with Shankhu, affiliated to Akhra. During my solo journey in India, I continued to delve into multisensory ethnographic literature with a specific interest in sound. After calling Shankhu to share my interest in making an experimental short film, he directly wanted to collaborate, so I decided to shift my focus to collaborative, multisensory research.

I invite you to read this dissertation before sensing our collaborative film process. This academic text forms the foundation upon which the filmmaking process rests. I am not only referring to a 'process' or 'project' because the final cut, sound mastering, and visual colors are still in progress but also because the collaborative process of ethnographic filmmaking and research is never complete. As long our ethnographic research projects are experienced by sensers, new interpretations and perspectives are co-created. "A book read by a thousand different people is a thousand different books" (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1983).

I welcome you to immerse yourself fully, allowing your senses to resonate and intertwine with the experience of reading this thesis. As you engage with the words on the page, let yourself become aware not only of the content but also of the physical context in which you find yourself. You are not merely reading; you are also breathing, feeling, listening, tasting, and seeing, creating a unique, intimate connection between this text, your body, and the environment surrounding you. Beyond the words, there are colors, shades, and subtle impressions that shape this moment, forging a singular interaction that transcends the intellectual and becomes a sensory experience.

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[3] The university's development foundation at the University of Antwerp.
4 Xavier Institute of Social Service, Ranchi.

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PART 1. Cultural Sensitivity in Multisensory Ethnography

1. Subjectivity and Reflexivity in Ethnographic Practice

This research is a blend of different methods that can be placed under the umbrella of ethnographic research. Ethnographic fieldwork allows me to gain insight into the living environment of some Adivasi people in Jharkhand. Because this research method is based on subjective experiences and therefore distinguishes itself from objective sciences, there is an ongoing dialogue with yourself as a researcher and critical self-reflection (Hoey, 2014). Everyday activities are seen within ethnographic fieldwork as the result of individuals interacting with the structures of 'culture'. Thus, these structures are not seen as something separate from the everyday (Herbert, 2000). Both the researcher and the participants are subject to different worlds. The experience of these worlds is based on different self-identities. These identities are in turn colored, classified and gendered. Therefore, it is always important to become aware of your own history and the impact of categorizations, as well as that of the subject (Crang & Cook, 2007). Ethnographic fieldwork research arose from the need to understand real people's worldviews and lifestyles in the context of their everyday experiences (Crang & Cook, 2007).

In the literature, research participants are often referred to as informants. In contrast, I agree with Crang & Cook (2007), who speak of 'intersubjective perspectives'. According to them, it is not possible to separate the subject from the object. Therefore, it is important for a researcher to become aware of their own positionality, not only of how they are 'immersed' in the community being studied, but also how they are immersed as a researcher and research object in other communities. The boundaries between the working field and academic field blur during most participatory observations, with the researcher's academic background influencing perspectives in the field and vice versa (2007: 40).

After all, I grew up in a white middle-class Flemish household. Even though as a woman, I have dealt with sexism throughout my life, I have little personal experience of structural discrimination. I was fortunate to have the opportunities to study and through these studies I became more aware of the different political and economic structures that underlie inequality and the loss of respect for non-human entities. This awareness has greatly influenced my lifestyle and my interest in human and environmental rights advocacy.

Figure 2 Screenshot from our film at 15:15.

Despite my attempt to represent these struggles in a decolonial way by giving as much voice as possible to the communities themselves, these collected data are still processed by me. Through collaborative filmmaking, I tried to involve the community in the research as much as possible. You will also see myself appearing in the film as the local people who participated in the recording process, thought I was also an important character to frame. This allows me to provide not only written but also visual

transparency of my presence. However, the choice of this methodology was still my own subjective choice, making my biases impossible to fully eliminate.

Figure 3 Appearance of co-director Shankhu at 9:16.

Figure 4 Metacinematic element at 9:07.
Revealing the 'corporeal' character of image-making (see part 2.1).

2. Challenging Dominant Discourses and Embracing Standpoint Epistemology

To go beyond the limits of academic perspectives, I decided to build this research upon standpoint epistemologies. Sandra Harding (2004) is known for introducing the concept of 'Standpoint Theory', which is rooted in feminist epistemology and the idea of 'situated knowledge'. This perspective emphasizes that knowledge is shaped by the individual's unique viewpoint. It challenges traditional paradigms that marginalize women and limit academic discussions by prioritizing a limited notion of objectivity. Standpoint Theory asserts that knowledge is influenced by social context, drawing on Marxist principles to suggest that those in positions of privilege may struggle to understand the perspectives of marginalized groups. By means of interviews, audiovisual ethnographic (field)work and collaborative filmmaking, I attempted to grab these voices which I anonymized due to respect for their privacy and the unstable socio-political contexts. These interviews have been mapped and attached at the end of this dissertation (Appendix 1). Also, poetry is one of those means of expression to give voice to individuals excluded from more formal ways of communicating in the public sphere (Paiva, 2020). This echoes Audre Lorde's assertion statement 'poetry is not a luxury'. According to Lorde (2018) poetry is especially important for marginalized and oppressed communities as it is a vital, necessary practice for survival and liberation, rather than a mere pleasure. I had the honor to collaborate with Jacinta Kerketta, an outstanding Adivasi poetry writer who shares parts from two of her poems she chose to integrate in the film.

In order to preserve their culture and claim rights, IP's[5] must adopt legal discourse and thus appropriate the language of the oppressor (Castillo et al., 2017). According to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988), the Western language discourse is deeply rooted in colonial and imperialist legacies, embodying power dynamics that favor specific voices and viewpoints while sidelining others. She scrutinizes this discourse for perpetuating hierarchies and exclusions, especially in its portrayal of marginalized communities. She proposes the use of alternative forms of communication, such as arts and cultural expressions, as well as accessible language, in allowing marginalized voices to be heard and understood on their own terms. Through artistic forms, linguistic barriers can be transcended and marginalized groups can assert their identities and narratives. By employing clear and relatable language, marginalized voices can broaden their reach and confront prevailing discourses effectively. Spivak's work acknowledges the power of creativity and storytelling in empowering marginalized groups to articulate their experiences and assert their agency (1988).

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[5] IP: abbreviation of 'Indigenous People'.

3. 'Speaking Nearby'

Another major inspiration for this thesis is Vietnamese filmmaker and professor Trinh T. Minh-Ha. Her films are characterized by a feminist and experimental approach with nomadic stylistic features. She herself does not categorise her work within one movement but bases it on the impressions she gets from the studied environment such as stories, songs, sounds, daily life and so on. Minh-Ha speaks of 'speaking nearby' (Trinh, 1992). She questions the hierarchical relationship between researcher and research subject. In film, this relationship often translates into an external narration speaking about the subject. Minh-Ha makes space for a multiplicity of voices including songs, marginalized individuals, poetry, taxi driver conversations, and street sounds. This multiplicity reflects a commitment to capturing the complexity and diversity of human experiences. Furthermore, she uses the concept of speaking nearby to critique the notion that cultural ownership is based on place of birth. By speaking intimately alongside people rather than on top of them, we can transcend geographic contexts, fostering a sense of closeness regardless of location (2023). I consider Trinh's films as 'Reassamblage' (1982) and 'Surname Viet Given Name Nam' (1989) as an expression of documentary art. Documentary art is seen by Rochelle Davis (2000) as anthropological research in the form of art. An art that, like anthropology, involves three fields: the subject (fieldwork reality), the audience (imagined reality), and the anthropologist (the interpreted reality). Gell (1998) views anthropological art as an actor that represents social relationships. It is essentially a living object that seeks to change the world rather than merely display symbolic meanings. Consequently, the collaborative film accompanying this thesis is an expression of a multimodal and interactive documentary art practice.

When Trinh (1992) is speaking about 'speaking nearby', Davis (2000) talks about the 'Triangular Relationship' in documentary art. This relationship explores ethical and power dynamics between the filmmaker, the subjects and the audience/sensers. Battaglia (2014) calls the focus on these three cornerstones the 'study of image-making'. Image-making is seen as the product of an entangled relationship between the image-maker, the image-subject, and the image-viewer. Personally, I prefer to use the term 'sensor' instead of 'audience' or 'image-viewer' as it involves not just a viewing experience but a multisensory one (see 7.2). In chapter 7.3, I will explain how I the fluid roles of the subjects and sensers allowed them to take on the role of co-creators, decolonizing ethnographic research and the hierarchy between filmmaker, subject and audience/senser. Studying the audience/sensers is more related to the field of cultural production, which determines power relations around art forms (Bourdieu, 1993). Questions such as: in what way are these media forms constructed, what attracts attention, how is it interpreted; are important reflections to understand how media representations are received (Bourdieu, 1993; Ginsburg, 1994; Battaglia, 2014).

4. Exploring Indigeneity through a Decolonial Lens

As the Adivasi people's main identity marker refers to their Indigeneity[6], I will try to give you a glimpse of how 'being Indigenous to a place' can be understood. I will refer to Kimmerer (2013), a Native American ecologist, professor, and author whose vision I deeply resonate with. As a mother and scholar, she embraces more fluid and contemporary forms of Indigeneity. According to her, 'Indigenous' to a place means applying a set of values. To live as if the future of the following generations mattered. To care for the land as if both our material and spiritual existence depend on it. Cosmologies, like creation stories, are a way by which we identify and orient ourselves in relation to the world.

"They tell us who we are. We are inevitably shaped by them no matter how distant they may be from our consciousness. One story leads to the generous embrace of the living world, the other to banishment. One woman is our ancestral gardener, a cocreator of the good green world that would be the home of her descendants. The other was an exile, just passing through an alien world on a rough road to her real home in heaven." (Kimmerer, 2013: 7).

In India, there is significant debate about who is truly Adivasi since it is a country with such a rich history of migration and ultimately no one is truly Adivasi (Alles, 2017). I have left exploration of Adivasi migration history outside the scope of this research. I align with Kimmerer's assertion that indigeneity is defined by living in harmony and respect for Mother Nature. The Adivasis are a people who worship Mother Nature and have a close relationship with their ancestors. Their religion is called '*Sarnaism*[7]'. Sacred groves, trees, rivers, mountains, and other natural elements are perceived as manifestations of the divine. Living in harmony with nature is therefore a central moral code for the Adivasi community. For example, the transitions of seasons are celebrated with festivals where seasonal songs and dances are performed to worship nature. *Karam* and *Sarhul* are examples of these festivals (Singhal, Ghosh & Bhat, 2021). I acknowledge that this is just a superficial observation of myself who did not spend sufficient time with these communities to really grasp the deep significance of what taking care of the land, truly means to these people. However, as a student and someone with a deep care for our ecosystem, eager to learn from ancestral knowledges, I tried to come a little closer to these cosmologies by asking questions about it during my interviews (Appendix 1) and personal meetings with Adivasi friends.

