TIDE Salon — Transcript PDF

Accessible text descriptions and transcription produced by Harriet Smith Hughes.

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Funder's Introduction

[Black background with text, headed by three logos: the TIDE logo; the Oxford University logo; and the ERC, European Research Council logo.]

The TIDE project is funded by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement no. 681884). TIDE Salon was produced with additional funding from the Humanities Cultural Programme and support from TORCH (The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities).

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Landing Page

[The background is a sepia ink image of a man crossing a ford, with text across it.]

This is TIDE Salon, an interactive multimedia spoken word and music salon celebrating the collaborations of British Asian artists exploring translation of form across time.

The artists engage with TIDE's 'Keywords' project, in which TIDE historians have traced how mobility in the great age of travel and discovery shaped English perceptions of human identity based on cultural identification and difference. Our current world is all too familiar with the concepts that surfaced or evolved as a result: foreigners, strangers, aliens, converts, exiles, or even translators, ambassadors and go-betweens. By examining how different discourses tackled the fraught question of human identity in this era, TIDE opens a new perspective on cross-cultural encounters and generates new understandings of key terms, concepts, and debates.

The artists use music and poetry to evoke and investigate the TIDE keywords in a contemporary context, while showing how their own artforms speak to each other through a shared sense of similarity in rhythm, form, beat, and difference — of sound and words.

When you launch the site, be prepared for audio and visual discoveries.

[Beneath the text is an icon of a compass, with the instruction 'Click to embark'.]

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Introduction to TIDE: by Nandini Das

What did it mean to be a stranger in sixteenth and seventeenth century England? How were other nations, cultures, and religions perceived? And what happened when individuals moved between languages, countries, religions, and spaces? TIDE: Keywords emerges from the collaborative work of 'Travel, Transculturality, and Identity in England, c. 1550-1700' (TIDE), a five-year interdisciplinary project funded by the European Research Council, exploring the development of the ideas of belonging and betweenness in early modern England. It was evident from the outset that not only did certain terms recur in different discourses, but they repeatedly illuminate points of tension, debate, and change. Tracing such terms is challenging, precisely because of the shifting and ambiguous nature of the descriptors. Lived experience in England and particularly in London was complex enough due to the sheer range of its populace. John Eliot's French-English

manual, the Ortho-epia Gallice (1593), illustrates the multicultural, multilingual space in one of its model dialogues:

> *'Where shall I find you about twelve a clocke?' 'I will be below in the Change, either walking among the Italians, or truking with the French, or pratling amongst our English, or carousing with the Flemings at the Cardinal's Hat.'(1)*

Terminology for describing this multitude created new complications. In London, for instance, the term 'foreigner' was usually used legally to denote someone from another city: by that definition, playwrights such as Christopher Marlowe (born in Canterbury) and William Shakespeare (born in Stratford-upon-Avon) were both 'foreigners' in London. This was not simply a matter of civic law, but had economic implications as well. English law and taxation practices denoted travellers from other nations as 'strangers' and 'aliens', but those of that group who permanently settled in the city and negotiated rights to escape alien custom duties and taxes ('denizens'), for instance, were habitually distinguished both from people born in London ('free denizens'), as well as from others of their own nations simply passing through – merchants, casual travellers, scholars, or diplomats and their retinue. Bringing in questions of nationhood, race and ethnicity further complicates the issue: the definition and status of 'stranger-born' subjects and 'English-born strangers,' as recent scholarship has shown, was hardly consistent even within the period in question.

There is an established scholarly tradition emphasising English xenophobia and anxiety about immigrant communities – from the French and the Dutch, to the Jews and Africans or 'Moors' – taking up state and national resources that rightfully belonged to the 'native-born' English. Increasingly, though, new research has demanded a reassessment of such preconceptions, revealing the multiple ways in which conflicting affiliations (e.g. based on shared faith or shared craft), or practical conditions of living and work in close proximity, could complicate easy binaries of differentiation.

Focussing on those figures who operated beyond settled communities and groups, the definition and status of diplomats, exiles, and converts, and those who defined themselves explicitly beyond the legal boundaries, such as pirates and mercenaries, was equally ambiguous. In early modern thinking about diplomacy, a fine distinction, for example, applied to the remit of ambassadors appointed by the monarch, and those appointed by the state but funded by the trading companies, as in the case of William Harborne, the English ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, in the pay of the Levant Company. Affiliations to company and state, in such cases, meant a careful balance had to be wrought in any act of mediation. How did such balancing of multiple claims help to redraw boundaries and re-define definitions?

Complexity lies also in the way concepts and ideas travelled from the Continent to England, and across discursive fields within England. One instance at least provides a telling illustration of how concepts of difference in religious discourse could shape economic and political decision-making, when the argument that justified the English state's authorisation of the activities of the Virginia Company in America was based on Sir Edward Coke's uncompromising claim that all non-Christian infidels were aliens, perpetui enemici, 'perpetual enemies', with whom no accommodation was possible, 'for between them, as with devils, whose subjects they be, and the Christians, there is perpetual hostility, and can be no peace.'(2) How did the transfer of concepts from other countries and other discursive fields produce conflict as well as consensus?

In examining these issues, TIDE: Keywords follows the model of Raymond Williams's *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976). In his introduction to the first edition of his *Keywords*, Williams argued that the meanings of certain crucial, recurrently used words were 'inextricably bound up with the problems [they] were being used to discuss'.(3) His twofold definition of such keywords as 'significant, binding words in certain activities and their interpretation' and 'significant, indicative words in certain forms of thought' (p. 15) continues to be a useful one to interrogate words that sometimes tend to be under-analysed in both popular and critical discourse. They help to illuminate what Williams had described as 'a history and complexity of meanings; conscious changes, or consciously different uses; innovation, obsolescence, specialization, extension, overlap, transfer; or changes which are masked by a nominal continuity so that words which seem to have been there for centuries, with continuous general meanings, have come in fact to express radically different or radically variable, yet sometimes hardly noticed, meanings and implications of meaning' (p. 17).

The selection of words examined in TIDE: Keywords all reveal similarly complex histories of usage; in many cases, the concepts, preconceptions, and debates that they embody (or subsume) came to play seminal roles in articulations of identity, rights, and power in subsequent periods. Our aim is not to settle on a single definitive description, but to illuminate precisely the complexity – and often, the multiplicity – inherent in the usage of these terms in early modern English. Each essay and citation of usage offered here emphasises the fact that the terms in question share a certain slipperiness, that they are altered, revised and transformed repeatedly by multiple imperatives. *TIDE: Keywords* will continue to be a work in progress throughout the duration of the project, with new examples and interrogations added as fresh material emerges through our collective research. We are grateful to scholars who have provided advice during the course of its preparation.

(1) John Eliot, *Ortho-epia Gallica, Eliots fruits for the French: enterlaced with a double new invention, which teacheth to speake truely, speedily and volubly the French-tongue* (London, 1593), p.26.
(2) *The Reports of Sir Edward Coke [...]The Second Edition* (London, 1680), p.443.

(3) Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, 1976; 2nd edition (Glasgow: Fontana, 1983), p.15.

TIDE: Keywords contributors — Nandini Das, João Vicente Melo, Haig Smith, and Lauren Working.

Editorial Assistants — Tom Roberts, Emily Stevenson.

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TIDE Salon Introduction

[We see a video introduction about the TIDE Salon. Waves wash across the screen. The title fades in.]

TIDE Salon, an interactive artist collaboration.

[Clips from the spoken word and musical recordings play, accompanied by period artwork. The text introduces the project's keywords, and the project's creators and collaborators.]

- 'Traveller' by Sanah Ahsan and Shama Rahman
- 'Alien' by Zia Ahmed and Steven Savale
- 'Savage' by Ms. Mohammed and Sarathy Korwar

TIDE Salon and original fiction by Preti Taneja. Artists' collaboration curated and produced by Sweety Kapoor. Multimedia installation by Ben Crowe. TIDE Salon commissioned by Nandini Das.

A re-discovery of meaning inspired by keywords of the Early Modern period, 1500-1700.

[The final frame invites you to navigate your journey on each page by clicking on the icons, which are listed in the section below.]

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Icons and Journey Map

[On the Introduction screen, and at the right-hand side of the screen throughout the TIDE Salon, there are five icons, which you use to navigate around the site. They are clickable or disabled, depending which page you are on.]

- An eye (Click for visual on/off)
- A key (Click to read the Keyword sssay)
- A treasure chest (Click to access the Alien Project Archive)
- Musical notes (Click to listen to the final composition)
- A skull and crossbones (Click to read about the artists)

[On the left-hand side of the screen are a further two icons: a treasure map, and a quill. These take you to the Journey Map, and Preti Taneja's 'Fragment' composition.]

[The Journey Map is an interactive map of the website, showing how all the elements interconnect, with clickable links and images. The elements are joined by sweeping coloured lines, which correspond to the Keywords and the way they link across the site: teal for 'alien'; yellow for 'traveller; salmon pink for 'savage'. A link to the Journey Map can be found on the left-hand side of the screen throughout the Keyword sections of the site, and at the footer of the screen throughout.]

[On certain pages of the site there are two further icons: a sparrow, which takes you to the next page; and the compass, which returns you to the Embarkation screen.]

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Website Footer

[At the bottom of the screen, in the footer, there are a set of five links on the left-hand side.]

- Index
- Journey Map
- Credits [transcribed in next section]
- Introduction to TIDE
- Transcript PDF

[The Index shows a panel of thumbnail images, each of which link to a section of the TIDE Salon project. They run from the Funders Introduction through to the ‘Alien’ keyword project, the ‘Savage’ keyword project, and finally the ‘Traveller’ keyword project. When you have visited a page, the Index shows a blue tick in the right-hand corner of the thumbnail to illustrate where you’ve been.]

[On the right-hand side of the footer there are three user options:]

- Share
- Sound (On/Off)
- Fullscreen

[Clicking ‘Share’ enables you to post about TIDE to Facebook and Twitter. The sharing text is below.]

[Facebook] Navigate TIDE Salon - an immersive digital installation of sound and words featuring a collaboration of 7 world leading British Asian artists - exploring what it means to be an ALIEN, a STRANGER, a TRAVELLER across time.

[Twitter] ALIEN, STRANGER, TRAVELLER: Welcome to TIDE Salon - an immersive sound and word installation featuring 7 world leading British Asian artists collaborating across form and time. Navigate your journey here: [link]

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TIDE Salon Credits

[Dark grey background with text. The title reads ‘TIDE Salon: An interactive artistic collaboration’. The text runs across two columns. The first column is headed ‘About’, the second column is headed ‘Credits’. The ‘About’ column repeats the text from the Landing Page which introduces the TIDE project, and is transcribed above.]

CREDITS

TIDE Team:
Nandini Das, Joao de Melo, Tom Roberts, Haig Smith, Emily Stevenson, Lauren Working
www.tideproject.uk

ALIEN Original composition by Zia Ahmed and Steven Savale
Copyright: Zia Ahmed and Steven Savale

TRAVELLER Original composition by Shama Rahman and Sanah Ahsan
Copyright: Shana Rahman and Sanah Ahsan

SAVAGE Original composition by Ms. Mohammed and Sarathy Korwar

FRAGMENT (CONSIDER REVISING) Original fiction by Preti Taneja
Copyright: Preti Taneja

Artists’ collaboration curated and produced by Sweety Kapoor
Original fiction by Preti Taneja
Multimedia installation and visual production by Ben Crowe/ERA Films Ltd.

Ms. Mohammed photo by Coco VU
Zia Ahmed photo by Finn Constantine
Preti Taneja photo by Rory O’Bryen

Unless otherwise stated all photographic imagery used in this installation are identified as being in the public domain and free of known restrictions as PD-Art photographs (i.e. faithful reproductions of two-dimensional public domain work of art).

Video backgrounds in SAVAGE, ALIEN, and TRAVELLER under license from Storyblocks.com

Archive footage in SAVAGE video licensed as Public Domain from Prelinger Archive

Graphic icons licensed under Creative Commons

[The compass icon allows you to navigate back to the Embarkation screen]

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Embarkation

[Video of a ship's prow on the water, with large text that links to the three project keywords.]

- Alien
- Traveller
- Savage

[Two clickable icons are beneath each heading: musical notes, and a treasure chest, linking to the 'Finished composition' and 'Project archive' respectively. This transcript follows a journey from 'Alien', to 'Traveller', to 'Savage'.]

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Alien — Final composition

[Black background with text across it. No audio yet.]

Keyword: Alien

'What country, by the nature of your error, Should give you harbour? Go you to France or Flanders, To any German province, Spain or Portugal, Nay, anywhere that not adheres to England, Why, you must needs be strangers'

[A voice announces (audio)] 'strangers, would you be pleas'd / to find a nation of such barbarous temper'.

[The text fades, replaced by the composition's title, 'Chastised and Baptised', by Zia Ahmed and Steve Chandra. The composition begins, an eerie synth backing that grows louder as Zia's voice repeats: 'alien', 'stranger', 'alien', 'stranger'. The video shows a spacecraft rotating above a burning Sun, and we move through space alongside Zia's words. The synth sounds build as Zia reaches 'the man who fell to earth'. A pause. A creature's eyes. The beat kicks in, and with it we're thrown into a rapid series of images: trade routes and maps; warfare and royal courts, drawn from Early Modern sources across the West, the Middle East, and Southern Asia. The track becomes dubby, frantic. Strings pluck an anxious loop. Once, the video cuts back to the modern spacecraft, slowly circling Earth below and the creature's eyes.]

[Composition text]

alien

stranger

alien

stranger

alien

stranger

alien

stranger

alien

stranger

alien

stranger

alien

stranger

the man who fell to earth

alien

a stranger

the natives

are in danger

away in a manger

palestinian jesus

to which country

do you pledge your allegiance?

alien

a stranger

alien

a stranger

alien

a stranger

alien

alien

a stranger

alien

a stranger

alien

a stranger

alien

an alien

a demon

history

repeating

non-believer

heathen

i can’t speak your name

it needs to change

chastise the alien

baptise the alien

chastise the alien

baptise the alien

say hello to peter pope

he sounds like a decent bloke

the day the earth stood still

part 2

am i an ic4 male

or klaatu?

klaatu

klaatu barada nikto

klaatu

klaatu barada nikto

alien powers

i can turn invisible

and hypervisible at the same time

intruder alarm

the man who fell to earth

came from somewherestan

strangerland

he’ll take our jobs

then he take our land

swallow your language

how long til you burst?

swallow your faith

how long til you burst?

swallow your pain

follow our ways

how long til you burst?

how hard can you work?

how much is your worth?

you’re not of this soil

you’re not of this earth

we don’t take to you

unless you take to us first

why don't you come to our service?

why do you build your own churches?

etrangier

strange tongue

go back

to where you came from

an humanoid

an asterisk

which box

do i have to tick?

why do i live in a country

that doesn't want me?

why should i die for a country

that doesn't want me?

if i’m an alien

then you’re an alien to me

if i’m a stranger

then you’re a stranger to me

‘strangers, would you be pleas’d / to find a nation of such barbarous temper’

[When the composition ends, you hover on the treasure chest icon on the right to go to the Project Archive.]

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Alien — Keyword essay

[Clicking on the key icon on the Final Composition screen links you to the ‘Alien’ Keyword essay, written by Professor Nandini Das, which is hosted on the TIDE Project website. Link to full text here.]

Alien — Project Archive

[Video of a ship on the horizon, and the sound of washing waves. Text links to the ‘Alien’ project archive, made up of Zoom calls and material produced in the creation of the final composition. Each of these is transcribed in full below.]

- First Project Zoom, all participants
- Mid-composition Project WhatsApp
- Pre-composition Artist Research — Zia Ahmed
- Composition Experiments x3 — Zia Ahmed
- Post-composition Project Zoom
- Post-composition Artist Reflection — Steven Savale

First project Zoom — all participants

Steven Savale: Do you guys know CLR James, the Trinidadian Marxist? He was doing a lecture on Shakespeare. Now, I don't know anything about Shakespeare really and I've never read Othello, but Othello's lead character is a Moor. So he would fall into the general term of Black, or person of colour. There were people in the audience saying, 'well this is a play about racism,' and he (James) said, 'well, no, it isn't.'

In the play, there is prejudice against Othello, not because he's black but because he's a Moor: because there simply was not the overall perception, there was not the ideology of racism as we know it when Shakespeare wrote that play. That's always stuck with me though I've never read or studied Shakespeare, and that was actually the first thing that came to mind when I read the project outline, which is something I saw about 40 years ago as a teenager.

And last thing from me. I read a book when I was a teenager. David Bowie made a film called The Man Who Fell to Earth and I was too young to get to see it, but I read the book. There was a great moment in it where the character is an 'alien' from another planet. And they say the only thing we can get you on legally sir, is that you are an illegal immigrant. So that's why the first word that I liked was 'alien', and I would love to explore the history of 'alien'.

Preti Taneja: That's absolutely brilliant. I am doing a bit of recording and taking a few pictures because this is the kind of material that we can use on the multimedia website to show the beginning of our process and how these ideas begin to evolve, if that's okay with everyone and of course if it's not then just let me know and mute your videos or whatever.

But there's some really interesting ideas there, especially kind of pulling on your childhood memories because we all have these deep embedded hurts of language in us that we need to reclaim. That thing 'to swarm' is exactly what this is really about, where it can mean one thing to one person and actually have this other meaning which is super intelligence. I love that, you know, and the childhood movies and our parents memories and all of this can come to bear on it.

And, you know, questions of identity in this group are very open really because there's many different languages, there's many different kinds of backgrounds and nobody is actually one thing or two things here, so it's going to be really exciting to see what comes up. Any other thoughts?

Sarathy Korwar: Yeah, just a quick one. I think, because both Dana and I — since we paired together and the fact that we're both first generation immigrants to this country, both from former

countries of empire, of colonial rule — I think it'd be really interesting to talk about the words that get borrowed into the English language from places that we're from, and our relationship to those words but also the relationship that people have here to those words and how that makes us feel, potentially. Dana and I, we can chat about it, see what we think.

Preti: If you do have those conversations — I know it's like an extra layer of complexity — but please do record them, and any email exchanges that you want to share that would be great. Any 30 seconds or 1 minute videos that you want to make on your own while you're thinking about this stuff, we can use all the material — we can use none of the material — but the more material we have, the better the site will be and we will have more to pick and choose from. I'm going to share with you in the group chat two links to Ben's work, which you can look at to get an idea of how interactive multimedia actually works. One of them is on migrant workers in Qatar, and the other one is on Samsung. Ben, do you want to just quickly talk about what they are?

Ben Crowe: Sure. So these are two projects that are a few years old now they're done for the International Trade Union Confederation, and they're really kind of framed around workers rights and the issues that people face in different countries, migrant workers in particular. So these were done with local trade unions and national trade unions and trade unionists in different countries. This just to give you a flavour of some of the functionality or the kind of software package that I'm using, which is called Clint.

It's supposed to be a responsive platform so you can play these things on your mobile phone or on your tablet or on your desktop. Although there's always some glitches here and there, across different technologies. Bear in mind, as well, that this is all hosted by a third party organisation, a trade union organisation. So, occasionally they don't update their servers when they need to. Which means that occasionally projects don't always play as they're supposed to. But I think at the moment they are doing, so you can take a look at that. There's also another one which was built for Preti, for your Shakespeare and Human Rights interactive research site. I've got control of that server and I have not updated it so it doesn't actually play correctly at the moment. [Laughter]. I'll sort that out over the next few days and hopefully send you that as well. These are just a taster. It's not to say that any of this project will look like this at all.

But I think that a lot of the things you've discussed the concepts and the themes and the kind of structuring ideas behind it — like division and plurality and multiple meanings — can be visually built into it, so it's a kind of housing around your work, and can kind of reflect the discussions that you're having as well.

Preti: Yeah, I really love things where the artistic form reflects the message and the content of what we're trying to produce and that's why we chose an interactive multimedia format because it

allows the user to curate their own experience, in a way, while learning from you so another kind of layer of translation takes place as well.

Has anyone got any other questions or thoughts, they want to share about the project?

Sanah Ahsan: I'm really sorry but I have to shoot off the call now, but I just want to say it all sounds really great. I haven't actually picked a keyword yet, but I'm looking forward to immersing myself in the list.

Preti: Great. We'll be in touch with an email with some more resources and stuff, and just email me any time.

Sanah: Yeah, sure. Well, it's nice to like 'e-meet' you all, and hopefully speak to some of you soon.

Sharma Rahman: I'm going to have to go as well, sorry guys. I'm paired with Sanah as well, so should we discuss the key word that we need to do right now, or with her offline but recorded?

Preti: Yes, absolutely.

Nandini Das: Just something to add in. The main TIDE Project website — and I'll put that link here in the chat — has a lot of kind of informal blogs and things. So if you're particularly interested in the historical side of things, and stories that we mentioned in the essay, then it's always worth searching the website to see if there's any more additional information on there.

Sharma: And is it okay if there's an overlap of the words that we choose with the other pairings?

Preti: Yeah, I haven't really thought about that actually but I don't think it matters too much because the way that the multimedia interactive site works is that it will actually allow us to do more layers of meaning. It really doesn't matter, it's a very open-minded platform. It has diversity of thought, as they say. [Laughter]

Zia Ahmed: 'Aliens', yeah, I'm cool with 'Aliens'. Just from what you were saying, Steve, about this thing about coming over and — just looking at recent days, especially with this stuff about taking TV shows off BBC or Netflix and with the statues being taken down — I've been thinking about a phrase, and I'm just bouncing off you, but thinking about 'the world's gone mad'. Thinking about definitions of one person's 'world gone mad' versus another.

Steven: I really like the idea of looking at the origin of words or trying to put yourself between, they say, 1500 and 1700, but then also putting yourself in the future at the same time. Sort of

like, bounce way back and then way forward to see where these words are actually going to end up. Where they came from and where they're going to end up.

'Alien' is just a crazy word when you think about it, because it has this huge science fiction connotation. It obviously didn't, that's a really recent addition to the word 'alien', isn't it? It's probably the most updated and different word on the list. Because the 'alien' was a real bureaucratic word at one point. I mean one of our very early ADF photoshoots we did outside of a place in Whitehall, which is called The 'alien' Registration Office.