During processes of displacement, enormous pressure is put on the preservation of cultural traditions. Bijan[8] raised the rhetorical question of what to do with nature gods and ancestors when one moves. How do you take these entities, which are inherently linked to the land, with you to the new settlement? How do you ensure that these spiritual connections, and thus the Adivasi identity, is not getting lost? (Appendix 1.2 to 1.4). I invite you to resonate with this Adivasi poem below to leave my own interpretations behind.

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[6] *Adi* means 'original', *-vasi* stands for 'inhabitant'.

7 Today, the religious practices of the Adivasis have been greatly influenced by Hindu and Christian religions. Some speak of Hinduization strategies to commit a cultural genocide on the Adivasi belief system (Shekhar, 2015).

8 Bijan is the alias I use to refer to an Oraon activist whom I interviewed.

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the ancestors. Then the priest addresses the Great Spirit, Mother Earth, the house spirits, water spirits, village spirits and the ancestors, and he sacrifices the chickens meant for them and offers the rice beer.

The content of the prayer words used by the priest and his associates is aproximately as follows (This is applicable to most occasions with slight differences. All rituals have the earth as their focus as she is the primary source of survival and security for the Adivasis, whether it is the seed sowing occasion of hope or the bringing in of the new harvest):

Oh Great Spirit of high heavens.
Mother Earth down below.
You rise like milk,
you set like curd.
Four corners, ten directions,
East, west, north, south.
The earth extending far,
the sky bending low,
spread like a mat,
covered like a bowl.
Plants and trees, animals and birds,
forests and hills, rivers and plains.
They are all your creation,
they are all your making,
they are all supported by you,
they are all protected by you.

Today, on this day of Sarhul,
today, on this day of festivity,
we, your children, we, your off-spring,
we invite you, we call upon you,
Come and sit with us, come and talk with us.
A cup of rice beer,

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a plate of mixed gruel.
You drink with us, you eat with us.

The hill spirits of the hill,
the forest spirits of the forest,
the water spirits of the deep,
the *Nag, Nagin* and others
who watch our fields,
who protect our wealth,
who give success at hunt,
who dispell sickness and misery,
when afflicted with stomach ache
and head ache,
you protect us and give us peace.

The village spirits of the village,
the house spirit of the house,
our elders, our foreparents, our ancestors,
the path you made, the road you showed,
we follow after you, we emulate your example.
We invite you, we call upon you.
You sit with us, you talk with us.
A cup of rice beer,
a plate of mixed gruel.
You drink with us, you eat with us.

You who have come here,
you who have arrived here,
we sitting with you,
we seated with you,
To you gods, to you goddesses,
we offer a prayer, we make a request,
our cultivation and crops,
our animals and wealth,
may they grow day by day,

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may they multiply always.
On the road we tread, on the path we walk,
let there be no threat of tigers,
let there be no fear of snakes,
let there be no splinter,
let there be no stumbling.
Jealousy among us,
anger and greed among us,
let them be uprooted, let them be destroyed.
Sickness and trouble, pain and misery,
whichever direction they may come from,
let them go back in the same direction,
let them return to the same direction.

From you gods, from you goddesses,
we expect these things,
we hope for these things.

Johar! Johar! Johar!

Along with the priest, his associates and the elders, everyone makes the rice offering (*akshat-dan*). After their "Johar" greetings, flowers and sacrificial food is distributed and with this begins – with the initiative of the priest – the sequence of song and dance. In the meantime nearby a mixed gruel is prepared with rice, *urad* and the meat. A second round of sacrificial meal is distributed. The elderly get to drink some rice beer too. After a brief performance of music and dance, people come back to the village. The priest is escorted to his home. In the evening people meet in the dance ground and the programme of music and dance goes on for the whole night.

The third day is given to eating and drinking with the guests and kins. In the evening is celebrated the intervillage 'fare-
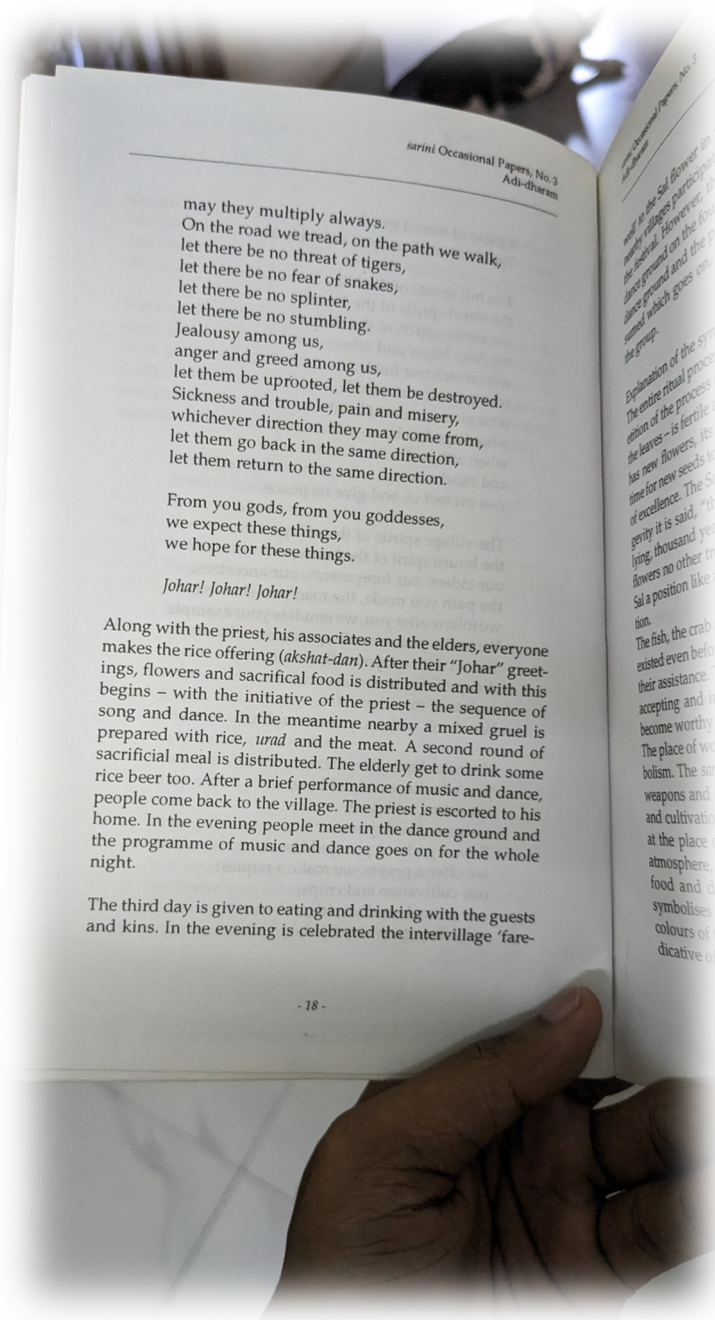
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Figure 5 Passage out of the book 'Adi-Dharam', written and collected by the Adivasi Icon Ram Dayal Munda in 2000. It is a mantra that is sung during Sarhul (see supra).

PART 2. Methodology

This research is based upon of entanglement of different qualitative methodologies, all of which have contributed to the creation of a collaborative film project. Initially I intended to frame my method through a timeline but soon I realized I that it is not possible to make a chronological timeline of the methods I used. Throughout the whole project, I consulted literature, watched documentaries, I (re)read indigenous poetry, listened their songs, I visited Jharkhand a second time, conducted audiovisual ethnographic fieldwork in different places in Jharkhand, continued with interviews, continued to work online with Shankhu, organised a film screening in Barcelona, continued to work on the film to organize another film screening in Belgium, then again interwove this feedback into the film to consult literature again and so on. Even after the submission of this thesis, I do not see the process of collaborative ethnographic filmmaking as finished. Partly because Shankhu and I aspire to submit the film in some short-film festivals after it went through a professional sound mastering. Secondly, I believe that as long as people will continue to (re)interpretate this thesis and our film, this project is alive (see Introduction).

Through this blend of methods, I aim to contribute to the decolonisation of academic research. This interest got sparked while writing my previous master's thesis as part of achieving a master's degree in 'Gender and Diversity' at Ghent University. In this frame, I travelled to Caquetá, a region located in the Amazon forest of Colombia. After writing this thesis (Verhaeghe, 2022), I was happy I had expanded my knowledge about the intersection between gender, *Witoto* Indigeneity and the fight for territorial rights, however I still felt a kind of unease. I was namely asking myself the question: "what contribution have I made now?". On the one hand, this process was certainly relevant to the Colombian NGO 'Colectivo Proterra' as I incorporated many of their and their partners' insights and working methods. I also wrote in English so I could share it with other stakeholders and people with interest. However, the thesis was limited to them skilled in English and academic jargon, so it was not accessible to the *Witoto* women, whose standpoints formed the basis of my research. I decided to pursue this master's degree in 'Film and Visual Culture' as I believe audio-visual media have an enormous potential to decolonize research, especially with today's video technologies. It creates new possibilities to collaborate with vulnerable communities and, despite coming from very distinct worlds, meet each other in a co-created framework that transcends language barriers. In the filmography you will find a link to this co-created framework called 'the Sonic Ecology of Adivasi landscapes' (2024).

Below, I will elaborate on the different intertwined methods characterizing this process. The following chapter examines the four methods shaping the further research. The first three, 'literature study and interviews', 'the multisensory turn' and 'Jharkhand's visual culture', were mainly applied during my first stay in Ranchi. Then I was still considering to only focus on these methods in case collaborative filmmaking was not possible. Further, I will deeper elaborate on the engagement with our sonic environment as a form of embodied research. By deepening myself into these practices I felt prepared to start a collaborative filmmaking project in a culturally sensitive way. However here I question again the limits of cultural sensitivity, so I rather refer to a *more* culturally sensitive approach. This community-driven process is explained in part 7.3.

1. Literature study and Interviews

For my literature review, I mainly relied on publications that resulted from the interaction between the academic field and IP's (see Part 1 and References). Including IPs in the reference list is indispensable when you want to decolonize research (Smith, 1999) and work with standpoint epistemologies (Harding, 2004). Although I left Belgium with the idea of making an ethnographic film around the Adivasi struggles, I have always left a lot of room to possibly go for a different research topic, depending on the opportunities that present themselves in the field. According to Crang & Cook (2007), ethnographic fieldwork does not start with a hypothesis subsequently tested in the field. In order to decolonize ethnographic research, it is important to let the research context reveal your research question, namely that what is relevant for the community (Smith, 1999). Initially, I travelled with a group of students affiliated with USOS. This gave me the opportunity to meet Academic circles as well as NGOs in Delhi and Ranchi researching and supporting the Adivasi movement. Through this network, I was able to conduct interviews with experts and activists to understand more about the socio-political context of the Adivasi struggles (see Appendix 1). Due to our short stay in Ranchi, I did not immediately see a way to make an ethnographic film. Not only because 3 weeks is short to establish close relationships with Adivasi activists but also because I was involved in the exchange program of USOS through which I could establish relationship closer to the academic field. I also did not want to force an encounter in an Adivasi community but rather let such invitations come to me. Therefore, I decided to conduct interviews about Adivasi representation through music and documentary arts and choose a relevant theme from this. At that time, I did not yet realize that this research was also crucial in developing a *more* culturally sensitive approach (see supra). Mainly because during this period I established close relationships with Adivasi activists based in Ranchi and gathered standpoint information about the historical context, local customs, the current socio-political geography of the Jharkhand Adivasis, etc.

I had the honor to conduct interviews with spokespeople from the 'Save the Forest Movement', local politicians, Adivasi filmmakers, professors, a well-known Adivasi poet, musicians, and local activists. A diverse group of admiring people who all devoted their work and life to the movement in their own interesting way. With another USOS student, I interviewed a coal mine leader with a very neoliberal vision. However, I believe the exploration of this thinking and its different embeddings, is essential for (critical) research.

Most interviews have been transcribed and then categorized thematically. I consistently sought oral informed consent from these participants. Most interviewees gave me permission to publish their real names, however I decided to protect their full privacy. Regarding the film project, all participants gave their permission to publish their faces. We ensured that we would respect the wishes of anyone who did not want to appear in the movie or be included in this dissertation. Should there be any interest or inquiries regarding the transcripts or recordings of this research, please feel free to send an email to luca.v@hotmail.com. In the appendix you will find back mind maps summarizing the interviews into thematic analyses. These thematic analyses have been coded by ChatGPT as the use of Nvivo was reaching too far for the scope of this thesis. To make it visually more interesting and easier to interpretate, I used Canva templates. This more conventional basis of ethnographic research formed the background to interact with the approaches I will discuss below.

2. Multisensory turn

According to David Macdougall, pioneer in visual ethnography, and Steven Feld, pioneer in sound studies, ethnography has been dominated by visual and discursive forms that reduce all knowledge to 'information'. Authors like Pink (2009), Erlmann (2010), Paiva (2020) and Paolo (2022), criticize the privileging of rationality over affectivity, which can lead to a narrow and biased understanding of human experiences. They warn about the limits of written notes, which can perpetuate biases and hinder present engagement. Not only the aural but the interplay between the aural, tactical and visual is underestimated in studying society (Feld, 1996; Macdougall, 2005). These pioneers argue for more embodied ethnographic research (Macdougall, 2005: 60, Feld, 1996: 94-96). They are concerned about further fragmentation of ethnographic research because of the focus on certain specific modalities (the aural, the visual, the descriptive, etc.). Therefore, they question how we can apply these modalities not separately but as an interplay (Macdougall, 2005: 60).

However, a shift has taken place in ethnographic research interacting with images, image-making, and visual matters (Paolo, 2020). Scholars are increasingly dismantling the separation of vision from other senses. Vision intertwines with touch, smell, and feeling, distributed throughout the nervous system (Gallese, 2009; Ramachandran, 1999). This underscores the multisensory terrain enabled by digital media leading to the shift of exclusively visual essays to audio-visual-sensory essays (Paolo, 2022). Feminist anthropologist, Sarah Pink (2009), delves into the multi-sensory dimensions of ethnographic research, emphasizing the limitations of conventional scholarly practice in capturing the directness of sensory and affective experiences. She draws on Peter Biella's (2009) proposition regarding the power of ethnographic films to foster increased awareness and compassion, highlighting their ability to convey a sense of virtual intimacy. Furthermore, Pink (2009) discusses the unique qualities of soundscape composition in ethnographic representation, emphasizing the nuanced meanings embedded in sound and silence. She suggests that sound recordings offer a distinct route to intimacy, allowing listeners to engage with the sensory landscape of the research context. Through careful consideration of sound as a form of place-making, ethnographers can enhance intercultural awareness and understanding. However, this multisensory terrain does not only open the door towards digital media but also towards the use of poetry as stated by Paiva (2020). In her insightful exploration of poetry as a method of resonance from a multi-sensory perspective, Paiva (2020) illuminates the transformative potential of poetic expression. Paiva's work challenges entrenched divisions between reasoning and affect, advocating instead for empathy across differences. This perspective resonates deeply with Erlmann's (2010) critique of Cartesian rationalism, which tends to prioritize reflective thinking and visual perception while marginalizing other sensory modalities. Erlmann (2010) argues for the inclusion of resonance as an alternative metaphor for reasoning, noting its historical presence in philosophical discourse. Resonance, he contends, offers a more holistic understanding of cognition by acknowledging the interconnectedness of subjects and objects through shared sensations, affects, or experiences.

आकाश में उगते कपास

अनंत आकाश
को जो है कपास।

...रेब रहा ऐसे हाथों को
...गा सकते हों,

Clouds of cotton growing in the sky

Sky, vast and unending,
Sowing out seeds of cotton.

It seeks such hands
That can grow this radiant shine.
But all it can see on Earth
Is hands being chopped off
Along with the ripe crops
In the machines of Time.

There are hands that wish
To sew up with a single-coloured thread
The motley layers of the soil.
But these hands fear those
Of the peasant woman sewing quilts,
For in her quilt-sewing fingers
Lies the power
To bring to life the cotton in the fabric,
To weave together every colour,
To breathe new life into the threads.

Figure 6 After leaving Ranchi the first time, I read Jacinta Kerketta's poetry collection 'Land of the Roots' (2018) during a train ride from Delhi to Rishikesh. I could feel the voice of the Adivasi land touching my heart through her carefully selected words and rhythms. Even though so far away, I felt so close. After returning to Jharkhand during the harvest season, I thought of this poem again and asked her if she wanted to record a part for our film. She proposed another poem which we partly included as well. Through her poems we intended to increase a similar resonance evoked by the tapestry of the sonic ecology of Adivasi landscapes.

Traditionally marginalized in the field, poetry emerges as a resonant method capable of bridging dichotomies and amplifying diverse subjectivities, thereby expressing pluriverse worlds (Paiva, 2020). The Zapatista movement conceptualizes a pluriverse as a realm where diverse realities coexist harmoniously. This perspective challenges dualistic thinking, transcending boundaries between nature and culture, and between human and non-human entities (Escobar, 2017). It opposes the hegemonic 'one-world world model' (OWW) by advocating for the preservation of manifold realities (Law, 2011). Central to this concept is the political ontology of marginalized communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples, as they strive to safeguard their ancestral lands. This struggle aligns with efforts to protect communal resources and resist land encroachment, thereby countering the privatizing tendencies of global capitalism (Escobar, 2017; Law, 2011). Therefore, I situate this audio-visual-sensory approach within this postcolonial pluriversal thinking.

By embracing multi-sensory methods, researchers can circumvent these pitfalls and engage with the complexities of socio-cultural landscapes in more nuanced ways. Poetry, like the landscape itself, offers a rich tapestry of sensory experiences that defy simplistic categorization (Sheers, 2008: 174). However, none of these authors deny the importance of the written, scholarly text. Pink (2009) underscores the importance of acknowledging the role of written narratives in connecting alternative representations of knowing with existing scholarly discourse. She explores how photographs and films can evoke sensory experiences, bringing readers closer to the emplacement, memories, and imaginations of

others. This interdisciplinary approach not only enriches scholarly discourse but also aligns with ethnographic practice, which seeks a holistic understanding of human experiences. By acknowledging the intertwined nature of sensory perception, affectivity, and creativity, researchers can navigate the complexities of cultural contexts with greater depth and sensitivity (Pink, 2009; Favero, 2020). David Howes (2005) names this reclaim of a holistic understanding of culture and experience implemented in various fields, including anthropology, sociology, and arts practice as the 'multisensory revolution'. In 2014, Pink expands on the importance of considering visual methodologies in ethnographic research, particularly in relation to local visual cultures and the researcher's own knowledge and sensitivity. She emphasizes the need for flexibility in selecting visual methods, recognizing that some may be purposefully planned while others may emerge unexpectedly during the research process. She advocates for a reflexive approach to visual representation, one that acknowledges the dynamic intersections between visual cultures, research contexts, and the researcher's subjectivity. I agree that having a flexible mindset is crucial to field research for example when access to a community is not ethically possible. I always considered building this thesis exclusively on already-existing multisensory Adivasi data regarding their stories of displacement.

2.1 Adivasi Displacement and Visual Ethnography

Through occasional visits to the 'Tribal Research Institute and Museum of Ranchi', I gained more knowledge about the Adivasi history through paintings, (questionable) replicas of tribal communities and other artifacts. This institute also provides space for Adivasi painters and filmmakers to screen their movies. Using the beautiful words of Indrajit[9], these brief encounters only give "a glimpse of a fragment of the Adivasi story".

7 Replica of an Adivasi community made by Bengal students.

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[9] Anonymized filmmaker (Appendix 1.19).

Figure 8 Screening of a Bollywood inspired Adivasi movie

Figure 9 Filmscreening during Tribal Filmfestival organized by Akhra on the World Indigenous Day (8th of August 2023. Ranchi).

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MacDougall (2005) views visual culture as an artifact of a specific time (p. 3). Capturing people, objects, and events with a camera is always about something; it is a way of pointing out, describing, and judging (2005: 10). "Corporeal images are not just the images of other bodies; they are also images of the body be- hind the camera and its relations with the world" (MacDougall, 2005: 3).

Since the participants of this research belong to a minority group, it seems essential to me to consult independent sources as in India, there is still significant censorship in film (Raj, 2019). Independent documentaries from India often serve as proactive interventions, where moving images not only comment on reality but actively encourage change and transformation (Favero, 2021: 48). The 21-month suspension of democratic rights in 1975, known as the 'Emergency', declared by Indira Gandhi, marked a significant turning point in the world of documentary film. This period unleashed a desire among filmmakers to challenge the ruling order. With censorship imposing strict limitations on creative experimentation, filmmakers sought new ways to express their dissent and critique of the State. This period laid the foundation for what is now recognized as the 'independent documentary' and established the basis for its future development. The importance of questioning the established order was not only heightened by the 'Emergency'. The development of neoliberalism also introduced new globalized ideas about cultural identity, personhood, gender, community, and more (Favero 2005, Mazzarella 2003). The growth of the far-right Hindutva movement, which advocates the supremacy of Hindu culture, is another factor that has contributed to the development of independent documentaries in India (Favero, 2021: 47). Old gatekeeping mechanisms were countered by new video technology that made it possible for a broader group of creators to produce independent documentaries (Favero, 2021: 46). As a result, content became more important than form.

By thoroughly watching Akhra's films on my laptop and during screenings, I could sensorially acquaint myself with the different Adivasi contexts without actually visiting these communities. Watching their documentaries allowed me to better 'imagine' what it means to be an Adivasi threatened by land dispossession strategies of large corporations. Additionally, I conducted several interviews with two Akhra filmmakers and learned more about the experience of independent Adivasi filmmakers in Jharkhand (Appendix 1.20 to 1.23). In this way, I follow MacDougall (2005), claiming that framing is always a reflection of the person behind the camera and thus a 'corporeal image'. Revealing myself framing while being framed by a participant (see figure 4 part 1.1), is thus a way to make the sensers not only aware of positionalities but also of corporeality behind image-making.