Nandini: You know, as researchers we spend ages looking through things called the Registers of 'aliens', which England kept every year. We have registers of 'aliens' in England from the 1500s.

Steven: That's what I'm saying. What a radical redefinition of the word. Why was that word used? Why did that become associated with little green men from planet Uranus?

Preti: While I listen to you, I wanted to ask if you do have visual prompts like your photographs, or your old band cover sleeves from your records, or anything like that that you feel we could put up there to show your influences and how these things that come into the work. Maybe photographs of graffiti that you've come across in a city in the past few days, or even samples that you might use from politicians talking on the BBC, or anything like that. Those threads of material will all make a really rich experience for the user on the site.

Steven: Great, well here's the thing. Two of my favourite artists, two of the greatest artists ever, describe themselves as 'aliens'. There's a long interview with Nina Simone in which she talks about how she always felt like an 'alien'. And then you've got someone like Sun Ra, who not only felt like an 'alien' but quite clearly started to believe he was one.

Preti: And Bowie, who you mentioned earlier.

Steven: Yes, I did. It's a bit different with Bowie, I think. Or maybe, I don't know. But I think that with Sun Ra and Nina Simone you've got the black experience, the Afro-American experience, directly related to feeling like an 'alien' from another world. Whereas in Sun Ra, he's actually got a whole universe of his music and his approach and his language and everything, all about being from another planet.

You've really got me here, because why was it that the thing I watched most when I was eight or nine that really meant something to me, was science fiction TV, which was relatively progressive at the time. If you wanted to see women flying aeroplanes or black people running moon bases you look for television science fiction. That was all we had — for me, it was all I had in the early '70s — to make me feel positive.

Preti: That's so important: how culture shapes your imagination when you're young and the possibilities of culture. That's kind of what we're trying to break up here, the stranglehold of a certain kind of cultural narrative on our times right now. Thank God that moment in the ‘70s happened.

Steven: I'm feeling more and more that 'alien' is working, because when you think about all that implies, you know, even just my own personal experience of being attracted to science fiction because I felt like an 'alien'.

Preti: Maybe we can find some of those 1970s comic book sci-fi covers.

Steven: Oh they were notorious, they were awful.

Sweety Kapoor: I think Steve might have a few for us at home.

Preti: Well, you can record material on your phones and send it to us, like phone screenshots or photographs from your phone or like video clips or anything. And, yeah, we can make it into something thing. I’m saying ‘we’, but it’ll be Ben.

Steven: Something that’s really relevant now is the removal of statues and the debates around that as well. Look at the statues of slave traders, and it’s like you’re growing up in an 'alien' world. We've got all these kinds of symbols of whole systems and a whole ideology that excludes you, and you want to strike back and you want to kick back and you want to kick over the statues. That kind of sparks a lot as well.

Preti: Yeah, I don't know what you guys think about this but I feel that we're also probably all involved in different groups that are having discussions about the debts that people of South Asian origin in this country owe to Black culture, and not to appropriate that too much. We kept this as a South Asian project because that's my personal heritage, and I'm the writer in residence, and I wanted to do something that specifically looked at this part, what it means to us, in this particular moment and with these particular keywords. So I've curated this room in that way.

I don't know how you want to navigate that. I'm not going to censor anyone for referencing Sun Ra or whatever, but it's something to keep in mind because these are really incendiary times. We don't want to re-perpetrate a violence of erasure, because we are not Black and while some of us have Black heritage in our bodies, in our minds, in our voices, in our music and so on, and that's valid — I think we have to be sensitive.

Steven: I think you'll find that there are some statues of governors of India. So I think the net will gradually encompass those.

Preti: Yeah. Dana. How are you doing down there? I know it's early where you are.

Dana: Yeah, I've just been taking it all in. It's good though. Steve, especially, was making me think about my overall experience, and the parallels to his. So thanks, Steve.

Zia: Is it worth reading Raymond Williams, or something that's easy to access…?

Preti: Nandini has sent over the project file, which has the actual keywords that Oxford University have been working on. That's the foundation that you should be working from.

Nandini: Williams' essays are very much a product of the 1970s. And so they're probably not going to be as useful, in some ways. Preti, have you sent everyone the direct link to 'Keywords'?

Preti: Yeah, but because we've been evolving this project over time there's probably been like pages of information. But now we're gonna do a definitive resource pack.

Nandini: I think that will be useful, because you'll just get the essentials. There's five years worth of stuff that we have accumulated.

Zia: Nandini, you said something before something about how 'the culture evolves through invisible debate'. What's an invisible debate? I mean, how do you get involved in an 'invisible debate'?

Nandini: I think there were two things that I was trying to talk about there. One was that culture means basically assuming that people all think the same when they share a certain culture, so there's an assumption of agreement. But under that assumption of agreement, there's always multiple debates that go on. Take Steven's talking about the word 'alien', for instance. There are a lot of layers of assumptions about what an 'alien' might mean in our contemporary culture.

It kind of goes in circles. Early on, 'aliens' were foreigners who came over here 'to take our jobs'. Then they became science fiction, little green men. But now, think about the debates about 'strangers' or 'immigrants', they're quite often being characterised as those 'invaders from Mars' kind of characters.

So, there's always an underlying invisible layer of people having a tussle about their control on words, and trying to impose the fact that what they mean by a certain word is what the general culture — or in our current debate, often people say, 'the public' — means by that word. Except

that no one quite knows who that public is and whether there is a single public either. That's what I was trying to get at, Zia.

Zia: And the key words, are they being debated specifically in terms of them being English words, or in terms of words all over?

Nandini: You mean in terms of other languages? We are focusing mainly on English words. So, the words we picked were words that we realised were being used quite often. They are kind of high frequency words that are constantly being used in this period, in churches, in law courts, in politics, at the parliament, and on stage by poets.

There's a fantastic resource which puts together every book in English printed from 1500 to 1700, basically, and they've all been digitised and you can search through them. So we did that, and we put together this list of about 40 words about race and identity that keep cropping up in those books, because that gives you an indicator of what people used, the vocabulary of difference or labelling that people used.

Preti: We're going to share some of that process, that people who did the keywords — Nandini's team did — so you can build that into your thinking and your responses if you want to, it's really fascinating. Nandini, do you trace etymologies? So with these keywords, did you say, okay, this word came from India?

Nandini: Every keyword essay starts off by telling you where the word comes from.And some of it is OED based, but because the OED started off as a Victorian pipe dream it has its own problems. So sometimes we go beyond the OED — quite often beyond the Oxford English Dictionary. But it all starts off with the source of the words. The main thing that each of these essays focuses on is how these particular words changed in the period that we're looking at.

And the reason that's really interesting, or really powerful, is because the period that we're looking at was when Britain was trying to catch up with Spain and Portugal and the Dutch and trying to become a global player. So there was a big chip on English shoulders about not being active enough and not having an empire, so it becomes really powerful later on. But also because this is the time of the first big immigration crisis.

I mean, Steven, you were talking about the whole 'coming over here, taking our jobs' dialogue. The earliest big debate about that is in the Parliament in 1607 and in 1614, when Sir Walter Raleigh talks exactly about that, all these immigrants coming over here, taking our jobs. We need to shut them out, make Britain great again.

Steven: Was it the Huguenots? Who were the immigrants then?

Nandini: The Protestant Huguenots were a large group of them, but not just the Huguenots. There were other Dutch immigrants as well.

There was a lot of anxiety about sailors who were being brought over. The English had started going abroad, but there was about a 70% mortality rate on ships. So once you had got somewhere you needed people to bring those ships back. I grew up in Bengal, in India, so I have a particular interest in stories — little traces — in which you can see Bengali sailors from current Bangladesh being brought back. The first Indian to be baptised in England was a Bengali boy, a 15 year old Bengali boy who was brought back. He was renamed Peter Pope. [Laughter]

Preti: That was in the 1600s?

Nandini: Yep.

Preti: It's like, poke this brain and just all this amazing information comes out. It's such a privilege to hear you talk about the project.

Nandini: I mean, we think of it partly as: we're relearning how to tell stories. Talking simply about works in the abstract doesn't work. So much of our work has been about excavating these stories, not just about the black slaves who were being traded or the Indian sailor boy brought over and taught Latin, so that he could do a performance in church, but also Dutch immigrants coming over and writing letters back home. We've got a wonderful letter that we found in an archive from a hat maker who had escaped from Spanish interrogation, and come over to England, writing back to his wife saying, 'well you know we've had a little bit of trouble with the local youths, and they have desecrated the Dutch church, but the people in general are really nice. The only problem is that they cook with lard. So when you come over bring our butter churn.'

That kind of little glimpse into everyday life is really what attracts and keeps us going.

Preti: I think what we really want to do though is just allow you all as artists and musicians to take over from the written word, and make something that evokes all these different traces and experiences that you're going to bring to it that's what this part of the project is really about.\

We have about another 10 minutes on this meeting, if anyone else wants to share anything: personal, political, historical, questions about material. On this very cold Friday morning in June.

If you want to share any resources or background — Steven, you were talking about something you had done recently on 'swarm' — if you wanted to send the link that would be great.

Steven: We did a video under lockdown conditions, I can send that over.

Preti: Brilliant, thank you.

Sweety: I was also thinking, Sarathy, about the stuff you did around your latest releases, your album which is arriving soon. You've got some artwork, I think, around the singles you've released previously, as well. It's all very interesting. I think you actually did archiving yourself and while you were in process, as well?

Sarathy: Yeah, I mean the rhetoric around the album is essentially of more arriving, and the album artwork is of a swarm of people coming in. It's challenging that negative rhetoric of more people being a negative thing. And Zia's on the other album, obviously, Zia's on a couple of tunes. We tour together all the time. We've got a new tune coming out next week actually, celebrating the end of racism. I don't know if you guys have heard, but yeah, it's over. [Laughter]

Anyway, there's a lot to be said, obviously, but I think for this project it would be really interesting to just have those initial conversations with Dana and kind of work through what is pulling us in which directions.

Sweety: And Dana, you have an added layer in terms of your experience — we had these chats a year or so ago — but because of your experience going up in Trinidad, with South Asian heritage, and then again how you felt when you moved to America. It's very interesting.

Dana: [Line breaks up]

Sweety: Dana, we can't hear you. It keeps freezing.

Dana: Oh. No but: yes, to all that.

Preti: So I guess the next step would be for me to get together a brief outline of the schedule to send you all, and a resource pack with all the links to the TIDE keywords, and a bit of information going over what we talked about today.

If Nandini and Sweety and Ben have 5 minutes then maybe we can stay and quickly just catch up, and let the very wonderful musicians and spoken word poets get on with their proper purpose in life, making beautiful creative things.

Sweety: Before we go, can I just say: Ben. When Preti sent me the links to the work you've done with your website, I mean she knows how excited I was. I really cannot wait for the artists to see it, to see what you create. It's astonishing how you've done amazing interactive projects, you know for people like Greenpeace as well, really bringing them alive. It was a joy to see, and I just wanted to say that.

Nandini: Just on a practical term, Preti, I'm aware that we posted quite a few links in the chat and there might be other things that people come across and just wanted to share. I wonder whether it would be useful just to set up a simple Google Sheet, or something like that, and share it with everyone, so that people can just cut and paste links or whatever into there.

Preti: Nod if you like Google Docs, it’s not for everyone. Okay, I’ll do it, and if you ever want to put stuff on there you can. If you ever want to download the chat, and I'm sure you'll know how to do this, but there are three dots at the side of the chat box. You can save it to your computer as a text file.

Okay, thank you so much guys.

[They wrap up]

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Alien — Mid-composition Project WhatsApp

[Black background with text.]

Exchange between Steven Savale and Sweety Kapoor.

[An image of a phone screen appears, showing a conversation between Steven and Sweety. The first message is an audio file, sent from Steven to Sweety. It begins to play on the page: an instrumental version of the final composition.]

Sweety: Steve… love this
Your call totally, would love to see the final piece extended to 5 min…..Think there’s an interesting flow and movement in the music that deserves to be explored and breath a bit more...allowing us to sit in the music with pauses from Zia amazing delivery and words.

[Prayer hands emoji]
5 min or possibly longer if you please!
Just food for thought. xx

Steven: Yes may extend it instrumentally.

Sweety: Exactly what I meant [Prayer hands emoji]
Although extended instrumental doesn't necessarily have to be at the end
[Blushing smile emoji]

[Navigating to the next screen via the swallow icon, the conversation continues on WhatsApp]

Steven: No it would be in the mid section before the f-ed up orchestral bit

Sweety: Love what the textures and sound world you've created. Feels like a journey through an unknown but know
*love the
Perfect. can feel and hear room between the words..

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Alien — Pre-composition Artist Research

Zia Ahmed: In my head I thought 'alien' was like an American term. I guess it's a synonym for so many things, the other keywords as well.

Nandini Das: It is. I think it's you've probably chosen the most complex term in this period in some ways, and it's just such a loaded thing to call someone an alien. In this particular time.

Zia: So obviously an alien is not human. Is that implication, or is it that the word meant 'not from here'.

Nandini: It's the second so if we had a time machine and we happened to be in Shakespearean London or something, if you talked about an alien it simply would mean someone who's not out of this soil. So, someone who's from a different land, essentially.

Zia: I was thinking about how even though the Hugeunots, their language was different, they were still white, right?

Nandini: Not necessarily so I mean there's, you know, though there are black and Asian people in in England who are also aliens. So a couple of days ago I was looking through some records of the very early East India Company. And one of the things that I'm still kind of stupidly excited about discovering is this request from what probably is an Indian sailor who comes back on one of the ships. So, the ships used to lose loads of sailors, disease and everything, as they went. But you still need men to bring the ship back to England. So they used to hire sailors from India, or wherever they went, to sail the ship back. So one of the things that I came across was the request from a guy called Samuel Mansur and he gets married to what sounds like a very English name, a woman called Jane Johnson, in Deptford.

The sailors all lived in Bedford, that was where the East India Company had a docks. So he gets married to her, and then two months later he requested that the East India Company give him permission to take his wife back home. But of course I mean the East India Company says, you know, there's no chance of that happening: you can't take a woman on board a ship with 70-odd men who haven't seen women for six months. We're not going to give you permission for that. We don't know what happened to Samuel Mansoor, he just disappears from the records. So there might be this random Indian guy wandering around Deptford in 1614, and he is also an alien.

Zia: And he might have ended up staying.

Nandini: That depends on how much he fancied Jane Johnson, of course. [Laughter]

Zia: So how would he — Now you've got to sit the tests and pay fees. How would you be the legal alien as opposed to —

Nandini: It's pretty similar in some ways to structures now. And that's probably not surprising because the structures England inherited were developed in this period. It depended partly on whether you had money, as always. Say if you were a merchant — from anywhere — you know you could be a Jewish merchant from Northern Africa, you could be an Italian merchant from Venice, and you decided that you were going to live in England. Either you could just come over and set up your business, and then pay quite a big tax on your income, called the 'alien fees'.

But when you came over, you'd have to be logged in something called the Register of Aliens. And we still have, it's an incredible series of historical documents, right from medieval period onwards. Lists and lists of all these foreign people who have come over to England. So you'd be in the Register of Aliens and that meant that when it came to tax season, the government would know to charge you a higher rate of tax compared to the local merchants, or local workers. If you stayed for a while and you thought, you don't quite fancy paying this higher rate tax and you'd quite like to buy a house rather than renting somewhere, all of that kind of stuff. And maybe you've got kids and they're growing up sounding English and speaking English — that happened.

You start worrying what's going to happen to them, they're not going to be able to go back to Venice or wherever, and settle back. So your two options open: you could apply for something called becoming a ‘denizen’, which is like a registered immigrant, or permanent resident. It’s the kind of thing that a lot of people from India and Pakistan and Bangladesh came over and had stamped on their passports, in the ‘60s and ‘70s. You became a permanent resident, and that meant you didn't have to keep applying for a visa. And you paid almost local rate taxes. The thing that you couldn't do is leave your property to your children. That would be at the discretion of the state. And so you could earn money, you could pay your taxes, your children could live here, they could nominally legally live in your house. But they couldn't inherit your house and then sell it off to someone else, because they weren't legal owners, since you were just a denizen.

And if you didn't want that, then you could pay even more money, and that this was really expensive and even in those days, you could pay quite a substantial amount of money and become a naturalised citizen. That meant that you would be treated for all intents and purposes as an English person.

Zia: So how far was that done in the 16th century?

Nandini: Even before that. But in the 16th century is when those laws get really set, and the processes get set. So, before that it depended quite often on who you knew. So, if you were a really talented artist and you fancied staying here you might have a patron. And you could, if your patron was influential enough at court, could go and request of him, ‘Look, could I be naturalised,’ and your patron might pull a few strings for you. Or you might be so rich that people would be eager to keep you. Imagine if you were a merchant who lent money to a lot of English aristocrats who were broke. Those English aristocrats would be really keen to please you. So you might have been offered the option of being naturalised.

Zia: It’s kind of similar. Like the points-based system, like if you had a skill.

Nandini: Yeah I mean, some of it sounds very similar. And obviously there are big differences as well but at a basic level I think what all countries did was, if you were a foreigner coming and settling in the country, then you had to work harder than the people of that country to prove that you were worthy. The boundaries were much stricter for you as an alien than it would have been for a natural citizen.

Zia: I don’t even know if this is going to be… But it’s just so interesting.

Nandini: Don't worry about whether it's relevant! I mean if you have any questions, I'm more than happy to answer them.

Zia: Thank you. Where there places in England that had a reputation for being friendlier to aliens, or was it that you kind of ended up where you ended up?

Nandini: I don't know about friendlier, but there were some places where there were more jobs. So, East Anglia, where there was a big wool industry, that was where a lot of the Huguenots went, because the Huguenots were quite often weavers and dyers. It all comes down to money. England's primary export throughout this period was that, you know, England might not have anything else, but it had lots of sheep. So, it produced a lot of wool.

Initially they used to export all the world to the Netherlands, and to kind of the Huguenot countries to have it processed and dyed. But then when the Huguenotes and people from the Dutch Protestant lowlands started coming over, a lot of them started setting up their own workhouses, their own industries in England. Norwich became a centre of immigrants, for instance, loads and loads of Dutch immigrants ended up in Norwich.

There was one point where there was this utterly harebrained brains scheme where they thought, ‘Ah, we know that East Anglia is boglands, what we need to do is get these Dutch to dig canals and sort it out.’

Zia: So did they end up digging?

Nandini: No, there were a lot of proposals for very ambitious projects, and a lot of money got wasted, but nothing really happened. I mean, they did drain parts of the marshlands, but not on any scale that they had imagined initially. But basically, I mean going back to what you were saying, where they welcome. There are letters from Dutch, and Huguenot immigrants who come over, and a lot of the letters are them trying to convince the rest of their family to come over, maybe their brother, or their wives. In which case they would say, ‘it's a welcoming country, the people in our neighbourhood are really good.’

Generally people recognised that these immigrants were a good thing for the area, so you know the mayor of Norwich would quite often send welcoming letters to the Huguenot community or to the Dutch church. But then there are other letters, there is a petition that we looked at, at one point, from the mid-16th century and it sounds very much like current religious tensions. So, there are Protestant young men who don't have jobs in East Anglia, in Norwich at the time, who take out the frustration on the Dutch church. They go and kill a pig and bleed it in the middle of the church to desecrate it. They go and piss around the walls of the church. So the Dutch people write a petition to the government saying, ‘Can you do something about this?’

Zia: So then, like, the thing about aliens — so then the Dutch made their own churches. Like a mosque here.

Nandini: Yeah, yeah. And you know exactly like with mosques, there's a huge amount of anxiety: ‘what are they talking about, they’re using their own language inside that building.’ That comes up quite often whenever there is a debate in Parliament about ‘the problem with aliens’. One of the things that comes up is, ‘why don't they come to English churches, why do they have to have their own churches and have services in their own languages, which we don't understand. Their sermon might be about treason, to our queen. But we don’t know, because we don't understand the language.’ So there's a lot of paranoia. Basically that's all you can call it.

Zia: How big was the fear of treason, or was that kind of used to galvanise, to turn people against?

Nandini: I mean there was a fairly large degree of concern about treason. The other thing about England in this period is that it's so isolated from the rest of Europe. It's if you think for us, England breaking away from Europe seems like the really old days — you know, Henry VIII and all that. But Elizabeth is Henry VIII’s daughter. It is within a generation of England having decided to break away from the rest of Europe. So there's a lot of tension and real fear as well because Spain really doesn't like England. There's a real military threat constantly and England is really aware that it's dependent on Europe for its cash, for its funds, but also it doesn't want to be dependent on Europe. In that sense, there's a real fear of treason, but also that real fear then triggers a lot of paranoia, as well.

Zia: So then do you reckon that sort of thing then led to the East India Company, because it sounds like they were mainly trading within Europe.

Nandini: You’ve put your finger right on it actually. So, that's exactly what happens with Middle Eastern and East India non-European trade for England. They say this quite specifically, that they need a market for their wool. And if they can't sell their wool in Europe, if the European markets are closed, where do they go? You wouldn't think that Delhi in the middle of the summer would be a market for English wool, but they didn't know that. But they were really thrilled when they went to Japan and realised that parts of Japan were very cold because it was like, a market for English wool, finally!

Zia: Would anyone have wanted, given that England’s so isolated, would they have wanted to come to England in the 1600s? Other than fleeing persecution?

Nandini: Yeah, in the sense that you know it's a buoyant market. You would come to England perhaps if you were a religious refugee and running away from persecution, you'd come to England if you were a European artist, musician, painter, jeweller, or tailor. Any kind of professional, because even if England was separated from Europe, it had this sense that it was

falling behind and fashion and all those cool things that continental Europe did. So there was a big demand for language teachers and you know people who could teach you how to sword fight properly, in the highest fashion. French fencing masters were in high demand.

A lot of my friends who work on Shakespeare and English theatre recently made a really exciting discovery about all the fencing schools that were around the globe theatre. So the actors could take pointers from those fencing masters. So there was that, professionals basically. Doctors came over, as well. And then of course the other big community was sailors. Like I was saying, if you were on an English ship going on a long haul voyage, chances were that 70% of a ship's total number of sailors would die on that voyage. It was that dangerous. There would be accidents, there would be disease, scurvy, all of that kind of stuff.

So, say you had invested loads of money in four ships that were going to go to Surat in India, and bring back lots of Indian spices and fabric, which you could sell at a huge profit. By the time you got there, out of a hundred sailors you only had 30 sailors left. You couldn't just abandon the voyage, so you hired loads of sailors from those ports. At any given time, you might have 20 to 30 Gujarati sailors on an East India Company ship in the 1600s. You could have Japanese sailors, and sailors from America, from the New World, who had been shipped to England, and then shipped to India, and they were doing the return journey. You could have sailors from Africa. There's a really sad story actually about one voyage, East India Company voyage, which stopped at Table Bay in South Africa. And they lured these two South African tribesmen from the Khoekhoe tribe onto the ship and brought them back to England to show off to the people. One of them died. The other man, a man called Corey, lived and there's a really touching story — I can’t really get this out of my head — a really touching story about this man, Corey. He lives in the Governor of the East India Company's house, he's put up there for six months, and they give him fancy clothes. They know that the Khoekhoe tribe like bronze and copper, so they make a whole suit of armour for him in bronze and give it to him. But there’s eyewitnesses that say that Corey still isn't happy, he just lies on the ground and cries. He's learned a few words of English and he just says, ‘Corey home go’. Table Bay in those days was called Saldanha Bay. Eyewitnesses say that Corey just lies on the ground and cries and doesn't eat and says, ‘Corey home go, home Saldanha Bay, go home’. And at the end, they have to send him back. I mean, it kind of gives me goose pimples just to think about that story, still.

Zia: Yeah, that’s mad. So how did they know that Corey’s tribe liked bronze?

Nandini: Because they used to trade. The usual thing that all European traders did when they went to that west coast of Africa was that they would refill their ships there. By the time they had reached the west coast of Africa on their journey to India or the Spice Islands, Indonesia, they would have run out of food. So they had to trade to get fresh food. And we suspect that is why they kidnapped Corey, because one of the ways of establishing a trade relationship was to kidnap

someone, teach them your language, and then they could act as a middleman, as an agent for you.

Zia: Was there a thing like — you know, the world music section? Was there a thing where like, people are into ‘alien music’ or ‘stranger music’? I guess the more positive side. Was there any popular ‘alien’ culture that was imported?

Nandini: That’s an interesting question. It depends on what you would mean by that in this period. If you were talking about European music, then yes, of course, English music wanted to emulate European music. There are a few references to Native American music. There’s a couple of fleeting references to Indian court music when the English go to the court of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. You don't really get a sense of appreciation so much though. To them it sounds dissonant, it doesn't make sense. In probably the same way, you know, that hard rock wouldn't have made sense to my grandmother. It’s something that’s not familiar, is it even music. It’s more about the people and the things and food. So, you know, I'm a foodie, I quite like the references to food in these things and quite often they talk about the banquets and the kind of food they're having.

Zia: So what was the first, in writing or art, representation of aliens, whether it was theatre or — whether it was in a negative or a positive light?

Nandini: I'm going to try and share my screen with you, hang on, let me just bring up a picture.

Zia: Yeah, ‘John Blanke’.

Nandini: Yeah. So this is one of the very earliest in this period. I mean there are other people, other non-white faces that you see in other paintings, but this person is being identified as someone because he's on the payroll of the king. He's a trumpeter, a Black trumpeter, and he's got a lot of historical attention recently. A lot of people have been writing about him, there's a whole website called the John Blanke Project. We know that there are other Black characters on stage as well. When Shakespeare is just starting out, one of his earliest plays is called Titus Andronicus, and that features a character called Aaron the Moor, and he’s Black. Let me see I can bring up a picture, because this is one play where we have a kind of eyewitness sketch of the stage. Okay, let me share my screen again. So can you see that figure?

Zia: Oh, yeah.

Nandini: So this is someone who had gone to see the play, and then they just did a quick sketch of what they had seen on stage. And that character is Aaron the Moor, who’s a villain in the play,

unsurprisingly perhaps. But you know you had characters like that on stage, you had other non-Black alien characters as well. In the 1570s and ‘80s — because there’s a huge rise in immigration in this period, and there’s a lot of people worried over these foreigners, coming over here, taking our jobs — there’s a huge rise in plays with foreign characters, plays with names like An Englishman for My Money, and all those kind of names. That play is about a resident foreigner who wants to marry off his three second generation immigrant daughters. The resident foreigner is a Portuguese Jew who's turned Christian, and he wants to marry off his second generation daughters — who don't speak Portuguese, they are English women, essentially — and instead of choosing to marry the foreign suitors that their dad chooses. As for them, they decide to marry three Englishman. So it's a feel-good English play in that sense: look, even the second generation immigrants prefer us to other foreigners! That kind of thing.

Zia: Okay last couple of questions. So, linking to that: were there within the aliens a certain group held up as ‘good aliens’, like the ‘good immigrant’ thing? An example of how an alien should be?

Nandini: Yes, I mean, a good alien ideally was a Christian alien or someone who had converted to Christianity. A good alien was also usually someone who was economically profitable. So either they were themselves rich, or they were a skilled professional, in some way. There's one point where the Virginia Company and the East India Company launch a big PR campaign because everyone in England is grumbling about how they are draining the country's resources by trading with foreign countries. And the way they do that at one point is by bringing over a young Bengali boy. We know that this boy, who may have been in his early teens, had been captured by a Dutch ship and then he had been gifted by the Dutch captain, to the captain of an English ship, a man called Thomas Best. And he's brought over to London, and the Company chaplain converts him to Christianity and teaches him English and Latin. And then there's a big, like really high profile conversion, a baptism, in London, which is attended by all the bigwigs of the East India Company, and by loads of aristocrats from the court, by the king himself. Then King James I gives him his English name, which is Peter Pope.

Zia: Yeah I wanted to ask you about Peter Pope. So the king was involved?

Nadini: Yeah, so Peter Pope was a ‘good immigrant’, in that sense. He learns English, he learns Latin, he becomes Christian, he goes back apparently to become a missionary. We don't know what happened to him after that.

Zia: Was that a forced conversion or not? He was just young?

Nandini: We don’t know, with such a lot of these things we just don’t know. If you were a 12, 13 year old onboard a foreign ship with language and food that you didn't understand, and one person was kind to you, you would want to fit in, perhaps.

Zia: Okay, I think that’s pretty much it. It’s been great. I was thinking, it’s probably later, 16th or 17th century, but the term ‘friendly aliens’ was a term that I came across. Do you know if that was people within the Commonwealth, where they still called aliens, or?

Nandini: I'm not entirely sure because I think you're right, there's a later resurgence of that term, ‘friendly aliens’, but honestly the whole kind of immigration and identity thing is so complicated that I'm not entirely sure exactly how it was defined. I mean the term ‘friendly alien’ was used in the period we look at as well. And those were basically the ‘good immigrants’. And then ironically some of those aliens — the children of those aliens — became part of the state, essentially. There’s a man called Horatio Pallavicino, who's very, very rich, one of the richest financiers of Tudor England, and he's the son of an immigrant. Another person that we work on a lot is a man called John Florio, Giovanni Florio. His dad was an Italian immigrant to England and John grew up partly in England, partly in Italy. And of course, Italy was supposed to be a hotbed of Catholic extremism in those days, so you know, he is always conscious that at any moment he might be branded as a potential terrorist. But he’s also very keen to establish that he’s a good immigrant, he’s an English man at heart.

Zia: I don’t know much about Shakespeare. Why did he set so many plays in Italy?

Nandini: Partly because England was fascinated with the bit of its identity it had disowned. Continental Europe was very much a significant part of its world, its known world. Especially if you dissociate yourself, you have that keen interest in finding out what’s going on ‘over there’. England was very aware that Italy had already had its Renaissance, this out-flowering of poetry and music and art, and England was always playing catch-up. So there’s that fascinated. There’s also fear. There’s a lot fear-mongering about these horrible Catholics and all the things they get up to. There’s a sense of, ‘oh, I don’t know what happens among the Catholics’.

There’s a wonderful moment in Shakespeare’s Othello. Othello is a converted Black African, a ‘Turk’, as he’s called, who has been made the General of Venice. Iago, who’s a Venetian, is trying to invoke his suspicion about his wife, Desdemona, who’s white, of course. There’s a fantastic moment where Iago isn’t able to get through to Othello, he isn’t swallowing the bait at all, and then Iago says, ‘you don’t know what Venetian women do behind closed doors, I am their countryman and I don’t know.’ That’s the point that Othello thinks, ‘oh, maybe she is having an affair.’ It quite often comes down to people’s weird sex habits. That fuels it, that’s partly why Shakespeare uses it. He knew that it would sell well.

Zia: Was he one of the earliest to do more sympathetic — are they actually sympathetic portrayals? People like Shylock — now people are like, Othello was trailblazing. Was that the case?

Nandini: I think that's partly the result of the fact that, you know, if I say to any random person on the street, name one 16th century playwright, they're going to say 'Shakespeare'. It's partly because popularly people don't know that much about other playwrights at that time. There were other sympathetic portrayals of foreigners around that time. The big blockbuster that Shakespeare would probably have wanted to equal was written by Christopher Marlowe. He's just before Shakespeare, and he writes this play called Tamburlaine, which is about Timur, the great South Asian Emperor. You wouldn't call it purely sympathetic, it's almost like a hero-making process. It doesn't say Tamburlaine is terrible because he's foreign. It says he's wonderful because he conquers the world. He's better than Alexander, in that sense.

We're more aware of Shakespeare. He also deals with more ordinary foreigners. It's not just about kings and heroes. Othello isn't a king or a hero, he's a hired soldier. This is going into biographical detective work territory, but some people who work on Shakespeare say that maybe he was more sympathetic towards foreigners because he lived among foreigners. The Globe was on the other side, and the place where Shakespeare lodged — he lived as a lodger in London, his main house was in Stratford, so he had to rent somewhere, a pokey little place in London — he lodged with Huguenot weavers. So maybe that makes him a bit more sympathetic towards foreigners.

Zia: Last one. Romeo and Juliet, you know it's meant to be a copy of another story from Arabic, or — how did he access them stories, in terms of libraries and reading other sources? Who had access to that?

Nandini: You could call them story families, basically. You know, that story of young love, they all belong to the same story family, and you can't directly trace them back to a single source. But one thing we know is that the big point of contact between the Middle East and Europe — much earlier on, in the 12th century — was the Crusades. So there's an exchange of stories at that point. A lot of stories from the Arab world feed into the European imagination at that point. A lot of stories from Europe feed into the Arab world at that point.

Zia: And that's during the fighting as well?

Nandini: Yep, yep.

Zia: Thanks for chatting to me.

Nandini: It's alright, it's fun to talk to someone about this. Any time. How are you getting on with stuff?

Zia: I think I went in one direction that was more — because the chat with Steve was more about sci-fi. I want to get back to the keywords, the talk with Steve was more about science fiction. But it's cool, I've got some lines, instead of a clear piece.

Nandini: There's a lot of interlink between the two. If you think of how Europeans in this period were always referring to the Americas as 'the New World'. They were growing up on these stories of these strange creatures that live in the Indies. One story from John Mandeville, the people who live in the Indies, in the rainy parts, they only have one leg. They walk on their head, and their foot acts as an umbrella on top. And then there are other stories of people who don't have a head, their mouth and eyes are set into their chest. So, the New World is an alien world for them, just like a different planet is an alien world for us.

Zia: I think that's going to be more the actual sound of the music, it's going to be kind of sci-fi. I didn't feel like I had a coherent train of thought. I think the Pope thing, I keep thinking about it, there's something — even the sound of the name, I keep playing with it.

Nandini: Okay, do you want to hear something even more exciting than that, if you're interested in Peter Pope? So this is 1614, early 1614, February, March, that kind of time. Peter Pope is in London, being taught English and Latin by Patrick Copeland, in one house in London. At the same time, Corey — remember Corey, who wants to go home, that's the only thing he wants? — is crying on the floor of another house about two miles down, so they're there at the same time. And the third person who's in London at the same time is a woman, the first Indian woman whose record we have. A woman called Mariam Khan, who is brought from the Mughal harem. Mariam gets married off to a man called William Hawkins, who had gone to the Mughal court and become great pals with Emperor Jahangir. Emperor Jahangir says, why don't you marry a woman from my harem? Hawkins really doesn't want to get married, so he says, 'I'd marry if you had a Christian woman'. And Jahangir says, 'ah, funny you should mention that, I do have an Armenian Christian woman in my harem.' Of course, the English didn't know that Mughals had this sort of open-door policy within the harem, you could practice other religions within the harem. So this girl, Mariam, gets married off to William Hawkins. While they're travelling back to London, Hawkins dies. So here is this 20-something, maybe even younger, Indian girl on a ship full of men, going to a foreign country whose language she doesn't understand, and whose only point of contact has just died. What does she do? Very quickly she gets married to someone else, who was also on that fleet. I find this absolutely mind-blowing, that at that point in the spring of 1614, there's a man from the Khoekhoe tribe, a Bengali boy, and a Mughal Armenian woman, all within a 5-mile radius in London.

Zia: And that's in Deptford?

Nandini: Mansoor is in Deptford, but this is Central London. These are high profile people, actually.

Zia: What happened to Mariam?

Nandini: Mariam goes back home. She accompanies her new husband back to India, and then when he swans off to Indonesia she refuses to leave. So the last we know of her is that she's in Mughal India, in Surat. So at least she gets to go back home.

Zia: And what happened to Corey? He didn't get to go back?

Nandini: No, he did, he did. He has a happy story, I'm delighted about Corey's story. He creates such a fuss that the East India Company decide to send him back six months later, on the return voyage. He goes back home and about two years later there's a diary of another sailor who says that when their ship anchored at Table Bay, they were greeted by Corey who helps them to restock the ship, and introduces them to his wife and children. So he has a happy ending, in that sense.

Zia: That's a cool place to end, as well.

[They sign off.]

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Alien — Artist's experimentation, Zia Ahmed

[The background shows an email from Zia Ahmed, with a draft of the composition lyrics in the body of the email.]

'strangers, would you be pleas'd / To find a nation of such barbarous temper'

an alien
a stranger
the native
are in danger

away in a manger
palestinian jesus
to which country
do you pledge your allegiance?
an alien
a demon
history
repeating
non-believer
heathen
i can’t speak your name
chastise the alien
it needs to change
baptise the alien
say hello to peter pope
he sounds like a decent bloke

[An icon at the bottom, a swallow, lets you navigate to the next page.]

the day the earth stood still
part 2
am i an ic4 male or klaatu?

klaatu barada nikto
klaatu barada nikto

alien powers
i can turn invisible
and hypervisible at the same time
intruder alarm
the man who fell to earth
came from somewherestan
strangerland
he’ll take our jobs
then he take our land

if i’m an alien
then you’re an alien to me
if i’m a stranger
then you’re a stranger to me

lonely alien got passed up
lonely alien unanswered
lonely alien hearts club
lonely alien dancer

[The next page shows another experiment, which follows the previous composition until the lines, ‘he’ll take our jobs/ then he take our land’. The full text of this draft reads:]

‘strangers, would you be pleas’d / To find a nation of such barbarous temper’

an alien
a stranger
the native
are in danger
away in a manger
palestinian jesus
to which country
do you pledge your allegiance?
an alien
a demon
history
repeating
non-believer
heathen
i can’t speak your name
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the day the earth stood still
part 2
am i an ic4 male or klaatu?

klaatu barada nikto
klaatu barada nikto

alien powers
i can turn invisible
and hypervisible at the same time
intruder alarm
the man who fell to earth
came from somewherestan
strangerland
he'll take our jobs
then he take our land

swallow your language
how long til you burst?
swallow your faith
how long til you burst?
follow our ways
how long til your burst?
how hard can you work?
how much is your worth?
you're not of this soil
you're not of this earth
we don't take to you
unless you take to us first

why don't you come to our service?
why do you build your own churches?

etrangier
strange tongue
go back where you came from

an humanoid
an asterisk
which box
do i have to tick?

why do i live in a country
that doesn't want me
why should i die for a country
that doesn't want me

if i’m an alien
then you’re an alien to me
if i’m a stranger
then you’re a stranger to me

[The email finishes, and from the screenshot we can see that there is an audio recording file attached.]

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Alien — Post-composition Project Zoom

Preti Taneja: Thank you so much for the bits that you've sent through to us, especially the long conversation with Nandini. And I think we've heard a track, is that right, Ben?

Ben Crowe: I don't think so. I've seen a zoom conversation that Zia had with Nandini. I don’t know what else we’ve got so far, actually. I’m waiting for an update from you guys.

Steven Savale: I sent through some work in process progress to Sweety. Some stuff from me Zia. So, definitely getting on with it.

Sweety: I got that last night, and I've spoken to some people about it. It sounds amazing.

Preti: I thought what we could do right now is, in this little meeting, just talk about how you chose the words that you picked. I think you picked ‘alien’. And also, how are you collaborating?

Steven: Well I suppose Zia should talk on the words. Though I'll tell you one thing that’s been top of my mind this morning is, there was a certain synchronicity about some of the words you wrote, Zia. There was a line I wrote for the first ADF album, and it says, ‘I stand out but I'm like a ghost.’ And amongst the many great lines Zia sent me was the line, ‘I’ve got alien powers, I can turn invisible and hypervisible at the same time.’ Which I thought was very similar, I think drawn from a similar experience, if I’m not being too bold there. It’s kind of what we internalise, you know, the idea of being alien-ness and stranger-ness. At the same time we say you're a stranger and alien and everyone sees you as if you have this big bright light on you, and yet you're anonymous, you’re depersonalised. I just thought it was amazing: a line I wrote 25 years ago, I heard it in one of the things you wrote.

Zia: Yeah, man, that’s mad. I mean this whole thing's from like the 16th century, so is it just things coming back around or — I mean from the first Zoom call it’s felt like we’ve been excited about the word ‘alien’. When I saw you talk about it I got excited.

Steven: Yeah the references to films, terrific. ‘The Man Who Fell to Earth was from somewherestan.’ Amazing.

Zia: I guess the choice of the words was from the first meeting when Steve started talking, I felt like we were drawn to that, for whatever reason. I think for me, the alien/stranger combination felt like I could relate to that more, compared with some of the other words.

Steven: I think what I really got — you know I haven't overthunk this, you know, I've just worked on instinct, but the way I structured the music around what we do, I really didn't want to do something that was just a straight, rigid, club-track or whatever. What was cool about reading the essays and reading projects is this idea of different times happening simultaneously. So it's like some of it has a little up-to-date modern groove, then it falls into almost this witch trial. You know, that’s in what I was trying to do at the end with all that weird, abstract, orchestral stuff. When you’re going ‘alien, demon, you need to change your name, heathen’, I was kind of going like, it’s a witch trial. But you know what used to happen, in those deeply religious times. That’s changed in maybe form, the idea of throwing out the stranger, throwing out the alien, putting up the barricades, the process was pretty much the same. I want to say that that was the same between the 16th century and now, and I’ve tried to demonstrate that in music.

Preti: How have you been collaborating, have you been doing Whatsapps or emails or sharing online? Have you met at all?

Steven: No, the best way to work with this like this is to do it. Zia sent me some stuff. I had an idea I wanted to do a sort of off-beat time signature. An almost alien time signature, a time signature you wouldn't use, and it's based on a five-four tablet loop. As soon as Zia fired me over his words, I was away, really.

Preti: Can you talk a bit about how the words came to you? Have you drafted a lot?

Zia: No, I mean, I sent over just everything that, in that sense, we weren't fixated on having a piece of writing, like it doesn’t need to be a coherent piece of writing, because the music will tie it together. It took me a while to send stuff to Steve because I was like, it’s got to be a complete piece, but after having stuff back as well I mean it’s a collaboration, it's not putting two pieces together, it's making one. Which is why I asked to speak to Nandini, because I mean just from the first phone call and I just saw these nuggets, and it sort of sparks so many things in your

head, and even the stuff about Peter Pope was stuck in my head from the first name. I used the name in stuff that I sent to Steve, just finding more stories and things like that to play with. And going into sci-fi online, looking specifically at characters, alien characters from films.

Steven: Alien language, as well.

Zia: Yeah, we had a phone call and I think The Day The Earth Stood Still, we studied that at school. It was like, this nice alien, compared to an alien coming out the chest. In terms of writing, I feel more comfortable sending fragments which then maybe means —

Steven: It was a great start. I mean, I've always worked from fragments, that's all I've ever done. Loops here, musical idea there, line there, line there. I don't think I've ever worked in any other way.

Preti: Do you feel like what you guys are doing with each other's fragments is a form of translation? Do you think it's fair to describe it like that?

Steven: I don't know really, because what it's like, as Zia just said, when you hear back what we've done it feels more complete than you thought. See, the thing is like when you start combining words and music and images and what have you, the automatic third eye creates structure that perhaps was unintentional. And I think that's the essence of collaboration. You don't sit down and write a blueprint or something but things kind of unravel. Things emerge. Even when you hadn't intended that. So, I don't know if it's translation, because in a way translation is quite a literal reading of something. Well, it's an interpretation. That works unconsciously and consciously.

Preti: Yeah, I can't wait to hear all of these different parts, and see some of the documentation, the fragments and bits and pieces that are going to come through. Because the more of the process material that we have, the more interesting a picture we can build, as well as getting your final piece. And we probably should know as well what films you've been referencing, some of the sources and other sorts of material that you put into this, not just from the TIDE keyword essay.

Zia: We are literally just saying, the name of the film: The Day the Earth Stood Still. Those were the two sort of clear references. Again, I'll send over screenshots and files and stuff like that.

Steven: Yeah, I'll make a couple of little videos and send them over, and some stuff with the tabla machine that I used. I think that might be interesting.