Figure 11

Spontaneous screening of the Film Gadi Lohardaga Mail at Akhra house (Akhra,2004).

Figure 10 Fragment of the Akhra film 'Gadi Lohardaga Mail', capturing songs about Adivasi displacement, forced labor and the colonial trailways (see appendix …)

By regularly visiting Akhra during my stay in Ranchi, I befriended Shankhu, the son of a well-known Adivasi filmmaker. Shankhu is around my age, and I quickly noticed that he belongs to the group of young filmmakers with a fresh approach to (documentary) films. In contemporary India, there is a wide range of practices, from linear documentaries to art installations, online archives, and smartphone apps. Favero calls this transformation 'new scenes', 'old politics' (Favero, 2021: 67). With nowadays easily accessible video technology, independent individuals develop different media practices. This opens doors for alternative production and screening (Batagglia, 2014: 74). My own poor experience with filmmaking and its conventions, fosters a particular interest in creating experimental documentary films. By building a friendship with Shankhu, we found a common interest in working with sound, old digital cameras, participatory methods, and the importance of our 'sonic ecology' to advocate Adivasi land rights.

In the following section, I will elaborate on the concept of 'Sonic Ecology' before discussing the way these frameworks supported this community-driven film project.

2.2 Sonic Ecology of Adivasi displacement

In section 6.3, I delved deeper into how I applied the concept of 'Speaking Nearby' (Trinh, 1992) as a way to collaborate with the Adivasi community in a *more* culturally sensitive manner. In the subsequent section, it will become apparent how engaging with ambient sounds can also foster a deeper relationship with the non-human entities that are part of the research field. Therefore, I expand Minh-Ha's interpretation of 'Speaking Nearby' humans to a 'Speaking Nearby' the Land. Embrace the sonic ecology to let the land speak as well.

In his essay on everyday sounds, Cobussen (2022) explores the dynamic relationship between sound, space, and human/nonhuman agents, challenging conventional notions of place and perception. Drawing on Zuckerkandl's insights (1973), Cobussen suggests that it is not sound itself that comes alive in space, but rather space that becomes alive through sound, inviting listeners to participate in the continuous process of place-making. He builds on a 'vibrational ontology', a term coined by Steve Goodman (2010), starting with the premise that everything is in a state of constant movement or vibration. It challenges the notion of fixed identities and emphasizes the fluidity of existence. In this perspective, vibration is not merely a physical phenomenon but is intimately connected with materiality. Entities not only emit vibrations but also perceive and are affected by the vibrations of other entities. This interconnectedness forms a complex web of relations where entities interact through their vibrations. Each entity is considered a potential medium capable of sensing or being sensed by others, and vibrations extend beyond the immediate emitter, creating a network of relationality (Goodman, 2010: 46-81). Cobussen (2022) emphasizes the contingent nature of place, influenced by various agents and events, echoing Pink's (2012) perspective on the intersectionality of place and human/nonhuman interactions (p. 14).

Building on Foucault's reconsidered distinction (1973) between the eye and the ear, Cobussen (2022) highlights the immersive and subjective nature of auditory perception[10]. He suggests that everyday sounds play a significant role in guiding human behavior, consciously and unconsciously. He advocates for a shift from 'speaking about the sonic' to 'letting the sonic speak' (p. 15). Foucault's distinction (1973) between the eye and the ear, does not align with the current wide embraced conceptualization of the multisensory method. As mentioned above, today's multisensory terrain intertwines touch, smell, feeling, audio and vision (Paolo, 2022) as it is proved to be all connected throughout the nervous system (Gallese, 2009; Ramachandran, 1999). Also, Erlmann (2010) and Paiva (2022) question this dichotomy between the visual as external and the aural internal by validating diverse sensory experiencing in shaping our understanding of the world. However, Cobussen underscores the transformative potential of actively engaging with ordinary sounds, whether through listening, recording, or composing, as a form of poetic expression that fosters meaningful connections with the local environment (p. 18). Fostering meaningful connections with the local environment is the premise of doing sensory ethnography (Pink, 2009). Below, I will shortly explain how we can analyse Adivasi contexts specifically through sound.

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[10] Cobussen (2022) acknowledges that focusing on auditory experiences can offer a unique cultural perspective but doesn't aim to prioritize hearing over other senses. Instead, he echoes Feld (1996) and Macdougall (2000) calling for an integrated view of the senses, highlighting how our bodies can detect sounds beyond just the ears (p. 15).

2.2.1 Let the Sonic Speak

Sonic ecology represents a dynamic interplay between individuals and their sonic environments. It encompasses the intimate relationship between the listening subject and the emergence of sonic events, where the listener is actively engaged in the sonic landscape. It contends that our familiar sonic ambiance not only influences but is influenced by our perceptions, emotions, and interpretations of sound variations (Cobussen, 2022). Contrary to the notion that our auditory interaction with soundscapes is primarily subconscious, Cobussen argues for the recognition of the listener's active role, which fluctuates depending on the circumstances of interaction with sounds and the environment (p. 50). I follow his suggestion that political culture and engagement can be influenced by how we perceive, interact with, and respond to these sonic environments (p. 88).

Murray Schafer, in his book: *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, divides soundscapes into three categories. First, he talks about 'keynote sounds,' which are common and often unnoticed sounds in an environment that form a background for other sounds (p. 9). Examples of keynotes include river streams, the rustling of the wind, and traffic in an urban setting. These sounds define the character of a place. In 'the Sonic Ecology of the Adivasi Lanscapes', many keynotes are present, such as the sound of rain, thunder, and birdsongs. The shouting of children and the tinkling of cowbells, if perceived as a constant background sound, can also be classified as a keynote. However, they can also be foregrounded within the next category, 'sound signals.' These are specific sounds that draw attention and convey a certain message (p. 10). Examples include alarms, bells, sirens, etc. Their purpose is to be heard and recognized, often having a clear function or meaning. Typical sound signals in our film include industrial sounds related to the mining industry in Jharkhand. Many sounds warn of an approaching truck or an explosion. These sounds literally convey that there is no place for the Adivasi communities and their traditional lifestyle. The message is that their land and culture are being destroyed, and their society is forced to relocate. These sound signals have meanwhile become so integrated into the Jharkhand landscape that they are often experienced as keynotes. Keynotes like birdsong and river flows are interrupted or replaced by industrial mining sounds. Then there are the 'soundmarks.' These unique sounds are specific to a particular place and serve as a sort of acoustic landmark (p. 10). Soundmarks can be objects like the sound of a mosque, but they can also be sounds like screeching seagulls. For example, seagull cries always remind me of my hometown, as I come from the coastal city of Ostend where many seagulls live. Our film includes soundmarks of the Adivasi mantras, harvesting hands, the markets, cattle bells, etc. Another soundmark that literally and figuratively forms the red thread throughout the film is the sound of the loom. Adivasi clothing is characterized by white-red fabrics (see figure 18) and this artisanal craft is an expression of their culture and identity. Consider that every time communities are forced to leave their land, an Adivasi is always spinning their thread somewhere, carrying on and reweaving stories of their ancestral roots.

Figure 13 Weaving workshop in a Mundari community I visited with a Gulab*
(Mundari activist, politician and musician) on 17th of August 2023. Khunti district,
Jharkhand.

Figure 12 Similar shot in our film at 7:00.

3. Participative and Collaborative methods

According to Trinh (1990), there is a need for research projects that not only analyze film as a product or the filmmaker as a producer but also examine the process from which the narrative develops. In this way, we transcend purely technical perspectives. The process of this film project is based upon a collaborative and participatory method. Below, I will explain how both methods created our film project and supported an equitable triangular relationship between anthropologist/filmmaker-subject-audience (Davis, 2000).

In the literature, the terms 'collaborative' and 'participatory' filmmaking are often used interchangeably. However, a distinction can be made. Collaborative filmmaking focuses on the cooperation between different professionals and sometimes non-professionals. The goal is to assemble a team as diverse as possible to achieve a high-quality and aesthetically pleasing outcome (Gruber, 2022). By collaborating with Shankhu, a young filmmaker with experience in the field of documentaries, the current result is technically and conceptually greatly enhanced. Shankhu has rich knowledge of camera handling, cinematographic conventions, and is himself a member of the *Oraon* Adivasi community. Additionally, he grew up in an urban setting surrounded by politically and artistically engaged individuals, giving him a critical perspective that greatly helped me approach the Adivasi context in a *more* culturally sensitive manner. According to Gruber (2022), the collaboration between Indigenous media makers and anthropologists, results in the most innovative examples of contemporary audio-visual and multimodal anthropology.

Shankhu was most involved during the production and post-production of the film. The preparation of the materials already took place in Belgium when I recovered old digital cameras and acquired a zoom recorder. The arrangements for staying on the land of an Oraon activist were made through connections I established in Ranchi. Afterward, I stayed with Shankhu for a week in Kotari, an Adivasi village in the Gumla district of Jharkhand. Through the activist family who welcomed us with open arms, we met various people who wanted to participate in our audiovisual project. We organized training in sound and camera handling for the villagers and asked them to draw a map locating important sounds of the community (appendix 5). After our preparation we started our field trip to take recordings.

Figure 14 Our gear. (left to right: Marshall headphone, Zoom recorder, Sony Alpha 6000, two recycled Sony camera's, one recycled Traveler DC-12 camera, a low-quality gimbal that we did not use (Picture taken in the guesthouse in the village where we created the collaborative film).

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We got guided around the village, into the forest, along the river, to a school, the market, etc. Both Shankhu and I, as well as the participants, made recordings and listened to the sonic environment. It was mainly the amplification of ambient sound by the zoom recorder that provoked the most curious reactions. Sonic ecology is certainly not something that only fascinates me and Shankhu. This involvement of the local community, despite the overlap with the collaborative method, can more specifically be termed a 'participatory method'. Gruber (2022) describes participatory videos as "an approach aimed at enabling representatives of marginalized groups or communities to discuss and communicate issues of concern to them through video production. Participants are usually trained in basic filmmaking skills through workshops and guided in the filmmaking process." The role of the filmmaker/anthropologist here shifts from 'director' to 'orchestrator' (Favero, 2014). After attempting the workshop, everyone received a certificate of participation and a goody bag. We left the old cameras for them with a sparked interest. We thanked our hosts with a financial contribution.

Figure 15
I received this picture on the left from the participant himself who is deaf and unable to speak, yet he created most of the visual footage recorded by a recycled camera.