Preti: I have a kind of more personal question, and I'm not sure how you want to answer this. But yeah, Zia, if you wouldn't mind going first. What does the word alien really mean to you?

Zia: I mean, I said to Nandini yesterday, at first — it felt more American or something because I've heard it on so many TV shows. So, in my head it felt kind of wild but I think with the 'stranger' word added on to it — it's that thing of, 'not from here'. 'You're not from here,' but then also that thing about 'why are you here?' Not necessarily just in a racist way, but also like how people, like 'aliens', ended up in this place. T

I was looking for that photo of Asian Dub outside the Alien Registration Office, which was in Whitehall. It is actually a thing.

It's about otherness. But yeah, on a personal level, thinking about the Peter Pope thing — about assimilation. That thing about how alien do you choose to remain? Do you change your name to Peter Pope? Do you learn English and Latin? How much do you want to stand out, I guess. The good and the bad of that, stand out in your beliefs, or standing out where another alien can find you. You know, having a beard or something. Do you get the thing where someone will throw out, 'As-salamu alaykum' or something? It's about looking like an alien, so another alien can find you. It's not necessarily what I've written about. But yeah.

Preti: Yeah, thanks. This process is so interesting because the words that we connect with just pull up stuff, and then take us in all these different directions that comes from quite a deep place and then it takes us in all these different parts, like science fiction or the personal relationships on the street or finding other people or finding a tribe of other aliens. And then we become less alien. I really appreciate that. So, Steve, what was that thing about the Ministry for Registering Aliens?

Steven: The Alien Registration Office. I don't know if it's still there but an early Asian Dub Foundation photo is outside. And I'm glad Zia is reminding us, because I've really got to try and find it. That was one of the first things I ever did when I joined the band, I suggested a photo outside that place.

I think it is interesting, the word 'alien', having this sense of extreme otherness, the unknown, but also a need to bureaucratise, a need to register them. It's just funny to have such a contradictory set of images with that word, because it's kind of a technical bureaucratic term. But also it's both negative and positive. As Zia was saying, the unknown can go to many places. Unknown can make you afraid, and it can also be exoticised. In the early days of ADF, we set ourselves so militantly against exoticisation. The exoticisation of the alien. The demonisation of the alien.

Also the curiosity, and the ultimate rejection. Another thing came to mind, and this has been something I've actually done throughout my career. The first decent band I had was called The Atom Spies, and we were obsessed with McCarthyite America. Those B-movies, The Day the Earth Stood Still was a good one. Most of them were absolutely terrible, but most of the aliens in those 1950s American sci-fi films were in fact, you know, covers for communists. The alien meant communist in popular culture. You know, I Married A Monster from Outer Space. The idea that the aliens were insidious. The aliens were actually amongst us but we didn't know what they were working on, had sinister aims, you know whether they were communists or whether they were from planet Nobogov, or something.

Preti: I think it's behind you. [Gestures to Steven's Zoom]

Steven: It's always behind me, yeah, there it is. That's my secret communication portal.

Preti: Do you have any questions for us?

Steven: I suppose maybe some little tips on some things that you actually want from us. Work in progress. I've got a couple of ideas.

Preti: Yeah. I can share something with you. I mean some people have sent us screenshots of WhatsApp conversations. Some people have sent us pictures of their notebooks with bits of crossings out, and how they developed their language ideas. We got some audio files, we've got some video files of people making the music, or even just the computer screen with some tracks on them. Anything you want to share, but we would also really love things like your references, like photos, or if you've got kind of two DVD covers, you know, things we won't be breaking copyright if we use. Obviously, just going to make a richer experience or immersive experience I definitely think you should get a photograph for us, whatever that is. Did that help?

We have the emails, and we have this recording. There's things we can pull out, like about being bureaucratised, the exoticisation, the demonisation, the curiosity, and then I think you said the rejection, the ultimate rejection. We can pull out words and do stuff with that. Is there anything, Ben, that I've missed?

Ben Crowe: Documenting a collaboration like this, I really appreciate can be a pain because you actually don't want it to interfere with the creative process. But at the same time I guess documentation is part of this project because I guess it reveals how meaning is created through collaboration.

Steven: I have to go, I'm really sorry. There's another Zoom meeting going on with my wife.

Preti: Thanks very much Steve, and keep in touch.

Zia: Could I just ask a reminder in terms of timeframe.

Preti: Well you, I think, are working on a play is that right.

Zia: Yeah, I was away for a week and a bit in Bradford, so it took a while for me to send stuff.

Preti: I mean I think we've said end of this month, that you can probably have until the first end of the first week of August and we won't tell the others. We'll just start working on it as we get material. With your final piece of music, spoken word, collaboration, we're probably going to make a playlist so that would be a discrete thing. And then further down the line, there's some chat about filming the performance, making some videos, which sounds really exciting but obviously that takes extra fundraising and I've been told that's down the line. Is that doable, then, three more weeks?

Zia: Yeah, that's great. Was there a timing on the thing, or was that just a sort of guideline?

Steven: Three or four minutes, wasn't it?

Sweety: I know I've had this conversation with Steve. We're looking at a minimum of 3-4 minutes, but we want to offer you up to 10 minutes. We thought 3 or 4 minutes was kind of just enough time for you to express everything around the keywords. And I know some people want it to be slightly longer because they've chosen to give some gaps or pauses just for the music, or just for the spoken word. But if you'd like to do an 8 minute piece, that would be amazing.

Steven: At the moment it's just coming up to 4.

Sweety: Yeah. And Zia, what you sent to Steve was just before you had the conversation with Nandini. I heard it last night. The combination is just amazing. But post your conversation with Nandini, do you see yourself adding lots more?

Zia: I think adding some stuff. But not necessarily stuff that needs to be in the final thing, just sort of see what works and what doesn't. There's a lot of stuff from the conversation yesterday that I want to play around with and send to Steve as well.

Steven: Eventually, Zia, what I'd like to do is go to a proper room with bigger speakers and stuff. It would be good to record you doing, a proper recording of you. It's worth it, definitely. Also, you will have lived with what I've done, internalised it a bit, and then the words will fit even closer to the final piece.

Preti: That sounds amazing, and if you want someone to come and make tea or whatever, I'm happy to do that.

Steven: And film it.

Preti: Yeah. In the meantime, do share the drafts, because that is part of what we can play with on this side. Anything you're happy with that's part of the process. Even just laying down practice track, or putting together a word or a sound, or whatever. And then the final thing will really help the user of the site to appreciate the intricacy of what you've done. Because sometimes when you're really talented you make it look so easy. It's come out in 5 minutes. But we all know that 5 minutes takes hours and hours of thinking and processing, so that's what we're trying to achieve with the site. That appreciation.

Zia: Yeah, we'll send a load of stuff over.

[They wrap up.]

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Alien — Steven Savale reflects

Hi, Steven Savale here, aka 'Chandrasonic'. My day job is playing guitar with the Asian Dub Foundation, and I wanted to talk about the process of coming up with the collaborative track between myself and Zia Ahmed. The track's called 'Chastised and Baptised'. I think there's two foundation stones for me: firstly, of course, hooking up with Zia and talking it through with him, developing the concept and him coming back with some words. And I think we found real commonality in a couple of lines that he wrote. He wrote, 'alien powers, I can turn invisible and hypervisible at the same time'.

Now, this immediately had an enormous impact on me because it was similar to some words that I wrote about 30 years ago, that eventually ended up on the first Asian Dub Foundation album, called facts and fictions, on a track called 'Journey'. I'd written some words about my father's journey to India, and some words about my own feelings and one of those lines was, 'I stand out, but I'm like a ghost'. I thought the images and the feelings behind those words were very similar to Zia's, and pointed that out to him and he listened to the track, and I think he got quite a lot from it. I think there's some other things that he wrote that, when he talks about, you know, the

alien having to change his or her name to fit in. And he comes up with a character called Peter Pope. This is actually what happened to my father whose name was Sharif, but sadly, when he went to work at a construction company on the factory floor, he was renamed Cyril Saville. So, that was a very interesting thread between the two of us, I think, and I think that's why the track turned out as it did; we were both writing about the same thing.

What I tried to do with the music was realise what seemed to be the vibe I got from the general thread of the TIDE project, which is the development of language through time. And also, the research papers that were sent out, looking at the historical aspects of it. I wanted to compare and contrast, particularly how immigration is viewed now and how immigration was viewed around the time when the word ‘alien’ first started to appear, I think in the 17th century. Or maybe earlier, the 16th century. I mean there's a lot to get from that. I had this idea of almost bouncing between time periods, a sort of melding clumsily, incoherently, time periods thrashing and crashing and smashing together, or a kind of traveller, you know, caught between two periods: now, and when the origin of the word alien came about 500 years ago. So there's a kind of reason there.

I like experimenting with time signatures that you don't often find in contemporary music. So I kind of had the idea in my mind to do a five four time signature. It’s quite quirky, kind of symbolises disorientation, but also had a unifying theme as well, or unifying kind of texture to it. So I got out the old tabla machine, which is featured in a lot of ADC music, a kind of electronic tabla sound on one of our biggest tracks, ‘Fortress Europe’, which incidentally was on the album that Zia owned. So that was a good connection on this. I also went for a five beat rhythm, and one that almost sounded like a kind of tabla radio signal.

[He plays the tabla machine]

So I'm hoping you hear that in the background. Sort of like a tabla time code, uniting and disorientating different periods of time. That's how I heard it anyway.

I built the track around that. We don't actually hear much of it in the final track except towards the end. You have a foundation stone, you build on top of that, and then sometimes you don't actually hear much of the original foundation stone. Now the other reason why I thought something like that could work is because of Zia’s unique delivery, because he puts so much on individual words. He lifts the meaning drip out of them slowly. So, the way he uses and rhythm could really work over a sort of less obvious time signature. And indeed I really didn't have to do much to Zia. The final version is pretty much as he spoke it, with a little bit of space here and there. I think I only rearranged one of his lines, actually, to kind of fit a more dynamic section, a dynamic break. But I didn't have to nudge his vocals, at all. He sat on that rhythm, especially after he’d heard the original instrumental, then he rewrote a far more extensive version of the

work and made a track about two minutes longer. And this time his vocals were really, really enmeshed in the overall feel of it.

I mean, until recently the track was far more electronic and mechanical, the first version I did. Sweety suggested that we needed something a bit more emotive to kind of knock off that mechanical notion, that sort of oppressive rhythm, you know that's awfully quirky and jerky and disorientating. So I was wondering what guitar I was going to put on it and I had a lot of misfires on that one. But in the end I went completely counterintuitive and played a really simple acoustic guitar line that was really against the electronic device on the track and it really offset it. So we've got a sense of the emotive nature of being a stranger, of feeling like a stranger. Feeling sort of disconnected and alone. And the larger forces that are shaping it, the electronic beats as the kind of larger forces, pushing down on the acoustic guitar, which is your heart amongst this this larger oppressive process, and how you find your way through it emotionally.

What's great that Zia does at the end is that he becomes like the accuser and the accused simultaneously. So we get elements of the kind of witch trial vibe, which again comes from the origins of the word in the time period. He talks about demons, so there's that kind of satanic, hermetic notion. So I tried to kind of evoke that by mucking around with some orchestral sounds.

I didn't really want to stick to a conventional format tool, because I don't think that what Zia is talking about has a very obvious structure. So I wanted the track to kind of collapse. Almost the character to collapse into simultaneous feelings of despair and defiance and the disorientations that would come with it. It's kind of like Zia is being the accuser, and the accused and becomes an accused fighting back. I kind of wanted to collapse the music.

[Plays a section of the track]

So you're being condensed. That horrible, ugly chorus that we all grew up with [referring to the lyrics, 'go back where you came from'.]

It's kind of an abstract, orchestral vibe. This was something we connected on quite a lot actually, myself and Zia, talking about certain science fiction films. Obviously we had the word alien, and the first thing that people will think of is the more science fiction element, the Extra Terrestrial sort of element. But actually the alien is a more bureaucratic term. That interesting dichotomy.

We talked a lot about science fiction, though. Zia mentioned a terrific science fiction film called The Day the Earth Stood Still, made in 1951. An alien comes down, with a huge robot — his name is Klaatu — and he tries to save the world or advise the world to not go down the nuclear pathway and atomic warfare. And it's great that Zia mentioned that because that was one that I remember very fondly as watching as a young child. And then other resonances came, like The

Man Who Fell To Earth, with David Bowie, which was excellent, a really convincing turn as an alien lost on earth. And that was very important for me because while I didn't see the film, because I was too young to get in to see it when it came out, I read the book and the book actually talks a lot about the alien being an illegal immigrant.

But musically, the more orchestral section that I did actually resembles more the music to Planet of the Apes — by the soundtrack composer, Jerry Goldsmith — which is abstract classical form. And again that's a very strange inversion, where the human being is alone on a planet of apes, who consider themselves more highly developed in humans. So there's an interesting other layer there that I referred to musically.

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Alien — Artist Profiles

[Two photos side by side, Zia Ahmed on the left and Steven Savale on the right. Both are looking straight into the camera. Hovering over either picture reveals the artist's biographical text.]

Zia Ahmed is a poet and writer hailing from North-West London. He is part of the London Laureates, having been shortlisted for London's Young Poet Laureate 2015/16.

He is a former Roundhouse Slam Champion and a Writer in Residence at Paines Plough as part of Channel 4's Playwright Scheme 2017. In 2018 he was chosen to be part of the Bush Theatre's Emerging Writers Group. In 2019, Zia's stage debut *I WANNA BE YOURS* premiered at the Bush Theatre. Zia has also written for My White Best Friend and is currently under commission with the Royal Court and Bush Theatre. In 2020, Zia was selected for the Genesis Almeida New Playwrights programme.

Steve Chandra Savale AKA Chandrasonic, is a London-based Guitarist and producer with Asian Dub Foundation. He joined ADF in 1994 helping to transform them into a major international touring band playing to huge crowds. They have released over ten albums since then, the latest being "Access Denied" released in September 2020. They've also received much acclaim for their live re-scores which began in 2001 with "La Haine" and continued with "Battle of Algiers" and George Lucas' "THX-1138",all of which are still ongoing.

In 2009 Steve presented the Music of resistance, a six-part documentary series that tells the stories of musicians who fight repression and injustice in their communities around the globe.

[The quill icon on the left-hand side navigates to the Fragment composition by Preti Taneja.]

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Alien — Fragment by Preti Taneja

[Black background with text]

Archivists' notes:

Part of 3 (?) found in archive: Human era: 2020, *folder:* 'Digital Debris'
Translated by: Algorithm BC, in the year Aliena, 3096.
Filed under U; keyword: unfinished; underexamined; unheimlich; unhomed
Title: Fragment (consider revising)
Reference found: A command frequently made by the dominant linguistic training programme, 'Word', in use worldwide during the final years.

KEY to Symbols:
*A single square bracket: **]** pertains to missing matter*.

Fragment (consider revising)

You write to me as Benjamin, you want to make this work. You come to me and are restless: you call me *Aliena* in your sleep. My name is Celia in my white-girl dreams. My whisper-name is Pṛthvī I am transparent in your arms, I am naked, brown and soft

] as a certain kind of sugar
] as Sappho to the Greeks

Fragment (consider revising)

Archivists' notes: Whether she herself was literate is unknown. The sense of her desire is as uncivil. We recall that 'the task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect upon the language into which he [sic] is translating which produces in it the echo of the original…Unlike a work of literature, translation does not find itself in the center of the language forest but on the outside; it calls into it without entering, aiming at that single spot where the echo is able to give, in its own language, the reverberation of the work in the alien one.'

- W. Benjamin, source lost.

Now let us examine your own hand. Now let us examine your hand on me. Hand me on. Hand me inside. Hand

] inside me.
] you're stranger than
] you are estranged to your
]
] mouth

'Consent with both that we may enjoy each other.'

Archivist's note: match to quote found. Filed under Script. *Title:* 'ASYL.' *Possibly an abbreviation of the defunct citizenship category – 'Asylum'. Author unknown.*

You are in the bookshop: I am here. You long for me and listen for me, you read me when no one is looking. My book lies in your hands, open at a page that moves you. I think it moves you to read it and again. I remember a moment between us. I remember how I made my declaration of love, mistaken in the body as desire. I remember you: saying to me, 'look for the higher ground.' You turned away as if we had not spent another life together. You turned away as if I had always been a stranger to you, and not the yearning in yourself.

During my research I read a scholar's marginalia. She was named for a tree for a bird, and for wisdom; she was named Lauren.

[though this feels somewhat artificially ordered, since my notes are scattered on scraps of paper, post-it notes, napkins, notebooks, wrappers, margins…]

I wondered if you would ever come across me there or here.

Fragment (consider revising)

There was that time we walked around a monumental library. There were books, held in glass cases, become as objects in a museum. I remember wanting nothing but to break. I remember

you weren't hungry, but we ate the rest out of home. And we talked about love in a language no one else could understand, and in voices only we could hear. You called me *Aliena*; it sounded stranger in your mouth. You called me strange, and I said, my name is *Aliena,* and I wanted to confess. *I will come again - all men are but strangers and pilgrims here on earth*, searching for their native land, not recognising it here

Archivist's note: the page is torn, the page is burned as if there was an urgent interruption. Only remnants are left.

] police beat
]
] chastised
] the church, the saints, the month of August, turning red
] baptised in the water
]
] bitter on the tongue.
]
] like recognition
] like
]
] is the thing with
] like

This is for Lochan, the future mind. This is for his father, Researcher/ Revisitor, who cannot sleep.

] There was also tomorrow, let us call it Tom.
] There was also love, and waterboarding.
] all of these fragments these researches this tastes
] recherché

À la les temps perdu

Archivists note: confusion of source reference. Lost language: French. Country: France. Recherché – trans. (English) rare, exotic or obscure. Or could refer to A LA RECHERCHE LES TEMPS PERDU*, by Marcel Proust, a fiction published in seven parts, in File: Human-era 1913-27. Folder: White European male/ Mythology*

I will mark this the beginning of the era: *Aliena*, in which

Fragment (consider revising)

[Navigating to the skull and crossbones icon on the right-hand side takes you to Preti Taneja's biography.]

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Alien — Biography of Preti Taneja

[Black and white photo of Preti Taneja standing in front of a textured background. The sparrow icon lets you click through the text.]

As the ERC Tide Writer in Residence, 2020 Preti conceived and co-produced TIDE Salon, and ERA Films interactive multimedia installation, which builds on the research practices of the TIDE scholars and brings musicians and spoken word artists who have South Asian heritage into conversation with their work. They draw on the TIDE keywords, collaborating across time and geographies in lockdown 2020, to create a new language of sound and words, presented in a digital format that challenges constructions of race, society and language, even as it evokes what archives are for and how we, the researchers, use them to build stories which arise out of ourselves.

TIDE Salon therefore brings full circle the work of the TIDE project, which begins with a set of subjects with their own histories, entering an archive that has been created and curated by other subjectivities over time stretching back to the early formations of Empire. It allows users to experience themselves as researchers eavesdropping, as if in real time, on a layered set of extraordinary collaborations which reflect upon how certain words and their changing meaning shape our understandings of ourselves in the world.

Preti has also contributed three linked pieces of original fiction, in fragments, creating an overarching, and mysterious narrative world for the site, while mapping and mirroring the journey of these words across TIDE.

Preti's first novel, *We That Are Young* (Galley Beggar Press, 2017), a translation of Shakespeare's *King Lear* to contemporary India and a critique of legacies of empire, billionaire crony capitalism, Hindu-Indian fascism and settler colonialism in Kashmir, won the Desmond Elliott Prize for the UK's best debut novel of 2018, and was recognised by the Rathbones Folio Prize, the Books Are My Bag Reader's choice Award (UK), the Jhalak Prize (UK), the Shakti

Bhatt First Book Award (India) and Europe's premier award for a work of world literature, the Prix Jan Michalski. The novel was critically acclaimed as 'a masterpiece' (The Spectator) and was book of the year in *The Guardian*, a *Sunday Times* Top 10 Book of the Year, and a Top 10 Book of the Decade in the Hindu (India). Published by AA Knopf in the USA, *We That Are Young* achieved starred reviews in *Kirkus*, *Publisher's Weekly* and *Library Journal*, where it was also selected as a Top 10 Literary Fiction Pick of the Year.

Preti has been invited to lecture and read widely on *We That Are Young*, including at Adelaide Writers' Week, Hay Festival, Jaipur Literature Festival, Johns Hopkins University, Stanford University, Yale University, Harvard MIT, Jesus College, Cambridge, Birmingham University, Bristol's Spike Island, and at Newcastle Centre for Literary Arts. She has been invited to give keynote addresses on the novel at the British Shakespeare Association 2019, and at the World Shakespeare Congress 2012, and will give a British Academy Lecture at Leeds University in 2021.

She was the 2019 UNESCO Fellow in Prose Fiction at the University of East Anglia and has also held residencies at Seagull Books, Kolkata, India. In 2017, she was named in the Hay 30, Hay Festival's selection of new writers whose work will change the world. In 2014, she was selected as one of ten AHRC/BBC R3 New Generation Thinkers, and she continues to broadcast for the BBC on world literature and culture. Her writing has been commissioned by the Big Questions series ed. Michael Rosen and Annemarie Young, Tara Arts, Seagull Books, The Royal Society of Arts, Vogue India, the Onassis Foundation and the Public Theatre, New York, and she is a featured poet in the forthcoming world anthology, The Penguin Book of Modern Indian Poets, ed. Jeet Thayil. Her second book, *Aftermath*, an essay on trust, race, prison, fiction and mourning, will be published by Transit Books 'Undelivered Lectures' series in autumn 2021.

Preti is a lecturer in Creative Writing at Newcastle University and editor and co-founder of Visual Verse, the online anthology of art and words. She was previously a Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow at Warwick University 2016-19, where she worked on cultural rights in conflict and post conflict zones. She has taught writing in prisons with the prison-education programme, Learning Together, and for over a decade worked as a human rights reporter covering minority rights for NGOs, when she co-founded ERA Films with Ben Crowe.

[Navigating back to the Embarkation screen lets you continue to the Traveller keyword project.]

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Traveller — Final Composition

[Black background with text.]

Keyword: Traveller

‘...for that the people of great Britaine (of all other famous and glorious Nations separated from the maine Continent of the world) are by so much more the more interessed to become Travailers, by how much the necessity of everie several estate of men doth require that, for their better advancement.’

[The text fades as the audio composition starts to play: ‘Traveller’, by Shama Rahman and Sanah Ahsan. A sitar rings out, building an ethereal melodic line. The video begins: woods in winter, a snow storm, monochrome tones. Cut to a jungle. Bare feet treading the ground. Sanah Ahsan’s voice begins to speak above the sounds of the sitar, meditative and considered. The video moves between forests and vistas: high, wide shots over the treetops; ancient ruins; a mountain pass. The drums begin, as Sanah speaks: ‘she grows, she grows, through this arduous journey of unlearning’. The video sweeps along coastlines; we watch birds in flight. Regularly, we return to bare feet on sand, in sea, as the sitar plucks and weaves.]

[Full text of composition]

the traveller is home in her own body

collecting furnishings from every journey

to decorate her walls in her own learning

she visits like tide to so many shores

depositing knowledge in diamond sediment

taking form as musician poet writer

she is a messenger

translating surahs written in the trees

ayahs echoed in each breeze

the traveller sees that nothing she carries in her backpack is her own

and no land she rests her head upon can ever be owned

the traveller grows

she grows through this arduous journey

of unlearning unlearning unlearning (music)

and re-learning re-learning

there is work in discerning truth from lies

in trusting the plunge from cliffs of mind

into the shoreless ocean of her heart

here she swims

in acceptance of every part of her self

she emerges dripping in sweet melodies of

letting go

again and again

each footstep she takes towards herself

is quaking the ground beneath her in liberation

knowing she already is

what she has sought to become

knowing the only place to be is here

moving like feather on the breath of god

the traveller knows

there is no place she can stray

that is far from Them

They are closer to her than her jugular vein

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Traveller — Keyword essay

[As before, the key icon on the right-hand side of the screen navigates to the Keyword essay, by Professor Nandini Das, hosted on the TIDE Project website. Link here.]

Traveller — Project Archive

[The treasure chest icon takes you to the ‘Traveller’ Project Archives. Video of a ship on the horizon, and the sound of washing waves. Text links to the archive, which transcribed in full below.]

- First Project Zoom, all participants [transcribed previously]
- Freeplay experiments
- Acoustic live play

- Collaboration WhatsApp 1
- Collaboration WhatsApp 2
- Artists' Project Zoom 1
- Artists' Project Zoom 2
- Post-composition Project Zoom
- Shama Rahman Reflects on the Project

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First Project Zoom, all participants (transcribed above)

Traveller — Freeplay experiments

[The video shows Sanah and Shama sitting beside each other on a sofa, a sitar beside them.]

Shama: Hi. So we're having a live go, having seen each other not in the flesh the entire time. We've pre-written, and pre-played, and done a swapsies, and some sort of combinatorial magick-ry. But then we thought we'd just try it live. So we're going to go into the wormhole.

Sanah: Let's do it.

[Shama turns on the backing to the track, a looped, melodic drone. They chat about what will come first on the track. Shama suggests that they do something together to see how it's sounding. She plays a pre-recorded sitar riff on the computer, mixing as Sanah speaks lyrics over the top, slow and meditative.]

Sanah: Yeah?

Shama: Yeah! Okay, here's some sounds that we've pre-done.

[She plays some more riffs and loops: a manipulated sitar; a drone that changes in intensity; a drum beat beneath.]

Sanah: I'm trying to remember the first bit. I think it opened very soft? Have you got it?

[Shama plays the file: the wandering and intense notes of the sitar. They continue to chat, going back and forth, playing clips that they had pre-recorded. They agree to play around with it live. Shama picks up the sitar.]

Sanah: When did you start to learn?

Shama: Seventeen, no, sixteen years ago.

Sanah: Was it through family?

Shama: It was through a dream. I was in Bangladesh and I dreamt this instrument, and I woke up and I told my mum about it and she was like, ‘that’s a sitar, here’s a number of someone you can learn from’. Turns out she’d done music to a very high level at uni and she hadn’t told me. She’d been taught by a sitar player, but to sing. So I guess it’s in there somewhere.

Sanah: That’s so beautiful.

[Shama begins to play over the backing track. Sanah speaks the lyrics, and they run through the whole track, Shama occasionally moving between sitar and mixer.]

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Traveller — Acoustic live play

Sanah: So this is the full-on acoustic version, yeah? Let’s do it.

[Shama picks up her sitar and starts to play. The sound is clear, clean, melancholic. Shama’s hands fly up and down the sitar’s neck as Sanah speaks, reading from her phone, her voice calm and soft. It’s much more spare than the previous version, with the sitar and vocals doing all the work.]

Sanah: I liked that one! I want to hear how that one sounded.

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Traveller — Collaboration WhatsApp 1

[Black background, with the white outline of a phone on the left-hand side of the screen. It shows a WhatsApp conversation between Sanah Rahman and Shama Ahsan.]

Shama: See you 3pm, send me zoom link when ready.
Just to confirm Friday Zoom Meeting 9.30am

Sanah: [Sends an audio file in the chat]

Just playing around with the recordings
Will send you a few options
I love the build Shama, I've left a gap after 'home sick, sea sick' to transition from foreigner to traveller.. I think there's more we could do with that gap but I love that transition musically and the build
Let's discuss anyway at 3

[Clicking on the audio clip in the chat, it begins to play. As Shama's voice begins to speak the lyrics, they appear across the black background of the screen.]

They will forget to tell you
that we are all outcasts
Cast out of Paradise like Eve
With bloodlines of sin
we can never escape
Seeking a place called home
we have never truly known
Knocking for the Garden of Eden
on man-made doors
Discarded on shores
by tempestuous tides of rejection
Homesick
Seasick
From trying to wash away the foreign
we will always embody
Homesick
Seasick
Homesick
Seasick
From trying to wash away the foreign
we will always embody

[Navigating to the next page via the swallow icon shows new messages on the phone screen.]

Shama: [Another audio file posted into the chat]

Traveller
I think this is a really interesting overlay as it's got a sense of the travellers meandering and her not owning anything plus the sort of floating stillness like a feather
I agree I think it fits best here that part
The build I think fits very well with foreigner though

[As before, when you click the audio clip it begins to play, with Shama's words appearing on the screen as they're spoken.]

The Traveller is home in her own body
Collecting furnishings from every journey
to decorate her walls in her own learning
She visits like tide to so many shores
depositing knowledge in diamond sediment
Taking form as musician, poet, writer
She is a messenger
translating prayers scribed into wind
knowing nothing she carries in her backpack
is her own
And no land she rests her head upon
can ever be owned
This arduous journey of unlearning, unlearning
all those values they called British
The value they most prize
Colonising hearts and minds
The Traveller resigns to letting go
again and again
Knowing the only place to be is here
Moving like a feather
on the breath of God

[Again, navigating to the next page via the swallow icon shows new messages on the phone screen.]

Shama: Yea I like the transition too… I wonder what it could be like transitioning the other way from Traveller to foreigner? From that stillness then into the other 'colour' that's more melodic/rhythmic (like that change into different spirits)

[She posts audio clip into the chat]

Foreigner (using transition beat)

[As previously, the beat starts up, and Sanah's words appear on the screen.]

They will say
Do not stray too far from God
Do not take your feet off this soil
where salvation ferments
This land is your temple
This is England
The only household of Holy
They will cast you out
tell you you are not a citizen of England
you are not a citizen of God
They will forget to tell you
that we are all outcasts
Cast out of Paradise like Eve
with bloodlines of sin we can never escape
Seeking a place called home
we have never truly known
Knocking for the Garden of Eden
on man-made doors
Discarded on shores
by tempestuous tides of rejection
Homesick
seasick
From trying to wash away the foreign
we will always embody
Homesick
seasick
From trying to wash away the foreign
we will always embody

[Another WhatsApp conversation is on the next screen]

Sanah: This is interesting, let’s talk about it more
Def up for playing around with that
I’m mindful that the traveller is more about her finding home in herself, so it’s a more joyful end in terms of self discovery to go from discarded to the movement towards self - if that makes sense?

Shama: Yea definitely makes sense. I can always start crafting something new from this anyway and keep the idea of major key (joyful) and more upbeat

Sanah: Does anyone mind sharing a zoom link when ready x

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Traveller — Collaboration WhatsApp 2

[Black background, with the outline of a phone on the left-hand side. It shows a WhatsApp conversation between Sanah Rahsan and Shama Ahsan.]

Sanah: Heya, free till 1pm today and 4-5 if you fancied a Zoom so we have a record of conversations. What’s your feel from the 2 words? I think you free write from Traveller resonates the best so far with me.

[There are 5 audio clips posted into the chat, which run together to make a conversation between Sanah and Shama.]

Sanah: So I think the lines that I really liked were like ‘depositing knowledge like diamond studs’, really amazing. And like ‘transcribed into learnings’ and I’m sorry, I just realised that is was ‘diamond sediments’ not ‘studs,’ sorry. And I like that she's a messenger. And then nothing she has is her own. I like the tropes of unlearning.And, you know, that is a really interesting thing to work with in music as well, that concept. The idea of letting go. I wasn't sure how long the piece needs to be, or whether they are two separate pieces that then also intertwine together as a third piece. I'm not sure. Yeah, whatever I said before. I suppose they're just ideas without a sense of change, I suppose, or a change that isn't signposted necessarily but you know it's a subtle pervasive change, maybe something that you might expect, and then something else comes out. There's playing without that sort of fun idea from our original conversation.

And I guess the dichotomies and extremes and stuff. But, you know, doesn't mean to say that it won't also be possible to intertwine and fit with either of these two words to be honest. And maybe there are parts of the tune that you liked, and maybe there are the ones that you didn't. And I can also go away and start sculpting it more because that, you know, that was a free play, if you will.

Shama: Sorry, I've literally just turned on my phone, it's been an intense work day today. So I'm sorry that I'm getting to this quite late, but thank you so much for sharing like the things that resonated for you and I'm happy to go with 'traveller' if that's what speaks to you more. To be honest I think getting on a Zoom today is going to be difficult, but we can definitely arrange one this week. And yeah just happy for you to — I know you were saying potentially doing three sections to the one piece. Well, maybe I've misunderstood this but, like, I don't know if that means the independent music and then me coming in and doing a bit together. But I'm very open and flexible to however you sort of imagined it to be. Maybe we could work all of this stuff out a bit more on zoom.

But I don't know if you want to kind of go away and have a bit more of a play with things based on us bringing it down to the traveller, or if we just want to try and see how those words were to fit over the audio that you've already sent me because I could try and record something over that and send it to you. But yeah, this is just some thoughts so let me know. I will be checking it again like this evening, just because I've got so much on with this deadline coming up. So, yeah, like, let's maybe get a Zoom in, this week, if that's okay. I was just thinking maybe Tuesday onwards, Tuesday afternoon onwards, is probably better for me just because of this deadline. But let me know if that works for you. I hope that's helpful. Let me know if there's anything that you need for my end, and I'll try to get back to you this evening if I can. Take care. Have a lovely Sunday.

[Navigating to the next screen via the swallow icon, the phone screen has new messages on it.]

Shama: Hey lovely, so was wondering if we should try a Zoom tomorrow late afternoon/early eve around 5 / 6? In addition I also like the idea of having you have a go over the top of the audio I already sent...I know it's pretty long so feel free to choose snippets of the different sections (there's roughly 3 / 4 sections and maybe the most contrast is where it's all layered and textured at the beginning, then it becomes pretty rhythmical, then I'm playing around with different rhythms with essentially DJing it to different beat shifts)

Sanah: Hi Shama. Sure this all sounds good. Are you able to email the sound over? Don't think I can record it off my phone whilst playing it.
Also - Is there anyway you could do 3pm today?

[Navigating to the next few screens shows thoughts jotted in a notebook, ideas and lines from the composition. There are notes on the connotations of ‘traveller’, the subversion of words; a set of thoughts on estrangement and banishment from Eden.]

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Traveller — Artists’ Project Zoom Part 1

Sweety Kapoor: You’ve begun the collaboration actually. That’s why it sort of makes sense to have collaboration as your dialogue, of ‘foreigner’ and ‘traveller’ and all the inbetweens, because I can see that you've got lines where you're waiting to intersect these words with different parts of TIDE as well, you know. So that's all I really wanted to say, and I’ve said it individually to both of you. So in the end, I wanted you to know that ultimately – and it's really important that you know – that you have total creative licence. This was presented to me by Nandini, and they're really happy with that. But it is up to the both of you, in the end, how you wish to do this.

Sanah Ahsan: Okay, cool.

Sweety: Just so long as you know that there’s no conditions that I'm putting on or they're putting on. And as I said, with the sort of Creative Producer lens on, you know, it's just like you’ve begun it. And that's really it, because I’ve spoken to both of you individually and actually, neither one of you need for me to go through it again, unless there's any questions that you have? I'm happy to answer them. But yeah, I mean, judging by what you sent through, it’s goosebump material. And the work together, it's already begun, I think. You’re naturally doing a collaboration piece, which seems to be both about ‘foreigner’ and ‘traveller’. But, again, before I leave you, I'm just gonna say it really is up to both of you. You know, there's no conditions. It's just all there for you if you want it.

Sanah: Great, yeah, thanks Sweety. I mean, in terms of what we did here, is that intersecting enough directly with the essays? Because I think, we’re trying to find that balance in terms of the storytelling that's in the essays…

Sweety: Absolutely, Sanah. The thing is that the essays were there for you as supporting material, you know, so some people will have chosen to read them and read extra stuff around it, and some people will have chosen not to. Because essentially, it's really about how each of you individually relates to that word, and how deep you want to go. And it might be your own

experience with that word, you know, in your real lives from the past, and what you experience journeying through those words and their meaning to you. So it could be that — nothing has to be literal, either. So how you choose to do it and how much deeper you want to go in intersecting with other TIDE words, or even within these words, and with the essays, it's entirely up to you. It's all for your taking — or not.

Shama Rahman: So we could intersect with some of the other words we meandered across and finally arrived at today. I guess because one of the things we were thinking about was the spiritual thing, wasn't it, and this movement from one place to the other —

Sweety: What I found really interesting about both of you expressing that, and then hearing what you sent through, was one of the initial words, Sanah, that you had expressed. I can't remember what it was —

Sanah: 'Mahometan', was it that?

Sweety: 'Mahometan', exactly. Some of the things that you might express tied in very nicely, I thought, to the spiritual side of the word, whether it's foreigner or traveller. I'm going to now leave you, ladies, because it's not for me to be part of your discussion. But if there is anything else, I'm happy to answer but I don't want to get in the way of your dialogue.

Shama: Sure, thank you Sweety! Take care.

Sweety: Bye.

Shama: Hello, hello.

Sanah: Hey!

Shama: How are you doing?

Sanah: We made it. Yeah, I'm alright. How are you doing?

Shama: I'm alright, I'm alright, it's interesting isn't it? Like talking on the phone, discombobulated, and then finding each other.

Sanah: Yeah, thank you for working it out with timings as well because I know it was a bit hard to get it together. So I'm glad that you've been able to do it while you're at work. It looks like you're at work, are you at work?

Shama: Yes, I'm at work. It's alright, everything is artistic and creative so I could probably put this into work.

Sanah: Great. I was gonna say, I don't think I had really got a grasp of how much creative freedom we had with it. And actually, like, in terms of the writing I very much was sticking towards the essays, because I thought that's what we needed to do. And I didn't know whether you felt similarly? But I wasn't going on my own personal journey with the word so much, though I don't even entirely pull apart those things. But it was more kind of bringing it back to a grounding in the essays. I think if we have more creative freedom we can play around with it a bit more, and move away from – I don't know.

Shama: Yeah, to be honest with you, I went for the instinctive first and then I thought I would have time to read the essays a bit more. But I didn't, really. I just went and read as much as I did with 'traveller', and this whole thing with you know, the French word. A little bit around 'rogue' and a little bit around 'Muhammadan'. And 'foreigner' a little bit and 'friend' and 'ally', which is quite interesting. But I didn't let it sink in as much as I could have. I didn't like read, read, re-read and really try to identify with it. I was just like: 'that's interesting', on a surface level. But I mean, I think the essays are interesting in a very factoidal way. Like, you know, 'this might have come from this, and it might have come from this. And did you know, it actually meant this?'

So I think some of those things are cool from a musical perspective — it feels like there's one perception of the word that we have now, which actually came from another perception. So I think I'm just sort of seeing it as: 'Oh, look, there's a perception and perspective shifts.' Throughout the centuries that hasn't been an obvious shift. That's why, from a musical perspective, I've kind of been using it as a trope, around being imperceptible, maybe slightly pervasive. You know, before you know it we're in a major key in a different rhythm. Yay! Or something. This sort of flipping thing, I've been taking it as — the actual feeling of it. I didn't necessarily [have a clear idea, except in the] very first video, which I've lost now (yay) but it's in my head somewhere. I was trying to do the transfer and I just deleted it. But that had a very defined thought to begin with as 'foreigner'. And if I'd had it, you'd have seen me kind of chatting to you in the video afterward going: 'Well I did start with 'foreigner' but I sort of cheated and put 'traveller' in as well'. You know, it was kind of in there. And maybe the perception of 'foreigner' is 'traveller', in a way.

Sanah: Yeah, for sure.

Shama: The last one that you've been playing around with, I'm not sure how to define it, to be honest, apart from as a musical trope. I think there's some journeying going on, there's some switching going on. There's a shift in gear, like you heard, and then coming back to the original trope. That was it.

Sanah: Yeah, I think for me, I was just playing around with how lyrically it meets with your storytelling and I think in terms of how it fits, there was something about that build in the middle. I'm not sure what time frame it was, but that was like, it kind of had that dubby sort of feeling to it. You know, the build before the big drop kind of thing, and I think that bit there's a sort of — I don't know if darkness is the right word, but it fitted the emotion of that bit, I think. And then the traveller, in terms of the opening part of it, that lyrically just seemed to fit much more, but I don't know how to work the order, or if there's a way of playing around with it.

Also, I'm just thinking now that we've got potentially creative licence to run free a little bit more, and bring in a bit more freedom in terms of — I don't know if it's more confusing – but I was thinking I felt a bit confined with those two, and maybe I could be a bit more creative with it. But based off of what you've already done, feel free to go and do more with it.

Shama: Yeah, so I was thinking we could go one of two ways, we could either now decide, okay, let's do 'traveller' or 'foreigner', or a mix or something else. And then I can have a go again, with a defined thought in my head, and then craft it — or craft what we have now, if that makes sense. The way I do stuff, often, is that whatever comes out, I'll see something in it, pick out stuff and then maybe have a go again, and either put it together by editing or actually restart again but kind of picking out the ones that came out from that original jam or something like that. So I don't mind if I don't craft whilst I generate, if that makes sense. I could do another generation, and then craft it, or I could craft what we have already, I really don't mind. It kind of depends what we liked from it maybe, or didn't like from it. Obviously, I think rhythmic stuff is quite cool. I did think that your reading of 'traveller', the more atmospheric one, seemed to fit better.

Sanah: Wait, which one? The one that was a longer recording or —?

Shama: It would have been, let's see, the 1:45 version. It's the second one.

Sanah: Okay. The 'foreigner' reading or the 'traveller' reading?

Shama: The 'traveller'.

Sanah: Okay, so it's right at the beginning of your piece, I think?

Shama: Yes, and I haven't managed to download the last one that you sent.

[They listen to the track]

Shama: So now you're going from 'foreigner' to 'traveller', right?

Sanah: Yeah, that bit's 'foreigner'. I'm just looking back over a free-write that I did initially when we got this task, when I thought that we could just do what we wanted with it, and it was playing on the word 'home'. I don't want to massively distract you from all of this but I'm just going back to it. And it was kind of just like — this is very much a free-write, but I was thinking about the body as 'home'. [She reads aloud]. "Home, I had never arrived in this genderless body. Sometimes my hand wanders lost in sleepless nights through untamed forestry. Thick black hair, I was always taught to shame. In hope of grasping thick trunk rooted in earth, tips of these fingers stumble onto unfamiliar pearls. I grow —"

Sorry, I've just realised this is very disconnected but it's basically exploring gender and home, and home and gender in the body, which is very, very different to what we've been doing. But it's just something that I was thinking about in terms of when she was like: "you have creative freedom to do whatever you want with it". It's completely different from the essays, but I think there's just so much in terms of how we — if we're given creative freedom to take the word it could go somewhere completely different.

Shama: Yeah, maybe it's your feeling. Part of the free work I did also has to do with body and community and discombobulation from body into dispersion. As in from yourself, and then that identity gets melded into 'the other', which can be one other person or million other people. And that movement around it no longer remains you and your unitary body, whatever that body is, right? So I do feel that there's a link. I guess because I'd actually gone not just to 'foreigner' and whatever. Yeah, I'd also looked at home and country, friend and ally, traveller, and then foreigner.

Sanah: I was just thinking, maybe there's a way of going from – in terms of the story – the 'foreigner' being very much about outcast and disconnect and there's elements of exile in it, but spiritual outcast —

Shamah: Yeah, it's quite unusual. That's definitely something that surprised me, that 'foreigner' meant 'spiritual outcast'.

Sanah: Yeah, and that kind of story and then going into — I guess, if we were to do this, and just I'm just thinking out loud — but potentially into the seeking of the outcasts and seeking of home in the body and struggling to find that, and then actually the traveller and the homelessness, the acceptance of homelessness, and the wandering and home being everywhere, basically. And potentially that being the story setting. Going from outcast-home to exploring ideas of home and body but not finding that, to then acceptance of homelessness through 'traveller'. That could be our story, maybe. I don't know, what do you think?