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3.1 De-hierarchizing the Researcher/Filmmaker – Subject Relationship

Blending our personal ideas, skills and experiences together, me and Shankhu became filmmaking partners. In this manner I blurred the line between myself as a researcher and Shankhu as an informant/subject. However, we both come from different backgrounds as Shankhu has more hands-on filmmaking skills and cultural insider knowledge. It is hard to explain how much I have learned from him. Shankhu's input mainly focused on the visual framing, creating establishing shots, collecting extra harvest footages, recording Jacinta's poem, etc. Beside the creation of a significant portion of our footages, he also taught me a lot about creating more coherence in our visual and sonic sequences. My input focused on an experimental approach. To break with typical documentary conventions, we incorporated techniques such as the use of blank spaces, audio-visual asynchronies, the exclusion of certain subtitles, working with different formats, metacinematic elements, etc.
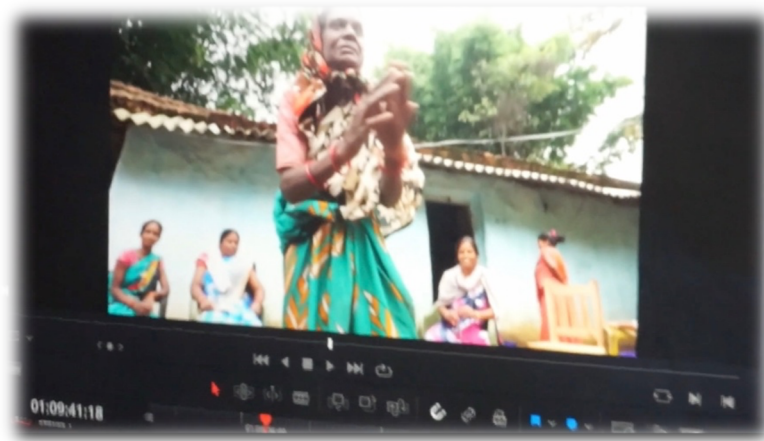
Figure 16 Metacinematic element at 8:17.

I also emphasized thematic elements such as the loom sound as a recurring motif, symbolizing the Adivasi's cultural identity. Additionally, I took on the logistical aspects of the project, including organizing the trip, overseeing the editing process, and maintaining the film's experimental style. A crucial element in our collaboration was that Shankhu has Oraon roots, speaks the Kurukh language, and is familiar with Adivasi cultural customs and practices. This helped us to make respectful decisions regarding the approach to the community. Additionally, he continuously assisted with translating conversations. Without such collaboration in which we could complement each other, this project would never have been successfully completed. However, we also faced challenges such as having a limit amount of time which influences the accuracy of our representation. The incorporation of metacinematic elements and context-providing footage such as the Gram Sabha meeting, were two other challenges as we did not intend to lose focus on the sound. We also faced some technical issues due to our low-quality video formats. However, the different formats and the appearance of sound and videorecorders, indicate the presence of multiple filmmakers.

Together, we aimed to represent the Adivasi community with respect and accuracy, while maintaining an experimental, reflexive approach. However, as we also had to ensure the issue of Adivasi displacement was still understandable, some more informative elements were added. After our second feedback from Ranchi, we decided to incorporate more conventional sequences in order to obtain a more coherent story (see part 3.2).

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Figure 17 During our stay in the guesthouse, we worked together on the first raw cut.

After collecting audiovisual material in collaboration with the local community, the post-production process followed. In this phase, the collaboration between Shankhu and me was greatly strengthened. Battaglia (2014) calls post-production "the moment in which the footage comes together as a 'film' and images acquire different meanings depending on their composition" (p. 5). About these different meanings, we could have never-ending conversations, so I do not go into too much detail here. Although we both organized some screenings (see 3.2), the film is still in post-production as I write this thesis. During our stay in the guesthouse, Shankhu and I spent many hours on post-production. But this process slowed down due to the distance afterward. Despite this, Shankhu and I managed to stay in weekly contact and continued co-creating through online meetings for over a year now. We created a shared google drive account to share our own cuts, extra footages and ideas. Additional material was incorporated into the film, such as my recordings during my visit to the Tapin North coal mine and a nearby coal factory. Shankhu integrated footage he later recorded during the harvest season. After reading Jacinta Kerketta's poetry book 'The Land of The Roots' which she personally gave me, I proposed her to collaborate with us. Jacinta is a very close friend of Shankhu and his family so he recorded two poems with her. One of them was chosen by Jacinta after seeing our film, and the other was one selected by us. We integrated two passages from each of the poems (see figure 6).

Through this link also added in the filmography, you will get private access to the most recent version of our film. This version includes many more adjustments compared to the one we screened in Ranchi and Antwerp. You can also find this earlier screening version here or in the filmography. We leave the sound mastering to professionals in Ranchi, ideally ready for submission to film festivals by October 2024. At the end of 2024, I will return to India with the idea to screen the film together with Shankhu in the participant's village 'Kotari' as well as in a big city such as Mumbai. We are also planning on offering film/sound workshops to NGO's working with vulnerable communities. This project will be supported by the Global Engagement Funds, part of the University of Antwerp. I will divide these funds with Shankhu ensuring equal access and control over the financial resources funding our next project. This approach fits within the 'Shift the Power' principle. Shifting the power is about ethical collaboration, redistributing recourses and decision-making. It is a shift from traditional centers of power often located in the global North or within dominant groups to those who are usually marginalised or underrepresented, such as communities in the global South. It emphasises local ownership, autonomy and the importance of empowering communities so that they themselves can

lead projects that affect them, rather than being mere passive recipients of aid or cooperation (Hodsgon, 2020).

In the next section we will explore the role of the sensers and the method establishing a triangular relationship (Davis, 2000) by incorporating their ideas in the filmmaking process.

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3.2 Audience/Senser Participation

According to Macdougall (1998), visual media can convey complex social interactions, emotions and cultural nuances through their ability to present both central and peripheral details simultaneously. However, this unscripted representation can also bring challenges. Unlike written texts, which can 'make sense' by filtering out irrelevant details, visual media present all details within a frame, including those that may be unintentional or ambiguous. This can lead to misinterpretations, especially when viewers bring their own cultural biases into the viewing experience. MacDougall notes that although filmmakers can control aspects of interpretation through selection, framing and contextualisation, images retain an inherent unpredictability. This unpredictability can be seen as 'dangerous' for both the subjects portrayed - whose anonymity is harder to protect - as well as for the viewers, who may misunderstand or misinterpret the content (p. 68 - 70). Interpretation of perceivers is thus of great relevance to the field of visual ethnography.

Shankhu and I were not only curious about how the film was received but also sought constructive feedback to incorporate into the film. Therefore, during post-production, we screened the film to our respective communities. Shankhu gathered feedback from his film relatives in Ranchi (see appendix 4). I screened the film for the first time in 'La Experimental', a cultural association in Barcelona. In collaboration with the Ghent based Catapa movement, we organized a sensitization evening at the University of Antwerp. Here I screened our movie and one on illegal coalmining produced by Akhra. I invited two other insightful people, someone with expertise in Jharkhand's politics and someone representing Catapa to strengthen transnational solidarity (see program Appendix 6). After presenting our process, I distributed chart papers to the sensers and asked their feedback based on three reflective questions (see appendix 2) from which I digitized their responses feedback (Appendix 3). Due to the academic context and presence of different NGOs and others active in the field of global solidarity[11], the sensers mainly consisted of people with academic or professional knowledge in relating fields. Ideally, I should have gathered feedback in Barcelona as well to incorporate visions less familiar with issues of (Adivasi) displacement. Shankhu's circle also consisted of people largely involved in the field of Adivasi activism. However they are mainly situated in Ranchi, they all had Adivasi roots and therefore a good understanding of the Adivasi culture and their movement.

By incorporating their feedback into our post-production, the collaborative method and triangular relationship (Davis, 2000), was further enhanced. Additionally, it is interesting to reflect on transcultural perceptions as we noticed differences between the reception in India and in Belgium. It is important to mention that an extra question was asked during the screening in Ranchi as we wanted to gather more feedback on the form as well (see appendix 2). Through the perception of the sensers, I attempt to explain the ideas that were underlying the film (part 3). It is remarking how a lot of the shared thoughts are echoing the ideas and intentions behind this co-creation. However, the more critical visions created a new ground for further improvement in our most recent cut. By analyzing the manner of reception, our future screenings can become *more* culturally sensitive towards the context of the screening.

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[11] 11.11.11, IPIS, USOS and Catapa are all Belgian-based organisations working on global solidarity and ecojustice but with different focusses and structures.

PART 3. Cross-cultural feedback on the film

1. Feedback Belgium (Antwerp)

Based on the gathered feedback (see appendix 3), I could synthesize following perception of the film. One that resonates a lot with the intention of me and Shankhu while making and editing the film.

The film highlights how people often overlook their ambient sounds, making them more aware of the fleeting, temporary nature of sound. Viewers were made to feel like 'flies on the wall', closely observing and listening to their surroundings, creating a deep sense of engagement and connection. A strong contrast is visible between the soothing, harmonious sounds of nature and everyday life, and the harsh, destructive reality of coal mining and industrialization. The film evoked feelings of love, nostalgia and recognition, especially towards the Adivasi culture, which was portrayed as warm, vibrant and deeply connected to the land. It subtly presented the reality of the lives of Adivasis, highlighting the threats they face without being too intrusive. The sounds of everyday life, such as weaving, rain and nature, served as a gateway into the lives of the Adivasis, representing the continuous routines and natural flow of life. The film illustrated the paradoxical nature of development, particularly through scenes like the coal mines, where messages like "go green, save green" contrasted with the visible environmental destruction. There is a recurring theme of loss of cultural roots, land and traditional ways of life, caused by industrialization and capitalism. The poetry and explanations in the film provided context and insight into the Adivasis' struggle for recognition and the importance of their relationship with nature. The film created a sensory experience through sound and images that made viewers feel connected to the Adivasi way of life, while also confronting the harsh realities of modernization and displacement.

2. Feedback India (Ranchi)

According to the sensers in India (see appendix 4), the film contained a clear and understandable message, but several people felt a need for more clarity and coherence. Some found the film chaotic and struggled to connect with it, describing it as overwhelming and without a clear storyline. Jacinta's poetry was well received and helped convey the film's message. The artistic elements, such as the comparison between nature and the impact of mining, were appreciated for the way they highlighted environmental and cultural degradation. The technical quality of the film was criticized, with comments about grainy footage and a lack of professional finishing. Suggestions were made to improve the video quality, such as removing grainy parts and considering music to enhance the soundscape. Some felt that the film failed to fully immerse them in the village setting, and instead exuded a dark, disconnected atmosphere. The lack of additional ambient sounds, such as jungle or cow bells, was noted as a missed opportunity to enhance the village atmosphere. The film effectively communicated the oppressive effects of capitalism on Adivasi communities, especially how they are forced into dangerous work. The sounds of industry, trucks and machinery contrasted with natural sounds, symbolizing the invasion of capitalism into traditional ways of life. The use of sudden cuts, sound shifts, and chaotic elements were interpreted by some as conscious choices to reflect the chaotic impact of modernity on traditional lives. However, not all viewers found this approach effective. Some felt the film lacked cohesion and would benefit from more structured editing. However, it evoked feelings of chaos, oppression and loss, reflecting the harsh realities faced by the Adivasi people due to capitalist exploitation. The duality between 'original inhabitants' and their current marginalized status was a touching insight for one of the viewers. Suggestions for improvement included keeping the video format consistent, improving technical aspects, and possibly adding music to create a more engaging soundscape. There were also calls for a clearer storyline to make the film more accessible and emotionally compelling.