Shama: Although it was a free-write, I personally thought what you did for ‘traveller’ was spot on. I don’t think that necessarily needs to be rewritten, I’m almost attached to it now. But I shouldn’t be, because it’s completely your prerogative, but I thought it got the essence of ‘traveller’ in a really interesting and lovely way. Like the messenger, she doesn’t own anything — all the things that I mentioned to you on the voice notes, there’s a lot of resonance as well, I was like, ‘this is quite interesting’. Especially because the essay did say something like ‘they are knowledge-bringers’ and they bring these different perspectives and they're quite esteemed, actually, taking it from one city to another and that was their job. So I think that’s quite interesting — that their whole essence was one of change. So it’s interesting you mentioning the idea of a home not being one fixed abode, it’s actually the state of flux and being okay with it. So I like that, and if there was a way of landing on that, ‘traveller’ almost seems the likely end point.

Sanah: Yeah, I think so. Are you less attached to the outcast part, or the way that’s written?

Shama: I like the spiritual angle of it, I guess. Maybe I like the meta-ness of the otherness of perception. Or, perception of otherness even. I’m not against ‘outcast’, maybe it was just the exact phrasing or something, it’s just ‘traveller’, the phrasing was exactly correct for me. See, I don’t know if we need to think about Britishness. I think that’s what I’m not so attached to.

Sanah: Okay.

Shama: Because I know that’s what’s in the essays, perhaps.

Sanah: Well actually to be honest, I'm less attached to that bit as well. I think it was more, for me, thinking we need to get the essays in there. You know what I mean? Whereas I think knowing that we’ve let go of those kind of shackles a bit —

Shama: I do think it’s a bit shackly, yeah, because it’s a bit old-hat to be talking about ‘are we British, aren’t we British?’. You know, whatever! But it’s the essence of it that’s more interesting, as in why are we less British or more British, or what is British? I mean that’s not necessarily political discourse, but more a feeling of these concepts. What is an ‘outcast’? What is the ‘spiritual foreigner’? So I think that was my kind of didn’t like the British thing, but it depends how it’s framed, perhaps?

Sanah: In terms of that, I feel more attached to the idea of us all being outcasts, in terms of everyone being cast out. And some of the lines around being outcasts, like Eve and I can’t remember the line now: ‘knocking for Eden on man-made doors or something – knocking for the Garden of Eden on man-made doors’. We’re all kind of, we’ll always be outcasts based on that understanding, basically. And that is something quite liberating in that too, and I think that being an entry potentially into finding —

Shama: You mean looking for perfection, and that not being real?

Sanah: Yeah, I think so. I mean, there's a lot of layers to it, I think yes perfection too but I think also acceptance, ideas of what is righteousness, or what is good, what is holy, all of those things. I think with all of these ideas, perfectionism can be linked into all those things.

Shama: That's very interesting. So an outcast from idealism? A dogma — well not a dogma, a set of presets, like a set of rules or systems, symbols that people put up to, to create an idea or a picture of what reality is – being outcast from that reality?

Sanah: I don't know if this is clear, but I was trying to get under this idea that I think the essay was slightly getting to is this seeking of the spiritual. There's like an end-state of enlightenment, like you get there and there's a state of purity and actually, what I was trying to get to is we have bloodlines of sin in the sense that Eve is created as an outcast. So we will always be internally bad to some extent. That's what I was trying to get to, but I'm not sure if I did that as well as I would like to have. The idea that I wanted to pull out is this kind of internal badness that we can never escape, and then therefore a movement into 'home' being a destination of goodness or a place where we're finally accepted. But actually, travel is this constant movement towards accepting the self. Being at one with all of the parts of you.

Shama: Which I think is in the 'traveller' bit, isn't it? The destination isn't a journey or something like that. There is no destination, it's the journey itself, or whatever. Oh shit! This meeting will end in ten minutes.

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Traveller — Artists' Project Zoom Part 2

Shama: Where were we up to?

Sanah: We were talking about the lines of acceptance that are quite explicit in 'traveller' and maybe the journey towards that in terms of being outcast in the Garden of Eden, also linking it to this internal sense of shame that we potentially carry, or unworthiness, or that also being linked into — I know it's not as overtly, but into 'foreigner', you know, 'foreigner' being outcast. And then: 'Why? Why are you outcast?'. That internal sense of badness and then trying to find a sense of home within the body. Travelling being acceptance. I know that sounds a bit messy.

Shama: No, no, it makes sense.

Sanah: Does that work?

Shama: Yeah. Although, it makes sense to have the traveller, maybe, accept the idea that the destination isn't the point.

Sanah: Yes. As in the traveller being the end?

Shama: Yeah, it's the traveller's expression of acceptance rather than the foreigner's, because otherwise you may not have anywhere to go. It's like, there are two phases or states of this character. Not a character, but you know what I mean — two sides of the coin really, isn't it? So you'd have your foreigner, like you're saying, maybe a bit agitated, perhaps, this whole outcast feel, almost trying to link it into some of the music as well. And then maybe transitioning through her contemplation of home, whether that's to do with the body or not. And then the traveller — as it is at the moment, she's a messenger, she's completely owning the fact she owns nothing, she goes and deposits her diamond knowledge to people. I think it's quite interesting, then she's like there is no end goal to this, and she's ok with it. I think that could work. And then musically, weirdly, I know what you mean about the traveller being joyful, but like your reading of it over that more atmospheric, ambient music sort of fits?

Sanah: Yes, it does, the atmospheric opening to me, I know, it's not overtly joyful. But to me, there is something in it. The rest is joyful, though. The acceptance in that, in that melody, there's something in it that's quite soft.

Shama: It's peaceful. Whereas I guess the major key and much more rhythmic dub or whatever it is, I guess — I mean doesn't have to be that way. I could bring rhythm into something darker. If we feel 'foreigner' to be a bit darker? I mean I could almost restructure the whole thing to begin rhythmically, with a build-up. That's quite cool.

[Zoom freezes momentarily]

Sanah: Sorry, you were talking about whether we wanted to make it a bit darker. I just do really like — and I know that we need to play around with the lyrics a bit more — but that fit of like, 'homesick, seasick', with that beat just building. There is a bit of a darkness in that bit that fits quite well. I can't remember the lyrics now! But anyway.

Shama: The very last one you sent, right?

Sanah: Yeah. I think the last one I sent, and the second to last one I sent, the two short, the ‘traveller’ one on its own and then the ‘foreigner’ one on its own. Might be material for us to work with. I mean, what do you think?

Shama: Yeah, so we could start the whole thing with like more of a rhythm, which does have a build-up and it does have that break like you're talking about between ‘homesick’ and ‘seasick’, with that repetitive, almost not quite making it and then making it. But then it could be even darker melodically or it could be more agitated, depending on how you want it to come across.

Sanah: I think what I’m a bit unsure of, and maybe you have some ideas on this, is the embodied home. So the struggle of ‘home’ actually fits before the foreigner? Just so that it opens a bit more softly? I’m just thinking like this rhythmic dot. Like you know, for example, the opening line of that free-write I did was: ‘Home I have never arrived’. This isn’t necessarily gunna be what it is, but: ‘Home I have never arrived in this genderless body. Sometimes my hand wanders, lost in sleep’. This is more about gender, this piece. But it’s kind of like the seeking of home, and if there’s a way for me to do it I was just thinking about linking that to being outcast. I don’t know, I haven’t thought it through properly yet, but do you think it could start there rather than going from the middle?

Shama: I think the idea of seeking and transformation could be the linker, so that both ‘foreigner’ and ‘traveller’ have the outward appearance of seeking or have their outward action that someone can perceive to be seeking. We’re saying the foreigner is not something that they like maybe, and the feeling of being outcast, of never feeling at home, and kind of being the ‘other’. In this version of what traveller means, ‘traveller’ is more at home with the idea. So then there's this transformation of a perception change which is quite interesting, in that it could go from a minor key to a major key without you realising it. That’s quite possible, so it could start off quite dark but weirdly, it's actually got a lot of rhythm to it, which is quite juxtaposition-y anyway. Normally, people go, ‘oh, a beat’. A beat normally means joyful. But if you're like, ‘it's got a lot of rhythm but it’s actually quite dark’. It goes to being more wandering and more meandering. But yet it's more peaceful and it's actually got a more positive melody to it. Quite interesting to play with play around the people's associations, maybe?

Sanah: I think so. Yeah that sounds really good.

Shama: And that could just be a trope of where I could play with it, but if you wanna bring in ‘home’, maybe it’s not in threes, maybe it’s just in both of them and how people might perceive ‘homes’ in a different way.

Sanah: I think I just need to go away and do a bit of playing with the words on my side, and just see what works.

Shama: I'm not sure how it would start, being a super hitting you in the face right at the beginning. But it could still be rhythmic, building itself up until it was sort of at breaking point, and then fever pitch, and then it transitions into more of a dreamlike state.

Sanah: Yeah, cool.

Shama: That could still work. For example, [claps hands in rhythm] I would just tap on the body of the sitar, and just build it up bit by bit, adding maybe a bassline. So it would still be building blocks incremental. So we can bring some of that in. If you like that thing with 'homesick, seasick,' or whatever, in the playing around I was messing about with beat shifts and just being quite playful with it. But it's jolting, yet in a rhythm, but the rhythm keeping shifting. So it's an idea that's interesting maybe as a transition into the more dreamlike state?

Sanah: Yeah, for sure. I think we should try and — well, how do you feel about doing a bit of a play around in person and seeing what happens? Just to see what we do with it, because I think it's really hard with all of this verbal stuff, when we can actually just play around with different ideas.

Shama: Yeah, yeah. What are you up to on Saturday, maybe?

Sanah: Oof, I can't do this weekend. Wait, when do you have to have this done by?

Shama: We have to have one done by the end of the month, by the 31st apparently, and within that, I need to be able to mix and master whatever you give me and incorporate it into a musical piece of between four and a half to eight minutes or something. So I need to mix and master as well.

Sanah: Oh shit. This is a bit ridiculous isn't it?

Shama: Because they want it to be one cohesive piece, which is one of the reasons I was asking: 'is it, you know, record the music then record the spoken word and then stick it together?' Not really, it has to be one cohesive production.

Sanah: Did you say the end of the month? That's the 31st they need to have it all done by, right? Thing is, realistically I don't think I can meet until next week, because this weekend — is that leaving it too tight?

Shama: Might be, yeah.

Sanah: What's next weekend looking like for you?

Shama: I might be travelling. It's a little bit up in the air, I won't really know until certain people I'm chasing come back to me. But it doesn't mean I can't work on it, I can work on it remotely, but obviously if you want to meet physically and get something done I'm not sure what would be the best thing. Are you free in the evening on Thursday?

Sanah: What time are you thinking?

Shama: I mean, I normally work until about 6ish.

[They continue to work out when to meet physically until signing off.]

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Traveller — Post-composition Project Zoom

Sweety Kapoor: So, Ben, have you had a chance to look through some of the process material that the artists have sent through?

Ben Crowe: Yeah, so I've had a chance to look through some of the Zoom conversations between the artists, the photos that they've been sending and the music and film files. So I can definitely see how things can begin to come together in an interactive project, that starts to reveal through the kind of form and structure that project how the collaboration takes place a little bit. And I think it's really exciting, all the material that's been provided so far. I think's it's looking really great.

Sweety: I really love how they've captured the text communication as well, because so much of that is happening and it's so reflective of how work does get done these days, by WhatsApp. They're not emailing, they're WhatsApp-ing. Yeah, I don't know if you saw Sanah and Shama's email communications. I love that, because it was literally them talking about the use of both the word 'foreigner', and 'traveller', and how they're thinking about it. It's incredible.

Preti: We've only got 30 minutes so I've only got three main questions, and then I want to give them a chance to ask some questions, just in case they have anything. But it's going to go really quickly, this half an hour. We're still waiting for them to join us.

Sweety: We are going to end with three really, really strong pieces. Really strong pieces. It's just been amazing to see each stage, and I've spoken to them, and they get more into it and they're discovering more around how a lot of the key words are so intersected together. And you can feel their brains expanding like this, and they're making so many connections, getting so much out of that. It's really wonderful, actually. I feel like everyone should know about the TIDE project.

Preti: The research that has gone into it is so intricate, and it's so collaborative. It's really unusual because so many researchers have have been working on it. Okay, Sanah is here.

Sanah Ahsan: How are you guys doing?

Preti: We're doing well here, we're really excited to see you and talk to you about all of the work you've been doing, it's absolutely phenomenal.

Sanah: Amazing. Did Shama manage to send over what we did last night? Have you had a chance to see that?

Preti: I haven't seen that exact thing.

Sanah: It was really fun. We met up and we did stuff in person, it was really good.

Preti: I haven't seen that exact thing. Okay, seen. It was really fun. We,
we met up and we we did stuff in person and it was
a lot of fun.

[Greetings and chat while Shama logs on as well]

Preti: So what we thought we would talk about this morning, just because we only have 15-20 minutes, is how you're collaborating. So if we could just start by you explaining a little bit about how you chose the word, and the thought process behind it. And then just talk about how you're collaborating.

Sanah: Sure, Shama do you want to do this or should I?

Shama: We can do it to together! You probably heard from Sanah that we got together yesterday. Until then we were sending each other voice memos, rewrites, often writing from both of us but also memos that are freeplays on different words. Just to get our instincts going, to work out what suited us, I suppose, from from the inside. And that was the creative process really.

Preti: And then you gravitated towards one more than others, and I was happy with that one

anyway, right from the beginning.

Sanah: Yeah, because actually the beginning process was — we were both unsure about actually choosing what word spoke to us most. And we had a call, which was really rich with lots of like thoughtful stuff and we were speaking around, I think three different words that spoke to us. And then that then came down to two, and we went away and both did free writes and plays on those two words, which were ‘foreigner’, or ‘traveller’.

And it was particularly, for me, the spiritual line that caught me, for ‘foreigner’ especially. I don't know if you're very familiar with that essay, Preti, but it kind of splits it up into the ‘spiritual foreigner’ and the domestic migrant and the temporal ‘foreigner’. And that really caught me. Then I guess we were both playing on those two words for quite a while and sending each other voice notes and going back and forth with those.

Then actually when we met, by the time we met up yesterday it was like ‘traveller’ had embodied most of what we'd kind of danced with before. And it just worked to stay without word. But there are subtle threads of spirituality and spiritual thought that seeps through it. But yeah, it was really fun. I mean, we kind of played around with beats and stuff before, and voice recordings, but when we actually came together in person and did it live just, I guess, an experimental play with it, that was really fun. We ended up getting two versions, didn't we Shama, which was a live acoustic version, and one done with all the beats.

Shama: We might send you both. I mean, Sweety you will have heard some of it from before. But what we tried to do was structure it a bit more. And like sticking with the ‘traveller’ ideas as an arc, we did quite a few live takes all the way through, just to get that energy of the interplay, like you're saying as well. And sometimes the beginning worked, and sometimes the middle worked, sometimes the end worked and sometimes everything worked apart from a little tiny middle bit. So by the time we got to the last one I think we just took the middle section so what I've got to do now, essentially, is cut it quite minutely so that it fits with rhythm. And then, I’ll do a mix, which is pretty much there — maybe a master but I’m not sure — it sounds pretty alright. So we've got that track for you.

Basically it’s layered sitar loops, rhythm, with Sanah’s voice over the top. It’s a nice mesh, it’s all nicely done. And then we did one with bare acoustic sitar and just voice. We thought you might like that. And we filmed everything on my laptop video. So you can probably see us kind of like chatting to each other, listening back to something like, yeah, all of it, really.

Sanah: Yeah there’s probably quite a lot of video footage there, I don't know if you want to watch the hours of it because we just left it on.

Shana: I might find the one which was the tape — the tape-tape. And Ben if you see a bit that looks interesting you can be like, that looks fun.

Preti: Yeah, please, any bits of it and all of the soundtracks can be used in different ways across the site to knit the stories together as well. So, you know, the whole thing is going to be like a potent mindmap of sound and visuals which people can explore, as well as these kinds of interviews that we're doing now. So it sounds like being released out of lockdown has been part of the process as well.

Sanah: Yeah, for sure.

Preti: Making words and music in this very compressed, solitary place, collaborating without seeing each other. And then being released into this joint space, do you think that had an effect in any way?

Sanah: Yeah, definitely. I think so, I don't know what you think Shama, but it just happened so naturally. We're obviously both very busy, and we literally just slotted in two hours to do it. And it happened very quickly and very easily, whereas I think with the back and forth over the last couple of weeks, it's a bit difficult to really get a sense of where we're going.

We were both a bit unsure about which word and which bits were resonating with us and I think, just the barriers in terms of communication. And you know, timings and that. But the minute we got together in person it felt very easy, it felt like a natural fit.

Shama: We'd done quite a bit of the groundwork beforehand. And you know, it was actually 4 hours, Sanah.

Sanah: Was it? Wow. It went really quickly, though.

Shama: Yeah, we were listening back to stuff and going like, 'that worked, that didn't work.'

Preti: I wanted to ask about the actual keywords, and what it's like working with this very intricate historical research from an archive. Do you have any reflections, you know this work put together by a team of people from history, theology, and so on?

Shama: My initial response wasn't musical, it was also a poem, a spoken-word thing. I really like etymology, I'm a bit of a geek on that front — sorry, academic, on that front! I just really enjoyed utilising the, what's the word, the mode of poetry to actually help me link these different words that spoke to me. I didn't gravitate towards one, I was like, 'I like 'traveller' and I like 'foreigner', I like 'home', and I like 'friend/ally'.' So, for me, poetry has this way of laterally

linking things together without being too literal, and I tried to get an instinctive response to something.

I did read a bit of the background of ‘traveller’, which I found really lovely. And this idea of it coming from the French word, ‘travailler’. And I'd always gotten that wrong apparently, in French, but see I was right, so I liked that. I really enjoyed reading the perception of ‘traveller’ as somebody who was the knowledge-bringer, and was seen in a good light, in a sense of a perspective-opener, travelling from one place to another place. I really enjoyed that.

And Sanah was talking to me about ‘foreigner’. There were certain things that I thought I knew already, but she surprised me by saying the spiritual angle of it, I was like wow, how could you be a spiritual foreigner, oh my god. So I think knowing these tidbits was quite interesting. Not tidbits — surprises, that was interesting.

Sanah: Definitely. I think there were certain parts of particular essays that spoke to me. I think actually, if I’m honest, I definitely took the more academic head of really reading the essays and getting stuck into the essays, which I found really interesting. And there were ones, initially, that grabbed me more, to be honest, like the ‘Mahometan’ essay. I was like, mind blown by, and there were just lots of bits to that that really struck me, especially around queerness in the Ottoman Empire. There were a couple of lines around that, and I had no idea, so that was really rich with learning for me. I found that whole process rich with learning, and really enjoyed it.

But I think, at times, I felt a little bit unsure about creative freedom and how close we needed to be to it being a piece of knowledge giving, translating the content of the essays into a poetic form. And I think at times I felt a bit like, oh shit, does this need to be a literal replication but a bit more creatively? And then I think once I stepped away from that and took it kind of where it spoke to both me and Shama, particularly in traveller around the idea of ‘travailler’, meaning ‘to work’, the work it takes to travel, linking that in with the idea of knowledge-giving and knowledge-giving, linking that in with the spiritual foreigner, all of these things being interlinked. Seeing the traveller as being on a journey with oneself, and not really having a home anywhere — it came very naturally. And also this idea of God being with the traveller and never being able to be cast away or separate from God, and how all of these things kind of interweave in that way, it just came together very naturally and was a bringing together of lots of different themes.

And I think just generally there was a lot of overlap in the essays. You know, even exile, we played with. There were certain things in those themes around exile, spiritual foreigner, certain lines in ‘home’ and ‘traveller’ as well, so we kind of were picking up on those things.

Preti: So yeah, what you're saying about this idea that you discover things and you realise that actually the history of these words, and why we feel about them now the way we do, goes back decades and centuries. I think for me, when I engage with the research like that there's something like a homecoming, a feeling of recognition when you realise this word that you think makes you strange in your own communities or in your own worlds or in your own body actually has a really long etymological history — you can kind of be at home in the word. I mean I think that's quite special for this project.

Shama: I think also from a musical perspective, I think it's quite interesting that there's a lot of changes or shifts in how these words are viewed now, in the sense that in England the word 'traveller' is not viewed particularly nicely. That's not something that I had been aware of when I first came here, so it didn't have that aspect for me. But what I liked to play with musically was this sort of like imperceptible change and shift. You might have been looking at it from this angle but actually before you know it, you've come over here and travelled here. I was trying to play with that, in terms of the tropes of the music itself.

You know, obviously also these ideas of never owning a place but she's at home everywhere. So, that sort of dreamlike state is there but then you know coming into her own — you might know by now the traveller is a female — it brings a lot of different energies. Really playing with storytelling from a musical perspective, with those underlying tropes not just the words, say, but then also obviously the words themselves have musical connotation. So I thought that was quite nice to have that background.

Preti: I have so many other questions for you about themes and stuff but I just want to pick up on one thing and then ask any questions for me or for Ben or Sweety. In one of your conversations you talk about shame, that happened quite early on. Has that always been in the piece, or has that dissolved?

Sanah: Is it in the piece? No, I don't think so. I don't remember what the conversation specifically was?

Preti: I think if you don't remember then that's answered the question. Is there anything you want to ask us?

Shama: I guess we have a lot of video for this. So I might just put it all up on this Dropbox, and you want all of it, I guess? Yeah.

Preti: Yeah, we should have as much material as we can and then when you see the site in beta, then we can say, 'yes, no'.

Shama: And I think we had one question about performance, didn't we?

Sanah: Yeah I was just about to ask that. I was wondering, Sweety, because I remember you mentioned potentially getting the boxing ring again for us to be able to film a performance. Is that still on the cards?

Sweety: So initially, the whole thing was going to be a live salon.

Preti: Obviously because of COVID it got shut down. I think what we want to do is, when we've got the project done, we want to see what the situation is. Because obviously academia shuts down over the summer, anyway.

Shama: I was wondering whether we could have a performance filmed without an audience or whatever it is.