Alongside this feedback, Shankhu received other suggestions, given by Akhra affiliates during spontaneous screenings. This mainly technical feedback has not been documented but was directly discussed and implemented during several online meetings while co-editing.

Conclusion

It is remarkable how the voices of prominent multisensory ethnographers are resonating in the feedback gathered in Antwerp. There was the notice of a deep sense of engagement and connection, evocation of feelings of love, nostalgia and recognition. According to Biellas (2009) and Pink (2009), the power of multimedia lies precisely in this creation of 'Virtual Intimacy'. Trinh's (1992) principle of 'Speaking Nearby' was also noted through the sonic way in which the Adivasi environment was represented. Beside their written reflection, sensers also discussed their feelings orally, reflecting on the influence of the political landscape on our everyday sounds (Cobussen, 2022). Although the sensers in Ranchi recognized the film as a form of documentary arts (Davis, 2000) due to its sonic framing of destructive mining and its effect on the Adivasis, many elements were not understood or were perceived as uncomfortable. The juxtapositions of contradictive sounds alternated with black and asynchronous visuals, actually intended to challenge cinematic conventions and raise questions. However, the question is whether an understanding of Adivasi land dispossession is not of more importance than the push of an experimental style. Additionally, the focus on increasing community participation by handing out recycled media, initially put less importance on the technical aspect initially became less important. I also understand much of the criticism as a result of our time constraints. This implied often poor sound quality and insufficient visual material to provide a more accurate framing of the community. Therefore, it is important to note that this film does not comprehend 'the' Adivasi displacement struggle. It is rather a modest attempt to offer a glimpse of a fragment of that story[12].

The difference between the feedback from the sensors in Antwerp and those in Ranchi is remarkable. I believe this could be due to a wide range of factors, the examination of which could constitute a thesis in itself. While the feedback from the Antwerp screening reflects the intentions of Shankhu and me, the more critical feedback from the sensers in Ranchi is equally significant. It is mainly from this feedback that Shankhu and I made new considerations regarding our current edit. Addressing the technical shortcomings, we recently adjusted some visual and sonic sequences to achieve a more coherent composition. However, with a fresh perspective on the last edit, we concluded certain footages need more lighting modification through color grading. After this last adjustment, the future version will be mastered by sound engineers based in Ranchi. To provide more context, we included additional notes creating clarity why, for example, we used low-quality film formats. After all, the process of community engagement was prioritized over technical professionalism however Shankhu and his environment taught me a lot about filmmaking techniques.

This research has significantly expanded my knowledge across various domains over the past year. I delved into the political context of Adivasi displacement and its impact on the communities and their ancestral lands. These harsh living conditions often confronted me with the privilege of my own geographical position. Subsequently, I initiated a collaborative film project in which Adivasi participants and collaborators could explore new multisensory media to connect with the natural environment. By applying creativity and contemplation in this research, it became a very meaningful process. A not to be underestimated factor is the additional time required for this type of research projects. Although I am deeply satisfied by the development of a sustainable research project laying groundwork for further projects in India, it often remains challenging to allocate sufficient time. Reflection on positionality elaborating on Indigenous and feminist epistemologies was crucial to the ethical preparation of the fieldwork. However, it remains important to acknowledge the power imbalance, challenges and limits of ethnographic research contexts.

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[12] Here I echo again Indrajit's* words he shared during our interview (appendix 1.19).

Since this exploration, I receive our sonic environment as a voice communicating the suffer of our eco-systems and their caretakers. This cry for global justice has never been so omnipresent, unfortunately it remains unheard by too many. I claim that through strengthening cross-cultural resonance and by weaving together messages of hope, we can find global solutions to local problems.

By means of an Adivasi soundscape exploration through collaborative filmmaking alongside this written academic reflection, I aimed to increase transcultural resonance on Adivasi displacement and their respective environments. I advocate for a *more* culturally sensitive approach by intertwining collaborative methods with multisensory ethnography. This form of decolonial research transcends disciplinary language barriers, enhancing our intimacy towards interdependent ecologies.

Figure 18 Leaving Ranchi for the first time as the USOS program was fulfilled. Shankhu and his dad thanked me with some traditional Adivasi fabric, a very typical gift in their culture.

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Appendix

1. Mind Maps Interviews[13]

Figure 19

Figure 20 Interview taken with the help of a translator.

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[13] Interviews taken during August 2023.

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Figure 21

Figure 21

Figure 22

Figure 23

MINING ACTIVITIES and LAND ACQUISITION
- The interviewee describes the ongoing process of coal extraction at the mine, highlighting the good quality of coal being extracted.
- Discussion about acquiring land from nearby villages for mining purposes and the compensation offered to the villagers.
- The need for consensus from all villagers; a single dissenting opinion can halt the process of land acquisition.

REHABILITATION and COMPENSATION
- The interviewee explains the steps taken for rehabilitation, including providing compensation and jobs to villagers whose land is acquired.
- Details about offering three times the market value of land, providing jobs, and relocating villagers to alternative areas for development.

RESPONSIBILITY and MONITORING
- The presence of officers overseeing resettlement and land acquisition, with one officer responsible for rehabilitation and another for statutory land acquisition requirements.
- Importance of maintaining accountability during the process of land acquisition and rehabilitation.

TAPIN NORTH COALMINE CONSTRUCTION LEADER
JHARKHAND

RENEWABLE ENERGY INITIATIVES
- Explanation of India's plans to increase its solar energy capacity to around 300 gigawatts.
- The interviewee's company's involvement in solar energy through subsidiary companies for manufacturing and installing solar panels.
- India's push towards nuclear energy and efforts to develop indigenous nuclear power technology.

ENERGY DEMAND and TRANSITION
- India's energy requirements and its heavy reliance on coal for electricity generation.
- Global trend toward thermal power due to energy crises in various countries, including Europe.
- India's efforts to transition to renewable energy sources, such as solar power, with the establishment of the International Solar Alliance.

CULTURAL IDENTITY and EDUCATION
- Challenging to maintain cultural identity within an educational system dominated by Western concepts.
- Feelings of alienation and inferiority by tribal children due to the focus on English and Hindi languages and the lack of acknowledgement of their own culture.

CULTURAL PRESERVATION and CHANGE
- Maintaining the Munda tribe's cultural practices, including music, dance, and language, are significant for a sense of identity and community.
- The impact of urbanization and modernization on these practices is discussed, with the younger generation having less time to engage in traditional activities due to external pressures and changing lifestyles.

GULAB* ACTIVIST & MUSICIAN
JHARKHAND

MEDIA and CULTURAL EMPOWERMENT
- The interviewee describes the role of media platforms, including documentaries and recordings, in preserving and sharing cultural traditions. These platforms offer a means to counter mainstream narratives, empower communities, and raise awareness about territorial struggles and social issues.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY and CULTURAL HERITAGE
- Intellectual property rights highlights concerns about the commercialization and appropriation of traditional knowledge, including music and medicinal practices. The importance of acknowledging the source of such knowledge and sharing economic benefits is emphasized.

Figure 24

Figure 26

TERRITORIAL STRUGGLES and INDIGENOUS RIGHTS
- The interviewee discusses how media, especially documentaries, have been used to raise awareness about territorial struggles and indigenous rights. Media serves as a way to challenge corporate narratives, communicate community perspectives, and influence public opinion.

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION and RESISTANCE
- The interviewee suggests that art, music, and other creative forms of expression can serve as tools for resistance and activism, especially in environments where direct discourse may be censored or suppressed. Artistic expressions can convey deeper meanings and engage with social and political issues in a symbolic manner.

POLITICS and ART
- The interviewee touches on the interplay between politics and art, highlighting how certain forms of expression might be tolerated due to their indirect nature. The relationship between the government and independent filmmakers is discussed, with a recognition of the potential impact of larger organizations like the BBC in spreading messages that challenge the establishment.

GULAB* ACTIVIST & MUSICIAN JHARKHAND

Cultural Rights and Management Rights
- Discussion on cultural rights and management rights since the Forest Conservation Act.
- Recognition of resources for cultural purposes like food, medicine, and worship.
- Establishment of local self-governance since 1992 and the PESA Act of 1996.
- Historical context including the Santal revolt, Munda revolt, and treaties with Britain recognizing tribal rights.

Government Development Programs
- Overview of government initiatives including MGNREGA Act, RTE (Right to Education), DAMS (irrigation programs), and agricultural programs.
- Discussion on the role of NGOs in ensuring the implementation of government initiatives.
- Challenges and shifts in tribal livelihoods from landowners to laborers due to infrastructure projects like highways, dams, and mining.

Climate Change and Land Rights
- Impact of climate change, particularly changes in rainfall patterns, since British rule.
- Violation of land rights faced by tribal communities.
- Compensation and rehabilitation measures for displaced communities.
- The role of local community assemblies like NOC in land acquisition processes.

International Recognition and Indigenous Rights
- Recognition of World Indigenous Day on August 9th in Jharkhand.
- International recognition of tribal rights by the UN through the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP) in 2007.
- Discrepancy between recognition and implementation of tribal rights.
- The role of cultural exchange and grassroots organizations like Gram Sabha.

Corporate Influence and Tribal Identity
- Discussion on the role of corporations like ACC Limited in land acquisition and displacement of tribal communities.
- Link between landlessness and loss of identity for tribal communities.
- Significant displacement of tribal communities in Jharkhand due to industrial projects.

KUJUR* ACTIVIST (FOREST RIGHT MOVEMENT) JHARKHAND

Figure 25

Figure 27. Interview taken with the help of a translator.

MUSIC AS ACTIVISM
- Music (particularly performed at AKHRA as the communal gathering space) provides a platform for sharing ideas and information.
- It's a way to contribute to larger collective discussions, especially about their identity and cultural aspects.
- Music serves as a means to communicate messages and express opinions, although primarily performed in their native Mundari language.

INFLUENCE of DIGITAL MEDIA
- ·When songs and content are shared on platforms such as Youtube or Facebook, there's a desire to reflect their identity, the impact on society.

Gender Roles in Music and Dance:
- Traditionally, playing music was considered more of a male role, but there's a growing trend where more women are participating in playing instruments.

MODERNIZATION of TRIBAL MUSIC
- The musicians noted that while the visual elements have modernized, the core music remains traditional. They highlighted the challenge when individual performances adopt more modern influences, whereas community performances remain more traditional.

MUNDARI MUSICIANS JHARKHAND

CHURCH and CULTURAL INFLUENCES
- There was discussion about how the church initially condemned tribal music as having 'evil spirits.' However, in recent times, the church has begun to incorporate some traditional elements in their songs and celebrations.

EDUCATION and PRESERVATION of CULTURAL TRADITIONS
- The conversation touched on the lack of formal education about tribal music and dance in schools, primarily in government institutions. There's a need to preserve and pass down traditions, with informal learning primarily happening within AKHRA settings. The aim is to establish formal structures for regular instruction in traditional music in every village.

COMMUNITY INITIATION and DEVELOPMENT
- Introduction and background of the medical sisters' work in the remote community.
- Their assimilation into the local culture and initiation of health initiatives.
- Focus on preventive healthcare, training local health workers, and addressing health issues like malaria.

Cultural Preservation and Modernization
- ·Preservation of Santal culture, including traditional songs and dances, especially among the youth.
- Impact of modernization, education, and the dominance of Hindi culture on Santal traditions.

Land Rights, Sustainable Development, and Government Interaction
- Importance of land rights for the community and efforts to register tribal lands legally.
- Transition from addressing mining-related issues to sustainable development, including agriculture, women's development, youth groups, and children's groups.
- Challenges faced in land rights struggles and resistance against mining initiatives, with the government favoring mining interests.
- Lack of government interference in cultural preservation efforts.

Rehabilitation, Environmental Concerns, and Community Values
- Discussion about the rehabilitation of mined areas and unfulfilled promises and policies.
- Environmental concerns regarding the cost of land restoration.
- Emphasis on community values among indigenous people, including sharing and community cohesion.

SANTAL ACTIVISTS JHARKHAND

Challenges and Social Issues
- Initial challenges with money lenders and current struggles with rising living costs, unemployment among educated youth, and low-paid jobs, particularly in the mining industry.
- Alcohol addiction as a problem in the community, attributed to frustration and limited alternatives for employment.

Global Perspective and Equity
- Ex-mine worker's perspective on global equity and the exploitation of resources from their community by developed nations.
- Advocacy for equal trade and shared resources as a means of achieving global equity.

Figure 28

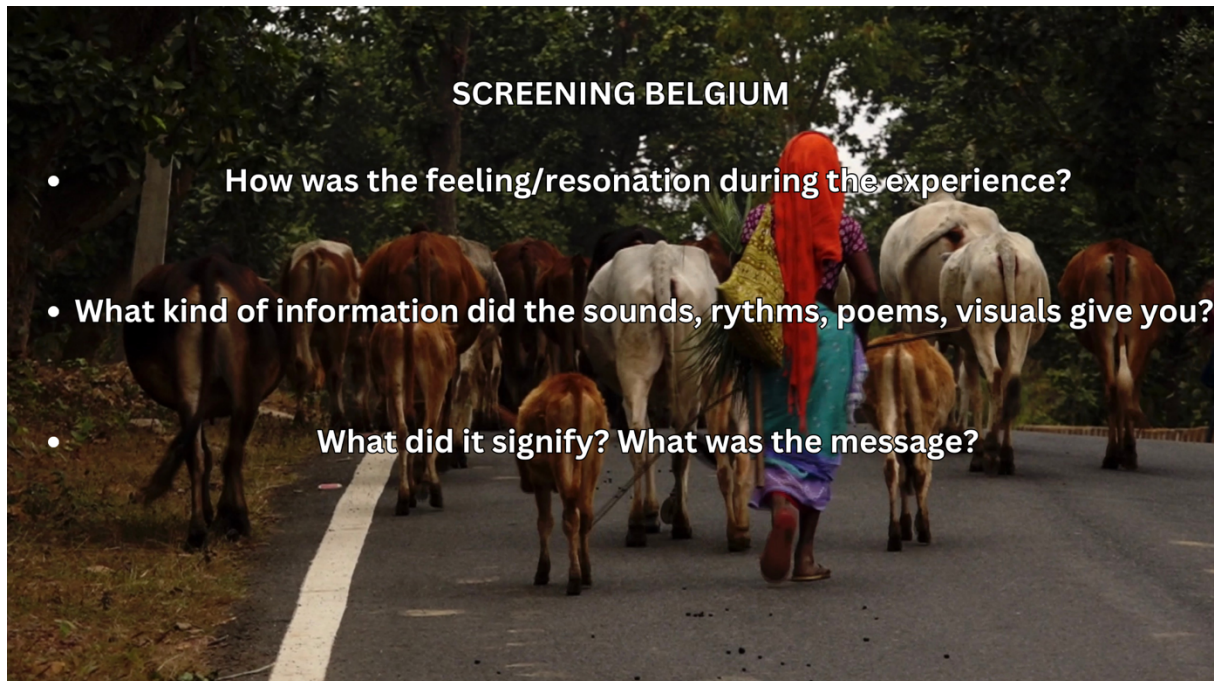## 2. Feedback Questions after Screening
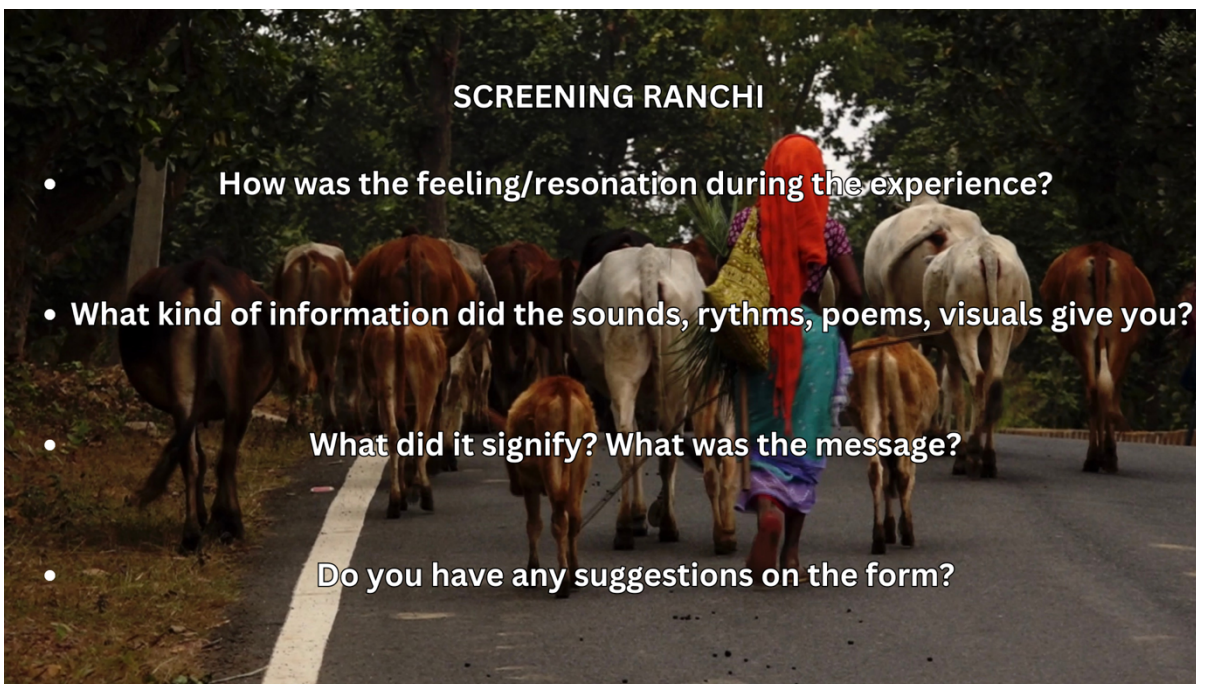

Figure 30

Figure 29

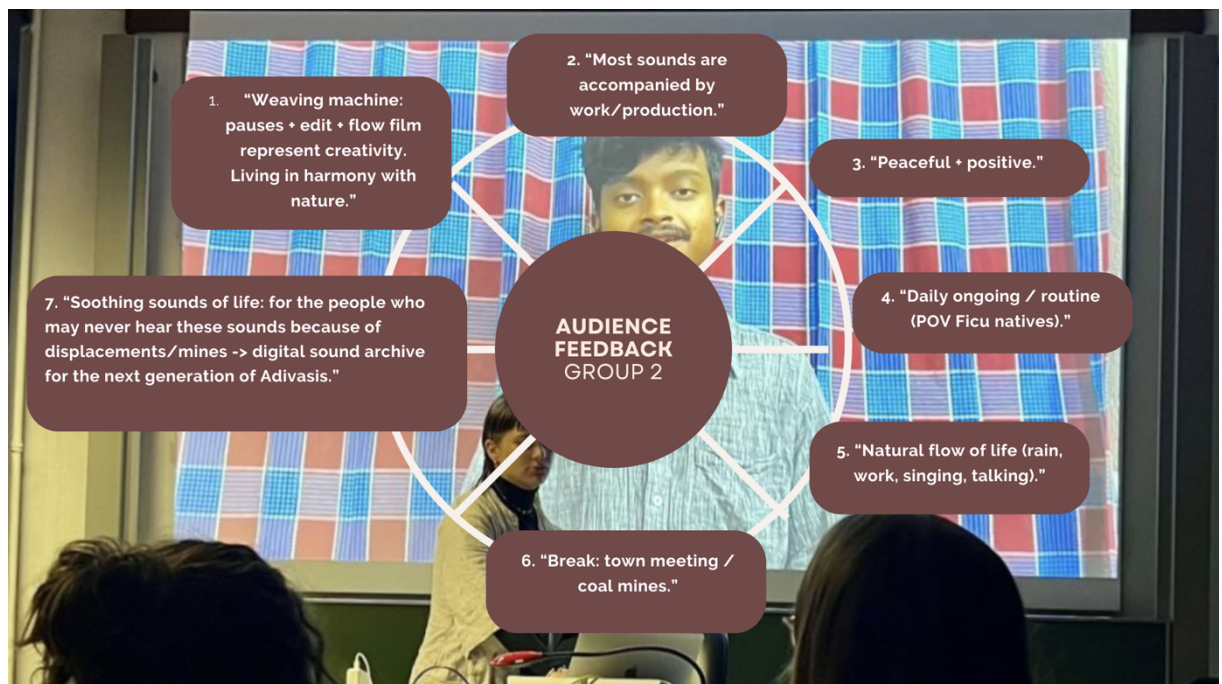# 3. Senser's feedback Antwerp (Belgium)