Sweety: So, the last Zoom we did, Nandini mentioned to Ben and I that next year, the whole TIDE project will be doing something, a big conference. Nandini said that she would look into having the TIDE Salon, with all of you performing as part of that. There is a possibility of — if Preti and Nandini wanted this to be filmed — I can definitely ask where we do ringside. Which you performed at, and Shama attended as well. We're beginning our events there in August, and that'll all be socially-distanced because space is so big. We want to support artists, because it is a grassroots venue, and we also want to raise some really important issues that have come up during COVID and give some money to charity as well. So that's I think a conversation that Preti and Nandini have to have, and I guess also Ben as well, to see if that's something they'd like to do. But the offer is there, absolutely, if you wanted to be filmed, we could arrange that.

Preti: Yeah, we can definitely look at that and we're definitely going to record all the tracks and make a kind of playlist separately to the Salon website, there will be a SoundCloud or something. Now Steve and Zia are in the waiting room…

Sweety: I have one question regarding the length. What is your length looking like now? I think at the time you had questions about it, it can be up to 10 minutes long if you need it to be.

Sanah: It was quite long. How long was it in the end, Shama?

Shama: It's about 7 and a bit minutes. I might cut it down to 7 minutes exactly, but at the moment it's about 7 minutes 20 seconds or something.

Sanah: How longare the others looking at the moment?

Sweety: It sounds like you guys have completed yours. But the other are starting in at around 4 minutes, but they're not finished.

Shama: Yeah, we didn't expect it to be that long at all, I was quite surprised it ended up being that long. I mean we did one that was like nearly 10 minutes and then we did it again, and completely cut it down.

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Traveller — Shama Rahman reflects on the project

Hi, I'm Dr Shama Rahman, and in this project I've been a musician, a composer, playing the sitar. I was really excited by the project, because I'm a little bit of a fan of etymology and where words come from. And a lot of my own material — songs and such — actually start life as poems and poetry. I also get inspiration from the actual words and stories that take shape and take form. And that's the sort of process that I followed with this project as well. So we were asked to choose a pair of words. I looked through and felt, you know, what instinctively called to me. And the first thing I did was like a free flowing poem, and you know the word that really jumped out to me from that was 'traveller'.

I speak French, and I often used to get it slightly wrong, in the sense that I used to use the word 'travailler' in French, as if it meant to travel, but actually in French it means to work on something. So it was really exciting for me to actually read the backstory and the etymology, the sort of source of how this word has morphed, even in the English language. And, you know, it excitingly did used to have common roots with the French, and it did mean to to work. And it really captured my imagination. How the traveller's job was to go and find knowledge and inspiration and, you know, bring this back to the community that they were from. And, you know, as somebody who comes from a lot of different sorts of places of living, you know, I embody different experiences and cultures. I come from Bangladesh, but I was born in the United Arab Emirates, and I've pretty much, through my young adulthood, had a musical career within England. Is this really resonated with me and also from a perspective of music, this is how I actually view music, as a way of gathering inspiration and knowledge and pearls of wisdom and kind of bringing it all together within that sort of musical element.

So yeah, that's how I first started off the process, actually through words and then I had some sort of free flowing improvisation, with the sitar. I created a piece by looping, you know, different elements of the sitar, both sort of from a drone aspect, creating this sort of sound bed, and then, getting into a more rhythmical angle. Also tapping on the sitar creating that sort of like

percussive element, bringing in different effects and things like that, you know, and then bringing in melodies and rhythms that you can actually recognise, like a theme that it comes back to.

And then at the same time I was pinging this back and forth with Sanah, the spoken word artist I was collaborating with, and she was also creating the spoken word angle to the collaboration. And then finally we just met up, utilising everything that we've been improvising and inspiring about back and forth. We ended up just doing you know a few live takes. And, you know, definitely, you know there were elements of what we, you know, what we had worked on individually, but it really kind of came to life as we were doing it live. Like proper beat poetry, sort of aim and intention and emphasis, like the original sort of jazz inspiration of the poetry, you know, having inspiration and going with it in one sort of breath.

The final version that came through is not a million miles away at all from, you know, the ‘axis of life’ take that we did, the live performance that we did. Potentially just sort of edited a couple of the different takes together, and we did two versions of it. And, you know, one slightly more acoustic key actually without any of the loops and then one with all the loops, all done live as well. So, it was a very cool experience, and really nice to feel that electricity, when we actually just got together and did this as one live performance recording.

[Clicking on the skull and crossbones icon to the right-hand side navigates to the artists’ profiles.]

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Traveller — Artist Profiles

[Two photos side by side, Shama Rahman on the left in black and white, Sanah Ahsan on the right, laughing in a teal suit. Hovering over either picture reveals the artist’s biographical text.] Dr Shama Rahman is a scientist, artist, creative technologist and futurist. She holds a PhD in the neuroscience and complex systems of Creative Cognition and Innovation.

Shama was the first Sitarist Explorer to perform in Antarctica on the first ever Antarctic Biennale. She has performed internationally with her band around the world and her music has been featured on Channel 4, the BBC, and by Google’s Cultural Institute.

Shama is a featured composer in the British Music Collection. She won a Help Musicians Emerging Excellence Award and an Arts Council England award for her album Truth Be Told. She is the Artistic Director of the Art/Science creative production agency Jugular Productions, producing interdisciplinary science theatre/dance shows and cabarets, salons, installations, immersive experiences and games.

Sanah Ahsan is a queer muslim womxn, liberation and community psychologist, award-winning poet and all-round disrupter. Her work is centred on compassion, decolonising our understandings of mental health and embracing each other's madness.

Some of Sanah's work includes presenting a Channel 4 documentary, performing for the BBC, Shakespeare's Globe, giving a Ted Talk; all whilst working as a psychologist at a homeless hostel. The Guardian recently described Sanah's poetry as "an exhilarating declaration of love and an invocation to bare the soul." Sanah is currently writing her debut poetry collection.

[Clicking on the quill icon navigates to the Fragment by Preti Taneja.]

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Traveller — Fragment by Preti Taneja

[Black background with text.]

Archivists' notes:

Part of 3 (?) found in archive: Human era: 2020, *folder:* 'Digital Debris'
Translated by Algorithm BC, in the year Aliena, 3095.
Filed under H; keyword: Hakluyt; homeward; hidden; heard; hope; hem
Title: Fragment (consider revising).
Reference found: a command frequently made by the dominant linguistic training programme, 'Word', in use worldwide during the final years.

KEY to symbols:
*A single square bracket: **]** pertains to missing matter.*

Fragment (consider revising)

Your name is Emily: you do a search for Emilia. Emilia does not know herself, except as a dash. As an em dash – as across oceans. Jewels hidden in her hems. Traveller dust rises into refraction of light. Prismatic formation of water on eyelashes. Blink towards this aeonic future. Blink, Emily, blink. This time will be yours. And we will recall you as Revati: all the worlds you remember are gone.

Beautiful bare-naked traveller, these lines are written for your nomadic eye.
In the state of untravelling.

] The way I write to you is
] oral
] the print will unravel as a thread
] this fascinating process
] your bare feet
] your clothes
] your mask
] has a label on it: *navigationi* and
] your hair smells of star anise, the spice route
] and the sea I always wanted to be
] the miniature painter at the Mughal court. And reduce to simplicity and perspective and frame.
I am too expressive. I am told. I am only visible when you look for me. I have to get out of here

I am the lover
] I am a live Fragment, (consider revising)

] and I really like etymology anyway, the sound
] of Akbar in dreams, the traveller, working the chain of meaning so you can be
]
] in labour, in revolution, free of lyric shame, deep in the body of Revati, as you like it to be.

And while you have been reading, 27 chatur yuga have passed
Now what are you still nostalgic for? Do you want more ghee?

We are walking towards the fourth space.
] your pixelated dreams
Where women, rejecting sindoor, embracing fulfilment; separated before birth by 1947, by 1971, now born across, now in time,

] where we
] can meet.

Archivists note #2: The only reference to Emily/ Emilia/ Revati found in two epic texts, one in a fragment of Script from the Human-era 17C English, one in the lost language of the Human-era known Sanskrit, of which only letters that evoke certain sounds now remain.

Archivist's note #3: For 'fourth space' and references see THREADS, by Sandeep Parmar, Nisha Ramayya and Bhanu Kapil*, in File:* Human-era, 2018, *Folder:* 'Philosophy/ Text/ Canon.'

[As previously, clicking on the skull and crossbones icon on this page navigates to Preti Taneja's biographical profile, which is transcribed above.]

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Savage — Final composition

[A black background with text across it.]

Keyword: Savage

'But you are more intemperate in your blood/ Than Venus, or those pampred animalls/ That rage in savage sensualitie'

[A beat begins with a clanging sound behind it — it's a piano being smacked with a fist. The percussion starts in, and we hear bits of whistle, then an electric guitar line. The video shows a woman and children, dressed in white, below an English oak. Sarathy Korwar's vocals join in, almost instrumental in style. We see the girls on the oak's swing, images of English pastoral. A country house surrounded with gardens. English nobility in high wigs. Ms. Mohammed's vocals begin, murmuring in Trinidadian dialect. We see spices, sugar, pastry, chocolate, tea, coffee, diamonds: the trade goods of colonial empire. The sound of a steel drum, a high loop of whistle, and a sharp, fluent electric guitar riff. The video cuts to the white structures of central London, ending at last with an image of a Carribean shore.]

[Full text of composition]

I am de Midnight robber
See meh coming dong
Rumbling tumbling like tundah
Riddim undergroun'

Wajang meh
Jamette meh
Zami meh
Try to pull meh dong?

Let dem try and defeat meh
Tide, it turnin 'round

I am de Midnight robber
See meh coming dong
Rumbling tumbling like tundah
Riddim undergroun'

Bram tundah
Stick run dong
Drum dun dun
Sing run come

Riddim comin dong
Savage on de ground

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Savage — Keyword essay

[As before, the 'Savage' Keyword essay, by Professor Nandini Das, hosted on the TIDE Project website, is accessed via the key icon on the right-hand side of the page. Link here.]

Savage — Project archive

[Video of a ship on the horizon, and the sound of washing waves. Text links to the ‘Savage’ project archive. These are transcribed in full below.]

- First Project Zoom, all participants (transcribed previously)
- Artist’s Project Zoom Part 1
- Ms. Mohammed’s Experimentation and Live Takes
- Sarathy Korwar’s Experimentation
- Artist’s Project Zoom Part 2
- WhatsApp / Email Collaborations
- Post-composition Project Zoom
- Ms. Mohammed reflects on the Project

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First project Zoom, all participants (transcribed above)

Savage — Artists’ Project Zoom Part 1

Sarathy Korwar: So, did you get a chance to look at those keywords?

Dana / Ms. Mohammed: Yeah, I wonder if we've chosen the same one. I think there was one that jumped out at me.

Sarathy: I’ve written down four words. A shortlist.

Dana: Okay, the one that jumped at me was ‘savage’.

Sarathy: Yeah, I’ve got ‘savage’. I also had ‘foreigner’, just because in India, the word ‘foreigner’ is used like, ‘farang’, ‘firangi’, in Hindi. Which means, basically, white people. It’s kind of swapped roles. Like here, foreigners would be people who look like us. Where in India, it’s white people. Anyway, the other word I had was ‘gypsy’, and ‘Indian’, because that would be relevant. But ‘savage’ is great.

Dana: Do we have to decide on a word together, or can we do more than one? I remember Sweety saying she wants both voices as part of it.

Sarathy: I think we're supposed to have one word, but we can have a conversation around that word, basically. It can mean different things for the both of us and so that's what the track would be. But I'm happy to go with Savage, I think it's a great word.

Dana: Okay, good. There's so many places to go with it. It's very topical. Everything is, right now. What a time to be alive. I just said to someone, 'may you live in interesting times', because — wow. Geez. Okay, so we have a word.

Sarathy: Savage is good. And I don't think there's any restriction on how long or short, this track has to be.

Dana: Well, I know you like about 10 minutes.

Sarathy: That's my minimum. [Laughter]

Dana: I'm happy to go with whatever.

Sarathy: I'm trying to write shorter songs, to be honest, just because like for me the easiest thing is to write something long, because then I don't have to worry about form, as much as things just kind of happen and I let them happen. But now with three and a half minutes, there's a certain like discipline to the writing. I'm totally up for that as well. Maybe best not to put a time on it right now.

Dana: It could morph into something quite big and amorphous, and I don't know.

Sarathy: What would be cool, for me, anyway, is to play some interesting soca rhythms, some tabla, some distortion on the tabla.

Dana: Yeah, we could so experiment here, there aren't really any limitations.

Sarathy: The whole 'savage' idea. We can push the idea of aggression, heavy sounds.

Dana: I'm happy to do that. Yeah, I was thinking because of the 'savage' connotations. I think we had this conversation once when we were coming back from Brighton. I said, you know, a lot of Trinidadian instruments, they're not technically instruments, they're like found objects. So we have something called the iron. Now they make it, but it used to be like old hubcaps. I actually have an old hubcap, one of these old ridiculous rusty things that, you know. It's fun to layer stuff like that and you get that kind of a vibe.

Sarathy: We could try that: just play with like found sounds, or like pick objects we associate with the word ‘savage’. It could be interesting, just to think about what objects can be associated with ‘savage’. Because savage also means, like, primal, but it means like, uncivilised, this idea of — for instance, hubcaps. It’s not ‘civilised’.

Dana: Yeah, it’s trash. Rubbish.

Sarathy: Yeah, this idea that an instrument has to be —

Dana: Something expensive made in Europe or something.

Sarathy: Yeah, exactly. So, yeah, you know what, forget about the tabla even, it’s like a classical instrument.

Dana: No, I think there's room for all of it, especially if you're gonna do something crazy and distorted.

Sarathy: Yeah, I like the idea. What you're saying, using found objects, non-traditional instruments.

Dana: You definitely still have to play drums, on the kit.

Sarathy: I’ll play drums, maybe not on the kit though. I’ll have a think.

Dana: Yeah, the interesting bit is how to proceed, actually getting started.

Sarathy: I think it would be best to start with a rhythm track, send something over, like a 3 minute thing, just laying down a few rhythms, get some stuff down. And in the meanwhile we just talk about lyrics — whether we want lyrics, it can be an instrumental piece as well, I don't know. I’m sure it can. It could even be like a broadcast from something.

Dana: A sample.

Sarathy: Yeah, exactly.

Dana: Okay, there’s some stuff to think about there. I’m going to write that down.

Sarathy: So like, objects associated with savagery. Like hubcaps, what other kinds of things?

Dana: Literally, like a bottle and spoon. But we could add our own tools, you know.

Sarathy: Iron and steel, that kind of stuff.

Dana: I think it would be interesting to find a way to bridge Soca stuff to what you normally do. We can do that whole, you know, Indo-Caribbean, back to the origin thing.

Sarathy: Send me some music, maybe. Send me some stuff that you're really digging.

Dana: Yeah, okay. That might be good. We both kind of do fusion naturally anyway.

Sarathy: Yeah. And we don't have to do the whole, 'I'll do the rhythm track, you do whatever'. You should send some stuff as well. I don't mind starting something. But I won't do too much, I'll send you something and you can add stuff.

Dana: We could both do that, and see if it works. Something basic like a loop or something, to start with.

Sarathy: Why don't you start with drums? Maybe send me something. And I can play off it and record it and like I said, any additional drum track. It would be cool to just play over.

Dana: Okay, yeah. I can do that. Maybe you should do it too. We'll each do a loop of what we're thinking. See if there's a natural bridge or something. Or one might just be way better, which will probably be yours. You're so humble, it's very sweet. I have to thank Sweety for posting us together.

Sarathy: No, I was really kicked, I was like, this is a great idea.

Dana: I'm so not qualified to work with you.

Sarathy: Oh no, man, don't say that. Also, neither of us are poets, by any means. I think it would be quite interesting to do an instrumental track, in lots of ways. The idea of 'savagery' is that people don't speak the language that you know. It would be interesting if it were in a 'foreign' language that no one understood.

Dana: Well, there's quite a few words in Trinidadian dialect, which is actually broken French, broken Spanish, broken English.

Sarathy: Yeah, same as in Hindi. It would be great to really fuck with them, so you can't really understand what's being said, it's this wall of sound. I think that idea might be, I don't know, might be interesting.

Dana: Yeah, you might have words for ‘savage’, in your dialects that you know. I have some too. They tend to be gendered, you know, wanton women, loose women, they have words for that. It all kind of comes back to what is civilised.

Sarathy: Yeah, exactly.

Dana: Well, that’s a good start, I think.

Sarathy: Let’s set a deadline or I’ll basically just not do it. Shall we aim for the 24th, next week? Once we get started it’ll be fairly quick.

Dana: It’s nice to see you, enjoy the Northern lights [referring to Sarathy’s Zoom background]. Stay up there for a while.

Sarathy: Oh wait one sec. Is there a BPM that you —

Dana: I don’t have one in mind yet.

Sarathy: You do yours, I’ll do mine, and we’ll see.

Dana: Yeah, you never know. It can shift. A tempo change.

[They wrap up and say goodbye.]

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Savage — Ms Mohammed’s Experimentation and Live Takes

[The video shows a hubcap, which is being tapped with an object, maybe a metal pipe, making a ringing sound. It switches to a video of a snare drum being tapped with plastic brushes, rustling, with a riff in the background. Then the same plastic brush is being used on a cheese grater. We see Dana / Ms. Mohammed playing a riff on the electric guitar, looping back and forth. The next video, she’s playing the guitar but using a metal pipe to strum, the sound experimental and distorted. In the next, she’s playing the bass guitar beneath the fuller track, which plays in the background.]

[The video transitions into still images: a screenshot of information about a ‘scratcher’, an instrument described as ‘a direct evolution from the traditional Tamboo Bamboo’. The next is a

Trinidad and Tobago Dictionary. An image of the Midnight Robber. An image of a whistle, some brushes, and a cheese grater, all the kind of found object instruments that Dana discusses as being part of traditional Trinidadian music-making.]

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Savage — Sarathy Korwar's experimentation

[The experiments are broken into three parts. The first video shows a screen with music editing software on it, with riffs playing, Sarathy's voice soft over the top. The next video shows Sarathy sitting down at the drum kit. He starts to pick out a percussive Soca rhythm. Last, the video transitions to an image of a notebook with notes from Sarathy's conversation with Dana. The text reads: 'Dana spoken word dialect'; 'Try sax on melody line'; 'Breakdown, percussion'; 'Dana whistle'; 'Work on arrangement'.]

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Savage — Artists' Project Zoom Part 2

Sarathy Korwar: I think it's in a really good place. I like all the sounds, I like all the stuff you added. I guess we need to figure out some kind of arrangement.

Dana / Ms. Mohammed: I really like that first thing you played, actually, what is that? A harpsichord?

Sarathy: Really bizarre. Yeah, it's a sample of somebody hitting a piano with their fist, and the strings are resonating because of the hit. It's amazing.

Dana: That's really cool, I love that. I think for the intro there, that's —

Sarathy: There's something symbolic about it. That's a savage thing.

Dana: Savage moves. I love that, that's good. I have issues with piano, so. Because of childhood. I didn't want — I wanted to learn guitar and they were like, no. My teacher was awful, I can't learn from certain people. She was always shouting at me, and I was like, I don't need this crap on a Saturday. So I love that backstory to that. So you had that sample, you just happened to have it?

Sarathy: Yeah, I have this crazy sampler instrument. It has these crazy samples, really left-field. Somebody hitting a guitar with a pebble, then 5 different sizes of pebble. Stuff you never knew you needed.

Dana: I love that one.

Sarathy: What about the voice? I don't like my own voice, obviously. I might change that to something. I might play it on the saxophone, but in a kind of weird, not nice way, or something. Unless you want to sing it?

Dana: I could try. I like the tone of what you did, though. It's very Sarathy Korwar.

Sarathy: Keep it, then.

Dana: I like it. I did think of something just to say over it, more of a spoken word sentence. I haven't finished it yet, though. I'll send you that. It's in dialect, Trinidadian. What did I send you, the iron?

Sarathy: Yeah. Can you send me, before I forget —

Dana: It wasn't perfectly in time.

Sarathy: Yeah I'm going to re-record everything after. I mean it's only a minute long right now, or a bit under. Yeah, I feel like we should work on an arrangement first, figure out the arrangement to at least 3 or 4 minutes. Then add spoken word. Maybe it could do with a second melody line that you want to write? And then a B-section almost. Maybe like a breakdown that's mainly percussion.

Dana: Yeah, I do that in all my songs. We definitely need that. And it can segway into other things. I like that idea. I was going to play around with a whistle. But we'll see.

Sarathy: Yeah, we can always take stuff out if we don't like it.

Dana: So how do we do this? Because normally we'd both be in the studio doing the arrangement. So we've got the intro, 16-bars or whatever. How do we do the rest.

Sarathy: I don't know how we do it. I think one of us probably has to take a crack at it. And then the other inputs on that, 'I like this, and I like this', or whatever. I don't think it's going to have

that many sections. We're not thinking of it conventionally in a super intro, verse 1, middle section, etc. I think it's probably easiest if one of us works on it, right?

Dana: Would it be easy for me to sit in with you virtually?

Sarathy: Okay, I'm going to share my screen, and let's see what you can see. I'm opening up the editor. Is that fairly clear? I'm just going to try and play the audio and see what happens. [The rhythm track plays]

Dana: Yeah, okay. I can get an idea of what's going on. That could work, I think. It's not clear as day or anything, but because I know what's being played — that can possibly work, to try and come up with an arrangement together.

Sarathy: Yeah, and you can be like, pull this here, or whatever. Maybe we should get all the bits recorded then.

Dana: Yeah, I guess in loops shall I make sure they're looping?

Sarathy: Yeah, then you and I can edit the drums and stuff and make sure they're working. And then we can work on an arrangement, basically.

Dana: Yeah, I'm going to use my laptop for this, instead of my phone, obviously.

Sarathy: Okay, I'll do this tomorrow. So shall we have another call on Monday?

Dana: Sure. So we'll record the new bits that you're thinking of. Actually Monday is a bit full for me. Tuesday?

Sarathy: That's fine. So you're going to do the spoken word, the dialect bit?

Dana: Yeah, I'm not sure where it's going to go, but we'll see if anything comes up.