Figure 31
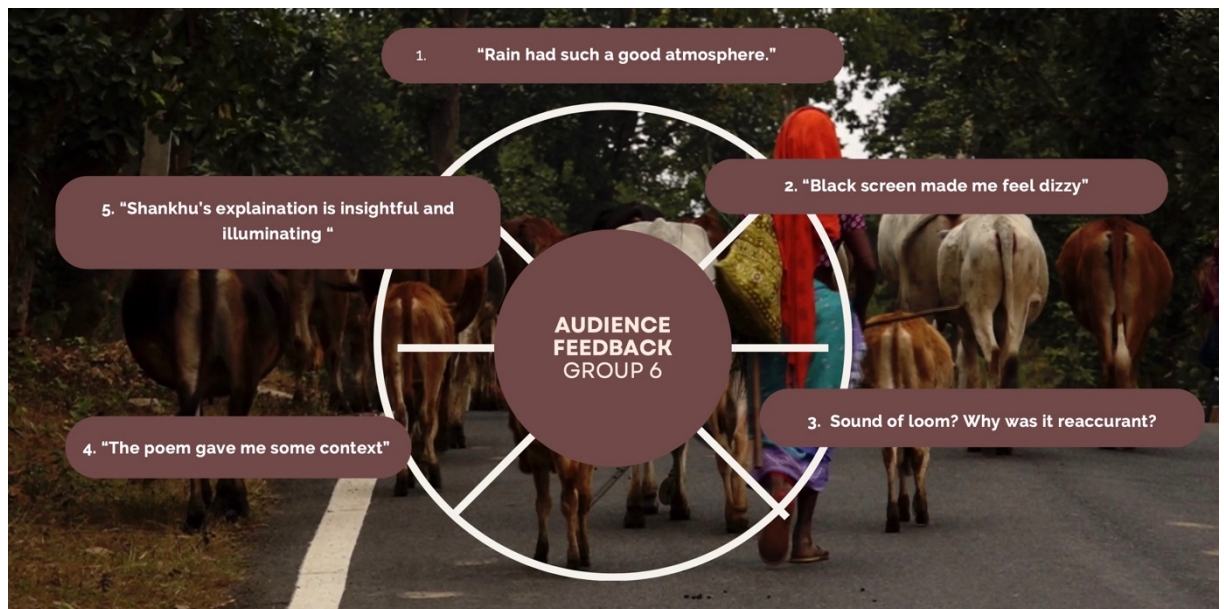

Figure 32

Figure 33

Figure 34

Figure 35

Figure 36

Figure 37

Figure 38

Figure 40

Figure 39

4. Senser's feedback Ranchi (India)

> "From the middle, it begins to make sense. Although I can grasp the message this movie is attempting to convey, it still needs some clarification."

> "The poetry and artwork are excellently done."
>
> "The comparison images demonstrate how damaging mining is to the environment, culture, and sound ecology. The section on the Gram Sabha made it more evident how the foreigners' colonization actions directly threatened the."

> "The movie appears unprofessional. Although I'm not in the film industry, I believe the clip will appear better if the grainy parts are removed."

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK
SENSER 1
RANCHI

Figure 41

> "It appears that the filmmaker attempted to explore the community from the outside but was unable to fully immerse in the village. The movie doesn't show a village; it only depicts a dark room. Thus, the village connection didn't seem appealing."

> "Although the sound conveyed the same information as what was seen on the screen, I believe it would have been better if there had been additional noises of the jungle and cow bells."

> "The message made sense. This movie will spark interesting conversations."
>
> "If there was music, it would sound better."

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK
SENSER 2
RANCHI

Figure 42

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Figure 43

"It's not really something I can pinpoint. It had the feel of one of those books such as an encyclopaedia where you have so much information to grasp without any association between them. It was alot of information but in a way which wasn't cohesive and also there were few scenes which felt similar to Meghnath and Biju's work."

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK
SENSER 3
RANCHI

"I am not an editor of videos or a director. I respect the efforts and intentions behind this film, but I couldn't seem to connect with it for some reason."

"Mines will take our land, our childhood, and our voice because they are hypocrites."

"If some forest guards were depicted in the gram sabha section."

"From the standpoint of the movie, I could not comprehend. I was unable to comprehend the aesthetics. My eyes were being injured from the blank screen, yet it must have had a purpose. However, I thought it was good how you exposed the mines' duplicity through their efforts to protect the environment."

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK
SENSER 4
RANCHI

"Although it's not my field of understanding, Jacinta Kerketta's poetry had a nice flow, so even as a non-filmy viewer, I was able to get the main idea of the movie through her poetry."

Figure 44

Figure 46

1. Not going to the technical side of the whole experience as I have no expertise in that regard, I would say that it reflected chaos. The sounds included, composed of natural elements for most of the part but still there was nothing that could be said as soothing. I recall the word "Adivasi" in the beginning and its translation to "original inhabitants". Even though these bunch of people are the original inhabitants still they are oppressed to do such hazardous tasks so I got a feeling that the sounds were trying to reflect this picture of oppression forcing them to be involved in 'odd' tasks which in this capitalistic world is just harmful labour which they do to meet their daily needs of earning bread.

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK
SENSER 5
RANCHI

2. I have a very strong feeling that the sudden cuts and transference of sounds was a deliberate attempt to incorporate different elements from the lives of tribals which are very crucial to them. For most of the part the sounds are composed of the ones from forests, rivers and nature as a whole. However, in the modern picture, the influence of capitalism cannot be unseen and that's why at times trucks, factories, drillers and so on were getting resonated. At times, it felt as if the sounds are creating an uneasiness in ears which I feel perfectly reflect the stature of these tribals in the modern landscape and how they cannot run away from the clutches of capitalism and are forced to take up hazardous jobs to make their ends meet. The 'sonic' display here rightly described the capitalistic impositions which should be declared unrightful because of the level of their harm. The sounds of trucks and machines could not be left out as they have become part of the lives of these tribals as they try to find out a compromise between sustainable living and sustenance, between their roots and capital (money). Is the compromise a healthy one? That's debatable just like the scripting of this whole documentary as there were a lot cuts and sudden shifts, but maybe it was a deliberate effect.

Figure 45

3. The message was simple, with increased urbanisation and globalisation fuelled by capitalism, the ground level workers are turning out to be the ones who put in actual work and sadly but this is what the truth is, they are the ones who get paid the least and receive least benefits. The city dwellers with their advertisement and marketing and snobbishness succeed to get the most benefits with hardly putting in actual hazardous labour. The case of the dangerous jobs was not the only element of the documentary but it struck me the most and the flow-disrupting sounds in the documentary best describes what it wanted to achieve through this example only. The sounds associated with industries cannot be omitted even if one lives deep in jungles and the want for more capital even pushes them to extremities but is it pleasing to them or let's just say pleasing to anyone who is humane. I think that is how it has turned out to be humans are not humane anymore but beasts chasing prey in the form of money but it is no direct showdown as these tribals are getting thrown as bait by the apex predators. Forests and their residents can no longer be left alone and the imposing clutches of capitalism with their factories and industries make their lives fully chaotic. The common space shared by the sustainability of tribals and destruction of capitalism is highly reactive and the end product is no perfect amalgamation but utter chaos and that is what got reflected through the sounds.

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK
SENSER 5
RANCHI

4. My only remark would be to keep the format of the videos same or at least try to make them look similar through adjustments. But, I think the aim was to reflect chaos that's why such focus was not given or if not then this piece needs a lot of technical adjustments.

5. Program workshop 'Recording our Land'

2nd until 5th of October 2023: exact timings to be added.

Workshop objectives

1. To empower Adivasi Oraon kids/villagers to document their environment and land through video recording.

2. To raise awareness about tribal displacement issues through a sensory experience.

3. To co-create a community-driven cross-cultural film project. Transcending language-barriers. Fostering decolonization of the ethnographic research context.

Workshop Duration: 1-2 days (adjustable based on available time)

MATERIAL NEEDED:

- Video recording equipment (old digital cameras or smartphones)
- Tripods or stabilizers for steady shots
- Notebook and pens
- Big pieces of paper for drawing the land and locating the sounds
- Color markers
- Laptop or computer for video editing (optional)
- Art/musical supplies (for artistic expression)
- Speaker (optional)
- Printed certificates of attendance, any other gifts?

Day 1: Introduction and Basic Concepts

- Group Discussion

Shankhu, me (and Sanjay?) explaining our project goals and invite participant to share their ideas. Discuss the importance of storytelling and how it can be used to raise awareness about tribal land rights. Refer to different platforms such as youtube, exhibition, filmfestivals, community screenings, social media etc. can be used. Invite people to share their thoughts on tribal land rights and media representation.

Explore the cultural significance of the Oraon tribe in Jharkhand. Depending on the size of the group let them draw a map of the land and locate typical sounds

- Introduction to Video and sound Recording

Explain the purpose of the workshops and its significance. Discuss the importance of sounds in storytelling.

Show examples of videos documenting local environments .

Share some of the recorded sounds and videos already made in the mining field and Munda village.

- Draw a map of your community and the important places to record

- Technical Basics:
Basic camera operation (if necessary)
The importance of steady shots.

- FIELD TRIP:
Go to the places pointed in the map. Start recording. Encourage them to focus on their environment and elements they find interesting.

- EVENING SESSION OR NEXT DAY:
Show some of the videos recorded that day. Discuss the messages conveyed and the artistic elements.
If possible, introduce basic video editing techniques using a laptop. Explain how editing can enhance storytelling.
Invite people to contribute with making more video and sound recordings. We can create a Whatsapp group where footage can be shared as well as the final result.
Provide certificates of participation to all attendees.
Thank the participants for their active involvement and contribution.

- FOLLOW-UP PLANS
Create a whatsapp group to share footages and the final results.
Coordination with Shankhu to edit the collected footage into a cohesive/ experimental video.
Encourage ongoing collaboration between tribal and non-tribal individuals.

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7. Who is Akhra (Ranchi)?

Akhra is a group based in Ranchi, Jharkhand, founded in 1996. Started by Biju Toppo and Meghnath, the group has been making films on issues in Jharkhand and India. Over the past 20+ years, the group has won several national and international film awards, the highest being twice the 58th National Film Awards in 2010 and the 65th National Film Awards in 2018 (Yadav, 2022). Apart from portraying socio-political conflicts mainly within Jharkhand, the collective is also mainly committed to documenting Adivasi folklore.

Through their harmonious fusion of cinema and activism, Meghnath and Biju Toppo have created a cinematic legacy that transcends the boundaries of time and sheds light on the challenges and accomplishments of indigenous communities in India. Moreover, their film repertoire includes ethnographic projects, which provide a nuanced picture of indigenous culture, livelihoods and leadership.

These films, such as 'Gadi Lohardaga Mail' (2004), document cultural heritage and collective memory through media such as songs, preserving indigenous heritage for posterity (Yadav, 2022). 'Gadi Lohardaga Mail' captures the last ride on the narrow gauge passenger train Lohardaga Mail. In this ride, tribal icons like Padmashri Dr Ram Dayal Munda, Shri Mukund Nayak and Padmashri Madhu Mansuri undertook the last ride on the train that would no longer run. The train holds the collective memory of the tribal people who travelled from one place to another. This last ride, along with the history of tribal life and struggle, was documented through the songs of these three cultural tribal leaders.

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