Sarathy: Yeah, I'll try the melody line or something else. I'll also try adding a bit more percussion, I don't know, we'll see. The whistle might be cool.

Dana: Yeah, I'm thinking about it. Obviously there's loads more of other kinds of Trinidadian sounds I can put on. But it might get too muddy if they're all playing at one time.

Sarathy: Maybe we use it in the break-out. Sweet.

Dana: Thank you.

Sarathy: So, let’s say Tuesday, and if you send me all the recorded bits over the weekend or on Monday. Send me, even the guitar lines, and the stems.

Dana: I don’t know how in time they were. I might have to re-record some of this.

Sarathy: Yeah, that’s cool, but I’ll be able to let you know — the arrangement will be easier.

Dana: Yeah, we’ll do that and decide what we’re definitely going to use.

[They wrap up and say goodbye.]

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Savage — WhatsApp / Email Collaborations

[Background is a manuscript showing an Early Modern bestiary. Over the top, we see a screenshot of an email from Sarathy Korwar to Ms. Mohammed.]

[Subject line] Savage take 1!

[Email body text]

Hey Dana,

Hope you’re well! I’ve laid down a few ideas so sending you stems and mixdown for you to have a play over.

Excuse the terrible singing! Feel free to mute, chop ideas as you like. 115bpm.

Lemme know if you want to chat through this week.

Love!
Sarathy

[The image transitions to a video of plastic brushes picking a beat on a drum covered with a shawl and sprinkled with guitar picks. Beside the video there’s a screenshot of an email from Ms. Mohammed to Sarathy.]

Hey Sarathy!

Absolutely love what you've done here!

Hope what I've added has done is justice. [Sweating, smiling emoji]

There's some Trinidadian 'iron' which is the old hub cap I told you about in our zoom meeting. [Grinning emoji]

A few Djembe hits. A heavily effected snare and guitar.

All very rough live takes no edits just to get the vibe going. I've attached 2 files one with your loop and myself and one with myself isolated. Let me know what you think.

Hope all is fabulous!

Love & Drums

Dana

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Savage — Post-composition Project Zoom

Preti Taneja: Thank you so much, both of you, for sending through so much excellent material, it's been such a pleasure. Yours was the first project that I saw any sight of, and I just fell in love with what you've sent us. The connection between what's on the page, and like the list of notes and things and, and then the tracks, the little beats on the drum and, you know, the snare drum you've sent through. It's a really great picture there.

What I thought we could do was just talk a bit about how your collaboration's been working, but first, if you could just talk a little bit about how you chose the key words, and then how you've been collaborating.

Dana / Ms. Mohammed: So Sarathy had a shortlist of four words. And I had one. I said, I don't know about you but 'savage' just really jumps out at me, and he said 'savage' was on his list, so we went with that. Also rhythmically that leaves a lot of room I think for us to really expand on it sonically.

Sarathy Korwar: Yeah, I think, ‘savage’ is such an aggressive word that it threw up a lot of associations. We talked about it on the Zoom call, but I think in terms of the kind of instrumentation we're trying to use, this kind of idea of almost an anti classical music, you know, to kind of music that is often considered sort of folk music or sort of ‘primal’ music that's associated with savagery. But then Dana also talked about how in Trinidad people are using hubcaps, just stuff that’s around, to make music, and I thought that was a great way to build that association with the word. I also found this great sample of someone knocking on a piano, like on a grand piano. And that's the kind of underlying pulse to the song. I thought, ‘how great is that,’ like that idea of somebody not playing the grand piano but hacking away at it. And it sounds great.

Dana: It was a great start for me, particularly, because I would have loved to do that when I was eight years old, because I hated piano lessons so much. I hated the teacher, and I was like, I don't need to be shouted out on Saturday as well! I'm leaving. She was such a terror, you know, one of those old schoolteachers that are very strict for no reason, who tap your fingers if you get the notes wrong. And, yeah, so that I love that that’s impetus to the whole track.

Preti: That sounds amazing and so you started collaborating, you sent us some WhatsApp screenshots and you sent us some bits of your notebooks and things. So how have you found it with the pandemic, and being in separate places?

Sarathy: Hard. It would have been so much quicker if we had just been in a room together, like we could have done this whole track in maybe a day, you know, just with things like, simple things like arranging the tune or just discussing ideas. I think the way we both work, or just speaking for myself, I like to work with a lot of trial and error, trying stuff and seeing if it works and sort of not having that possibility. Where you’ve got to work on something, then send it to Dana, and she’ll send stuff back, it’s not ideal. But equally, it’s been interesting. And because we’re both ‘musicians’ first, it’s been quite cool to collaborate on what the music brings to the word, instead of the lyrics first.

Dana: Yeah, it's been really interesting for me too. We've been kind of effortlessly on the same page for a lot of it, which is interesting because it could have been like ‘what are you doing, Dana? This is my track!’ But it’s been really easy. I guess we both have the same approach to it as well but it's very specific, it’s not like a Sarathy track or a Ms. Mohammed track, it’s in its own world.

Preti: You know I’d not thought about what a collaboration would be called. I’m really fascinated by this question of when the lyrics come in. In one of your conversations you talk about how savagery doesn’t really have a language, it has a hybrid language, or a gibberish

language, and I thought that was so fantastic to explore that through sound. We haven't got to the point where I've heard lyrics yet, so are we doing lyrics?

Sarathy: Yeah, I think the idea is kind of to go with that idea of it being sort of a foreign tongue to everyone. So it's kind of like, it's an unknown, no one will really know what the lyrics are, but like we are going to write stuff. Dana has actually written some already. I'm going to write some as well. Both of us writing in some form of a dialect, that kind of indecipherable from something, that would be quite cool. It's almost been the final stage of the track, we've built it up so quickly and then left space for lyrics at the end.

Dana: It's pretty minimal at the moment. What I've basically done is written some sentences in Trinidadian dialect. I do use the word 'savage' in it. But yeah, it's very typical of — I'm lucky, because I have a palette of sounds that I can use for something associated with this word. Because people do use those kind of words for how Trinidadians behave at Carnival and such things. So it's kind of like, natural. Yeah, so there will be more of that. It doesn't need to be all in dialect, but I like the challenge of that.

Preti: Does the dialect have a name?

Dana: Well no, it's just Trinidadian dialect. We don't even use the word 'patois', because when we say 'patois' that means broken French, for us. I've seen it written as Trinidadian English. But it's a mixture of a lot: broken English, broken French, broken Hindi. It's one big mash up. So yeah, it's hard to explain.

Preti: Yeah, I mean, I asked this question to the other group as well but do you feel like what you're doing with each other, and with the keyword, and with music, do you feel like it could be described as an act of translation, or do you feel interpretation is better? How can we begin to understand this process?

Sarathy: I think interpretation makes more sense to me, anyway. It's really just us coming together and talking about what associations the word has, and trying to navigate through sound, mainly. I think that decision was made pretty early by both of us that we kind of try and think about sounds, and not necessarily immediately associate other words with the word 'savage'. I think that process has been really interesting for me because I don't really, I wouldn't be making music usually with a word association in mind. So that's been an interesting kind of process.

Dana: Yeah, I never know what something is about until the end. So yeah, this is new for me as well. It's interesting.

Preti: What is it like working with this kind of very academic, intricate text as a piece of research?

Dana: It’s different. It's definitely different.

Sarathy: Ultimately it’s music-making, so I’m trying not to think of it as an academic exercise. I think all the theorising and analysis, for me, is happening later, like I'm just making music and the academic thinking is happening later.

Dana: Yeah, same. The difference is that there is this very strong theme. And it's collaborative, which is not what we usually do. I'm this control freak solo artist, but it's been okay! I’m okay. But yeah, interpretation.

Preti: I really want to hear some more about this collaboration aspect of it then. How did you approach it and how did you get over it, being this control freak, solo person?

Dana: Well, I love Sarathy and what he does, so yeah, of course you want to start collaborating with people you love. I'm very honoured, so thank you, Sweety, for posting him to work with me. I’m punching well above my weight here. It’s been great. I use the word effortless. We've had the same approach to it, which is interesting because it can be really difficult if you don’t have that, collaborating.

Sarathy: Yeah, I mean, I find it really easy. I mean, most of my music is very collaborative. I've kind of gotten to the point where I'm very happy giving up control after a certain extent, like I always kind of start —

Dana: Teach me your ways!

Sarathy: I think it’s going into something not feeling precious.

Dana: Okay, okay, the shade.

Sarathy: Oh ho. Talk later.

Dana: It’s ruined now, with this little Zoom meeting, our chemistry is over. I hope you’re pleased with yourself.

Sarathy: I’m saying good things! It is super hard to come to terms with that, I think. When I’m laying down something I really like, I’m telling myself, this isn’t final, it might stay, it might not stay. Dana might like it, she might not like it. Like, don’t get too fixated on that.

Dana: Actually, I said that to you about the bassline, it’s not finished yet. Oh! I’m learning. This is good, my therapist will be pleased.

Preti: It sounds like there’s a lot of trust that has to be built through this to make one cohesive piece, not just one of you and one of the other. Something kind of mystical. That's kind of amazing.

Sweety: Sarathy didn’t need any coaxing, by the way.

Dana: Yeah, it's still a very big honour to collaborate, so, thanks.

Preti: Have you surprised yourselves, with your ability to collaborate? Or with the ideas that have come out of this piece of work?

Dana: Good question.

Sarathy: Yeah, at some level, even writing like, I mean, I never sing. I don’t know if I’m going to keep my voice on there, but I felt comfortable enough in this space to send Dana my voice, which in itself is quite a big thing. So I did surprise myself. I was like, you know what, I'm just gonna send it. It's just an idea, it's not finished, so it's fine. You know, that's good, like being able to do that has been good. For me that’s growth. Of course I'll send drums and synths and stuff that I know. It’s been great that we’ve been able to take those chances, and it’s been a very safe space. No one’s judged us, we haven’t judged each other’s ability. We haven't even talked about music really, in terms of like keys or pitch. We’ve really just let our sounds and feelings —

Dana: BPM, that was it.

Sarathy: It’s best if you’re not actually talking about the actual technical stuff.

Dana: You’re right, we haven’t talked much about it other than in the sense that I've said things like, if you hate it, it's cool. The approach is different as well for me it's usually very set ideas and they're like, my babies. ‘How dare you change their hair?’ This is good, this approach is really different in that way. And really nice, so thank you.

Preti: Yeah, it's really interesting you say that because I feel like the researchers who wrote the keywords have had that same experience, you know, because they’re all academics and they’re very protective of their fields, and their ideas, and their processes. Academics don’t share unless they’re finished, and then it can be cited by someone else. But this keyword thing has sprung out of all of these different people's knowledge and skills, I feel like both of you have really captured

that spirit in what you've been doing. It's like watching a beautiful friendship grow, it’s kind of nice.

Dana: Aw, yeah, we get along really easily, even before this. That’s really sweet. No, there's a lot of love and respect for sure. So that's, I think that comes through.

Preti: So we have another five minutes. Is there anything you want to ask us?

Sarathy: Are the deadlines still the same?

Preti: I think we've got space to be a bit flexible, maybe by week. If you need an extra say that.

Sarathy: No, don’t say that, don’t say that. [Laughter]

Dana: No, it’s good to know, because sometimes when you get to mixing something you’re like, I wish I’d done a bit more tweaking. But no, I'd rather go with the original deadline.

Preti: Let's stick to the original deadline.

Dana: I was going to ask, when it comes to documenting the process, are you getting what you want from our Google Documents folder?

Preti: Definitely. I feel that you really set the bar as a pair, so I'm really enjoy seeing all of the stuff that you’ve sent over. You can send us the most wild and wacky things, like if you want to send us a picture of your lava lamp because that's what you stare at while contemplating words, then do that. Or you have a particular plant that you are nurturing. Anything goes, during the wild process that is creativity.

Dana: Okay, great. That’s good to know.

Preti: Sweety or Ben, do you want to add anything in there?

Sweety: I was just going to ask in terms of how you both are imagining it, length-wise?

Sarathy: Yeah, we’re imaging it as kind of a pop single, under four minutes. [Laughter]

Sweety: You know you have that flexibility, to have it up to ten minutes.

Sarathy: Yeah, I mean most of my tunes are like that length, like seven, eight, ten minutes. But it’s almost too easy to make a tune that long for me, that's just kind of meandering. Like we

talked about that earlier, just to have something that's really punchy, effective, concise even. I mean, for me, that's personally a challenge just to make those 4 minute tunes.

Sweety: You know that’s so interesting, because one of the reasons that I suggested we give that flexibility, from seven to ten minutes because — well, I had you in mind. Coming from your side and doing something with Dana, allowing for movement and discussion and whatever you wanted. I thought you and Dana would want to do a longer chat. But make it 3 and a half minutes, let’s get it into the charts. [Laughter]

Preti: I guess there’s a kind of language to your music individually. And if you're changing your own language because you're working together then I think that's really interesting.

Dana: It is interesting.

Ben: I was just going to add, when you send stuff it’s really great to see what you’ve done. You’ve sent the fragments, and some of the beginning points of the discussions. You’ve sent fragments where you’ve mentioned the different instruments — Dana, you mentioned the hubcaps and things like that. And you’ve sent the video showing that. That’s fantastic. As you go along that process of taking ideas and experimenting with them, do little bits and clips of that process evolution. That way, when we put it in the interactive housing and framework, someone watching can see how that evolves and they can make the links. It provides that coherence.

Dana: Definitely. Especially with the way it’s done — it needs a visual, the hubcap.

Preti: That’s great, thank you so much both of you. I didn’t really know what was going to come out of this process but I’ve just been so blown away.

[They wrap up and say goodbye]

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Savage — Ms. Mohammed reflects on the process

I’ve done a few takes already, so this film really is part of the journey so far, if you want to know about the journey. The rest of it was a cakewalk. Talking about the journey — talking to camera, that's really difficult.

So, the ‘savage’ TIDE project. Me, Ms. Mohammed, and Sarathy Korwar, who I'm a massive fan of, so I was excited to be able to have the opportunity to do this. So, yeah, thank you, everyone at TIDE but especially Sweety Kapoor who crowbarred me into this, bending the rules a little bit — but you know we’re both a bit punk rock.

‘Savage’ was the only word that stood out for me on the shortlist. And it was also on Sarathy’s shortlist so here we are. Also rhythmically, it just lends itself to so many outcomes and so many avenues. Lyrically, too. I'm not sure when I decided that it was going to be mostly in dialect. It turned out to be entirely in Trinidadian dialect, and if you're unfamiliar with Trinidadian dialect, it’s like broken English, broken French, broken Spanish, broken Hindi, everything's in there. It’s really difficult to explain your culture, I don't know if you've ever had to try — my inspiration for the delivery, lyrically, for the track, was the Midnight Robber, which is a traditional Carnival character, Trinidadian carnival (which is the best carnival). What is a Midnight Robber? Characters in carnival, traditional masks, it all gets really difficult to fit it into these explanations.

Hopefully you get the whole picture when you get all these videos and photos and the track itself in one place. But, yeah. Getting back to the dialect. Using ‘savages’ as a them, I knew I wanted to use words that were also kind of maybe slurs or derogatory, not in the best light, so I say ‘wajang’, I say ‘jamette’, I say ‘zami’, and these are very gendered, disparaging terms for women who are sexually promiscuous or badly behaved or gay — very relevant for me. I was really pleased I got a chance to do that.

As an expat, you know the language that I grew up speaking, the mother tongue, as we say, gets more and more important and it's been seeping into my solo work anyway. It’s just so colourful and so many words that we have that English-English doesn't really do justice. That was all I had in mind, the rest of it was completely improvised and, you know, I was just running on intuition and first impressions. Sarathy sent me the initial loop, and I think the first thing I wrote was back was the first guitar line that you hear. And so, you know, it's just really effortless and I use that word a lot to describe the collaboration. He's really easy and lovely and super talented, so it was all just really a pleasure. And I'm very lucky to be part of all of it. Hopefully you like the track when you hear it. Thank you.

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Savage — Artist Profiles

[We see side-by-side images of Sarathy Korwar and Ms. Mohammed. Sarathy is looking into the middle-distance, Ms. Mohammed is holding a guitar, wearing a bright red dress. Hovering over either image reveals the artist's biography.]

Born in the US, Sarathy Korwar grew up in Ahmedabad and Chennai in India. He began playing tabla aged 10, but was also drawn to the American music that he heard on the radio and leaking through the doorway of his local jazz music shop (Ahmad Jamal and John Coltrane were early discoveries). At 17, Korwar moved to Pune to study Environmental Science, but instead dedicated his time to music, practising tabla under the tutelage of Rajeev Devasthali, translating his skills to the western drum kit and playing as a session musician.

He moved to London where he trained as a classical tabla player under the guidance of Sanju Sahai at SOAS (The School of Oriental and African Studies), focusing on the adaptation of Indian classical rhythmic material to non-Indian percussion instruments.

Korwar has since established himself as one of the most original and compelling voices in the UK jazz scene, leading the UPAJ Collective - a loose band of South Asian jazz and Indian classical musicians brought together through a love of collaboration and improvisation, who set up a residency at the Jazz Cafe in London.

Hailing from Trinidad as a fifth generation of Indian descent, Dada Mohammed is no stranger to being the other. Early on, Dana found herself delving into the guitar, forming a band and being on the fringes of the music scene. A brief stint in New York saw her exploring alternative scenes, before settling in London where she further crafted her sound. In 2012, Dana released a self-titled LP as Dana Jade, earning glowing reviews.

However, major changes occurred in the intervening years. Despite LGBTQ and feminist progress there came a conservative backlas: austerity, Trump, the #MuslimBan, the increase of the far right globally. As life for marginalized voices has become increasingly fraught, it felt more imperative that ever to own our collective otherness, especially as a counter to growing prejudices, islamophobia, and the many lenses of 'otherness' Dana found herself and others being viewed through, including that of a queer gay woman; thus Dana reclaimed her music avatar from Dana Jade to her surname, Ms. Mohammed.

Ms. Mohammed pushes boundaries with feminist and conscious lyric writing, genre bending music and her distinctive unique fender-bender playing style of the guitar.

[Navigating then to the quill icon on the left-hand side takes you to the Fragment for ‘Savage’, written by Preti Taneja.]

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Savage — Fragment by Preti Taneja

[Black background with text.]

Archivists’ note:

Part of 3 (?) found in archive: Human era: 2020, *folder:* ‘Digital Debris’
Translated by Algorithm BC, in the year Aliena, 3095.
Filed under L: liminal; liar; likable; lozenge; language; liver; library; libation (see also: intoxication,) liberation
Title: Fragment (consider revising).
Reference found: a command frequently made by the dominant linguistic training programme, ‘Word’, in use worldwide during the final years.

KEY to symbols:
A single square bracket: **]** pertains to missing matter.

Fragment (consider revising)

They say the savage is almost a human who longs for something lost
Has forgotten their father, who cannot spell son, whose name is lost.

They say the savage came over here crawling, legs wide open, whose body is hair,
Who has never known laughter, who cannot spell daughter, whose shame is lost.

In the Middle French ‘savage’ were the spaces beyond human control: ships set out
Now in line, column, in row, rank, file a ‘great game’ being played (as clerks, we lost).

The English were afraid their language was the savage (compared to the Italian)
They turn tide on us, the sounds we make, our children weep as bame are lost.

Savage is unnatural and inhuman, shakespeare means woman, and dark matter

Inhuman needs punishment for the fall: so says the religion that came with the lost.

Savage is a natural, innocent being – the French philosophers write for *égalité*
Nature is as nature survives: will it be Aliena's voice or montaigne's that is lost?

Eventually savage changes face with native; sitting up at high table with bone-china tea
Tea-ching sounds, tea-ching syntax, tea-ching snuff to tame our minds 'till they're lost.

They say look: we have one or two here, that's to be grateful for, that's certainly so
Now we can spell grateful, obedient, modest: our ancestral flame blown out, lost.

They call this an archive, an archive is whatever falls into an envelope,
] the rest of the letters can be framed as 'lost.'

The origin of this ghazal was a ghazal: this is not a true ghazal the poet protests
The form is corrupted, the form is savage, is the form love? The train is lost –

The beti, the beautiful, the touch, the divine, the tongue, the heart, the lips
The question of winning has no answer. Knowing this truth, any gain is lost.

] don't you recognise me?
] I will admit it, I like my mangoes juicy and sweet: in you, Shahid, the rain, I am lost.

Archivist's note #2: Vah! Vah!

Archivist's note #3: This fragment is one of the most complete of Aliena's works to survive the final years. As an example of Aliena's style it can be considered classic – with themes of love, longing, sexual desire and speaking as if from a submissive position in history, also with reference to names of what are assumed to be her friends or colleagues (here 'shakespeare', 'montaigne') and sometimes appearing to be in conversation with other writers (see note 4.)

Archivist's note #4: 'Shahid' *trans. 'witness'* (Arabic/ English) 'Beloved' (Persian/English). Could also *refer to* AGHA SHAHID ALI, *Kashmiri poet, writer of the Human-era b.1949-2001, authority on the 'ghazal' a poetic form of H-e 7th Century: Arabic, Persian Urdu, English.* See for example:

'They ask me to tell them what "Shahid" means –
Listen: it means "The Beloved" in Persian, "Witness" in Arabic.'
– *Agha Shahid Ali, source text:* GHAZAL

In File: Human-era, 20-21 C span, *Folder:* ‘Philosophy/ Text/ Canon’.

Notable lines:
‘The other question remains: if one writes in free verse – and one should – to subvert Western civilisation, surely one should write in forms to save oneself from Western civilisation?’
– Agha Shahid Ali, source text: unknown.
In File: Human-era, 20-21 C span, *Folder:* ‘Philosophy/ Text/ Canon’.

Notable lines:
‘The thirst for unity haunts the Westerner.’
– Agha Shahid Ali, source text: unknown.
In File: Human-era, 20-21 C span, *Folder:* ‘Philosophy/ Text/ Canon’.

[As before, navigating to the skull and crossbones icon takes you to Preti Taneja’s biography, transcribed previously.]

[End of transcription document. Return to Table of Contents]